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Amiable fictions: virtual friendship and the English novel

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AMIABLE FICTIONS:
VIRTUAL FRIENDSHIP AND THE ENGLISH NOVEL

by

Bryan Paul Mangano

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English
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Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Eric Gidal

This dissertation argues that friendship operates in mid-eighteenth-century English fiction as a privileged category of virtue, knowledge, and aesthetic value. By representing social tensions raised by extra-familial friendships and appealing to readers as friends, Samuel Richardson, Sarah Fielding, Sarah Scott, and Laurence Sterne develop ideal friendship into a reflexive trope for cultivating authorial identity, framing literary response, imagining a public sphere, and theorizing social reforms. *Amiable Fictions* offers a new way of thinking about the ethical frameworks that shape experimental narrative techniques at a moment when the English novel is just emerging into cultural prominence.

In this study, I analyze the ways that these four novelists represent friendships as allegorical meditations on interpersonal ethics so as to imagine literary exchange as a virtual form of friendship. For each of these writers, the communicative intimacy of friendship becomes a basis for theorizing more perfect spiritual and economic unions. On the level of plot, these fictions unpack the philosophical values of real friendship by staging its antagonism with persistent forms of patriarchy, aristocracy, and economic individualism. Drawing from the values of friendship that arise in the plot, these authors shape narrative exchanges as a tie of friendship. In cultivating an amiable ethos, they avoid appearing as slavish flatterers in a commercialized literary marketplace, or as overly didactic figures of institutional authority.

Amiable Fictions builds on studies of the novel genre by accounting for the way a rhetoric of friendship motivates experiments in narrative form. I offer insights into developments in epistolary style, free indirect discourse, unreliable narration, anonymous authorship, and autobiographical form. I suggest that the concept of friendship orients these writers in their exploration of techniques, propelling them as they articulate a range of possibilities available for future authors of narrative fiction.

This dissertation also engages current scholarly understandings of sociability, sensibility, domesticity, and public and private life in the mid-eighteenth century. These

novelists deploy friendship as a moral category that challenges codes of sociability, refines understandings of sympathy, and often antagonizes the emerging cultural authority of the domestic sphere. Reframing questions of gender and sexuality and their influence on literary forms, the project highlights how male characters imitate friendship between women (and vice versa), how social reform impulses raise the need for heterosexual friendship, and how extra-familial friendship conflicts with domestic norms as an alternative mediator of public and private character.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that friendship operates in mid-eighteenth-century English fiction as a privileged category of virtue, knowledge, and aesthetic value. By representing social tensions raised by extra-familial friendships and appealing to readers as friends, Samuel Richardson, Sarah Fielding, Sarah Scott, and Laurence Sterne develop ideal friendship into a reflexive trope for cultivating authorial identity, framing literary response, imagining a public sphere, and theorizing social reforms. *Amiable Fictions* offers a new way of thinking about the ethical frameworks that shape experimental narrative techniques at a moment when the English novel is just emerging into cultural prominence.

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This dissertation also engages current scholarly understandings of sociability, sensibility, domesticity, and public and private life in the mid-eighteenth century. These novelists deploy friendship as a moral category that challenges codes of sociability, refines understandings of sympathy, and often antagonizes the emerging cultural authority of the domestic sphere. Reframing questions of gender and sexuality and their influence on literary forms, the project highlights how male characters imitate friendship between women (and vice versa), how social reform impulses raise the need for heterosexual friendship, and how extra-familial friendship conflicts with domestic norms as an alternative mediator of public and private character.

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INTRODUCTION:

ENLIGHTENMENT FRIENDSHIP AND THE NOVEL

> For what friendly heart can want a subject on such an occasion; when it must be sensible, that the goings-out, the comings-in, the visit either meditated, paid, or received, the visitors, the reading or the musical subjects, the morning meditation, the mid-day bower, the evening walk: what she hopes, what she wishes, what she fears, are proper topics for the pen; and what friendship cannot be indifferent to. For what one thing is there, that a friend does, or is concerned in, or for, which can be too slight a subject to a friend.[1]
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> —Samuel Richardson to Sarah Wescomb, undated letter of 1746

Samuel Richardson advises a young female acquaintance that the pretense of friendship liberates the epistolary writer from every standard of relevance: whatever comes to mind merits inclusion simply because it *has* come to mind. The friendly heart cares for anything that passes through the consciousness of the writer. Written during Richardson's composition of his epistolary novel *Clarissa* (1748-49), his reflection on epistolary friendship in this private letter not surprisingly echoes the rhetoric of friendship exchanged between his heroine Clarissa and her intimate Anna Howe. That Richardson often depicts the epistolary friendship between these two young women according to this standard of intimacy partly explains why *Clarissa* remains the longest English language novel. Yet, Richardson's attempt to represent such a friendship does not fully account for his signature prolixity or his feeling about pruning his work. In a different sense, we might consider this relation between standards of relevance in epistolary letter and epistolary novel not only as one of form and content, but as an analogy between the intimacy of letters and literary texts. It is as if Richardson expected his own readers to tolerate the teeming volumes that make up his epistolary novels just as he encourages Sarah Wescomb to write on even the slightest subject by reminding her of what a friendly

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[1] Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*. Ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 66-67.

heart should receive as an object of curiosity. For Richardson, the quantitative limits of private letters and public fictions, as parallel forms of friendly discourse, knew no bounds.

In his famous published eulogy to Richardson, the French philosophe Denis Diderot compares the act of reading to friendship. Recalling the first time he read Richardson's complete works, Diderot writes, "How deliciously this reading affected me! At each moment I could see my happiness shortening by a page. Soon I was experiencing the same feelings undergone by great friends who have lived long together and are on the point of separating. At the end, I suddenly found myself alone."[2] Diderot raises the issue of quantity and relevance with respect to the Abbe Prevost's abridged translation of *Clarissa*, the only one available in French. At one tense juncture in the eulogy, Diderot scoffs at those readers who have read Richardson only in the abridged version, the "elegant French translations." To dramatize the inferiority of their reading experience, he turns to the scene of Clarissa Harlowe's death as it appears in the English text. He directly addresses those readers who have missed out on the mournful details that have inspired in him an elevating sensation of sympathy and self-worth:

> you do not know the unfortunate Clarissa; you do not know Miss Howe, her dear tender Miss Howe, hair disheveled, stretched on the coffin of her friend, wringing her hands, raising her eyes, drowned with tears toward heaven, filling the Harlowe house with her piercing cries and pouring imprecations on all the cruel family. You have no notion of the effect of those circumstances suppressed by your petty taste, because you did not hear the lugubrious peal of the parish bells, carried by the wind to the Harlowe household and raising in their stony hearts a dull remorse; because you did not see them wince at the sound of the hearse's wheels carrying the body of their victim. Then the gloomy silence which hung over them all was broken by the sobs of the father and the mother; then the true torment of these wicked souls began, and serpents stirred in the depths of their hearts and rent them. Happy those who were able to weep!"[3]

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[2] "Eulogy of Richardson" reproduced in *Clarissa: The Eighteenth Century Response: 1747-1804: Volume 1, Reading Clarissa*. Ed. Lois Bueler. (New York: AMS Press, Inc. 2010), 393.

[3] Ibid, 395.

While much of Diderot's eulogy substitutes a discussion of fictional characters for the knowledge of Richardson as a man, this scene from *Clarissa* becomes an especially fitting intermediary, mingling the emotions evoked by the death of this fictional character with the emotions of praise and mourning for Richardson as an author. Within the scene, the weeping friend Anna Howe becomes the central figure of authentic affection, contrasted with the cruelty of the Harlowe family and their punitive remorse. When Diderot builds to his final exclamatory praise for those happy that they could weep, he links the opening division between Richardson's readers to this fictional divide between Clarissa's true and false friends at her wake. This lover of Richardson finds solace in sharing his grief with Anna Howe. In the same stroke, he associates the "dull remorse" of the Harlowes' "stony hearts" with the "petty tastes" of French readers who cannot tolerate Richardson's length or style. Surprisingly, Diderot does not associate the Harlowes with Richardson's critics, but, rather, with those readers who only know Richardson in an abridged form. The Harlowes stand in for the "petty taste" of the reading public, scolded for their short attention spans and linguistic limitations. The friendly reader by contrast possesses the literacy and mental discipline to consume every last word, and moreover, as in the case of epistolary friendship, any additional words the author might choose to add. In the context of a eulogy, Diderot, seems to make not just friendship, but a form of comprehensive reading into a matter of deep moral stakes, as if those who fail to engage with and appreciate the unabridged novel would also stand with cold hearts over the burial of their own innocent children. For Diderot, such readers are enemies to dead authors and to the dead in general.[4]

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[4] Ibid 398. Diderot extends his apostrophizing friendship with Richardson in an address to his friends whom he would invite into this amiable community, writing, "O my friends, Pamela, Clarissa, Grandison, are three great dramas!" But in the context of Diderot's construction of friendship with Richardson, one cannot too quickly assume that the writer means to address his actual living friends. These friends too are Diderot's readers; they may yet remain unborn. Paradoxically, these are the friends of his own writing, of the present and of posterity. On the basis of this virtual friendship with his own present and future readers, Diderot recommends Richardson's novels in the language of friendship. Beyond this knot of virtual relationships, however, Diderot also states that to come face to face with a fan of Richardson's fiction is

In setting the single case of Diderot's "Eloge" alongside Richardson's remarks on epistolary friendship, I am not contending that Richardson's novel infectiously transmitted to its public an analogy between reading and friendship. Rather, I offer these citations as two particularly rich instances of a friendship trope that circulated broadly in mid-eighteenth century culture and was often deployed to humanize the experience of disembodied textual exchange. Diderot's eulogy in particular highlights three interrelated aspects of this trope that this dissertation explores: 1) the representation of friendship ideals in fiction; 2) the idea of friendship between authors and readers; and 3) the use of friendship rhetoric as a justification for the formal boundaries or techniques of fiction. In *Amiable Fictions*, I account for the way Richardson and other mid-eighteenth century novelists imagine the totality, consumption, and circulation of their fictions by way of a complex cultural analogy between intimate friendship and literary textuality. I discuss how representations of friendship function as meditations on interpersonal ethics that metaphorically reflect on the narrative exchanges between author and reader. The sustained allegorical representation of amity becomes a trope that indicates an authorial desire to consider one's relationship with a reading public as a form of friendship, albeit one restricted to the virtual and defined by the limits and possibilities of print media. While my primary focus involves the linked conception of novel form and ideal friendship, this subject necessarily engages broader contexts of eighteenth-century authorship, literary exchange, books, and textuality.

In exploring the influence of idealized friendship as a trope of novel reading, I am retreading the well-worn territory of novel origins and history. I understand most genre studies of the English novel in recent decades as various reconsiderations of a core premise from Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel*: "formal realism is only a mode of

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instantly to find a new friend, as he speaks of clasping and kissing those who share his enthusiasm for the author. Conversely, he includes an anecdote about a woman who breaks off a friendship with another women for ridiculing *Clarissa*."

presentation, and it is therefore ethically neutral." Watt deserves and has received due credit for initiating a comprehensive historical examination of the early novel's distinguishing features. In part, scholarship has critiqued Watt's claim by uncovering the discrete historical ideologies that produce the formal features of realism. In a larger sense, though, subsequent generations of critics rightly reject the assertion that we might ever approach fictional forms as ethically or politically neutral. *Amiable Fictions* pursues both of these revisionary tracks. It assumes first, that the category of friendship involves the ethical and the political, and second, that codes of friendship, like those expressed in Richardson's letter, directly shape qualities of fictional detail. My attention to the mid-century novel's participation in a historical discourse of ideal friendship requires that we reconsider and amend prevailing accounts of the way eighteenth-century novels purvey cultural ideologies of subjectivity. Beyond the politics of individualism and domesticity, Richardson, Fielding, Scott, and Sterne imagine extra-familial friendship as the primary interpersonal tie for cultivating social identity and self-knowledge.

For Richardson and Diderot, intimate friendship requires the sharing of information and a sharing in emotional response. In this respect, the rhetoric of friendship provides a significant impetus for the mediation of character minds and evolving conceptions of interiority. Michel Foucault's paradigms of disciplinary power and panoptic surveillance have typically provided a framework for understanding how the representation of fictional subjects reflects the historical formation of subjectivity by political institutions. In the seminal application to novel studies, John Bender's *Imagining the Penitentiary* argues that the transparency, completeness, and reliability of details in formal realism produces a subjectivity that "subsumes an assent to a regularized authority."[5] In a more recent variation on this critical paradigm, D.A. Miller discusses

[5] John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 72.

how Jane Austen's third person narration expresses the contradictory desires for the subjectivized "personhood" of characters, bound to regimes of gender and matrimony, and the autonomy of the "stylothete," embodied in the de-subjectivized narrator.[6] By attending to the way representations of friendship shape political constructions of character interiority, this dissertation argues that operative notions of friendship in this period reflect a basic contradiction: intellectuals and literary artists privilege ideal friendship above other interpersonal bonds because they see friendship, simultaneously, as a modern zone of privacy set beyond the instrumentality of commerce and politics, and as a mythic origin of all political community.

On the one hand, the writers I will discuss reflect a historically prevalent view of friendship as a depoliticized form of intimacy, distinguished from that of kinship and marriage, and their respective political valences. Discussing the emergent public sphere, Jürgen Habermas identifies this view of friendship, citing Karl Marx's observation: "If marriage were not the basis of the family, it would not be subject to legislation, just as friendship is not."[7] More recently, Allan Silver has argued that Scottish Enlightenment philosophers idealize private friendship as that which exceeds the instrumentalism at work in economic and political spheres: in friendship, the individual appears as an end in his or herself.[8] On the other hand, the Aristotelian notion of friendship as a political tie of

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[6] D.A. Miller. *Jane Austen: or The Secret of Style* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[7] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1989), 129. This quotation concludes Habermas's extended commentary on Marx's views of eighteenth-century civil society. Habermas suggests that Marx's comment on friendship is part of his broader thinking about the dialectic emergence of a more pure form of privacy in a socialist state. What is especially interesting about Habermas's reading is the implication that Marx, along with proponents of free market capitalism (Smith and Hume), both associate the liberty of friendship—the purity of its privacy—with its freedom, not just from political regulation, but, rather, from necessary political significance. Any return of the classical model of friendship thus poses a challenge not only to emergent forms of capitalism, but also to the socialist "dialectic immanent in the bourgeois public sphere" that Marx perceives.

[8] Silver, Allan. "Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Social Theory and Modern Sociology" *American Journal of Sociology*. 95, no. 6 (1990): 1479. Silver's basis his argument primarily on the writings of Adam Smith, David Hume, Francis Hutcheson, and Adam Ferguson.

virtue persists in the eighteenth century. Authors allude to a canon of classical friendships to construct cultural continuity. Utopian thinkers locate the seed of social reform in the virtuous ties of private friendship, while metaphorically using scenes of friendship to cultivate an ethics of textual community. The mid-century discourse of friendship reflects the reaction of several writers to what J.G.A. Pocock identifies as a modern crisis of value.[9] By bringing together classical evocations and political progressivism, the discussion of friendship mobilizes a politics of nostalgic republicanism and civic virtue as well as the economics underlying bourgeois civil society. In both cases, the proliferation of virtuous friendships becomes a central goal for those concerned with staving off the social and moral corrosion seen to result from modernization. This tension between the apolitical and political idealization of friendship resonates through the connection literary writers forge between intimate communication and the formation of socialized subjects.

Because eighteenth-century writers often ascribe to non-familial friendship an intimacy greater than that of romantic, marital, and familial ties, the literary significance of their engagement with friendship exceeds the scope of recent critical paradigms focused on domesticity. Like Bender, Nancy Armstrong's foundational study of domesticity and fiction sees the apparatus of realism as a coercive ideology of surveillance. Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* argues that early novels construct the cultural centrality of the domestic woman, a figure who attains a privileged ethical interiority through an illusory de-politicization of the domestic sphere. According to Armstrong, the domestic woman becomes the central character in a system of surveillance and self-discipline that structures modern subjectivity.[10] From this perspective, the novel genre expresses the adaptation of patriarchal authority to new

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[9] J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

[10] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

circumstances. In *Secret History of Domesticity*, Michael McKeon also tracks a close parallel between the structures of domestic spaces, its associated rhetoric, and evolving literary forms.[11] More than Armstrong, McKeon foregrounds the dialectic interplay between fiction and the materiality of domesticity as a process that terminates with the domestic fiction of the early nineteenth century. Both of these studies carry forward Habermas's supposition that the eighteenth-century public sphere emerges in conjunction with a mythical image of a humanizing domestic space.[12] The influence of this ideological structure on the novel is undeniable. Yet, eighteenth-century literary publications persistently invoke the bonds of idealized friendship, conceived as a non-familial moral relationship of special social importance. As I will argue, the discourse of friendship destabilizes the authority of domesticity, often within the same works that strive to render compatible the virtues of friendship and family life. More than shoring up domestic ideology, authors appeal to friendship as a reaction to the political inadequacy of domestic obligations, while underscoring alternative qualities of textual exchange. Unlike domestic intimacy, which often involves household proximities, ties of blood, and patriarchal authority, friendship tropes foreground remote and anonymous exchange, extra-familial affection, and reciprocal authority. By grounding these qualities of literary exchange in the logic of friendship, authors could tacitly acknowledge the emerging power of readers as consumers in the literary marketplace, while still guiding them to a view of fictional characters, narratives, and authors as, not just commodities, but objects of ethical obligation.

Just as ideal friendship challenges the social privilege of domesticity, it challenges notions of individual autonomy central to emerging political and economic theories. In

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[11] Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

[12] Habermas, 46-47.

different ways, Watt, Bender, Armstrong, and McKeon speak to the novel's role in facilitating the authority of individual experience. My approach especially builds on McKeon's methodology of exploring how narratives forge a link between ideologies of fact and value. By acknowledging the importance of friendship ties, however, I seek to qualify one of McKeon's principle conclusions about the dialectical constitution of the genre: that it results in the separation of self from society as ideological abstractions. As he argues, "the autonomy of the self consists in its capacity to enter into largely negative relation with the society it vainly conceives itself to have created, to resist its encroachments and to be constructed by them."[13] In this view, the alienation of the individual from society—the struggle between resisting and conforming to social norms—becomes a characteristic feature of the novel from mid-century onward. While I concede that such tensions are central to the novel genre, I call attention to the importance of the "friend" as a recurring abstraction pertinent to narrative mediation, one that grounds the connection between facts and values, and mediates between self and society in a way that mitigates the hero's autonomy or alienation.

Several studies highlight how literary works reflect the cultural significance of friendship during the early modern and Enlightenment eras. Janet Todd's study, *Women's Friendship in Literature*, remains one of the only extended studies of friendship in the eighteenth-century novel. It addresses the role literature plays in furthering attitudes about friendship, specifically in reconciling the deviant potential of women's amity with a patriarchal domestic ideology. Todd takes up eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century novels, frequently treated in criticism for the romance plots at their center, and shifts the interpretative focus to the female friendships often seen as marginal. She distinguishes friendship in terms of the sentimental, manipulative, erotic, political, and social. Since Todd's examination of women's friendship, other studies have addressed literary

[13] McKeon, 419.

depictions of friendship and conversation as social alternatives to received political structures of authority. Laurie Shannon's *Sovereign Amity* focuses on representations of male friendship in Renaissance literature as an implicit challenge to hierarchical social relations and the authority of monarchical power.[14] In this early modern ancestor to Enlightenment era friendship, the bond of amity must assert its sovereign force in the face of a culturally saturating political model of monarchical authority. Shannon's study calls attention to the way in which friendship is always defined vis-à-vis antagonistic models of duty, political and domestic. In *The Conversational Circle*, Betty A. Schellenberg also offers a view of friendship as an alternative model of authority rooted in the conversational communities of eighteenth century life. At this later historical juncture, these friendships do not challenge monarchical power so much as they fill up a perceived vacuum of power and trust in the face of waning ecclesiastical and political authority.[15] Schellenberg describes the conversational circle as a conservative paradigm of social authority that arises in several literary works, including Richardson's sequel to *Pamela*, as well as the novels of Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott. As she notes, many of these texts were popular in their day, but they have since been marginalized by a twentieth-century literary canon that is shaped by an abiding interest in the rise of progressive individualism. Following in Todd's general approach, both Shannon and Schellenberg prompt a rereading of canonical and marginal texts framed by friendship as a social relationship essential to understanding the cultural work undertaken by narrative exchanges.

In *Amiable Fictions,* I build on these literary-historical studies of friendship with a greater emphasis on literary form. In synthesizing the remarks made by Richardson,

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[14] Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2002), 7.

[15] Betty Schellenberg, *The Conversational Circle: Rereading the English Novel, 1740-1775* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 8.

Diderot, and others, that link notions of reading and writing to friendship, I attend to the way authors representing plots of friendship fold its connotations back into the concept of narrative representation, in its didactic and aesthetic registers. Take for example the way that Richardson's notion of epistolary friendship projects an economy of abundance onto the novel form. Friendship becomes a frame for justifying the novel's totality, or what Georg Lukács calls an "architectonic" of novel form. As Lukács argues, the novel has a radical imperative to constitute its own unity, in contrast to the epic form's "indifference to any form of architectural construction."[16] Richardson's commentary offers an example of the way the exchanges of textual friendship might provide an architectural logic for eighteenth-century fictions: the ethical obligation of reading a friend's letter serves as a metaphor to contain expansive texts that might otherwise strike the reader the way a certain Victorian novel struck Henry James: as a "loose and baggy monster."[17]

A few brief examples can illustrate the historical development of this organizing ethos. In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Wayne Booth discusses the foregrounded narrator-reader relationship in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) as a subplot of the novel. He fixes on a late passage in where the narrator addresses the reader through the language of friendship. For Booth, this passage reflects an analogy between friendship and the aesthetic autonomy of novels. Notably, his description of Fielding's parting sentiment closely echoes Diderot's elegiac commentary on Richardson:

> at a time when we know we are to lose him . . . [Fielding's narrator] uses terms which inevitably move us across the barrier to death itself, we find, lying beneath our amusement at his playful mode of farewell, something of the same feeling we have when we lose a close friend, a friend who has given us a gift which we can never repay. . . .The book and the friend are one.[18]

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[16] Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Trans. Anna Bostock. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 67.

[17] Henry James, *The Tragic Muse*. (New York: Scribner, 1908), v.

[18] Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 218.

Booth's suggestive remarks about Fielding's tone have further implications for understanding the novel's form. In the passages he has in mind, Fielding writes:

> We are now, Reader, arrived at the last Stage of our long Journey. As we have therefore travelled together through so many Pages, let us behave to one another like Fellow-Travellers in a Stage-Coach, who have passed several Days in the Company of each other; and who, notwithstanding any Bickering or Animosities which may have occured on the Road, generally make all up at last, and mount, for the last Time, into their Vehicle with Chearfulness and Good-Humour; since after this one Stage, it may possibly happen to us, as it commonly happens to them, never to meet more.[19]

What makes this closing gesture of intimacy especially striking is the distance it measures from the novel's opening "Bill of Sale," which positions the story as a meal for consumption. The work of the novel is to move us from appetite to obligation. By the final introductory chapter, Fielding addresses the reader as "my Friend," apologizes for any offense he may given "thee or thy Friends," and contrasts his reader's sympathies with the abuse heaped on his writings by enemies. The narrator compares this shift in tone to a stage-coach journey, jesting and digressive at the outset, but "usually plain and serious" toward the end. Of the final portion of the novel, he declares: "The Variety of Matter, indeed, which I shall be obliged to cram into this Book, will afford no Room for any of those ludicrous Observations which I have elsewhere made [. . .] All will be plain Narrative only." The comic simile of traveling companions becomes a device for describing not just the form of the final book but the temporal logic of the novel as a whole, in its movement from pleasantry to sobriety. At the same time, this plain and serious intercourse involves the disappearance of the personalized narrator into pure storytelling: "plain Narrative only." The implications of this development are twofold: 1) the avowal of friendship indicates a new level of trust that, at last, displaces the need for the narrator's micromanagement of our response; 2) the less frequent visibility of the

[19] Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (New York: Norton, 1995), 595.

narrator anticipates and prepares us for his "deathly" departure, once we come to turn the novel's final page.

Fielding's trope also has the paradoxical effect of humanizing the text as an embodied relationship, at the same time as it figures the superiority of purely textual friendship. On the one hand, the reader may find this declaration of intimacy surprising: the passage recasts our reading experience as a moral connection to another human being with whom we share the burden of mortality. The self-presentation of the "infirm author" and the linearity of stage coach travel become complementary evocations of time-bound bodies. In this regard, the traveling friendship trope invests the narrative with the pathos of irreversibility, masking the re-readability of all texts. In sensing the ending, the author indicates that this newly minted friendship is, not just a textual relation, but, soon to be mediated only by the reader's memory. The reader will put aside the book and mourn, presumably having as little power to pick it up again as a traveler has of recreating the same journey twice. A novel that, as many critics observe, seems to command at least two readings, wants to evoke, by way of the linear stage-coach trope, a more fleeting, irreversible, and life-like experience, thereby masking the artifice of storytelling and the actuality of its re-readability: a machine passing itself off as a phantom. Yet, in a contradictory way, Fielding also highlights the immortality of texts. Speaking to a reader now located in some distant future, he concludes that his enemies will "be dead long before this Page shall offer itself to thy Perusal."[20] Hence, the inhuman durability of texts makes the virtual friendship between author and reader possible. But, like any metaphor, the page that reaches the reader's perusal after the death of its author, his enemies, and his enemies' writings, can be taken not only as the tenor, but also as the vehicle of this analogy with friendship: Fielding's extended play on this trope suggests that embodied companionships are as highly mediated as print on the page of a novel.

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[20] Ibid, 596.

What Fielding offers is as much a "Farewell to the Reader," as the chapter title suggests, as it is a greeting to the reader on new footing. The same paradoxical nuance appears in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) from the outset, as friendship appears as an explicit contract set before the reader, rather than a culminating realization. Early in the novel, Tristram writes:

> Sir, as you and I are in a manner perfect strangers to each other, it would not have been proper to let you into too many circumstances relating to myself all at once. [. . .] As you proceed further with me, the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that, unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship.----*O diem praeclarum!* ---then nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling.[21]

While Fielding nearly apologizes for the trifling jests that he will set aside for the final chapter, Sterne warns the reader in advance of trifles and tedium, with the promise that all shall find retrospective transformation through the miracle of friendship. This opening promise of friendship with the reader (as perfect stranger) announces the underlying framework of narrative details, which, according to Lukács, "can never be justified by their mere presence."[22] One might observe that the lack of plot in *Tristram Shandy* relative to *Tom Jones* makes the declaration of the novel's organizing principle a more urgent matter from the beginning. Similarly, however, Sterne's language expresses the same ambivalent sentiment conveyed in the suggestion of a friendship achieved and 'terminating' in the novel's movement toward an ending. As the ending here becomes definitive for the meaningful ordering of time and narrative information, this rhetoric approaches something like the secularization of a Christian death and resurrection, conflated in the promise of a denouement that is simultaneous the birth and death of the virtual friend (a moment of origin and closure that, in Sterne's novel, perhaps never arrives).

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[21] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinion of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980), 6.

[22] Lukács, 76.

As if such matters were too simple, Sterne adds one further twist, continuing on from the above passage by immediately addressing the reader, formerly the perfect stranger, as "my dear friend and companion," as if the act of contracting were to enact the very thing this contract defers, "dear" friendship. Sterne's novel asks to be read as a process of keeping faith with the possibility of friendship, using the language of friendship in advance (that is to say, with irony, in quotations marks, under erasure), while also recognizing the ending as at once the birth and death of a virtual friendship. Just as in Richardson's notion of epistolary friendship, it is this promise of friendship that lends a frame of potential relevance to all seemingly irrelevant detail.

Diderot's eulogy, Fielding's 'infirmity,' and Tristram's 'termination' each point to the deathly aura of textual friendship. In each case, the surviving text evokes the literal mortality of its author. At the same time, the reader's progress toward the narrative end evokes a figurative death of the author-friend. In Diderot's reflection on reading, this feeling of premature mourning counterbalances the "deliciousness" of hurried consumption. In *Reading for the Plot*, Peter Brooks discusses such a tension in psychoanalytic terms. He characterizes the reader's experience of narrative desire as the death drive overlaying the pleasure drive, two forward impulses that create a "dilatory" tension in the experience of reading.[23] According to Brooks, this delay creates its own kind of complex pleasure. To extend this framework to the sub-plot of author-reader relations, then, we can view the eighteenth-century rhetoric of elegiac friendship as a concrete figuration of desires provoked internally by the narrative itself: to be sure, not universal or essential qualities of story-telling so much as historical features of novelistic plot, detached from the tropes that figure its consumption. In the chapters that follow, I

[23] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 103.

will attend to the way that these particular approaches to plot, and the patterns of desire they instigate, correlate with the deployment of friendship as a metaphor of response.[24]

Brooks writes that narrative "seems ever to imagine in advance the act of its transmission . . . in a posthumous moment." In mid-eighteenth-century fiction, I argue, a rhetoric of friendship in authorial address frequently evokes notions of posthumous transmission, as suggested by Fielding and Sterne. Beyond this, though, Brooks means that plot alone "imagines" its transmission through scenes that allegorize its reception by an audience. Roland Barthes's influential distinction between notions of character and figure will prove useful for reading friendship as an allegory of transmission.[25] In his famous reading of Balzac's *Sarrasine,* Barthes defines figures as symbolic roles (queen-women, castrated-lover, are a few of his examples) that the text attaches to and detaches from specific characters and things at junctures in the plot, forming a larger symbolic pattern in the work. Barthes emphasizes that these figures circulate among characters, narrators, and constructions of the reader. Expanding on this approach, Garrett Stewart's study of Victorian fiction takes up the relationship between the addressed (interpolated) reader and plotted (extrapolated) scenes of reading. As he suggests, we can approach the abstraction of reading, or more broadly, receptivity, as a Barthesian figure that circulates in a text, characterized variously by different texts (or within a single one) by represented or invoked states of "heightened attentiveness, of passive reception, of vicarious subjection."[26] Such an approach provides a way of paraphrasing the object of this study as an inquiry into the reciprocal influence between 'the friend' and 'receptivity' as

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[24] This application does not strictly adhere to Brooks' notion of plot, focused as it tends to be on the representation and arrangement of the story itself. Brooks looks primarily for the ways the story allegorizes the desires that transverse the plot, particularly through the representation of the protagonist's desire. This structure too will also be of central concern in what follows.

[25] Roland Barthes, *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 20.

[26] Garrett Stewart, *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 16.

circulating figures in eighteenth-century fiction. My claim is that the friend figure and figures of reception exert organizational force on one another within texts, an attention to which reframes historical understandings of developments in early novelistic techniques, including epistolary style, free indirect discourse, episodic form, unreliable narration, and autobiography. Writers draw on the contents of friendship to figure literary reception as a habit of sympathy, patience, reciprocity, and aesthetic appreciation. At the same time, these very qualities arise on the level of plot as virtues that exceed the scope of domestic and commercial interests, but, which are seen, nonetheless, as essential to the reformation of English society.

Politics of Friendship and the Novel

This dissertation seeks to address a basic question: why is friendship a useful category for shaping the act of reading in eighteenth-century British fiction? How does it help novelists to conceive of their literary projects and their publics? In each chapter, I will explore how novelists represent the cultural tensions around friendship that make it a useful term for approximating literary consumption. But first, I would like to synthesize several cultural and philosophical contexts that foreground the rhetorical appeal of ideal friendship for novelists, and help to theorize the implications of the way different novelists manage the trope. My focus here will be on the contradictory facets of idealized friendship that make it especially useful for writers dealing with corresponding tensions adhering in notions of literary exchange.

First, several developments in British society point to the elevated social importance of friendship in the middle of the century. Changes in family life have implications for the both practice of friendship and the subject matter of fiction. While it is commonly accepted that the domestic sphere takes on increasing political and economic importance, Naomi Tadmor has documented the practice of the "household family," as an alternative to the nuclear family and extended kinship networks, and noted

its implications for attitudes about friendship. Unlike the nuclear family, the household family had permeable boundaries and offered women the chance to take on greater financial authority. The notion of this more flexible household family, (elements of which one finds in the biographies of Richardson, Fielding and Scott), might provoke a greater sense of the rigidity of the nuclear family structure. As Tadmor observes, however, the house-hold family involves its own notions of obligation to domestic order and time keeping.[27] These changes in the understanding and practice of family could push writers toward an equation of family with friendship, or more clearly distill the separation of biological family and friendship.

Other pertinent historical contexts include the development of the commercial sphere, public spaces, and communication networks. The emergence of banks, credit markets, and paper currency, and the extensions of mercantilism conspire to produce a moral anxiety about self-interest. In this context, private friendships answer a cultural need by serving as an extra-familial zone of disinterested virtue.[28] Similarly, the rise of social spaces, including clubs, coffee-houses, literary salons, and distillation of codes for polite sociability offer writers a new point of contrast for reflecting on the unique intimacy of private conversation between two familiar friends. Associated with this intimacy, epistolary correspondence takes on increasing moral value, while also becoming a context for the cultivation of "audience-oriented" subjectivity.[29] The expansion of mail services and codification of epistolary norms increasingly allows for a new kind of sustained remote intimacy: a confessional form that is simultaneously a

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[27] Naomi Tadmor. *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 21-24.

[28] See Silver and V. Smith.

[29] Habermas, 49.

cultivation of a performative social self.[30] Epistolary writing raises questions about the propriety of heterosexual friendship, and creates moments of indeterminacy with respect to assumptions about writing style and gender codes.[31]

The expansion of print media in the eighteenth century also changes the practice of friendship. Among writers, the shift from patronage to literary networks transposes allegiances of taste and politics to a realm of professional ties that look more like friendship (and often were).[32] Among readers, broadsides, books, periodicals, and pamphlets not only provide more opportunities for friends to share their judgments of texts, but textual objects themselves circulate between friends as gifts or common property. A connection between sentimental friendship and the book form develops in the latter half of the century into the understudied phenomenon of friendship books. Evoking pre-mature memorialization, these books stored the concrete emblems of lived friendships, including drawings, letters, locks of hair, fabric, and copied quotations from favorite authors.[33] Collectively, these practices invite us to consider how notions of

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[30] For a discussion of this tension in general and within the private letters of several authors, see Bruce Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[31] For studies of male epistolary friendship, see George E. Haggerty. *Horace Walpole's Letters: Masculinity and Friendship in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2011); and Raymond Stephanson, "'Epicoene Friendship': Understanding Male Friendship in the Early Eighteenth Century, with Some Speculations about Pope." *The Eighteenth Century* 38, no. 2 (1997): 151-70.

[32] See Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger. *Sociable Criticism in England: 1625-1725*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007). The authors discuss the important role that a rhetoric of friendship plays in the late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century practice of submitting literary works to coterie audiences for approval or judgment before publication. This work discusses how this practice of private praise and "reproof," associated with the counsel of friendship, evolves alongside the rise of public literary reviewers in the mid-eighteenth century.

[33] While friendship books appear to evolve out of the practice of autograph books, traceable back to sixteenth-century Germany, they also reflect eighteenth-century perceptions of interpersonal relationship in the "age of sensibility," and often work to document reading experiences. For two instances of eighteenth-century friendship books, see "Libri Amicorum: Friendship and Autographs." Anne Wagner. Untitled Manuscript. *New York Public Library Digital Gallery*. Web. 29 March 2013; and "The Unique Friendship Book of Rev. James Stanier Clark (1765-1834)." James Stanier Clark. Untitled Manuscript. *Art Works Gallery*. Web. 29 March 2013. < http://www.artworksgallery.co.uk.>

friendship are reshaped, at least among more privileged segments of society, by the omnipresence of print media.

By focusing on the concept of ideal friendship in fiction rather than period bound notions of sensibility or sentimentalism, we can attend to the way the ethics of fictional form is inflected not only by the historically discrete connotations of amity but also by a broader philosophical discourse. Recent theoretical accounts of friendship trace a lineage from Aristotelian *philia* to modern political institutions arising in the eighteenth century. Jacques Derrida's *Politics of Friendship*, for instance, offers a sustained inquiry into the Western logic of friendship. In this essay, Derrida examines a chain of quotations running from Aristotle to Nietzsche, involving variations on the logic of an apostrophic exclamation attributed to Aristotle: "O my friends, there is no friend!" Derrida argues that this persistent and evolving refrain inscribes within the history of political philosophy a tacitly fraternal order of idealized friendship rooted in the mythic kinship of national ancestors.[34] In Derrida's view, political friendship is, on the one hand, grounded in a metaphor of household economics and kinship, and on the other hand, deployed as the basis for a virtual community in the political present. To exercise political friendship, one must identify a political enemy as a symbol of existential hostility. Because the enemy poses a threat to the life of individual and community, the offices of idealized friendship revolve around acts of self-sacrifice, reparation, consolation, and mourning.[35] According to Derrida, the modern development of depoliticized friendship retains traces of this double construction of political friendship, in analogy with kinship and defined in opposition to the idea of a national enemy. In light of this perception, Derrida contemplates the possibility (and impossibility) of a future democracy of friendship rescued from the strictures of its phallocentric origin. While eighteenth-century novelists

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[34] Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* (New York: Verso, 1997), 5.

[35] Ibid., 12.

do not invoke the rarified community that Derrida imagines, they nonetheless challenge the masculine and familial ideal. Derrida's lineage becomes an important consideration in examining, for instance, the way Richardson idealizes female friendship, while his heroines measure themselves against a biblical and classical male canon, including Damon and Pythias, and David and Jonathan. Just as Western philosophers construct an ongoing conversation around a shared citation, fictional characters allude to ancestors so as to bind themselves to tradition while implicating a future community of readers.

Like Derrida, Giorgio Agamben sees Aristotle's treatment of friendship in the *Nichomachean Ethics* as a foundation of politics, from the distinction of human from animal to the development of modern democratic institutions. He differs, however, in focusing on Aristotelian friendship as an ontological formulation. In Agamben's reading of Aristotle, the friend is not just an "other self' [heteros autos], but an essential otherness within the self: the consciousness of the friend lies at the heart of one's ability to sense the "sweetness" of one's existence, the basic fact that living is a good thing. All such sensation is "con-senting," or sensing together.[36] For Agamben, Aristotelian friendship is not a matter of political inter-subjectivity, but one of being, one that facilitates the transition from de-subjectivized being to political subjectivity. Before one recognizes friendship as fraternal, familial or non-familial through social experience, friendship defines one relationship to an unspecified other, or rather, an other specified only to the degree that he or she stimulates the con-senting appreciation of living. This 'sensing together" does not involve sharing any particular content, other than the fact of existence.[37] Agamben's ontological reading stands in tension with Derrida's political deconstruction; my emphasis here does not tend toward an effort at reconciliation so

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[36] Giorgio Agamben, *What is an apparatus? and Other Essays*. trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 34.

[37] Ibid., 36.

much as preparation for recognizing how literary deployments of friendship implicate these conflicting facets of the classical legacy. These strands suggest, for instance, why Sterne can speak of cultivating a friendship with the reader, structured as inter-subjectivity mediated by narrative progress, while immediately slipping into a natural address to the reader as friend: a reminder that all reading is a form of con-senting or sensing together that evokes the broadest philosophical definition of friendship. This equation of reading, living, and friendship emerges in Sterne's work and elsewhere through an exploration of biographical forms. At the same time, authors reflect not just on the recording of life, but on the reader's expenditure of life in passing time with books. Just as Catherine Morland, the heroine of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, wishes she could "spend [her] whole life" reading a gothic novel, at the same time as she must learn to better read her situation in society, novels cultivate a reversible association: reading as living, living as reading.[38] While friendship figures as a precondition in classical conceptions of good living, it also figures largely in notions of good reading—of one's books and one's world—at the heart of eighteenth-century views of good living.

Despite the connection that Derrida and Agamben draw between classical friendship and the development of modern political and social institutions, recent criticism of the mid-century novel has observed a tendency toward the de-politicization of private friendship and of fictional characters (Silver 1990, Gallagher 1994, Maurer 2009).[39] These observations identify the way that private friendships, as well as

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[38] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 39.

[39] Catherine Gallagher, for instance, observes that literary authorship in mid-eighteenth century England becomes less explicitly political, as scandal and political allegory transform into fiction about "nobodies." Thus, the general de-politicization of fictional characters makes the notion of readers "befriending" a character appear politically neutral, or at least non-partisan. Similarly, Shawn Lisa Maurer makes an inference about the literary depiction of friendship. As she contends, the "sentimental friendships" of the mid-eighteenth-century fictions repress the political and economic dimension of masculine friendship until revolutionary authors of the 1790's lay bare the class tensions inherent in this quixotic illusion of friendship. While Maurer suggests that women become ciphers in the triangulation of sentimental male relationships, the essay does not address sentimental female friendships or whether such relationships equally reflect depoliticization. In the survey of divergent attitudes toward idealized friendship that follows,

"friendships" with literary characters, promote social conservatism by defusing the revolutionary energies of class solidarity. While I acknowledge the conservative social aspect of intimate friendship, I am suggesting that current accounts overlook the way novelists implicitly sustain and enhance the political significance of amity. Writers elevate the cultural importance of friendship, relative to familial and political institutions, by depicting its role in mental intimacy, self-knowledge, education, the cultivation of taste, and social monitoring. At the same time, these novels develop an analogy between private friendship and the public, anonymous, textual exchanges of print media that yields ambivalent political implications. Beyond broader cultural trends toward empiricism, rationalism, and skepticism, for many literary writers, friendship becomes a privileged social relation for bridging epistemological and ethical norms.

The Authority of Friendship in Early Modern Discourse

Seeing the novel through this political theory of friendship offers a means of reframing the familiar story about the way eighteenth-century fiction produces what Watt calls the "individual," or what Bender and Miller call the "subject." Just as Watt begins his study by paralleling philosophical and literary realism, I turn first to the early modern philosophy of friendship that anticipates the epistemological centrality of friendship in later literary representations. The conceptual shift from overtly political to a privatized, epistemologically-geared friendship manifests when the classical political opposition between friend and enemy gives way to the alternate distinction between friend and

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I have found it difficult to make clean distinctions between male or female ideals, or homosexual and heterosexual ideals, though the social pressures of gender, sexuality, and status always informs the permutations and strategic appropriations of friendship paradigms. See Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); Shawn Lisa Maurer, "The Politics of Masculinity in the 1790s Radical Novel: Hugh Trevor, Caleb Williams, and the Romance of Sentimental Friendship" in *Enlightening Romanticism, Romancing the Enlightenment: British Novels from 1750 to 1832*. Ed. Miriam L. Wallace. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 87-110.

flatterer as an increasingly more common discursive binary from the seventeenth-century through the Enlightenment. While Petrarch develops this idea earlier, Sir Francis Bacon's essays "Of Followers and Friends," and "Of Friends" best illustrates how this friend/flatterer distinction fits into emerging paradigms of instrumental knowledge, mediation, and conceptions of the mind. The earlier essay "Of Followers and Friends" foreshadows this newer dichotomy of friend/flatterer emerging within an explicitly political approach to friendship. In this essay, Bacon not only distinguishes between follower and friends, but emphasizes that "factious" or partisan followers are least desirable because their bond depends not on affection, but on shared hostility toward another. Bacon offers his pithy conclusion: "To be governed by the one is not good, and to be distracted with many is worse, but to take advice of friends is ever honorable."[40] The formulation suggests that the advice of the friend reaches the politician not as a preferred mean between the political authority of the one or the many, but as a perspective found trustworthy because it comes conceptually from outside the interests of politicized subjectivity.

In a later extended version of this essay titled "Of Friends," Bacon moves further from the political context of friendship, while also developing the epistemological payoff of trustworthy friends. In his essay on friendship, Bacon suggests that the intimacy of friendship offers the ideal context for moral reproof and knowledge of the self, writing,

> The Light a Man receiveth, by Counsel from Another, is Drier, and Purer, than that which Commeth from his own Understanding, and Judgment; which is ever infused and drenched in his Affections and Customs. So as, there is as much difference, between the counsel that a Friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the Counsel of Friend and of a Flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as a man's self; And there is no such Remedy, against Flattery of a Man's Self, as the Liberty of a Friend.[41]

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[40] Sir Francis Bacon, "Of Followers and Friends," 1597 and 1625, in *A Harmony of the Essays*, ed. Edward Arber. (Westminster: A. Constable and Co., 1895), 5.

[41] Ibid., 175-77. Bacon prefaces this by speaking of general benefits of conversation: "whosoever hath his Minde fraught, with many Thoughts, his Wits and Understanding do clarifie and breake up, in the Communicating and discoursing with Another: He tosseth his Thoughts more easily; He marshalleth them

While the "enemy within" the home or the self in classical political framework may have took the form of a traitorous brother, or even of the individual's own treasonous private thoughts, the enemy of the friend and to the self in Bacon's writing becomes the deception of the flatterer. Against this internal and external threat of distortion and falsehood, the friend offers the drier and purer light of Enlightenment. In purifying one's self-reflection of affections" and "customs," the friend's service enacts a limited form of de-subjectification.

The movement from Bacon's early to later essay on friendship hints at a tension around affections that will only become more pronounced. As the first essay distinguishes the friend from the partisan follower who has no real affection for his patron, in the second essay it is primarily the affection one has for one's self that becomes the basis for self-deception and even for the deception of superficial friends. Although Bacon does not draw this point out, his modification of the term "affection" from an assurance to a hindrance anticipates a longer trajectory wherein the pursuit of truth by means of friendship will intensify as a primary objective, rendering even the affection of the friend an object of careful scrutiny.

From Adorno and Horkheimer's essay on modern disenchantment to recent work on cultural mediation, Bacon often figures as a godfather of Enlightenment rationality.[42] Several qualities of Bacon's treatment of friendship can be further clarified against the backdrop of his continental predecessor in the essay form, Michel de Montaigne.[43]

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more orderly; He seeth how they looke when they are turned into Words; Finally he waxeth wiser then Himelfe; And that more by an Houres discourse, then by a Dayes Meditation." For Bacon, these benefits of conversation and counsel find their ideal form in the context of a trustworthy friendship.

[42] See the first chapter of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1982). More recently, Bacon serves as the starting point for Clifford Siskin and William Warner's coauthored introduction to *This is Enlightenment*. Ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[43] Montaigne's discussion of friendship receives extensive treatment in Derrida's *Politics of Friendship*. Rather than re-treading this ground, I will only call attention to those aspects of Montaigne's approach that

Montaigne's famous essay on friendship, when placed alongside Bacon's relative modernization of friendship, appears to intensify classical notions of friendship as a public, political, explicitly male bond that exists in its purer form between two individuals.[44] For Montaigne, ideal friendship must be a bond between two citizens, and it must at the same time take precedence over citizenship: secrets between great friends take priority over secrets of state. Montaigne appropriates from Aristotle, the notion that true friends are one soul in two bodies, which produces what we might call an "anti-mediational" construction of friendship. As Derrida observes, since friends allegedly share a soul, there is no real basis for exchange, gift, or debt between them.[45] Montaigne writes,

> In this noble relationship, the services and good turns which foster those other friendships do not even merit being taken into account: that is because of the total interfusion of our wills. For just as the friendly love I feel for myself is not increased—no matter what the Stoics may say—by any help I give myself in my need, and just as I feel no gratitude for any good turn I do to myself: so too the union of such friends, being truly perfect, leads them to lose any awareness of such services, to hate and to drive out from between them all terms of division and difference, such as good turn, duty, gratitude, request, thanks and the like. Everything is genuinely common to them both: their wills, goods, wives, children, honour and lives; their *correspondence* is that of one soul in bodies twain according to that most apt definition of Aristotle's, so they can neither lend nor give anything to each other.[46]

In Montaigne's view, the friend's externality is artificial; the friend cannot offer any surety against flattery because he or she can never genuinely offer an outside perspective on one's soul. This image of friendship continues along the older classical lines of the friend/enemy distinction, where the bond of friendship is defined in opposition to

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provide the most illuminating counter-point to Bacon's writings, to further clarify the historical significance of Bacon's presentation of this subject.

[44] See Derrida, 184, for a discussion of how this contradictory construction of friendship as both inherently political and radically exclusive takes root from the classical Greek approach to *philia*.

[45] Ibid, 179.

[46] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Trans. Donald M. Frame. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965).

everything that is outside the shared selfhood of two individuals: enemies are other souls. By contrast, Bacon divides the ethical categories of friendship in a way that cuts laterally across the boundaries of self and other. For Bacon, the self can be both a friend or an enemy by way of self-flattery (and, in this respect, the self is more often an enemy, less trustworthy in its essence than the true friend. Other souls are not enemies by definition in this view, but become so insofar as they flatter and reflect false images back to the self.

Montaigne's understanding of correspondence between the souls of friends then offers a stark counter-point to the beneficial separateness one finds in Bacon.[47] For Montaigne, this correspondence results from the illusion of difference, of one soul in the form of two bodies: that is, this correspondence is actually already intra-subjective, the thoughts of a single, bounded, and eternal self. Bacon, on the other hand, makes difference and communicative mediation the very basis of credible knowledge. If, as it might be argued, Montaigne treats this ideal correspondence as an exception rather than a rule, Bacon conversely positions friendship as a more generalizable basis for self-knowledge, and implicitly, for all pursuits of knowledge. Thus, if Montaigne's picture of idealized friendship might be described as singular, indivisible, and anti-mediational, Bacon's model is both imitable and "super-mediational," which is to say 1) friendship becomes an imitable model for trustworthy communication, and 2) friendship thrives by virtue of the distance and separateness of individuals. In tracing these features of friendship into the eighteenth century, I want to emphasize not only that the qualities of separation and distance persist, but also that they become a key point of intersection for the construction of literary exchange as friendship. As a culminating expression of this developing contradiction, William Blake's notable formulation, "opposition is true

[47] It is worth noting too that Bacon does not only differ from Montaigne on this point, but also from Plato, St. Augustine, and several other writers. Montaigne offers an extreme and contemporaneous version of a widely circulating notion about ideal friendship.

friendship," plays this basic logic of friendship out to its limits in picturing the truths that arise from bridging the radical otherness of heaven and hell.[48]

In comparing Bacon with Montaigne, one need not overstate their antithetical qualities to observe two distinct, though not always mutual exclusive, locations of authority upon which friendship stakes its sovereignty: 1) the modern separateness of souls (bodies, selves) in friendship that ensures against flattery and models an ideal form of communicative mediation; 2) the canon of noble fraternal friendships defined against filial duty and cited as authoritative precedents even in modern circumstances that have broken from the fraternal or same-sex mold. While Bacon anticipates a growing emphasis in British culture on the instrumental utility of friendship as a tool of knowledge and communication, this modern aspect of friendship does not simply displace the classical fraternal model. By the eighteenth century, the classical authority of friendship finds itself reactivated in new ways by the modern reframing of friendship as a private epistemological apparatus for grounding public action and guiding social mores.

Several theological writers of the mid- to late seventeenth century begin to synthesize the political authority and modern intimacy of ideal friendship. This religious discourse cultivated the privilege of friendship as an ethical category, reinforced narrative patterns through biblical examples of amity, and above all sought to reconcile the secular connotations of ideal friendship with the spiritual obligations of Christian benevolence. One of the most wide reaching and enduring publications, Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* (1659), became a frequent reference point for eighteenth-century writers on matters of moral obligations.[49] In this text intended for the "meanest reader," Allestree

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[48] William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" in *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. Ed. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant. (New York: Norton, 1979).

[49] Fielding's *Shamela*, for instance, indicates that its heroine has the section on "Duty to one's neighbors" torn from her copy of the book. Hester Chapone and Samuel Richardson cite the book in a debate over the autonomy of young women. Edward Young refers to the novel *Clarissa* as "The Whole Duty of Woman."

describes true friendship as a bond of "great nearness and usefulness," with a threefold duty to keep secrets, attend to secular needs, and offer moral counsel.[50] A subset of this last obligation, the "highest" and most "peculiar Duty" of friendship involves reproving the faults of a friend, thereby taking responsibility for the friend's soul. Since most men, according to Allestree do not wish to hear their faults, one must have a "great prepossession" of the friend's heart to make them patiently listen to moral counsel. One who fails to offer necessary reproofs fails to act the part of the friend, and "tacitly acts that basest Part of a Flatterer."[51] Like Bacon, Allestree points out that "we have that natural Partiality to ourselves, that we cannot so readily discern our own Miscarriages, as we do other Mens; and therefore 'tis very necessary they should sometimes be shewed us by those who see them more clearly."[52] But counter balancing this private moral counsel, Allestree's only cited example of friendship comes in an allusion to the story of David and Jonathan, offered as an instance of earthly assistance in friendship. In this noble pairing, Allestree calls attention to how Jonathan runs risks to his own safety to secure that of his friend, and "draws his Father's anger upon him, to turn it from David."[53] Because political and familial authority unite in the figure of Saul, Jonathan's loyal friendship for David appears to surpass his obligation to both father and king. While Allestree ultimately ranks the private counsel of friendship above heroic actions, the Biblical citation locates an authoritative precedent for a political supremacy of friendship that underwrites its epistemological utility.

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[50] Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man: laid down in a plain and familiar way for the use of all, but especially the meanest reader*. (London: John Baskett, 1724), 308.

[51] Ibid, 309.

[52] Ibid, 310.

[53] Ibid, 308-309.

Jeremy Taylor's *The Measures and Offices of Friendship* (1662) illustrates how a Christian framework could shape the epistemological refinement of friendship, while still shoring up its authority as a secular and quasi-political tie between two persons.[54] His work grapples primarily with a contradiction that will continue to trouble eighteenth-century moralists: the tension between universal benevolence and one's singular love of the friend. When we contract particular friendships, Taylor writes, we "inclose the commons; and what Nature intended should be every mans, we make proper to two or three."[55] As he continues:

> Friendship is like rivers and the strand of seas, and the ayre, common to all the world; but Tyrants, and evill Customs, Warres, and want of Love have made them proper and peculiar. But when Christianity came to renew our nature, and to restore our lawes, and to increase her priviledges, and to make her aptness to become Religion, then it was declared that our Friendships were to be as universal as our conversation; that is, actual to all with whom we converse, and potentially extended unto those with whom we did not.[56]

Christianity unleashes friendship from all social constraints, though it remains constrained by our physical limitations: all those whom we interact with. Taylor argues that nature imposes its own limits: "Universal friendship must be limited because we are so."[57] But the notion of textual conversation raises uncertainty about such limits. A writer, it would seem, should always approach the act of addressing a public as an extension of this free flowing friendship. The very possibility of publication extends the realm of friendship beyond bodily limitations. The voice of the text speaks on a threshold, between the potentiality and actuality of our conversation.

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[54] Taylor's work is the most extensive English language discussion of friendship by a popular writer for at least a century. Taylor's essay records and responds to a query posed by his friend Katherine Phillips regarding whether perfect and intimate friendship was compatible with Christianity.

[55] Jeremy Taylor, *The Measures and Offices of Friendship*. 1662. Reprint. (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Fascimiles & Reprints, 1984), 11.

[56] Ibid, 12.

[57] Ibid, 19.

Taylor's essay illustrates how literary tastes and narrative genres shape understandings of friendship. At one point, he disparages those Platonic friendships perpetuated by French romances such as *Le Grand Cyrus*. In his view, these friendships are "like tinsel dressing, which will shew bravely by candle light, and do excellent in a mask, but are not fit for conversation, and the material entercourses of our life. These are the prettinesses of prosperity , and good-natured wit [. . .] a thing that pleases the fancy, but is good for nothing else [. . .]."[58] Approaching true friendship thus requires a more 'realist' mindset, attentive to probability and privileging substance over ornament. Taylor admits, "I will love a worthy friend that can delight me as well as profit me, rather than him who cannot delight me at all, and profit me *no more*." Echoing the Horatian dichotomy of *dulce* and *utile* (like many novel prefaces in the coming century), Taylor offers a vivid poetic analogy of his own: "I will not weigh the gayest flowers, or the wings of butterflies against wheat; but when I am to choose wheat, I may take that which looks the brightest." [59] For Taylor, beauty retains a circumscribed place in true friendships.

Taylor also highlights the growing association of friendship with radical intimacy and ethical interiority. In treating the friend as a substitute priest or minister, his work is suggestive of friendship's broader role in Anglican spiritual mediations. Suggesting that the friend's perspective allows one to know oneself better and to order the mind, he writes, "Friendship is [. . .] the clarity of our minds, the emission of our thoughts, the exercise and improvement of what we meditate."[60] Just as Bacon claims that the friend functions as "a kind of Civil Shrift of confession," Taylor claims that the friend functions as a spiritual intermediary, nearly like a Priest, writing, "my friend is a worthy person,

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[58] Ibid, 44.

[59] Ibid, 45.

[60] Ibid, 29.

when he can become to me instead of God, a guide or a support, an eye, or a hand; a staffe or a rule [. . .]."[61] Taylor constructs friendship as both a metaphor and a metonymy for religious mediation between layman and clergy. In the opening of his essay, he writes, "to consult with a friend in matters of friendship is like consulting with a Spiritual person in Religion."[62] Friendship becomes an inherently self-referential bond of ethical and theological reflection.

Domesticity and Distanced Affections

Eighteenth-century secular philosophers largely break with this view of friendship. While seventeenth-century religious writers, including Allestree, Taylor, John Norris of Bemerton, and Mary Astell, discuss friendship as a space of intellectual inquiry and spiritual growth, influential British philosophers from John Locke to Adam Smith and David Hume tend to marginalize friendship's ethical and epistemological value. Locke never theorizes friendship directly, though his remarks indicate that he viewed the relationship as helpful but inadequate in the pursuit of truth. As Richard Yeo observes, Locke cares more about the practical utility of conversation in general, giving equal emphasis to knowledge gained through interactions with friends, enemies, and strangers.[63] In his study, *The Friend*, Alan Bray sees Locke as a champion of universal sociability, codes of politeness, and civil society over the intimacy of particularized friendship.[64] Just as Locke displaces friendship from the realm of epistemological

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[61] Bacon, 167. Taylor, 31.

[62] Taylor, 6.

[63] Richard Yeo. "John Locke on Conversation with Friends and Strangers." *Parergon* 26.2 (2009): 16.

[64] Alan Bray. *The Friend*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 212-213. Bray takes Jeremy Taylor as the voice of the older world, and Locke as the "cogent voice of the confident new world replacing it," marking a transitional moment which threatens to replace Christianized friendship with Locke's notion of civil society.

questioning, Smith similarly displaces friendship from the realm of moral feeling. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith defines and praises a rare form of noble friendship, but nevertheless detaches it from the notions of sympathetic imagination and impartial spectatorship that are central to his moral theory. When it comes to the emotional self-regulation necessary for sympathetic correspondence, Smith remarks that "the presence of an acquaintance will really compose us, still more than that of a friend; and that of an assembly of strangers still more than that of an acquaintance."[65] For Smith, social harmony derives from a collective tranquility of mind, which is, in turn, promoted by the everyday practice of limited sympathy with strangers.

In their historical explorations of the novel, Gallagher and McKeon indirectly point to the marginal position of friendship in mid-century theories of sympathy. Gallagher, for example, draws from David Hume's philosophy to theorize why it is that readers can occupy the plight of the fictional character more easily than they can sympathize with strangers. She notes that, in Hume's view, sympathy can arise from resemblances or the stronger principle of cause and effect, rooted in kinship and property relations. Gallagher reasons that the minds of fictional characters, which can, in a sense, "belong to us," and which lack the embodied properties of non-familial strangers, more readily engage our sympathy.[66] This understanding of sympathy depends on a tacit analogy between, on the one hand, the way readers own and occupy the fictional mind and, on the other hand, the emotional tie between people bound by property and blood in the family household.

In a similar vein, McKeon fixes on the buried domestic trope in Smith's description of the impartial spectator, who brings the pitiable case of the other "home to himself." For McKeon, Smith's model instances the way that a trope of domesticity

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[65] Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments. (30 in Penguin –fix edition) get Cambridge edition

[66] Gallagher, 169.

mediates the public other and the private self to produce the "virtual reality of 'society.'"[67] Smith's theory of sympathy offers one instance of McKeon's broad contention that, by the mid-eighteenth century, "the sociopolitical utility of the familial . . . is confirmed by the epistemological utility of the familiar."[68] Both McKeon and Gallagher identify the "home" "property" and "kinship" as shaping tropes in eighteenth-century moral philosophy, which form the basis of sympathetic community extendable to fictional characters and anonymous citizens alike.

While I do not contest the utility of these approaches to philosophical theories or even their application to literary texts, I question whether the trope of familialism fully accounts for the connection between sociopolitical and epistemological authority in mid-century novels. Concerns about rhetoric, language, and communication in modern philosophy highlight the marginalization of a counter-discourse that arises more forcefully in works of fiction. In *This is Enlightenment,* John Guillory argues that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century witnessed a paradigm shift from an interest in the topic of persuasion to a more pragmatic interest in communication. Situating the Locke's epistemology of mind and language theory within a longer historical transition, Guillory details how the new focus on communication raised anxieties about the material basis of transmission and potential for interference. He condenses the logic of this anxiety as follows:

> Communication by signs (words) compensate for the absolute (because unmeasurable) distance between one mind and another. That distance, which is not exactly physical, is nonetheless conflated in the history of communication theory with the physical distance between bodies in space. Every communication can be seen as a telecommunication, and conversely long distance communication as a figure for the inherent difficulty of communication.[69]

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[67] McKeon, 377.

[68] McKeon, 327.

[69] John Guillory, "Enlightening Mediation" in *This is Enlightenment*. Ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 46.

At this stage in development of communication theory, Guillory contends, the physical distance between bodies becomes a pervasive analogy for the non-physical challenges inherit in communicating ideas from one mind to another (let alone changing another's opinions). This reasoning produces ambivalent implications. While the analogy concedes, in its vehicle, that telecommunication involves additional difficulties, it seeks to associate the connotations of difficulty produced by physical distance with the distances involved in all acts of communication, retaining the original negative connotation of telecommunication while implicitly admitting that all communicative acts involve difficulties equivalent to those raised by distanced communication. Hence, telecommunication is at once symbolic of burden, and set on an even playing field. This ambiguity opens the door for a re-appraisal of telecommunication. In Richardson's view of epistolary friendship, for instance, we find an inversion of this Lockean anxiety. For Richardson, epistolary conversation becomes a metaphor, not for the difficulties, but for the possibility of intimacy in all modes of communication.[70] In Chapter 1, I examine Richardson's *Clarissa* to suggest how epistolary friendship, as telecommunication, reinforces the liberty, judgment, and reliability of amiable counsel, accentuating the super-mediational model of friendship held by Bacon and subsequent theologians.

Anticipating Richardson's theory of epistolary friendship, one genre of didactic writing takes the notion of super-mediational advantage to its logical limit: the friend who offers counsel from beyond the grave. Works such as Tom Brown's *Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1702) and Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death in Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1728) both deployed ghostly epistles in conjunction with the moral advice and intimacy of friendship. Rowe's work was especially popular, going through fourteen editions between 1733 and 1816, one of which Richardson himself had

[70] See Derrida, 228, for a similar discussion of distance as a figuration of meaning in language.

printed in 1740.[71] Most importantly, her work highlights in its title this nexus of friendship, death, and epistolary form.[72] The general language of distanced friendship and the affinity of souls between author and reader parallels the specific development of ghostly epistolary correspondence as a form of friendship in Rowe's *Friendship in Death*. In these letters, the omniscient souls of the dead address their living friends and relatives, offering a range of counsel from impassioned rebuke to mild consolation. In the most extended critical treatment of Rowe's book, John Richetti argues that, while the text may lack literary merit, it plays a role in shaping the "ideological matrix" that informs works by later writings including Richardson's. Richetti suggests that Rowe deploys romance conventions throughout her letters to promote religious principles, illustrating to her readers that "the afterlife is best imagined as a glorified and intensified version of the joys of lovers."[73] While this characterization is not wholly inaccurate, it slights the role of friendship as organizing principle, foregrounded in the work's title. Rather than seeing Rowe's romance patterns as that which links her work most directly to novelists, I would suggest instead that her anticipation of Richardson and other novelists resides in her association of friendship, death, and epistolary writing. In its guiding framework, Rowe's *Friendship in Death* follows in the early modern tradition that links true friendship with

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[71] See Josephine Greider's introduction to Rowe's *Friendship in Death* (New York: Garland, 1972), 5.

[72] Even this general commitment to moral fiction (among writers such as Rowe) could appear as a bond linking a community of writers and readers to a rhetorical paradigm of textually mediated friendship. Such are the terms that the editor of Penelope Aubin's collected *Histories and Novels* (1739) comments on Aubin's affinity with Rowe: "The Life of Charlotta du Pont she [Aubin] dedicates to the celebrated Mrs. Rowe, with whom she had an intimacy, as we there see, and may farther reasonably infer from the Tenor of both their Writings, for the promotion of the Cause of Religion and Virtue, and from that Affinity and Kindred of Souls, which will always make the Worthy find out one another, and create Stronger ties of Union and Friendship than those of Blood." Quoted in John Richetti's *Popular Fiction Before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 240. Not only does friendship partake in a stronger tie than blood, but it also can be read and inferred *there*, as the editor observes, not in the dedication alone but in the marked affinity within their writings. It is a friendship that links the authors, but more implicitly encompasses the editor and the wider readership in recognizing and sharing in this affinity among their writings, just as Rowe and Aubin were readers of one another's work.

[73] Ibid, 259.

the virtue of distanced judgment, mental intimacy, and honesty over flattery. But in placing the voice of the friend not just at a distance, but beyond the grave, her work extends the ideal of separation and distance to the most radical limits imaginable.[74] While the aesthetic of "formal realism" in mid-century novels excludes such explicitly super-natural communications, the proto-gothic aura of Rowe's epistolary didacticism adheres in several of the texts I examine.

In Richardson and Rowe's work, we glimpse a model of remote intimacy that contradicts the efforts of several authors to integrate the virtues of friendship and domesticity: contrary to the idealization of physical distance between non-familial friends, one frequently comes across the notion that matrimony is either founded upon or aspires to ideal friendship. A chief proponent of such a view is none other than Richardson himself. Colonel Morden, a character in *Clarissa*, best expresses this tension in his eulogizing remarks on his deceased cousin Clarissa Harlowe and her living friend Anna Howe:

> Marriage, which is the highest state of friendship, generally absorbs the most vehement friendships of female to female; and that whether the wedlock be happy or not.
>
> What female mind is capable of two fervent friendships at the same time?
>
> This I mention as a *general observation*: but the friendship that subsisted between these two ladies afford a remarkable exception to it. [. . .] Both generous. High in fortune; therefore above that dependence each on the other, that frequently destroys the familiarity which is the cement of friendship. [. . .] making it an indispensable condition of their friendship each to tell the other of her failings; and to be thankful for the freedom taken. [. . .] Impossible that there could be a friendship better calculated for duration"[75]

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[74] Despite the doubly mediated distance of the epistolary and the grave, Rowe's friendly spirits see all and know everything past and present about the inner workings of their addressees' minds. As a result, their epistemological and moral authority become indistinguishable. Since these spirits know everything about life and the afterlife, they have an unimpeachable moral position for offering advice under sign of friendship. Rowe grapples with the plausibility of ghostly epistles, as her spirits must frequently account for why they choose to communicate via letters rather than simply appearing in ghostly form before their friends. Generally, these spirits cite divine regulations. Such excuses direct the reader's attention away from the advantages of letters that Rowe implicitly underscores by making it her medium of choice for didactic fiction.

[75] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady,* ed. Angus Ross (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 1449-1450.

Morden positions this female friendship, paradoxically, as a moral example to others and a rare violation of the general rule. He suggests that spouses strive to imitate this independent, non-romantic model of friendship, at the same time as he relegates that model to a lower status. In a private letter, Richardson comments directly on this subject with equal ambiguity:

> Those will be found to be the most noble friendships which either flame between persons of the same sex; or where the dross of the passion is thrown out, and the ore purified by the union of minds in matrimony. And I am of opinion that love is but the harbinger to such a friendship; and that friendship therefore is the perfection of love, and superior to love; it is love purified, exalted, proved by experience and a consent of minds. Love, Madam, may, and love does, often stop short of friendship.[76]

Here, the rites of matrimony enact a purification that sets heterosexual love on par with noble same-sex friendships. But this equation requires that one ignore the ennobling qualities of friendship that Richardson's novel underscores, including financial independence, equivalent authority, and separate residence. The intimacies and duties of marriage stand opposed to the qualities that define remote friendship.[77]

Even in cases where writers privilege the intimacy of matrimony, they theorize an image of reformed marital relations by appealing to an independent notion of ideal friendship. Samuel Johnson's essays from *The Rambler*, for instance, attempts to borrow the tacit moral and epistemological priority of friendship in order to characterize marriage as the "strictest tie of perpetual friendship" (*Rambler* 18). In much of his writings on

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[76] *Selected Letters*, 193. The letter is addressed to Hester Muslo, 30 Sept. 1751.

[77] This tension indicates the broader dialectic development wherein the category of friendship, which has become increasingly characterized as a purified union of minds in separating itself from the passionate model of friendship expressed by Montaigne, finds itself at this juncture reincorporated paradoxically into the sexual economy as the epitome of marital relationships. One could argue that the very ideology behind companionate marriage partly arises through the suppression of this structuring contradiction. But it is a contradiction often bound up with a failure among writers to distinguish between marriage as an ideal and as an institution. While Morden states that marriage is the highest bond of friendship, "whether the wedlock be happy or not," Richardson would appear to concede to the reality that many marriages, though they may be loving ones, stop short of friendship.

marriage, Johnson satirizes relationships that fail due to a fundamental incompatibility (frequently stemming from the man's blindness toward the woman's superficiality or eccentricity). In such representations, he implicitly concedes that marriage, in actuality, is only ever rarely a constant bond of friendship. His evaluation of failed relationships emphasizes pieces of advice commonly involved in the choice of a true friend: knowing well the mind of the other person, choosing a noble and constant character, being wary of flattery. In the rare portrait of marital happiness between Hymenaeus and Tranquilla, Johnson foregrounds several features of friendship that contribute to the match. The pair are equals in birth, fortune, experience, and intellect. From a distant prospect, their characters have a fundamental affinity, while "a nearer inspection discovers such a dissimilitude . . and afford that *concordia discors*, that suitable disagreement which is always necessary to intellectual harmony" (*Rambler* 167). In absorbing the virtues of a remote intellectualized friendship of virtue, mental intimacy and transparency takes center stage in this portrait: "we converse without reserve because we have nothing to conceal [. . .] we considered marriage as the most solemn league of perpetual friendship, a state from which artifice and concealment are to be banished for ever, and in which every act of dissimulation is a breach of faith." Johnson's remarks on marriage reflect the way that an independent understanding of friendship becomes absorbed by the domestic ideology that preoccupies eighteenth-century cultural studies. Yet, as I will argue, this model of marital friendship does not effectively offer the same allegorical purchase for constructing attitudes about the mediations of novel authorship and literary audiences as one finds in the rhetoric around non-familial and non-marital friendship modeled on classic patterns of noble same-sex friendship. Instead, images of romantic friendships serve as integral counterpoints that refine the qualities of platonic friendship tied to literary exchange.

Amiable Tutors and Didactic Fictions

In framing literary exchange in terms of friendship, novelists draw on the educational utility of friendship in a range of pedagogical discourses. Several major eighteenth-century educational programs seek to disseminate models of ideal friendship. One early instance of this approach appears in Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694). While Locke makes good breeding the crucial category of his educational treatise for producing this orderly civil society, Astell, as his contemporary, instead extols friendship as the pedagogical cornerstone of her controversial treatise on women's education. The essay proposes that England establish religious communities for ladies of quality to prepare themselves for life in a corrupt world.[78] For Astell, private friendships guard the mind against the influence of vanity and custom, and hence play a requisite part in her educational agenda.[79] This view of friendship stems from the pedagogical apparatus of the retreat. Just as instructors will be "watching over their [students'] souls with tenderness and prudence," students are encouraged to form close friendships and "to observe the minutest fault" in their peers, attending not just to outward behaviors, but interpreting these behaviors as mediations of mental states.[80] The individual pursuit of

[78] While the proposal often appeared to call for an institution that would answer the absence of abbeys and monasteries in Protestant England, Astell did not propose a permanent abode for women seeking an alternative to marriage or a refuge for ruined women, but rather, a religious preparatory school that would offer women a space for education and intellectual empowerment unavailable to them through existing institutions. She placed friendship at the center of an educational program that would promote a greater role for women in intellectual life (short of explicit political activity) and have a salutary moral reverberation outward from the domestic sphere. Astell believed that most women should ultimately contribute to society as wives, exerting a socially beneficial influence on their husbands and children, but she doubted whether sustaining female friendships could form properly under average conditions; rather, in her view, the formation of these special bonds required a temporary retreat from the infectious atmosphere of social life.

[79] As E. Derek Taylor points out, Astell sees Locke's philosophy as materialist, rigid in its view of environmental conditioning, and consequently, fatalistic about social change, particularly the condition of women in society. As an alternative, spiritual friendship arises in Astell's medicalized rhetoric as an antidote to the diseased souls that populate the modern world. See his introduction to *Mary Astell and John Norris: Letters Concerning the Love of God*. Ed. E. Derek Taylor and Melvyn New (Hertfordshire: Ashgate, 2005).

[80] Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I & II*. Ed. Patricia Springborg (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1997), 28, 37.

mental discipline, introspection, and self-monitoring aligns in Astell's program with the obligation to monitor the progress and correct the failings of one's peers. In this respect, Astell disperses authority among students by means of friendship ties.

A Serious Proposal exemplifies how pedagogical theory functions to bridge the gap between rare and common friendships. Astell tacitly accepts Montaigne's sense that true friendship is a once-in-three-centuries bond, but this does not deter her from trying to experiment with the odds. She constructs the utopian retreat so as to systematically cultivate idealized friendships.[81] The essay perceives the rarity of true friendships in the modern world dialectically. As Astell writes, "Probably one considerable cause of the degeneracy of the present Age, is the little true Friendship that is to be found in it; or perhaps you will rather say, that this is the effect of our corruption. The cause and effect are indeed reciprocal; for were the World better, there wou'd be more Friendship, and were there more Friendship we shou'd have a better world."[82] The retreat becomes a kind of hospital, a controlled sanitary space for developing friendships as an immunity against the unsavory air of the outside world. Its graduates transmit the cure to all those they come into contact with, and most immediately, to the family they will go on to form. The more genuine friendships Astell's society can inject into the body of the wider world, the more that world will gradually come to resemble the petri-dish of a community that cultivates these salutary friendships.[83]

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[81] Astell describes this universal yet rare friendship as "the richest Treasure! A Blessing that Monarchs may envy, and she who enjoys is happier that she who fills a Throne! A Blessing, which next to the love of GOD is the choicest Jewel in our Caelestial Diadem, which, were it duly practic'd, wou'd both fit us for heav'n and bring it down into our hearts whilst we tarry here" (36).

[82] Ibid, 36.

[83] As Astell sees that instructors prudently dispense "fitting medicines" to their pupils, so too the seekers of friends must use judgment in their choice of a friend. Friendship is "a Medicine of Life, (as the wise man speaks) yet the danger is great, lease being deceived we suck in Poyson where we expected Health. And considering how apt we are to disguise our selves, how hard it is to know our own hearts much less anothers, it is not advisable to be too hasty in contracting so important a Relation." Paradoxically, to choose a friend properly, it would seem one already needs to have one. To judge of the potential friend with optimal prudence, one needs to already possess the beneficial reflective monitoring of the friend. If Astell

By dispersing authority in private friendships, Astell anticipates trends in eighteenth-century educational programs as well as instructional genres of print. Richard Barney observes that Astell was not alone in advocating for this brand of pedagogical friendship particularly among female pupils. Alongside Astell, François Fénelon and John Essex, both invoked a model of friendship as a regulating affection that would lead women toward virtue.[84] The invented scenarios of Rowe's letters in *Friendship in Death* and Richardson's epistolary style guidebook, *Letters written to and for particular Friends, on the most important Occasions* frame acts of remote pedagogy in terms of amity. Lord Chesterfield's letters to his illegitimate son Phillip Stanhope displays the desire of paternalistic instructors to adopt an amiable persona. Published by Chesterfield's daughter-in-law to offer the public a "fine system of education," the letters enforce the importance of friendship, as Chesterfield finds different ways of making the point to his son, that "you are whatever company you keep."[85] This advice applies no less to the virtual company Chesterfield offers his son:

> Do not think that I mean to dictate as a Parent; I only mean to advise as a friend, and an indulgent one too: and do not apprehend that I mean to check your pleasures, of which on the contrary, I only desire to be the guide, not the censor. [. . .] I do not, therefore, so much as hint to you, how absolutely

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does not solve this conceptual problem, she does offer the retreat as a context for lessening the effect of self-deception. The space of the retreat mitigates the threat of external and internal poisonings as well as the motives for disguise by removing women from the interests and vanities of the world that promote illusory friendships.

[84] Richard Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 188-189. Barney observes that this notion of decentralized supervision that spread through a politics of gender solidarity seems to have directly influenced literary texts like Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall* (a notion I elaborate on in Chapter 3).

[85] The letter of October 9, 1747, reprinted in *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*. Ed. David Roberts. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56. This letter deals primarily with topic of friendship, cautioning the son to be wary of "simulated friendships," remember that "real friendship is a slow grower," and to always distinguish between companions and friends. At the same time, however, Chesterfield advises his son to maintain the appearance of amiability with nearly everyone, while trusting in almost nobody. While the distinction between friends and flatters remains crucial for Chesterfield, his advocacy for the outward performance of amiability combined with generalized suspicion is a view that departs from the standards of transparency and trust often associated with true friendship in this period.

> dependent you are upon me, that you neither have, nor can have a shilling in the world but from me; and that, as I have no womanish weakness for your person, your merit must and will be the only measure of my kindness.[86]

Like many pedagogical programs of the day, Chesterfield recognizes that overbearing paternal authority can blunt the pupil's autonomy, the very thing a wise teacher seeks to cultivate. He appeals to the counseling authority of the friend over that of the father, recognizing that friendship has a greater persuasive purchase. But he appears unable to fully commit to this artifice, quickly reminding his son of his total dependence on him. Figuring his power as commercial rather than paternal, this "friendship" dissolves into a marketplace of capital and merit: the better a "friend" the son can become in return, the more credit he can count on from his father. Chesterfield later advises his son in traveling abroad that he will be closely observed by a network of his father's friends, "Arguses with an hundred eyes each," that create a perpetual surveillance.[87] Complementary to his monitoring network, Chesterfield pleads the terms of epistolary friendship to make his son disclose potentially incriminating details:

> Your letters, except when upon a given subject, are exceedingly laconic, and neither answer my desires nor the purpose of letter; which should be familiar conversations, between absent friends. As I desire to live with you upon the footing of an intimate friend, and not of a parent, I could wish that your letters gave me more particular accounts of yourself, and of your lesser transactions. When you write to me, suppose yourself conversing freely with me, by the fireside.[88]

Since biographical accounts suggest that the relationship between father and son existed more in letters than in close quarters, it is not surprising to find Chesterfield invoke the language of friendship so frequently, as a category closely tied to both the pedagogical discourse of the day as well as to the epistolary medium. The instruction to "suppose yourself conversing freely" suggests that this friendship, on both the father and son's

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[86] Letter of October 4, 1746. Ibid, 41.

[87] Letter of October 9, 1747. Ibid, 57.

[88] Letter of September 27, 1748. Ibid, 98.

part, required a considerably straining performance; this virtual friendship appears as illusory as the imagined domestic fireside which the two never shared.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's novelistic education treatise, *Emile*, raises parallel tensions with more philosophical nuance. As a work, alternately read as blue-print or prototype for the bildungsroman, *Emile* expresses the intersection of pedagogical friendship with the ethos of a fictional narrator. Rousseau lays out an educational program that breaks down the calibration of pedagogical authority according to discrete developmental stages. In the fourth stage, around the fifteenth year of the pupil's life, Rousseau advocates that the tutor gradually adopt the position of an equal and ultimately of a friend. As he writes, "make them your equals in order that they may become your equals; and if they cannot yet raise themselves up to you, descend to their level without shame, without scruple. Remember that your honor is no longer in you but in your pupil."[89] Contrary to Richardson, Rousseau does not view friendship as a crowning tie that surpasses love, but, rather, as a foundational relationship for becoming an adult.[90] At the most pivotal juncture in the education process, when the pupil first becomes capable of mature sentiments, the tutor becomes suddenly reconfigured as the pupil's first real friend:

> he [the pupil] sees a slave's attachment no longer but a friend's affection. Nothing has so much weight in the human heart as the voice of a clearly recognized friendship, for we know that it never speaks to us for anything other than our interest. One can believe that a friend makes a mistake but not that he would want to deceive us. Sometime one resists his advice, but one never despises it.[91]

Rousseau returns to this transformation in a later passage, offering a considerably more paradoxical description:

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[89] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*. Trans. Allan Bloom. (Basic Books, 1979), 246.

[90] Ibid, 220.

[91] Ibid, 234.

> He [the pupil] is now sufficiently prepared to be docile. He recognizes the voice of friendship, and he knows how to obey reason. It is true that I leave him the appearance of independence, but he was never better subjected to me; for now he is subjected because he wants to be. As long as I was unable to make myself master of his will, I remained master of his person; I was never a step away from him. Now I sometimes leave him to himself, because I govern him always.[92]

The delicacy of cultivating an elective government, so fundamental to Rousseau's political theories, becomes in this educational scenario a matter of transitioning from the authority of pupil-hood to the voluntary self-subjugation of friendship. Yet, in Rousseau's model, this subjugation never becomes reciprocal. The tutor in fact retains the liberty of deceiving his ward, as he has does from the earliest phases of this pedagogical program. The major task of the fifth phase, marriage, still requires that the tutor continue his deceptive stratagems by staging an entirely fictive scenario that guides the pupil to the right choice of a wife and cement the bonds of love.[93] In this respect, Rousseau's pedagogy formulates a problem parallel to one English novelists confront: balancing the rhetoric of amiable intimacy against a basic requirement that the narrator withhold secrets from the reader to tell a story. Like a narrator, the tutor Jean-Jacques willingly exposes his contrivances to his pupil once they have had their desired effect. As novelists seek to coordinated the depicted education of the hero with the implicit education of the reader, they encounter similar tensions around the necessity of narrative artifice, the figuration of reading as friendship, and the portrayal of idealized friendship's radical openness.

This dissertation focuses on four novelists who distinctly cultivate an ethos of textual amity, but whose efforts to do so raise questions about the ethics of fiction. Their appeal to the rhetoric of friendship mirrors both the utility and contradictions one finds in

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[92] Ibid, 332.

[93] Rousseau articulates the ambiguity inherent in this delicate brand of tutoring turned friendship: "He is still your disciple, but he is no longer your pupil. He is your friend, he is a man. From now on, treat him as such." Ibid, 316. In a related argument, Janet Todd discusses Rousseau's *Julie; or the New Heloise* as illustration of manipulative friendship. While Todd focuses primarily on the non-pedagogical friendship between the women of the novel, the relationship between M. de Wolmar and St. Preux closely echoes features of the deceptive pedagogical strategy detailed in *Emile*.

the efforts of writers like Astell, Chesterfield, and Rousseau to synthesize ideals of Western friendship with a modern system of education. Just as the pedagogical theories turn to friendship in addressing the limitations of naked authority, novelists use an amiable ethos to address the limited commercial viability of a hectoring didactic voice. A casual friendly persona represents an alternative to harsh institutional authority (a parent, tutor, or political leader). But the more precise notion of ideal friendship maintains a pedagogical orientation and excludes slavish flattery. Hence, the range of amiable rhetorics offers writers a middle course between the outmoded preaching of moral conduct books and a morally questionable subservience to consumer desires. Friendship tropes reinforce the ethical obligation of reading, while also underscoring the reader's autonomy.

Transparent Minds, Print Media, and the Public as Friend

Representations of friendship engage in an evolving eighteenth-century debate over what distinguishes print from private conversation. This debate involves philosophical contemplations of language and materiality, as well as varying perceptions about changes in the print marketplace. At the beginning of the century, the notion that codes of private friendship might serve as inspiration for public conversation appears inherently contradictory. In one of the *Spectator's* remarkable statements about friendship, for instance, Addison contrasts the private communications of friends with that of larger groups:

> as conversation gets into clubs and knots of friends, it descends into particulars, and grows more free and communicative: but the most open, instructive, and unreserved discourse, is that which passes between two persons who are familiar and intimate friends. On these occasions, a man gives a loose to every passion and every thought that is uppermost, discovers his most retired opinions of persons and things, tries the beauty and strength

> of his sentiments, and exposes his whole soul to the examination of his friend.[94]

Addison's emphasis on transparency of mind, particularity of details, and willful subjection to judgment anticipates the principal qualities associated with friendship by Richardson, Chesterfield, and Rousseau. But he also underscores how these virtues are possible only in private, and this has striking implication for a definition of public discourse. Addison would seem to imply that the guarded speech of public conversation is structured either by a basic distrust of the group's collective and individual judgments, or by the individual's fear of the practical consequences that honest speaking will have on his social identity.

To figure the public as a space of friendship, then, is to directly oppose the notion of public conversation as a space of universal skepticism or worldly prudence. In proceeding, I do want to observe the risk of taking for granted this recurring idealization of amiable intimacy as the "mind" or "soul" lying naked and uncensored before the listener. Indeed, the following chapters will particularly attend to how fictions provoke reflection on the often contradictory logic of such transparency. Virtuous friendship encourages one to both confess passions and imitate a paradigm. The desire to apply amiable intimacy to the notion of public exchange only compounds this tension. Rousseau nicely captures this paradoxical quality in his novel *Julie: or the New Heloise*, as M. de Wolmar's contracts a tutoring friendship with St. Preux to keep the latter from encroaching on his wife Julie: "Our friendship is beginning, its dear link is here, may it be indissoluble. Embrace your sister and friend; treat her always as such; the more familiarly you act with her, the better I will think of you. But behave always with her as if I were present, or in front of me as if I were not."[95] Putting aside (as much as possible)

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[94] *Spectator* No. 68.

[95] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*. trans. Phillip Stewart and Jean Vaché. (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 349.

the complex triangulation of romantic desire in this novel, the ethic of friendship positions the concepts of private and public as opposing mirrors of one another, neither one offering a clear code of conduct. One suspects that, for Wolmar, such a code of virtue is unnecessary: St. Preux is being asked to regulate all conduct according to an intuitive feeling of shame. Wolmar rephrases the deal without regard to his particular surveillance, advising St. Preux to neither "do nor say anything that thou dost not wish everyone to see or hear." Such a notion effectively dissolves external distinctions of public and private conversation by prompting the subject to internalize the division so as to equally censor one's speech to friends, lovers, strangers, and enemies. Diametrically opposed to Addison's model, Wolmar's system almost seems to leave friendship behind altogether. Yet, we must recognize that the code of radical transparency in private friendship is what propels his extreme formulation of public conversation.

While Addison distinguishes the intimacy of two minds conversing from the self-fashioning of public identities, eighteenth-century authors continually associate print exchanges with the sincerity of private conversation. Samuel Johnson's remarks on authorship, for instance, extend the norms of private conversation to public print media, while expressing some ambivalence about the consequences. Because the sincere author does not mean to flatter his audience, according to Johnson, his readers may expectedly resist the freedoms he takes with his representation of the culture and their complicity in it. The author who means to reflect the culture of the day as it truly appears will have particular difficulty with his contemporary readers. As he states, "He that writes the history of his own times, if he adheres steadily to truth, will write that which his own times will not easily endure" (*Rambler* 65). The suggestion that the comprehending reader lies at a remote distance, in a future moment when the force and relevance of authorial critique has been blunted by time, positions textual friendship as a community of dead authors and living readers. The obstacles that frame the uncertain futurity of this community in Johnson's account generally parallel the cultural and linguistic obstacles

that defer notions of textual friendship in Jacques Derrida's survey of political philosophy.[96]

But one finds a quite different Samuel Johnson in James Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. In a discussion of authorship recorded by Boswell, Johnson passionately defends the integrity of his contemporary readers as financial sponsors of honest communications against Boswell's nostalgia for the waning age of literary patronage:

> Boswell: It is a shame that authors are not now better patronized.
> Johnson: No, Sir. If learning cannot support a man, if he must sit with his hands across till somebody feeds him, it is as to him a bad thing, and it is better as it is. With patronage, what flattery! What falsehood!
> Boswell: But is it not the case now, that instead of flattering one person, we flatter the age?
> Johnson: No, Sir! The World always lets a man tell what he thinks, his own way.[97]

The dissonance in Johnson's two attitudes reflects, on one hand, the force of a powerful cultural abstraction, "the World," an image of the public sphere at its best, and, on the other hand, the possibility of flattering one's living readers, which he acknowledges elsewhere, but refuses to concede in this exchange.[98] The reading public alternately appears in Johnson's writings as a overly-sensitive antagonist to truth-telling and a disinterested collaborator in the circulation of free expressions. His oscillation suggests a conflicting perception of the print marketplace that appears in works of fiction. On one hand, the rhetoric of friendship assumes a generally benevolent reading public. On the

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[96] To be sure, Derrida reframes these resistances and scrutinizes the writer's own sense of possessing truth. Johnson nevertheless anticipates this sense of deferring community in the pursuit of truth.

[97] From James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791) quoted in Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World: the Untold Story of the British Enlightenment* (New York: Norton, 2000), 84-85.

[98] Porter suggests that Johnson's position is likely inflected by his recent personal experiences with patronage, particularly his unsuccessful solicitation of assistance from Lord Chesterfield. As a jilted Johnson later wrote in a letter to Chesterfield, "Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a Man struggling for Life in the water and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help?" But even still, this personal experience leads Johnson to generalize about the historical transformation of literary marketplace away from patronage in optimistic ways, though he could elsewhere retain his skepticism toward all readers as figures of universal human vanity.

other hand, this rhetoric serves at times to effectively distinguish between an author's "friends" and "enemies."

Indicating the persistent evolution of this trope, Germaine de Staël's *Considerations on the Principle Events of the French Revolution* (1818) perceives a singular moral restraint among the English, and attributes this quality to an imaginary community of friends. She offers a reciprocal idealization of writers and readers, while emphasizing the distinctly English character of this free exchange:

> The freedom of the newspapers, which some persons would represent to us as contrary to delicacy of morals, is one of the most efficacious causes of that delicacy: everything in England is so well known, and so discussed, that truth in all matters is unavoidable; and one might submit to the judgment of the English public as to that of a friend, who should enter into the details of your life, into the shades of your character, to weigh every action, in the spirit of equity, agreeably to the situation of each individual.[99]

In this reflection on news media, Staël crystallizes all the paradoxical formulations of the prior century: friendship as private and public, delicate and open, subjugating and liberating, sympathizing and judging. While I am not suggesting that Stael's argument represents a normative view of the English public sphere, I would contend that such a complex articulation of the public sphere in terms of private friendship would not have been imaginable a century prior.

Setting the *Spectator* alongside Stael's comment offers only a cursory approximation of the progress of ideas around friendship and its relation to print exchanges. This dissertation does not propose to account for the cultural forces that drive this development, nor does it suggest that the novelists I will discuss play a principal role in making Staël's fraught logic thinkable. More precisely, I mean to foreground the interventions of mid-century novelists in the history of this discursive exchange between

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[99] Germaine de Staël, *Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution*. Ed. Aurelian Craiutu (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), 450. *The Online Library of Liberty*. Web. March 29, 2013. *PDF* file.

notions of private friendship and notions of anonymous publics. My purpose is not to specify their degree of influence, but, rather, to reframe the development of specific fictional techniques in light of their engagement with this cultural trope. Given the amount of reflection that mid-century authors give to the category of ideal friendship, this reframing addresses a critical aspect of the early novel's history that gets occluded or handled reductively by aforementioned studies, which theorize the genre through the lenses of domesticity, individualism, and disciplinary regimes.

In the first chapter, I examine Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) in light of the author's private remarks on epistolary friendship, which link the quantitative scope of writing to the qualitative interest of the reading friend. In the first section, I connect this association with the epistolary mode and plot of *Clarissa*, in which a distinction is drawn out between true amicable affection and the unreliable sympathies of one's kin. I argue that the privileging of non-familial, epistolary friendship becomes a means of reconciling several contradictions, involving presence and absence, public and private, familiarity and anonymity, and masculinity and femininity. In the second section, I discuss how Richardson draws on the tragic connotations attached to classical idealizations of friendship in light of Derrida's commentary. I show how the novel develops a motif that links this tragic dimension of classical friendship to the epistolary medium, thereby foreshadowing the trajectory of Clarissa and Anna's friendship from embodied, to epistolary, to one of mourning that hopes for reunion in the afterlife. Building on the response of Diderot discussed in this introduction, I examine other notable reactions to the novel that fix on the thematic of friendship, including that of Sarah Fielding, Sarah Chapone, and Lady Bradshaigh, to suggest how this tragic plot of friendship engages notions of authorial power and reader desire. I conclude that Anna Howe's mourning prompts several readers to describe their relationship with Clarissa in terms of friendship, a formulation that leads to both positive and negative evaluations of the novel.

Chapter two deals with Sarah Fielding's *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) and *David Simple, Volume the Last* (1753) as evidence of her evolving attitude about friendships and the literary public. Although the *Adventures* precedes *Clarissa*, I take up both of Fielding's novel here after my discussion of Richardson, so as to underscore how her perception of *Clarissa* and its reception shapes her own technique. I argue that the *Adventures* develops an economic model of friendship played out against a critique of moralities rooted in patrimony, kinship, and markets. This plot of idealized friendship manifests in the novel's experiments with third person narration, as the union of minds between characters is set in relation to the narrator's access to fictional minds. In the sequel, I suggest that Fielding follows Richardson in turning a scene of mourning into a vehicle for audience identification, but she goes further by openly hinging the authority of her third person narrator on the precarious question of whether readers can transcend their emotional absorption in the death of fictional "friends" and their related desire to see characters resurrected for further adventures.

My third chapter discusses how Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall* (1762) poses a fundamental tension between the gender binaries expressed by idealizations of friendship and the desire to frame utopian communities in terms of friendship. I connect the novel's representation of an isolated society of female friends with the author's ironic self-consciousness regarding female authorship. For Scott, the backstories of friendship between the Hall's residents reflect the primary affective terms out of which grows the universalizing impulse of the utopian endeavor. But the ability of this exclusively female project to reform society at large is presented in tacit parallel to the challenge of forging a literary public of writers and readers that likewise could transcend the stereotypes of gendered authorship as well as the social taboos that surround heterosexual friendship.

In my final chapter, I address how Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) pursues a narratorial ethos rooted in a distinction between the liberties and intimacies of friendship and the regulations of sociability. I suggest that Sterne develops

this distinction by appealing to the authority of literary predecessors, drawing on "old friends," including Cervantes' Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and Shakespeare's Yorick, to highlight particular qualities that reinforce the intimacy and jibes Tristram engages in with his readers. By distinguishing intimate friendship from sociability, Sterne develops a justification for the eccentricity of his style, thereby using codes of amity (amiable tolerance and love for the friend's peculiarity) to frame the emerging aesthetic value of originality.

CHAPTER I

FRIENDSHIP IN DEATH: REMOTE SYMPATHY AND LITERARY AFFINITY IN SAMUEL RICHARDSON'S *CLARISSA*

Among many professions of sentimental friendship in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748-1749), one instance marks a critical narrative juncture. Just as Clarissa Harlowe's fraught choice between a libertine suitor and a loveless marriage arranged by her family reaches a crisis, her constant friend, Anna Howe, proposes to obtain a carriage, whisk Clarissa away from Harlowe place and help her to negotiate terms with the Harlowe family from a safe distance. Discounting Clarissa's reservations about propriety, Anna writes, "Who is it, that has a soul, who would not be affected by such an instance of female friendship?"[100] Pressing her offer, Anna reminds Clarissa that a refusal of such kindness would reflect on their friendship. Echoing back Clarissa's rational philosophy, Anna writes, "if, by a *less* inconvenience to ourselves, we could relieve our friend from a *greater*, the refusal of such a favour makes the refuser unworthy of the name of friend" (355). While the form of Anna's remark—a citation of Clarissa's own rule—appeals to Clarissa's fidelity to self, the content raises the issue of friendship's public recognition, in its emphasis on worthiness and the application of "friend" as name. The reflexivity of Anna's rhetoric conveys her recurrent self-consciousness about shaping her friend's story and betrays her fantasy of being read by a wider audience. Anticipating a crucial turning point in the narrative, the letter foregrounds the entanglement of public attitudes about friendship, character motivations, and the unfolding of a novelistic plot.

However such an "instance of female friendship" might actually affect the eighteenth-century reader, it would undermine Richardson's avowed moral purpose: "to

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[100] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady,* ed. Angus Ross (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 354. References are to this edition.

caution parents against the undue exertion of their natural authority over their children, in the great article of marriage: and children against preferring a man of pleasure to a man of probity, upon that dangerous, but too commonly received notion, *that a reformed rake makes the best husband*" (36). To draw out the punishment he levies on both Clarissa and her family, Richardson must keep Clarissa's eager friend Anna at a distance until after Clarissa's death. But a formal consideration also applies: Richardson needs these corresponding friends to remain apart. Preserving the essential mechanism of narration, this epistolary exchange, requires that Clarissa not accept Anna's offer of cohabiting residence. To be sure, Clarissa's rejection of this proposal is apiece with Richardson's general characterization of his heroine.[101] She persistently avoids any financial or material entanglement with Anna, because this feeds her desire to see their friendship above all "sordid alloys." But there is nevertheless a useful reciprocity for Richardson between this idealization of friendship, arising from Clarissa's character, and his didactic predetermination of Clarissa's demise.

In this chapter, I explore how Richardson's desire to write a tragic novel leads him to idealize epistolary friendship as an ethical category that frames literary response, while, at the same time, articulating its contradictory qualities. I begin by examining tensions in Richardson's formulation of epistolary writing, expressed in personal letters written as he was composing *Clarissa*. I then turn to the way *Clarissa* draws on these same tensions to elevate the obligations and intimacy of same-sex friendship. First, I contend that the distance of epistolary friendship is positioned as a moral virtue that elevates it above familial duties, even in spite of Richardson's avowed intentions. Second, by comparing the female friendship between Clarissa Harlowe and Anna Howe

[101] James Phelan would describe this juncture as a conflict between the "synthetic" level (the author's rhetorical structure) and the "mimetic" level (the depicted motivations among characters, including the designs of the narrator on the narratee). See James Phelan, *Living to Tell about It: a Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 20.

with the male correspondence between John Belford and Robert Lovelace, I show how Richardson further refines the moral authority of this friendship in terms of its audience-orient subjectivity. Lastly, I return to the narrative necessity of Clarissa's demise as a contradictory expression of distanced friendship. I see Anna and Clarissa's remarks on friendship throughout the novel as effectively synthesizing the implicitly tragic qualities of idealized classical friendship with the spiritual aura of telecommunication. This rhetorical motif anticipates the pathos of Anna's mourning friendship, an aspect of the novel that figures largely in recorded reader reactions. I contend that Richardson's private remarks, his novel, and various responses to it collectively suggest how a rhetoric of friendship mediates between perceptions of novel form and reader affect.

Contexts for Plotting Friendship: Family Romances

Michael McKeon and William Warner identify the 1740s as the decade in which the novel genre appears definitively as a contestable cultural institution. Despite methodological divergences, both critics identify the relationship between Richardson's *Pamela* and the Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* as evidence of the genre's emergence into cultural prominence. *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* both exhibit discernable formal ties to the body of fiction distinguished contentiously as romance, which each author seeks to define his work against. Warner, for instance, describes *Pamela* as an aesthetic "masquerade" that uses the sort of titillation associated with fictions by "disreputable" female authors (Behn, Haywood, and Manley) to lure the reader into the author's didactic trap. While *Joseph Andrews* differentiates itself by its satirical tone, McKeon observes that it nevertheless structures its plot around a romance equation of birth and worth. In both novels, narrative closure depends on the formation or acclimation of lovers to domestic union.

In discussing *Clarissa* (1748) and Sarah Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple* (1744), the first two chapters of this dissertation engage with critical perceptions

regarding this decade of the novel genre's emergence. By examining the rhetoric of non-familial friendship that develops in popular works of fiction, I am calling attention to a generic tension that emerges within the novel in its negotiation of romance forms tied to courtship and kinship. While Richardson's first novel, *Pamela*, filters the narrative primarily through an epistolary exchange between a servant and her parents, and ends with the constitution of a new family, *Clarissa* shifts the scene to a set of extra-familial correspondences between peers of each sex, and ends with the deaths of its principal characters.[102]

As Russell West argues, eighteenth-century novelists work to negotiate the problems of remoteness and anonymity that increasingly characterized literary exchanges by making direct appeals to the reader in terms of familiarity.[103] In light of the gravitational pull domesticity exerts as a master-trope in other novels of the period, it is especially significant that Richardson not only shifts away from the familial frame of *Pamela*, but also foregrounds his rejection of the familial recognition plot device in *Clarissa*.[104] Cast off by her natural family, Clarissa laments to her nurse and tutor Mrs. Norton, "Surely you are mine own Mother [. . .] O that I had indeed been your own child, born to partake of your humble fortunes, an heiress only to the content in which you are so happy [. . .] nothing of what has happened would have been" (986). Her wish echoes the romance convention of hidden birthright that has proliferated in early fictions.[105]

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[102] In *Richardson's "Clarissa" and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Tom Keymer discusses these symmetries and other formal patterns in the novel (46).

[103] Russell West, "To the Unknown Reader: Constructing Absent Readership in the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Fielding, Sterne, and Richardson," *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 26, no. 2 (2001): 105.

[104] On the formal implications of domestication in eighteenth-century romances and novels, see Michael McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 394, 639. McKeon takes Richardson's *Pamela* as the primary example of formal domestication in the novel.

[105] See Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 45. Todd reads this passage as a "treasonable fantasy" that symptomizes the tension between patriarchy and female friendship. I would add that this fantasy echoes and reconfigures romance narrative conventions, foregrounding the relationship of novel form to the social ideologies of family and friendship.

While, typically, the comic form of romance disclosure reconciles the protagonist's visible merit with their invisible, natural right to social position, Clarissa, by contrast, would dispossess herself of social status to preserve her virtue. In generic terms, Clarissa's birthright fantasy undermines the romance reconciliation of birth and worth, valorizing Mrs. Norton's worth without birth, as a potential sanctuary of female virtue. By turning this recognition convention on its head, Richardson foregrounds the role of narrative conventions in his heroine's self-consciousness, and, yet, stakes his claim to verisimilitude against the comic novel's reliance on a totalizing recognition moment to achieve closure. If familial recognition underpins the comic novel, then Richardson's tragic realism in *Clarissa* indicates a reluctance to organize plot around family formation (through courtship or hidden kinship). This displacement of kinship as an element of romance plot has consequences for the moral sensibility such plots implicitly locate in family affections. As a consequence, in *Clarissa*, the depiction and explication of affective friendship, as an alternative to family, becomes an urgent matter of form.

The Modern Elevation of Epistolary Friendship

Recent criticism of *Clarissa* has taken up the didactic editorial persona that Richardson creates to steer his readers toward right reading practices, but it is worth thinking further about the way Richardson conceives of epistolary friendship as a medium to explore the overarching didactic designs of his fiction. As John Carroll argues in an introduction to Richardson's private letters, friendship and epistolary correspondence are inseparable ideas for the author.[106] Richardson comments on the subject in a letter to Sarah Wescomb, writing,

> I make no scruple to aver, that a correspondence by letters, written on occasions of necessary absence, and which leaves a higher joy still in hope,

[106] Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*. Ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 31.

> which presence takes away, gives the most desirable opportunities of displaying the force of friendship, that can be wished for by a friendly heart. This correspondence is, indeed, the cement of friendship: it is friendship avowed under hand and seal: friendship upon bond, as I may say: more pure, yet more ardent, and less broken in upon, than personal conversation can be even amongst the most pure, because of the deliberation it allows, from the very preparation to, and action of writing.[107]

Richardson's private remarks reflect the complexity of his approach to this intersection between friendship and the epistolary. Initially Richardson seems as if he will position letters written on "occasions of necessary absence" as a substitute for conversation. If one must be absent, then letters will do. But by the end of the first sentence, he has subtly shifted this position, making absence not a loss but an opportunity. As he continues, this opportunity becomes itself the necessity for the truest expressions of friendships, because the time for deliberation in writing allows for a purer communication than that of immediate conversation. And, yet, epistolary friendship also thrives on the "higher joy still in hope," which paradoxically evokes the returning bodily presence of the friend. There is a suspension of disbelief at work for the epistolary writer that can enjoy the imaginative pleasure of contemplating a presence yet to come, all the while admitting that this presence, once made present, will pale in comparison to the pleasures of absence and deferral. Richardson expresses a structuring contradiction of epistolary friendship: the temporality of epistolary discourse that allows extended space for deliberation depends on keeping the friend's body at a distance, while at the same time, the writer delights in both the memory and future expectation of the friend's actual presence.

In Richardson's view, this epistolary dynamic of communicative intimacy, mediated by temporal and spatial distance, positions the true friend as the ideal correspondent, thereby measuring all correspondence on the scales of friendship. Conversely, the material determinants of letter writing are the precondition for all epistolary communication to become friendship in its purest possible form. Richardson

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[107] Ibid., 65.

formulate this idea in a question he puts to Sarah Wescomb: "Who then shall decline the converse of the pen? The pen that makes distance, presence; and brings back to sweet remembrance all the delights of presence; which makes even presence but body, while absence becomes the soul." Anticipating Wordsworth's praise for "emotions recollected in tranquility," Richardson associates the epistolary form with the delights of past experience re-mediated to mind through the pen's intervention. When managed properly, this remediation draws closer the souls of correspondents, creating an implicit friendship.

While the motor of conflict that drives *Clarissa* depends on sexual, familial, and politico-economic ambition, the formal structure that discloses the plot has the opposite qualities of a non-familial, non-sexual, non-politico-economic relationship between two sets of friends on relatively equal social footing.[108] While the suspense of the story depends on violating proximities, narrative transmission makes a virtue of distance. The dialectic emergence of friendship into the rhetoric of authorship results from the conflict that Richardson establishes between the absent friend and the present family, a conflict that becomes both dramatic content and a principle of narrative focalization in Clarissa and Anna's correspondence. In each case, the reader must attend to the performance of friendship, abstracting and tracking its implicit codes, while reflecting on the explicit discussion of friendship, Richardson's central trope in the construction of novel authorship and readership.

Despite Richardson's strident support of filial duty in the novel's preface and in his private letters, *Clarissa* draws out the moral privilege and epistemic value of same-sex friendship conducted in letters, by staging its antagonism with a dysfunctional domestic sphere. Critics have taken various positions on Clarissa and Anna's relationship. Lois Bueler recognizes Clarissa as a paragon of non-familial friendship in

[108] Todd, 47, 67.

light of Aristotle's virtue ethics.[109] In contrast, Naomi Tadmor suggests that the novel reinforces an eighteenth-century view of family-based friendships as the only reliable support for young women in crisis.[110] A similar line of criticism scrutinizes imperfections in the women's friendship. Victor J. Lams finds a self-aggrandizement in Anna's praise of and mourning for Clarissa that jars with Richardson's didactic agenda.[111] Others claim that the novel privileges traditional patriarchal values over transgressive female solidarity. Ellen Gardiner argues that Richardson undercuts the judgments of both women to legitimate Belford as an editorial figure that allegorizes Richardson's authorial identity.[112] In Janet Todd's view, Richardson takes an ambivalent stance by admiring the sentimental qualities of women's friendship while depicting its social inefficacy.[113] My approach here concedes that Clarissa and Anna's friendship necessarily falls short of the standard of perfection they outline together, and, also, that many aspects of the novel reinforce patriarchal authority. Nevertheless, as I will discuss, the narrative gradually separates the claims of friendship from those of family, positioning the former bond as a prime context for intimacy and judgment.

In her study of the novel, Hina Nazar examines key passages in which Clarissa and Anna reflect on friendship as a space of judgment and self-knowledge. At one point, Nazar theorizes that reader dissatisfaction with the novel's conclusion stems from the tacit dissonance between the worldly values attached to the women's friendship and the

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[109] Lois E. Bueler, *Clarissa's Plots*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 120.

[110] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 268.

[111] Victor J. Lams, *Clarissa's Narrators*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 144.

[112] Ellen Gardiner, *Regulating Readers: Gender and Literary Criticism in the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 45.

[113] Todd, 65.

ending's emphasis on otherworldly rewards.[114] My approach in the following analysis shares Nazar's premises, though I take issue with the equation of represented friendship with worldliness as such. As I will argue in the second part of this essay, the tragic ideal of friendship invoked by a pattern of allusions conceptually bridges between qualities of distanced epistolary exchange and the otherworldly register of the novel's ending.

At the novel's outset, a rhetoric of amity frames our interest through Anna's concern as a "dearest friend" for the "disturbances that have happened in [Clarissa's] family" set in contrast to the "public talk" that distorts Clarissa's character and exaggerates the scandal (39). As the novel progresses, Richardson stages the entanglement of friendship as a framework of narrative focalization, with family strife as dramatic content. In one such instance, Clarissa narrates a desperate appeal to her father, offering descriptive details to help Anna visualize the scene, but breaking off with provoking ambiguity:

> Let me beseech you, my dear and ever-honoured papa (and I dropt down on my knees) that I may have only your's and my mamma's will, and not my brother's, to obey. ---I was going on; but he was pleased to withdraw, leaving me on the floor; saying, That he would not hear me thus by subtilty and cunning aiming to distinguish away my duty; repeating, that he would be obey'd.
>
> My heart is too full;---so full, that it may endanger my duty, were I to unburden it to you on this occasion: So I will lay down my pen. ---But can--- Yet, positively, I will lay down my pen!---. (65)

Although Clarissa finishes her thought in the final sentence of this letter, the suggestive stops and starts of the two preceding dashes lends the final dash the weight of a withheld secret. Each dash marks the pressure inscribed by her conflicting allegiances to friend and family, indicating the fragile prospect that the ties of friendship can hold open a space for narrative disclosure. This tension resides between the emphatic resolution of the exclamation point and the final dash's suggestion of Clarissa's continued, though unwritten, train of thought.

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[114] Hina Nazar, "Judging Clarissa's Heart," *ELH* 79.1 (2012): 96.

In contrast to Richardson's valorization of an undisturbed mediation of minds in his letters, the passage stages how a mindfulness of filial duties can interrupt communication. Beyond threatening the transmission of narrative facts, the dashes in Clarissa's letter convey her self-censorship of private judgments and feelings. She cannot give Anna the requested access to the "inmost recesses" (174) of her heart and preserve her familial obligations. Yet, as readers we are equally interested in the "inmost recesses" of Clarissa's heart (or, more technically, we are interested in what omissions these dashes signify.) In this respect, this passage formally employs our curiosity on the side of friendship at the same time as it represents a potential breakdown of intimacy between friends.

More than putting pressure on the lines of narration, this crisis scene implies that what will mark Anna as a true friend, under these increasingly tense circumstances, is that she in fact should *not* need total transparency. It is her ability to fill in these gaps that legitimates her virtue and authenticity as a friend, a notion that suggests an alignment between Anna's implied performance of friendship—her response to Clarissa's broken writing—and the reader's interpretive task in decoding the same passages. Even when Clarissa clings to filial duty over friendship early in the novel, the legibility of the narrative requires that we read the blanks in her account from the perspective of her friendly addressee, bridging the gap between what can be written and what *has* been communicated. The frequent alignment of the novel reader's perspective with Anna's, as an intimate addressee who nevertheless must read between the lines, lays the phenomenological groundwork for the cultivation of an underlying analogy between indirect authorial didacticism, in the context of epistolary fiction, and the representation of epistolary friendship. In extending the codes of this friendship to an ideal of textual exchange, the novel may seem to suggest by analogy that we as readers should not require the author to make his didactic intentions too transparent, because it is a mark of

our readership *as* friendship to recognize the author's intent without it being made fully explicit.

To be sure, Anna does not always read Clarissa's situation correctly or offer consistent moral advice. But Richardson describes her crucial mediating function in a letter to Aaron Hill, in discussing the delicate point of Clarissa's desire for Lovelace: "As to Clarissa's being in downright Love, I must acknowledge, that I rather would chose to have it imputed to her [. . .] by her penetrating Friend, (and then a Reader will be ready enough to believe it, the more ready for her not owning it, or being blind to it herself) than to think *her self* that she is"[115] Ostensibly, in epistolary fiction, to show the reader that Clarissa thinks herself in love, she must write it down. Or must she? Richardson occludes his own crucial but subtle parenthetical distinction—between not "owning" it and being "blind" to it. It is as if to say, whether Clarissa actively hides it or is blind to it herself, the friend knows—or, rather, for readers, a friend's imputation trumps these psychological subtleties.

Jürgen Habermas notably identifies Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) as a central example of the "audience oriented subjectivity" that epistolary fiction models as the literary precursor to the public sphere.[116] In these terms, *Clarissa* refines the implied audience identity for this literary subjectivity—that is, an audience identity that becomes inseparable from the codes of friendship traversing the text. More than a refinement, though, Richardson's novel punctures the myth of a humanizing domestic space that Habermas considers as the private basis of public sphere ideology. If Anna's knowledge of her friend's heart depends on the distanced mediation of the epistolary, then this virtual intimacy stands at odds with the representation of threatening domestic proximities in the Harlowe household.

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[115] To Aaron Hill, October 29, 1746, printed in *Selected Letters*, 72.

[116] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

Early in the novel, Anna's rhetoric draws out the separation of friendship from family through a figurative language of proximities. Calling Clarissa a "prodigy" among her family, and attributing their harsh treatment to jealousy, she remarks, "The distance between you and them is immense. Their eyes ache to look up at you [. . .] Can you wonder then, that they should embrace the first opportunity that offered to endeavor to bring you down to their level" (129). In contrast to the oxymoronic 'remote intimacy' of epistolary friendship, this figurative distance between Clarissa and her family emerges through the physical proximities and embodied coercions that the Harlowes employ, controlling and invading Clarissa's spaces, and setting the pattern, as critics have noted, for Lovelace's treatment of the heroine.[117]

In contrast to this logic, Anna voices the requirements of epistolary friendships, writing to Clarissa, "Nothing less than the knowledge of the inmost recesses of your heart can satisfy my love and friendship" (174). While still dependent on the domestic tropes of architectural spaces, Anna lays out an increasing antagonism between the literal home (the vehicle) and the architecture of the heart (the tenor). While the virtues of friendship require the nearest figurative proximity of mind and heart, epistolary friendship thrives by virtue of distance. Anna's rhetoric devalues notions of the family, home, physical proximities, and forms of privacy, and raises up notions of virtual proximities, intellectual equality, and minds open to public scrutiny, paving the way for the gradual figuring of these values in a model of friendship that complements associations surrounding remote literary exchange.

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[117] Such proximities transgress the traditional regulation of distances negotiated by the implied decorum of domestic architecture. For a discussion of this analogy between architectural and epistolary spaces, see Karen Lipsedge, "Representations of the Domestic Parlour in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, 1747-8" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 17 no. 3 (2005): 391; Christina Marsden Gillis, *The Paradox of Privacy: Epistolary Form in "Clarissa"* (Gainesville: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1984). On the implications of this analogy for third-person narration, see Michael McKeon's *Secret History of Domesticity*: *Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006).

While, early in the novel, Clarissa remains more reluctant to elevate friendship above familial duty, she reinforces the distinction in terms of epistolary style. For Clarissa, Anna's epistolary friendship combines a supremacy of judgment arising from physical distance with disinterested sympathy. As she writes to Anna, "I doubt not your sympathizing love: but yet you cannot possibly feel indignity and persecution so very sensibly as the immediate sufferer feels them: [you] are fitter therefore to advise me, than I am myself" (231). The weight carried by this detached advice depends on a foundational sympathy that is taken for granted. Richardson foregrounds the difference between the sympathy of Anna and that of Clarissa's sister, Arabella. In two juxtaposed reflections on Clarissa's flight from Harlowe place and her uncomfortable residence with Lovelace, Arabella concludes her vitriolic letter with personal scorn, writing, "Everybody, in short, is ashamed of you: But none more than Arabella Harlowe." In what is surely one of the novel's most dramatic shifts in tone, the next letter from Anna begins with the consoling imperatives: "Be comforted; be not dejected; do not despond, my dearest and best beloved friend" (510). This passage would seem to set up Clarissa's later remark on Anna's uncharacteristically sharp tone, after Lovelace has sown confusion and jealousy by intercepting and manipulating their letters: "For surely, thought I, this is my sister Arabella's style" (995-996). A temporary consequence of Lovelace's artifice, this tension is soon resolved, reaffirming the novel's location of sympathy and understanding in epistolary friendship.

Clarissa and Anna's association of sympathetic critique with friendship takes on generic connotations. Distinguishing Anna's teasing style from the personal attacks of her siblings, Clarissa identifies friendship with the tone of satire:

> *Permitted* or *desired* satire may be apt, in a generous satirist, mending as it raillies, to turn too soon into panegyric. Yours is intended to instruct; and tho' it bites, it pleases at the same time: No fear of a wound's rankling or festering by so delicate a point, as you carry; not invenom'd by *personality,* not intending to expose, or ridicule, or exasperate. ---The most admired of our moderns know nothing of this art: Why? Because it must be founded in good-nature, and directed by a right heart (280).

This mode of satirical critique avoids flattery and personalized judgment without sacrificing honesty. It differs from the tyrannical authority that Clarissa's father and brother exercise, as well as from the prejudiced personal attacks waged by her sister. Appropriating this depersonalized mode of critique, Richardson echoes Henry Fielding's distinction between novelistic satire and the libel of scandal fiction in *Joseph Andrews* (1742): "the former privately corrects faults for the benefit of the person, like a parent; the latter publicly exposes the person himself, as an example to others, like an executioner."[118] While private epistolary friendships and public fictions are two distinct contexts, Clarissa's comment suggests that both draw from the same underlying moral logic of satire. But as the passage also indicates, the counseling function that Fielding compares to that of a parent has been transposed to the domain of friendship as a consequence of Richardson's plot.

The Feminization of Classical Friendship

Clarissa and Anna draw on gendered codes of ideal friendship to socially elevate their relationship. On the one hand, Richardson further refines the women's friendship as a space of truth and virtue by setting it alongside men's correspondence, which represents the superficiality of modern male friendships. On the other hand, Clarissa and Anna establish the authority of their moral tie in citing the precedent of biblical and classical male friendships. Consequently *Clarissa* engages two aspects of the phallocentric fraternal model of friendship, divided along the line of ancient and modern. The novel sets the virtues of ancient and modern friendship in conflict, while synthesizing tragic subtexts of ancient friendships with qualities of the epistolary medium. The secular and religious aspects of these heroic male friendships inflect the epistolary friendship with

[118] Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*. Ed. Martin C. Battestin. (Middleton [CT]: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 189.

disparate trajectories: the *telos* of surviving friend becomes located, contradictorily, in the management of the dead's earthly legacy and in the apotheosis of friendship in the afterlife.

By distinguishing the women's friendship from the male correspondence, Richardson seeks to reconcile a sense of radical intimacy with consciousness of a wider reading public. The notion of a judging public eye appears early in the definition of friendly counsel. As Clarissa tries to navigate the murky moral territory created by Lovelace's secret courtship and her parent's request that she marry Solmes, she appeals to Anna for an objective judgment:

> I would so conduct myself as not to give reason even for an *adversary* to censure me; and how shall so weak and so young a creature avoid the censure of such, if my *friend* will not hold a looking-glass before me to let me see my imperfections?
>
> Judge me then, my dear, as any indifferent person (knowing what *you* know of me) would do. (73)

Although Clarissa praises Anna's sympathetic friendship, she casts her self-report *as if* she were setting her story before hostile or indifferent eyes. In one respect, this standard of universal acceptability anticipates Anna's rhetoric, when she later seeks to persuade Clarissa to abscond with her, asking, "Who is it, that has a soul, who would not be affected by such an instance of female friendship?" Richardson's heroines recurrently express a sense of acting and writing always in the eye of a wider audience. Yet, so much hinges on Clarissa's parenthetical qualification: "knowing what *you* know of me." If Clarissa asks Anna to apply a worldly moral standard, she nevertheless founds this impartial judgment in the friend's surpassing knowledge of one's life and character. This relationship anticipates Adam Smith's theories of impartial judgment and sympathizing spectatorship, in which one "must . . endeavor, as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer."[119] The epistolary friend, benefiting from the

[119] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2009), 28.

code of copious writing, must endeavor toward impartiality, but also possesses a rich fund of information for inhabiting the other's situation. Hence, the friend's response reconciles the most extreme limits of public neutrality and private insight.

This audience-oriented subjectivity becomes literalized after Lovelace rapes Clarissa. Anna encourages her friend to publicize her story, and Clarissa alternates between collaboration and resistance. At the height of her suicidal distress, Clarissa asks Anna to guard her story, writing, "Let me slide quietly into my grave; and let it not be remembered, except by one friendly tear, and no more, dropped from your gentle eye, my own dear Anna Howe, on the happy day that shall shut up all my sorrows, that there was such a creature as / Clarissa Harlowe" (1013). At such times, Clarissa imagines the rites of mourning and memory as the exclusive domain of the private friend. Yet, Clarissa still imagines a public beyond her correspondent. Prompted by Anna to recount her experience of the rape, Clarissa writes, "I will, if life and spirits be lent me, give you an ample account of all that has befallen me . . . and as I shall write with a view to that, I hope no other voucher will be wanted for the veracity of the writer" (1018). In the third edition, Richardson adds to Clarissa's final thought the notable extension: "be who will the Reader."[120] Clarissa soon embraces the notion of publicizing her story, and actively participates in the collation of letters. The amendment demonstrates that Clarissa's equation of the friend with a public readership persists even after her rape. The gesture underscores that, for Richardson, epistolary friendship, at its best, suggests a space of incipient authorial self-consciousness.

Richardson's revision embellishes this critical motif at a stage in the narrative when Belford becomes increasingly uncomfortable with the tacit confidence Lovelace places in him. The men's relationship all along lacks a reciprocal commitment to the

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[120] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa. Or, the History of a Young Lady*. Third edition. Vol. 6 of 8 (London, 1751. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. University of Iowa. 5 Apr. 2013), 187.

moral counsel. As Belford grows increasingly concerned for Clarissa, he advises Lovelace in spirit of "true friendship" to abandon his designs. But his appeal to the code of counseling friendship falls on deaf ears, largely because Belford has been an inconsistent counselor, alternately concerned and entertained by his friend's plots. As he remarks:

> I am far from hating intrigue upon principle. But to have awkward fellows plot, and commit their plots to paper, destitute of the seasonings, of the *acumen,* which is thy talent, how extremely shocking must their letters be! --- But do thou, Lovelace, whether thou art, or art not, determined upon thy measures, with regard to the fine lady in thy power, enliven my heavy heart by thy communications; and thou wilt oblige / Thy melancholy friend, /J. Belford. (608)

Their friendship conforms to Shawn Lisa Maurer's description of depoliticized sentimental friendship among men in the mid-eighteenth century, founded on an exchange of mental pleasure, rather than on a shared commitment to ethical or political values.[121] After Clarissa's rape, Richardson emphasizes how this form of entertainment depends on a shameful secrecy. When Belford agrees to share Lovelace's letters, Lovelace grows exasperated that his friend would violate their zone of privacy, reminding him these letters were "written under the Seal of Friendship" (1183) and "in the confidence of friendship" (1184). Belford's moral transformation is secured by the shame he experiences in attempting to read Lovelace's letter to Clarissa:

> I read to her such parts of your Letters as I *could* read to her; and I thought it was a good test to distinguish the froth and whipped-syllabub in them from the cream, in what one could and could not read to a woman of so fine a mind; since four parts out of six of thy Letters, which I thought entertaining as I read them to myself, appeared to me, when I would have read them to her, most abominable stuff, and gave me a very contemptible idea of thy talents, and of my own judgment. (1297)

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[121] Shawn Lisa Maurer, "The Politics of Masculinity in the 1790s Radical Novel: Hugh Trevor, Caleb Williams, and the Romance of Sentimental Friendship" in *Enlightening Romanticism, Romancing the Enlightenment: British Novels from 1750 to 1832*. Ed. Miriam L. Wallace. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 87-110. While Maurer suggests that women become ciphers in the triangulation of sentimental male relationships, her essay does not address sentimental female friendships or whether such relationships equally reflect depoliticization.

What might strike the reader as odd is the fact that Belford still finds any "cream" (two parts out of six) in his friends writing. Nonetheless, Richardson highlights how the privacy of their correspondence cuts both ways, reflecting equally on Lovelace and Belford as sharers in this unspeakable entertainment. More than the women's correspondence, this dynamic foregrounds the paradox of Richardson's idealized epistolary expression, as that which discloses one's most secret thoughts and that which is fit for public consumption. It is as though Richardson is suggesting that Lovelace and Belford will remain unfit for friendship until it has become the second nature of their inner most cogitations, always and only, to think that which is acceptable to a mixed-sex public.

Belford compares the women's friendship with his relationship with Lovelace, and he concludes that naturalized ideas about gender difference have lent a dubious legitimacy to their conduct. After observing Clarissa's and Anna's concern for one another, he writes: "tell me, thou vile Lovelace, if thou hast not a notion, [. .] that there must be a more exalted pleasure in intellectual friendship, than ever thou couldst taste in the grosser fumes of sensuality? And whether it may not be possible for thee, in time, to give that preference to the *infinitely* preferable, which I hope, now, that I shall always give?" (1132). While Belford contrasts the women's "intellectual friendship" with Lovelace's licentiousness, Lovelace locates the inadequacy of their relationship in Belford's passivity, arguing that, if he were a true friend, he would have done more to physically oppose the plot against Clarissa. As Lovelace writes,

> Thou shouldst have apprised [Clarissa] of her danger; have stolen in when the giant was out of the way; or hadst thou the true spirit of chivalry upon thee, and nothing else would have done, have killed the giant; and then something wouldst thou have to brag of.
>
> 'Oh but the giant was my friend: he reposed a confidence in me: and I should have betrayed my friend, and his confidence!' This thou wouldst have pleaded, no doubt. But try this plea upon thy present principles, and thou wilt see what a caitiff thou wert to let it have weight with thee, upon an occasion where a breach of confidence is more excusable than to keep the secret. (1440)

Despite the mock-heroic tone, Lovelace regrets the situation in which he finds himself, and genuinely wishes Belford had interposed more forcefully. Lovelace continues, "I am sure now, that, I would have thanked thee [Belford] for it with all my Heart and thought thee more a Father and a Friend, than my real Father and my best Friend" (1441).[122] While this gesture ostensibly serves to deflect blame, the argument extends an ideal of women's friendship to not "spare the *fault* for the *friend's* sake (995)," transposing the duty of disinterested moral counsel to the realm of physical antagonism. Clarissa herself laments to Belford that he did not take action, knowing what he did. In contrast to Lovelace's romantic terms, she asks why he could not have merely sent her a letter to inform her of his friend's designs. Her regret reminds the reader that an effective intervention need not have entailed more than an act of writing. It would, however, have required Belford to violate the unsavory "confidence" of their friendship sooner.

As the unfolding contrast between the men's and women's correspondences sheds unflattering light on the former, Clarissa and Anna nevertheless compare themselves with instances of heroic male friendship. Their allusions foreground qualities of male friendship that tie together spiritual associations of the epistolary medium with the tragic trajectory of the plot. Clarissa's citation of the David and Jonathan story alludes to a friendship plot that involves relevant tensions between the bonds of non-familial amity and one friend's duty to a father figure who is an unbendable king. At the resumption of their correspondence after a temporary alienation, Clarissa compares her affection toward Anna with David and Jonathan's love:

> What pain, my dearest friend, does your kind solicitude for my welfare give me! How much more binding and tender are the ties of pure friendship, and the union of like minds, than the ties of nature! Well might the Sweet Singer of Israel, when he was carrying to the utmost extent the praises of the friendship between him and his beloved friend, say, that the love of Jonathan

[122] Carol Houlihan Flynn observes that Clarissa and Lovelace are both at different points left without the support and amicable counsel of their immediate family, putting greater pressure on their non-familial friendships. *Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 255.

> to him was wonderful; that it surpassed the *love of women*! What an exalted idea does it give of the soul of Jonathan, sweetly attemper'd for this sacred band, if we may suppose it but equal to that of my Anna Howe for her fallen Clarissa! (1114).

Invoked as morally reassuring precedent for Clarissa's feelings, this biblical relationship allows her to draw the most decisive separation between her affection for Anna and her kinship ties.[123] The citation, moreover, reinforces public orientation of their friendship, as an instance of heroic glory passed down through the ages.

Seeing an analogy for her situation in David's song for the dead Jonathan, Clarissa's recalls features of a classical model of elegiac friendship. These features, as I will discuss, are reinforced by other allusions in the novel, as well as qualities it ascribes to epistolary mediation. In *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida explores the logic of this elegiac friendship as a kind of writing.[124] Reading Cicero alongside Aristotle, Derrida identifies how an idealized model of amity involves the kind of excessive affection and intimacy that can only manifest through the pathos of the friend's absence, real or imagined. In this ideal friendship, virtue operates in a "strange temporality opened by the anticipated citation of some funeral oration."[125] The time of friendship becomes meaningful by reference to the future moment of the friend's death and expected expressions of love by the surviving friend. In this temporality, the interaction between living friends becomes a process of "self-quotation," as if each friend were "signing the funeral oration in advance."[126] Derrida also locates this sentiment in Aristotle in the

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[123] Allusions to David and Jonathan were frequent in early modern remarks on ideal friendship. Jeremy Taylor comments at length on David and Jonathan in *The Measure and Offices of Friendship*. 1662. Reprint. (Delmar, NY: Scholars Fascimiles & Reprints, 1984), 47-49. Richard Allestree cites David and Jonathan as an example of a friend's rescue that transgresses parental approval in *The Whole Duty of Man* (London: John Baskett, 1724), 308.

[124] That is to say, Derrida brings to bear his sense of "writing," in the terminology of deconstruction, that emerges through a critique of the hierarchical binary: speech/writing.

[125] Ibid., 5.

[126] Ibid., 5.

Eudemian Ethics, which associates the highest form of amity with a fundamental dissymmetry of love, the notion that 'it is better to love than to be loved.' From this principle, Derrida concludes, "Friendship for the deceased thus carries this *philia* to the limit of its possibility. But at the same time, it uncovers the ultimate spring of this possibility: I could not love friendship without projecting its impetus toward the horizon of this death."[127]

What Derrida extrapolates as a theory of anticipatory "self-quotation" appears in Clarissa as an effect of literary foreshadowing. Richardson's foreknowledge of Clarissa's demise leads him to invest the representation of epistolary friendship with a deathly motif. This pattern appears not only through gestures of "self-quotation," such as when Anna praises Clarissa for being "more fit for the next world" than this one, but through citations that evoke posthumous obligations. Clarissa's allusions to David and Jonathan, and Anna's allusion to that of Damon and Pythias (which I will discuss below), function not only to seed in the reader's mind the trajectory of Richardson's plot, but also to indicate their conscious participation in a classical ideal of friendship. This is not to say that Clarissa and Anna understand the aspects of *philia* that Derrida uncovers. Rather, I am suggesting that the intersection of classical friendship and tragic prolepsis in *Clarissa* allows readers to perceive the deathly trajectory always inherent in the classical model. By aesthetic means, the novel brings to the threshold of consciousness that which Derrida discerns and develops with greater precision in his philosophical essay.

Clarissa's application of the biblical friendship highlights qualities that are relevant not only to her "fallen" state, but also her physically remote friendship with Anna. The "union of like minds" and affinity of "souls" that Richardson consistently associates with epistolary mediation here figures the fidelity of the surviving friend to the deceased. Continued fidelity in the absence of the friend thus correlates with the

[127] Ibid., 12.

temporary trials that Clarissa and Anna encounter in the remote locations. Because this heroic fidelity suggests a form of spiritual communication between the living and the dead, it correlates with Richardson's view of epistolary communication as a mingling of souls. While Todd notes the homoerotic connotations of this allusion, any implied physicality is co-opted to legitimate a relationship that has become purely textual in nature.[128] Clarissa does not stress masculine valor, but appropriates the qualities most compatible with female amity defined through mental communion. In a similar gesture, Clarissa compares her friendship for Anna to enlisted soldiers: "How often are the dearest of friends, at their country's call, thus parted—with a *certainty* for years—with a *probability* for ever!" (1088). The novel adopts a broad strategy to intercept heroic male friendship and refigure it in the service of epistolary friendship. Such a transformation may signify the social anxiety around "feminization," but it develop norms to which Richardson holds himself, and to which he exposes Belford as a means of reforming him.

Richardson's allusion to the Damon and Pythias story by way of John Norris's *Miscellanies* (1687) offers the subtlest yet most telling instance of the novel's engagement with masculine friendship.[129] The allusion implicates a complex link between the pathos of classical friendship, modern literary textuality, and junctures of novelistic plotting. Several critics comment in passing on the novel's mentioning of Norris's poem "Damon *and* Pythias. Or, *Friendship in Perfection*," which Anna cites from the *Miscellanies* (the book is one of the few objects other than letters exchanged between these characters). But it is necessary to engage the full poem to appreciate Richardson's management of gendered friendship:

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[128] Todd, 48-49.

[129] For a study of John Norris's influence on Richardson, see E. Derek Taylor's *Reason and Religion in Clarissa: Samuel Richardson and 'the Famous Mr. Norris of Bemerton'* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009). Taylor does not examine this poem in respect to *Clarissa's* plot.

I.
Pyth. 'Tis true (my Damon) we as yet have been
Patterns of constant Love, I know;
We have stuck so close no third could come between,
But will it (Damon) will it still be so?
II.
Da. Keep *your* Love true, I dare engage that mine
Shall like my Soul immortal prove.
In Friendship's Orb how brightly shall we shine
Where all shall *envy*, none *divide* our Love!
III.
Pyth. Death will; when once (as 'tis by Fate design'd)
T' *Elisium* you shall be remov'd
Such sweet Companions there no doubt you'll find,
That you'll forget that *Pythias* e'r you lov'd.
IV.
Da. No, banish all such fears; I then will be
Your Friend and guardian Angel too.
And tho with more refin'd Society
I'll leave *Elysium* to converse with you.
V.
Pyth. But grant that after Fate you still are kind,
You cannot long continue so;
When I, like you, become all Thought and Mind,
By what Mark then shall we each other know?
VI.
Da. With care on your last hour I will attend,
And lest like Souls should me deceive,
I closely will embrace my new-born Friend,
And never after my dear *Pythias* leave.[130]

Like Clarissa's appropriation of David and Jonathan's story, the poem reflects tensions between classical and modern, masculine and feminine, active and passive. Richardson would appear to borrow Norris's strategy in treating this canonical masculine friendship, as his poem displays little interest in the relationship's heroic backstory. Instead, Norris imagines an intimate conversation dislocated from the mythic plot. While the poem parallels Clarissa's application of the David and Jonathan case, by invoking a scene of mourning, it moves beyond this scene toward a more explicitly religious framework for conceiving of friendship. Norris's poem injects early modern theology into the classical context, and this makes it a more resonant allusion within Richardson's matrix of ideas about ideal friendship and remote textual exchange. Rather than rehearsing a common

[130] John Norris, *A Collection of Miscellanies*. 1687. Reprint. (New York: Garland, 1978), 95.

seventeenth-century concern about the conflict between true friendship and devotion to God, the poem deals with the issue of recognition and fidelity after death when souls presumably appear all alike.[131] Reflection on the continuity between earthly and heavenly friendship provokes, on the one hand, anxiety about the persistence of positively felt qualities of earthly friendships, and, on the other hand, optimism about leaving behind the negative features of earthly friendship. Earthly marks allows for identification as well as fraud. Heavenly marks are a mystery that could still leave one deceived by "like Souls." As a friend, Damon can only offer a final consoling promise.

My point here is to suggest that—while Anna certainly does not have this concern in mind—Richardson may. The question, "by what mark shall we then know each other?" has significance for *Clarissa*, if we situate Anna's allusion (as a partial reference to the full poem) within an epistolary correspondence between friends, one in which Anna's own letters—as a consequence of her inconsistent hand-writing—will be forged by Lovelace in a chain of events that leads directly to Clarissa's rape. The poem's anxiety about marks and recognition in the afterlife parallels the novel's portrayal of threats to epistolary identification. Epistolary letters aspire to forge a relationship that is "all thought and mind," but their persistent materiality leaves them vulnerable to interference. Beyond such thematic parallels, this allusion joins the David and Jonathan citation in foreshadowing the novel's resolution.

For Norris and Richardson, the intimacy of friendship structures the way characters imagine community in the afterlife. Prompted by her failing health, Clarissa

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[131] A concern raised in verse by Katherine Phillips, and in essays by Jeremy Taylor, Mary Astell, and John Norris. In letters exchanged with Norris, Astell solves the problem by suggesting that lovers of God are "like excited needles, [. . .] that cleave not only to him their *Magnet*, but even to one another. See Mary Astell and John Norris. *Letters Concerning the Love of God*. 1695. in *Mary Astell and John Norris*: *Letters Concerning the Love of God*. Ed. E. Derek Taylor and Melvyn New. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 66-7. Norris's poem and Clarissa's remarks do not worry over the place of God in the spiritual reunion of friends.

imagines her continued relationship with Anna on the trajectory toward spiritual communion after death:

> This *is* a friend, said the divine lady, (taking the letter in her hand, and kissing it) worth wishing to live for. ---O my dear Anna Howe! How uninterruptedly sweet and noble, has been our friendship! ---But we shall one day, I hope (and that must comfort us both) meet, never to part again! Then, divested of the shades of body, shall we be all light and all mind---Then how unalloyed, how perfect, will be our friendship! Our Love then will have one and the same adorable object, and we shall enjoy it and each other to all Eternity! (1348)

Clarissa's apostrophe to Anna takes the place of her writing, and as a rhetorical gesture, prefigures their ontological separation. Prompted by the conflation of physical absence and spiritual presence, Clarissa 'quotes in advance' the future expressions of joy that will mark their reunion. As Clarissa suggests, however exemplary their relationship has been, her bond with Anna has never yet quite been perfect friendship. She imagines spiritual communion as an extension of epistolary disembodiment and as a new language mediated by light. While their friendship has been partially "divested of the shades of body" by the inherent distance of correspondence, Clarissa's fantasy of the afterlife brings to fulfillment the mental communion embodied by the letter medium.

Although Clarissa will immediately compose a letter to her friend, her apostrophic address to the absent Anna, perhaps with an awareness of Belford as a recorder, engages in an audience-oriented act of self-quotation characteristic of classical friendship. As such, this gesture reflects a fundamental conflict between the *teloi* of cited masculine friendships. On one hand, the classical ideal finds its fulfillment in a future act of writing, which itself evokes perpetual re-inscriptions. As earthly record, the epistolary letters serve as the necessary context for pursuing *philia* to its limit in imagined and actual "funeral orations." This friendship persistently looks ahead to its legacy as cultural text in the world of the living. On the other hand, the ideal reframed by Norris, and indirectly, by Clarissa, looks ahead to spiritual reunion. In this sense, they move beyond the classical notion of *philia* fulfilled in a gesture of "asymmetrical" love and toward the resolution of an imagined balancing of accounts in the afterlife.

Anna expresses this divided sensibility at the scene of Clarissa's wake. In her frenzied mourning, she first reflects on Clarissa's earthly legacy, which she had hoped to publicize, though, at the time, with an expectation for a happier ending. She conveys a sense of finality and permanent separation in her lament: "And is this all!—is it all of my Clarissa's story!" (1402). She then recalls Clarissa's promise in the letter that they will "meet and rejoice" in the afterlife, and calms herself in reflecting on Clarissa's escape from further torment. Unable to pity the Harlowes for their role in Clarissa's demise, Anna asks: "had not I the best right to my dear creature's remains?—And must names without nature be preferred to such a love as mine?" (1403). Anna persistently sees herself as the only fit and deserving person to care for Clarissa's remains, literary and bodily. Her "funeral oration" becomes not just a testament to Clarissa's righteousness, but a testament to claims of friendship over the hollow signifiers of kinship.

By the end of the novel, these divergent trajectories of friendship remain unresolved but mutually constitutive. Richardson cannot directly depict the divine reunion of friends, which leaves him to locate closure in acts of public mourning and in the suggestion that Clarissa's story will be transmitted. As Clarissa's story reaches its ultimate public in the novel reader, these doubled trajectories of friendship become a means of ambivalently framing the novel's print textuality. In the secular plot of elegiac friendship, the printed text signifies the culmination of Anna's love for Clarissa, the full justification of her friend before the world. Within the framework of spiritualized friendship, publication signifies at best an act of goodwill: Clarissa's story, as warning and example, may set a few other souls on the course of virtue. At worst, it signifies a distracting expense of moral energy. In either case, it does not reflect a fulfillment of their friendship's plot. Final closure remains only inferred as an exclusive joy shared between Clarissa and Anna after death. Just as Richardson's formulation of sympathy and judgment in epistolary friendship, discussed above, seeks to reconcile extreme conceptions of public and private, his understanding of ideal friendship's plot arc equally

embraces the imagined limits of secular and spiritual amity. The novel's final, contradictory location of these secular and spiritual aims serves to extend the limits of friendship's public (earthly) and private (spiritual) authority.

From Sympathetic Immersion to Virtual Friendship

This convergence of idealized *philia* and epistolary friendship in *Clarissa* extends to the novel's framing of the author-reader relationship. I will be suggesting that Richardson locates an aesthetic justification for his rejection of secularized "poetical justice" in the classical authority of tragic friendship and that reader responses indicate the partial effectiveness of this strategy. As his revisions seek to embellish the public orientation of the women's friendship, a motif that culminates in Clarissa's death and Anna's survivorship, his public and private dialogue with readers also displays the fraught implications of the friendship trope. In various negotiations around the novel's reception, a rhetoric of friendship emerges to legitimate approval and disapproval of its aesthetic design.

Richardson composes a post-script responding to the initial wave of reactions to the first four volumes of *Clarissa*. In this short essay, he seeks to justify the novel's conclusion now that the public has the whole work in view. He first appeals to the "great lessons of Christianity" to censure "a notion of poetical justice," reduced to a system of earthly rewards and punishments, which "seems to have generally obtained among the fair sex." But then Richardson remarks that there is "no need to shelter our conduct under the sanction of religion," and he marshals the secular poetics of Addison, Rapin, and Aristotle. After citing passages by these authors, he offers a further reversal, arguing that he has in fact exceeded all writers in his adherence to "poetical justice" so long as this notion be allowed to include Clarissa's "happy death" and the heavenly reward we must

imagine for her.[132] He concludes by treating attacks against the story's length more dismissively, and emphasizes the mimetic necessity of being "circumstantial and minute." It does not occur to Richardson that dissatisfaction may emerge not only out of the public's resistance to tragic form or minuteness taken separately, but out of *Clarissa's* original combination of tragic pathos with the high-level prose particularity he elsewhere associates with friendship. Richardson cites and footnotes Addison's commentary on Nahum Tate's *History of King Lear,* a play that infamously "improves" upon Shakespeare by adding a happy ending. While Richardson takes Tate's play as evidence that the modern fashion for poetical justice spares no author, the cited *Spectator* passage alludes to Tate after naming several currently popular tragedies (including *Oedipus*, *Othello*, *Oroonoko, Venice Preserv'd*). The desire for poetic justice may have encroached on revered works of the theatre, but the rarity of unhappy endings in eighteenth-century fictions after *Clarissa* suggests that, in the period, the idea of a tragic novel is something of an oxymoron. One issue at stake for Richardson, then, is the freedom of prose fiction writers to imitate tragic modes that the public still tolerated, at least to some extent, on stage. Yet, Richardson does not identify the novel's simulated intimacy of epistolary letters as any impediment to its absorption of the classical tragic pattern.

Several notable resistant reactions to Clarissa's deaths imply that the displeasure resides precisely in the novel's attempt to mediate a tragic narrative through the rhetorical frame of intimate communication in friendship (the suggestion being that, while one can stomach *Hamlet*, it should not be filtered through Horatio's perceptions). The vivid psychological portrait of *Clarissa*, elicited by epistolary codes, makes her death seem to some readers all the more cruel on Richardson's part. Lady Bradshaigh, who would eventually become Richardson's most frequent and affectionate correspondent, contacted

[132] Richardson attempts to have it both ways, justifying *Clarissa* according to the moral utility of a resonant tragic pathos, and according to a Christian framework for comedy that would undercut our experience of any tragic pathos.

him under the name Belfour to offer praise as well as to lament her dreadful anticipation of Clarissa's fate. Unsure if she can bring herself to finish the novel, she writes: "I cannot see my amiable Clarissa die; it will hurt my Heart and *durably*."[133] Even years later, this distress was a persistent sore point in her otherwise affectionate, lifelong relationship with the author.[134] Richardson's initial reply echoes elements of his post-script, citing the motives of theatrical tragedy:

> Cannot you rejoice in your Tears for any remote Distress, and be thankfull, that such as you see represented are not your Lot, or the Lot of those whom you love? If Warning and Example be not meant in Public Representations, as well as Entertainment and Diversion, what wretched Performance,—what mere kill-time Amusements must they be to thinking Minds.[135]

Richardson's advice fails to appreciate the extent to which his own cultivation of epistolary friendship, with its notion of shared selfhood, works contrary to the perception of Clarissa's distress as that of a person remote from oneself or one's loved ones. A testament to the complex innovations of *Clarissa*, Richardson's overall defense is ultimately inconsistent. Alongside his appeal to pleasurable distance, he acknowledges the intensity of the attachment he has cultivated, but seeks to turn this fact equally to his advantage. He wonders why such feelings do not translate into a thankful recognition of the author who has skillfully stimulated such an intense attachment for a fictional character. As he puts it, "If I have drawn hard-hearted Scenes, I have likewise drawn tender ones; and if the Author rather than the Character in his Story must be considered, I

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[133] Bradshaigh, writing under the pseudonym Belfour, to Richardson, undated letter (November-December 1748) printed in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*. ed Anna Laetitia Barbauld (London: Printed for Richard Phillips, 1804), v.4, 215-216.

[134] Half a decade later, Bradshaigh is provoked by the possibility that Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* may also resolve tragically. She exclaims in a letter to the author: "Would I had never re'd Clarissa, wou'd I had never officiously (and to please my own ridiculous humour) wrote its author, would he had never wrote the long expected grandison, once my delight, now my Torment".

[135] Richardson to Bradshaigh, 15 December 1748, Forster Collection Manuscripts, Victoria and Albert Museum, XI 48.5. E.5.

only hope to be weighed in an equal Balance."[136] Richardson thereby shifts his justification, at times appealing to the immediate psychological pleasure of remote tragedy, at other times appealing to a more self-consciously appreciative reader, who can step back from the scales to find that the weight of their grief, on the one side, has been counter-balanced by their relationship with the author, on the other.

Many early readers of the novel did just that. Despite Richardson's attribution of wrong-headed attitudes toward poetical justice to his readers of the "fair sex," one finds that among Richardson's epistolary correspondences, Bradshaigh's reaction is not exactly representative. Several female readers expressed their sympathy for Clarissa, by way of inhabiting Anna Howe's role, while also praising the narrative as a whole. One unidentified female reader, for instance, writes that,

> the reading of it has given me infinite Pleasure, tho' at the same Time, I may say with Miss Howe, that it has almost broke my Heart and ruined my Eyes. I approve greatly of the Catastrophe; the Sufferings and Virtues of the Divine Clarissa, could only be rewarded in Futurity; besides we might with Justice have doubted the Reality of her Distress, had she been able to survive it."[137]

Another correspondent, Susanna Highmore, writes of Anna's mourning:

> her Grief described in so lively a Manner, by your inimitable Pen, was more than I could bear; I laid down the Book and felt for some Moments I verily think as much Affliction as such a Friend in real Life so circumstanced could feel. Never pretend to say, there is a Pleasure in such a Sorrow . . . I see, I hear, I feel the same, and am for the present as unhappy, as if it were all true; but shall indeed much sooner recover from my Sorrow, than if I had real Cause for it.

In spite of her hope for recovery, she goes on to describe how she re-experiences this grief in a dream, "not as a fiction," which leads her to have a "presumption in my sleep to fancy myself the Friend of Clarissa's Heart."[138] She and Mary Delaney reflect an ability to combine their appreciation for the work with their feeling that "it is impossible to think

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Carr to Collier, December 1748, Forster MSS, XV 48. E.9.

[138] Highmore to Richardson, 2 January 1749, Forster MSS, XV 48. E. 9.

it a fiction."[139] Male readers, such as Edward Moore, also coordinated the grief of friendship with literary evaluation, while also translating this emotion into a consoling joy: "whoever will take the Trouble to question his own Feelings will learn that Joy has a much greater share in his Tears than Sorrow . . . It is her noble Forgiveness of Injuries, her Humanity, her Friendship, her Sweetness of Mind, and above all the Praises, which are bestowed upon her, that compel Tears, and not that we have lost her."[140] Each of these readers takes a slightly different path toward reconciling their grief for a fictional death with an expression of overarching gratefulness.

Still, others were of Bradshaigh's party. One amusing response from an anonymous reader takes the notion of simulated friendship as the basis for financial intimidation. The unidentified note kept by Richardson reads: "I should read the account of Clarissa's death with as much anguish of mind, as I would feel at the loss of my dearest Friend. I know a great many Gentlemen that are of my Mind, and I believe your Book will sell very indifferently, unless you alter it in that Respect."[141] What this commentator makes clear is that an admiration and perceived friendship with the novel's heroine did not guarantee any corresponding reverence for the author; the idea of virtual friendship could suggest that Clarissa belonged to her readers as much as, if not more than, she belonged to Richardson, and, thus, that he had little right to subject her to such an ending. The reader reminds Richardson of the audience's power as consumers. Nonetheless, such reactions indicate the way that both admiring and disapproving readers

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[139] Delany to Richardson, 25 January 1749, Forster MSS, XV 48. E. 9.

[140] Moore to Richardson, 23 December 1748, Forster MSS, XV 48. E. 9.

[141] See Thomas Keymer's "Clarissa's Death, Clarissa's Sale, and the Text of the Second Edition," *RES* 45, no. 179 (1994): 395. Expressions of friendship toward Clarissa linked with critiques of the plot might be placed in the context of general remarks on the verisimilitude of the novel. As Catherine Talbot wrote to Elizabeth Carter in 1747, "one can scarce persuade oneself that [*Clarissa's* characters] are not real characters, and living people." This quotation appears in T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 239.

appealed to the notion of friendship in justifying their responses to the novel, and particularly to its tragic ending.

No doubt the proliferating notion of virtual friendship reflects, to some extent, the echo chamber of copied and circulated letters within Richardson's correspondences, as well as an imitation of public reactions. High-profile reactions, such as Diderot's "Eloge," discussed in the introduction, and Sarah Fielding's *Remarks on Clarissa* (1749), similarly invoke simulated friendship within public defenses of the author. Diderot's terms strikingly translate textual intimacy into the language of tragic survivorship, as he compares his reading experience to the "feelings undergone by great friends who have lived long together and are on the point of separating." He finishes this thought with noted ambivalence, writing, "at the end, I suddenly found myself alone."[142] The trope allows Diderot to develop a subtle association between the culmination of his virtual relationship with the author, the public's loss of Richardson as a writer, and the author's physical death.

While Diderot's piece comes out a decade after this initial period of reception, Fielding's *Remarks* appears the same year that the final volumes of *Clarissa* are published. Fielding observes of the novel that "True and false Friendship was never more beautifully displayed than in this work."[143] I will discuss this publication in the context of Sarah Fielding's fiction in the following chapter. But, it deserves brief mention here as part of the matrix of reactions linking reflections on friendship to aesthetic evaluation. Central to the *Remarks* is a scenario involving a reformed male reader, Bellario, who rewrites his initial experience of the novel through an epistolary correspondence with Miss Gibson, a figure defined by her critical articulateness and admiration for

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[142] Diderot, 393.

[143] Sarah Fielding, *Remarks on Clarissa*. 1749. (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1985), 46.

Richardson. In this staged scenario, Fielding suggests that the perception of true friendship stimulated by the representation of the mourning friend becomes the cornerstone of emotional response, and, consequently, critical appreciation. Fielding uses the novel's depiction of mournful friendship to represent the reformation of this fictional male reader as a model for others. Revising his initial objections to the novel through a heightened identification with Anna Howe, Bellario writes, "On the Arrival of Miss Howe, we turn from the slow moving Hearse, to the rapid Chariot-wheels that fly to bring the warm Friend, all glowing with most poignant lively Grief, to mourn her lost Clarissa. In short, we sigh, we rave, and we weep with her."[144] What marks the responses of Diderot and Fielding is the way that they stake their literary sensibilities on the idea of virtual friendship as *both* an immediate affective relationship with fictional characters and a figuration of the reader's affinity for the author.

Diderot and Fielding treat *Clarissa's* representation of mourning friendship as an implicit vehicle for the feelings of readers for a fictional character, and, indirectly, for the author. Sarah Chapone's private declarations to Richardson render this analogy explicit, closely echoing the terms that Richardson himself posed to Lady Bradshaigh. As Chapone wrote to Richardson,

> I have been blest in my friendships, almost beyond the race of mortals [. . .] I have several Friends to whom I am highly obliged, and for whom, I have a most jealous and tender regard, but yet I must say, few of them come up to that fervency which you have given the Generous Anna Howe, and which in the same circumstance I should have felt for Clarissa, and, which at present, I am ready to transfer to the Author of that admirable work.[145]

That Chapone speaks of what she "should have felt," implies that these invoked feelings are only conditional, tied to the translation of fictional circumstances into a real scenario.

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[144] Ibid., 45.

[145] Chapone to Richardson, 20 March 1751, in Forster MSS, XII. 48. E. 6.

Yet, the notion that she can transfer these sentiments to the author requires that her feelings for Clarissa ultimately become more than hypothetical.

These reactions to *Clarissa* suggest the novel was broadly successful in stimulating expressions of sympathy and friendship for character rooted in the novel's depiction of tragic friendship, even for readers who did not approve of the outcome. In this respect, *Clarissa* deals in a form of sympathy attached metaphorically to non-familial friendship, and thus deviates from mid-century philosophical models of sympathy rooted in kinship or property. The novel's use of classical friendship reinforces an effect of sympathetic reading that Catherine Gallagher ascribes to the feeling of readers toward purely textual entities. As Gallagher suggests, the "non-existence" of the fictional character, defined by accessibility, but also by incompletion, provides an "ontological contrast" with the reader's sense of herself. This contrast produces for the reader a sense of her "plentiful" reality, "helping us reenvision our embodied immanence through the condition of its possible absence."[146] By inviting readers to inhabit the position of the mourning Anna Howe, Richardson's novel facilitates this effect by linking the disembodiment of the dead with that of the fictional. The figure of the dead friend serves the effect that Gallagher describes, by thematizing absence, while particularizing that absence in relation to the living friend who becomes "another self," one who shares an affinity of heart and mind beyond all others. The plot of tragic friendship prompts identification across the ontological gap between real and fictional, inviting a multiplicity of readers to participate in a virtual community centered on a fictional death.

Richardson's novel was also partially effective in translating these feelings into the idea of a virtual community that binds authors and readers around aesthetic principles (the chief principle here being the rejection of earthly poetic justice). In another sense,

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[146] Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality" in *The Novel: Volume 1, History, Geography, and Culture*. ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 361.

too, we might say that the exchangeability of these affections implicates the author in the logic of asymetrical love. Just as fictional and dead friends cannot return tokens of affections to the living, the author cannot reciprocate amiable affections with all sympathizing readers, except indirectly and by artifice, because, in the act of composition, the audience can only seem to the author numerous, anonymous, and, prior to publication, non-existent.

Many of the readers cited, though certainly not all, who echo this notion of virtual friendship for Clarissa, or for Richardson, could claim actual friendship with the author as a familiar correspondent. Despite his novelistic engagement with this female friendship as an exacting paragon, he was not stinting in his own warm expressions nor restrained about signing his letters to a recent acquaintance, "your sincere friend and servant." Nevertheless, the typical centrality of literary conversation in these letters illustrate how the author-reader relationship heightened expression of intimacy. Correspondents can claim a further degree of friendship with Richardson than they otherwise might by expressing their reaction to his novel. As Thomas Edwards's remark to Richardson suggests, it was a claim of intimacy fraught with the paradoxical sensations of epistolary remoteness and virtual presence:

> The Day that she [*Clarissa*] came hither, You accompanied her; I mean your portrait. I have placed it in my Study where I usually sit, and what between the Portrait of your Mind, and that of your Body, I Sometimes almost fancy myself actually with you.[147]

[147] Edwards to Richardson, 10 January 1750, Forster, MSS, XII. 48. E. 6.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMICS OF FRIENDSHIP AND THE PARADOXES OF NARRATION IN SARAH FIELDING'S *ADVENTURES OF DAVID SIMPLE* AND *DAVID SIMPLE, VOLUME THE LAST*

> And thou, Reader, if ever thou can'st find him out in his Obscurity, I beseech thee advise him likewise to let the wearied, mouldring Bones of *Don Quixote*, rest quiet in the Earth that covers 'em. Let him not expose 'em in *Old Castile*, against the Sanctions of Death, impiously raking him out of the Grave where he really lies stretch'd out beyond a Possibility of taking a third ramble thro' the World.[148]
>
> —Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote, Part II*

In the closing paragraph of *Don Quixote*, the narrator asks the audience to discourage a rival from "resurrecting" his deceased hero. Closely approximating this posture, Sarah Fielding's *David Simple, Volume the Last* (1753), elegizes its protagonist by meditating on his escape from future suffering and gently chiding those readers who would "chuse to drag David Simple from the Grave" for further adventures.[149] *Don Quixote, Part II* and *Volume the Last* both appear nearly a decade after the original entries in each series. Just as Cervantes's sequel shifts tone by focusing on themes of failure and deception, Fielding extends the David Simple storyline by rejecting the comic spirit of her earlier novel. That predecessor, *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744), ends by linking a double marriage with the hope of broad social reform. In stark contrast, *Volume the Last* concludes by linking a bleak worldview with a sustained meditation on watching friends suffer and die.

Richard Terry has argued that Fielding's changing view of friendship lies at the heart of her evolving style. In Terry's account, *Volume the Last* turns away from the

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[148] Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de, *The History of the Renowned Don Quixote De La Mancha. Translated by Several Hands: And Publish'd by Peter Motteux*, rev. J. Ozell, 4 vols. (London, 1725), 4:359.

[149] Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple and Volume the Last*, ed. Peter Sabor (1744; Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 342. References are to this edition.

utopian promise of real friendship at the center of the *Adventures* and toward a philosophy of Christian consolation; David Simple's death chastens readers' expectations regarding friendship's personal rewards and public value.[150] Although Terry deals carefully with the thematic of friendship, his approach does not account for the way Fielding's Cervantic rhetoric mediates character deaths and expresses her shifting sense of authorship. In both Cervantes and Fielding, we do not just watch characters mourn the death of a friend; we are invited into that circle of friends at the same time as we are made aware that this death is fictional. Moreover, in both cases, we are made conscious of a potential gap between what the narrator desires, and what we might desire; a gap which highlights how fictional deaths raise problems that actual ones do not. Imitating Cervantes's request for the reader's assistance to secure narrative closure, Fielding delicately asks readers to believe her hero "is escaped from the Possibility of falling into any future Afflictions." Both endings foreground the way a hero's death may thwart the audience's desire for the possibility of continuation.[151]

Fielding and Cervantes differ in specifying the author's antagonist: for Cervantes, a rival writer poses the challenge, while, for Fielding, the reader's mere imagination has the power of resurrection. Fielding's reflexive manner of "burying" her hero links her to a generic ancestor, while also reflecting the intensified circulation of novels and fictional characters in popular culture of the 1750s. In his study of character "afterlives," David Brewer demonstrates that the mid-eighteenth-century social canon displays a fondness for loved characters over authors, evidenced in the widespread "migration," or re-circulation,

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[150] Richard Terry, "David Simple and the Fallacy of Friendship" *SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 44, no. 3 (2004): 525-544.

[151] Fielding may have in mind another famous instance of this tension which appears at the end of William Shakespeare's *King Lear*: "Vex not his ghost / O, let him pass, he hates him / That would upon the rack of this tough world / Stretch him out longer." Shakespeare, *The History of King Lear,* in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 5.3.314-316.

of "old friends" in new stories across genres and mediums.[152] He points out how the rhetoric of "old friends" appears throughout the eighteenth century in texts and performances that reintroduce lovable characters, including Sir Roger de Coverley, Falstaff, and, despite Cervantes's best effort to bury him, Don Quixote.[153] Using Samuel Richardson's work as an example, Brewer indicates how the flexibility of character lives could reinforce a troubling sense that such "friendships" were a means of flattering public tastes, thereby creating tension for authors concerned with provoking moral reflection.

In its careful coordination of the reader's attitudes toward David's death, Fielding's ambivalent conclusion intimates how the popular love for memorable characters might make the narrator, and by extension the author, appear to be an extraneous third party. Fielding strives to counter just this possibility. Mobilizing the depiction of friendship among characters, her work intercepts a language of friendship associated with pleasing familiarity to reframe the moral and aesthetic obligations between authors and readers. As this chapter argues, Fielding's preoccupation with ideal friendship not only motivates her shift from comic to tragic form, but also shapes her expectation that readers forgo their possessive relationships with "old friends" so as to embrace their relationship with writers as a form of friendship. As a means of reconciling authorial didacticism with an increasing awareness of reader autonomy, Fielding's application of the friendship trope instances the broader effort among several writers to "elevate" the moral status of novels.[154]

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[152] David Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1835*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2005). Brewer borrows the idea of the "social canon," from Franco Moretti's essay "The Slaughterhouse of Literature." *Modern Language Quarterly* 61 (2000): 207-27. In this view, the social canon reflects the loosely specified set of texts and characters kept alive by individual readers of popular literature, distinguished in this way from the academic canon.

[153] Brewer does not discuss Sarah Fielding's complex approach to character and authorial identity.

[154] See William Warner's *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1998). Warner focuses on the way male authors, such as Richardson and Fielding, "elevate" public fictions by intercepting the allegedly egoistical narrative pleasures offered by female authors, such as Behn, Manley, and Haywood. While Warner does

Anticipating the tense ending of *Volume the Last,* Fielding's *Remarks on Clarissa* (1749) highlights the aesthetic and moral friction produced by character deaths. *Remarks* explores a variety of debates surrounding Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) through an invented conversation and epistolary exchange. A central character, Bellario, initially takes issue with the "Story's ending unhappily," but, through a polite dialogue, he comes to recognize both the formal and mimetic integrity of Richardson's plot.[155] Presumably speaking for Fielding, the reformed Bellario argues that readers must process Clarissa's death as part of Richardson's larger design, which, in detailed descriptions, juxtaposes the deaths of the "Virtuous and the Vicious." He then echoes the novel's postscript, in which Richardson argues that a secularized form of "poetical Justice" is inconsistent with Christianity.[156] The pamphlet indirectly reinforces this moral-aesthetic stance in its discussion of the elegiac friendship that binds characters and readers. Fielding depicts Bellario's correction—prompted by his intercourse with a fellow reader and fan of Richardson, Miss Gibson—as a result of his identification with the fictional Anna Howe as a mourning friend. At the center of the novel's constellation of deaths, Bellario fixes on Anna's response as a pivotal scene linking the reader's emotional engagement with aesthetic appreciation. As he writes, "On the Arrival of Miss Howe, we turn from the slow moving Hearse, to the rapid Chariot-wheels that fly to bring the warm Friend, all glowing with the most poignant lively Grief, to mourn her lost Clarissa. In short, we sigh, we rave, and we weep with her."[157] Moving from this scene to a more distanced

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not discuss Sarah Fielding's fiction, her sympathy for Richardson's project, as well as the elements of her fiction I will discuss here, suggests her participation in the logic of elevation that Warner examines.

[155] Sarah Fielding, *Remarks on Clarissa* (1749; Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1985), 47. As mentioned in the prior chapter, Lady Bradshaigh, perhaps the most critically discussed reader in Richardson's circle, famously questioned the necessity of Clarissa's death.

[156] Fielding refers to Richardson's citation of Addison and others in his defense of *Clarissa's* plot, which I have discussed in the previous chapter.

[157] Fielding, 45.

assessment, Bellario concludes, "True and false Friendship was never more beautifully displayed than in this work."[158] Fielding would seem to argue that readers who actively sympathize with Anna's grief can attain a more profitable balance of absorption and reflection, rather than directing their anger over Clarissa's death at the author.

Bellario goes on to contrast the lack of real friendship between the male characters with the real friendship between Clarissa and Anna. First, he takes notice of Lovelace's moral censure of Belford's failure to intervene more forcefully and restrain the self-destructive plots of his so-called friend. Bellario then focuses on the falsity of these male friendships as displayed in the novel's deathbed scenes, which, contrasted with Clarissa's death, links the in-authenticity of their friendship to the spiritual unsoundness of their minds.[159] But despite the illusion that Bellario is "writing to the moment" of his reading experience, from the broader context of Fielding's pamphlet, we know that he has been encouraged to reflect upon and revise his initial impression of the novel as the result of the dinner conversation and his epistolary exchange with Miss. Gibson. Writing over his initial response, he re-imagines his relation to these scenes at a further remove from the novel, on the page of this letter. In this respect, his identification with Anna Howe as friend takes shape through the intervention of this disinterested and critical epistolary conversation.

Sarah Fielding's *Remarks on Clarissa* signals the omnipresence of the epistolary in the literary imagination in the 1740's, as it becomes not only a fictional mode, but a means of negotiating the reception of particular works. Lettered correspondence, rooted in a network of delivery services, was hardly a new structure of communication by the 1740's.[160] But taking a cue from Richardson, the novelty of Fielding *Remarks* resides in

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[158] Fielding, 46.

[159] Fielding, 46.

[160] Still, as Roy Porter points out, the development of a postal infrastructure with daily delivery to provincial areas did not take off until the mid-eighteenth century. English citizens witness a major

the way it facilitates a mutually constitutive idealization of non-familial friendship, epistolary correspondence, and literary publics. In its outermost rhetorical frame, the *Remarks* represent an anonymous reader writing back to Richardson, an illusion of epistolary contact mediated by fictional contrivances, print publication, and emerging generic expectations about literary criticism. The letter writer, of unspecified gender, adopts an editorial persona, a fly-on-the-wall perspective, including in her response the conversations and private letters among other readers without intervening directly in the debates. Sarah Fielding is as absent (and present) from the critical pamphlet as Richardson is from his novels. She appears nowhere explicitly in the cast of characters, never identified in the voice of the writer, nor closely identifiable with the central female character Miss Gibson. Fielding's *Remarks* construct the relationship between reader and author as a dialogic interaction which takes the epistolary form as its critical medium and metaphor. It draws on a scene of emergent friendship but filters the private conversation through the anonymity of this generalized novel reader turned letter writer. As in the correspondence between Clarissa and Anna, the assumption is that these private correspondence are never really private, but always written with a hypothetical attention to the public eye.[161]

More than anything that Bellario and Miss. Gibson say, the form of their relationship speaks to the imagining of new publics and lines of communication not just centered around literary conversation, but tacitly intertwined with the values associated

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expansion of postal networks between 1740-1770. See *The Creation of the Modern World: the Untold Story of the British Enlightenment* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000), 40.

[161] A skeptical reading seems unavoidable, namely, that Bellario's avowed admiration of the novel and his epistolary performance of critical evaluation suggests a secret design on Miss Gibson within larger plot of seduction or courtship. Working against this inference, however, is this outer-framework, wherein the author has received these letters openly from Miss Gibson and publishes them without reservation or disclaimers. What neutralizes the suggestive connotations of a correspondence between parties of opposite sex seems to be the subject itself: a critical conversation about the virtues of Richardson's novel. While the correspondence may appear as depersonalized as modern academic scholarship, the impersonal character only heightens its correlation with features of idealized friendship in the eighteenth-century.

with representations of friendship in works like *Clarissa* and, as I will discuss, Fielding's fictions. In the correspondence taken up by these two astute readers, as well as by the anonymous frame narrator, we see an emphasis on self-selection of community and, as Betty Schellenberg suggests, a replacement of individual judgment for consensus reached through the corrective advantage of conversation.[162] Fielding imagines that an epistolary discussion of novels actually creates new communities, ones that are elective and based on literary taste and polite critical debate, rather than on inheritance, sexual passion, or economic self-interest. This chapter will explore how the mental affinity that Fielding associates with the formation of a critically expressive circle of readers involves more than conversational paradigms, and corresponds with her fictional exploration of ideal friendship.

Remarks specifies the features of the novel that Fielding admired and offers insight into how Richardson's novel links epistolary friendship, literary response, and narrative closure. *Volume the Last* translates many of the aesthetic concerns of the *Remarks* into a fictional plot. Yet, in spite of her affinity with Richardson, Fielding worried about the didactic efficacy of fictional letters. In her discussion of the *Remarks*, Emily Friedman suggests that, in the wake of *Clarissa's* publication and varied reception, Fielding sought to overcome what she perceived as inherent limitations in the epistolary mode. As Friedman argues, Fielding recognized that if the multi-voiced novel of letters could allow readers to arrive at distressing interpretations (say, of Lovelace's viability as a suitor), then third person narration offered a means of guiding readers toward an aesthetic sensibility that balances rational judgment with emotion, a combination that Bellario and Miss Gibson seem to exhibit.[163]

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[162] Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Conversational Circle: Rereading the English Novel, 1740-1775*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 29.

[163] Emily C. Friedman, "Remarks on Richardson: Sarah Fielding and the Rational Reader." *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 22 no. 2 (2009-2010): 312-313. Friedman shows how *Remarks* anticipates the author's fraught engagement with readers in *The Cry* (1754), a novel Fielding coauthored with Jane Collier. On the

In developing this third person technique, *Adventures* and *Volume the Last* together demonstrate how a rhetoric of friendship can frame the appreciation of prose fiction. However, as I will suggest, the utility of this friendship trope engenders a problematic of its own: in creating and refining a stylistic alternative to the limited didacticism of fictional letters, Fielding constructs a narrating ethos that retains traces of epistolary intimacy, wavering inconsistently between remote anonymity and intimate community. In forging a relationship between the act of narration and the exploration of ideal friendship as subject matter, Fielding's novel draws out contradictions surrounding the narrator's knowledge of character interiority, the ethics of friendly intimacies, and the power dynamic inherent in the author-reader exchange. Ultimately, these contradictions are instructive ones, reflective of her self-conscious engagement with the aesthetic and ethical challenges of the novel form.

The Wise Security of Legible Minds

From Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694) to Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall* (1762), the subject of true friendship intersects with paradigms of utopian reform, conversation, sociability, and sympathy. Eighteenth-century writers focus on friendship to specify ethical forms of community and explore the possibility of knowing other minds. In her singular and influential study of female friendship, Janet Todd takes as her starting point the structuring tension between the bonds of friendship and the romantic plot.[164] Examining eighteenth-century representations of friendship, Todd bridges matters of literary form and social ideology. Fielding's novels do not focus exclusively on female friendship, but they offer important case studies for extending

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significance of friendship to a reading of the *The Cry*, see Ellen Gardiner's "Friendship, Equality, and Interpretation in *The Cry*," in *Regulating Readers: Gender and Literary Criticism in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 1999), 110–33.

[164] Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). Todd does not comment on Fielding's treatment of friendship.

Todd's inquiry, suggesting how friendship, as an ethical calling, bears on a female author's self-conscious exploration of literary techniques.

"Real friendship" operates in *Adventures* as an idée fixe that kindles the protagonist's desires and as a metaphor of textual community. Analyzing Fielding's innovative brand of irony, James Kim proposes a suggestive analogy between David's search for a friend and Sarah Fielding authorial plight as expressed in the preface to the first edition; just as David seeks out a friend in a world of false surfaces and self-interest, Fielding looks for a sympathetic reader in the midst of a potentially hostile male audience.[165] Betty Schellenberg likewise observes that, as readers follow the coalescence of David's amicable community, they are figuratively invited into the conversational circle and encouraged to participate in its ethos.[166] By internalizing the novel's values, they are left with a sense of membership in the utopian society pictured in the closing scenes. Together, these readings indicate how the idea of amity serves Fielding both as a figure for the motivations of a female author in a male-dominated literary marketplace and as a concept that shapes the reader's sense of community with fictional characters. These approaches also suggest far-reaching implications for understanding Fielding's experiments with the third-person perspective. Well past the novel's preface, Fielding's narrative strategies continually evolve in conjunction with her representation of friendship between principal characters. Building on Schellenberg's foundational insight that Fielding's novels seek to foster a "virtual circle of like minded readers . . . socialized by the very act of reading,"[167] I will examine how Fielding's work, in striving for more

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[165] James Kim, "Mourning, Melancholia, and Modernity: Sentimental Irony and Downward Mobility in David Simple" *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 22, No. 3 (2010): 477-502. This figurative equation of a masculine hostile audience and the unfeeling world represented in the story is complicated by the fact that David finds true and false friends in both male and female characters.

[166] Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Conversational Circle: Rereading the English Novel, 1740-1775* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1996), 21.

[167] Schellenberg, 125.

than the socialization of readers, illuminates formal contradictions tied specifically to the persistent rhetoric of idealized friendship. [168]

To explain the metaphorical suggestiveness of ideal friendship in Sarah Fielding's literary imagination, one must examine the role of the friend as a quest object that shapes the novel's plot and narration. *Adventures* begins with an act of brotherly betrayal that provokes David's desire for "real friendship;" this ambition drives the novel's action. At the beginning of the novel, David finds himself cheated by his younger brother Daniel and at sea without the moorings of family or profession. He becomes isolated in his musings on this unexpected event. This early moment of despair seems to echo plights faced by well-known characters in the social canon. Yet, whereas Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, and Pamela Andrews turn to thoughts of God for comfort in moments of crisis, surprisingly no thought of religious consolation enters into David's head.[169] Nonetheless, The narrator describes David engaged in something like prayer, but without reference to any listening deity or spirit. At the same time, his loneliness complements the proximity of the narrator to his thoughts:

> The only Use he had for Money, was to serve his friends; but when he reflected how difficult it was to meet with a Person who deserved that Name, and how hard it would be for him ever to believe any one sincere having been so much deceived, he thought nothing in Life could be any great Good to him again. He spent whole Days in thinking on this Subject, wishing he could meet with a Friend that could live with, who could throw off all separate Interests; for where Selfishness reigns in any of the Community, there can be no happiness. After he had revolved these things several times in his Mind, he took the oddest, most unaccountable Resolution that ever was heard of, *viz*. To travel through the whole World, rather than not meet with a real Friend. (20-21)

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[168] Of Fielding's development, Schellenberg writes, "the narrator as naïve alter-ego of the wandering hero in *David Simple* has been replaced by the narrator as authoritative social commentator in *Volume the Last*" (120). I will account for this transition, not as a replacement of one approach by another, but, rather, as an evolution that results from the constant interplay between ideals of amity and proprieties of narration.

[169] His psychological burden, admittedly, results not from desertion on an island, imprisonment and potential execution, or sexual violence, but, rather, the possession of "a very easy comfortable Fortune" (20) for which he has no meaningful use.

At the outset of the story, David naively trusts in his brother's friendship. When he discovers his sibling's plot to disinherit him, he gravitates toward the opposite extreme and briefly becomes cynical about the possibility of trusting anyone again. But the magic of the word "friend" intervenes. As if drawn in by the force of David's desire for companionship, the narrator comes close to the language of free indirect style in depicting these cogitations. In the above passage, for instance, semicolons shift registers of speech, with some ambiguity, between outside reportage and the voicing of David's thoughts. In the first sentence, only the pronoun and verb tense distinguish this thought from what we might otherwise recognize as language closely mimicking the rhythms of David's reasoning, until, following the semicolon, the phrases "he reflected" and "he thought" signal the presence of a mediating narrator.[170] In reading the clause that begins, "for where Selfishness reigns . . .," we cannot definitely or exclusively attribute this assertion to the narrator or character. In sharing David's feelings and listening in on his thoughts in the absence of any person, the narrator engages virtually, albeit in a unidirectional manner, in the kind of intimacy David proposes to seek out, filling the role of the friend before the real thing comes along.[171] Just at the point in the narrative when

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[170] In Dorrit Cohn's foundational lexicon, this shift would be an instance of her distinction between "narrated monologue" (or free indirect speech) and "psychonarration." See Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[171] In subsequent editions of the *Adventures*, Henry Fielding inserts a paragraph that adopts a more skeptical tone toward David's ambitions. He writes, "This was the Fantom, the Idol of his Soul's Admiration. In the Worship of which he at length grew such an Enthusiast, that he was in this Point only as mad as Quixotte himself could be with Knight Errantry." Comparing David's quest with Don Quixote's "Knight Errantry," Henry suggests that true friendship may prove as chimerical as natural family affections. At the same time, he emphasize that David is not defined by quixotism, but, rather, "in this Point only." David's character becomes a synecdoche for the novel genre: formally realist, but given to romantic excesses. Calling David an "enthusiast," Henry evokes a period skepticism toward perceived religious excess, associated particularly with Methodism. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) defines enthusiasm in line with this religious skepticism: "a vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication." As Johnson's *Dictionary* implies, enthusiasm involves not just the private belief, but the "confidence"—which is to say—the public expression or appearance of certainty about one's communication with divinity. Henry thus implies that David's quest partakes in both excessive religiosity and romance madness, qualities that put David at odds with modern polite society. Sarah Fielding's narrative diverges from this skeptical moment, as Henry's tone only seems to anticipate that of the faithless, heartless, and worldly-wise characters that David will soon encounter.[171] For a scholarly edition

David experiences this absence most markedly, the narrator appears closest to his mental space, consequently offering the reader access to the language and rhythm of David's mind, listening in the place of both God and friend.[172]

But before we arrive at this critical early scene, Fielding characterizes the narrator in a way that will make such gestures of mental transparency suspicious for the reader with a good memory. The narrator frequently displays knowledge of her character's inner thoughts and feelings, as if she holds a privileged perspective into David's world, not having any part in the action, and, perhaps, existing on a separate ontological plane.[173] However, in the novel's opening paragraph, the narrator indicates parenthetically that, "this History is all taken from his [David's] own Mouth" (7). It is a remark that is easy to forget, since the relationship between David and the narrator remains without any further clarification. Nevertheless, readers must infer that David has previously recited his entire tale to this anonymous figure, which ambiguously frames the narrator's intimacy with David during his moment of isolation. We might take instances of free indirect speech merely to represent the narrator's translation of David's self-reported thoughts into the format of a third person storyteller with limited omniscience. But such instances may also point to a certain liberty taken by this amicable auditor-turned-narrator to describe the workings of David's mind beyond what David may have originally confessed. It would

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that maintains Henry Fielding's emendations, see *The Adventures of David Simple*, ed. Macolm Kelsall (1745; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[172] James Wood identifies a similar connection between narration, free indirect style, and the thematic of friendship in *How Fiction Works* (New York: Picador, 2008), 16. Of Henry James's narration in *What Maisie Knew*, Wood writes: "the free indirect style is done so well that it is *pure voice*—it longs to be turned back into the speech of which it is the paraphrase." Wood comments that the "shadow" of Maisie's language in James's prose allows the reader to hear her speaking "to the kind of friend she in fact painfully lacks." Fielding's *Adventures* may provide one of the earliest models for this relationship between an isolated protagonist and a "friendly" third-person narrative persona.

[173] While I am ascribing a feminine pronoun to the narrator because of the author's gender, I want to acknowledge that author and narrator must be carefully distinguished. We should not assume that Fielding wishes to conflate the historical tensions surrounding her identity as a female author, which she acknowledges in the preface, with the social position and voice of the narrator in the main text.

seem the narrator's original display of sympathetic attentiveness now licenses her to enact a discursive intimacy in her retelling of David's story. While removed from David in space and time, the narrator's mental union with her hero recalls his description of ideal friendship. Whether we are to presume the narrator is simply sharing David's disclosed thoughts or imaginatively projecting them, the passage illustrates a close connection between this early use of free indirect style and the notion of a pre-existing but now distanced tie of amity between narrator and character. Moreover, this structure begins to involve the reader in the logic of amity, insofar as the narrator's double status as listener and transmitter models an act of reception in the circuit of narrative dissemination, an implication that I will discuss in detail below.

Fielding ties this mind-reading thematic to that of true and false friendship in the opening scene of filial betrayal. David's brother Daniel has manipulated their father's written will, secretly transferring nearly all of the inheritance into his own hands. During the reading of the will, Daniel feigns surprise. David finds this performance genuine, because, as always, he "never doubted but that his Brother's Mind was like his own" (11). But throughout the first chapter of the novel, Fielding has invited the reader to share in this belief with David, by engaging in what initially appears to be a form of collectivized psychic reportage, writing: "while there was any Money in either of their Pockets, the other was sure never to want it: the Notion of whose Property it was, being the last thing that ever entered into their Heads" (7). Lines that upon a first reading would seem to guarantee, by the authority of a third person narrator, the mental affinity existing between David and Daniel, must be reconsidered as a deceptive use of free indirect style that offers us only David's flawed consciousness. It is only a few lines later that the narrator reveals the subjective basis of the story, and then quickly begins to hint that David's perceptions will fail him. That "the strict Friendship they kept up" appears ultimately as his illusion underscores the role of mental communion in the real friendships that will follow. Yet, this original violation of trust threatens to haunt future

relationships by alerting readers to the difficulty of ever really knowing that David possesses a genuine friend.

Although the narrator's subtle ploy parallels the way that Daniel fools David, the narrator's trick is temporary, harmless, and instructive. By teaching the reader not to take for granted the authority and transparency of the third person voice, this technical maneuver aligns with the kind of instruction David receives in learning to question the appearances that once signaled the natural affections of a brother. Linking deceptive appearances to a brother's false loyalty, Fielding resists the simple equation of kinship or domestic ties with moral sensibility and its associated economic dimensions.[174] In David's search for a real friend "to live with" and share in his recovered fortune, the novel explores an alternative to a patrimonial system that encourages self-interest and deception rather than fostering openness and affection between brothers.

The tension around patrimony in the *Adventures* indicates a nexus between narrative form and historical context. Before deliberating on his journey, David merely wanders about in distress over his brother's deception: "When he first set out, he had but half a Crown in his Pocket, a Shilling of which he gave away in his Walk to a Beggar, who told him a Story of having been turned out of doors by an unnatural Brother" (14-15). The immediate mirroring of what has just happened to David suggests a prevalence of this familial disorder, centered especially around the power struggle between brothers for control of the home. David's experience with the beggar models a scene that will

[174] The relation of sensibility to understandings of kinship, family, and friendship in the period indicates a cultural and intellectual context to which this essay cannot fully do justice, though it forms a significant backdrop for Fielding's treatment of friendship and family. Several influential studies of the novel point to the centrality of family, domesticity, and property, as the basis of sympathetic economies. See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford University Press 1987); Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); and Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994). These analyses often highlight the ways that, in the philosophical canon, figures including Adam Smith, David Hume, and Edmund Burke connect sympathetic cognition to one's feelings toward kin, the proximity of domestic intercourse, and property rights.

reoccur throughout sentimental literature over the next few decades, involving the exchange of money for a tearful tale. This sentimental economics typically allegorizes the reader's relation to sentimental literature, drawing out its moral delicacies and hazards. But, in this early case, the sympathetic communion takes root specifically in the alienation from family ties and expresses a reciprocal distress.

This mirroring of alienated siblings reflects the way fiction processes ideological contradictions raised by the problem of younger sons, what Michael McKeon describes in terms of a tensions between aristocratic and progressive ideologies.[175] Seeking to deprive David of his patrimony and possess it wholly himself, Daniel embodies the qualities of the progressive striver; his unmistakable duplicity conveys Fielding's critical view of emergent economic rationalization of self-interest.[176] The passage emphasizes the oxymoronic "unnaturalness" of these two sets of brothers and raises questions about rooting the social order in notions of natural family affection. Fielding incorporates this act of benevolence toward a stranger to anticipate the community of friends, and by extension, the community of readers, that will supplement the unreliable sympathy of kinship.

In this political-economic context, Fielding's depiction of ideal friendship cuts in two directions. Because David's pitiable plight involves his imperiled social privilege as a first son, critics have noted the narrative's support for an aristocratic ideology.[177] Yet, I

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[175] McKeon, 226-228.

[176] Daniel's irreverence regarding the written will, repeated in the Harlowe's view of the grandfather's will in *Clarissa*, suggests a dislocation of the aristocratic analogy between familial and political structures of authority. Whether the perceived breakdown of this analogy in fiction reflects an actually breakdown in structures of authority in the wider culture of eighteenth-century Britain exceeds the scope of this study.

[177] For Kim, the novel deals with "the problem of true worth cast down the social hierarchy" (489). Alternatively, however, Gillian Skinner observes that David's class status is difficult to determine. While he benefits from the rights of a first son, his patrimony represents his father's success in trade. Although he is educated like a gentleman, he has little familiarity with high living. See Skinner, *Sensibility and Economics in the Novel, 1740–1800: The Price of a Tear* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 22.

would suggest, David's exile demonstrates how patrilineal economics create a familial competition between brothers that makes genuine amity impossible. In Gary Gautier's view, Fielding also distances herself from an emerging bourgeois sensibility.[178] This appears in the novel's relentless critique of a rampant commercialism that precludes genuine friendship in public and private life. Fielding's satirical image of the Royal Exchange, of Mr. Johnson who barters with his daughter's hand in marriage, and, in *Volume the Last*, of the vain pursuit of profits in foreign slave markets, define an ideal of friendship against various forms of economic individualism. In this context, David sets out to instigate a novel route for connecting virtue to financial identity, what one might call "amimony." Yet, as I will show, Fielding's portrait of relationships that aspire toward ideal amity evokes contradictions that threaten to unsettle this alternative economy.

The search for friendship strives to reconcile financial prudence and liberality. Just before setting out, David makes two seemingly irreconcilable commitments, to, "assist all those who had been thrown into Misfortunes by the ill Usage of others," and "to keep all his Money to share with his Friend, if he should be so fortunate to find any Man worthy to be called by that Name" (21). The tension here is more than one between universal benevolence and exclusive friendship. At stake is a logic of risk and reward, between paying it forward and holding back for greater certainty about possessing the genuine article. These two motivations ultimate converge, as we will see, because Fielding makes apparent victimhood a virtual guarantee of worthiness. But even the very possibility of friendship incentivizes David to invest his whole fortune, as well as his time and energy, since, "if ever he could find a valuable Friend, in either Man or Woman,

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[178] Gary Gautier, "Henry and Sarah Fielding on Romance and Sensibility," *Novel* 31, no. 2 (1998): 195–214. According to Gautier, Fielding "warns conservative Augustans against rejecting sensibility and lapsing into a cold, neo-Stoicism. Yet at the same time she warns bourgeois proponents of sensibility against making any clean break from Augustan principles of rationality and clear judgment" (204).

he should be doubly paid for the Pains and Difficulties he could possibly go through" (35-36). No expenditure can appear imprudent, because nothing currently in David's life has value in the absence of a friend.

Upon setting out into London, David finds the words "friend" and "friendship" bandied about as casually as oaths. While Sarah Fielding may seem facetious when she conducts David first to the Royal Exchange in search of friendship, it foregrounds the dialectic elaboration of friendship, first distanced from the supposedly natural affections associated with domesticity, and then distanced from notions about the socializing effects of commerce. The narrator continues to embody the advising friend that David lacks, indicating to the reader, in advance, the futility of searching for a friend in this venue, while being too remote to offer any counsel to David. The narrator's remote wisdom is immediately contrasted with the imposing advice of a new "friend" who immediately solicits David to buy shares in a stock fund, remarking, "I advise you as a Friend, for now is your time, if you have any Money to lay out; as you seem a Stranger" (22). This sinister solicitation of investment under the guise of friendship inverts David's logic of expenditure: in this case, the word friend becomes an unlimited rhetorical currency that one can draw on to facilitate investment schemes and maximize personal profits. David avoids this trap, partly because he already possesses a nearly inexhaustible fortune, one which, in his mind, is only worth exchanging for the priceless possession of a true friend.

Before David discovers his true friends, his acquaintance with the characters Varnish and Spatter expands the reader's skepticism beyond the opening scene of filial deception. Fielding presents Varnish and Spatter as false friends, not because they feign an amiable persona, but because in speaking about others they are prone respectively to flattery or vitriol. These flaws reflect their unreliable perceptions and an inability to sympathize. Because they spend more time gossiping than listening attentively, they cannot forge the kind of mental communion that Fielding associates with friendship. Thus, in moving from this interlude of unreliable narrations to the first person stories of

David's future friends, the novel suggests that sympathy may not be realizable in telling stories about others; rather, it may appear only through responsive listening to autobiographical accounts. This pattern positions the overall tale in fraught territory, as Fielding's anonymous third person narrator tacitly asks for unconditional trust from the reader in spite of the story's internal logic.

Throughout this sweep of false friendship, even a moderately skeptical reader might pause over a lingering problem: David has substituted a desire for real friendship in the place of any sustained self-scrutiny. Our trust in the narrator as an intermediary serves as a necessary corrective. If David laments his former naiveté, he otherwise takes his virtue as a given.[179] Distracted from spiritual introspection by his own cynical thoughts about all humanity, he finally arrives at a reflective solution that prompts him to resume the quest: "his own Mind was a Proof to him, that Generosity, Good-nature, and a Capacity for real Friendship, were to be found in the World" (35). Such certainty runs counter to the philosophical and theological tradition (discussed in the introduction) that defines friendship as an alleviation of self-flattery. In the absence of a friend's reflecting consciousness, the *Adventure*s relies on the reader's trust in the remote narrator as its authenticating device to legitimate the sincerity and integrity of David's "proof."[180] The narrator's tacit friendship with David, founded on a vague claim of acquaintance, and intense knowledge of his mind, recurrently verifies his claim to virtue. Fielding does not prevent the reader's adoption of a skeptical mentality (the sort that Henry Fielding applied in turning *Pamela* into *Shamela)*; rather, she makes this skepticism a question of how far one trusts, not just David, but the narrator, as his benevolent intermediary.

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[179] David's certainty on this point breaks with representations of character interiority in earlier works of fiction, from the spiritual struggle that marks the allegorical work of religious dissenters (Bunyan and Defoe) to the social self-consciousness of epistolary form (Richardson).

[180] McKeon, 95. On the confessional authority of the first person, McKeon describes the "structural interplay between the sinful present of the Character and the repentant retrospection of the Narrator, who, incorporating God's omniscience, knows how the story will end." The friend-narrator restructures this interplay between intimate immediacy and distanced foreknowledge.

The small community that David finds—which includes Cynthia, Valentine, and David's future wife Camilla—grows from an act of charity and is solidified by the oral recitation of each individual's personal story. The method of forming this surrogate family necessitates the novel's episodic shape. Initially deterred from the predictable linear plot of a first son, who inherits and then carries on with the familial estate, David sets out "to travel through the whole World" and to owe his knowledge to "experience alone" (21). In a sense, though, his only productive travels take place in the imagination, as he listens to the stories of his future companions. Sorting out the true and false friends requires not so much first-hand experience, as it requires letting strangers tell their story. It would appear that real friendship is formed not through shared experiences, but virtually, through vicariously sharing in the experiences of others, and in recognizing patterns that parallel one's own life story.[181] Such relationships form the basis of the more stable economic system in which David invests his full faith and credit.

While much of this community building requires that characters take the reins of storytelling, the narrator must repeatedly displace any lingering fears about the superficiality of appearances. Before stories can even be exchanged, each side must recognize an affinity of mind in the appearance of the other, as a basic guarantee of the subsequent tale's veracity. When David first meets Cynthia, for instance, she offers an account of her situation only after observing "the *Innocence* of David's Looks, and the Sincerity which was visible in his Manner of expressing himself" (79). Similarly, when David finds himself unsure how far to trust Camilla and Valentine, on whom he has just bestowed his charity, he finds reassurance in Valentine's grateful countenance, which "looked on *David* with an Air of Softness and Gratitude, in which our Hero's Sensibility read as much as any thing [Valentine] could have said" (100). For the skeptical reader,

[181] Each story parallels features of David's experience, particularly the injustice that can result from acts of deception and the absence of sympathy.

the trust invested in sympathetic looks (a logic that intensifies in *Volume the Last*) may not quell the doubts elicited by the character type that Daniel represents, namely someone who, "did not want Art enough to affect" the appearance of friendship (9). But if this language of amiable appearances anxiously recalls the unreliability of Daniel Simple's looks and declarations, such appearances allow for characters to tell their own stories and stimulate sympathies that will further corroborate these first impressions.

As a necessary supplement to the fragile proof of these visual cues, the narrator assures us that the initial suspicion these characters feel toward one another is justifiable but misplaced. When David briefly doubts his esteem for Camilla and Valentine shortly after bestowing his charity on them, the narrator's authoritative language allows readers to place greater trust in these strangers than David can, given what little he knows. For instance, following David's generous dispensation, the narrator observes, "*David's* Pleasure was perfectly equal with either of theirs, in the Thoughts that he was the Cause of it" (103). This declaration of shared sensibility mitigates the suspicion that David is dealing with yet more frauds. At the same time, Fielding's qualified phrasing could leave readers unsure whether to attribute this comforting thought to the narrator's intimate knowledge of hearts and minds, or, as in the earlier instance of free indirect style, to David's fallible perception of the visible joy exhibited by his beneficiaries.

As this community grows together into a unified audience for the stories of strangers that they encounter, the narrator guarantees their union of minds more forcefully, while always tying it suspiciously to visual proofs. In one instance, the group listens to a new acquaintance, Isabelle, tell her life story. At a juncture in the embedded tale highlighting a thematic of friendship, Fielding's narrator intervenes to describe the silent communion between David and Valentine: "both expressed their great Admiration for the Marquis *de Stainville* and the Chevalier *Dumont's* sincere and faithful Friendship, and by their Looks and Gestures plainly declared the inward Exultings of their Minds, at the Thought that they had met with the same Happiness in each other" (170). Again, the

narrator casually adopts an omniscient posture to verify the correspondence between inner sentiments and exterior looks. Yet, from the beginning, Fielding has dared readers to overvalue appearances and has positioned the narrator's claims as interpretations of an anonymous friend. By this point, we are led to cautiously credit the bonds of this community, but we might still pause over the narrator's confident description of collective consciousness, which echoes the novel's opening illusion.

The primary point of this analysis is to suggest that Fielding's portrait of idealized friendship—forged out of extreme skepticism generated by the pervasive circulation of false friendship—can only function through the narrator's sleight of hand that distracts us from an inherent contradiction: real friendships always build on the same unreliable signs that, as David's experience shows, can ensnare virtuous characters in the plots of their false friends. As Kim states, the world of this novel can seem "a sentimental 'deconstructionist wonderland' where true friendship is present only through a metonymic chain of infinite deferral."[182] The narrator's efforts to root this new community in David's virtuous subjectivity continually stand in tension with the buried admission that the story in its entirety comes from David's own mouth. The authority of this narrator, it is suggested, ultimately resides in the same form of oral exchange that binds character to character. Thus, after many instances of deceit, the novel legitimates these oral exchanges and affirms the correspondence of sympathizing minds by eliding the narrator's initial, nearly invisible act of credit. The narrator invites us, as readers, to project onto David a faith in these strangers that we recognize he should not have, a faith that is available only to our advantaged perspective, one which, after further reflection on

[182] Kim, 484-485. For Kim, the ethical subjectivity of women characters finally stabilize this chaos of signification, by providing, through gestures of fidelity that lead to marriage, a solid foundation for a community of friendship to emerge. I would suggest, however, that this observation does not fully account for the significance of David and Valentine's relationship, or of David's platonic friendship with Cynthia. Most importantly, this view underappreciates the narrator's involvement in managing this deferral of value so that a new community can emerge.

the novel's framing apparatus, should not be available even to us. If such faith ultimately devolves into ironic reflection on narrative artifice, it nevertheless indicates an important feature of Fielding's ambivalent construction of the narrator: this amiable persona emerges, on the one hand, as a literal extension of the circle, a figure whose own story remains elided, and on the other hand, as an impersonal, omniscient entity that figuratively imitates the represented virtues of David's new community.

The narrator's paradoxical validation of David's community addresses a genuine tension between friendship and social propriety. When the group desperately wants to hear Isabelle's history, the means of inducing her confession becomes a delicate matter of how to engage a forward intimacy with strangers. As David's impatience grows, he laments upon the

> Tyranny of Custom, which often subjects the Unfortunate to bear their Miseries; because her severe Laws will neither suffer them to lay open their Distresses, without being thought forward and impertinent nor let even *those People* who would relieve them, enquire into their Misery, without being called by the World *madly curious*, or *ridiculously meddling*. (152-153)

David's fear of seeming impertinent correlates with Catherine Gallagher's account of fictional Nobodies. As she suggest, because readers recognize, from the novel's opening pages, that characters such as David and his friends do not refer to actual persons in the world, readers can more easily justify an "inquisitiveness without impertinence."[183] According to Gallagher, our ability, as readers, to sympathize with fictional minds depends on our ability to probe them without regard for any person's consent, or for social niceties that would otherwise censure our curiosity. But in the *Adventures,* the reader's curiosity is propelled, not merely by the recognition that these characters are Nobodies, but by the representation of characters who themselves press on the limits of acceptable curiosity.[184]

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[183] Gallagher, 178.

[184] Fielding's novel thus frames a syllogistic equation, linking fictional Nobodies to strangers, and strangers to potential friends.

David's amiable curiosity, underwritten by that narrator's publication of these delicately solicited confessions, not only figures the acceptability of our interest as readers, but also speaks to the readers view of propriety regarding actual persons. Isabelle's narrative legitimates a curiosity that is prompted by visible suffering and motivated by universal desire for friendship. The broader acceptability of David's behavior transposes the risk/reward schematic of friendship formation; the willing sympathizer risks provoking public censure, while the victim risks over exposure and ridicule. The violation of everyday decorum, for both parties, instances Wolfgang Iser's account of how the reader's judgment of heroic actions implicates social norms. As Iser argues, the reader must determines whether to censure the hero for actions that violate social norms, or whether to question the universality of those norms. David's lament expresses a desire to universalize the privilege he wishes to take, so that strangers need not seem quixotic, or worse, morally deviant, in their willingness to solicit information so as to sympathize with others they hardly know. His appeal tacitly positions the reading audience as those who can authorize his case as a legitimate exception. Although David never quite breaks with decorum, Fielding invites us to reflect on what its significance would be. The claims of friendship are left, ultimately, in ambiguous moral terrain; between a possible, rare, exception to custom, and an ideal that remodels custom altogether.

By bringing David up to this behavioral limit, Fielding reminds the reader that only the narrator's problematic access to the private dimension of character legitimates the reader's recognition of David as one of "*those People*." David imagines the custom guiding the eye of the world that rests upon him; he knows it will see him as mad and ridiculous, and restrains himself appropriately. But he also laments the injustice of this authoritative conjunction between custom and world; it should let him off the hook for his unusual curiosity, he imagines, because it should see that he is one of "*those People*." Acknowledging this social tension helps to reframe the formal problem that Fielding

engages in her approach to narration. Against the ridiculing eye of the world, Fielding stages her intimate view of David. Just as David's wish is conceptually impossible, in its asking the world to implicitly know his inner worthiness, the narrator's mediation of David's mind straddles a parallel divide, uncomfortably occupying a liminal space (and generic phase): on the one hand, the narrator positions herself as a homo-diegetic member of David's world, repeating David's story and mind-reading characters in the same way they read one another; on the other hand, the narrator takes the liberties of a depersonalized third-party, an anonymous persona with God-like access to the private thoughts of her own creations. This formal gap emerges not just in correlation with the hero's quest for friendship, but as an outgrowth of its taxing idealization. The narrator's performance of friendship as a remote and retrospective mediator of David's story may contrast with David's more immediate, local, and spontaneous performance of friendship, but these two models are as knotted together as the novel's form and content.

As David weds Camilla and Cynthia is betrothed to Valentine, the novel's location of narrative closure in a double marriage counterpoints her effort at shoring up our investment in friendship as an alternative economics. By the end of the *Adventures*, the search for ideal friendship appears to take the more familiar road of moral subjectivity fulfilled in the domestic sphere. That the novel caps David's quest with the institutional bonds of matrimony has not dissuaded critics, however, from defending the centrality of friendship; according to Terry and Linda Bree, amity does not so much distract from these romantic elements as it refines the qualities Fielding wishes to associate with committed heterosexual love.[185] From a formal angle, I would add, David's marriage is decentered by Valentine and Cynthia's espousal, as the narrator places both unions within the larger pattern of a reformed community. These couples are bound by a familial bond

[185] See Terry, 527; Linda Bree, *Sarah Fielding* (New York: Twayne, 1996), 42-3.

made conscious through experience that the bonds of kinship and domesticity alone cannot forge reliable ties of sympathy.

Despite these closing romantic sentiments, Fielding emphasizes that she has little concern for romantic intimacies. As the narrator pointedly puts this matter, "I have too much Regard for my Readers to make them *third Persons to Lovers*" (Fielding's italics, 230). In this assumption about narrative propriety, Fielding acknowledges that some readers may wish to partake in a more voyeuristic delight, but suggests that they should be ashamed to admit it. By this point, the novel has failed if it has not taught its readers to frame their interests in characters through the morally justifiable curiosity exhibited by these very same role models. Above all, this jest about the interest of her polite readers indicates why, for Fielding, the friendship tropes frames our relation to character and author better than a trope of spousal intimacy could; in the latter case, the reader would always be "a third person" excluded by the code of monogamy. Friendship, on the other hand, admits of a third.

Forging an Ethics of Reception for Fictional Deaths

Before David acquires the security of his amiable circle, he encounters Mr. Orgueil, a stoic figure who critiques modern moral sensibilities in a way that implicates David's quest for friendship. Orgueil troubles David by impugning the selfish pleasure that rewards compassionate action, arguing that only law and reason can serve as a guide to real virtue. Because just this sort of pleasure lies at the heart of David's new relationships, Orgueil's charge against sensibility extends to the political dimension of David's sustained friendships. If the joy that fills the *Adventure's* final pages does not wholly shake this line of critique, the sequel's unrelenting attack on David's community draws out a tacit counterargument. The final volume displays not so much the fallacy of sensible friendship, as Terry has argued, but, rather, the fulfillment of an idealized mental union that trades in pain as much as pleasure. *Volume the Last* focuses on the obligations

and expressions of real friendship, while shifting its concern toward the emotional taxes levied on this liked-minded society. By forcing David to confront a series of misfortunes, Fielding dramatizes the psychic burden of friendship, and in doing so, puts greater strain on the intermediary function of the narrator.

In pursuing its tragic vision, *Volume the Last* nevertheless extends and qualifies ideal friendship's economic implications as a form of social critique. The false rhetoric of friendship that appears in the *Adventures* portrait of the Royal Exchange gives way, in the sequel, to a nakedly self-interested financial world, in which the word friendship sounds, to the initiated, like "unintelligible Gibberish" (291). When David seeks to assist his family by procuring a loan, he naively expects that Valentine's economic prospects in Jamaica, and his own claim of friendship with Valentine, will serve as a security in the eyes of the broker. But it strikes Mr. Nichols, the lender, as absurd that David, as an expression of friendship, has linked his fortune to that of a family beyond his immediate household. As the narrator puts it, "the Trust and Confidence David expressed in Valentine's Friendship, sounded as nonsensical in his [Nichols's] Ears, as if he had affirmed he could safely trust a Fox with the Care of his Poultry" (291). Nichols advises David that "Valentine's Friendship was mere Pretence, and had been hitherto counterfeited, in order to make an Advantage of David's credulity," and that Valentine "would wisely cast him off, and avoid the Expence of endeavoring to prove himself what such a Fool as David would call a real Friend." Although the reader can recognize Mr. Nichols as a corrupt and cynical figure, his power over David reflects an insurmountable gap between the values of ideal friendship and those of modern economic institutions. In David's world, real friendship is prized currency that adds security to collective property-holding and economic ventures. But David's fails to translate his sensibility into terms the modern world recognizes. In such scenes, Fielding's appears increasingly skeptical about real friendship ever widely circulating in British society

Fielding uncovers a complementary logic driving the cynical self-interest of public finance and the rationale of domestic economy. In her portrait of Mrs. Orgeuil, Fielding critiques the notion of moral duty centered on the family household, diminishing in degree as it radiates out in concentric circles of obligation. Fielding reverses the flow of moral sentiments, suggesting, instead, that the possession of a forward intimacy and sympathy, which allows one to imagine strangers as friends, forms the basis for the reformation of familial affections. For instance, while observing David's care for his niece, little Cynthia, Mrs. Orgueil declares how shameful it is for a man in his financial situation "to spend his substance on strangers" (281). While the young girl is no stranger to David, Mrs. Orgueil's moral view implicitly assumes that a niece might be treated as more of a stranger than a son or daughter. As the narrator writes, "when Mrs. Orgueil entered on the Topic, how much it is a Man's Duty to provide for his own Family, she was never tired of the Repetition of the Word *own*. (282). Mrs. Orgueil expresses her selfish views often and at length, reminding her husband that "charity begins at Home" and "it is incumbent on every Man to take Care of his own, and not ruin himself and his Family for the sake of a romantic Friendship" (320). More than just a foil for true friendship, though, Mrs. Orgueil's view caricatures features of works on moral sensibility that would come out in decades to follow, as philosophical works by Smith, Hume, Burke each propose versions of a moral economy that radiates outward from the self to the home, neighborhood, and finally, the wider world by ever diminishing degrees. For Fielding, charity starts with strangers.

Volume the Last punctures the optimism of *Adventures* by showing how the necessary intercourse between David's little community and the larger society renders them vulnerable to financial and physical catastrophes. Mr. Orgueil, and a new acquaintance, Mr. Ratcliff, together lead David to financial ruin by encouraging him to squander his fortune in a fruitless lawsuit. Valentine succumbs to a premature death while pursuing colonial projects in Jamaica. David's niece, little Cynthia, dies from an illness

contracted unnecessarily while under the care of the negligent and selfish Mrs. Orgueil. Increasing poverty and the loss of friends and family undo Camilla's health. By the end, only Cynthia and David's daughter, young Camilla, remain to witness David's untimely passing. While the narrator describes these events as a "strange and unexpected change of fortune" (295), she repeatedly hints that they may be partly attributed to David's "timidity of mind" (277), as he hesitates to disentangle his friends from the corrosive influence of the Ratcliff and Orgueil families. David's culpability challenges the narrator's management of an amiable ethos. On one hand, the narrator has an obligation to expose her hero's folly for the reader's moral edification. On the other hand, she shows a defensive fidelity to these characters, appearing anxious that the reader may judge David harshly, and, as a result, grow incapable of sympathy. Gently critiquing David's passivity, she observes that he "*in a manner forced himself to fancy he believed* that Ratcliff and Orgueil would be his Friends, against that almost infallible Proof to the contrary" (my italics, 277). The string of equivocal modifiers and verbs suggests the narrator's difficulty describing David's mind or judging his actions. That she can only label signs of false friendship as "almost infallible Proof" recalls the way the *Adventures* balances real friendship on a knife's edge between naiveté and merited faith.

Added to this dilemma, the excessive nature of tragic events makes the narrator wary about the disclosure of her character's thoughts and feelings. The narrator's challenge in cultivating sympathy here involves not only the reader's past experience with suffering, but also his or her willingness to sympathize with this degree of pain. More so than in her mediations of past joys, the narrator exhibits a sensitivity to the risk of exposing her suffering characters to the reader's indifference or cynical mockery. At the same time, this caution correlates with Fielding's more nuanced recognition of reader autonomy resulting from her engagement with *Clarissa's* audience and from the personal

tragedies that arose in the nine years between the *Adventures* and *Volume the Last*.[186] Her tone registers her anxiety about a reading public that has less desire to follow characters into the depths of grief, particularly if they sense a joyous reversal of fortune is not around the corner. Thus, Fielding's sense of a potentially hostile audience conveyed in the preface to *Adventures* returns as the narrator's persistent anxiety in *Volume the Last*.

In these emotionally-charged moments, the narrator shifts strategies, at times prompting good readers to collaborate with her cues to sympathize, at other times, lumping all readers together as potential antagonists. An instance of the former approach appears in a description of David and Camilla's feelings as they observe their son Peter's silent misgivings about his name, imposed by his Godfather, Peter Ratcliff. In this description, the narrator asks the audience to imagine, "a peculiar kind of tender Sensation, as I cannot pretend to give my Readers any Idea of, unless they will again assist me, by the Help of their own Imaginations" (255). In more distressing moments, the narrator frames the notion of the reader's collaboration more tenuously, invoking the inadequacy of language to mediate pain, and placing rhetorical emphasis on negative grammatical constructions. One striking example occurs when two of David's children, Joan and little David, die suddenly after contracting the measles, another accident resulting from Mrs. Orgueil's selfish disregard for everyone but her own kin. The narrator remarks that she will not hold back the parent's painful sentiments to spare her "gentle readers," but rather, because, "Words cannot reach it—the sympathizing Heart must imagine it—and the Heart that has no sympathy, is not capable of receiving it" (326). By posing this unflattering image of emotionally disengaged reading, Fielding hints at the possibility of a divided readership. As the volume hastens to a close, such strategies reveal the narrator's emerging anxiety about finally handing over David's legacy into the reader's care.

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[186] Terry makes this latter connection, citing Bree's coverage of Fielding's life.

David's multiplying misfortunes place further stress on a narrator attempting to balance amiable obligations to both character and reader. In her effort to imitate the knowledge of mind and moral obligations displayed by David's friendships, the narrator encounters a web of contradictions. The articulation of these tensions over the course of *Volume the Last* informs a rhetoric of contested power relations between narrator and audience. First, we can perceive an uneasy parallelism between the narrator's frequent apology for the failure of her language and the increasing preference among characters for non-verbal signs of sympathy. Although the notion of friendship as a form of radically unmediated sympathy arises occasionally in the *Adventures*, it proliferates in *Volume the Last* alongside frequent depictions of characters restraining the verbal and visible signs of anguish in the face of collective mental suffering. As members of David's circle grow confident in one another, they withhold verbal professions of friendship, finding the subtler communications of a glance more appropriate for the kind of painful communion brought on by tragic events. But while these instances of mental affinity between characters always include the mediations of facial expressions, the narrator paradoxically expects that we might sympathize without the aid of any intervening narration. Our performance of friendship, as readers, requires that we appeal to our feeling of personal emotional depth as a substitute for the indescribable interiority of these characters.

Yet, in coaching us in this practice, the narrator verges on self-effacement. By imitating the way her characters associate true friendship with non-verbal communication, the narrator risks eliding her own purely verbal position in the circuit of intimate connections. This risk appears as the degree of pain intensifies. The question of whether the narrator can capture in language the inner feelings of her characters shifts to the question of whether the narrator should infringe on their private dialogues. In the final scene of protracted suffering, as David languishes on his death-bed and finds a temporary consolation in a reunion with Cynthia, the narrator writes: "his visible Decay, even

chearful as he was, gave such Wounds to her Heart, as, following her Example, I am willing to pass over, and bury in oblivion. Neither shall their Conversations be repeated by me. It is sufficient to say, that they spoke the Words dictated by the Hearts of Cynthia and David Simple" (338). The narrator's challenge in mediating the suffering interiority of character also becomes a matter of friendship's ethics. In modeling the act of narration on the example set by her characters, Fielding draws out the moral strain inherent in befriending character and reader at the same time. This image of "burying" the details would seem to imply that the narrator bears the burden of information that she must responsibly censor, sparing her readers, yes, but also excluding them from the knowledge that binds her to Cynthia (and Cynthia to David).

However, Cynthia too, in being an example to the narrator, has presumably passed over these details—both David's "visible Decay" and "their Conversation,"—in an implied oral exchange that serves as this sequel's pretext. The passage prompts us to infer that *Volume the Last* does not originate in David's oral narration, as specified at the outset of the *Adventures*, but stems from Cynthia's account.[187] A storyline arising from words "taken from [David's] own mouth" now becomes limited by 'words invoked but passed over' by Cynthia. With this recognition, the narrator's claim to bury Cynthia's words stands in open contradiction with the narrator's admission that she does not in fact possess them. The narrator's effort to imitate the friendship between characters thus draws her into adopting conflicting positions. On the one hand, she does not know what words were exchanged in this conversation, and, if she did, she would not share them. On the other hand, her authority as narrator draws on the suggestion that she possesses this

[187] The novel's penultimate paragraph corroborates this interpretation. Following a lengthy quotation of David's death-bed oration, the narrator writes, "These Things did David speak at various Times, and with such Chearfulness, that Cynthia said, the last Hour she spent with him, in seeing his Hopes and Resignation, was a Scene of real Pleasure" (342).

secret knowledge of friendship. This posture puts readers in an uncertain position: has the narrator, out of friendship to David, turned her back on us? Or are we prompted to share with the narrator in a remote sympathy that lacks the particular knowledge of a friend?

Despite the narrator's increasing tendencies toward concealment and self-effacement, the novel concludes with the transmission of David's last monologue and a final paragraph that foregrounds literary self-consciousness for both writer and reader. Reversing the earlier promise to conceal these distressing conversations, the narrator discloses David's deathbed sentiments regarding his quest for friendship. He confesses to Cynthia: "I then experienced all the Horrors of Friendship—my Eyes were forced wide open, to discover the Fallacy of fancying any real or lasting Happiness can arise from an Attachment to Objects subject to Infirmities, Diseases, and to certain Death" (431). In this final account, the lure of happiness connected with friendship, *not* friendship itself, appears illusive and devalued. Despite the horrors of friendship and the impermanence of earthly relationships, David does not forsake his sole surviving friend, but takes solace in her presence, faithfully yielding his offspring into her care. Cynthia's survivorship becomes an important structural feature of the tragic conclusion, as she stands in as a proxy for the reader (like the mourning Anna Howe), and, as David's first and last friend, but never his love, a vehicle for further displacement of the marriage plot. As David disparages those qualities of earthly friendship that involve the presence of the embodied friend, or the friend-as-wife, the novel preserves friendship's remote offices through the figure of the surviving Cynthia.

In the closing lines, Fielding transposes this thematic of disembodied friendship to the level of literary exchange, allowing the narrator to speak more explicitly as an author of fictions. Her parting terms bring to a climax the moral and epistemological tensions around the depiction of friendship, drawing out the paradoxical power relations between writer and reader. At the same time, she subtly prompts readers to recognize their

relationship with character in terms of their regard for authorial control and the aesthetic closure offered by the final volume:

> But now will I draw the Veil, and if any of my Readers chuse to drag David Simple from the Grave, to struggle again in this World, and to reflect, every Day, on the Vanity of its utmost Enjoyments, they may use their own Imaginations, and fancy David Simple still bustling about on this Earth. But I chuse to think he is escaped from the Possibility of falling into any future Afflictions, and that neither the Malice of his pretended Friends, nor the Sufferings of his real ones, can ever again rend and torment his honest Heart (342).

This association of authorial "veiling" and figurative burial reflects a culmination of the way Fielding has treated amicable sympathy. On the one hand, this imagery reinforces the narrator's authority in entombing her protagonist: she has been drawing and un-drawing the veil all along, "burying" certain conversations, while revealing others. On the other hand, the reader's imagination must be granted the power to animate inert matter, as it has been all along required to turn Fielding's sentences into sentiments; the passage acknowledges how this basic ability exists in tension with the writer's control over the story's unity and completion.

Whereas Fielding's narrator in the *Adventures* quietly shifts from personhood to impersonal omniscience, the narrator in *Volume the Last* ends by explicitly imbuing her hero with contractor status, playing on historical and meta-fictional frames of reading. In these closing remarks, David is an entity that exists independent of author and reader, and one that is entirely subjected, alternately, to the writer's moral objective *or* the reader's whimsy. Through this explicit contradiction, Fielding foregrounds her effort in translating the representation of tragic friendship into an ethics of consuming fiction. The reader's freedom to imagine must be acknowledged before the narrator mildly encourages the audience to follow her example. By voluntarily allowing David to rest in peace, the reader imitates the pattern of real friendship, by finding the loss of a friend more bearable than his or her suffering. Yet, this gesture of friendship is also rooted paradoxically in David's fictional being. Unlike Don Quixote, who "really lies stretch'd out beyond a

Possibility of taking a third ramble through the World," David Simple comes to rest in a historical-fictional purgatory; from present and future sufferings, the narrator can only "chuse to think he *is* escaped" (my italics). As the present tense phrasing suggests, it is by letting David rest now, *as* an imagined character, that we express our amity. The narrator asks the audience to recognize the general subjection of fictional characters to readers, and to disavow that power as a sign of friendship.

In the same manner, her ending pleads with the audience to deal generously with the writer by asking us to sympathize with her inability to stop this figurative grave robbing. Although Fielding evokes her relative disempowerment as an author, it is her recognition of the reader's power that allows for the friendship trope to register as a frame of obligation. Linking authorial didacticism to the vulnerability of fictional identity, Fielding imagines the give and take of authority exercised between authors and readers, a volatile dynamic that ultimately serves best to liken the act of reading fiction to the reciprocity of virtual friendship. Hence, Fielding does not end her novel by lamenting her inability to control readers, but, rather, poses the reception of her work in the reciprocal terms of friendship.

Unlike Cervantes, Fielding targets the reader's mental reflection on fictional characters, rather than rival writers, or even the status of readers as purchasers of books. By equating friendship with the mental discipline of readers, she seeks to reform the aesthetic sensibility of her audience as a prerequisite to moral didacticism. This strategy does not definitely resolve the paradoxical relation between aesthetic artifice and ethical codes established in the *Adventures*: in this case, the moral of true friendship reinforces the totality of the narrative form and vise versa. While the connotations of friendship and literary form have shifted, Fielding persists in her effort to synthesis the aesthetics and ethical register of fiction in the terms of idealized amity.

As Henry Fielding wrote defending the *Adventures*'s structure, "every Episode bears a manifest Impression of the principal Design, and chiefly turns on the Perfection

or Imperfection of Friendship; of which noble Passion, from its highest Purity to its lowest Falsehood and Disguises, this little book is, in my opinion the most exact Model"[188] Through a syntax that categorically includes imperfection and perfection, purity and disguise, within the "noble Passion" of friendship, he unintentionally speaks to the formal contradictions that his sister grapples with; the "noble Passion" that both the *Adventures* and *Volume the Last* model as books, necessarily includes both the pure and the deceptive. While Henry's remark does not anticipate the sharper moral distinction between true and false friends that his sister draws, it nevertheless evokes the conflict that adheres in her aspiration to embody friendship in the narrator: between the desire for intimacy and equality with readers and the necessary artifice of plotting and narration. Of these tensions, Sarah Fielding's fiction truly is a most exact model.

[188] Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple*, ed. Macolm Kelsall (1745; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 7.

CHAPTER III

INSTITUTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP: FEMINIST UTOPIA AND HETEROSEXUAL PUBLICS IN SARAH SCOTT'S *MILLENIUM HALL*

> ADVERTISEMENT.
>
> The Publisher of this Volume is under some Difficulties; not from any Apprehensions of losing by the Book; for great part of the Impression is bespoke; his Anxiety arises from the Author's addressing the Volume to him, and making him a Compliment in the Beginning; which, as he is conscious he does not deserve, he hopes the Reader will impute to its proper Cause, namely, to the Warmth of Friendship, which is too apt to exalt the Object it esteems. The Gentlemen who wrote this Volume is of too much Consequence to be obstinately contradicted; and as the Bookseller could not prevail on him to leave out the Compliment above-mentioned, he hopes his publishing of it will not be imputed to any other Motive, but that of his Readiness to obey.[189]
>
> —Sarah Scott, *A Description of Millenium Hall*

Sarah Scott's name did not appear on any of the first four editions of *A Description of Millenium Hall* published between 1762 and 1778.[190] Yet, the novel's title-page attribution of authorship to "A Gentleman on His Travels,"—similar to Defoe's claim that *Robinson Crusoe* is "written by himself,"—recalls an authenticating device of prose fiction that by this historical moment would seem vestigial and artificial. Shortly upon reading the opening pages, readers would recognize that they held in their hands a work of fiction, not a piece of travel writing. This narrating gentleman, as well as the publisher who speaks in the above "advertisement," appear as an element of this contrivance. The inclusion of this publisher's remark, in the place of a dedication or subscription plea, indicates Scott's effort to draw the apparatus of publishing and print culture into contact with the utopian sphere her novel portrays. In this respect, the novel's framing does not

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[189] Sarah Scott, *A Description of Millenium Hall* (Ontario: Broadview: 1995), 52. References are to this edition.

[190] The first four editions appeared in 1762, 1764, 1767, 1778. Accessed through *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. Gale. University of Iowa. 17 Mar. 2013.

just imitate a familiar device of historicity, but goes further in its invention of this relationship between writer and publisher, offering readers a brief glimpse of the financial and social backstory of printed texts.

Commenting on private letters between Scott, her sister Elizabeth Montagu, and their circle of friends, Eve Tavor Bannet describes Scott's authorship as "semi-anonymous," a kind of open secret, known immediately by her closest friends, and more widely known over coming decades.[191] Bannet suggests that this secrecy could foster a sense of intimacy and affiliation, useful for soliciting future subscriptions in the service of "philanthropic literary patronage."[192] Betty Schellenberg, however, contends that Scott's anonymity dulls the novel's political edge.[193] In her view, anonymity allows readers to identify with the narrator's male authority, which reinforces the way Scott's utopian community equates femininity with the private sphere. Nanette Morton similarly argues that Scott's subjection of female virtue to the narrator's male gaze reinforces social hierarchy, and restricts female rights to their "proper" sphere in a natural order.[194] Neither critic comments on the work's "semi-anonymity," but Schellenberg's assessment implies that knowledge of the author's gender would significantly alter the work's meaning, partially recasting an otherwise conservative portrait of female virtue exercised only in private life. If we assume that Scott, in writing the novel, was aware that a small group of readers would recognize the text as her production, then we might approach Scott's anonymity, not as a sign of the work's failed political potential, but, rather, in

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[191] Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Bluestocking Sisters: Women's Patronage, *Millenium Hall*, and 'The Visible Providence of a Country,'" *Eighteenth-Century Life* 30, no. 1 (2006): 45. By the 1790s, book dealers and reviewers ascribe authorship to Scott. Bannet bases her claim of "semi-anonymity" on the correspondences in the Montagu Collection, The Huntington Library.

[192] Bannet, 46.

[193] Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Conversational Circle: Rereading the English Novel 1740-1775* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 100.

[194] Nanette Morton, "'A Most Sensible Oeconomy': from Spectacle to Surveillance in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 11, no. 3 (1999): 188-89, 204.

terms of the semi-legibility of ironic cues manifesting throughout the text. To a greater extent than the epistolary dialogism of Richardson's *Clarissa, Millenium Hall* cultivates a form of virtual friendship behind the back of its unreliable narrator, and through a partial negation of the narrator's sentimental male friendship with his publisher.

As indicated by Sarah Fielding's preface to the *Adventures of David Simple*, anonymity stems directly from social attitudes about female authorship.[195] Because Scott's framing artifice reflects on these attitudes, drawing the social context of authorship into the content of her fiction, she makes it difficult to separate the biographical author from the implied author, particularly for readers in on the secret of her authorship. Wayne Booth distinguishes between the reader's sense of friendship with the actual writer and the implied author (the didactic ethos that emerges from the text alone), writing of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*: "It is not Fielding we care about, but the narrator created to speak in his name."[196] In this remark, Booth's sense of the narrator is equivalent to that of the implied author, and not applicable to the sort of homo-diegetic narrator we find in *Millenium Hall*.[197] Nonetheless, as Schellenberg indicates, so much of

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[195] For a general discussion of this context, see Jane Spencer *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (New York: Blackwell, 1986); and Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 91-93. Schellenberg speculates that Scott's career long preference for anonymity may result not just from a reticence to claim a public identity as a female author, but from a resistance to an intellectual identity in public and private life. Schellenberg does not address the function of semi-anonymity in Scott's career.

[196] Wayne Booth, See *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 218.

[197] Booth distinguishes between narrator and implied author, particularly in cases where the author's intention involves an ironic distance between narrator and implied author, say, in the case of Lemuel Gulliver. In the case of *Tom Jones*, he conflates the reader's feelings for narrator and implied author. My point here is that, even if readers intuitively separate the unnamed gentleman narrator of *Millenium Hall* from their sense of the work's implied author, by sensing ironic undertones in his portrayal, the additional separation of that implied author from Scott's actual identity is rendered more problematic than what Booth describes in Henry Fielding's case, due to the social circumstances surrounding anonymous authorship, particularly for women. Of course, given this historical frame, I would equally resists the separation of actual and implied authorship in regards to male writers, not only because male authorship can only be fully understood in relation to the cultural constraints on female writers, but also because the social ideology of public and private spheres, which yields such constraints on authorship, manifests as thematic content in *Tom Jones* as much as in *Millenium Hall*.

our interpretation of this utopian fiction depends on knowing or sensing Scott's actual identity as a female author. To separate our feelings for the implied author from the biographical fact of gender identity would only further reinforce perceptions of the work's constraining gender politics. Approaching the text via the "semi-anonymity" of its female author means that any sense of virtual friendship between author and reader must involve a more subtle, ironic coordination of identities.

In this chapter, I will discuss how the friendship trope mediates a reflexive irony in Scott's novel. The novel speaks, simultaneously, to a knowing in-group, which shares the author's irony toward gender restrictions in the literary sphere, and to an out-group, which are nonetheless given enough cues to serve as an invitation to textual community. This community is not based on knowledge of the author's sex, but based more abstractly on their sympathy for a heterosexual literary sphere. This chapter reads Scott's novel, not as a didactic work pitched at vulnerable young women, or, as other readers suggest, at rakish young men, but as a work that primarily seeks to provoke ironic reflection on the relationships between friendship, commerce, and gender that subtend print media. In my analysis, I track ideal friendship as the guiding trope that Scott employs to link her portrayal of this proto-feminist utopia, the embedded biographies of its founding women, and the novel's self-conscious participation in print culture.

I begin by discussing the novel's framing apparatus in greater detail, arguing that it reflects fraught eighteenth-century attitudes about mixing friendship and commerce. Scott depicts this anxiety as a function of male friendship in the literary marketplace to foreground its investment in a gendered ideology of the public sphere. Recognizing the ironic intent behind this framing apparatus positions readers to process the portrait of a hermetic female utopia that follows. I then turn to examine how Scott's representation of the utopian community and its backstory further develops an understanding of the way anxieties about friendship and commerce emerge through a gendered division of public and private virtue. In the biographical accounts, Scott depicts gift-giving of friendship in

correlation with a notion of Providence as "amiable" force that offers veiled blessings. In a literal way, these gifts divert the patrimonial transmission of wealth into a "common stock" for this utopian project. Symbolically, the recognition and acceptance of gifts, from friends and fortune, becomes an ethic for countering the related forms of moral corruption rooted in masculinized notions of entrepreneurial commerce, and women's expenditures in the service of a circumscribed feminine vanity. In this context, Scott's treatment of gendered friendship, as a theme, consistently points back to authorial anonymity as a structuring absence: the actuality of Scott's professional authorship as the line of connection between public and private, male and female. Finally, I examine Scott's treatment of heterosexual friendship as a figure for the possibility of gender equality in the literary market. Through this category, Scott registers both hopes and doubts, while implying that if idealized heterosexual friendship is possible, it may first flourish in the virtual space of print.

Semi-Anonymous Authorship and Commercialized Amity

To know or suspect that Sarah Scott may have authored *Millenium Hall*, or even to suspect a female author, bears directly on how one reads the invented advertisement and opening passages of the narrator's letter. With the work's "semi-anonymity" in mind, the novel's self-framing artifice appears not just to veil the taboo reality of an aristocratic female author engaging in the writing profession, but to skeptically reflect on the conditions that necessitate this veiling. This male friendship, which is also a business relationship, serves as a foil for the novel's depiction of utopian female friendships; the women's virtuous ties, as I will discuss, are depicted in a way that tacitly addresses the problematic qualities of this opening frame. In this section, I examine how Scott offers ironic cues in her depiction of the publisher and narrator to cultivate a knowing reader, one who will be best situated to interpret the utopian community and the biographies of its female proprietors.

The novel's elaborate framing makes *Millenium Hall* an exemplary text for considering the evolving role of idealized friendship in constructions of authorship and narrative interest. While Richardson and Fielding's association of friendship with didacticism and access to character interiority requires allegorical interpretation, Scott makes the connection even more explicit by representing this writer-publisher frame in the language of friendship. Likening the reforming power of fiction to that of utopian friendship, the novel recalls Mary Astell's notion that the cultivation of female friendships in private institutions might serve to reform the world covertly through the private sphere by influencing husbands, politicians, and economic agents. But, here, substituting for the direct contact between Astell's pupils and their neighbors, this male publisher and editor disseminate their amicable influence in the book market, where the use of the term friendship is part metonymy for the contacts between writers, patrons, and publishers, and part metaphor for the virtual relationship between authors and readers.

In the advertisement, the publisher begins by indicating that he is "under some difficulties," not financial ones by any means, as "a great part of the Impression is bespoke," but, rather, because the writer offers him a lengthy compliment in the main text, which "he [the editor] is conscious he does not deserve," and which "he hopes the reader will impute to its proper Cause, namely, to the Warmth of Friendship which is too apt to exalt the object it esteems." He concludes by remarking that the writer is "of too much Consequence" to be opposed in his desire to let the compliment stand, and the publisher "hopes his publishing of it will not be imputed to any other Motive, but that of his Readiness to obey" (52). In all this, the publisher seeks to counter two related but unspecified imputations. First, he wishes to frame the narrator's praise for the publisher, which will appear in the coming pages, as an expression of friendship and nothing more. Second, he wants to defend the editorial decision to include the author's praise for him as an obedience to the author, and nothing else. He speaks of the "warmth of friendship" between them, while also noting his hesitancy to disobey an author of "Consequence."

The passage expresses the delicate intersection of commercial, social, and personal relationships. The need for this opening clarification indicates an anxiety about reconciling these divergent relationship codes.

Though never stated explicitly, what it seems the publisher wants to guard against is the imputation that the narrator's praise reflects a form of self-interested flattery. Such an inference would reduce their friendship to a crass token of self-interest, an affective commodity, or what Pierre Bourdieu defines as symbolic capital. As Bourdieu famously argues, symbolic capital involves a form of capital-in-potential inherent in social relationships, specifically valued ideas, such as faith, gratitude, or, as in this case, friendship, which self-interested agents can transform into actual capital over time. In Bourdieu's view, symbolic capital involves the deliberate misrecognition of a relationship's economic significance, and a contradictory figuration of its forms (gifts, gratitude, affection) as beyond value and valueless.[198] Scott's incorporation of the advertisement foregrounds a moment of symbolic capital being translated into actual capital, and represents the publishers labor to encourage the public's misrecognition. At the same time, the narrator's tone expresses Scott's muted irony. In sum, the advertisement cultivates a skeptical reader by having this publisher vaguely implicate that this reciprocal flattery could be misinterpreted as indicating motives beyond either friendship or deference to a social superior.

The delicacy of coordinating the commercial and personal in this publishing relationship instances Allan Silver's argument regarding the eighteenth-century relegation of friendship to the private sphere. As discussed in the introduction chapter, Silver contends that Scottish Enlightenment philosophers reflect a broad cultural desire to keep friendships free from the precision of commercial calculation, while keeping

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[198] Pierre Bourdieu, "Selections from the Logic of Practice," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (London: Routledge, 1997), 198. See also Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 183.

theories of commerce free from the messy and imprecise qualities of personal affections. If Silver's view of Smith's theories suggests the latter's complicity in masking symbolic capital, Vanessa Smith credits eighteenth-century writers more broadly, for their awareness of how idealizations of private friendships depend on "disavowals that accompany the invention of separate public and private sphere."[199] Scott's framing artifice speaks to this disavowal. A subtle irony, in this case, involves her sense of how the publisher's anxiety, generated by commercial male friendship, arises from the distinct social privilege of men as agents of the public sphere. The narrator and editor wish to appear, simultaneously, as responsible professionals in the public eye, and as trustworthy exemplars of unalloyed friendship. But their desire to reconcile the commercial and the personal belies the way male authors enjoy a freedom derived from the gendered division of public and private. This anxiety about mixing commercial and affective ties appears as a product of the separation of spheres. While the notion of female authorship, and particularly one of Scott's social class was not uncommon, anonymity was also typical.[200] The cultural anxiety around female authorship, perceived as an unnatural relation of private to public, parallels the anxiety of male commercialized friendship. As further evidence will suggest, Scott's advertisement masks the absence of open heterosexual commerce in the literary sphere.

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[199] Vanessa Smith, *Intimate Strangers: Friendship, Exchange and Pacific Encounters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010),129. Smith focuses on the way Oceanic encounters expose European anxieties about mixing commerce and friendship.

[200] Many studies discuss anonymity as a function of female writers' resistance to professional authorship. See, for instance, Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (New York: Columbia University. Press, 1989); Betty Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For a closely related study of Scott's sister, Elizabeth Montagu, see Ellis, Markman. "'An Author in Form': Women Writers, Print Publication, and Elizabeth Montagu's Dialogues of the Dead" *English Literary History* 79, no. 2 (2012): 417-445.

The publisher and narrator depict themselves as virtuous or reformed men concerned with setting good examples before the young eyes of either sex. That their warm friendship appears retrospectively as an imitation of the women's utopian relationships intensifies the novel's sense of cultural contradiction. Both men project, to a lesser degree, the feminine-coded qualities of humility and reticence that later characterize the Hall's women. Just as the publisher deflects the imputation of vanity, the narrator disavows his role in the story that follows, remarking, "my vanity must rather be mortified than flattered in the description of such virtues as will continually accuse me of my own deficiencies, and lead me to make a humiliating comparison between these excellent ladies and myself" (54). Such professions of humility distract from his self-license in exposing the women's stories, and promote misrecognition of any economic motivations behind his appeal to the publisher.

Similarly, the publisher's determination not to abridge or censor the text against the author's wishes mirrors the writer's apology for his prolixity at the beginning and end of the novel. The letter begins by acknowledging that the lengthy narrative to follow is not what the receiver anticipated in the course of their personal correspondence. As he writes, "you little expected instead of a letter to receive a volume" (54), suggesting that a non-professional line of personal communication existed prior to, and created an opening for, the submission of an epistolary account of his travels. In moving from "letter" to "volume," the writer does more than extend the quantitative bounds of his prose; rather, he passes a qualitative threshold, from letter to manuscript, or, read allegorically, from private epistle to prospective publication.

Justifying his forthcoming verbosity, the writer draws on the correspondent's friendly interest in his personal experiences and like-minded concern for the subject matter, writing that he could not "fail in communicating . . . the pleasure" of having made the acquaintance of the "amiable society" at Millenium Hall. Following this rational, however, the narrator immediately confesses that "in giving a very

circumstantial account," he has "a view beyond the pleasure, which a mind like yours must receive from the contemplation of so much virtue (53)." He then expounds on the character of the publisher, not defining him explicitly by his profession, but speaking generally of his "great end of benefiting the world" (54). Despite the advertisement's indication of a warm relation, however, a distanced, disinterested tone arises in the midst of this praise. Addressing his friend only as "sir," he evokes professional civility more than intimacy. Getting down to business, he declares, "you are the best judge, whether, by being made public, they [the pages of this letter] may be conducive to your great end of benefiting the world." The inspiration to share his pleasure with a friend thus morphs into a flattering pitch for publication.[201] Such mixed motives arise at the novel's conclusion, where the writer notes: "you may think I have been too prolix in my account of this society; but the pleasure I find in recollection is such, that I could not restrain my pen within moderate bounds. If what I have described, may tempt any one to go and do likewise, I shall think myself fortunate in communicating it" (249). In both cases, this rhetoric of mutual pleasure and virtuous friendship thinly veils the writer's advertisement for the printability of his adventures.

By allowing these interested motives to show through, Scott implicates a reader who feels some skepticism about this amiable relationship. To address the way Scott holds these tensions up for our consideration, we must go beyond critical accounts of the novel's targeted audience. With regards to the novel's didactic purpose, James Cruise argues that, although *Millenium Hall* foregrounds a convention of conduct book rhetoric—a male author addressing young women—one can recognize that Scott intends to covertly reverse this dynamic. In her figuration of the narrator's youthful traveling

[201] This gesture reverses the power dynamic inherent in literary patronage, a system considerably eroded by 1762. If we take the publisher's reference to the author's "Consequence" as an indicator of the latter's elevated social standing, this appeal to the publisher's judgment thus figures the dependence on a gentleman on the judgment of the professional class to access the public.

companion, Lamont, Scott expresses the social need to reform rakish young men.[202] While this seems an integral element of her design, it does not fully accommodate the kind of reader Scott conceives in her ironic construction of the novel's framing apparatus. From the outset, the degree of heightened self-consciousness about the purpose, contracting, and dissemination of the volume, which appears in the advertisement and the opening of the letter, places readers on an equal footing, asking them to contemplate the value of the work *for* others. As Scott's novel inflects the friendly exchange of letters with the interest of a writer and publisher promoting social reform, it coordinates the interest of the reader, putting the reader in the publisher's chair. When for instance, the narrator remarks, "you are the best judge, whether, by being made public, they [the letter sheets] may be conducive to your great end of benefiting the world," the reader's judgment is covertly flattered along with the publisher's. The text's ideal reader cannot simply be equated with the writer's own description of the young, who inhabit "that season of life when we are most susceptible of impression, and when on our minds, as on a sheet of white paper, any character may be engraven"(53). What possible interest might the wayward young man or vulnerable young lady, the supposed targets of this didactic project, have in any of this transactional business? The explication of motives for writing and publication within this ironized fictional relationship implies a different kind of reader. Through the novel's opening frames, Scott introduces the reader as an intimate, closely aligned with the publisher's spectatorship, but distanced by a moderate skepticism of this lens. We, as readers, are asked, only hypothetically, to inhabit the naive consciousness of the impressionable Lamont and to consider how the narrative will be likely to influence a mind in need of education or reformation.

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[202] James Cruise, "A House Divided: Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 35, no. 3 (1995): 555.

The actual reader *may* be a young man or woman in need of reformation. But this opening gambit, which not only invites the reader to share and assuage the concerns of publisher and editor, but also tempts them into doubts about the professed warmth of their friendship, implies a savvier interpreter—one characterized not by gender or age, but by a sensibility to the rhetoric of fiction. Hence, Scott layers the reader's interest in the narrative by holding up three roles: 1) the young impressionable reader; 2) the addressee of the letter, inhabiting the interest of the narratee as publisher—a pedagogue who works through print narratives; and 3) if we find Scott's "advertisement" intentionally ironic, the reader allied with the "semi-anonymous" author, surveying the letter with some awareness of the gender divisions and commercial anxieties in public expressions of amity. These layered registers entangle the work's tutorial function, its image of reception as friendship, the politics of authorship, and literary aesthetics. Through the depiction of utopian friendship and private histories that follow, Scott's indirect coordination of virtual friendship, based on female exemplars and the fragile possibility of heterosexual friendship, enhances and develops the reader's skepticism toward this explicit frame of fraternal friendship.

Utopian Economy and Conversable Friendship

The stark separation of public male and private female virtues that appears in the novel conflicts with the publisher and writer's pretense that their idealized affections and commercial interests might mix together. And, yet, at the same time, what these men pretend to embody about the literary sphere, the reconciliation of commercial projects and humanized affections, is exactly what Scott's utopian experiment in gentry capitalism ostensibly seeks to produce in the broader economy. Alessa Johns argues that Scott "infused intersubjective relations with commercial language as a way of demonstrating that the need for fair exchange out to be brought to bear on private human

relationships."[203] While I share Johns's perception that Scott explores the synthesis of commercial and intersubjective language, in what follows, I come at this topic from the opposite direction: if Scott infuses interpersonal relations with commercial language, it is only a means to the greater end of infusing modern economic practice with the rationale of friendship. In her utopian vision, Scott seeks to draw all commerce, (gentry capitalism as well as literary exchange) within the bounds of virtuous friendship. Like Sarah Fielding, Scott looks to ties of charity and gratitude to ground economic identities outside networks of patrimony and entrepreneurial risk. The narrator and his youthful travel companion, Lamont, offer reflections that generate conversation between them and the women residents, which become a means of disclosing this philosophy. While the narrator raises questions that echo prevailing justifications of markets and trade, Lamont foils as a young aristocratic who risks devolving into libertinism. By depicting this doubled gaze, Scott poses her view of friendship as one that resists old and new modes of patriarchal fraternity in political-economic terms.

Gary Kelly calls attention to *Millenium Hall's* argument for a form of gentry capitalism centered around collectivized land ownership.[204] While Kelly focuses on the work's critique of market capitalism, Scott's utopia also notably critiques patrimonial flows on wealth, showing how both systems stimulate wasteful and destructive desires. Scott contrasts the feminized productivity of this estate with the ill effects of ventures governed and inheritances stewarded by men. A marketplace without a woman's touch appears overrun with examples of miserliness, profligacy, excessive risk, fraud and labor abuses. Rebuking the political economics associated with Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1714), Scott represents how private vices undermine collective prosperity. Her

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[203] Alessa Johns, *Women's Utopias of the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 107.

[204] Gary Kelly, "Sarah Scott, Bluestocking Feminism, and *Millenium Hall*," introduction to *A Description of Millenium Hall*, by Sarah Scott (Ontario: Broadview: 1995), 26.

critique also anticipates the position of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), which famously emphasizes, if not outright vice, the primacy of self-interest to produce a thriving macro-economy. Counter to these influential paradigms, Scott imagines the successful operation of a commercial venture that shows benevolence toward workers and invests profits in philanthropic projects to remedy basic physical privations and provide educational opportunities. Her novel seeks to demonstrate that ties of affection do not undermine profit, nor are they merely ornamental. Notions of Christian neighborliness and charity drive the Hall's operations. The pre-histories of contracted friendships (to which I will turn in the next section) disclose the primary affective terms out of which grows the universalizing impulse of this utopian project. More than abstract benevolence, contracted amity is here the language of virtue and the goal of economic endeavors. Alongside *Clarissa* and *Adventures of David Simple*, *Millenium Hall* approaches character and subjectivity through the linked authority and intimacy of ideal friendship. Scott's novel actualizes the economic potential of this subjectivity beyond Sarah Fielding's conceptions. In this respect, *Millenium Hall* poses the most explicit challenge to scholarship that understands the ideology of fiction as a clash between aristocratic values and economic individualism.[205]

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[205] See Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel: 1600-1740* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987). As discussed in the introduction, McKeon's influential dialectic theory of the early English novel, for instance, does not account for an economic subjectivity that depends more on attachments to a non-familial friend than on individual's ability to accumulate wealth and status in the marketplace (as in the adventures of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, or Richardson's Pamela). Nor does McKeon's address the ideology behind an amicable community that does not locate virtue in notions of birth (as in Henry Fielding's comic-epic romances). McKeon's view of "conservative ideology," a skepticism toward both aristocratic and progressive views of individual virtue, perhaps comes closest to the way ideal friendship always registers a double-edged resistance to the old and the new. But, even in this case, McKeon's approach to all epistemological and social ideologies is structured by his sense of an emerging antagonism between self and society. Even conservative ideology suggests an isolation of the individual from society that does address the role of the friend, as a figure that persistently disrupts the abstraction of an economic self from society. Admittedly, Scott's novel appears two decades after the time frame that McKeon delineates as the novel genre's constitutional phase. Nevertheless, his dialectic model of genre seeks to address the limitations of Ian Watt's influential *Rise of the Novel* by accounting for the persistence of aristocratic and romance sensibilities in Henry Fielding's novels in the 1740s and beyond. McKeon's account, ultimately, reflects a broader tendency in criticism, which I point out with regard to

Various reform projects on the estate—including a girl's school and homes for orphans, elderly women, former paid companions, impoverished ladies, circus performers, prospective wives—become objects of conversation among the two visiting gentlemen and the circle of women who manage the property. These discussions distill the Hall's moral economy and model conversational ideals. Scott depicts intellectual conversation as a central component of moral reform in this community, but approaches it through her notion of friendship conceived as a privileged spiritual and economic relationship.[206] Two elements of Scott's depiction of useful conversation become more particularized through the novel's thematic of friendship. First, the epistemological authority of this conversation derives from the longstanding intimacy of this non-interchangeable group. Although these women welcome the traveling gentleman as visitors, the value of debate emerges through the interaction between a close-knit group of friends and temporary interlopers. Second, Scott prompts us to read these conversations in light of the biographical backstories that punctuate the gentlemen's tour of the estate. Although these discussions deal only with broad moral and social themes, Scott carefully coordinates the perspective of each speaker with what we have learned or will learn about her life experience. Hence, the philosophical views that these women express in their conversations are given additional thematic significance through a correlation with their biographical narratives, which focus primarily on the formation of these particular friendships. The moral knowledge that emerges through conversation reflects back on and legitimates the production of this friendship circle.

The tone of discussion motivated by friendships within *Millenium Hall* jars with expectations about women's contribution to conversation at mid-century. David Hume,

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scholarship on each particular text, to undervalue the importance of friendship in shaping notions of self and society.

[206] In this respect, Scott goes beyond the paradigm of communication described by Schellenberg in her examination of conversational community in *Millenium Hall* (*Conversational Circle*, 134-135).

for instance, observes that women add a beneficial refinement to intellectual exchanges, forcing men to adopt a more polite means of expression.[207] In *Conversable Worlds*, John Mee offers a spectrum of conversational values emerging in this period. At one extreme, one finds the masculine-coded aggressive method of "talking for victory" exhibited by Samuel Johnson at his literary club. In the middle, Hester Piozzi, an attendant of Johnson's meetings, conveys a sentimental view of conversation in line with Hume's perceptions, striving for politeness and sympathetic exchange. At another extreme, Mee notes the "glitter . . of diamonds" associated with the wit and entertainment value of conversation for Scott's sister, Elizabeth Montagu.[208] On this continuum, the women of *Millenium Hall* display no traces of what might be perceived as crude masculinity, and yet they come closest to Samuel Johnson's style of aggressive reasoning, confronting and stridently correcting nearly every remark the narrator and Lamont make. The seriousness in their conversation contrasts with the narrator's polite expression, and Lamont's often thoughtless observations. As Mee observes, by the 1770s, writers more commonly treated efforts at civil conversation as marks of artificiality, and affected performances of servility. Scott anticipates this development. By positioning the conversation of friendship as an uncivil service, she depicts a tone that critically reflects back on the instrumental professions of friendship exchanged between the narrator and his publisher in the opening frame.

The conversation draws out the theory of friendship that regulates the private sphere of the estate, but it inevitably suggests implications for a political theorization of public commerce and state authority. One crucial exchange results from the narrator's

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[207] For a discussion of Hume's view in connection with the Bluestocking circle conversations, see Elizabeth Eger and Lucy Peltz, *Brilliant Women:18th Century Bluestockings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 50.

[208] Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community, 1762 to 1830* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 110. See also Paul Langford's *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).

expressed concern about the moral danger of the Hall's plentiful provisions.[209] The narrator, a gentleman engaged in mercantile commerce, has just returned from working on his plantation in Jamaica. He expresses the view that profit-seeking and sociability go hand in hand: mutual needs create commerce, which produces humanizing social intercourse, and this dynamic chain of relationships forms the "great bands of society" (110). Granting mutual wants as the foundation of society, Lady Mary Jones speaks for the hall in rejecting the narrator's tacit assumption that material wants are the primary desires that prompt social intercourse, and that the absence of want would produce asocial behavior. As she answers, "Reason wishes for communication and improvement; benevolence longs for objects on which to exert itself; the social comforts of friendship are so necessary to our happiness that it would be impossible not to endeavor to enjoy them." (110).[210] Lady Mary proceeds to characterize the narrator's view of commerce and labor as one that follows from the human desire to be distracted from want. In contrast, Scott's utopia guarantees against want, structures commercial activity as a pursuit of pleasure guided by Christian theology, and thereby liberates the desire for friendship to serve as the primary pull of social cohesion.[211]

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[209] This perspective parallels theories of labor (in Burke and Smith) which address fears of national decay brought on by an infusion of luxuries as a consequence of trade and market economies. For a historical account of this fear, see E.J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977).

[210] This neo-classical idealization of human nature, as predisposed toward a life of the mind, reliable communication, affectionate society, and charitable work, emphasizes, as had Aristotle, the "social" pole of the human being conceived as a "social animal," rather than the "animal," component, as had modern social theorists such as Hobbes and Mandeville.

[211] That is to say, the commercial pursuit of physical pleasures perceived as morally corrupting are effectively barred from the outset in this utopia. Scott's world is not radically ascetic, but it does not even broach the commercial benefit of immoral desire's, as Mandeville does, because it would not seek to benefit from ethically dubious behaviors, however beneficial to the whole of society. Instead, it offers an alternative path to the greater secular good that still preserves the notion of Christian commerce. While the prevailing view of society describes the mental pleasures of social intercourse as an outgrowth of the

Scott's development of friendship as a foundational social bond challenges the masculine privilege derived from a politics of negative liberty.[212] In *Secret History of Domesticity*, Michael McKeon describes the rise of negative liberty as a political theory that complements the gradual separation and increasing sense of opposition between public and private spheres. Political theories of negative liberty, which appear in the works of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, reinforce conceptions of the private household economy's freedom from state regulation and separation from public commerce.[213] In this context, Scott's theory of freedom through friendship directly addresses the division of public and private commerce that renders women's work an exclusively private affair. At first, Scott's portrait of this hermetic community seems only to confirm the cultural equation of ideal femininity with humility and cloistered virtue. When questioned by Lamont as to why, if these women have such a great desire for society, they should choose to isolate themselves, Mrs. Mancel suggests that their rejection of public life has little to do with respect for a natural order. She responds:

> Do you then [. . .] mistake a croud for society? I know not two things more opposite. How little society is there to be found in what you call the world? It might more properly be compared to that state of war, which Hobbes supposes the first condition of mankind. [. . .] What I understand by society is a state of mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections; where numbers are thus united, there will be a free communication of sentiments, and we shall then find speech, that peculiar blessing given to man, a valuable gift indeed; but when we see it restrained by suspicion, or contaminated by detraction, we rather wonder that so dangerous a power was trusted with a race of beings, who seldom make a proper use of it. (111)

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material substructure, their society reverses this causal relationship, so that material commerce can be shaped as an effect of immaterial social intercourse.

[212] This distinction in modern political theory contrasts a view of powers enabled through political association (positive liberty) vs. powers left unrestricted by the state (negative liberty). For elaborations, see Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" in *Liberty* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty" in *The Idea of Freedom*. ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 176.

[213] McKeon, *Secret History*, 32, 111.

In referencing Hobbes's origin myth, Scott places her utopia in the context of British and French political philosophies of the past two centuries, specifically the exploration of societal origins in the philosophy of Milton, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. It is as if Scott rejects outright the notion, evident in all of these approaches, that there is anything in the world yet deserving of being named modern, Enlightened, or civilized. One cannot explain the present moment in terms of a primordial past, she appears to say, if a close inspection of modern life, particularly the public sphere (perceived as a crowd), exhibits a war of conflicting self-interests. The allusion to Hobbes suggests that Scott views the modern world as still lodged in a state of nature, requiring individuals to surrender even more of their natural liberty to the state for the sake of preserving the social order (negative liberty). But Mrs. Mancel goes on to describe the reciprocal benefits of friendship, mainly that of purified communication, in terms that evoke positive liberty. As she argues, the "gift of speech" has a potential value for individuals that is only actualized by participation in intellectual friendship. Scott thereby theorizes friendship as that which produces a "freedom of speech," in a different sense than the modern constitutional sense of the phrase conceived in terms of negative liberty.

That an ideal of friendship serves as the guiding concept for structuring this alternative society becomes eminently clear when Lamont questions Mrs. Mancel further: "You seem, madam, [. . .] to choose to make us all slaves to each other?" As she responds, 'No, sir, [. . .] I would only make you friends. Those who are really such are continually endeavoring to serve and oblige each other; this reciprocal communication of benefits should be universal, and then we might with reason be fond of this world" (112). For Scott, this bond of friendship should substitute broadly for existing affective relations between individuals stratified by social status or set in opposition by desires for social advancement. Yet, elsewhere Mrs. Mancel qualifies this ambition to render a universal social contract in the terms of servile friendship. Her remarks reflect back on the above passage as an instance of speculative thinking, rather than as an elaboration of the Hall's

mission statement. When pressed about the extent to which the women present themselves as role models, she remarks, "We do not set up for reformers . . . we wish to regulate ourselves by the laws laid down to us, and as far as our influence can extend, endeavor to inforce them; beyond that small circle all is foreign to us" (166). Despite this requisite expression of humility, the question of how far the influence of Millenium Hall, and *Millenium Hall*, might possibly extend is the subject Scott raises throughout their conversation, and it is the sentiment that the narrator broaches in concluding his letter, proposing to imitate all he has seen "on a smaller scale" (249). Countering both commercial and aristocratic sources of corrosive self-interest, Scott depicts the economic dimension of these friendships as a pattern for renovating the nation as well as for reforming masculine-coded limitations of public sphere communications.

Friendship's Fortune:

Dividends of Virtue and Gifts of Providence

While David Simple's fortune depends on finding a wife and a circle of friends in whom he can reliable invest his inheritance, Scott's multiple heroines find themselves liberated from filial and spousal obligations, yet put in possession of considerable wealth. Their collective fortune is partly earned through each woman's individual suffering at the hands of tyrannical fathers and husbands, jealous step-mothers, lascivious benefactors, and shallow guardians. The first interconnected story of Mrs. Mancel and Mrs. Morgan details the latter's Clarissa-like plight, coerced by her family to marry an unpleasant suitor who does not care that she dislikes him. A model of self-sacrifice, Mrs. Morgan submits to her father's commands, despite the fact that a jealous step-mother has manipulated his perceptions. Counter to the openness of affection between Mrs. Morgan and her female friend, the marriage forces her to practice "disguise and hypocrisy," because she cannot publicly display her distaste for her new husband. Immediately following the marriage, Mr. Morgan regulates his wife's meetings with companions and

prohibits anything more than an acquaintanceship with other women, dictating: "Madam, my wife must have no other companion or friend but her husband; I shall never be averse to your seeing company, but intimates I forbid; I shall not choose to have my faults discussed between you and your *friend*" (130). However caricatured this representation of Mr. Morgan may appear, the terms of his ban suggests a substantive conflict between the idealized privacy of spouses and of female intimates. Women's friendships evoke a fear like that of cuckoldry; Mr. Morgan suspects his wife of leaking his embarrassing private behavior through a channel of female friends, thereby rendering him an object of public ridicule.[214] Hence, the potential surveillance of private male virtue, under the guise of female friendship, threatens the hegemonic surveillance of female virtue by the patriarchal gaze. Scott appears to argue that women's friendship cannot thrive under such circumstances, but, rather, only in the realm of Millenium Hall. Mrs. Morgan can do nothing else but submit to these harsh parameters until her husband dies; ultimately, suffering her friend's absence pays dividends through the inheritance she receives as a widow, presumably one earned by tolerating her husband and tending to him on his death bed. This money pooled with Mrs. Mancel's inheritance, makes up the founding endowment for their communal project.

Supplementing this plot logic of rewarded virtue, these narratives depend on unexpected and disguised movements of an "amiable providence" whose gifts operate in a sustained analogy with those of flesh and blood companions. Although Mrs. Morgan is rewarded financially by her tyrannical spouse, typically the fathers, male benefactors, and husbands, despite the affection they show while alive, appear, after death, either stingy in

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[214] For a related reading, see George Haggerty, *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later 18th Century* (Bloomington, University of Indiana Press, 1998). Haggerty views this tension more explicitly as a fear of lesbianism, seeing in Mr. Morgan's ban on friendship a "homophobia inherent to patriarchal narrative" (*Unnatural Affections*, 99). While I do not see persuasive evidence in the novel for reading the women's relationship in these terms, I recognize that the intimate knowledge shared in friendship is perceived to pose a threat to the husband's public character parallel to that of a wife's known infidelity.

making their wills or just insolvent. Mrs. Mancel's guardian, Mr. Hintman showers gifts upon her, but his financial assistance, it turns out, disguises his intention to sexually possess her upon her maturation; just before his perverse plan reaches a crucial stage, his timely death leaves Mrs. Mancel without provisions. Only the accidental discovery of her birth mother, Mrs. Thornby, returns her to financial security (148). Upon her mother's death, an inheritance of forty-thousand pounds allows her to collaborate with Mrs. Morgan on their utopian scheme, each tied by no other bond but their friendship.

The re-discovered maternal inheritance forms an important motif in Scott's providential design and the financing of *Millenium Hall*. Closely paralleling Mrs. Mancel's situation, Miss Selvyn's tutor and friend Lady Emilia Reynolds fills the void left by her deceased mother, until Lady Reynold's turns out to be her actual birth mother—having disguised her secret due to the shameful circumstances of the pregnancy. Upon her death, shortly following her disclosure, Lady Emilia contributes twelve thousand pounds to the three thousand her daughter had inherited from the adopted father (211). Thereafter, Mrs. Selvyn does not hesitate to contribute "her fortune to the common stock" (218) at Millenium Hall, which she hears of through her friendship with Lady Mary Jones. Similarly, in Lady Mary's case, her father, the Earl of Brumpton, leaves her at the age of ten entirely dependent on an aunt following his death, having "mortgaged to its full value all of his estate" (172). Following the death of this prodigal aunt, Lady Sheerness, Lady Mary is once again left without any security. Taken in by her elder sister-in-law, Lady Brumpton, Lady Mary lives a life similar to that of a paid-companion, forced to observe the profligate lifestyle of yet another benefactor who is driven by a desire for vain social intercourse. This time, however, Lady Mary is soon rewarded for her pains. Lady Brumpton dies before expending her entire wealth, and bequeaths on her sister-in-law ten thousand pounds—money which also makes its way to the common stock at Millenium Hall. In Scott's fiction, extravagance and vanity, as well as kindness and companionship, are qualities attributed to men and women alike. But, in most cases,

the inheritances bestowed by these secret mothers or female benefactors greatly outweigh the sums transmitted by male guardians and fathers. The maternal figures of the preceding generation tend always to have one limiting flaw; nonetheless Scott's ascribes to Providence the responsibility for transmitting funds from this elder generation of women to the younger circle.

This transfer of funds partly earned and partly bestowed to Millenium Hall's endowment represents a diversion of capital from domestic lineage and market commerce—the intertwined fiscal channels of patrimony, colonial projects, and investment bubbles. And if this utopian household family cannot quite procreate, they continually draw new members through word of mouth, rescuing widows, destitute and ruined women, or simply those who prefer to live independently. The project's expenditures generate interest in the form of affection between managers and laborers and increased productivity; these bonds contribute to long-term expansion of the Hall's domain, as it gradually incorporates more of the surrounding estates left to decay through the corrosive miserliness and profligacy of the aristocracy. At the same time, however, this expansion restores and preserves the British past. In renovating a building to house gentlewomen whose personal wealth no longer matches their social rank, these leading women seek to revive a "seat of ancient hospitality" linked to a sense of national origin, while collectivizing the enjoyment of its architectural and natural pleasures (221). As the backstories reveal, this utopian scheme progresses by using inherited money to recover and restore those estates badly managed by aristocratic and free-market systems.

Complementing this inheritance of capital, Scott depicts the women's reception of limited charitable virtues from their flawed female elders. While the older generation of women including Lady Lambton, Lady Sheerness, and Lady Brumpton, suffer the limitations of their own vanity and pride, they all at times act with sincere benevolence, taking abandoned young girls into their guardianship. Not quite role-models, they provide a lineage of feminist solidarity, out of which emerges the utopian scheme of Millenium

Hall. Their notions of birth, their pursuit of frivolous amusements, and their vanity restrict these elders from experiencing sustained intimate friendship. They are cut off from one another, lacking the sort of counseling community that the Hall embodies. Like her generational counterparts, Lady Sheerness realizes only on her death-bed how "little real friendship [is] to be found in such fashionable connexions" (189), and, that, "friendship existed not without esteem; and that pleasurable connections would break at the time they were most wanted" (188). While even their acts of charity are tinged with self-interest and their benevolence mitigated by their isolation and lack of an overarching social and spiritual purpose, their regrets provide the next generation with an edifying warning: only when guided by a larger network of real friendship can such ethical deeds register their full force.

As is nearly always the case in eighteenth-century fiction's use of the term "fortune," there is an obvious double-sense in which these women's fortunes are joined together. Scott structures these tales around pairs of friends, beginning with the linked biographies of Mrs. Mancel and Mrs. Morgan. While the subsequent tales focus on a central character, they all involve a key point of connection: Lady Mary Jones's course is altered by her acquaintance with Mrs. Selvyn and the counsel she receives from her on a delicate personal dilemma. Mrs. Trentham's narrative is centered on the fraught friendship she attempts to sustain with Mr. Alworth; Mrs. Maynard, who narrates to the gentlemen, enters toward the conclusion of this tale as a counseling friend to Mrs. Trentham. Just as Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Mancel begin Millenium Hall as a partnered endeavor, each of the women is later encouraged to visit and reside at the Hall by her female counterpart. These pairings suggest that Scott, like Astell, placed great importance, not just on the general idea of female friendship as community, but also particularly on the more private one-on-one relationships between two friends as the basis of moral counsel and self-knowledge.

From a genre perspective, this pairing up and de-centering of reader interest in various protagonists reflects the influence of the friendship ideals on Scott's literary technique. Just prior to writing *Millenium Hall*, Scott had authored two historical biographies: *The History of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden* (1761) and *The History of Mecklenburgh* (1762). In these historical works, as Johns has noted, Scott attempted to coordinate the broad outlines of general history with the particularity of detail in fiction, seeking a moderate degree of distance from the subjectivity of the central characters.[215] Of more typical general histories, Scott complains of

> The partial knowledge it gives of history, distinguishing some particular periods with great lights, while intermediate ages are left in obscurity. These detached pieces of history are like redoubts in fortification; each may serve to employ for some time those who design to become masters of them; but if there is no line of communication whereby they are united, they can give no assistance to each other. A reader may by this sort of study become acquainted with the characters and actions of some particular kings of any country, but will remain totally ignorant of the history of the kingdom.[216]

Although a work of fiction, *Millenium Hall* reflects a similar preoccupation with finding the right amount of distance to represent the confluence of various agents; Scott pursues that distance in *Millenium Hall* through the framed narration and proportioning of tales, a structure that prohibits any one protagonist from dominating the reader's interest, without wholly abandoning the kind of identification with fictional minds that earlier novelists had cultivated.

Scott uses these parallel plots to provide an overview of several young women struggling against the coercions of patriarchal culture, while she also takes opportunities to minutely depict the formation of affectionate ties that will model the philosophy of charity at Millenium Hall. One scene in particular, involving Mrs. Morgan (then Miss Melvyn) and Miss Mancel, stands out as background for Miss Mancel's later debate at

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[215] Alessa Johns, 101.

[216] Sarah Scott, *The History of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden* (1761), quoted in Johns, 101.

Millenium Hall with Lamont, which deals with charity toward the poor. In this scene, in which the two young women reside at a boarding school, a negotiation between acquaintances around a proffered gift pushes them to articulate and embrace a more complicated image of friendship involving the sympathetic imagination and the idea of shared property. When Miss Mancel, rich with monetary gifts provided from her generous though secretly scheming benefactor, offers to pay for the less fortunate Miss Melvyn to have equivalent attention from private tutors, the latter refuses, not—as the narrating Mrs. Maynard observes—out of pride, but because of their disparity in age. Mrs. Maynard takes up the privilege of an intimate friend to elaborate on the young Miss Melvyn's true feelings at the time, remarking:

> Had Louisa been the same age with herself, she would have felt a kind of property in all she possessed; friendship, the tenure by which she held it; for where hearts are strictly united, she had no notion of any distinction in things of less importance, the adventitious goods of fortune. The boundaries and barriers raised by those two watchful and suspicious enemies, Meum and Tuum, were in her opinion broke down by true friendship; and all property laid in one undistinguished common. (93)

As in Sarah Fielding's fiction, this melding of voices evokes the third-person use of free indirect style: the amiable teller, sympathizing with the plight of her subject and filtering the heroine's private thoughts through the language of narration—presumably sourced through Mrs. Maynard's intimate conversation with Miss Melvyn (now Mrs. Morgan). Miss Melvyn's thoughts here express the model of friendship as shared property. This "tenure," presumably bestowed by God, informs the ideology of the Hall's operations. The breaking down of the barrier between 'mine and yours' correlates with Mrs. Maynard's narrative liberties in disclosing not just the stories of these women, but their private thoughts and feelings as her communal property. Such an analogy might be taken to authorize not just Mrs. Maynard's privilege, but that of the gentlemen narrator and Scott as author, entangling even the anonymous reader's access to these private histories in this circulation of common property.

Thematically, it would seem no coincidence that the gift in question involves education—gesturing ahead to the utopian institution that funds the refinement of mind with the collective resources of friends. But crossing this bridge requires a certain mental equivalence as a foundation. Reacting to her friend's quiet reluctance, Miss Mancel reads her friend's mind—insofar as it has been accurately expressed by the narrating Mrs. Maynard—breaking into the property of private thoughts to articulate an image of friendship that, analogously, breaks down personal boundaries of property. As she exclaims:

> Could we change places, with how much pleasure should I have accepted it from you! and the satisfaction that learning these things now give me would be turned into delight, by reflecting on the gratification you would receive in having been the means of procuring them for me. I should not envy you the joy of giving, because I as receiver should not have the less share of that satisfaction, since by reflecting on yours I must partake of it, and so encrease my own. (93)

The implications of this passage are complex and merit sorting out. This logic directly undermines the preceding explanation of shared property, which registers the impossibility of gift-giving in idealized friendship (Montaigne). Instead, Miss Mancel introduces an emotional calculus. As Bourdieu argues, the gratitude of the gift receiver disguises the implicit need to offer a counter-gift and instantiates a dilatory space of obligation. Miss Mancel works to spontaneously cancel such invisible debts by describing the reciprocity of sympathetic communion: by imagining the giver's joy, the receiver thereby verifies an emotional recompense that cancels her obligation to the giver. In spite of this rationale, Miss Melvyn delicately manages to defer taking the gift of a tutor, arguing that she will receive just as much benefit from observing Miss Mancel's instruction as a distant spectator. While the narrating Mrs. Maynard infers that Miss Melvyn "plainly saw, that the greatest proof of a noble mind is to feel a joy in gratitude" (93), Miss Melvyn appears equally moved as much by the gesture of generosity as by Miss Mancel's refined articulation of benevolence. While Miss Melvyn's hesitates to receive the gift initially, because she does not want to take

advantage of her younger companion, she discovers "that she had done [Miss Mancel] injustice in thinking her youth rendered her incapable of that perfection of friendships, which might justify the accepting of her offer" (94). Scott thus depicts the formation of this friendship as a complex knot of affections, which involves a demonstrable equivalence of emotional intelligence, the rational of spontaneous solvency in gift-giving, and the deferral of the gift's reception, which frames their relationship, moving forward, as a persistent obligation conferred by this transformative gesture.

Julie McGonegal argues that this exchange marks the division between the logic of generous friendship between the female proprietors of Millenium Hall, and their charitable work for the surrounding inhabitants, which partakes in the misrecognition of symbolic capital.[217] But this view, I would suggest, too quickly reduces the Christian rationale of charity to the sociology of symbolic capital, and overlooks Scott's effort in this passage to reconcile virtuous friendship with the rationale of charity. In picturing the Hall's operations, Scott undoubtedly distinguishes the intimacy among these proprietors from their relationship to beneficiaries. But Miss Mancel's image of idealized gift-giving, as spontaneous cancellation of debts, attempts to reconcile the founding gifts of friendship with those of hierarchical charity. Thus, later, when she debates with Lamont about a poor man's inability to "return the obligation" of charity, she remarks, "It is he . . . who first conferred [obligation], in giving you an opportunity of relieving him. The pleasure he has afforded you is as far superior to the gratification you have procured him." In the Christian calculus, charity does not confer obligation, but balances a pre-

[217] See Julie McGonegal, "The Tyranny of Gift Giving: The Politics of Generosity in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* and *Sir George Ellison*" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19, no. 3 (2007): 291-306. McGonegal argues that Scott's novel trades in symbolic capital, intercepting it from patriarchal structures of power, but deploying it toward economic ends in an analogous way. As she remarks: "Scott's texts themselves are the products of a symbolic labour that, by contributing to the maintenance of collective misrecognition, transforms interested relations into elective relations of reciprocity" (306). She notes that Scott's depiction of gift giving among women suggests the "fragile possibility of intervention in this cycle" (306). But what the novel's opening treatment of male friendship reveals is that *Millenium Hall's* critique of patriarchal forms of symbolic capital and misrecognition is more consistent and pointed than McGonegal describes.

existing obligation to the poor. Moreover, we might imagine, Miss Mancel would argue, according to her prior logic, that the "superior pleasure" experienced by the giver can be imaginatively experienced by the poor man. Miss Mancel imagines, on parallel tracks, the accountancy of obligations stemming from Christian moral duty, and the accountancy of emotional recompense stemming from sensible friendship.

Mrs. Maynard's commentary further raises the stakes of this matter when she attempts to clarify the sentiment by quoting Milton's Satan. Exiled from heaven and regretful that he has rejected God's gifts, Satan reflects on how the truly grateful receiver of a favor "by owing owes not, and is at once indebted and discharged" (94).[218] The implication of this allusion is twofold. First, Mrs. Maynard suggests that this negotiation of affections between innocent young ladies is as fraught with moral hazard as Satan's epic transgression against God. Conversely, she implies that Satan might have avoided his fate if he had used his moral imagination, switching roles with God to experience divine benevolence from the deity's point of view. In doing so, he would have satisfied himself with the figurative parity between giver and receiver. In a sense, the very ontology of good and evil springs from Satan's lack of imagination.

By equating this joyful sympathy for the gift-giver with the cancelation of all psychic debt, Scott draws on the unique imaginative resources cultivated by fictional

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[218] The passage appears in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 2007), Book IV, lines 56-7:

What could be less then to afford him praise,
The easiest recompence, and pay him thanks,
How due! yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
I 'sdained subjection, and thought one step higher [50]
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burthensome, still paying, still to owe;
Forgetful what from him I still received,
And understood not that a grateful mind [55]
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged; what burden then?

narratives, what Gallagher describes as the special ability of fiction to generate sympathy for characters beyond the obstacles of real life. Reading fiction, developing an ability to sympathize with character situation, is a means of practicing the kind of spontaneous sympathy necessary to move friendship beyond the calculations of charity. While this account of the sympathetic imagination closely parallels Smith's moral spectatorship in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* for Scott, everything depends on the receiver's ability to inhabit the benevolent mind in an act of charity. In this respect, *Millenium Hall* dispenses with pity for suffering as a motive for either charity or friendship, focusing exclusively on imagined pleasures.

By comparing Miss Mancel's logic of sympathy with Milton's logic of gratitude for God's gifts, Scott coordinates a broader ethics of the gift, one that includes the women's gracious reception of fortune's blessings, whether self-evident or veiled as tragedy. *Millenium Hall* develops a sustained analogy between, on the one hand, respect for providential benevolence, and the gracious acceptance of gifts from friends. Monetary gifts of personal friendship and providential plot supplement the rewards of individual virtue throughout the interpolated back stories. An amiable providence guides these women, not toward the personal fulfillment of marital duty, but, rather, toward their collective fate as denizens in the "heavenly society," or the heaven on earth vision of Millenium Hall. As Kelly notes, two significant historical connotations of the term "Millenium" relate to these plots: the immediate reference to a thousand-year period of peace described in *Revelations*, and the Puritan notion of a fifth monarchy, equating the biblical Millenium with the short-lived British commonwealth of the mid-seventeenth century.[219] Scott's novel appropriates these theological and political contexts to equate a reign of peace and order with this female collective that eschews male authority in marriage, economics, and politics.

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[219] Kelly, 27.

Synthesizing the language of friendship with that of fate, each founding member retrospectively interprets once-perceived setbacks as gifts of a benevolent Providence, recognizing the amicable hand steering their course. As Mrs. Maynard remarks, "Chance that deity which though blind, is often a powerful friend, did what she could not prevail on herself to do" (150). Miss Mancel's suitor Sir Edward Lambton dies prematurely, driven to join the army and take suicidal risks in war because his mother will not approve of their courtship. Yet she later divines in this event the "merciful hand of providence," reflecting that, if allowed to marry "her sincere affection for him would have led her to conform implicitly to all his inclinations, her views would have been confined to this earth, and too strongly attached to human objects" (161). Once blinded by romantic love, she finds herself spiritually liberated from the secular confines of marriage. Lady Mary Jones, likewise, benefits from an overturned carriage which thwarts her attempt to abscond with a lover and elope privately. Immediately reflecting on her error, she "would certainly have offered rich sacrifices on the shrine of Chance, had there been a temple there erected to that deity" (178). Perhaps the strangest case, Mrs. Trentham gives thanks for contracting small pox and having to bear its scars, partly because this revives her love of reading, and partly because her unattractive appearance allows her fraught relationship with Mr. Alworth to return "within its ancient bounds of friendship" (242), preserving her likewise in a single state. In each case, Scott represents Providence as a force that saves these women from marriages to questionable suitors, but without providing them with more worthy alternatives. Instead, the greatest gesture of divine benevolence is to lead them to one another, and to leave them in a financial position to throw their lot in with the "common stock."

Heterosexual Friendship, Genre,

and Allegories of Literary Exchange

Because the harmony between individuals rooted in principles of ideal friendship produces the pastoral harmony with nature achieved by the Hall's management, the possibility of including heterosexual friendship in this utopia has great implications for reforming British society, in its economic systems, relation to natural resources, and collective moral identity. And, yet, the novel's inset tales continual depict the improbability of idealized friendship functioning effectively in spheres of family and public life. One must reconcile this representational axis of Scott's utopia with her persistent self-consciousness about literary commerce as friendship. More precisely, in this section, I want to connect the depiction of divided spheres of friendship, and the thematic of heterosexual friendship with the ironized expressions of warm friendship between narrator and publisher.

According to William Warner, male authors, such as Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, work to elevate the novel as a moral and masculine form of writing, while still drawing on the conventions and curiosities stimulated by romances that are elsewhere coded as feminine.[220] *Millenium Hall* appears to allegorize this literary-commercial "elevation," with its male narrator taking advantage of a reader's curiosities about this female society to further his didactic ends. But the recognition of female authorship as the outermost frame allows Scott to have the last laugh. *Millenium Hall* plays with sentimental male friendship as a context for the moral elevation of the reader's curiosity in narrative particulars, but, also, highlights how gender politics inform the representation

[220] William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998). Catherine Gallagher makes similar observations about the vexed relation of women novelists to their authorial property in *Nobodies Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994). For an argument that parallels my claims about Scott, see especially Gallagher's chapter on Charlotte Lenox's career.

of idealized amity. The novel concludes with special attention to a heterosexual friendship that is reduced to communication by epistolary correspondence, coincidentally the medium of exchange between editor and publisher. The depiction of this heterosexual friendship, when read allegorically, raises questions about gender divisions in textual transaction.

Scott calls attention to the relationship between gender and genre just prior to the final inset tale, as the narrator observes that Millenium Hall surpasses "all that romance ever represented in the plains of Arcadia [. . .] except the want of shepherds be judged a deficiency, that nothing else can compensate; there indeed they fall short of what the romantic writers represent, and have formed a female Arcadia" (223). For the narrator, Millenium Hall is at once too romantic and not romantic enough. He simultaneously diminishes the estate by equating it with a fanciful space, as detached from reality as a work of fiction, and critiques it for failing to boldly imagine a perfect heterosexual community. We must also recognize the extent to which the narrator diminishes the project's engagement with modernity. The estate, after all, is not an Edenic space uncorrupted by civilization, but, instead, a sub-culture that reforms and continues modern agricultural, industrial, and educational practices. The narrator relegates these utopian reforms to a nostalgic past, rather than a progressive future. Yet, only he can bring their reforms into contact with the present, by way of his travel narrative, and by implementing their ideas on his own plantation.

The narrator's reflection on his own exclusion from this all-female society, filtered through his inadequate appreciation for the Hall's modern political resonances, sets up the final interpolated tale's focus on heterosexual friendship, its social obstacles, and tenuous survival. *Millenium Hall* offers two instances of heterosexual friendships that persist after failed courtships through epistolary correspondence. The novel's last inset backstory dwells on this form of amity, and I will discuss it in detail. Earlier in the novel—in a tale within a tale—Scott references another less developed relationship

between Lady Emilia Reynolds and Mr. Peyton—the unwed parents of Mrs. Selvyn. Engaged to marry, but delayed in their gratification by an unexpected military posting, the lovers surrender to passion before the appointed day of separation. Finding herself pregnant, Lady Reynolds will not allow herself to marry Mr. Peyton upon his return, as she believes that now she can only appear as an object of shame in his eyes. Despite his protests to the contrary, she maintains her decision and contrives to have her daughter secretly taken in by another couple, the Selvyns, who have just lost a child. While too ashamed to marry, Lady Reynolds maintains a distanced friendship with Mr. Peyton, describing their relationship to her daughter in the following terms:

> he ever behaved to me with the tenderest respect . . . and till his death gave me every proof of the purest and strongest friendship. By consent we avoided each others presence for three years, by which time we hoped the violence of our mutual passion would be abated. He spent the greatest part of it abroad; and at the end of the period we met with the sincerer joy, from finding we were not deceived in our hopes. Our attachment was settled into the tenderest friendship. (216-217)

Despite the mentioned reunion, their relationship continues mostly through the exchange of letters. The father, living in closer proximity to the their daughter, communicates information about their child to Lady Reynolds, veiling their true relationship by writing "in the stile of a man who was writing to a person that had no other connexion with it than what her friendship for him must naturally occasion." (217). In this brief anecdote, Scott offers an image of a romantic friendship that might have persisted and strengthened in marriage if the sexual passions had not thwarted their mutual esteem by engaging too soon.[221] More than a casualty of arbitrary circumstances, their story suggests the challenge of developing a friendship prior to marriage without yielding to passion before tying the knot.

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[221] As Schellenberg argues, because even the most moral men in Scott's fiction appear to be, by nature, over-sexed, all men are incompatible with the utopian community (*Conversational Circle*, 101).

The image of male-female friendship allowed to persist outside of marriage depends on the mediation of distance and letter-writing. Coincidentally, the communication of this backstory occurs by way of a letter handed to Mrs. Selvyn by her mother on her death bed—the letter presumably written to provide the information after her death. This image of letter writing places Scott in the context of the frequent deathly connotation of epistolarity discussed in previous chapters. Not only does the medium deployed by the dying mother here carry, for the daughter, an association with the distanced friendship between her parents, but it also conveys the absolute distance that will in short time separate mother from daughter. It is a communication delivered by the sender just on the threshold of death, and read in the presence of the writer, so that she might observe her daughter's emotional response and commune with her following its transmission. The reflexive quality of this scene foregrounds an image of the writer as a present yet absent monitor, whose death is inscribed in the very motivation to write.

This notion that true friendship between men and women can better persist through distanced correspondence than in a state of marriage is reinforced in the final tale detailing the failed engagement between Harriot Trentham and her half-cousin Mr. Alworth. Serving as Harriot's tutor, Master Alworth develops a close intellectual friendship with his pupil. Their shared grandmother, Mrs. Alworth, observes their affectionate relationship and hopes that it will result in their espousal. But this hope has no foundation in the sentiments felt by the young pair; as Mrs. Maynard remarks: "Bred up like brother and sister, a tenderer degree of relation had not entered their thoughts, nor did any thing more appear necessary to their happiness, than a constant enjoyment of each others friendship" (227). Nevertheless, when Mrs. Alworth makes her aspirations public, the two find themselves re-evaluating their relationship, wondering if society can tolerate their intimacy outside the context of a marital union. They acknowledge that they do not feel "that turbulency and wildness, which had always appeared to them the true characteristics of love," yet "everything was insipid that they did not mutually enjoy"

(229). After much thought, they determine to marry, concluding that "it might become difficult to continue the same degree of intimacy without exposing themselves to censure" and, perhaps more naively, that "they could not fail of being happy as man and wife, who had so long enjoyed great felicity in the most intimate friendship" (230). But just as Harriot and Master Alworth are poised to demonstrate the Johnsonian ideal of friendship in marriage, another woman, Miss Melman, kindles in Mr. Alworth desires of another sort and the vows are broken. That Miss Melman lacks any capacity to also satisfy Mr. Alworth's desire for intellectual friendship further reinforces the sense that, in Scott's view, sexual relationships and real friendships are rarely observed in combination. As Mr. Alworth concludes that "esteem and passion were totally independent," Harriot likewise reflects that "passion had greater power over his sex than esteem." Consequently, the novel takes a pessimistic stance toward the possibility of friendship in marriage, as well as toward the social acceptability of amity between a man and a woman, let alone in the case where one of the two is married to someone else.

Scott again preserves male-female friendship by reducing its sphere. Following Mr. Alworth's marriage to Miss Melman, he keeps up a correspondence with Harriot and does not see her in person for some time. When he does have a chance to again reside in her proximate, he comes to regret his earlier decision, growing distressed at his wife's frivolity and falling in love with his once intimate friend. Mrs. Maynard, Harriot's counseling friend, observes this change in Mr. Alworth and warns her companion of the adulterous desires she has kindled. Shocked by this idea, and even more so after Alworth discloses his secret, Harriot can only advise that they keep their distance from one another. Gradually, Mr. Alworth attains a command over his passion, and the two continue their relationship in the form of a regular correspondence. Alworth is left to focus on his children's education and learn to tolerate his wife's vanity, while Mrs. Trentham, at Mrs. Maynard's suggestion, comes to visit and eventually reside at Millenium Hall. Although Mr. Alworth and Harriot do not have children together, they

are further united by the agreement that Harriot will undertake the education of Alworth's daughter. Their relationship transforms finally into a metaphorical family constellation, in which the mother and father can sustain a true friendship only through the repression of sexual desire and distanced communication through an exchange of letters.

While *Millenium Hall* draws from modern ideas about female academies, Protestant nunneries, and other reformatory spaces imagined in the period, Scott's novel does not ultimately seek to further the construction of such a female academy and refuge, but, rather to intercept these ideals in promoting the novel as a tool of social reform that aspires to transcend gendered institutions of print media. Scott may draw much from the reforming model of intimate household friendship among women at the heart of Mary Astell's project in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), but she does so to advance the intimacy of texts that inevitably transgress the gendered codes surrounding actual embodied friendship. To do justice to Scott's authorship, then, is to recognize that her representation of friendship is not meant to serve simply as a model of imitation; it reflects a more nuanced consideration of the mediations of fiction, gendered authorship, and the coordination of didacticism with the artifice of amiable companionship. Like *Clarissa* and *The Adventures of David Simple*, Scott's novel draws on the cultural privilege of friendship in tension with other ties of authority. But, in doing so, she establishes a unique analogy between the gender politics of authorship and the problem of heterosexual friendships outside of marriage. While she defines women's friendship through its antagonism with patriarchal forces in family and commerce, her depiction of heterosexual friendship internalizes this tension. By subjecting ideal amity to greater pressures and distinguishing what remains from all other registers of affection, Scott imagines a purer form of friendship between writers and readers—one that someday may not require the anonymity of a female novelist or the rhetorical mask of male friendship.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROMISE AND PRESUMPTION OF FRIENDSHIP IN LAURENCE STERNE'S *TRISTRAM SHANDY*

Despite Samuel Johnson's famously dismissive quip about *Tristram Shandy*—"nothing odd will do long"—the novel has long amused and perplexed its readers, not in spite of, but, largely, due to its very oddness.[222] Readers have long debated about whether to place *Tristram Shandy* among the early moderns (Rabelais and Montaigne) or modernists (Marcel Proust and James Joyce).[223] Jonathan Lamb argues that Sterne borrows a stylistic motive from Montaigne, in exposing his mind naked to the public as a means of reflecting the oddity of the world.[224] This oddity has proved useful in scholarship as a foil for studies of various authors. While there is no reason why readers should not come to appreciate Sterne's literary debts as well as his innovations, the breadth of his work's historical application has prompted efforts to clarify his entanglement with eighteenth-century literature and culture. This chapter examines the convergence of classical and eighteenth-century views of friendship in *Tristram Shandy* as a means of reframing the sources of its perceived oddity, and, by extension, its persistent appeal.

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[222] James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*. ed. George B. Hill and L.F. Powell (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934-50) ii, 449.

[223] For emphasis on Sterne's early modern sensibility, see D.W. Jefferson, "Tristram Shandy and the Tradition of Learned Wit" *Essay in Criticism*, 1 (1951): 225-48; Donald R. Wehr, "Sterne, Cervantes, Montaigne: Fideistic Skepticism and the Rhetoric of Desire" *Comparative Literature Studies* 25 (1988):127-51. For examples of Sterne's relevance to modern and postmodern aesthetics, see David Pierce and Peter de Voogd, eds. *Laurence Sterne in Modernism and Postmodernism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996); Melvyn New, "Reading Sterne Through Proust and Levinas" *Age of Johnson* 12 (2001): 329-60. I do not mean to overstate the antagonism between these different approaches, but only to suggest that this divergent emphasis has significant, and, at times, irreconcilable implications for interpreting facets of Sterne's literary project.

[224] Jonathan Lamb, "Sterne's Use of Montaigne" *Comparative Literature* 32, No. 1 (Winter, 1980): 1-41.

Prior chapters have explored diverse ways that eighteenth-century writers represent ideal friendship as a trope that links intimacy with moral community. Sterne's novel takes up this understanding of friendship and poses it as an explicit contract of reading in its opening pages. In doing so, the author further demonstrates the perception of critics (from Victor Shklovsky to Thomas Keymer) that his novels lay bare conventional aspects of the novel form by mid-century, while anticipating conventions yet to develop. The trope of reading as a form of friendship that has been implicit, or barely legible, in past novels, Sterne draws out into the light of day. But like many of these writers, Sterne draws on classical and early modern associations of friendship, staging these values in direct conflict with modern codes of sociability.

While many mid-century novelists explore the conflict between friendship and social propriety, in *Tristram Shandy* this tension takes on a different valence because of the novel's unique cultivation of singularity as a value. As John Mullan has suggested, early critics saw the novel as one among many works designed to flatter the popular taste for novelty.[225] Partly this denigration had to do with perceptions of Sterne's self-promotion strategies. Frank Donoghue describes Sterne's attempt to garner praise from the actor David Garrick as a reflection of Sterne's view of an "author as a commodity akin to an actor on stage."[226] Many of Sterne's actions in the years following the anonymous publication of *Tristram Shandy's* first volumes convey his emerging desire for fame and savvy sense of marketing. Yet, this explanation of his literary style avoids engaging directly with the narrator's stated motive for disclosing his oddity: a desire for friendship with the reader. *Tristram Shandy* employs the frame of friendship to position

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[225] John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth-Century*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 147-150.

[226] Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 68. As Donoghue asserts, for Sterne, it is only through an internalization of the discourse associated with commercialized theatre that the audience can be "construed as the author's friends."

those qualities of the text, perceived by detractors as emblems of fashionable novelty and commodification, on an ethical footing, drawing together a literary tradition of odd friends and a modern notion of exposing one's irrational thoughts in the context of private friendship. By asking his audience to see themselves as reading toward friendship, Sterne deflects the perception that one is merely consuming a novelty, and fosters the Aristotelian idea of "sensing together" with a singular subjectivity. At the same time, I will argue, Sterne repeatedly underscores how his contract of friendship requires a performative presumption of advanced intimacy on the part of both author and reader.

Wayne Booth traces many of Sterne's stylistic devices to less popular texts of the preceding decades; Booth even goes so far as to declare that "every form of intrusion in *Tristram Shandy* is . . .available in [Henry] Fielding's works."[227] Whether or not this perception is wholly accurate, it rightly places the focus not on the taxonomy of textual play evident in Sterne's novel, but rather, on the reader's perception of organization in spite of disorganization, of transcendent personality in spite of psychological chaos, of intimacy in spite of flagrant artifice. Sterne achieves this by cultivating a notion of virtual friendship that encompasses such contradictions. He views friendship as a promise of intimacy as well as a performance that provokes formal self-consciousness about autobiographical fiction and the novel genre. Approaches to the novel's autobiographical form have understandably emphasized its reflections on its own serial publication and its treatment of death.[228] But despite Tristram's opening proposal of friendship, no study has yet comprehensively addressed how the category of friendship operates within the novel's memorialized episodes, digressions, and recurring allusions.

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[227] Booth, Wayne. "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before *Tristram Shandy*" *PMLA* 67, No. 2 (1952): pp. 163-185.

[228] Keymer, Thomas. "Dying by Numbers: 'Tristram Shandy' and Serial Fiction, I" *Shandean: An Annual Devoted to Laurence Sterne and His Works* 8 (1996): 41-67; and "Dying by Numbers: 'Tristram Shandy' and Serial Fiction, II" *Shandean: An Annual Devoted to Laurence Sterne and His Works* 9 (1997): 34-69.

In this chapter, I begin by addressing how the opening contract promises friendship as way of presuming a forward intimacy. This tension between presumptive and promised friendship forges a connection between the epistemology of character oddity and an ethics of reading. Sterne frames character oddity as friendship, not just through the amiable ethos of the narrator, but through the mediation of new friends by way of recognizable types. Drawing on the presumption of audience familiarity with a prescribed literary canon, Sterne's intertextual development of character introduces original personalities by invoking the trust readers place in characters they already know. More than evoking familiarity, the novel's allusions to Cervantes and Shakespeare foreground a thematic tension between friendship and sociability. In this respect, Sterne intercepts the authority of popular literary types ("old friends" in David Brewer's terms), not just to introduce new friends, but, rather, to model a connection between unsociable character and literary immortality. Contrary to Johnson's perception about oddity and ephemerality, Sterne stakes the endurance of his character portraits on a singularity of self that can only be cultivated through the intimacy of a presumed friendship.

In the second part of this chapter, I look at the Aristotelian ethics of spending time together in friendship that emerges with this modern elaboration of intimate friendship. Sterne's view of community with readers parallels Aristotelian friendship, particularly the notion of friendship as the shared sensation of the goodness of being alive. While this ethics shares features with Sterne's broader depiction of sympathy and sensibility, Sterne's development of textual friendship addresses the narrower scope of what "sensing together" means in the sphere of novel reading. Tristram's use of apostrophe, particularly in elegiac contexts, clarifies the tension inherent in treating reading as a form of friendship. Nonetheless, the apostrophe extends qualities associated with performative friendship elsewhere in the novel, becoming a virtual space that contrasts with embodied sensibility, while it also recovers and preserves the memory of lost loved ones.

Familiar Oddity and Unsociable Friendship

In a letter sent to accompany a volume of *Tristram Shandy*, Elizabeth Montagu writes to Sarah Scott, endorsing Sterne: "He is full of the milk of human kindness, harmless as a child, but often a naughty boy, and a little apt to dirty his *frock*. On the whole I recommend him to your acquaintance, and he has talents and qualities that will recommend him to your friendship."[229] Her introduction exemplifies a cultural trope in the rhetorical nexus of reading, authorship, and friendship: Sterne's book, though it might be any text, circulates by recommendation like a person in an eighteenth-century social network. By a kind of transference in this case, friendship with another person vouches for potential "friendship" with an author, while it reflects back on that friendship, working to reveal affinities or differences in taste.[230] Montagu speaks of the book as a substitute for its author's presence, which in turn, is a substitute for the sender. As she writes, "not knowing what temptations the town of Bath may offer, I have sent you the deepest Divine."[231] In a space of unfamiliar dangers, the lent volume provides at least one trustworthy object of entertainment.

This brand of virtual friendship by recommendation parallels Sterne's well-known strategy for soliciting attention to the early volumes of *Tristram Shandy.* Seeking David Garrick's public endorsement, he reached out to the actor through a mutual friend, Catherine Fourmantel. Ventriloquizing his proxy, Sterne wrote to Garrick in a letter for her to copy: "You must understand, He [Sterne] is a kind & generous friend of mine whom Providence has attached to me in this part of the world where I came a stranger--&

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[229] Alan B. Howes, ed. *Sterne: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 170. Future references to this text will appear as *CH*.

[230] Like Clarissa and Anna's exchange of Norris's miscellanies in *Clarissa*, Scott and her sister engage in a virtual market that mixes the credits of affection and esteem with the returns of textual appraisals.

[231] *CH,* 169. Because Montague knew Sterne personally as cousin to his wife Elizabeth, we might expect her to be especially loose with distinctions between his actual and textual presence.

I could not think how I could make a better return than by endeavoring to make a friend to him & his Performance."[232] The first biographer of Sterne, Dr. John Hill, provides a striking contrast, deploying the rhetoric of textual friendship while wrongly portraying Sterne's books as gaining affection from the public, and from Garrick, without the passport of any intercessor. Of Sterne's success, he states:

> Here were none of the common arts of making a reputation practised: no friend before hand told people how excellent a book it was: no bookseller, a proprietor, whose interest should lead him to cry it up, and bid his authors do the same. A parcel of books were sent up out of the country; they were unknown, and scarce advertised; but thus friendless they made their own way, and their author's . . . they have made their way to the tables of the first people in the kingdom, and to the friendship of Mr. Garrick. [233]

Elizabeth Montagu's and Dr. Hill's comments reflect the propensity to discuss the relation between authors, readers, and publics in terms of friendship. Partly this talk transposes the language of theatre sales and subscription publishing, where "friends of the author" signifies a form of public or coterie sponsorship.[234] While Montagu speaks of the book as a surrogate for its author, Dr. Hill indicates a detachability: the books have "made their own way, and their authors," but it is the books themselves that Garrick has befriended.

My purpose here is not to determine the extent to which Sterne's popularity arose by virtue of a "practised reputation," personal recommendations, or on their own merit. Rather, I am suggesting these remarks indicate a way of talking about books and

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[232] *CH,* 45.

[233] *CH*, 73.

[234] See for instance Catherine Gallagher's discussion of Aphra Behn's authorship, in the context of the playwright profession, in *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 13. Gallagher's account touches on how the language of friendship appears in notions of public support for playwrights, particularly through the convention of flagging certain performance as "friends of the author" or "gift night" productions, where the collected profits would go to support the play's author. Alternatively, Frank Donoghue sees Sterne more through an analogy with professional actors. Garrick and Fourmantel would have understood the interplay of useful friendships and career advancement.

friendship that Sterne's novel comprehensively engages through its self-framing and its approach to characterization. It is a way of reconciling the detachability of the book as a commodity in the marketplace with the recognition of texts as a form of interpersonal community (and requisite communal labor). One might speculate that such comments, particularly Montagu's phrasing of the transition from "acquaintance" to "friendship," are prompted by the very terms Tristram uses to introduce himself:

> Sir, as you and I are in a manner perfect strangers to each other, it would not have been proper to let you into too many circumstances relating to myself all at once.---You must have a little patience. I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also; hoping and expecting that your knowledge of my character, and of what kind of a mortal I am, by the one, would give you a better relish for the other: As you proceed further with me, the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that, unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship.---*O diem praeclarum!* ---then nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling. (6)

By the sixth chapter of the first volume in *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne has shared with readers the intimate details of his parents' sex life, including the embarrassing circumstances of his own conception. He is brought to this juncture by reflecting on what previous chapters have left out. Tristram's invocation of friendship works to assuage the burden of quantity, rather than the propriety of sequence. His broad notion of developing friendship with the reader partakes in this logic. Moving from perfect strangers" to "slight acquaintance" to "familiarity" to "friendship" does not involve, as one might expect, a gradually disclosure of the narrator's "private" self, or a shift from a quality of detail appropriate for acquaintances to more intimate secrets. While Tristram speaks of what is "proper," the impropriety of his opening chapters suggests that what weighs more on his mind are the "too many circumstances" that he must communicate to effectively frame an episode of his life. The pursuit of friendship, it would seem, operates through the quantitative accumulation of details in no particular order, which will render each episodic narrative increasingly intelligible, and, consequently, humorous.

The promise of friendship exorcises the specter of reader boredom. As the quantity of particulars threatens to overtax the reader's patience, the notion of textual friendship dangles at the horizon like a prize. Unlike Richardson's notion of the friendly epistolary reader's eager interest for more detail, Tristram does not promise to spare his readers of tedium, but only to retrospectively transfigure that experience. He prepares the reader to spend their patience, but frames this depletion of mental energy as a credit paid toward a valuable possession. At the same time, this promise provokes a curiosity about the significance of these particulars that can propel the reader forward and mitigate the sensation of tedium.

Following the above quotation, Tristram continues on as if the act of contracting had fulfilled the stated objective, remarking, "Therefore, my dear friend and companion, if you should think me somewhat sparing of my narrative on my first setting out,---bear with me,---and let me tell my story my own way." This paradoxical gesture reflects Sterne's sensitivity to the contradictions involved in the pursuit of textual friendship, as well as the textuality of all friendships. He perceives that, while trust emerges through friendship, friendship emerges through trust. All friendship formations (as in the case of David Simple's charity in *Adventures of David Simple*, or Miss Mancel's gift to Mrs Morgan in *Millenium Hall*) requires a moment of premature trust, and, thus, moral risk. From the opening chapter, Tristram has already presumed the intimacy of friendship

As examined in the introduction, Henry Fielding reserves such expressions of friendship for the final chapters of *Tom Jones*, while he adopts the more servile, economic persona in presenting the "Bill of Fare" to the reader in the opening chapter, with its explicit rejection of intimacy: "An Author ought to consider himself, not as a Gentlemen who gives a private or eleemosynary Treat, but rather as one who keeps a public Ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money."[235] Yet, before the

[235] Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (New York: Norton, 1995), 25.

end of this first chapter of *Tom Jones*, Fielding drops the metaphor and leans toward a less commercial, and more advanced intimacy with the audience, appealing to the "sensible" and "learned" reader. By the end of the novel, of course, he addresses the reader as a friend. This divided image of the fictional text—as a commodity up for public sale, and as a private gift exchanged between intimate companions—concretizes the paradoxical status of literary exchange that Sterne engages.[236]

In one respect, Sterne synthesizes the commercial and the personal, making this contract of friendship into a kind of advertisement. Yet, rather than serving up a "Bill of Fare," which reinforces an illusion that reading is somehow akin to being a detached rational consumer in a marketplace of goods, Sterne distinguishes reading from commerce in his language of friendship, even as he absorbs into this account of textual friendship the language of exchange and credit. The passage foregrounds how the "exchanges" of reading differ from those of the marketplace. One does not acquire this friendship with the certainty and immediacy with which one can trade coin for a book, or a feast. Rather, the novel highlights how reading toward friendship requires an expenditure of patience, tolerance, and attentiveness, without any guarantees regarding the goods one will come to possess. Sterne emphasizes that in the act of reading, we are lenders from the outset; contracts of reading fold back on themselves because we always have to "pay"—monetarily and psychically—just to read the "menu." As Tristram asks us at this opening stage to give him "credit for a little more wisdom than appears upon [his] outside" (7), he reinforces the reader's status as a lender, and lending as a qualification of textual friendship.

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[236] Sterne's level of familiarity with the novels of his contemporaries has long been unclear. For a discussion of this issue, see Tom Keymer's introduction to *Tristram Shandy: A Casebook*. Ed. Thomas Keymer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). However, some evidence suggests that Sterne playfully borrowed a distinctive phrasing or two from Fielding's *Tom Jones*, as he did extensively with Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. See Ian Campbell Ross, "Did Sterne Read *Tom Jones*?" *Shandean* 13 (2003): 109-111.

But this pretense of role-playing as a form of lending makes trust the primary concern. If, on the one hand, Tristram asks readers for a loan of their mental energy, his appeal to literary prototypes offers a form of security, in lieu of prior familiarity with the author. While Garrick's public praise for *Tristram Shandy* is well-known, Sterne's novel employs its own internal logic of recommendation by evoking familiar literary personas and developing characters through intertextual references that thematize friendship. As demonstrated by David Brewer, many eighteenth-century writers draw on the existing cultural familiarity with literary characters (from the early eighteenth-century and seventeenth century), to rekindle audience affections and thereby market new works.[237] While the rhetoric around "old friends" that arises in Brewer's examples does not directly apply to *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne's approach to character nonetheless draws on this notion of pre-existing familiarity, by introducing characters in analogy with "old friends," while also distilling traits of these prototypes and diffusing those qualities across the text.

Sterne's readers, however, expressed mixed perceptions about the familiarity and originality of his character aesthetic. A generous early review approved of Sterne's skillful appropriations, writing: "uncle Toby, corporal Trim, and Dr. Slop, are excellent imitations of certain characters in a truly Cervantic performance, which we avoid naming, out of regard to the author's delicacy."[238] But not all readers agreed that familiarity was a

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[237] David Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1835*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2005). In his discussion of Sterne, Brewer describes *Tristram Shandy* as setting up a textual aesthetics modeled on a "club of true feelers." In this view, rather than hectoring readers in prefaces and footnotes as Richardson had, Sterne "flatters and cajoles" his readers into a submissive posture, inviting them to accept the rules of his game as one must accept the terms of a select club or society, submitting to basic guidelines while retaining some autonomy. While Brewer usefully situates Sterne's conversational model in the historical context of club sociability, here I choose to focus on the related language around friendship, first, because these are Tristram's explicit terms, appearing in a well-known passage that I will discuss below; second, because friendship often exceeds in degree the moderated intimacy and foolishness of club sociability; and, lastly, because Sterne evokes the more extensive philosophical-historical trajectory of the Western idealization of friendship, prompting us to adopt a wider lens, if only to better recognize patterns in the novel's minutiae.

[238] *CH*, 52. Unsigned notice in the *Critical Review*, ix, January 1760. As this volumes editor notes, it is not just Cervantes' *Don Quixote* but Tobias Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* that this reviewer means to evoke.

good thing. Against Rev. George Gregory's charge of unoriginality, Anna Seward offered diametrically opposed praise for Sterne. She writes, "we see and hear the little domestic group at Shandy-hall; nor can we help an involuntary conviction not only that they all existed, but that they had been of our acquaintance; and where may be found even the most shadowy prototype in books, of uncle Toby and his Trim, of Mrs. Shandy and Dr. Slop?"[239] These reactions express an historically unfolding aesthetic problem that Sterne's novel addresses: on the one hand, the evocation of "old friends" may facilitate the audience's affections, while, on the other hand, the presence of such cues can spoil the illusion that characters are as vivid as real acquaintances.

Sterne's manages the typological qualities and singular obsessions of his characters so as to put the familiarity of old friends in the service of the strange vivacity of new ones. He accomplishes this by drawing from particular qualities of comic prototypes that link aberration to friendship. In particular, Sterne's allusions to Cervantes's Don Quixote and Shakespeare's Yorick, play a central role in cultivating a nexus of associations around friendship, oddity, and literary fame. Like Sarah and Henry Fielding, Sterne alludes to Cervantes as a comparison point for his brand of humor. But Sterne goes further in adopting the structure of friendship between Cervantes's famous pair, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.[240] Beyond Brewer's general notion of a "literary commons, " *Tristram Shandy* frames the qualities of these "old friends" in a way that illustrates the endurance of particular characters in the popular imagination.[241] The

[239] *CH*, 268. Anna Seward to Rev. George Gregory, Letter of Dec 5, 1787.

[240] Sarah Fielding's Quixote, David Simple, goes off in search of a friend. Sterne recognizes that the quixotic type should have one already.

[241] The many borrowings from Don Quixote and Sancho Panza by eighteenth-century writers partly reflect the primary work's commercial popularity and the natural momentum of appropriation in a culture predisposed to "imaginative expansion." But the continued amicable status of the Quixote figure signifies more than the fact of circulation and the 'iterability' of the print medium. Brewer argues that the increasing quantity of proliferating textual copies attached a connotation of sociability to a character's circulation in books, while the circulation of characters between novelistic and theatrical mediums reinforced their detachability from narrative frames (*Afterlife of Character*, 81, 79).

friendship at the center of Cervantes's text enshrouds these characters as representatives of the social canon, and, through an air of amiability, promotes their "introduction" to succeeding generations. Similarly, as I will discuss, Sterne finds Yorick a useful prototype for exploring how the fool's persona generates a critique of sociability. More narrowly, Shakespeare's triangulation of Yorick, Hamlet, and Horatio, presents a structure of friendship that is useful for exploring the elegiac qualities of textual friendship and public memory.

In *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*, Robert Alter discusses how Sterne's portrait of Uncle Toby and Trim recapitulates essential qualities of the Quixote-Sancho relationship. Toby and Trim exhibit the most marked resemblance to the founding canonical friendship of European fiction, but this idealism-skepticism dynamic circulates throughout the narrative, appearing in the interactions between Walter and Toby, Eugenius and Yorick, Walter and Mrs. Shandy, and various characters in the novel's embedded tales. According to Alter, "Cervantic realism, Sterne perceived, operates by a repeated juxtaposition of soaring fantasy with earth bound coarse-grained actuality, the quixotic principle, colliding with the sanchesque."[242] In *Tristram Shandy*, these positions are reversible, allowing characters to alternate between quixotic and practical figures. Moreover, Sterne applies this structure toward the management of singular hobby-horses, thereby using this familiar typology to orient the representation of singular traits. Toby plays Sancho to the philosophizing Walter; Trim becomes the pragmatic assistant in Toby's amours, helping him to succeed in spite of his delicate sensibility; and Walter and Toby both help Trim through the excessive grief prompted by

[242] Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: the Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 39. Alter is interested in the way this literary antecedent transmits a philosophical tension to Sterne's novel that manifests in gestures of formal reflexivity. While I am equally interested in the novel's reflexive devices, I want to examine what is significant about these aesthetic and philosophic concepts being transmitted through the social form of friendship (the Quixote-Sancho friendship).

his reflections of Parson Yorick's sermons. A Cervantean circuit of friendship binds together Sterne's characters.

In combining Alter's observations with Brewer's concept of the "old friend," we can see that a perception of amiable familiarity depends, not just on the appropriation of a particular character, but, rather, on the presence of culturally defined amiable qualities and roles. The word "quixotic," as an eponymous adjective derived from a fictive personage, indexes this transformation of the concrete friend into the atomized one.[243] Roland Barthes's semiotics of character in *S/Z* offers useful terminology for describing the way Sterne pursues a logic of amiable recommendation through the evocation of qualities and role, rather than the direct appropriation of a character.[244] Barthes's describes the character's proper name as site for the passage of figures, or, the symbolic meanings that we can recognize in a configuration of character semes (qualities).[245] For Barthes, a figure is "not a combination of semes concentrated in a legal Name, nor can biography, psychology, or time encompass it: it is an illegal, impersonal, anachronistic

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[243] This link between quixotic idealism and the literary depiction of friendship applies to the mix of foolishness and ambition that marks many of the fictional friends discussed in this study. From Clarissa's pursuit of perfect virtue, to David Simple's quest for a real friend, to the utopian scheme of *Millennium Hall,* friendship bonds recurrently channel the individual's pursuit of ideal living, but in a way that never quite shirks the shadow of quixotic madness. On the upside, the quixotic mark of character carries with it the association of familiarity in advance, or, in excess of the transpired narration, with the payoff of heightened reader attachment.

[244] Roland Barthes, *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974). Barthes approach to character has been useful in criticism dealing with the alleged "flatness" and experiments in "roundness" that mark this developmental period of the British novel. Brewer, for instance, argues that eighteenth-century characterization had to do less with deep interiority and a plot-bound character history, and more with Barthes's notion of a proper name operating like a "magnetic field" linking reconfigurable bundles of traits and possibilities (*Afterlife of Character*, 40). To expand on this application, we might say this theory of the proper name encompasses the ability of new writers to appropriate circulating characters, drawing on their familiarity while transforming them to suit new contexts. For a detailed comparison of Sterne's and Barthes's similar approaches to the autobiographical form, see Katharine M. Morsberger, "Parallel Forces: Identity and Authority in Roland Barthes and Tristram Shandy," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 30 (2001): 245-267.

[245] Barthes's examples of figures evoked by semic constellations in Balzac's *Sarrasine* involve concepts such as "queen-women," "castration," "wealth."

configuration of symbolic relationships."[246] That is to say, figures circulate in the text without regard to person, place, or time, and form an overall pattern crucial to the readers interpretation of the text. In Barthes's terms, Sterne's text repeatedly brings together figures of quixotism (often detached from direct allusion to Cervantes's Quixote), responsiveness, and friendship.

One instance of this latent association between friendship and quixotism appears in the Le Fever episode, a passage well-known for capturing Sterne's sentimental style. While Toby and Trim are engaged in the siege of Dendermond, they hear of a dying soldier, Le Fever, and his young son, staying at an inn nearby; the situation becomes an opportunity for Toby to show his humanity, and for Sterne to demonstrate his power to affect readers. Toby puts aside his public duty to carry on the siege so that he can attend on the private suffering of a fellow soldier. He enlists himself anew in the service of "that king Being, who is a friend to the friendless" (298). While the scene depicts the triumph of Toby's sensibility over his hobby-horse, military strategy, Sterne does not allow Toby's motivations to appear entirely unalloyed.

As the situation develops, Sterne illustrates not just Toby's sensibility, but the Cervantean friendship structure between Trim and Toby that defies military rank. At first, Toby plays the counselor, critiquing Trim for premature hostility toward the parson attending on the dying Le Fever (296)—an anger stemming from Trim's recurring obsessions with the religious persecution of his brother. Positions soon reverse, however, as Trim tries to counter Toby's enthusiastic compassion for Le Fever, which not only runs to an idealistic extreme, but subtly reincorporates Toby's militaristic fanaticism. With increasing fervency, Toby maintains that Le Fever will march again with his regiment, while Trim repeatedly discourages this idea, encouraging Toby to face reality and deal with the more practical concern of providing for Le Fever's son. Tristram

[246] Barthes, 68.

captures the clash of Toby's romantic desire and Trim's hard-nosed sense of probabilities:

> In a fortnight or three weeks, added my uncle Toby, smiling,---he might march.---He will never march; an' please your honour, in this world, said the corporal:---He will march; said my uncle Toby, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off:---An' please your honour, said the corporal, he will never march but to his grave:---He shall march, cried my uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch,---he shall march to his regiment.---He cannot stand it, said the corporal;---He shall be supported, said my uncle Toby;---He'll drop at last, said the corporal, and what will become of his boy?---He shall not drop, said my uncle Toby, firmly.---A-well-o'day,---do what we can for him, said Trim, maintaining his point,---the poor soul will die:---He shall not die, by G---, cried my uncle Toby. (298-299)

The complexity of the Le Fever episode resides in its coordination of irony and pathos. Sterne shows how Toby's fixation not only promises to wastefully expend a great deal of benevolent energy, but also may possibly endanger the object of his charity. If Trim's counsel has little effect on Toby's proposals, it nonetheless refines the morality of Toby's vain defiance of human frailty. The reader can still partly sympathize with Toby's motivation, while perceiving the eccentric impulse that demands the presence of an interrupting friend.

In developing these quixotic patterns of friendship, Sterne stages a conflict with modern codes of public sociability that deepens the significance of Tristram's opening contract of friendship. While Tristram must apologize for his uncle's sacrilegious profanity in the Le Fever episode, his admiration for Toby's assumption of intimate privileges with the dying soldier accounts for his own presumption of friendship with the reader. His memorialization of these qualities indicates the circulation of amiable semes between character and narrator. Tristram describes how, in his first (and last) visit to Le Fever, Toby "independently of all modes and customs, opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it" (299). Describing the tone in which Uncle Toby puts his proposal to Le Fever, Tristram observes, "There was a frankness in my uncle Toby,--not the effect of familiarity, ---but the cause of it, ---which let you at

once into his soul, and shewed you the goodness of his nature" (299). Again, Sterne hits on the paradox of intimacy, which can only cultivate familiarity by first pretending to it. By concretizing this tension under these dramatic circumstances, Sterne clarifies the origins of his own presumptive friendship as an expression of the quixotic sensibility he shares with his uncle. At the same time, the immanence of Le Fever's death adds a temporal urgency to the omission of social formalities.

Before examining the novel's related depiction of Yorick and Eugenius, we must first understand how Sterne's engagement with John Locke's psychology mediates his representation of friendship as performance and self-exposure, and thereby inflects his appropriation of these early modern figures. Locke's philosophy and empirical approach anticipates trends that will intensify across the eighteenth-century. Literary critics have inquired into Sterne's representation of the Lockean mind, and his response to the picture of human psychology that emerges in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Sterne's deployment of friendship, as a challenge to the division between public and private communication, recalls Locke's psychological explanation of social aberrancy. As Alan Bray and Richard Yeo argue, Locke sees friendship as a valuable tool for conversation in the pursuit of rational judgment, but he privileges conversations that include strangers and enemies.[247] The value of restrained conversability over particularized intimacy in rational conversation correlates with Locke's fear of idea association as a mechanism that can produce odd, and, thus, asocial individuals.

In the *Essay*, Locke discusses the observable oddity of character as a symptom of an irrational flaw in a person's chain of ideas, requiring correction at an early age. Without the management of a sound education, these flaws create routine mental pathways that, like Sterne's hobbyhorses, become an inseparable element of character:

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[247] Alan Bray. *The Friend*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 212-213; Richard Yeo. "John Locke on Conversation with Friends and Strangers" *Parergon* 26.2 (2009): 11-37.

> Ideas that are not ingrained by controlled rational thought are wholly owing to chance or custom; ideas that in themselves are not at all kin, come to be so united in some men's minds, that it is very hard to separate them; they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding, but its associate appears with it; and if they are more than two, which are thus united, the whole gang, always inseparable, show themselves together.[248]

Locke's tropology has particular import for this study. While the search for rational associations involves tracing a kind of 'natural kinship' or familial likeness, errant associations also appear anthropomorphized as 'associates' of an 'inseparable gang.' A model of affinity without familiality, these associations are, as Locke writes, a kind of 'keeping company' that function "as if they were but one idea." While nothing in Locke's treatise invokes friendship as an apt metaphor for dangerous associations, his view of an ordered mind depends on tropes of family, kinship, and nature. He contends that this invisible "kinship" of ideas produces a normalized and sociable *public* character suited to mix in the company of strangers. Conversely, for Locke, an unnatural affinity of ideas produces an odd, asocial individual, characterized by a form of cognitive association and notional company-keeping in antagonism with the natural kinship of ideas.[249]

For Locke, this tendency to form unnatural mental associations, which all persons possess in degree, positions the self on a continuum of rationality and madness, between "Bedlam" and civil conversation.[250] Discussing the intimate exchanges of friendship, Joseph Addison develops this opposition between madness, as a form of radical mental particularity, and civil intercourse, as an internalization of social norms involving

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[248] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), Bk. 2, Ch. 33.

[249] See Michael McKeon Secret History of Domesticity (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2005). Locke's use of kinship to discuss proper and improper associations conforms to Michael McKeon's archaeology of public/private divisions of knowledge driven by an unfolding formal process of domestication. McKeon describes the way tropes of family or familialism mediate between micro and macrocosm, public and private, ethic and epistemology. As he puts it, "the sociopolitical utility of the familial [. . .] is confirmed by the epistemological utility of the familiar" (*Secret History*, 327).

[250] Locke, Bk. 2, Ch. 33.

horizons of expectation and self-restraint. While Addison praises the edifying virtues of a more liberated conversational mode, in describing this radical mental transparency, he tacitly evokes what was for Locke the seeds of social alienation and madness:

> I have often thought if the minds of men were laid open, we should see but little difference between that of the wise man, and that of the fool. There are infinite reveries, numberless extravagances, and a perpetual train of vanities which pass through both. The great difference is, that the first knows how to pick and cull his thoughts for conversation, by suppressing some, and communicating others; whereas the other lets them all indifferently fly out in words. This sort of discretion, however, has no place in private conversation between intimate friends. On such occasions, the wisest men very often talk like the weakest; for indeed the talking with a friend is nothing else but thinking aloud.[251]

Addison implies that the private conversations of friendship, requires that one credit the conversant for more wisdom than appears in his or her foolish disclosures—to find a truth of character in a "train of vanities."

In turning to this context, I want to underscore the sense in which Sterne's promise of friendship works by intercepting the Lockean epistemology of mind, particularly the concept of idea association, but approaches the aberrancy of association, not as a threat, but as a basis for amiable community. Sterne follows Addison in pursuing an understanding of friendship as that which not only gives the most direct access to the life of the mind, but reveals all minds to share an essential vanity and irrationality. By transposing Addison's terms to the realm of public literary exchange with an anonymous audience, Sterne challenges the equation of an authorial ethos with a more pleasant yet distanced sociability.

The paradox that Sterne repeatedly encounters is that this private relationship, as imagined above by Addison (or, by Richardson, in terms of epistolary friendship) requires a notion of public intercourse to define itself against, even if that private sphere

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[251] *Spectator* 225.

contains within itself what Habermas calls an "audience-oriented subjectivity."[252] Tristram addresses this tension by inverting the structure of audience-oriented intimacy. In other words, while Richardson's heroines expose their inmost hearts in a zone of privacy, while hoping that a wider public may one day sympathize with them, Sterne, conversely, addresses himself to the world first, while hoping for a friend. After the initial proposal of friendship, he rarely addresses the reader again directly in terms of amity, instead reverting to a typology of address that divides caricatured readers by gender, rank, and profession. He figures the anonymous public as his readers, in its multiplicity (Sir, Madam, Worship, Lord, Critic, Hyper-critic, etc), all the while exposing his train of vanities as if he were addressing a familiar ear. The use of such formal addresses serves only to ironically foreground the universal lack of propriety in Tristram's communication with various readers.

Of this simulated conversation, John Mee observes that "Sterne's writing revels in the problem of polite regulation of meaning, winking at his reader's knowledge of the multifarious forms of social talk and their instability."[253] The source of Sterne's tendency to poke at conversational norms, I am suggesting, is to be found in the way that he, like Addison, identifies the intimacy of friendship with the exposed foolish mind of a wise man. One finds this equation paralleled in Sterne's public identification with the Yorick persona, as well as in the novel, through Tristram's defining prop of authorship: the cap and bells that he alternately wears and invites the reader to put on. While, for Locke, the kinship of ideas corresponds to the outward fitness to play one's social role, for Sterne, the oddity of mental associations corresponds to the fool's dress that defines his public

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[252] Richardson's heroines, that is, endeavor to expose the inmost recesses of their hearts in a zone of privacy, while hoping that a wider public may one day read the virtue inherent in their performance of textual friendship. As in the rhetoric of myth and romance heroism, words between friends are framed by the possibility of a wider audience.

[253] John Mee, *Conversable Worlds. Literature, Contention, and Community, 1762 to 1830* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 79.

authorial identity. But his deployment of the foolish persona accentuates a tacit implication of Addison's formulation: friendship can become not just a prompt for unleashing pent up thought aberrations, but an inspirational context for generating new mental associations that appear odd, foolish, even mad, in the eyes of the polite world.

Like the Le Fever episode, an early scene representing the friendship between Parson Yorick and Eugenius allegorizes tensions surrounding Sterne's authorial performance of friendship. As an example of an "old friend" twice over, Sterne depicts Parson Yorick as a resurrection of Shakespeare's fool, and as a rider of Quixote's horse ("full brother to Rosinante"). Yorick's relationship to Eugenius, and to the local community, draws from these literary associations to frame the conflict between friendship and sociability. Combining Quixote's stubbornness with the boundless humor of Shakespeare's jester, the Parson embodies a model of friendship defined by sentimentality and abrasive jocularity. What gets Yorick into trouble, ultimately, is his refusal to compartmentalize spheres of friendship and social intercourse. Yorick identifies gravity in social discourse with manipulation and deceit, citing Rochefoucauld, who calls it, "A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind" (18). Rather than heeding the *Spectator's* distinction between private friendship and public conversation, Yorick exposes his defective mind in all contexts. Tristram admires the very qualities that Yorick shares with Uncle Toby. As he writes, "he was a man unhackneyed and unpractised in the world, and was altogether as indiscreet and foolish on every other subject of discourse where policy is wont to impress restraint." Offering his opinion, "without much distinction of either personage, time, or place" and always "saying what came uppermost, and without much ceremony" (18), Yorick bares his whole mind in all social interactions, quite in the vein of the "thinking aloud" that Addison associates with private friendship.

What also defines Yorick's willingness to engage in honest discourse and abrasive jesting as a form of friendship is his firm embrace of reciprocity. Yorick may

finally suffer the revenging "blow" of the affronted, but, Sterne makes clear that this reflects the inability of "grave" types to take his jests and gibes in the proper spirit, namely, that with which Yorick himself endures public mockery. Tristram explains Yorick's fate by comparing the relationship between Jester and Jestée to Mortgager and Mortgagée, suggesting that the psychological effect on the victim of ridicule accumulates like interest over time, until, one day, the victim unexpectedly turns on the jester, expecting full payment of principle and outstanding interest.

Like Toby, Yorick rejects the council of his friend, Eugenius, and unwittingly continues to incur debts among his neighbors, believing that "not one of them was contracted thro' any malignancy;—but, on the contrary, from an honesty of mind, and a mere jocundity of humour" (19). Yorick is used to appearing himself as an object of public amusement due to the run-down appearance of his horse. His expectation of mockery wherever he goes becomes a part of his moral self-consciousness. As Tristram writes, "he loved a jest in his heart—and as he saw himself in the true point of ridicule, he would say, he could not be angry with others for seeing him in a light, in which he so strongly saw himself" (13). At one and the same time, Yorick can laugh *with* and be laughed at *by* others. He models an economy of lending that accrues no interest and finds recompense instantaneously, through identification with the pleasure of others, and through lending them the presumption that their jokes do not arise from malignancy. It is a model of universal goodwill and openness that comes into sharp conflict with sociability and its codes of "personage, time, or place."

Eugenius's advice to Yorick to moderate his humor, or else be overwhelmed by secret enemies striking at his "infirmities and mistakes" (20), prefigures Tristram's vulnerabilities before the reading public, and, particularly, his exposure to regulating reviewers who will "cut and slash" at his "jerkin" without regard to whether they pierce

the lining (115).[254] As Eugenius warns Yorick, "the fortunes of thy house shall totter,--thy character, which led the way to them, shall bleed on every side of it,--thy faith questioned,--thy works belied,--thy wit forgotten,--thy learning trampled on" (20). In such remarks, Sterne appears to anticipate having his own faith questioned, his learned wit trampled on and forgotten, as those of Johnson's persuasion would have wished it. Although Eugenius lends a mock-heroic tone to this fear, Yorick finally meets his demise from 'blows received in the dark,' or, put less rhapsodically, from a lack of professional preferment.[255] Tristram notes how Yorick utters his last words in "a *cervantick* tone" and glances at Eugenius with a fleeting fire in his eyes, "faint picture of those flashes of spirit, which (as Shakespear said of his ancestor), were wont to set the table in a roar" (22). As the double legacy of Shakespeare and Cervantes emerges to prompt affection for Yorick and heighten our perception of this injustice, Sterne seems to tacitly allegorizes his own anxiety about how his similar brand of humor will strike his readers. By invoking the authority of these familiar literary figures, Tristram cultivates a pathos that diffuses, in advance, unfeeling attacks on his own 'honest wit.'

Yet, Sterne concludes the episode by reflecting ambivalently on the utility and danger of this allusive strategy. In writing an apostrophic epitaph for his friend's grave, Eugenius appropriates Hamlet's words, "Alas, Poor Yorick." He infuses them with the sentiment of one mourning for a friend whose career and health was stunted by his inability to behave according to social norms: the familiar popularity of the "old friend" invoked and mixed with the pathos of a social pariah's death. For Eugenius, the epitaph expresses a softened exasperation at Yorick's perversity, as well as a lament directed at a

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[254] Of course, this use of Yorick as a veiled figure of authorship becomes obvious with the hindsight knowledge that Sterne will make him the narrator of *A Sentimental Journey*.

[255] For comprehensive account of the way writers and reviewers conflated Sterne and Yorick in their responses to his fiction, and particularly in their responses to Sterne's death, see Alan B. Howes *Yorick and the Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 45.

society too grave for Yorick's beautiful soul. By noting that the inscription speaks as both "epitaph and elegy," Tristram allows us, as readers, to associate the anonymous public voice of epitaphic writing with the voice of an intimate friend by way of this secret history. Tristram takes comfort in the possibility that Yorick's ghost can hear the passing onlookers sigh as they echo the inscribed quotation. Yet, pitched between irony and pathos, this passage may leave us pensive. Has the epitaph provoked a public reappraisal of Parson Yorick? Or has the canonicity of the epitaph, and the mechanistic response it stimulates, overwritten and effectively buried all public memory of the parson? If the latter, Tristram still offers his readers the privileged insight of the lone friend, Eugenius, contrasted with this memory of public hostility and the ignorance of posterity.[256] The passage dramatizes a risk of relying on "old friends" as the basis of lasting fame. By showing how the fame of literary ancestors can outshine the public memory of their heirs, Sterne illustrates a potential danger of his character aesthetic.

The Ethics of Friendship and Sterne's Elegiac Apostrophe

Sterne's depictions of Uncle Toby and Yorick, set in the light of their literary ancestors, meditates on the aesthetic values of character by way of a sustained analogy with the codes of behavior in public and private settings. These scenes metaphorically suggest the same comparison of social relationships and literary texts that one finds in Montagu's remarks, regarding the "acquaintance" and "friendship" of books, and Hill's comments on the picaresque travels of Sterne's volumes. They highlight a sense in which spending time with a certain kind of book has an ethical dimension akin to spending time

[256] By the same token, the passage dramatizes a risk of relying on "old friends" as the basis of lasting fame. By showing how the fame of literary ancestors can outshine the public memory of their heirs, Sterne illustrates a potential danger of his character aesthetic.

with a certain kind of person, a point often determined through a judgment of one's worthiness for friendship.[257]

In fundamental ways, Sterne's literary project derives from Aristotle, though crucially, not from any sense of formal unities expressed in the *Poetics,* but, rather, from the image of friendship that emerges in the *Nichomachean Ethics*. In Book 9, Chapter 9 of the *Ethics*, Aristotle describes virtuous friendship as necessary for happiness (1169b22); he defines a fundamental sensation, necessary for the good life, as the perception that being alive is a good thing (1170b1), and he indicates the necessity of sensing this together with a friend (1170b11).[258] While Tristram does not consistently embody the specific attributes of moral character that Aristotle identifies elsewhere in the *Ethics*, the narrator's stated purpose throughout the novel conforms to this underlying template. Tristram defines reading, not just as the formation of friendship, but as the practice of it. He stresses that, whether you, as a reader, choose to laugh with or at him, you must endeavor only to "keep your temper" and stick in his company (7). He writes the book, "against the spleen," and, most importantly, to share the sensation with us that being alive is a thing of value, writing: "True Shandeism, . . . opens the hearts and lungs, and like all those affections which partake of its nature, it forces the blood and other vital fluids of the body to run freely thro' its channels . . .and makes the wheel of life run long and cheerfully round" (237). Sterne's comic ethos becomes a fitting medicine for the promotion of friendship's most essential affirmation.

In reflecting on Sterne's sustained amiable ethos, I wish to shift the critical focus from the political and moral scrutiny of sentimental gestures in the novel's episodes, to a consideration of what it means in ethical and political terms to be "in the presence" of the

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[257] For a discussion of appraising books according to parameters of friendship, see *Wayne Booth, The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[258] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics. Books VIII and IX*. Trans. Michael Pakaluk. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

same sort of foolish mind that Addison describes in the *Spectator* as a defining feature of intimate friendship. By placing the reader in the seat of the listening friend, *Tristram Shandy* prompts a consideration of the ethics and politics of practicing this form of friendship as an affirmation of life's value. This relationship becomes a matter of politics not in an explicit sense of historical institutions and practices, but, rather, in the same sense that Aristotle's notion of "sensing together" in friendship is, in Giorgio Agamben's reading, the origin of our political being. Amiable self-exposure, in the context of friendship, produces this "con-sentiment" because, for Sterne, it revels in the life affirming pleasure (rather than the responsibility or discipline) of possessing consciousness. The representation of digressive consciousness as an object of life affirming humor becomes not just a hallmark of friendship, but, paradoxically, the fundamental expression of community; it is that which distinguishes human forms of community from, in Aristotle's words, "cattle that share the pasture together." Sterne acknowledges the political value of Shandean friendship in corresponding terms. Following his definition of "True Shandeism," he asks for a kingdom of "hearty laughing subjects," and notes that hostility and sadness ("the bilious and more saturnine passions") have as disordering an effect "upon the body politic as body natural." Tristram also requests that subjects practice a "habit of virtue," so as to regulate melancholic thoughts. But contrary to Locke's equation of well-ordered minds with civil society, Sterne distinguishes between the undisciplined associations that promote ill humours, and those that promote merriness, health, and friendship. Sterne preserves the merry exchanges of disordered minds as essential to the health of the body politic.

While Sterne depicts relations between humans and animals in ways that suggest community, these moments clarify the narrower scope of virtual friendship. As Heather Keenleyside argues, Sterne, at times, appears to conceive of a "first-person form of narration" that binds animal and human consciousness in sympathetic community. According to Keenleyside, this "first-person form" derives from a view of self-

consciousness, not as the subject's reflection on one's objective self, but, as the "unmediated perception of happenings, actions and states"[259] One example appears during Tristram's travels through France, when he comes across a donkey unsuccessfully munching at an artichoke stem. Tristram pities the ass, which "hast not a friend perhaps in all this world, that will give [him] a macaroon." He imagines holding converse the creature, remarking, "with an ass I can commune forever" (367). Such community surpasses even his Uncle Toby's sentimental address to a house fly, as Toby remarks that the world is "wide enough to hold both thee and me" (80). Tristram describes this memory as a "lesson of universal goodwill taught and imprinted" by an "accidental impression." Although Toby's benevolence toward the fly is perhaps just a form of "sharing the pasture," the gesture provokes a kind of "sensing together" between Tristram and his Uncle. He writes, "the action itself was more in unison to my nerves at that age of pity, which instantly set my whole frame into one vibration of most pleasurable sensation" (81). His uncle's action affirms the goodness of life for another creature, giving Tristram a pleasurable experience that becomes the cornerstone of his sensibility and presumptive openness to the world.

And yet, these scenes of shared sensibility belie Sterne's sensitivity to the textual mechanisms of virtual presence and specifications of friendship with the reader. However much these episodes shape Tristram's understanding and desire for friendship, they necessarily depend on physical presence and cannot encompass the kind of textual friendship proposed to the reader. Sterne's conception of virtual friendship consciously engages in the more difficult task of pursuing this joyful community of friendship by way

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[259] Heather Keenleyside, "The First-Person Form of Life: Locke, Sterne, and the Autobiographical Animal" *Critical Inquiry* 39, No. 1 (Autumn 2012): 130.

textual communication. He communicates with readers not through the "accidental impression" of a sentimental gesture, but, rather, through the 'accidental impressions' of the marbled page, what Tristram calls the "motley emblem" of his work.[260] On the one hand, Sterne consistently poses his work as an affirmation of life and the reader's health, positioning himself as a textual presence that travels with the reader to the end of the book. On the other hand, he frequently represents friendship through acts of consolation and mourning, evoking the asymmetrical love of classical friendship. In his performance of elegiac apostrophes, Tristram grapples most conspicuously with this conflicting obligation to the memory of the dead and to his reader, thereby drawing out the textual constraint on his performance of distanced amity.

Sterne's linking of mourning and the consolation of virtual community provides thematic context for Tristram's elegiac apostrophes. Preparing to describe his father's reaction to the news of his elder brother Bobby's death, Tristram pauses to "squeeze in" an illuminating story about Cicero's mourning for his daughter Tullia. The story is meant to provide insight into Walter's chosen means of consolation:

> When Tully was bereft of his dear daughter Tullia, at first he laid it to his heart,—he listened to the voice of nature, and modulated his own unto it.—O my Tullia! my daughter! my child!—my Tullia!—still, still, still, —'twas O my Tullia!—my Tullia! Methinks I see my Tullia, I hear my Tullia, I talk with my Tullia.—But as soon as he began to look into the stores of philosophy, and consider how many excellent things might be said upon the occasion—no body upon earth can conceive, says the great orator, how happy, how joyful it made me. (246)

In Tristram's anecdote, Cicero experiences the hallucinatory perception that he again converses with his daughter. The point of the story seems to be that this painful form of

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[260] As is well-detailed in scholarship, the marbled page was both random and different in each printing, hence accidental. For a comprehensive discussion of Sterne's typographical games in historical context, see J. Paul Hunter, "From Typology to Type: Agents of Change in Eighteenth Century English Texts" in *Cultural Artifacts and the Production of Meaning: The Page, the Image, and the Body*. Ed. Margaret J. M. Ezell and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 41-69.

virtual contact with the dead should surrender to the consoling joy of new community, mediated by the stores of philosophy.

This lesson in mourning provides insight into Tristram's autobiographical impulse and his sense of what his own apostrophes and resurrections of dead family members accomplish. The virtual friendship that Tristram pursues with the reader negotiates these competing claims of family history and literary history, the loss of loved ones and the consolation of dead authors, Tristram's intimations of his own morality and the discursive temporality of his fiction. Rather than indulging in unproductive grief, or dissolving the particulars of that grief in joy, Tristram surpasses (his version of) Cicero and channels his apostrophic longing into a basis for sympathetic community.

As a man who sees himself as a modern day stoic, Walter turns to the comfort of philosophical quotations on the subjects of death and loss immediately after hearing of his son's death.[261] In one respect, this form of consolation enacts a textual form of "sensing together;" rather that experiencing the loss of his son in isolation, or in the presence of his brother Toby, Walter turns to the virtual community of his favorite philosophers for consolation (a gesture he repeats upon the various accidents that befall Tristram). Yet, these quotations fill Walter with feelings about life contrary to Aristotle's view of life-affirming friendship. As Walter's own interjected reflection suggests, the work of mourning involves devaluing life itself:

> Is it not better, my dear brother Toby, (for mark---our appetites are but diseases)—is it not better not to hunger at all, than to eat?---not to thirst, than to take physic to cure it? Is it not better to be freed from the cares and agues, from love and melancholy, and the other hot and cold fits of life, than like a galled traveller, who comes weary to his inn, to be bound to begin his journey afresh? (249)

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[261] John Preston, *The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), 140. According to John Preston, Walter is "Ciceronian to the point of inhumanity." But so, after all, is Cicero, or Sterne's Cicero, at least. A footnote in the Norton edition of *Tristram Shandy* points out that Tristram exaggerates the comfort this gesture offered Cicero. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero states that philosophy offers him no relief. See Elizabeth Rawson's *Cicero: A Portrait* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1983), 225.

Although Walter's appeal to the textual community parallels Tristram's dependence of literary heirs, it underscores important differences. The work of mourning and memorialization that Tristram undertakes in writing about his family affirms the value of being alive (though it does not shy away from melancholic pathos), and seeks to preserve the particular oddity of characters. What Sterne does to surpass Walter (by way of a veiled nod to Cicero), then, and deflect the charge of inhumanity, is to suggest the turn toward a textual community, this new friendship (figured as a community of past writers and future readers) need not be a replacement of old ties, but a means of preserving them in a new form.

Tristram's apostrophes to dead family members—as an aspiration to a form of virtual contact mediated by writing—coordinate Tristram's sense of virtual contact with remote readers. Sterne represents Tristram's apostrophic moods as though they strike him unexpectedly, furthering the performance of advanced familiarity, while creating tension between Tristram's awareness of readers and his immersion in memory. While narrating an episode of Toby and Trim's military games on the bowling green, for instance, a single detail draws Tristram into an extended sentimental reverie. He longs to let Trim know how he felt toward him, exclaiming, "Oh corporal! had I thee, but now . . . how would I cherish thee! . . . But alas! alas! alas! now that I can do this, in spight of their reverences---the occasion is lost---for thou art gone . . . that warm heart of thine, with all its generous and open vessels, compressed into a *clod of the valley*!" (318). The thought leads Tristram into a yet more distressing recollection of Trim mourning at Toby's funeral, a scene that he anticipates coming back around to narrate in more detail. But despite this sense that Tristram writes in the thrall of associative memories, in reflecting on the difficulty of this future task, he begs the muses: "deal not with me then, with a stinted hand" (318). At such moments, Tristram seems, on the one hand, nearly overwhelmed by grief and unable to continue the task of autobiographical writing, and, on the other hand, concerned that his sentiments reflect an inspired craft.

The pathos of this spontaneous longing belies the way Tristram uses apostrophes to transform his relationship with his elders into one of textual friendship, while further memorializing their singular qualities. In another instance, we find Tristram abruptly shaken from his narration of Toby's life-imperiling obsession by his desire to intervene and counsel his uncle. As we imagine Toby sitting among his books on missiles and geometry, like Quixote among his romances, Tristram plays Sancho:

> ------stop! my dear uncle *Toby,* ---stop!---go not one foot farther into this thorny and bewilder'd track,--- [. . .] intricate are the troubles which the pursuit of this bewitching phantom, **Knowledge,** will bring upon thee. ---O my uncle! fly---fly--- fly from it as from a serpent. [. . .] ---Alas! 'twill exasperate thy symptoms,---check thy perspirations,--- evaporate thy spirits,---waste thy animal strength,---dry up thy radical moisture, ---bring thee into a costive habit of body, impair thy health,---and hasten all the infirmities of thy old age. ---O my uncle! my uncle *Toby*! (64)

The novel gives us no further information as to whether this episode actually quickened Toby's decline. But even on a first reading, before arriving at this passage, we glimpse future scenes in which Toby has recovered his health. Thus, we might pause to reflect on the strange emotion that Tristram experiences, even though he possesses the foreknowledge of Toby's recovery from this illness, and even though, at the moment that Tristram writes, we must presume that Toby is dead. Caught up in the suspense of his own representation, Tristram's apostrophe expresses a desire to become a virtual presence in this reconstructed scene. In this way, his apostrophic impulse prefigures a phenomenon discussed by Jonathan Culler in relation to the famous apostrophes of Romantic lyric poetry. As Culler argues, the apostrophe becomes an anti-narrative force that seeks to translate the linearity of causal experiences into a purely discursive temporality, that is, a space where the constructed aesthetic sequence of ideas eclipses any concern for represented chain of events in historical time. Hence, Tristram's recreated scene, which invokes a potentially unavoidable chain of events, prompts him to instantiate a pretense of dialogue with his uncle that arrests the progress of narrative time, and, with it, the consequences for Toby that Tristram fears.

Paralleling Eugenius's amiable counsel and epitaphic apostrophe to Yorick, Tristram's stance in this apostrophe evokes the combination of counseling and mournful friendship. Set in the context of the Quixote-Sancho motif, this reconstructed intimacy, defined by an intimate knowledge of Toby's mind and an authorization to advise him, suggests that Tristram now stands more in the position of a friend than of a nephew. In his use of apostrophe, Tristram disrupts the bonds of kinship between generations, structured by linear time, as older family members are resurrected, not as reverence-inducing authorities, but as friends to be advised, sympathized with, and whose minds now stand more open to exploration than when they lived. Like epistolary friendship, the apostrophic address of narrator to character functions as another form of audience-oriented intimacy. Also, like epistolary forms, this use of apostrophe does not just figure textual exchange as friendship, but, inversely, identifies friendship with the liberties of textual exchange (the discursive freedom of the apostrophic portrait): analogous to Yorick's resistance to the codes of sociability, this discursive friendship revels in its liberty from expectations of personage, time, and place. At the same time, the passage constructs a textual imitation of friendship (of living together, affirming health, providing counseling) that offers consolation for the loss of loved ones.

This discursive friendship with lost friends gains a freedom not only over time, but also over strict historical truth. Tristram's recursive analysis of this passage engages the historical dialectic of the virtual and fictional, concepts which are interpenetrated by classical categories of beauty and truth. While Tristram elsewhere likens authorship to the work of historians, his cool assessment of this apostrophe reconciles the historical work of autobiography and the task of "painting" powerful, lasting scenes. Following the apostrophe to Toby, he abruptly shifts tone in the next chapter, declaring that he would "not give a groat for that man's knowledge in pencraft," who thinks he could have continued the prior narrative without breaking off. As he states, "the best plain narrative in the world, tack'd very close to the last spirited apostrophe to my uncle Toby,--would

have felt both cold and vapid upon the reader's palate" (65). He explains this reasoning further with an analogy: "writers of my stamp have one principle in common with painters.—Where an exact copying makes our pictures less striking, we choose the less evil; deeming it even more pardonable to trespass against truth, than beauty" (65). Distancing himself from the heated apostrophe and turning his address toward the reader in act of critical self-praise, Tristram exposes the audience-oriented intimacy involved in his apostrophic portraits. The shift reminds us that his attention to lost friends always, at the same time, involves his progress from "slight acquaintance" to "friendship" with us.

But crucial to this progress with the reader is Tristram's confession that the lasting power of such scenes depend not purely on fidelity to history, but on beauty, or, rather, a degree of fictionalization: that is, his portrait of Toby deviates from historical truth to enhance its striking qualities. This rationale forms a productive analogy between Tristram's communication with this image of his dead uncle, and his communication with the reader. Moreover, Tristram's notion of "beauty" must be understood here, not as a reference to neo-classical norms, but, instead, as applied to this very image of his Uncle Toby's hobbyhorse. For Sterne, beauty—the motive to fictionalize, to enhance striking and enduring qualities, to breath life into the text—does not involve platonic forms, but singular deformities. More precisely, this notion of the beautiful connects textual pleasure to the particular oddity of the self cultivated by the discursive intimacy of apostrophe. And this mechanism, because necessarily fueled by the potency of representations, contains within itself a notion of the memorialized friend as always partially a fiction (within the fiction).

Despite this vivacity of oddity in Tristram's family portraits, a sense persists that he often feels alone, like the speaker of Thomas Edwards's sonnet "On a Family-Picture" (1758), who describes himself, "like a Column left alone." Edwards concludes, "Amidst

our House's ruins I remain / Single, unpropp'd, and nodding to my fall."[262] But, in Sterne, this isolation too becomes complementary to the cultivation of textual friendship. Tristram's imaginary conversations with his family, as well as dead literary ancestors, tacitly reinforces his isolation. While Tristram's gains in liveliness by appearing side by side on the page with this gang of distinctive companions, his latent detachment from them, as their only surviving heir, makes him that much more available to the reader.

One might track this dialectic of loss and gain back to a barely perceptible allusion in Tristram's opening contract of friendship. Again, Sterne seems to have Cicero on his mind. As Tristram proclaims, "O Diem Praeclarum" to crown his description of the anticipated joys arising from his expected friendship with readers, he echoes Cicero's apostrophe, "O Praeclarum Diem," at the end of *De Senectute* (On Old Age). Cicero frames the discourse as a speech delivered by Cato the Elder, and the passage evokes the classical rhetoric of eulogistic friendship in the mourning of a father for his son:

> Oh the glorious day [O Praeclarum Diem], when freed from this troublesome rout, this heap of confusions and corruption below, I shall repair to that divine assembly, that heavenly congregation of souls! and not only to those I mentioned, but also to my dear Cato, than whom a more virtuous soul was never born; nor did any exceed him in piety and affection. His body I committed to the funeral pile, which he, alas!, ought to have lived to do by mine: yet his soul did not forsake me, but keeping me still in view, removed to those abodes, to which he knew, I was in a little time to follow.[263]

Considered as an audience-oriented oration, Cato's speech encapsulates the tension that structures Sterne's formal reflections on friendship. On the one hand, Cicero's linking of these responsibilities with the hope of reunion in death underscores the deathly subtext of Tristram's phrasing in the opening contract, particularly in his desire to let the reader know "what kind of mortal I am" and in his hope that this exchange will "terminate in

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[262] Thomas Edwards, *The Sonnets of Thomas Edwards* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1974), 311.

[263] Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *Cato Major; or a Treatise on Old Age*. Trans. James Logan (London: Printed for S. Austen in Newgate Street, 1750), 168-169. Googlebooks.

friendship." On the other hand, while Cato the Elder devalues his remaining time on earth, he testifies to the value of this earthly relationship, to the "piety" and "affection" he shared with his son Cato. He means his audience to place a high value on cultivating such affections, while he addresses his listeners as "my friends." *Tristram Shandy* negotiates these conflicting implications of mournful friendship, between the desire to diminish the value of life for the sake of lost friends, and the desire to transform lost friendships into new ones, for and with one's audience. The performance of textual friendship with readers is poised on this emotional hinge, as Sterne's narrator alternately turns toward the lost friendships that he re-experiences through writing, and remembers the audience, affirming virtual contact with the reader as an affirmation of life.

Tristram's divergences from Cicero place an emphasis on the life affirming aspect of Aristotelian friendship.[264] At no point in the novel does Tristram indulge the temptation to devalue life as a coping mechanism, as both Cicero and Walter Shandy do. Nor does he ever imagine reunion in the afterlife—an especially notable absence, given the invocation of heaven, and presupposition of Christian metaphysics throughout the novel.[265] In a sense, these are related features of friendship in the novel. The absence of reflection on spiritual reunion underscores the importance of earthly friendship, whether it be embodied or textual in nature. Hence, we might say that, in speaking of a "glorious day," Tristram appropriates the emotional resonance of Cicero's elegiac hope, but enlists this sentiment in the anticipation, not of reunion in a future life, but, rather, on a future page. This echo reframes Tristram's promise of friendship, by equating the feeling of perfected union in the afterlife with the potential realization of friendship in the act of reading. At the same time, it encapsulates the delicate yet generative balancing act the

[264] Rather than the logic of asymmetrical love, which, as we've seen in Clarissa and David Simple, can lead to a paradoxical devaluation of all earthly things.

[265] Sterne does not afford his narrator the consoling image of friendship after death that Richardson grants Clarissa, or that Fielding grants David Simple.

novel undertakes, in translating an elegiac "resurrection" of old friends into a life affirming conversation with new ones.

Conclusion: The Politics of Oddity
and the Aesthetics of Friendship

This chapter has attempted to track the way *Tristram Shandy* enacts a complex fusing of friendship ideals to locate an ethical motive for its literary aesthetic. As I see it, Sterne appropriates classical friendship norms and literary "old friends" as a form of cultural capital to support a model of open character. Figured as an ideal of friendship, this openness incorporates and transvalues ideas of mental life derived from Lockean psychology. Representations of this openness (by Uncle Toby and Yorick) serve as analogues for the discursive liberties Tristram takes with his apostrophized family members and with addressed reader. His presumption of friendship becomes the basis for pursuing intimacy with readers through a disorganized accumulation of foolish associations.

Samuel Johnson's comments on poetry in *The History of Rasselas* are predictive of his feelings about *Tristram Shandy*. In his view, the poet does not "number the streaks of the tulip," but paints the platonic ideal of a tulip.[266] Moreover, a work's endurance over time results from the artist's ability to look beyond an object's peculiar qualities. By contrast, Sterne does not hesitate to number the streaks of his fictional minds, and he locates the legitimacy of this aesthetic in the openness of friendship. What's more, he uses this friendship as a basis for preserving the peculiar qualities of the dead, figuring autobiography as a vehicle for transmitting odd traits to posterity. Particularity of self, figured as madness, oddity, unsociability, psychic aberration, becomes a sign of literary endurance, motley emblems for Sterne's concept of beauty. The connection between

[266] Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (New York, Penguin, 1976), 61-62.

friendship ideals and the cultivation of this particularized self is one facet of the emerging discourse around originality and particularity that will continue to expand and fragment in the gradual development of Romantic era aesthetics.[267]

Absent in all of this, of course, are women's friendships. No doubt women readers make up part of Tristram's addressed audience (Madam and Jenny), as well as part of his actual audience (Elizabeth Montagu and Sarah Scott). Many critics have debated the political implications arising from Sterne's portrait of masculinity.[268] In concluding, I would like to briefly suggest why the model of friendship in *Tristram Shandy* may have held potential value for female readers in the eighteenth century. Like all of the novelists in this study, Sterne perceives the political marginality of friendship in British culture, at the same time as he cultivates its far reaching social and ethical implications. Johnson's aesthetic marginalization of oddity is, in essence, a diminishment of the knowledge and values that emerge within private friendships. This aesthetic tension correlates with friendship's marginal position with regards to the values of domesticity, sociability, theories of moral sentiments, and rational inquiry discussed in preceding chapters. Sterne

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[267] I have in mind the view of Romantic art expressed by Friedrich Schlegel in his "Letter About the Novel" (1799). Schlegel praises the confessional aesthetic in general, and Sterne in particular for displaying a wit, eccentricity, and arabesque quality that "raises his sentimentality in appearance over the sphere of English sensibility." In a different portion of the essay, Schlegel seeks to understand the novel genre, in its ideal, as an expression of a Romantic temperament. In describing how one might express a theory of the Romantic novel, Schlegel enumerates qualities that track closely with those I have analyzed in Sterne's fiction, though Schlegel does not connect these notions with Sterne's novels. As he writes: "such a theory of the novel would have to be itself a novel which would reflect imaginatively every eternal tone of the imagination . . . The things of the past would live again in new forms; Dante's sacred shadow would arise from the lower world, Laura would hover heavenly before us, Shakespeare would converse intimately with Cervantes, and there Sancho would jest with Don Quixote again." See *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*. ed. J.M. Bernstein. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 290, 294.

[268] Ruth Perry, "Words for Sex: the Verbal Continuum in Tristram Shandy" *Studies in the Novel* 20 (1988): 27-42; Elizabeth W. Harries, "Sorrows and Confessions of a Cross-Eyed Female Reader of Sterne" in *Approaches to Teaching Sterne's Tristram Shandy*, ed. Melvyn New (New York: Modern Language Association, 1989), 111-117; Barbara M. Benedict, "'Dear Madam': Rhetoric, Cultural Politics, and the Female Reader in Sterne's Tristram Shandy" *Studies in Philology* 88 (1992): 485-88; Juliet McMaster, "Walter Shandy, Sterne, and Gender: A Feminist Foray" *English Studies in Canada* 15 (1989): 441-58; Paula Loscocco, "Can't Live Without 'Em: Walter Shandy and the Woman Within" *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 32 (1991):166-79.

counters the devaluation of friendship as an exclusively private and peripheral affair, equally devalued by public sphere commerce and domestic ideologies. If he presents this confrontational model of friendship only through male characters, at worst, his novel leaves unsettled the implication of this male performance for women's friendships. In one respect, Sterne's paradoxical equation of familiar friendship with one's public conduct toward strangers is closely approximated in Germaine de Staël's observation that "one might submit to the judgment of the English public as to that of a friend."[269] One might say that the work of elevating an open character, in which *Tristram Shandy* participates, manifests broadly in idealized equations of modern English society with this ethos of public transparency. Such an equation is what one finds in the rationale of literary realism that Jane Austen puts in the mouth of Henry Tilney, the hero of *Northanger Abbey*, when he describes a world "where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing, where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay everything open?"[270] The recurring triumph of an open society that one finds in the resolution of Austen's plots derives from the kind of analogy between social intercourse and literary character that *Tristram Shandy* embodies. This feature of Sterne's novel is implicated in the emerging disciplinary regime of requisite transparency, the kind of universalized 'voluntary spying' that Michel Foucault associates with Ann Radcliffe's version of Enlightenment.[271] But Sterne's understanding of friendship is at once part of this historical narrative, and a repository of what gets left behind: the friendship forging humor unleashed by our inner fools. In *Tristram Shandy*, the value of

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[269] Germaine de Staël, *Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution*. Ed. Aurelian Craiutu (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), 450. *The Online Library of Liberty*. Web. March 29, 2013. *PDF* file.

[270] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 186.

[271] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 153-154.

transparency is more precisely the sharing of those singular, irrational associations as the basis of forging the “merry” kingdom.

EPILOGUE

> I have tried to show that reading cannot be assimilated in this way to conversation, even with the wisest of men; that the difference essentially between a book and a friend lies not in their greater or lesser wisdom, but in the manner in which we communicate with them, reading being the reverse of conversation, consisting as it does for each one of us in receiving the communication of another's thought while still being on our own, that is, continuing to enjoy the intellectual sway which we have in solitude and which conversation dispels instantly, and continuing to be open to inspiration, with our minds still at work hard and fruitfully on themselves.[272]
>
> —Marcel Proust, "Days of Reading"

Disputing John Ruskin's fondness for the company of books, Marcel Proust takes to task the very equation of reading and friendship that, as I have argued, the English novel cultivates. The same qualities that Samuel Richardson extols as the superiority of distanced epistolary correspondence, the freedom with regard to time and space that fosters a purer expression and heightened intimacy, Proust finds incompatible with conversant friendship—not just inferior to it, but the "reverse." The sensation of authorial presence and anticipation of its loss, which Denis Diderot equates with his reading of Richardson's fiction, Proust subsumes to his sense of pleasurable solitude. While for several eighteenth-century writers, textual communion exceeds the constraints of conversation and hones the intimacies of friendship, for Proust, textual exchange appears inferior to the actual company of friends.[273]

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[272] Marcel Proust, *Against Sainte-Beuve and Other Essays*. trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 208.

[273] Proust, it should be noted, is focused on "the very heart of the nature of reading" and its spirituality. His dispute with Ruskin derives from his concentration on the pure experience of reading. In this context, reading, as the relationship between author and reader, stops when one puts aside the book. It does not encompass reflection, re-reading, or writing. For eighteenth-century novelists, this more all-embracing understanding of the act of reading is essential to the evolving analogy between literary exchange and the formation and practice of friendship.

What is surprising about Proust's sense of reading as the "reverse" of conversation is that this perception has nothing to do with the impossibility of answering back to the text. He does not base his distinction on the one-way transmission of literary art, or the reader's passivity of mind, but, on the contrary, he claims a greater activity of mind for the solitude of reading. We are not under the sway of the author, but freed up for self-reflection. And, yet, this notion of minds "hard and fruitfully at work on themselves" is one, as we have seen, that eighteenth-century thinkers associate with the confessional introspection of letters, as well as private conversations between close friends. The very notion of reading that Proust takes for granted, as an idealization of self-conscious subjectivity—a mind transparent to and at work on itself—has genealogical roots in the discourse of friendship and its intersection with eighteenth-century literary history. Even this understanding of reading's ideal subject, as one engaged in the "reverse" of conversation with a friend, should be understood as part of the history this study begins to trace, one in which the paradoxes of solitude emerge out of the idealized inter-subjectivity of friendship and the novel's image of its best reader.

While Proust equates friendship with bodily presence, his understanding of conversation concedes the same limitations of such presence that led Richardson to valorize the letter form. Solitude is an enjoyment of intellectual freedom that the presence of another person "dispels instantly." For Richardson and Proust, the body of the friend places physical and temporal constraints on one's freedom of mind. But are these limitations essential to friendship? The sheer prevalence of epistolary relationships among eighteenth-century novelists, the print dissemination of epistolary fiction, the influence of epistolary form on the performativity of third person narrators (*David Simple*) or autobiographical ones (*Tristram Shandy*), all point to the ease with which writers of the period identify the remoteness between writer and reader with the highest forms of friendship. But how far do these novels finally go in claiming that readers and authors share in a friendship, rather than something analogous to it? Do Richardson's

reflections on remote friendship extend to encompass print media? Or are the similarities between epistolary writing and print culture merely serving an ideology of marketable affect? How much are we meant to make, finally, of Tristram's address to the reader as a friend? If I have wavered in my treatment of friendship as, on the one hand, a metaphor, and, on the other hand, a definition of ideal reading, it is only because these authors and their readers do so. For mid-eighteenth-century novelists, the comparison between literary exchange and friendship remains at the level of an evocative and useful analogy—to be sure, as we've seen, one with considerable implication for literary form, but not one for which any writer makes a sustained and systematic argument. The distinction that Proust makes goes to the heart of this tension between metaphor and categorical inclusion.

Idealized friendship enters into the dichotomy between reading and conversation—which in the eighteenth century appears more as a continuum—because it balances the freedom of individual consciousness with the requirements of communication. For Richardson, this balance arises in analogy with the liberties of epistolary reading and writing. The time for "preparation" allows the writer further degrees of introspection and a finer texture of detail, and allows the reader more flexibility in managing his or her economy of attentiveness. But even among Richardson and his readers, counterbalanced against this volitional self-regulation, there arises the opposing amiable virtue of unregulated consciousness. Richardson recognizes how in the "converse of the pen," the pen itself (or, more broadly, the materiality and action of writing) propels writers toward an intimacy that surpasses conversation. The sentiment is echoed in one of Lady Bradshaigh's digressive letters to the author. Describing her recent travels to Richardson, she writes,

> We had been at Richmond, and were oblig'd to wait for the Coach coming over the Ferry. I cou'd not help thinking myself in a dream all the time I sat there. What Stuff am I telling you? Cicero very often says to his Friends, To you I must write what ever Comes uppermost, aye, say you, but every one's uppermost thoughts are not alike. but as great a man, and as fine a writer as he

> was, he sometimes wrote as Errant Stuff as even I can write, never the less his manner is what I admire, familiar, easy, and more like talking to a friend than writing.[274]

It is just this oscillation between the poles of unselfconscious disclosure and self-conscious reflection that marks the divergent yet complementary virtues of textual friendship arising out of the epistolary scene, presented as a unrevised record of a mind alternately immersed and reflecting on itself. That Bradshaigh compares this familiar style with "talking to a friend" only underscores the contradictory priority of writing over speech: a friend's writing achieves greater familiarity than speech by simulating conversation and surpassing its limits.

Bradshaigh's reflection shows that, present in the discourse of friendship around Richardson's fiction, we can see an anticipation of the dialectic development of friendship's rhetoric that manifests in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, wherein the depiction of embodied familiarity becomes a justification for the writer's advanced exposure of his disordered self to strangers. Textually mediated friendship appears superior to conversation for two entirely opposing reasons: on the one hand, it surpasses the conversational constraints of time and place, allowing writers and readers time to put thoughts in order. On the other hand, it forges intimacy through a notion of spontaneity particular to the act of writing, to the power of the pen over the mind of the writer, though in the service of laying open the writer's disordered mind to the writer and to others. This coordination of order and disorder becomes a critical discursive intersection between constructions of ideal friendship and the fictional ordering of selves and stories. The conjunction of friendship and textuality makes the ordering of an ideal self possible, and the disorder of the self aesthetically valuable.

Beyond the historical and formal utility of the friendship trope, the theoretical question that Proust raises has persisted in the realm of contemporary literary theory,

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[274] Forster Collection Manuscripts, Victoria and Albert Museum, XI 48.5 E.5.

particularly in the field of ethical criticism. Wayne Booth's *The Company We Keep* remains a touchstone, asking the foundational question: "can we use the vocabulary of friendship to appraise the patterns of desire that narratives ask us to share?"[275] I have argued that many eighteenth-century novelists ask this question either explicitly or through the reflexivity of their plots. But I have also tried to offer a sense of how we can identify "the vocabulary of friendship" as it emerges through historical contexts and singular works. This approach might address concerns of contemporary critics, who take issue with the limitations of friendship as an ethical trope for critical methodology. I do not mean to imply that the friendship trope broadly regulates eighteenth-century literature, or that it need become an all encompassing paradigm of ethical criticism. Yet, I would claim that, as a trope of novel reading, if friendship is not always uppermost in a text, it has a history that extends beyond the mid-eighteenth century.

To begin tracing this history is to recognize a singular dialogue between the discourse of friendship and that of the novel genre. A more comprehensive study might assess the correlations and divergences between literary genres and mediums in their various appeals to friendship with an audience. The particular moral quandaries surrounding friendship in works of prose fiction offer one angle on the poetics of amity,

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[275] Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1988), 196. Similarly, Jacques Derrida remarks that "friendship should always be poetic. Before being philosophical, friendship concerns the gift of the poem" (*Politics of Friendship*, 166). While Derrida scrutinizes what we would mean by friendship and gift, these terms are very close to Wayne Booth's description of the novel *Tom Jones* as a 'gift from a friend.' Other readers, including Adam Zachary Newton and James Phelan, have questioned this ethical vocabulary. See Newton's *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) and Phelan's *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). Newton's critique arises out of his preference for the paradigm of Levinasian otherness. But I would suggest that the cultural significance of friendship in the eighteenth-century, as a discourse that forges a dialogue of the secular and sacred, the self and the other, provides historical texture for the exploration of alternative ethical paradigms, including that offered by Levinas. Phelan, by contrast, finds any predetermined framework too limiting, and prefers to let the individual text set the terms of its reflexivity. I find this sensible, and not opposed to the way I have tried to ground my readings in the terms set by these individual novelists. It just happens to be the case that friendship arises as a recurring term for understanding literary textuality in this period. Tracing the origins and legacy of this historical phenomenon through literary history would offer a more qualified and inductive way of reconciling Phelan's and Booth's approaches to ethical criticism.

and we might expect to find a different set of desires and anxieties shaping the reflexive rhetoric of eighteenth-century verse or drama. In this study, I have focused on how the discourse of friendship weaves together three aspects of the novel, none of which are unique to the novel, but which have a unique relationship within novels: 1) the remote community of the book medium; 2) the narrative self and the meaning of a life and its transmission; 3) the interplay of immersion in and reflection on fiction, as a space of emotion, but also as an experiment with social ideals.

What the discourse of friendship offers eighteenth-century writers is an ethical framework for cultivating literary reflexivity, one that not only involves the depiction of fictional friendships, but also broadly structures the aesthetic integrity of a work's representational narrative axis and its performative, self-conscious address to an audience. For these authors, the category of friendship is the principle hinge upon which pivots the immersive and reflective experience of novel reading. Seeing the representation of friendship as a location of novel reflexivity offers one way of tracking the genre's development into the next century.

A work such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, for instance, registers the legacy of this eighteenth-century discourse around epistolary friendship in its Gothic aesthetic. The frame narrator, Robert Walton's intense desire for friendship in his self-imposed isolation, coupled with his unintentionally ironic remark that letters offer "a poor medium for the communication of feeling," point to a persistent interplay between amity and literary mediation.[276] Walton's whole perception of Victor Frankenstein and the man's tale is framed by his opening wish for "a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind." In closing, he laments that he has gained such a friend in Frankenstein, but "only to know

[276] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2012), 54.

his value, and lose him.[277] In this work, we find the persistence and further development of formal tensions around friendship in eighteenth-century fiction: friendship as a space and temporality for mental regulation, as well as a space of tolerance for disordered confession and accidental disclosure; the framework of friendship deployed as a humanizing context for narrative exchange in a "desert" (or, rather, on a sea of ice), and the ironic critique of egoistic male friends (Walton and Frankenstein) bound together by a lack of sympathy for an excluded other (Frankenstein's creature); and, finally, the logic of asymmetrical love in elegiac friendship pushed to further limits by Frankenstein's inability to reciprocate affections for Walton. The structures and tensions of friendship in enlightenment fiction circulate as a spectral presence, animating the experimental form of Shelley's novel.

Beyond the explicit formal engagement with friendship that we might observe in a work like *Frankenstein*, the formal reflexivity of friendship in eighteenth-century fiction resonates with novel developments through the Victorian period. Even as the meaning of friendship changes with respect to political and social ideologies, the category continues to shape understandings of the affect and authority of novels, alongside, against, and through the evolving centrality of the domestic sphere. Jane Austen's development of free indirect style as a negotiation of intimacy between narrator, character, and reader; Charles Dickens's figuring of a periodical apparatus as a circle of friends in *Master Humphrey's Clock*; and the famous friendship of Sherlock Holmes and his biographer Doctor Watson—and especially the public reaction to the temporary mystery around Holmes's supposed death—all transpose or re-enact connections between fictional friendships and literary reflexivity initially explored by eighteenth-century authors.

The mid-eighteenth-century novel records an important phase in the history of books and literature for setting up the kind of debate that Proust enters. It is not so much

[277] Ibid. 55, 211.

that these eighteenth-century writers invent this equation of reading and friendship; the notion is implied in classical texts and echoed among Renaissance authors. But if we understand the English novel as both a significant literary and media event of modernity, we should consider further how the category of friendship stimulates and organizes ideas about the way readers were asked to engage emotionally and intellectually with this evolving genre. The rhetoric of friendship may partly have been a comforting way of dealing with the novel situation between authors and readers in this volatile moment in print culture. Nonetheless, these particular works plays a role in the moral elevation of the genre and the emerging status of novelists as claimants to high literary art and a humanist tradition. Proust is not the first or the last to question this still pervasive analogy, which continues to mark the threshold between an Enlightenment ideal and ideology of ethical reading.[278]

[278] Translating the print conflation of solitude and intimate communion to the digital age, the bookstore Barnes and Noble introduces its digital reading device, the Nook, with the humanizing accessory, a durable book jacket inscribed with Sir Christopher Wren's maxim: "Choose an author as you choose a friend."

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