THE POLITICS OF SCANDAL IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PRINT CULTURE

SIGNS OF SECRECY:

THE POLITICS OF SCANDAL

IN

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH PRINT CULTURE

By

GRACE POLLOCK, B. Arts Sc., M.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2006)   McMaster University
(English)   Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Signs of Secrecy: The Politics of Scandal in Eighteenth-Century English Print Culture

AUTHOR: Grace Pollock, B. Arts Sc., M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Peter Walmsley

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 311

ii

ABSTRACT

Early modern England experienced a number of political, social, and economic transformations that occurred alongside the growth in the seventeenth century of a religious doctrine of scandal, which enabled different sects to defend their right to worship against the authority of the state, to exhort members of their own community towards unity, or to persuade others of the benefits of general conformity to a national practice of worship. In addition to a continuance of the pamphlet controversies over conformity, the Restoration and early eighteenth century also witnessed the growth of a secularized culture of scandal, developed in conjunction with a flourishing print culture and a political system comprised of parties. This study focuses on the ways in which scandal as a discourse—with the attendant ideas of publicity and privacy and an uncertain epistemology of visible signs and hidden secrets—developed in England as an important language of political articulation, and suggests that scandal to some degree continues to mediate the production of modern subjectivity and social formations. An exploration of a variety of literary genres—religious treatises and pamphlets; dramatic comedies by Aphra Behn, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and others; Daniel Defoe's periodical, *A Review of the Affairs of France*; and the *Secret Memoirs of the New Atalantis* and *Memoirs of Europe* by Delarivier Manley—emphasizes scandal's cultural effects and outlines the central features of scandal literature by exploring its topicality, rhetorical secrecy, hermeneutics of social behaviour, transmission of "intelligence," and negotiation of power relations. While observing and accounting for a shift in popular attitudes towards scandal over the course of the eighteenth century—a shift that ultimately results in scandal's repudiation from polite social discourse—this study brings attention to scandal's important role in constituting British identity through encouraging the development of a "normative grammar" for public interactions. A consideration of scandal suggests an alternative history for the formation of an eighteenth-century British public than the one provided by Jürgen Habermas' influential model of the "bourgeois public sphere." Finally, scandal literature that formally embodies as well as thematizes a "secret" narrative form—exemplified here by the secret memoir—becomes significant in the early eighteenth century as a means of political intervention while also structuring and animating readers' curiosity and desire. In addition to critiquing the generic categories used to describe scandal literature to date, this study calls for a recognition of the historically specific conditions that produced a tradition and discourse of scandal in English print culture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION : The Secrets of Scandal

And there's a Lust in Man no Charm can tame,
Of loudly Publishing our Neighbour's Shame;
On Eagles Wings immortal Scandals flye,
While Virtuous Actions are but born, and Dye.[1]

This study takes as its object the discourse of scandal, focusing in particular on the

culture and print forms of scandal that shaped early eighteenth-century Britain. By

examining several texts whose explicit concern is scandal, I intend to show both the

ubiquity of scandal in eighteenth-century print culture and the particular contribution of

scandal to political and social life during the period from 1660 to 1780. In a general

sense, I suggest scandal as a topical discourse and phenomenon can serve in any given

time period as an important index to the cultural issues that draw public interest,

particularly in terms of larger concerns of social justice, power, and representation.

Although an increasing amount of literary, historical, and cultural scholarship is paying

attention to scandal, there remains a surprising lack of studies on what I call "scandal

literature" and a "culture of scandal" in early eighteenth-century Britain.[2] One factor that

---

[1] Stephen Harvey, "Ninth Satyr," in *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis, Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden and Several Other Eminent Hands* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1693), 176–188. The epigraph is on page 184, ll. 193-196. All citations and line numbers refer to this edition. This quotation also appeared as an epigraph in Manley's *Court Intrigues* (wrongly attributed to Garth), Haywood's *Bath Intrigues* (wrongly attributed to Garth), and Haywood's *Female Spectator*, Book XIII.

[2] There are few book-length studies that take scandal as their principal subject and only one that addresses eighteenth-century Britain. Kathryn Temple's *Scandal Nation: Law and Authorship in Britain, 1750-1832* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003) discusses the influence of various literary scandals on the production of a late eighteenth-century British national identity. Other studies of scandal include: in nineteenth-century studies, William A. Cohen, *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of*

1

accounts for the scarcity of theory and criticism on scandal, is, quite simply, the

differences between early forms of scandal—its modes of signification and social effects

before the ideas of public and private become sedimented concepts—and the kinds of

scandal we encounter today, which have been impacted by over two centuries of negative

publicity that depicts scandal as malicious slander intent on destroying the sacrosanct

privacy upon which bourgeois rights, freedoms, and lifestyles are based.[3] Some of the

differences between early and contemporary scandal will be suggested throughout this

introduction as I outline the main features that characterize scandal as a discourse and

phenomenon in eighteenth-century England.

---

the British Constitution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004); in cultural studies, *The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal Democracies*, ed. Andrei S. Markovits and Mark Silverstein (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), Patricia Mellencamp, *High Anxiety: Catastrophe, Scandal, Age, & Comedy* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 153-244, *Media Scandals*, ed. James Lull & Stephen Hinerman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), Robert Williams, *Political Scandal in the USA* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1998), John B. Thompson, *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), *Public Affairs: Politics in the Age of Sex Scandals*, ed. Paul Apostolodis and Juliet A. Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); for general audiences, T.H. White, *The Age of Scandal* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1950), Suzanne Garment, *Scandal: The Culture of Mistrust in American Politics* (New York: Times Books, 1991), Trevor Fisher, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), and Roger Wilkes, *Scandal: A Scurrilous History of Gossip* (London: Atlantic Books, 2002).

[3] Exceptions to this general attitude are increasingly common because of studies such as S. Elizabeth Bird, *For Enquiring Minds: A Cultural Study of Supermarket Tabloids* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), which briefly describes the tabloid's origin in early modern European broadside ballads and newsbooks, 8-11. See also Kevin Glynn, *Tabloid Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), which is important for the way it recognizes how "trash" culture can work to empower the socially and economically disenfranchised by giving them access to information; Glynn, however, only views "tabloidization" as a phenomenon beginning in the late 1980s.

I. *Scandal in translation*

The epigraph at the beginning of this introduction is taken from a late

seventeenth-century translation of Juvenal's *Ninth Satire*, which, in addition to

thematizing scandal, must have been itself at one time scandalous if we consider its

exclusion from several Victorian translations.[4] The *Ninth Satire* presents a dialogue

between two characters, Juvenal and Nevolus, the latter of whom is a male prostitute who

complains about the ingratitude of his former patrons—both male and female—who have

left him aged, impotent, diseased, socially isolated, and in financial distress. Nevolus

fantasizes about exposing the covetousness of one powerful ex-patron, Virro, but cannot

risk incurring Virro's wrath. At one time Nevolus had been employed by Virro for Virro's

own pleasure and to sleep with Virro's estranged wife (with whom Nevolus begets two

children). Nevolus's story, if made public, would establish the masculine and civic

failings of Virro, a "lustful pathick," who not only hired Nevolus to be the active partner

in anal intercourse but, more importantly, failed to fulfill his duties as a Roman citizen by

consummating his marriage and propogating his own children (173). Roman laws,

designed to ensure the self-perpetuation of the Republic and the exclusion of foreigners,

dictated that a childless citizen would forfeit at least half of any inheritance.[5] Virro's

---

[4] See, for example, J.E.B. Mayor, *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal* (1880-81); C.H. Pearson and Herbert A. Strong, *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal* (1892); J.D. Duff, *Fourteen Satires of Juvenal* (1899); and S.G. Owen, *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal Translated into English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903).

[5] See William Barr, ed., *Juvenal: The Satires*, trans. Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 201n.

unwillingness to consummate his marriage thus signifies far more than the disgrace of

"lost Manhood": it means losing the full privileges of Roman citizenship (137). Having

provided Virro with two heirs, Nevolus feels inadequately compensated for both his vital

services and his silence. He recalls a conversation in which he told Virro: "Much Pains it

cost to Right the injur'd Dame; / A whole Night's Vigour, to repair thy shame: / Witness

your self, who heard the lab'ring Bed, / And shrieks at the departing Maiden-Head"

(146–49). After Nevolus recalls the entire story to Juvenal, he enjoins Juvenal not to

repeat the story for fear that the revelation of Virro's secret would provoke his revenge:

"Then slight him not, nor with his Scandal sport, / But be as Mute as was th'Athenian

Court" (179–180). Juvenal agrees with Nevolus that he has a legitimate cause for

complaint and offers him the consolation that although Nevolus has fearfully guarded

Virro's secret, it is inevitable that any "Rich Man"—especially one like Virro who

consistently mistreats and begrudges his servants a proper livelihood while hoarding

wealth and pursuing a decadent lifestyle—will eventually be exposed by those servants

whom his covetousness has turned into his "Abject Foes" (182, 201).

Harvey's translation further develops the relationship between servants and

masters as one of negotiated power in which the servants, though subservient,

nevertheless enjoy "the Unbounded Freedom of their Tongues" (186).[6] The masters

---

[6] For an illuminating discussion of the recurrent theme of servants' indiscretion in eighteenth-century literature, see Jenny Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Davidson presents a complex argument in

whose "Vicious Lives" cause them to fear their servants' knowledge and aspersions are "More mean and wretched far than their own Slaves" (201, 202). By contrast, the masters who live virtuously can openly "despise" any of their servants' attempts at "Slander (the worst of Poysons)," knowing in advance that their social status and genuine virtue secure for them greater legitimacy and credibility in public deliberations arising from the defamatory charges (198, 199). Harvey's metaphor invokes both the abstract notion of the body politic being poisoned by false rumours and the damage such character assassinations might have on a person by exerting a form of social control over her or his ability to conduct business, that is, to enter agreements or to have relations with others that require a degree of trust. Harvey's distinction between slander and scandal is an important one, however, in that it suggests scandal is a symptom of widespread cultural depravity—an imbalance in the body politic—that nevertheless enables the body to defend itself against disease, whereas false slander is simply a poisonous act of revenge on the part of "ignoble Minds" (200). Yet both scandal and slander underscore the effects of social dependency in a way that prefigures Marx's variation of the Hegelian master/slave dialectic. The precondition for any type of human economy—from the smallest to the largest scale—is a relation of dependency, a necessary condition of sociality further entrenched by social stratification that requires the reliance of the most

---

which the discourse of manners and the discourse of morals are shown to be in an ambivalent and occasionally antagonistic relation to each other as it becomes increasingly difficult for people to differentiate between dissimulation and politeness.

5

rich (patricians, capitalists) on the most poor (slaves, proletarians). The logic of this

relation dictates that if the underclasses contribute their labour, recognition of status, and

submission to benefit the "common weal," then the ruling class must also contribute to

the overall health of society, and can do so by ensuring social stability through good

leadership and providing the poor with the basic means of subsistence. Of course, it is in

the interest of the ruling class to fulfill its social responsibilities because the complacency

of the underclasses would further secure domination for itself and its progeny in future

generations.

The *Ninth Satyr*'s concern with legitimacy, particularly the legitimacy of social

hierarchies and the monarchy, would have resonated deeply within eighteenth-century

Restoration culture. Harvey's translation is more than a straightforward linguistic mirror

of Juvenal's original. Indeed, acts of translation are always political acts, motivated by the

translators' desire to communicate something of interest and relevance to contemporary

readers. Moreover, the common eighteenth-century practice of reading satire topically is

implicitly encouraged by Dryden's introduction to the *Sixth Satire* in the same publication

when he facetiously asserts that Juvenal's nasty representation of "Roman *Ladies*" should

in no way be extended to English women.[7] In keeping with the preponderance of

allegorical readings of classical literature that related ancient representations to their

modern counterparts, it is not difficult to read Dryden's publication of Juvenal's satires as

---

[7] John Dryden, "Argument of the Sixth Satyr," in *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis*, 87.

an oblique commentary on the political situation that emerged from the exclusion of

James II and the crowning of William III and Mary II in 1689. Harvey's translation, in

particular, draws attention to the threats of radical individualism and personal decadence

embodied by Virro,[8] threats that could be increasingly associated with Whig political

values and actions during the eighteenth century. Dryden's excavation of Juvenalian

satire and its championing of civic consciousness against the corruptions of the Roman

Empire enables him to propose a variant of humanism very different from the anti-

monarchical, anti-hierarchical republicanism of the Puritans, which would later transmit

many of its principles to the development of a rights-based liberal individualism. J.G.A.

Pocock's study of the "Atlantic republican tradition" describes the revival of a language

of the common good, civic virtue, and political corruption, mainly through the

seventeenth-century work of James Harrington.[9] A notion of civic humanism, adapted to

moderate political ends, could be used to oppose what was perceived as a corrosive

individualism and to lay the blame for social strife squarely upon the shoulders of an

individual or party perceived to have usurped authority for self-interested motives against

the common good. Such civic consciousness could also be used to promote a nostalgia for

---

[8] Laura Brown's work on eighteenth-century drama discusses some of the ideological connections that have been made between libertine philosophy and radical Puritan iconoclasm. See Brown, *English Dramatic Form, 1660–1760: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 41–42. However, such connections in Restoration comedies must be understood in terms of their parodic dimension when the libertine espouses republicanism without any corresponding moral principles.

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

a harmonious, dignified social order based on individuals' participation in the *res publica* and their proper exercise of civic virtue against socially malignant self-interest and factious behaviour. This is a vision of the commonwealth that rests upon a naturally uneven distribution of privilege and a humanism made possible by a smoothly functioning organic hierarchy in which each member fulfills his patriarchal and patronal duties, following the supreme example of the only legitimate authority figure and patron who could bring peace to the nation: the monarch. Within Stephen Harvey's translation, scandal is positioned as antithetical to this harmonious nationalistic ideal. Yet it is paradoxically those who feel it is their social responsibility to speak against obvious corruption in the Court and the neglect of civic duty on a larger scale who are the ones directly involved in the production of scandal.

This principle of responsibility towards others relies on the subject's possession of what I will refer to as "social intelligence," which encompasses the knowledge of both how society operates and how the subject can function most advantageously within it. The demand for better social intelligence pervades Juvenal's satires as he complains that the patronage practices and values of the former Republic are declining as a consequence of the ruling class' secrets, which are now exposed by him, as well as its failure to perform its important duties and its pettiness and avarice.[10] Within a properly functioning system, even a client offering sexual services such as Nevolus should be able to count on

---

[10] The other satires that include the theme of bad patronage are I, V, and VII.

proper compensation without having to resort to scandalizing his patron. Presumably, the significant threat arises less from the grumblings of Nevolus or the slaves than from the possibility of Virro's peers discovering the truth. Certainly, both Juvenal and Harvey assume an understanding with their audience that it will easily and rightly discern the cause for scandal, and why Nevolus fears Virro's retaliation. Today, we might find these matters more puzzling, leading us to ask the following questions. In the specific terms of the *Ninth Satyr*, why would Virro have cause to be concerned with Nevolus' allegations? In terms of scandal in general, how is a threat posed by others' knowledge and the possibility of making that knowledge public? On what grounds is a shared, general response to scandal a safe assumption? What distinguishes an action as specifically "scandalous" and not merely unfortunate, hypocritical, deceptive, sinful, or criminal? The answers to these questions first require a clear definition of scandal.

II. *Towards a definition of eighteenth-century scandal and scandal literature*

In the case of scandal—a word with many ambiguous meanings—it is worth risking semantic rigidity by outlining a specific definition. To begin with an eighteenth-century definition of scandal, Johnson's *Dictionary* describes something as "scandalous" when it possesses the quality of "giving publick offence." A "scandal" refers either to an "offence given by the faults of others" or to "reproachful aspersion; opprobious

censure."[11] In the former case, the necessary element appears to be the reaction of taking

offense at an action done by an "other" supposed faulty by the scandalized; in the latter

case, the scandal consists of an account (whether truthful or defamatory) of the action

within the context of passing moral judgment on the offender. From these definitions,

four general features of scandal can be outlined and expanded. First, on the most basic

level, scandal consists of an intersubjective relation arising from a scenario in which an

agent's action offends others. Second, in the case of public scandal, the action is held

generally to be offensive by the consent of the community to which both offended and

offender belong, particularly so if the offender wields some type of power within the

community and the offense had been concealed in order to perpetuate this power. Third,

the judgment is passed less upon the morality of the offensive action *per se* and more

upon the moral character of the particular offender, whose primary "fault" is not a

particular vice (lust, greed, sloth) so much as having chosen to act out of self-interest or

ingratitude rather than the public good, with the result that the action has produced social

strife. Fourth, a general reaction of moral outrage is only possible if those who take

offense acquire knowledge of an action that has already transpired and this means that the

details of the action must be publicized (that is, made public). If we juxtapose these

characteristics of scandal with Johnson's definition of satire, as "a poem in which

---

[11] Samuel Johnson, "Scandalous" and "Scandal," in *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2 (London: W. Strahan, 1755; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1967).

wickedness or folly is censured," then immediately similarities and differences between

scandal and satire become apparent. Perhaps the most obvious difference between satire

and scandal is that satire is recognized as a self-conscious literary form—here, a

"poem"—that may or may not be topical, whereas scandal always refers to actually

existing circumstances. While satire explicitly acknowledges its constructedness as an

artistic production, scandal conveys secrets that are supposed to be true even though more

often than not this secrecy tends to undermine the authority and accuracy of its

representation of reality. When the discourse of scandal is contained in literary forms, it

often displays rhetorical elements similar to satire, a direct or implied condemnatory

quality, and an ironic structure, and, like satire, its expression may or may not involve

verbal irony.[12] However, in contrast to satire, scandal's internal logic unfolds in such a

way that its purpose is to arrive at a moral and pragmatic resolution to a particular social

issue, whether it accomplishes this task effectively or not. Scandal and satire both depict

and pass moral judgment on someone whose actions have potentially undermined the

social order, but scandal does so with the explicit intention of mediating the actually

---

[12] A common view of satire is that, in addition to possessing an ironic structure, it must also employ verbal irony or at least some kind of copious exaggeration that provokes humour. However, John Peter's study of early modern satire has shown that the pervasive use of irony in eighteenth-century satire is not representative of all satire, and it may be more appropriate think of satire as a literary mode rather than a genre for two reasons: (1) invective is deployed within several other genres (eg. the complaint) and in both poetry and prose; (2) clearly the generic features of satire change over time, and scholars should avoid imposing a single, historically-specific definition on all expressions of satire, thereby disregarding elements that writers from other periods may have associated with satire and/or discounting some literature as satire altogether. See Peter, *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

11

existing relationship between an individual and the community so that it censures neither

solely for the sake of artistic expression and the fulfillment of generic requirements nor

entertainment value but to provide the communicative grounds on which the public can

determine and demand appropriate reparations for the scandalous offender's misuse of

authority and power. In this way, scandal as a discourse need not be limited to literary

expression alone but appears throughout the realm of cultural production and has

ramifications in various areas such as theology, moral and political philosophy, law,

government, as well as in everyday oral and visual culture.

While it is useful for my purposes to differentiate scandal from satiric literature,

such distinctions were not quite so stark in the eighteenth century. The noun "scandal"

often refers directly to written and print forms of the discourse, as when Joseph Addison

describes a "Bundle of Letters in Womens Hands" as a "Packet of Scandal."[13] Moreover,

contradictory definitions of satire can be found throughout eighteenth-century literature,

perhaps most notably in Dryden's *Discourse on Satire* (1693), which originally serves as

a preface to the previously mentioned translations of Juvenal. The fact that Dryden

obviously felt it necessarily to write an elaborate account of satire in the first place

suggests that cultural definitions of satire were anything but settled in the early eighteenth

century, and perhaps only ever attained a very ambiguous and hybrid status like several

---

[13] Addison, *Spectator* No. 16 (March 19, 1711), in *The Spectator*, ed. D. F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), I: 71.

other kinds of eighteenth-century literature. I agree with Michael Seidel's argument that "satire, libel, lampoon, and slander, were inextricably mixed, whether the specific forms they took were poetic, dramatic, narrative, or expository."[14] Consequently, it is possible to think of scandal literature as a variation of eighteenth-century modes of satire that expresses a particular, mainly topical concern.

Scandal circulates secrets in order to titillate audiences but the one secret consistently and thoroughly exposed by scandal is a palpable failure on the part of an individual or group to act in the public interest for which they were born, appointed, or elected. Thus, scandal implicitly rehashes the English common-law argument that a ruler's power is conferred through the consent of the ruled so that his or her decisions are effectively limited by a responsibility to act in all instances on behalf of the public interest. The same concerns inform the production of eighteenth-century satire. Even Dryden, the great defender of decorum in modern literature, concedes that when a "particular person...is become a public nuisance"—a condition that presumes an individual in possession of enough power to cause such an effect—it is "absolutely of a poet's office" to "make examples of vicious men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their crimes and follies."[15] Given these ambiguous definitions of satire and scandal,

---

[14] Seidel, "Satire, Lampoon, Libel, Slander,"in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40.

[15] John Dryden, "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," in *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), II: 80–81.

it is useful to consider discourse of scandal and satirical genres as converging in early

eighteenth-century topical satire, with the burlesque portrayal of Dryden in *The Rehearsal*

(1671) and Dryden's attack on Thomas Shadwell in *Mac Flecknoe* (1676) being two of

the great early examples. Generic confusion, also signified as an "appetite for variety,"[16]

is a staple of the eighteenth-century literary diet. But there are limits to interpreting

scandal only in terms of its literary representation. Consider, for instance, the way in

which the cultural reception of a single text is mediated intertextually not only by its

literary precursors and sucessors but also by its material and symbolic effects on the

culture, effects deliberately elicited by scandal. More importantly, print forms of scandal

not only cross several designated literary genres but also influence oral culture in a way

that penetrates multiple areas of cultural life beyond the production and consumption of

literature. For these reasons, scandal is best seen as a discourse or "idiom"[17] of cultural

expression rather than a specific literary mode or genre. In other words, scandal circulates

recurrent and unique rhetorical forms, epistemological concerns, and social effects but

cannot be restricted to one communicative medium only. A proper understanding of

scandal literature must engage with scandal as a larger social discourse that embodies

---

[16] See Margaret Anne Doody, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), especially chapter one, "Appetite, imperialism and the fair variety of things," 5-29.

[17] On "idioms of political discourse" in the eighteenth century, see J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), especially the introduction.

certain particular attributes when it is given shape and transmitted as a printed text.

The scope of this study is limited to an exploration of a print culture of scandal, and, since so many variable meanings accrue to the term "scandal" in the eighteenth century, the term "scandal literature" can only be a provisional designation. Nevertheless, the utility of grouping together and studying diverse genres—religious treatises and pamphlets, dramatic comedies, periodicals, and secret histories—under the rubric of "scandal literature" resides in the way it can illuminate our understanding of a cultural discourse and its historical development and the way aspects of this eighteenth-century discourse may or may not continue to influence the present. There are certain attributes common to eighteenth-century representations of scandal that have been overlooked because literary scholarship has tended either to interpret scandal literature in terms of its valuable contribution to established genres (for example, the novel) or to embrace scandal literature in postmodern fashion as a "wild blend of genres."[18] As an alternative to these two kinds of scholarly treatment, I want to endorse another complementary possibility, one that foregrounds scandal literature's historical contribution as a mode of cultural production, which can be better illuminated, according to J. Paul Hunter, by an exploration of "how writing relates to various forms of cultural desire."[19] Such an

---

[18] This phrase is used to describe Eliza Haywood's *The Adventures of Eovaai* (1736). See Earla Wilputte, "Introduction," in Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo: A Pre-Adamitical History* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), 9.

[19] J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), x.

approach means, on the one hand, being attentive to the more general concern of how the

language and textuality of scandal are used as mediums of cultural representation and

constitutive forces in the production of subjectivity, and, on the other hand, outlining

some of the specific organizational patterns scandal imposes on language and literature in

an effort to structure the subject's desire. The meaning of scandal literature is located at

the interstice between the texts that seek to construct readers and the historical ways in

which their contemporary readers respond to them. Psychoanalytic and post-structural

theory thus provides us with a rich resource for understanding how subjects relate to

representations of scandalous objects and how such relationships are always mediated by

language. Using such theories, a new kind of formalist understanding of scandal becomes

possible, one that foregrounds the nature and politics of its cultural production and

consumption. What follows below is a more extensive definition of scandal and an

outline of some of the common rhetorical and literary elements of scandal that provide

the basis for an interrelationship between the scandal as a discourse and the subjects who

relate to it.

III. *A general definition of scandal*

Scandal is both a discourse and a phenomenon. As a discourse, scandal frames

and publicizes information in particular ways so as to incite a general feeling of moral

outrage within an intended audience. Importantly, the target of scandal (the antagonist) is

not seen as an absolute "other" but as a community member whose actions have gone

awry and who is therefore in need of correction. The audience's relation to the antagonist

is therefore ambivalent, as an acceptance of his or her social membership is tempered by a

failure of identification arising from an awareness of the offensive act. Moreover, the

antagonist is not simply a *member* but typically an already well-known functionary within

the community who thus wields influence, if not power in a material sense. This aspect of

scandal is succinctly expressed in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*: "The mightier the

man, the mightier is the thing / That makes him honoured, or begets him hate; / For

greatest scandal waits on greatest state."[20] As a result of the status of publicness, of being

public, the antagonist's position is doubled as a private person and a social representative.

That is, the public figure has two bodies, not unlike the attribute famously conferred upon

kingship in medieval and early modern political philosophy.[21] The natural body and the

social body of the person each instantiates a public/private dimension, which makes an

attempt to distinguish between public and private seem quite arbitrary. Yet this task is

precisely what scandal claims to undertake, providing the audience with the illusion that

they are being let in on an intimate secret, when in fact the *publicity* of scandal constructs

the "private" dimension and moral character of the public persona.

---

[20] William Shakespeare, "The Rape of Lucrece," in *Shakespeare: The Poems*, ed. John Roe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 191, lines 1004–1006.

[21] The seminal account of the medieval conception of the two bodies of kingship is Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

Oscar Wilde once famously wrote, "Scandal is gossip made tedious by

morality."[22] While scandal certainly exhibits a moral dimension, it can be further

distinguished from the more desultory forms of gossip because it has an explicitly public

orientation and purpose. "Scandal" is misapplied to communication that remains on the

level of the strictly personal, which fails to conform to the parameters that the discourse

of scandal establishes for itself as a social intervention. In other words, scandal is always

political. It is a discourse concerned with power and justice that focuses on public figures.

Indeed, the ontological condition required for a scandal story to reach the proportions of a

public event is generalized moral outrage, which presupposes the idea of a community

whose agreed upon rules have been broken. In such cases, the required conditions for the

discourse of scandal to generate the event of scandal depend wholly on its public

reception. Although scandal uses some tried and true means of persuasion in an effort to

produce the desired event—including generic forms, narrative formulas, and rhetorical

devices—it is not always successful. Similarly, although an author of scandal literature

employs the discourse of scandal, such employment may not, in fact, result in a scandal,

which is a historical event extraneous to the textual representation. According to this

definition, however, scandal literature must always have the *potential* to scandalize—to

generate the phenomenon of scandal—which means that it must always have a topical

---

[22] Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windemere's Fan*, Act III, in *The Works of Oscar Wilde*, Vol. 5 (New York: AMS Press, 1972), 110.

import that can be generally interpreted by an audience to apply to itself and to an antagonist in its midst. This is one reason why scandal literature is at pains to constitute the members of its audience in particular ways through generating their desire for a type of knowledge that is constructed as having a direct impact on their lives.

The internal logic of scandal dictates that its content be publicized as widely as possible in order to produce the event of a scandal. However, scandal does not really circulate private information, but information already made public in the form of secrets.[23] Contrary perhaps to a common assumption, secrecy is not the opposite of publicity but precisely that which underlies and motivates the act of making something public. A secret is information that is specifically waiting to be made known—otherwise it would not be constructed within the symbolic realm at all, let alone as deliberately concealed knowledge. A secret cannot exist prior to the subject's knowledge of it. This means that a secret is always a discursive effect that follows upon and constructs the subject's knowledge as such, while also shaping the subject's perception of his or her knowingness as arising from a privileged, informed position perpetuated by the discursive conditions of secrecy. Secrets presume that knowledge could be socially significant if it is

---

[23] Two previous studies of gossip and scandal are notable for also developing scandal's connection to secrecy; see Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); and Mellencamp, *High Anxiety*. Jodi Dean in *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell Univesity Press, 2002) is critical of the secret structure of mass media discourse for supporting the public's desire for transparency. However, in eighteenth-century culture, secrecy and scandal are self-consciously recognized as hermeneutic problems that make transparency impossible. I will discuss in further detail in Chapter Three how scandal relates in complex ways to the formation of a modern public.

made known to more people than those who already know it. Scandal is public

knowledge transmitted by what I will call a "secret form." Since a known secret is

technically neither a secret nor a private matter, we can conceptualize the secrets of

scandal as containers that have leaked, and therefore no longer function effectively as

containers. But the containers malfunction due to a design flaw in their original

conception rather than in the manner in which they are used. Harvey uses another

metaphor that suggests the futility of arresting the dissemination of a scandalous secret:

"Try to imprison the resistless Wind, / So swift is Guilt, so hard to be confined"

(189–190). The information spread by scandal may have once been "private," but, as part

of the discourse of scandal, it can no longer be so. This does not mean that scandal

presents itself in such a transparent way. Rather, it is better to think of the public nature of

scandal by imagining the circulation of a letter in an envelope whose seal has already

been broken. Part of the undisclosed structure of scandal that is largely responsible for its

mass appeal is that with each telling or retelling of a scandalous story, the narrator relays

his or her information as if the secret missive is being opened anew for the sake of the

privileged confidante.[24] The rhetorical and textual devices within scandal literature,

whether or not topicality is disguised by allegory, always embody this secret form. It is

---

[24] This letter analogy perhaps helps to explain why several of the first examples of scandal literature were conveyed in epistolary form. See, for instance, Aphra Behn's *Love-letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684-87), Delarivier Manley's *The Lady's Paquet Broke Open* (1707), and Eliza Haywood's *Bath-Intrigues: in Four Letters to a Friend in London* (1725).

the *secrecy* rather than the secret content of the scandal that motivates people's curiosity and that in turn drives the desire to pass on information to others. Thus, the purpose of scandal is not the revelation of private acts but precisely the translation or reconstitution of a private act into a public one through the formal element of the secret.

The secrets of scandal operate much like Marx's commodity fetish: they derive their value exclusively from exchange (or the potential for exchange) and thus represent a form of cultural capital congealed as "power/knowledge."[25] The secret form, in a sense analogous to Marx's commodity form, entails a transmission of a secret from one person to another. The basis of scandal's social power is this intersubjective relation mediated by the secret, the knowledge of which enables knowing subjects to alter their own or another's social status within the cultural field. The secret and its content have no essential value or power except what can be gained from the discursive and material place the secret occupies in the social relation. It might seem the secret confers power onto the subject; but it is rather the case that the secret acquires power based on the positions of the knowing social actors who engage in the process of exchange. Even so, the secret form constructs the particular knowledge or content of the secret as the object and cause

---

[25] The term "power/knowledge" has been associated with Michel Foucault. See Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980). On the commodity form and commodity fetishism, see Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes, ed. Ernest Mandel (London: Penguin, 1976), especially 125–177. The concept of cultural capital or "symbolic capital" is indebted to the work of Pierre Bourdieu. See, for example, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), and *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

of the subject's desire, which in turn plays the paradoxical role of being both the product and precondition for the subject's relationship towards the secret. Significantly, the desire produced by scandal is not merely a private fantasy-reality but a *politicized* desire in the sense that it arises from a state of social embeddedness, combines with moral outrage against a particularly social form of injustice, and is directed by a collectively felt need for remedial action. The realization of remedial action, however, is often thwarted by the secret form of scandal itself.

The secret explains the mechanism of desire that underlies the communication of scandal. The operations of desire make scandal *appear* as if it spreads spontaneously in a self-propagating fashion, as if it has a life and will of its own. But scandal can only remain within the circuit of communication so long as it goes some distance towards but does not entirely meet the satisfaction of the subject's desire. It must continue to provoke controversy and circulate its secret in defiance of perception or of the closure satisfied by adequate retribution. In other words, remedial action or full public consensus would effectively put scandal to rest, having reestablished socially acceptable norms and stabilized the community once again. The suggestion that desire is at odds with remedial action points to the complex duplicity of scandal in that it presents itself as ends-oriented (the ends are truth-telling, social justice, and moral edification), while relying on a principle of epistemological uncertainty (the secret) to prevent decisive action and perpetuate itself endlessly. For this reason, it is not surprising that scandal provokes

22

depictions of itself as a pernicious form of entertainment rather than as an effective check against public corruption.

As a cultural phenomenon, scandal is precisely the public occasion arising from the production of general indignation. The public must recognize itself as a stakeholder somewhere in the scandal story's construction of the antagonist's actions. The condition for scandal to deem the antagonist a public enemy is typically the administration of power in some capacity on behalf of the community. The scandal story reinforces the assumption that the antagonist is a public representative charged with upholding the public good. Public scandals also require a network that widely transmits information. Even so, scandal is responsible for not simply appealing to a pre-existing public but generating that very same "public": the public comes into being and acquires its character through the very process of discursive exchange. Although it is tempting to construct scandal as a form of public empowerment through the acquisition of "power/knowledge," it is important to emphasize that knowledge itself is never inherently powerful. The value of knowledge, like a commodity's exchange-value, is generated only through the social relationships that enable its exchange. The real power of knowledge, therefore, is always *social*: the subject's ability to participate as a nodal point within a network that involves knowledge transmission is what transforms knowledge into cultural capital. By extending this metaphor, we can see how the communities formed around a print culture of scandal are like immaterial versions of the Exchange in eighteenth-century London, a marketplace

23

of news that provides a structural relationship through which one can put knowledge to a

useful purpose, cash in on its value, and accumulate social power.[26]

This leads us to another question about scandal that remains typically unexpressed

in discourse itself: what is at stake in the impulse to spread scandal about those in power?

Scandal does not simply convey the *resentment* of social inferiors towards their betters;

one might grumble and complain without producing and consuming information about

the secret lives of others. The intent behind scandal is clearly to *damage the reputation of*

someone who has a reputation to damage. Reputation, often interchangeable with

"character" in the eighteenth century, is constituted when publicly circulating knowledge

about a person congeals into an identity that is generally assumed to be consistent with

---

[26] Many excellent studies have shown how eighteenth-century English print culture was fully imbricated with the circulation of cultural capital and used specific ideas such as taste, politeness, and credit to establish modern individual and social identities through the construction of competing realms based on divisions between classes, genders, and high/low cultural value. See, for example, Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (London: Methuen, 1972) and *Literature and Popular Culture* (Sussex: Harvester, 1985); Valerie Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); Barbara M. Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-Century English Periodical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678–1730* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); and Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Trevor Ross, *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998); Laura Brown, *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); and Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

the person's habitus or particular way of social being.[27] This identity, if favourable, allows the person to enter into social relationships with others; in other words, it signifies as cultural capital, which can translate directly into financial capital or "credit."[28] With the diminished effectiveness of other traditional signifiers of virtue (wealth, birth, title) in the eighteenth century, the language of scandal becomes a common means of generating social consensus by constituting and establishing individual reputations and by securing a generally agreed upon character for public figures. In eighteenth-century England, this social consensus is increasingly denoted by the term "publick."

Although the secret form of scandal produces rather predictable effects on the subject, in the case of scandal as a public event, there is no formal equivalent to the secret that determines whether or not scandalous publicity leads to a full-blown scandal. Unlike the secret's ability to animate and structure the subject's desire, the occurrence of a public scandal is always radically contingent on historical conditions and the social effects of the discourse. The potential for constructing any given action or series of actions as counter-normative or scandalous depends on not only the actions themselves having a broad

---

[27] Character, although attributed to particular individuals, is always social in nature: it is an expression of one's capabilities as a social being. Consequently, the various personal traits that fall into the category "character" are culturally contingent and therefore reveal much about the particular values, morals, and behaviours that are held in high esteem or "credited," in the sense of representing cultural capital, by any particular society at any given moment in history. For the complex ways in which character and subjectivity developed in the eighteenth century, see Lynch, *The Economy of Character*; and Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*.

[28] For further discussion of the idea of paper credit and cultural consumption as a means of acquiring credit in the eighteenth century, see Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender*.

social impact—including the impact produced by the scandal—but also a community that is close-knit enough to identify collectively and agree that the scandalous actions have had a significant impact (although the negative or positive aspects of that impact can be disputed). Accordingly, one feature that most scandals seem to have in common is the demand that all members of a society be mindful of the sociality that binds them together and exercise at least a minimal degree of what I call "social intelligence." This demand applies in only a soft sense to those individuals who wield very little social power; but it is forcefully asserted for those individuals who, by the consent of the public, occupy the role of public officials.

We can illustrate the principle of social intelligence by returning briefly to the *Ninth Satire*. What is it about Virro's secret behaviour that makes it potentially scandalous to his fellow Romans? Modern readers might be scandalized by Nevolus' occupation or the graphic language used to describe his sexual activities, while Virro's effeminate homosexuality might disturb homophobic readers. But Juvenal is not primarily interested in regulating sexual mores. It does not really affect the Republic when Virro engages in homosexual activities. In fact, the *Ninth Satire* points out the prevalence of all kinds of promiscuous sex in Roman society, from the social circles frequented by Nevolus ("the most envied *Stallion* of the Town" [7]) to the temples turned brothels and the clients of prostitution converging from "every Point ... at Rome" (219-20). Virro's penchant for men only signifies negatively insofar as it is presented as a further obstacle

26

to the fulfillment his social duties, chief among which is the reproduction of the

hierarchical social order. What matters to Juvenal is that Virro ignores the social customs

that secure property transmission and upon which the socio-economic prosperity and

perpetuation of the community depend. By failing to consummate his marriage, Virro has

both abused the public's trust and emptied the socio-economic institution of marriage of

any meaningful content. Virro's "Guilt" lies in the way he has managed to deceive public

perception and ensure his inheritance and legacy without doing any of the more or less

undesirable work himself. The content of Virro's secret—his use of a "Gallant" to satisfy

his wife's sexual needs and his consequent enjoyment of the special privileges conferred

to fathers in ancient Rome—implies deception and illegitimate profiteering. But Virro's

even more egregious flouting of his civic duty with respect to social reproduction is his

failure to provide a proper maintenance to those clients and slaves who contribute to his

status and wealth, despite it being fully in his power to do so. Furthermore, the

dissimulation or hypocrisy required by keeping secrets is as egregious as the underlying

activities that need to be concealed in the first place. With these actions—or rather

absence of action—Virro's personal faults translate into a covetousness that threatens to

undermine the moral framework of civic-mindedness that keeps the social order

functioning smoothly. At the level of greatest generality, then, the source of Virro's

scandal—the necessary element that all scandals have in common—is negligence of duty,

leading to an anti-social disregard of the common interest in favour of self-interest. In

other words, Virro demonstrates a *lack of social intelligence* that can be neither dismissed as ignorance nor considered less dangerous than if he committed a crime in a positive sense: his privileged social position and power demand that he know better than to cultivate habitual vices that obstruct social transactions and public values.

IV. *Social intelligence today*

The concept of social intelligence encompasses more than prosocial behaviour, since the word "intelligence" has a great number of associated meanings. Today, two meanings of "intelligence" predominate: the most common one refers to the faculty possessed by individuals with superior understanding or quickness of comprehension; the other sense of "intelligence" refers to confidential information of governmental or military importance obtained by gathering news from a variety of sources about foreign or clandestine events, organizations, and individuals. Both kinds of intelligence imply a knowingness about how to conduct one's self in the world, particularly an ability to assess the best course of conduct in relation to the knowledge one has about what others are doing, will do, or are capable of doing. Because this presumed knowledge is based on community norms, it should come as no surprise that scandal as a discourse and cultural phenomenon appears with the most force when two communities collide. When different values and world views come into contact, scandal outlines the resulting antagonisms that ultimately betray a problem of communication within the collective whole. To generate a

28

scandal, an action must involve more complex moral considerations than would a straightforward criminal act. Individuals must engage in public actions that draw out conflicts and contradictions within the society and its moral order. The discourse of scandal, by providing a way to interpret morally ambiguous behaviours, attempts to reestablish the integrity of the community. Once the moral inconsistencies of the situation are clearly delineated and remedied, community members are exhorted to avoid causing or fuelling further divisions within the community by taking measures to silence scandal. The exercise of social intelligence suggests that it is ultimately in the interests of both the individual and the community to abstain from any actions, although perhaps innocuous in themselves, that could either elicit an offended response from others or provoke an occasion that has damaging consequences for the community to which one belongs.

The expectation of most modern audiences is that there are two kinds of scandal stories: ones that reveal the sordid details (usually involving a sexual relationship) of a person's private life, and ones that reveal corruption and conspiracy within some corporate or political entity, usually involving a small group of colluding individuals.[29] But these types of scandal are merely differentiated by their content, an aspect of the

---

[29] John B. Thompson, for instance, subdivides political scandal into sex, financial, and power scandals. See Thompson, *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000). This typology seem unnecessarily self-limiting by overlooking, for instance, how sex is always tied up with power. Furthermore, Thompson's discussion of "visibility" interprets visibility literally, as a public figure's presence in the visual media. This assumption results in the construction of the "rise of mediated scandal" beginning in the nineteenth century. My argument regarding eighteenth-century print culture suggests, by contrast, that discursivity is the foundation of scandal, in which the *tropes* of visuality serve as useful ways to construct the dynamics of secrecy.

scandal story that I would suggest is often a far less important determinant of public scandal than its secret form. Misconceptions of scandal either conflate it with slander, which is presumed false, or assume that it is a transparent representation of the truth. In actuality, scandal is neither false nor true. In most cases, it deliberately questions what and how something is "knowable" without establishing the "facts" once and for all. Scandal does so by constructing a dialectical form that opposes false appearances to true essences but that cannot be conclusively resolved since the essences are *posited* rather than actually revealed. The indeterminate truth-value of scandal is embodied by the rhetorical and formal elements of secrecy. Scandal is never a transparent record of a transgression or pattern of transgression; rather, as with any discursive operation, it constructs actions within a moral framework that constitutes them retroactively as trangressive events, and therefore as scandalous.

With contemporary mass media, it often seems that the imperatives of "info-tainment" deliberately encourage trivialized or sensationalized versions of scandal in both its tabloid and more polite forms. Consumption of scandal continues to be related to class and gender identity, with the effect that the more popular a scandal seems to be among working-class and female consumers, the more it seems to be criticized for being only mindless, mass-mediated fluff masquerading as serious journalism. I would suggest today the opposite argument is actually more accurate: these stories have the makings of politically significant scandals but instead masquerade as mere entertainment, as the

products of a depoliticized or "privatized" consumer culture that expects celebrities to function less as exemplary public figures and more as commodities or brands. It is not the discourse of scandal and the occasions for scandal that have changed. Rather, the framing mechanisms surrounding the representation of scandal no longer presume to be morally instructive, to empower the public, or to challenge dominant power. In other words, the historical-political contextualization and ethical address that appear so evident in eighteenth-century scandal literature have been severely weakened, perhaps due to the atomizing effects of liberal capitalism and the corporatization of today's media, which seem less interested in making demands on members of its audience and spurring them on to seek justice than in maintaining or deepening a sense of generalized apathy. Today's scandal stories suggest that Henry Giroux is right to argue that what is missing from popular culture is a language that enables people to rethink ideas and practices relegated to the realm of the personal in terms of their political and social significance. Such a language would demand a capacity "to engage in the continuous translation between public considerations and private interests" and to move from the level of individual concern to that of collective action.[30] It is precisely such acts of translation—serving to connect individual actions to their social consequences—that are lacking in many of the scandal stories presented by today's media, which tend to obfuscate the operations of

---

[30] See Henry A. Giroux, *The Terror of Neoliberalism: Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of Democracy* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2004), 49-50.

power that underlie any individual act, reducing public issues to the interests of the

individual only. This narrowing of moral judgment domesticates scandal by constructing

a realm of private acts for the sake of privatized mass consumption. By contrast, the

discourse of scandal that prevails in early eighteenth-century England takes its political

purpose seriously; it might include titillating sexual content but its moral judgment is

almost always reserved for and directed towards the *social* consequences of power.

V. *Social intelligence in the eighteenth century*

Early modern meanings of "intelligence," more so than contemporary meanings,

capture the sense of intelligence as reflexive, socially-oriented knowledge. The *Oxford*

English Dictionary indicates that "intelligence" in the eighteenth century could mean an

"Interchange of knowledge, information, or sentiment; mutual conveyance of

information; communication, intercourse" as well as "A relation or footing of intercourse

between persons or parties; a good (or other) understanding *between* or *with*." Edward

Phillips in *The New World of English Words: or, a General Dictionary* (1658) also

defines "intelligence" in these two different senses as "the Correspondence that

Statesmen and Merchants hold in Foreign Courts and Countreys" and as "the Union and

Amity between two or more Persons that rightly understand one another."[31] Given these

---

[31] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Intelligence," Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Online Edition (Oxford University Press, 2004): <http://www.oed.com>. Defn. 5–6.

more nuanced definitions that assume a purposeful application rather than a mere retention of knowledge, the term "social" affixed to intelligence might seem redundant. Nevertheless, it foregrounds the role of communication as an important aspect of intelligence, which means always anticipating what one's actions communicate to the world. Acting intelligently implies an aptitude not only for deciphering the more cryptic or obscure aspects of another's behaviour but also for making one's actions sufficiently intelligible to others. Social intelligence becomes particularly important in an electoral democracy, in which public figures are invested with the responsibility of representation, and any person desirous of an occupation or social position must be concerned with the increasing significance of reputation, credibility, and character as the modern markers of "virtue." Harvey's translation of the *Ninth Satyr* testifies to early modern scandal as a democratized rather than a patronal or patriarchal phenomenon. For Harvey, it is no longer slaves or laity spreading gossip about their masters and priests but all of "Man" engaged in scandalizing "our Neighbours" (193–194). With honour no longer being defined and monopolized by the ruling class, securing a good reputation becomes a concern for everyone. In this sense, then, intelligence implies a capacity to anticipate the public effects of one's actions in a way that renders secrecy both an unnecessary and undesirable risk.

Another sense of intelligence that is commonly invoked in the eighteenth century defines intelligence as a special hermeneutic ability possessed by those individuals who

gather and decipher valuable information on others' behalf. This meaning of intelligence

presumes that certain activities—such as state or military operations—will necessarily be

carried on in a covert manner due to the particular, possibly antagonistic, interests of

different nations, communities, and individuals. Gatherers of intelligence—denoting in

this instance "information, news, tidings"[32]—also exhibit a kind of socially intelligent

communication by adapting to and infiltrating closed societies without drawing attention

to themselves. Paradoxically, it is the informants' ability to manipulate their identities and

present an appearance of authenticity—a disguising of reality that suggests a doubleness

or duplicity—that is supposed to enable the penetration of other people's appearances

through an accumulation of disparate "facts." Espionage suggests such a desultory and

deceptive manner of gathering information through immaterial circuits of

communication. Acquiring intelligence under a cloak of secrecy puts into question the

veracity of the gathered information and also suggests that intelligence—often used as the

basis for scandal—is plagued by uncertainties and requires a degree of credulity on the

part of the receiver. This dimension of speculative belief gives intelligence a power to

shape and even to reconstitute reality in the absence of first-hand or "ocular" evidence.

The communication of social knowledge through a mediating figure who reveals

secrets and exposes dissimulation on the part of others is particularly suited to the

development of a public print culture in the Restoration and early eighteenth century,

---

[32] *OED*, "Intelligence," Defn. 7.

34

which witnesses an explosion of pamphlets and books alongside newspapers, whose titles

often included the word "Intelligencer" and clearly demonstrated a popular awareness of

and interest in the social effects of "Intelligence."[33] The fact that many serials and

miscellanies—such as Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698-1700) and Tom Brown's

Amusements Serious and Comical (1700)—are also suspected of circulating scandal

about particular persons should come as no surprise. "News-mongers" are frequently

accused of reporting more than could ever be corroborated, and writers like Brown and

Ward took it upon themselves to revel in such suspicions by exaggerating and

fictionalizing much of their reports. The common premise shared by their publications is

the figure of the well-travelled narrator who offers to the public an alleged eye-witness

account of London life, especially of the seedy underside of the city contained in the

taverns, brothels, coffee-houses, and markets. In such publications, the trope of

secrecy—with its construction of appearances and essences—is put to maximum use in

conjunction with an ironic playfulness that emphasizes the fallibility of the narrator, the

role of knowledge as both product and producer of individual and collective subjectivity,

and the problem of validating knowledge transmitted in the form of such "intelligences."

These conventions of news-writing soon overlap with and are further elaborated

by the form of "secret histories" and "secret memoirs," which proliferate in the first

---

[33] For a list of eighteenth-century London newpapers and other serials whose names include the terms "Intelligence" or "Intelligencer," see *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, Vol. 2, ed. George Watson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 1313-1346.

decades of the eighteenth century. The secret histories frame a series of episodes as

gathered intelligence of events that have transpired in another historical period or place

other than England, but the stories are clearly about recent events in English society. In

many ways, these secret memoirs and histories best exemplify the form and content of

scandal literature: they deploy the discursive conventions of scandal to construct and

convey topical incidents of social importance. In secret histories, the names of the real

people to whom the author actually refers are encrypted through the use of fictional

codes, a practice that supports the trope of the narrator acting as a spy at a foreign court

and also helps the author avoid charges of libel. The separate publication of a key that

decodes or "unlocks" the names by pointing to the real people involved in the intrigues

secures a connection between the "secret" history and the political activities and figures

to which it obliquely refers, thereby transforming the cultural field in a way that

encourages audiences to read for hidden allegories laden with topical content. Reading for

topical content becomes such an obsession in the early eighteenth century that it provokes

elaborate parodic responses, one of which is Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1714),

which not only scandalizes overzealous readers of scandal literature but also suggests a

growing backlash against scandal. This novel way of looking for immanent rather than

transcendental extra-textual references within allegorical representations signals the

emergence of a culture that looks upon itself as an object of curiosity. Secret histories

thus anticipate the "novelization" of English culture in the sense of providing the reading

36

public with common narratives with which to identify and scandalous antagonists to oppose, while also suggesting a gradual shift towards realist modes of thought and representation that seek to capture the particular complexities of the present.

The fact that the early eighteenth century perhaps more than any other period witnessed an explosion of scandal literature is related to specific historical events, in particular the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, which reduced state control over the publishing industry to the imposition of taxes and the enforcement of laws against libel, treason, and *scandalum magnatum* (libel against peers). Beyond the expansion of print culture, the prevalence of scandal as a secular, political discourse is also related to general historical trends, including most significantly the increasing domination of a modern state system based on party politics. According to Pocock, these historical trends also include the Whig party's consolidation of commerce, "the rapid modernization of both society and social understanding, ... the parliamentary form of government" as well as the establishment of the nation's "imperial and exterior relation to Europe."[34] One needs to add to this list the tumultuous events and controversies over sovereignty and state religion that eventually produced the Settlement Act of 1701, which basically put to rest anxieties regarding the Protestant succession, and the Act of Union in 1707, which ushered in a whole new set of concerns and negotiations between England and Scotland regarding governance, representation, and power. Pocock's complex account of the political climate

---

[34] J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 32–33.

during and after the civil wars foregrounds the struggles between different political

ideologies, suggesting the endurance and adaptation of earlier republican and radical

ideas, however unlikely and qualified, among Tories and disillusioned Whigs even in the

face of Whig rule at the turn of the eighteenth century.

An increase in scandalous discourse and scandal literature during periods of

historical transition underscores the tendency for scandal to be both a product and a

contributing factor in the production of cultural instability, iconoclasm, anti-clericalism,

and crises of governance. These transitional periods not only coincide with the

overlapping of different or opposed conceptions of community, values, and norms but

also provide an occasion for scandal's articulation of social divisions. Rather than

viewing the eighteenth century as characterized by a smooth and natural "rise" of liberal

ideas and practices, the prevalence of scandal in the early eighteenth century corroborates

Pocock's characterization of England as "involved in a fermenting and ungovernable

debate over itself."[35]

Pocock's account of the persistence through the eighteenth century of the multiple

oppositional political ideologies and civic ideals that first erupted in the decades leading

to the civil wars seems quite accurate if we consider the particular case of the reception of

Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1714).

The popular response to the *Fable* generated such a scandal in 1723 that it was

---

[35] Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 33.

38

condemned by the Grand Jury of Middlesex as a "public nuisance."[36] In the *Fable*,

Mandeville portrays an English society in which each individual's selfish pursuit of

private interests helps the community to function as a whole, thereby subverting the

traditional celebration of the beehive as a virtuous model of social harmony. The satirical

complexity of Mandeville's *Fable*—too often misread as earnest—suggests, on the one

hand, that modern society no longer provides adequate forms of cultural instruction

through which the populace could learn "that it was more beneficial for every body to

conquer than indulge his Appetites, and much better to mind the Publick than what

seem'd his private Interest."[37]   On the other hand, Mandeville implies much more

subversively that the new capitalist economy actually *cannot* brook the effects of such an

education. Anticipating Marx, Mandeville's hive is a modern society that *needs* people to

forget their social duties in order to promote economic growth based on both the

extraction of ever greater levels of surplus labour-value and rampant, unthinking

consumption. It is not so much that the rich have deliberately defaulted on their moral

responsibilities but that the system itself does not allow moral qualms to interfere with its

amoral operations. Capitalism requires the unreflexive drone to do its work, and makes an

ideal fit with a society whose members under the pretense of virtue are willing to forego

civic-mindedness and abdicate any communal responsibility towards others. Mandeville's

---

[36] For an account of the *Fable*'s reception, see Phillip Harth, "Introduction," in Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (New York: Penguin, 1970), 7–46.

[37] Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, 81.

declaration that the hypocrisy of modern society has perverted and rendered obsolete those older values of social intelligence, civic-mindedness, and benevolence is not a critique of the values themselves but a reminder that modern society is in dire need of renewing them.

Pocock's assertion that the triumph of Whiggism in the eighteenth century leads to a dominant Whig version of history that minimizes or suppresses altogether the actual conflict and debate preceding the consolidation of Whig power explains to some extent why the social history of scandal and its literature remains largely unwritten for the first half of the eighteenth century, during which the powerful Whig party is the main target of both satirical pamphlets, newspapers, secret histories, and other harbingers of scandal. Even Whig supporters express ambivalence if not outright frustration at the way Whig leaders put their political ideals into practice through an imperial agenda that threatens to make war a permanent reality. This is a prospect that becomes increasingly unpopular but sustains grudging support among a people who are, above all, desirous of peace and stability at home as means to secure economic prosperity, individual freedom, and national independence on the world stage.[38] In such a historical moment, scandal assumes an important role by providing a secular discourse for social protest and practices that are neither conservative nor radical but adaptable to a variety of situations

---

[38] See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), especially 55–100.

and political agendas.

Broadly speaking, scandal's translation of a "private" act into a framework that contextualizes and judges it in terms of its public consequences provides a means of connecting and engaging widely disparate social actors and interests into focalized and vigorous debates that challenge dominant norms and produce new ones. Although an eighteenth-century culture of scandal clearly contributes to the establishment of certain norms of social behaviour and good governance as part of a general movement to reform English "manners," it just as quickly threatens to undo the advances made towards politeness by perpetuating disagreements, disputes, and personal attacks. Lord Chesterfield expresses concern over the latter in a letter to his son when he advises against participation in any form of scandalous communication: "In the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief."[39] Although my argument in the following chapters asserts the political significance of scandal against a long history of detraction, I would nevertheless fully reject any argument that posits an inherent revolutionary potential in scandal as either a discourse or a practice. Throughout history scandal has been invoked as an excuse to exert the tyranny of the many over the few and to justify the excessive use of institutional power to protect the integrity of the community against scandalous individuals through practices such as censorship,

---

[39] Philip Dormer Stanhope, Fourth Earl of Chesterfield, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son*, Letter LIV(October 19, 1748), ed. Oliver H. Leigh (New York: Tudor Publishing, n.d.), 129.

41

criminalization, scapegoating, and exile. Moreover, one must acknowledge that the phenomenon of scandal has also involved a failure on the part of society to confront its shortcomings through an aggressive reassertion of established norms and identities—the response to Mandeville's *Fable* might be a case in point. Or, additionally, that certain actions deemed criminal among people of low status are occasionally minimized when committed by high-profile and power figures through the appellation of "scandal," which punishes through obloquy but also perhaps impedes the carrying out of other punitive measures required for social justice to be realized. These qualifications all add up to the single, critical assertion that scandal can only be understood as a discourse and phenomenon through reference to the specific historical conditions surrounding its production and consumption.

This study begins in Chapter One by tracing a historical and theoretical background for scandal's development as a discourse through an exploration of early modern theological treatises and pamphlets on scandal. These texts merge theology, politics, and philosophy in their controversial negotiations and significations of Church and State power, indicating that the prevalence of scandal coincides with historical moments when power is shifting and a community or nation is confronted with the need to reorganize its form of governance and its internal relations and divisions. Chapter Two then traces the treatment of scandal in Restoration comedy of manners and accounts for the backlash against scandal that gains increasing force over the course of the eighteenth

42

century by exploring Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *School for Scandal* and Frances

Burney's *The Witlings*. Chapter Three is concerned with the operations of scandal in a

growing "news" culture that enables the production of the abstract collective identities

suggested by terms such as "public" and "nation." In particular, Daniel Defoe's *Review of*

the Affairs of France provides a template for understanding the formation of an early

eighteenth-century public based on the establishment of communicative norms through

the discourse of scandal. Defoe also represents scandal as populist form of dissent against

leaders who are only too willing to fall back upon an ideology of entitlement or

exceptionalism in order to legitimate their power. This antagonistic, secular form of

scandal is further discussed in Chapter Four with respect to Delarivier Manley's two

secret memoirs, the *New Atalantis* and *Memoirs of Europe*. Writing against the

dissimulating practices of the Whig party, Manley elaborates a theory of desire that

pertains not only to the secret form of scandal literature but also to British politics on a

national scale. These examples of scandal literature and the development of a theory and

politics of scandal based on eighteenth-century English culture offer us a resource for

understanding the changing conditions that brought on the historical transition to

modernity and perhaps also can provide us with fresh models for translating today's

representations of scandal into effective political discourse.

CHAPTER ONE

The Political Theology of Scandal from the Reformation to the Restoration

*Human intellect is to the rays of things like an uneven mirror which
mingles its own nature with the nature of things, and distorts and stains it.*

– Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620)[40]

This chapter traces a genealogy for scandal during the early modern period, a

genealogy that examines the historical transition to modernity during the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries through the lens of the epistemological, political, and psychological

complexities of scandal as a discourse: that is, as a network of signs and practices based

in, if not directly reproducing, the power relations which organize everyday social reality

and subjective experience. Encompassing both the material and the ideological,

discourses serve a crucial function, as Richard Terdiman explains: "In their structured,

material persistence, discourses are what give differential substance to membership of a

social group or class or formation, which mediate an internal sense of belonging, and

outward sense of otherness."[41] The genealogical approach draws from Foucault's method,

which he describes as "a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, nonlegitimized

knowledges off against the unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter

---

[40] Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620), in *The Oxford Francis Bacon*, Vol. XI, ed. Graham
Rees and Maria Wakely (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), 81.

[41] Richard Terdiman, *Discourse-Counter-Discourse* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985),
54.

44

them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them in the name of a true body of

knowledge, in the name of the rights of a science that is in the hand of a few."[42] Not only

is scandal one of those illegitimate knowledges that disrupts traditional historiography

and literary criticism of the eighteenth century, but it is itself an unruly discourse that

resists any effort to categorize its causes, purposes, effects, and outcomes in a

straightforward, monological way. Perhaps for this very reason, scandal occupies a central

position in the socio-symbolic realm during times of political divisiveness and cultural

upheaval, and in the early modern period becomes integral to the negotiation of norms

within and among various communities, whether the Reformed Church, the Scottish

Covenanters, the sects of dissenters resisting conformity to the Church of England, the

illustrious court of Charles II, or the political parties emerging from the fall of absolute

monarchy in England. It is impossible to understand the impact and legacy of scandal

without first exploring the theological doctrines that underpin even our contemporary

ideas of scandal; and certainly one cannot fully understand the transformations undergone

by English culture during the eighteenth century without paying attention to scandal,

which proliferated alongside a bourgeoning print culture and the development of

specifically modern identity categories: socio-economic class, public, and nation.

This chapter discusses theological sources and establishes the groundwork for this

---

[42] Michel Foucault, "7 January 1976," *Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), 9.

project, which traces the trajectory taken by scandal as it transforms from a religious into a secular discourse. Bridging the sacred and the lay purposes of scandal is the notion of community: the former based on the religous sect, the latter emerging with party politics and a concept of nationalism implied by the term "public." Throughout the seventeenth century, religious doctrine was central to political philosophy and played a crucial role in every major political event from the civil wars to the Exclusion Crisis and the Settlement Act. The Restoration might have presented an illusion of unity and peace but as the historians J.G.A. Pocock, Gordon Schochet, and Howard Nenner have emphasized, the religious and political disputes of the Interregnum, the "spectre of the Regicide," and "constitutional uncertainties" persisted in a way that "haunted" the decades following the return of the king.[43] A major source of contention was the persecution of religious dissenters through laws passed in a parliament dominated by "a formidable alliance of Anglicans and Cavaliers," in blatant disregard for the king's professed desire for indulgence; this led to controversies regarding non-conforming religious groups, which refused to be subsumed into the Church of England, the major instrument of state power and ideological unity at this time, and also objected to parliament's failure to represent

---

[43] J.G.A. Pocock and Gordon J. Schochet, "Interregnum and Restoration," in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock with the assistance of Gordon J. Schochet and Lois G. Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 173; Howard Nenner, "The Later Stuart Age," in Pocock, ed., *The Varieties of British Political Thought*, 181. See also Richard L. Greaves, *Enemies Under His Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664–1677* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

their interests.[44] Scandal was invoked both for and against conformity. While both sides

of the debate viewed scandal itself as something negative that should be avoided, they

had very different reasons for doing so. One side (what I will call the "establishment"

view) took the position that scandalous divisions or "schisms" obstructed national unity.

The other side (the "dissenting" view) felt that forcing dissenters to take Communion in

the Church of England would scandalize both the consciences of individuals and the

communities of which they were a part.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the paradoxical role of scandal as both an

obstacle to homogeneity and a contributor to community formation is then adapted for

secular ends with the negotiation of the public as a community that could defend its

various interests against the tyrannical impositions of the state and ruling political party.

This chapter proceeds from the particular to the general by considering first the role of

scandal within small, insular communities (the religious sect, the Restoration court) and

then scandal's impact on a national scale when it is initially incorporated and then later

purged from the eighteenth-century concept of the British "public." The ideological

complexity and mutability of scandal are demonstrated through the stark contrast drawn

between the philosophical and political earnestness of the religious treatises on scandal

discussed in this chapter and the more playful, ironic representations of scandal in the

libertine comedy of manners discussed in the next chapter. A major recurrent theme

---

[44] Nenner, 187.

throughout this chapter (and in some of the following chapters as well) is the turn from

theological doctrine towards secular discourse over the course of the seventeenth century,

a turn which I characterize as a cultural shift from a "reformation of morals" to a

"reformation of manners." The former term invokes the Protestant break with the

authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church and the civil war rhetoric of truth and law

sanctioned by God, while the latter suggests the cultural break from the libertine court of

Charles II and the beginning of an *embourgeoisement* that would later result in

widespread cultural objections to and an "official" censure of scandal by the end of the

eighteenth century.

The England that emerged at the Restoration was eager not to revisit the violence

and turmoil of the civil wars, and disputes were no longer framed by religious discourses

that relied on Manichean constructions of good and evil, and morals inspired by God but

dictated and implemented by men. Instead, philosophical skepticism—such as that

articulated by Francis Bacon, who decried priestcraft and superstition as the "Idols of the

Tribe"—coupled with a pragmatism that sought to avoid unnecessary disputes on matters

"Indifferent" replaced moral absolutism with the regulation of outward behaviour or,

simply, manners. Scandal as a moral discourse concerned with assessment of right and

wrong yet characterized by a constitutive ambiguity, as shown below, was uniquely

positioned to provide a transitional framework for rethinking community as a contingent

formation rather than a divine absolute. An indication that this pivotal transition was well

underway at the end of the seventeenth century is William III's momentous declaration in

1689 of a new era characterized by "a General Reformation of the Lives and Manners of

all Our Subjects, as being that which must Establish Our Throne, and Secure to Our

People Religion, Happiness and Peace."[45]

Although the shift from religious to secular ideology is precipitated by and

produces several important historical changes, my central concern here is the crisis of

signification encoded by the doctrine of scandal, especially as this doctrine relates to

structures of sovereignty—the intertwined institutions of Church and State—in the

seventeenth century. That this crisis of signification is both a crisis of authority *and* a

crisis of authorship is suggested by the struggle over meaning manifest in changing

modes of literary representation, from modes that suggest predetermined, essentialist

interpretations based on a providential order to those that suggest socially inscribed and

audience-mediated performances.[46] Allegory is explored here not only as an

epistemological structure that characterizes early modern scandal literature but also as the

paradigmatic literary and hermeneutic mode that undergoes a shift suggestive of the

influence of secular modernity. As the foundations for cosmological harmony and

providential meaning are increasingly shaken by the philosophical challenges of Francis

---

[45] William III, *His Majesty's Letter To The Lord Bishop of London* (London, 1689), 4.

[46] Michael McKeon brilliantly explores this crisis, focusing specifically on the destabilization of literary genres, early modern epistemology, and the material and ideological bases for social status, broadly characterized as changes in the meaning of truth and virtue. See McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, and others, allegorical meanings that move from the particular to the universal (as eternal truth or divine nature) increasingly come under suspicion.[47] By the eighteenth century, Christian allegory is revealed to be as inadequate a vehicle as the heroic epic and medieval romance for expressing the new experiences and concerns of modernity.

The seventeenth-century revival of the doctrine of scandal anticipates the emergence of a new way of constructing and interpreting the world that presupposes the subject's capacity to read allegorically, but always as a subject who is immanent and whose allegorical perspective moves from the subject to the community and back again without ever invoking transcendence. It is an allegorical mode characterized by the absence of any transcendental signified; the authority of the community substitutes for the authority of God (or, in more radical forms, divine authority is conferred on the community through the presence of the Holy Spirit). By the eighteenth century, writers of scandal literature ensure allegory's full demystification through a complete inversion of the hermeneutic gesture: generalities signify primarily as fabulous vessels through which to convey particular, ugly truths. The reader's eye, once fixed on heaven, is now positioned earthward, surveying the contemporary scene through an ironic lens that

---

[47] Skepticism's attack on allegory as a religious mode of thought is forcefully reiterated by David Hume's account of allegory as a "primitive" feature of polytheistic religious systems whereby living humans are elevated to the stature of gods "through the hands of poets, allegorists, and priests, who successively improved upon the wonder and astonishment of the ignorant multitude." See Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, ed. H.E. Root (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), 39.

results in a doubled perspective, rendering any knowledge both excessive (more than can

be seen or known) and incomplete (less than should be seen or known). In the final

section of this chapter, this inverted allegorical structure is seen to replicate both the

mediating structure of the secret, which establishes the dialectical struggle between

posited truths and perceptual knowledge, and the structure of irony as the rhetorical trope

that constructs a hidden, "true" meaning against an otherwise superficial and

straightforward literalism. A common thread running through this chapter is a focus on

the philosophical and political implications of scandal through the exploration of figures

that trope signification, referentiality, and perception—signs, idols, veils, and

mirrors—and that provide a basis for continuity between the sacred and the profane as

England bears witness to the structural and ideological transformations from which

emerge the arborescent patterns of growth that we now call modernity.[48]

---

[48] My choice of image here alludes to the genealogical family tree, which presupposes a view of history and knowledge with endless horizontal and vertical branches that cannot be fully integrated into a linear, progressive narrative. The Foucauldian genealogy, capable of both synchronic and diachronic movement in its web-like form that always threatens the official narrative of centralized, patrilineal descent, is distinct from the anatomy, which presupposes the integrated, atemporal coherence of a single, dissectable (and therefore knowable) body. Although I am suggesting that a genealogical model is best suited to understand scandal as a *modern* phenomenon, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a "rhizomatic" model has greater radical potential as an "anti-genealogy" that can challenge evolutionary narratives of progress. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 10.

I. *The doctrine of scandal*

An understanding of the impact and persistence of scandal in England requires an account of scandal's various meanings as they are inherited and developed by early modern thinkers. The *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the existence of two principal, distinct traditions prior to the eighteenth century. One usage attributes scandal to the same etymological origin as slander, from the Old French *esclandre*, although noting that scandal, unlike slander, does not necessarily imply the "falsity of the imputations made." The other usage is more precisely developed in ecclesiastical doctrines and exegesis based on occurrences of the Greek *skandalon* in the New Testament that are often translated by the King James Bible as "stumbling block" and figuratively refer to a moral snare or offense.[49] Fortunately, several theological treatises on scandal published throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries outline philosophies that provide detailed and nuanced analyses of the social and psychological effects of scandal as they relate to the individual, the institution of the Church, and the community in general. As a period of ideological change and social transformation, the early modern period provided fertile ground upon which a discourse of scandal could flourish. Conversely, the development of scandal as a category of language and thought played a role in generating

---

[49] The first documented appearance of the word *scandal* in an English work is in the *Ancren Riwle* (c.1225); all other uses of *scandal* are traced to the sixteenth century and after. See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, "Scandal, *n.*," Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Online Edition (Oxford University Press, 2004): <http://www.oed.com>.

the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a modernity that simultaneously

privileged the individual and the public as agents of moral and social good.

An early elaboration of the Roman Catholic doctrine of scandal appears in the

Summa Theologica (1265-1272) by Thomas Aquinas, who defines scandal in a strict

sense:

> As Jerome observes the Greek [*skandalon*] may be rendered offense,
> downfall, or a stumbling against something. For when a body, while
> moving along a path, meets with an obstacle, it may happen to stumble
> against it, and be disposed to fall down: such an obstacle is a [*skandalon*].
>
> In like manner, while going along the spiritual way, a man may be
> disposed to a spiritual downfall by another's word or deed, in so far, to wit,
> as one man by his injunction, inducement or example, moves another to
> sin; and this is scandal properly so called. (520)[50]

After debating various objections to the definition, Aquinas concludes that scandal

"occasions another's spiritual ruin. It is a word or action, that is either an external act—for

an internal act can have no influence on the conduct of another—or the omission of an

external act, because to omit what one should do is equivalent to doing what is forbidden;

it must be evil in itself, or in appearance."[51] This definition implies, as do further

---

[50]Thomas Aquinas, "Scandal," Part II, Second Part, Question 43, Vol. 9 of *The "Summa Theologica" of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. literally by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1916), 519-537. All references are to this edition.

[51] A. Van Der Heeren, paraphrasing Thomas Aquinas from *Summa Theologica* (II-II, Q. xliii, a.1), in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Scandal," Vol. XIII (1912), Online Edition (K. Knight, 2003): <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13506d.htm>.

elaborations on the cases and divisions of the doctrine,[52] that the inherent "evil" or "sin"

of scandal is by no means so readily and easily discernible. An original action that results

in scandal may neither be sinful in itself, nor cause another to fall into sin, but only

represent the *potential* to lead to sin. Aquinas explains:

> Thus, for instance, if a man were to *sit at meat in the idol's temple* [1 Cor. 8:10], though this is not sinful in itself, provided it be done with no evil intention, yet, since it has a certain appearance of evil, and a semblance of worshipping the idol, it might occasion another man's spiritual downfall. Hence the Apostle says (I Thessal. V.22): *From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves*. Scandal is therefore fittingly described as something done *less rightly*, so as to compromise both whatever is sinful in itself, and all that has an appearance of evil. ... As stated above ... nothing can be a sufficient cause of a man's spiritual downfall, which is sin, save his own will. Wherefore another man's words or deeds can only be an imperfect cause, conducing somewhat to that downfall. For this reason scandal is said to afford not a cause, but an occasion, which is an imperfect, and not always accidental cause. (521)

Two important features of scandal emerge from Aquinas' commentary: first, an action

must be done publicly in order to provoke scandal, since scandal by definition involves

---

[52] Aquinas distinguishes an act as either the "direct" or "accidental" cause of another's sin. In the former case, the perpetrator (intentionally or unintentionally) publicly commits a sin or something with the appearance of sin, which then provokes another's spiritual downfall. The result is "active scandal," to which provocation another may or may not consent In the case of accidental scandal, an innocent or righteous act nevertheless instigates another to take the occasion to fall into sin, for instance, by "envy of another's good." This case also falls into the category of "passive scandal" since the original act does not "afford the occasion of the other's downfall." "Passive" and "active" are generally used to attribute sin to one or the other party involved in the scandal. If both parties commit a sin, then active and passive scandal are present together (521-522). Finally, Aquinas is careful to distinguish between cases of scandal that proceed from malice, for instance, when a person deliberately hinders the spiritual welfare of others by "stir[ring] up scandals," in which case the scandal should be treated with contempt; and those cases which proceed from the weakness or ignorance of others, when, for example, some spiritual or temporal good is mistakenly taken as an occasion for stumbling, in which case the instigator should either temporarily defer or conceal his actions until the scandal can be avoided, such as through proper counsel (536).

more than one actor. According to Aquinas, a sin "being hidden cannot give scandal"

(530); thus, the repercussions of a deed which is not committed "publicly" (522) remains

strictly between the individual and God. The condition of intersubjectivity, or the

subject's relations with the other, seems to render impossible an absolute moral

determination. Thus, the second and perhaps most surprising problem arising from

scandal is the indeterminacy of the essential sinfulness of scandalous actions. It is

sufficient for an action that results in scandal to manifest, in Aquinas' words, "some lack

of rectitude" (521), and not be evil in a positive sense, for an intentional or unintentional

act with the mere appearance of sin can produce scandal. The problem of scandal thus

anticipates the postmodern concern with the problematic relationships among knowledge,

language, and perception as forms of mediation, and the object of representation.

Aquinas' terms resonate well with the claim that a signifier does not embody or even

correspond to a positive attribute inherent to the signified but only refers to "lack" in a

signified object, which in turn creates an irremediable disjunction between signifier and

the signified, between the world constructed in language and the unsymbolized remainder

that is both the enabling product and destabilizing obstacle of a discursively constituted

reality.[53] Consequently, the conditions arise for the proliferation of various meanings

attached to the word "scandal," and the subject is implicated in any "objective"

---

[53]This account of signification is based on Slavoj Žižek's development of the Lacanian ideas of the Real and the Symbolic in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989).

determination. For instance, if the scandalized members of the community are "ill-disposed" (522) or "ignorant" (534), a perfectly good action may result in scandal. The determination of scandal by the community leaves the scandalous actor at the mercy of the community, which can potentially misread the act and attribute "hidden" motives to the actor, without requiring any evidence. While the determination of *sin* is fully dependent on the status and content of the actor's conscience, with *scandal*, by contrast, the actor's conscience ultimately does not matter: what really matters is the way the act is perceived and constructed in the minds of observers, possibly triggering guilt and condemnation in the consciences of the scandalized. Thus the potential for sinful effects to arise from scandal is entirely dependent on the reaction and agency of the scandalized, whether the scandalized justly or unjustly take offense, resist falling into sin, or choose to succumb to temptation outright. The logic of scandal thus points to the necessarily discursive constitution of the scandal itself, as an object of discourse.[54] Agency is not only wrested from the subject but resides entirely in the performative power of signs—both the action and how it is represented—to create "scandals." What qualifies as scandal is not at all preconstituted; the "sin" of scandal is named as such only after the fact and thus designated retroactively as the offspring of a series of events that were previously unsymbolized or at the margins of the symbolic order. In other words, an act is never

---

[54]For a brief, illuminating discussion of discursive constructivism, see Ernesto Laclau, "Preface," in Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, xiii-xv.

scandalous in itself but becomes so only as a result of the other (a person or institution)

calling it by that name. Thus scandal can be generated without any legitimate foundation

at all.[55] Although Aquinas attempts to uncover the many properties that belong to scandal

proper, it is clear that signifying practices rather than any inherent characteristics of a

situation alone establish (rightly or wrongly) the identification and identity of scandal.

Scandal is unsettling in that it points to the ambiguity and utter contingency of

moral choices and actions. So, for example, what *appears* immoral to one person may not

appear immoral to another. The attribution of sin to something scandalous, therefore, is

specific to the particular context in which the action occurs: for instance, as Aquinas

notes, "an idle word is a venial sin, when it is uttered uselessly; yet if it be uttered for a

reasonable cause, it is neither idle nor sinful" (534). In other words, scandal indicates that

the meaning of a particular gesture is neither determined by the actor's intentionality nor

by any essential moral signification. The social constructedness and moral ambiguity of

what qualifies as "sin" is clearly illustrated in cases of scandal, in which the "evil" of an

act resides not in the act itself but in the possible outcome, that is, in the spiritual ruin of

one or more individuals. As Aquinas is careful to explain, the factors mediating the

signifying act and the interpretations of the other are too numerous for the subject to

---

[55]Robert Blair, for instance, laments that scandals are not always properly labelled as such. In his 1659 preface to Durham's *Treatise Concerning Scandal* (1659), he ends a comment with a significant aside: "There is also (in Chapter Twelve), a clear discussing of that tickl[ish] question, 'What ought to be done by private persons when church officers spare such as are scandalous?' to wit, upon supposition that there is a real defect (in the truth whereof often there is a mistake)"(xv).

control. Yet all the contingencies encountered by the subject's immersion in a

community must be taken into account to avoid scandal. Thus the Scriptures direct one to

refrain from even the most innocuous activities that could provoke scandal. One should

not only scrutinize one's actions and be sensitive to the reactions of the other but also

recognize that such reactions are integral to one's moral security and public identity.

According to Aquinas, any action with the potential to provoke scandal "should always be

left undone out of that love for our neighbor which binds each one to be solicitous for his

neighbor's spiritual welfare; so that if he persist in doing it he acts against charity" (523).

John Calvin's 1550 treatise, translated as *Concerning Scandals*,[56] sheds more light

on the lack of subjective coherence denoted by "the conscience" in theological treatises.

This early modern construction of conscience is not linked to unique consciousness

emanating from an integrated subjective core, but rather serves as a figure for internalized

authority through which the subject can emulate divine order rather than worldly chaos.

Calvin, concerned with addressing the problems and persecution faced by the early

Reformed Church, sets out to remove the obstacles (scandals) that prevent people from

embracing "the teaching of the gospel, which is the one and only way to salvation," and

to exhort Protestants to keep to the "road" that "has been laid down for us by God,"

despite the proliferation of "obstacles of all kinds, whether they divert us from the right

---

[56]John Calvin, *Concerning Scandals* (1550), trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1978). All references are to this edition.

direction, or keep us back by being in the way, or provide the means for making us fall" (8). As Calvin establishes from the outset, the theological term "scandal" refers not only to the transgressive conduct of individuals and the various reactions of the scandalized but also extends to the gospel message itself, frequently denoted as the "scandal of the Cross," and more significantly to Christ as the embodiment of the gospel and the ultimate scandal described in 1 Peter 2:8: "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient." In this context, Calvin's use of the term scandal is similar to the *OED* definition of "something that hinders reception of the faith or obedience to the Divine law."[57] Calvin divides scandal into three classes: "intrinsic" scandals involving the Scriptures; "troubles of various kinds" arising from dissolute behaviour; and "extrinsic" scandals caused by slanderous calumnies against the Reformed Church. Regarding the first, Calvin immediately qualifies the existence of scriptural scandals by insisting that although Christ is *perceived* as a scandal which the "majority stumble over," it would be quite wrong to think that "the true cause of offense lies in himself" (4). On the contrary, it is "the perversity of men" that causes scandals; Christ is merely "dragged in as a pretext" for stumbling and the gospel "is yet the cause of enormous disturbances because the ungodly seize upon it as an opportunity for fomenting trouble" (9). Non-believers and lapsed believers "run away from the image of Christ as though it were some strange monster" (29). According to Calvin, Jesus causes some

---

[57]*Oxford English Dictionary*, "Scandal," Defn. 1b.

59

people to turn away from the light that exposes their sins. Those subjects who cling instead to the illusion of coherent goodness must avoid Christ, who becomes a permanent obstacle, a stumbling block lodged in their conscience. A confrontation with the gospel that results in belief regarding both the fallen nature of Man and the death of Christ to redeem humanity from its sins causes a dialectical reconstitution of the subject in relation to Christ's holy image. A splitting of the subject ensues through a sudden awareness of several differences: the subject's own sinful nature in opposition to Christ's perfection; a constitutive lack within the subject that can only be filled by the Holy Spirit; the permanent antagonism between the flesh and the spirit; the subject's former life as headed towards eternal condemnation and a rebirth into a new life with Christ. The subject who accepts the gospel in this confrontation becomes "other" to himself or herself. For some, this confrontation with Christ as a function of the Real constructed through Christian symbolism is too horrifying or monstrous to endure. Thus, one effect of the scandal of the gospel as a symbolic form of the Real is to declare the presence of otherness within the subject and the community.

Calvin further indicates how the doctrine of scandal demonstrates the instability of signification, for insofar as Christ signifies scandal to unbelievers—an inevitability, Calvin insists, arising from the "illwill or badness" in "human nature"—it is nevertheless "accidental to Christ" and not the "essence of his function" (9). Nevertheless, Christ's identity for believers is fully dependent on this misrecognition on the part of non-

60

believers; the other's lack of faith is constitutive of true belief. Calvin thus chastises

Christians who "want Christ free from every scandal" for "he can be no other Son of God

than the one made known in the Scriptures" (9). Indeed, far from troubling Christ's status

as the Son of God, scandal surrounding the gospel and resulting in the persecution of

professing Christians rather confirms it, by attesting to the truth of "what the prophets and

apostles have predicted" in the Scriptures (10). Scandal, based on false perceptions and

fallen human nature, is thus paradoxically constitutive of the true Christ, yet not part of

him: "For it must remain a fixed principle that if we want to avoid scandals, then we must

at the same time refuse Christ, who would not be the true Christ unless he were 'a rock of

offense'" (10-11).

Calvin's argument seems less contradictory and even prescient when we consider

the similarities between Christ's identity as a "stone of stumbling" and the Lacanian

account of the Real as a hard kernel that resists symbolization.[59] Lacking ontological

substance, the Real is only detectable through its structural effects, one of which is the

impossibility of ever achieving a stable identification between signifier and signified. In a

similar manner, the use of "scandal" to denote the status of a given situation remains

unstable. For scandal to take effect and have any sort of discursive longevity, it requires

---

[59]Although this comparison at first glance might seem unusual, the parallels between Judaeo-Christian theology and "secular" psychoanalysis are innumerable. See, for instance, Suzanne R. Kirschner, *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Indeed, Freud could be credited with making a science out of Western religion.

the response or resistance of the scandalized, just as a spectacle by definition requires an audience. Because it is dependent on intersubjective constitution, scandal is generated within the space between human interactions and for that reason remains contingent on the way it is represented and communicated.

Scandal is recognized through structural effects that take on a character and function strikingly similar to the Lacanian Real but are fully operational with the Symbolic realm. In Žižek's formulation of the real–symbolic–imaginary triad, the Real functions like a scandal. It is "the constitutive paradox whereby a system is able to establish its forms of internal coherence and unity only insofar as it cannot systematize its own principles of constitution."[59] Although the discourse of scandal situates itself within the symbolic realm as the Real—much like the discourse of psychoanalysis, whose revelation of the unconscious also embodies the secret-form[60]—it would be only reiterating scandal's own claims for itself to argue that scandal was actually the Real when the discourse of scandal is quite clearly a product of the symbolic realm. Žižek's later work attempts to account for the way that certain disturbing elements of culture

---

[59]This is Glyn Daly's very helpful paraphrase of Žižek's concept. See Daly, "Introduction: Risking the Impossible," in Slavoj Žižek and Glyn Daly, *Conversations with Žižek* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 8. Significantly, Daly's example for this kind of system is the law, which provides the basis for determining what is legal or illegal but cannot question whether *itself* is in fact legal or illegal; to pose such a question would be to assume a position outside the system, a position strictly unthinkable within the system itself.

[60]Deleuze and Guattari critique psychoanalysis for its need to produce secrets. See *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 49–137.

represent the unsymbolizable Real. From his revised schema, which replicates the triadic structure *within* each of the fundamental categories, emerges the concept of the "symbolic Real," which can now account for certain strange elements within signifying systems that point to either a void or excess of signification.[61]

The work of M. M. Bakhtin provides us with another, more straightforward way to think of the division within the symbolic order. Michael Holquist describes Bakhtin's thesis in *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique* as reformulating "the distinction between conscious and unconscious as a difference not between two different kinds of reality, for they are both variants of the same phenomenon: *both* are aspects of consciousness. ... the unconscious is a suppressed, relatively idiosyncratic ideological realm ... whereas the conscious is a public world whose ideologies may be shared openly with others. He calls Freud's *un*conscious the 'unofficial conscious,' as opposed to the ordinary 'official conscious.'"[62] Once we consider all elements of the symbolic order as forming social consciousness in its entirety, then scandal can be usefully denoted as part of the "unofficial conscious," located in a consciousness or on a symbolic plane divided from within itself rather than embattled from without.

"Scandal" names a social relationship denoted by the lack of a fixed essence—an

---

[61]Žižek, *On Belief* (London: Routledge, 2001), 83. For an example, Žižek suggests that "the Holy Ghost is the 'symbolic Real' of the community of believers."

[62]Michael Holquist, "The Politics of Representation," in *Allegory and Representation*, ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 177.

absence of determinate meaning. Only the discourse surrounding a particular act can

produce scandal, and such a symbolic dependency opens up the discourse to controversy.

Through undermining stable signification, scandal threatens to disturb the most

fundamental bases of the social order, particularly in the period of transition to modernity.

For this reason, scandal is associated with images and figures of the horrifying abject: the

abject troped as both a void of nothingness and a monstrous excess.[63] We commonly

observe the use of metaphors to understand social phenomena, and characterizations of

scandal are no less figurative. The recurrent figures in Calvin's work indicate some of the

features attributed to scandal:

> For there is to be no weakening in spirit, because danger threatens from
> those people [who stir up scandal]; indeed, I warn and testify that there are
> no serpents with venom so poisonous. In fact, for that reason we ought to
> be more vigilant and alert in keeping guard. However, I say that all who
> have not neglected to plant firm roots in Christ will be free from this
> exceedingly pestilential contagion. (63)

> Or will that be a reason for discounting pure religion, which was dragging
> forth that many-headed monster into the light of day? (58)

In the former instance, scandal is likened to a poison or pestilence, the awareness of

whose dire presence is usually imperceptible until it has wreaked havoc on those bodies it

has infected. In the latter instance, scandal is like a hydra, the mythical beast whose heads

multiply as soon as they are cut off, here a figure for the monstrous proliferation of

---

[63]For an illuminating discussion of the psychoanalytic concept, see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

scandal. Scandal seizes the imagination of individuals and grows spontaneously beyond

human ability to control. Both figures show how scandal, discernible only as a discourse,

remains unseen, although its effects are palpable as it insidiously spreads throughout the

body politic turning members of a formerly harmonious community against each other.

The typical reaction of a person or institution towards scandal is to protect itself against

such elements that threaten the established symbolic order and, by extension, its own

subjective coherence.

Occasions of scandal and the way they are represented in the symbolic realm can

thus be seen as giving historical shape to the operations of the Real, which in Žižek's

work is figured not dissimilarly as an absence or imperceptible gap in the symbolic

system and whose "return" can cause a traumatic disturbance of everyday reality. The

subject protects itself against arbitrary intrusions of the Real by reincorporating them as

"answers," such as signs from God, that support symbolic meanings and, therefore,

enable symbolization.[64] Thus Calvin is able to interpret the incidence of scandal arising

from the gospel as proof of Christ's power to discriminate and drive a wedge between

believers and non-believers, and more specifically the Reformers' efforts to pierce

through the veil of ceremonious authority and false divinity erected by the Roman

Catholic Church as a cover for its "whirlpool of ignorance" and "darkness of errors" (83).

---

[64]Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 1991), 3-47.

Calvin aims to reveal the taint of human worldliness corrupting the holy mandate of the

Church and thereby challenge the mystifying ideologies of the "Papacy." For Calvin,

Roman Catholic dogmas have the status of ideological fantasies, the purpose of which,

according to Žižek, is to conceal the fundamental antagonism between the Symbolic and

the Real through mediating the subject's desire and protecting against excessive

enjoyment (true joy, for Calvin, is only experienced through an unmediated relationship

with Christ).[65] For Žižek, understanding the unconscious operations of the Real—and the

ideological defenses erected to protect the subject from them—involves "an effort to

unearth, to render visible again, this constitutive violence whose 'repression' is

coextensive with the very existence of the [symbolic] Order."[66] The Real thus has no

positive essence but emerges as a form without content, a recurrent pattern taking on

discernible shape around an incoherent void. To properly historicize, for Žižek, does not

involve recording ever increasingly minute details (a task which merely supports the

naive belief that history can be represented in its totality) but rather entails the recognition

of the recurrence of specific cultural forms in Western modernity, particularly those that

---

[65]I should clarify that Protestantism is no less "ideological" than other dogmas just because at one historical moment it destabilized the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church. The discourse of scandal–although always constructed according to its internal logic as engaging in demystification–is not "essentially" radical or conservative (just as it is not determinately true or false) but can operate as either or both in any given context. Further discussion of the political implications of scandal can be found in the second half of this chapter.

[66]Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London: Verso, 1994), 205.

affect the subject: "Historicity proper involves a dialectical relationship to some unhistorical kernel that stays the same—not as an underlying Essence but as a rock that trips up every attempt to integrate it into the symbolic order."[67]

Žižek's choice of words—"rock that trips up"—to describe the Real is not accidental; his work frequently makes reference to Christian theology as a source for understanding the fundamental antagonisms that structure reality and occasionally erupt to disturb entrenched modes of symbolization.[68] Within the psychoanalytic framework established by Žižek, the ideology of sacrifice represented by Christ's crucifixion and the teachings of the early Church represent genuinely radical acts that effectively shift the coordinates of the symbolic order.[69] In a similar manner, Calvin implies that the renewed power and authority of Christ's intervention can be detected in the activities of the Reformation that make manifest the divisions, according to Calvin, necessitated by the gospel's presence in a fallen world: "Disturbances and quarrels are the immediate consequence. The ungodliness which many had concealed before is now brought to light" (13). Calvin has no sympathy for those Christians who, to avoid scandal, refuse to engage in the spiritual warfare born out of the preaching of the true gospel, arguing at the same

---

[67]Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, 199.

[68]See Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or Why the Christian Legacy is Worth Fighting For* (London: Verso, 2000).

[69]For a discussion of the Lacanian "act," see Žižek, *On Belief* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 113-127.

time that the appearance of harmony in the Roman Catholic Church is made possible only

through an ongoing ignorance or disavowal of the "filthy monstrosities as today swarm in

the brothels of the monks" (86). Calvin counters the argument that divisions undermine

the Church by asserting that such struggles reveal the power of God and strengthen the

Church: "the more the Church has been crushed beneath the cross, the more clearly has

the power of God shown itself in raising it up again" (40). "We see that while the Church

flourished with spiritual vigour in the midst of troubles, it has melted away when it has

enjoyed peace too much" (48). In this context, scandals, whether emergent from the true

teachings of the gospel or arising from malicious slanders and persecution, serve an

important purpose by undermining the symbolic efficiency of the totalizing system Calvin

attributes to the Roman Catholic Church.

There is a mutually illuminating relationship between Calvin's account of scandal

and his account of the Reformed Church, which are both portrayed as complex discursive

and ideological structures equipped to address serious doctrinal disputes. Calvin's attack

on the Roman Catholic Church, by contrast, depicts the institution and its leaders as

unaffected by scandal because they lack the convictions needed to be unsettled by it.

While the Reformed Church attempts to follow a straight path despite the obstacles laid

in its way by scandal, the Roman Catholic Church is deliberately wayward, thereby

obfuscating doctrines in a way that sediments its own institutional authority and that

enables its leaders to evade both conscience and judgment: "For in it consciences are

benumbed as though cast under the spell of venomous charms, and they escape by means of long and labyrinthine ways from a serious awareness of God. For that vast chaos of ceremonies is indeed 'a den of robbers' (Jer. 7:11; Matt. 21:13) because hypocrites, hiding behind their cover, are confident that they are at liberty to do anything they like with impunity" (Calvin 58). Without a mechanism for accountability that might upset their enjoyment, the priests lack all moral restraint. By contrast, the "stern warfare" (29) that embroils the Reformed Church keeps it from falling into self-satisfied complacency. Calvin suggests that just as Christ was long-suffering through many struggles, the Church as the perfect reflection of Christ will be so too: "it is particularly reasonable that in the form of the Church the living image of Christ should appear as in a mirror" (26).

The divisiveness in the social order during the Reformation applies equally well to Calvin's construction of subjectivity. The point of the gospel is not to smooth out but to reveal peoples' internal conflicts; it does so by "prick[ing] their consciences" (27). The gospel message, by leading to an awareness of one's sin, thus leads some to stumble. Some individuals respond to this "sense of shame" (11) by avoiding rather than submitting to God, and thereby avoiding the process that would involve an "othering" or scandalizing of the self:

> Of course, since the word of God is a "two-edged sword," and its functions
> are not only to lay bare and condemn obvious faults but also to penetrate to
> the secret depths of our hearts, to pierce through all the innermost parts of our
> being, and to distinguish between our intentions and thoughts (Heb. 4:12),
> and finally, to present the whole man as an offering to God – those men are

not willing to have their wounds touched. (Calvin 27)

The Biblical "two-edged sword" to which Calvin refers is explicitly "the word of God" that pierces "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow" (Hebrews 4:12). The figure of the double-edged sword (as opposed to a single-edged sword that might hack off a limb) draws attention to the penetration of the body and the fatality of a wound which, arising at the juncture of two asymmetrical incisions, cannot be sutured back together. Only the ongoing presence of the sword—the word of God—within the body can stop the wound from haemorrhaging. Separation from God means death. The fundamental division of the subject into incommensurable parts that cannot be held together except through the mediation of the "word" is strikingly similar to Lacan's model of divided subjectivity whereby the traumatic entry into language coincides with a splitting of the subject. Lacan's famous essay expounding the idea of the mirror stage describes the emergence of alienated subjectivity through the trope of a child confronting its own reflection in a mirror. It is worth quoting Lacan at length:

> We have only to understand the mirror-phase *as an identification*, in the full sense which analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation which takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytical theory, of the old term *imago*.
> This jubilant assumption of his mirror-image by the little man, at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nurseling dependency, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores

to it, in the universal, its function as subject.

This form would have to be called the *Ideal-I*, if we wanted to restore it to a familiar scheme, in the sense that it will also be the root-stock for secondary identifications, among which we place the functions of libidinal normalization. But the important point is that this form situates an instance of the *ego*, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will rejoin the development of the subject only asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as *I* his discordance with his own reality.

In order to mitigate this "primordial Discord," which sets the subject's idea of itself against the limitations imposed by embodiment, the subject's lived experience takes on the structure of a "drama" or fictional narrative which "manufactures for the subject, captive to the lure of spatial [visual] identification, the succession of phantasies from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality...and to the assumption, finally, of the armour of an alienating identity, which will stamp with the rigidity of its structure the whole of the subject's mental development."[70] It is via the mirror and its objectified image of the self—a trope for the socio-symbolic relationship with the other—that the illusory image of the coherent subject is constituted. Lacan's formulation might seem radical today as a theory of how ideology works to resolve fundamental conflicts and as a demystification of the Enlightenment mythology of a rational, coherent subject. But the trope of the mirror has a long history in Western philosophy and theology as a theory of the subject. Lacan indicates such an awareness with his use of the term "imago," which

---

[70]Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror-phase as Formative of the Function of I," trans. Jean Roussel, in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994), 94, 96.

71

alludes to the *Imago Dei*, the true image of God, the confrontation with which positions the Christian subject, made in God's image, as the ultimate Other, alienated from the world.

The problem of rightly perceiving and encountering God's image in the Christian imaginary articulates the fundamental epistemological quandary engendered by all forms of representation. The *Imago* is the transcendent ideal that exposes the lack in the subject, especially the subject's capacity to know and understand the divine, to a degree that is unbearable. Within the Christian framework, humanity in its fallen state separated from God cannot look directly upon his divinity. Instead, knowledge of God must be mediated and can only be partial: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 *Corinthians* 13:12). Christ, as the union of word and flesh, is the perfect subject; he is no longer a mere representation of God but God-made-Man, the perfect union of the symbolic and material realms that requires no mediation—veils are rent and mirrors are shattered. The incarnation is the overcoming of the fundamental division between the signifier and the signified; the perfect union abolishes both the law and the need for laws, at least in theory. The moral codes negotiated and established through the discourse of scandal suggest a return of the law under a different guise, as well as the persistence of fundamental divisions with the socio-symbolic order. For instance, the recurrence of idolatry suggests the same, idolatry being the name ascribed to humanity's relentless

attempts throughout history to construct images of God in defiance of this limiting

injunction against knowledge and sight. The idol as material representation is

misperceived by the subject to embody God's power; in reality, the idol conceals a void

or absence of divinity. Idols are mere appearance; they are mere dissimulation in the

Aquinian sense as "outward signs of deeds or things" which signify simply what "is not"

(101).[71] A simulation refers to a copy that has an original; but dissimulation refers to

nothing positive, only an absence of something that never existed. The dissimulator and

the idol only pretend to outward representation of an inward reality when in fact they both

conceal a void into which the viewing subject projects "holiness" as the object of desire.

The scandal of idolatry and dissimulation—indeed of all representation—is that there is

no positive essence that can corroborate appearance. Scandal exposes the limitations

imposed on all ways of knowing even as it grants authority to the essence/appearance

dialectic as as the only means through which one can gain knowledge about another

person or object. At the same time that visuality acquires a heightened significance, it is

undercut by the desire for something more—an internal presence, a truth, however

incomplete the subject's knowledge of it might be. The best humans can do is construct

allegories—curious representations that obliquely point to some fundamental truth. Paul

De Man refers to allegory as a "lopsided, referentially indirect mode" that purports to

---

[71] Thomas Aquinas, "Of Dissimulation and Hypocrisy," Part II, Second Part, Question 111,Vol. 12 of *The "Summa Theologica" of Thomas Aquinas*, 99–108.

reveal "the furthest reaching truths about ourselves and the world."[72] Allegory is a mode

of representation that embodies a disjunctive reality, which, when decoded properly,

offers partial knowledge of the truth. In Christian contexts, it offers the subject a

conscious fantasy that anticipates imperfectly the mortal's final reunion with God.

Against the fantasy of an essential, integrated subjectivity evoked by the figure of

the perfect mirror-image—a fantasy that nevertheless has real consequences for the

subject—Žižek explores "the truly traumatic core of the modern subject."[73] Throughout

his work, Žižek alludes to the "misrecognition" characterizing the Lacanian mirror-phase

as he elaborates upon the subject's formative encounter with a symbolic order that fails to

colonize the undirected drives of the body; consequently, according to Žižek, the subject

emerges only in conjunction with an inexpressible remainder of the Real. The structuring

of the unconscious by the Symbolic (or "big Other") produces the subject's fundamental

alienation or constitutive lack, which in turn is concealed by fantasies that attempt to

restore to the subject what it has lost. In other words, identification with signs provided

by the symbolic order allows individuals to live out their subject-positions while masking

the original void, which is paradoxically the positive condition of the subject's existence.

The subject derives further fantasmatic support for the illusion of its own coherence from

---

[72]Paul de Man, "Pascal's Allegory of Representation," in *Allegory and Representation*, ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 2.

[73]Slavoj Žižek, "Preface: Burning the Bridges," in *The Žižek Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), ix.

the pursuit of an imaginary or "sublime" object (the Lacanian *objet a*)—embodied by the idol or earthly substitute—that fills out the empty place at the core of the subject and the symbolic order. As a fantasy that "gives body" to the hole of unsymbolizable Real—like Christ, the word of God made flesh, the two-edged sword that gives life by lodging itself within a wound of its own making—the *objet a* arises at the point of intersection between the subject and the symbolic order. When the place occupied by the *objet a* is literally embodied, the subject becomes trapped in a closed circuit of desire; it is both the object that the subject desires in order to conceal its constitutive lack (the sword) and the subject's objectified lack (the wound)—the cause of the subject's desire. The *objet a* inscribed in the discourse of scandal is the secret truth itself. Scandal positions the subject in a fantasy relation towards knowledge such that truth becomes the elusive goal of the secret that always remains only partially disclosed. The fantasy remains powerful not because the subject is enthralled to a delusion but because the subject's reality—constituted in part by affect and desire—always exceeds that which can be validated through direct perception or captured through processes of symbolization. At the same time, it allows for mechanisms of perception and symbolization to function efficiently.

Although a doctrine of scandal is incorporated into Christian theology, the challenges posed by scandal to both the determination of truth and the stability of meaning make scandal particularly adaptable to the later philosophical skepticism

developed by Bacon and others in the seventeenth century. The internal structure of

scandal operates according to this dialectical tension or antagonism between, on the one

hand, an original act that threatens to unsettle or alter the ideological and material

conditions of a given society—thus provoking various socio-symbolic forms of

containment—and, on the other, the perceptions and moral judgments of the broader

community that reconstitute the act under scrutiny in order to justify the occasion for

scandal. One effect of scandal's retelling of a past event is that it articulates a need and

desire for new, socially intelligible forms of representation when a subject's self-

representation for others has failed or has been shown to be inadequate. Consequently,

scandal initiates a process of attempting to suture a rift in the symbolic order that first

must symbolize a point of destabilization in the dominant cultural ideology and, by

extension, a gap in the symbolic order itself, signifying literally and figuratively a

corruption in the efficiency of the symbolic code—some "unthinkable" event whose site

and occurrence can only be located after the fact through its reconstruction as a particular

sign, which in this case is the scandalous act itself. This signifying process on the

cultural level involves not so much a revelation of otherness as a *making of the other*

through the resignification and estrangement of an act and actor that in another context or

historical period might not signify at all or appear benign. For this reason, conventionally

"criminal" or unambiguously immoral acts do not typically generate scandals. Rather,

scandal is generated by actions that fall outside the normative codes of the community

and cannot be accounted for within the community at large; therefore, the actor therefore must be made to account for his or her decisions. Until discourse provides the means for accountability, the scandalous act not only remains outside the official law, but the law for which this act would be relevant does not exist as such. In other words, the event of scandal does not merely represent a challenge to pre-existing social norms but also demands discursive and cultural innovation in response to its challenge, thereby contributing to the formation in any given era of that which constitutes "the social" itself.

Prior to the scandal, social rules and norms may be unspoken or undefined; they emerge with the express purpose of dealing with what has impacted the public consciousness and has been deemed socially unacceptable. The public engagement with scandal is thus one of many processes that help a community to define its moral values and to establish its identity. To be more specific, scandal arises because a community is concerned with one of its own members who at least initially resides within its boundaries and whose actions, by unsettling established norms, pose a challenge to the coherence of the community's self-image. But in the process of attempting to suture a rift in its integrity, the community and by extension the socio-symbolic order must first allow for the positive presence of such a rift that could only be said to exist in a negative, unrepresented form prior to the scandal. One should view this dialectic or antagonism (to which scandal, in its various historical manifestations, gives shape and content) neither as outside or alien to the system nor as a later effect of it but as fundamentally constitutive

of the system itself. In the terms used above, the scandalous actor is not a threatening force external to the community but a product of the community itself, particularly of the community's simultaneous failure and attempt to accommodate and reintegrate difference—the other within. The socio-symbolic order does not erect defenses against an external obstacle; it is divided from within, and this division is precisely what enables it to function smoothly and secure meaning.

So while scandal's internal logic argues that it discovers a real truth that contradicts appearances and that appearances are deceiving, it is rather the case that scandal discursively constitutes its own truth and self-justification based on a reconstruction of reality. (The potential for this reconstruction to "falsify" reality leads to the recurrent blurring of the distinction between the terms "scandal" and "slander" in cultural usage.) The indeterminacy of the version of the truth presented by scandal stories also facilitates the confusion between fact and fiction, both within the discourse itself and within larger cultural spheres. Although scandalous discourse establishes a claim upon truth according to its own internal logic of *secrecy*—as a disclosure of the authentic, underlying reality that has been hitherto hidden from public view—scandal is rather responsible for producing the meaning and significance of the act towards which it is simply supposed to be a response. Due to this performative dimension of the discourse, what type of act might qualify as scandalous cannot be fixed or determined but remains fully contingent on the social contexts in which the act occurs and on how such an act and

the rules it has broken are represented within cultural discourse as a "scandal." Scandal, as a dialogic discourse, simultaneously constructs and mediates the relationships between the collective and the individual, moral beliefs and material practices, the present and the past, the establishment of norms and the dismantling of norms.

Viewed in this way, scandal can be defined in terms of a recurrent form or pattern, rather than any particular content. Fundamentally, scandal's structure manifests the dialectic of appearance and essence—and the demythologizing impulse engendered by the dialectic—which, Paul Ricoeur suggests, forms the basis of the "hermeneutic of suspicion" that is at once the condition of possibility for and the defining characteristic of modernity.[74] Popular culture—particularly the literature of satire and scandal—in early modern England displays the struggles and obsessions of a modernity that simultaneously privileges and invalidates the authority of the subject, signification, and knowledge, while contesting and reconfiguring the mutually constitutive relationships between self and other, essence and appearance, nature and culture, private and public, material reality and symbolic production. As such, early modern culture is a particularly vibrant record of the epistemological vacillations, as well as the destabilization of guaranteed meanings and social positions, incurred by symbolic and social mediation.

As with other epistemological discourses, scandal often figures the acquisition of

---

[74]Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 32.

knowledge in terms of visual perspective—of perceiving and penetrating things as they truly are, despite the many unwanted shadows that might be cast on the object of inquiry by the subject's "own nature." Scandal, as a form of representation that mediates the subject's way of seeing, is like Bacon's distorted mirror; for as scandal represents a reality, that reality encompasses both the image and the subject's beliefs and desires. Although Bacon hoped that direct, experiential knowledge could eventually supplant medieval superstitions, the persistence of irony in modern consciousness and its particular embodiment in scandal's structure of secrecy continue to render knowledge, in terms of a transparent visual or linguistic economy, uncertain. Scandal disputes and deconstructs the basis of absolute and authoritative knowledge and, in so doing, produces the self-conscious subject characteristic of modernity.

II. *The politics of scandal in the civil war period*

> The Fruits of Unity *(next unto the well Pleasing of God, which is All in All) are two; The One, towards those, that are* without the Church; *the other towards those,* that are within. *For the Former; It is certaine, that Heresies, and Schismes, are of all others, the greatest Scandals; yea, more then Corruption of Manners. For as in the Naturall Body, a Wound or Solution of Continuity, is worse then a Corrupt Humor; So in the Spirituall. So that nothing, doth so much keepe Men out of the Church, and drive Men out of the Church, as Breach of* Unity.[75]

---

[75]Francis Bacon, "Of Unity in Religion" (1612), in *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 12.

The philosophical and political implications of scandal as a discourse are both broad and complex, not least of all because scandal explores the mutually constitutive relationship between material and symbolic realities through questioning the credibility of representation as well as the subjective and social production of meaning. Scandal constitutes a way of knowing and of interpreting reality that contains in its very structure a constitutive ambiguity, which can effectively mutate in order to negotiate and articulate the specific concerns of a culture as well as the multiple, contradictory positions regarding what qualifies at any moment in history, within any given group, as "truth" and "justice." In the seventeenth century, according to historian Howard Nenner, religion and law were the two "dominant idioms" for discussing politics.[76] In the discourse of scandal, religion and law overlap. Within religious communities, the doctrine of scandal enabled the negotiation of what actions could be determined as lawful or unlawful for proper Christian conduct. The determination and resolution of scandal by officers of the Church was decided in conjunction with traditions and attitudes that were seen as safeguarding the continuity of the community. In this sense, the doctrine of scandal suggests forms and practices remarkably similar to English common law. Gordon J. Schochet observes, common law "would become, by mid seventeenth century, the primary vocabulary of parliamentary opposition to the alleged excesses of Charles I." The common law established as fundamental and timeless those "historic English 'liberties', with land law

---

[76]Nenner, 191.

and tenures, and [...] the proper possessions and entitlements of Englishmen."[77] The

governing structure, as a result, could be seen to exist primarily as a means of protecting

the ancient rights and property of Englishmen rather than as an end in itself. But the civil

wars were also quite clearly about religion, preceded as they were by Charles I's efforts to

unify the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland under the head of the Church

of England. To standardize worship, in 1638, Charles I declared the mandatory use of the

Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* and liturgy for all Protestant denominations, which led

to Scottish resistance against the threat of "popery" associated with Laudianism and

Scotland's subsequent support of the parliamentary army against the king.[78] According to

Howard Nenner, opponents of Charles I produced a new conception of the monarchy as a

representative of the people rather than God's representative on Earth. The origins of both

the old and new conceptions could be traced through a notion of "trust."

> The concept of monarchical power being held in trust had originally been
> regarded as offering no threat to the exercise of monarchical sovereignty.
> Kings by divine right received their power from God and were accountable
> to him for any abuse of that power. But the accountability was to God
> alone. In 1649, the Commons, sitting in judgement of Charles I, redefined
> the parties to the trust and thereby appropriated the trust construction to a
> radically different political purpose. The king was still the trustee, the
> people were still the beneficiaries, but instead of God being the grantor of
> the trust, the trust was now understood to have originated with the people
> themselves. In the vocabulary of the law, which was increasingly the coin

---

[77]Gordon J. Schochet, "Why Should History Matter?" in Pocock, ed., *Varieties of British Political Thought*, 325.

[78]See Robin Clifton, "The Fear of Popery," in *The Origins of the English Civil War*, ed. Conrad Russell (London: Macmillan, 1973), 144–167.

of political discourse, the people were the 'settlors' of a revocable trust.

A significant result of this reconfiguration, Nenner observes, was that treason, typically committed *against* the sovereign could be "inverted" to apply to the king himself, who was then seen as having committed treason against the people.[79] Such an inversion divested the monarchy of its divine right at the same time as it reinscribed sovereign power as a dualistic (people/sovereign) rather than a triadic (God/sovereign/people) phenomenon. The monarch was no longer God's representative within a sacral, extraterrestrial universe but the people's demystified representative on earth.

The iconoclasm of kingship extended as well to the Church, when Parliament in 1641 condemned Laudian "Innovations" and passed the first of several orders that purged the churches of idolatrous and superstitious monuments: "all Crucifixes, Scandalous Pictures of any One or more Persons of the Trinity, and all Images of the Virgin *Mary*, shall be taken away and abolished."[80] Seventeenth-century lawmakers made frequent use of the term "scandalous," which often appears alongside "seditious" and "treasonable," to categorize dangerous activities requiring parliamentary attention and discipline. In addition to the *scandalum magnatum* law that allowed peers to charge commoners with

---

[79]Nenner, 197, 196.

[80]"House of Commons Journal Volume 2: 01 September 1641," *Journal of the House of Commons*: Volume 2: 1640-1643 (1802), 278-80. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=6262. Date accessed: 03 March 2006. For a history of these practices, see Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War* (Rochester: Boydell, 2003).

libel, several other bills, laws, and ordinances throughout the seventeenth century refer to

scandalous clergymen and schoolmasters, and printers and authors of scandalous

pamphlets and books; in fact, a veritable host of "notorious and scandalous Offenders"

(many of whom were Anglican clergymen) was declaimed in parliamentary proceedings,

especially during the period from 1641–1649 when Parliament was engaged in a power

struggle with Charles I and then tried to consolidate and maintain its power in the absence

of a monarch.[81] Scandal was understood as a very serious offense in this period, with

different implications than the slanders and libels described as "scandalous" at the end of

the century. Indeed, "scandalous" was applied broadly to persons who represented an

entire ideology or sect that was deemed antagonistic and threatening to the interests of the

governing authority, especially if that authority was already tenuous. It is another

paradoxical element of scandal's history that such a discourse, strongly derided for

causing factious behaviour and schisms, served as a useful bridge between religious belief

and the law, and provided a common language for communicating between the different

factions.

In the preface to *Religio Laici*, John Dryden insists that "Reformation of Church

and State has always been the ground of our Divisions in *England*,"[82] and the discourse of

---

[81]"House of Commons Journal Volume 4: 3 June 1646," *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 4: 1644–1646* (1802), 561–63. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=23709. Date accessed: 03 March 2006.

[82]Dryden, "Preface," in *Religio Laici* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1682), cited here from *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 107–108.

scandal is an illuminating embodiment of this divisiveness, which continues to define

Restoration England despite its promise of peace after the civil wars. Although I

suggested above that scandal shares similarities with the ideological practice of common

law, there is one crucial difference between the two: common law moves in one direction

only, legitimating exigent actions according to "will of the people," and thus

presupposing historical unity as the basis for the law; scandal moves in two directions,

dialectically, suggesting that, like common law, legitimation is possible on the grounds of

a really existing communal identification, but, for this very reason, actions are lawful

because they are exigent, *because they make communal identification possible*. In this

sense, scandal values community but does not assume its *a priori* existence; rather,

human life is a constant process of struggling to produce community with no guarantees

of success except through the constant, vigilant application of repressive force, and

through such a process, the "lawful" and the "unlawful" come to be defined as such.[83] For

this reason, scandal exists in an ambivalent relationship with the liberal mythology of the

social contract, individual rights, and a rational "public sphere."[84] Scandal exposes, on the

one hand, the utter contingency and constructedness of these entities as *ideas*, let alone

social realities. This lack of fixity becomes too dangerous to admit for those desiring a

---

[83]On the notion of repression as a function of peace and civil society, see Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended."*

[84]Jürgen Habermas develops the idea of a rationalized eighteenth-century public sphere in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

stable, coherent social order, a desire that would exert a strong influence on the late

eighteenth century's dominant perceptions of itself and would persist, until recently, as a

relatively symptomatic feature of later reconstructions of the period. On the other

hand—and more intriguing—is scandal's implication that the social contract only comes

into effect as such through the process of its having been broken.

Scandal can thus be seen to reinstate the social order and the personal targets of its

criticism in a way that henceforth *enables* them to occupy the representative function in

which they failed so miserably before. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, it is only

when a society is characterized by a totalizing refusal to admit the contingency and

arbitrariness of sovereign authority that such authority remains with any legitimate basis.

Authority can be fully granted, entrusted, and respected in a person or governing

institution only once it has been subject to scrutiny and corruption has been sufficiently

rooted out. In other words, the engagement with scandal can, in fact, secure public faith

because, without such a process, the disquieting potential for dissimulation and secrecy

produces a more fundamental skepticism and uncertainty that can only be dispelled

through the revelatory process. Whereas there was no good reason *not* to suspect the

presence of corruption beforehand, scandal probes for and exposes the secret truth; only

now can the person be trusted, disguise removed to show the sordid reality, the existence

of which a self-congratulating public suspected in the first place. By submitting to such

chastening, the scandalous person becomes a full member of the community, fully

authorized to represent the community's interests. Although this effect, the legitimization of authority, is one possible outcome of scandal, it should neither be taken as the only outcome nor would it necessarily nullify the way the scandal in the process articulates the disruptive forces that might otherwise never make it into official consciousness. Nevertheless, the constitutive ambiguity of scandal helps to explain why the scandal of kingship, the proliferation of scandals during the civil war period, and the tremendous cultural efforts to construct unity and uniformity through the expulsion of scandalous elements all paved the way for Charles II's assumption of the throne in 1660.

The tracts and pamphlets concerning or related to scandal that appeared before and during the civil wars is a body of texts that is both rich in doctrinal content and rife with political insinuation and discord.[85] It is clear that scandal is used to generate and control internal disputes within the author's church, at the same time as each addresses the church's role in the political struggle between parliamentary and monarchical government, the outcome of which remained indeterminate for most of the seventeenth century. The literature is engaged in an effort to conceive new notions of trust and representation, and how the intermingled church-state system could best work to accomplish the goals of justice and peace, although quite admittedly at a cost of silencing some voices. The two following sources fall into Foucault's category of "subjugated

---

[85]For example, Henry Hammond, *Of Scandall* (Oxford: Henry Hall, 1644), discussed below, and Samuel Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication ... To which is added, A Brief Tractate of Scandal* (London: John Field, 1646).

knowledges," which he defines as "historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations." As with other excavated knowledges, scandal's "historical contents ... allow us to see the dividing lines in the confrontations and struggles that functional arrangements or systematic organizations are designed to mask."[86]

In the midst of Charles I's first war with Parliament, a tract appeared entitled *On Scandall* in which Henry Hammond, a prominent Anglican divine and the king's Chaplain, cautions against scandal. Hammond's definition of scandal emphasizes from the outset one particular meaning of scandal as "A Trapp, a Gin, or Snare to catch anything," for which he cited Romans 11:9.[87] The context surrounding the verse sheds light on Hammond's main purpose in writing the tract: to address the political struggle in England. Since the war began in 1642, the Puritan Parliament had been supporting its cause by using biblical rhetoric to herald England as the newly chosen people of God, the new Israel.[88] Hammond turns this rhetoric back against the Parliament when he refers to God's rejection of all but seven thousand Israelites after "they have killed [God's] prophets, and digged down [God's] altars," choosing instead to worship "the image of

---

[86]Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended"*, 7.

[87]Henry Hammond, *Of Scandall* (Oxford: Henry Hall, 1644), 1. All subsequent textual references will be to this edition.

[88]"The Early Seventeenth Century: Civil Wars of Ideas," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Online* (W.W. Norton, 2003–2006): <http://www.wwnorton.com/nto/17century/topic_3/welcome.htm>.

Ba'al" (Rom. 11: 3–4). Consequently, God has not prevented the majority from being

blinded to the truth, pronouncing "Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see"

(Rom. 11:10). Hammond makes a further allusion to England's contemporary situation

when he also defines scandal as an "Obstacle or Hindrance, such as a sharpstake," which

was used in fields during war (1). For Hammond, scandal is no longer an arbitrary

determination of good and bad outward behaviours but "a sinne ensnaring or occasioning

ruine" (3). He uses scandal to indict those who would embroil England in a violent civil

war. Scandal, he suggests, also becomes a source of temptation to turn away from God

when enemies seek to "lay a snare before the Children of Israel, to intice them by their

Daughters to Idolatry, and by Idolatry to intrap and destroy them" (6). In such instances,

the enemy tries to divide and conquer Israel through attacking its belief system. The clash

of two civilizations—God's people and the idolaters—produces further

misunderstandings when an act such as "casting stones at an Idol of Mercury" is intended

by the stone-thrower as a gesture of "contempt" for the idol, but the thrower's ignorance

of the idolaters' practices means that he is "charged with worship, as that is how the

Heathens worship" (13). Hammond's repeated allusions to idolatry resonate strongly with

the religious iconography associated with the ideology of sacred kingship that the

Puritans set out to destroy on the grounds that true worship was perverted by the

mediation of images and corporeal resemblances. Appropriating this language of

iconoclasm, Hammond suggests that the Puritans have turned away from the holy image

of God's anointed king and erected instead the idols of their seditious beliefs. The

problem of idolatry occurs when an image or object intended to enhance worship through

the veneration of a sign of invisible power is instead take to be the embodiment of the

power itself. The term "false idol" is therefore redundant, since all idols are produced

through the false perception of the worshipper. Moreover, the problem of

referentiality—the relationship between the signifier and the signified—leads to the

imbrication of idolatry and the doctrine of scandal, since it is likewise possible that an

observer of the practice might mistake veneration of an image as worship, and project

false motives onto the participant based on the public display of the religious rite that can

be attributed with the diametrically opposed meanings of desecration and veneration.[89]

The scandalized interpret the situation as through Bacon's distorted mirror, effectively

seeing what they want to see. (In the same vein, Dryden later argues that Puritans transfer

the infallibilty of the scriptures to their own interpretations, while pretending *not to*

interpret but merely to assert the inherent, singular, and transparent meaning once and for

all.) Hammond's argument that iconoclasm causes some to sin inadvertently when their

intentions are misread by others affirms the principle throughout the treatise that it is

better to leave idols—if idols they are indeed—and idolaters alone than to attack them. It

is better to refrain from actions against others that might produce divisions within one's

---

[89]For a brief account of the "principle of reference" implied by idolatry, see John Sandys-Wunsch, "Graven Image," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, ed. David L. Jeffrey (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 320–321.

own community. To ward against the uncertainty of signification, Hammond introduces

an idea of the conscience, which did not figure significantly in the Aquinian doctrine of

scandal but would come to be very important to the way scandal was rethought in the

seventeenth century.

The problem of idolatry leads Hammond to ascribe a new importance to the role

of conscience in political affairs, as the only basis for distinguishing true faith from

idolatrous worship. Unlike human beings, God knows the conscience of each person, and

"accepts the will [to sin] for the deed" (13). It is enough to harbour seditious desires; one

need not act upon them. Paradoxically, Hammond's individualizing gesture that

distinguishes each Christian in his or her relationship to God enables him to overlook

sectarian differences in favour of a single community of Christian believers united under

one figurehead, the king. Hammond wants to sway those individuals who are caught up in

the war but whose consciences are giving them trouble. Hammond argues that what

matters in the subject's actions is not what others think but that the actions may

themselves constitute a sin against the subject's own conscience. This raises two

interesting features of the "conscience": first, it cannot be self-identical with the "man"

himself, since a man can choose to act contrary to his own conscience; second, the

conscience is not infallible since an act that should be "indifferent" could be mistaken as

sinful, or a sinful action could be thought "indifferent." The subject that emerges from

this picture is positioned in antagonistic relation with itself. Hammond's work thus

91

anticipates the emergence of the modern subject as the preeminent source of moral

authority. Moreover, scandal becomes a justification for placing limits upon the

individual's "Christian Liberty"[90] and a call for circumspection in the realm of politics,

where divisions and uncertainties abound. On a more general level, Hammond's work

shows one way in which the discourse of scandal provided a means of moral intervention

for theologians to address political affairs and make connections between biblical and

doctrinal knowledge and more localized, contemporary events in order to prescribe

behaviours that were more conducive to communal living.

Near the end of the civil war, the issue of scandal was raised again, this time by

Scottish Presbyterian minister, James Durham, whose posthumous *A Dying Man's

Testament to the Church of Scotland, or, A Treatise Concerning Scandal* exhorts

disaffected Covenanters against producing divisions within the Church because of the

Scottish Parliament's agreement to support Charles II's restoration to the throne. Durham

urges reconciliation through the avoidance of scandalous divisions. Durham first asserts

that "every publick or known irregular action is offensive, because it is of ill example to

others, or otherwise may have influence on them to provoke to some sin" (6). When a

deed has drawn the attention of others and has potential to be construed as scandalous,

then it becomes a stumbling block to the community. But in cases when an action is not

publicly known, Durham argues that it is more in keeping with Christ's rule to love one

---

[90]Hammond, 13.

another if one responds with a private rather than public admonishment. Such a gesture

quiets a matter before it reaches the proportions of a scandal; otherwise "it were to waken

a scandal, and not to remove one."[91] The community stirred into a frenzy by scandal is

propelled by the event itself, because of its "notoriety" (58), rather than the more noble

intent of dealing with the original scandalous deed. Although advocating discretion with

respect to public scandals, Durham nevertheless suggests that "some scandals are of such

grosse nature and publicknesse in the fact, that they cannot be passed without some

publick rebuke, at least, even though the person should seem satisfyingly to resent his

deed, because in this, respect is to be had to the edification of others, and not of the

person only" (60). Scandals—as public events—are justified when the scandalous act "is

of its own nature grosse and infectious, like a little leaven ready to leaven the whole

lump" (58). Durham traces a fine line between the suppression of dissent for the sake of

unity and a defense of "diversity of judgment" against the censures of authority. He can

do so by distinguishing matters indifferent from matters "Fundamental," which would

entail either committing sin or countenancing sin in others. Only in the case of the latter

should individuals be allowed to "vehemently press their own opinion" as being

consistent with keeping the community of the church unified and intact.[92] In all other

---

[91] James Durham, *A Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland, or, A Treatise Concerning Scandal* (London: Company of Stationers, 1659), 58. My citations refer to this edition.

[92] Durham cited in David Lachman, "Introduction," in James Durham, *A Treatise Concerning Scandal*, ed. Christopher Coldwell (Dallas: Naphtali Press, 1990), x.

instances, Durham requires mutual forgiveness based on the principle that diversity need not entail division: the side in the position of greatest authority or tenderness of conscience should, like Christ, display the greatest deference to the other's opinion. In Durham's work, it becomes clear that scandal can be located in different sources by different people. Its constitutive effect is the production rather than resolution of antagonism, as divisions produce scandals, and scandals breed and nurture divisions. Ultimately, Durham acknowledges the impossibility of establishing absolute, fixed rules regarding how one should respond when confronted with a *potential* scandal but leaves the determination of how to proceed if an occasion should arise to the discretion of the church administration, which is exhorted to exercise "prudence and consciousnesse" in dealing with the situation (62). Durham's rallying call for unity over division would prove futile when the Scottish Presbyterian Church is aggressively suppressed by the English parliament in 1660.

The cases of Hammond and Durham should indicate sufficiently how scandal could be construed to serve any side within a debate. With scandal, what matters is, *who is speaking*? Each side in a debate that causes divisions can level the accusation of scandal at the other. Even if all parties agree that the production of scandal as the articulation of difference can damage the community's uniformity, the repression of differences can produce just as dangerous consequences. The doctrine of scandal provides some guidelines and rules for how to proceed when differences become too great and

complex for a simple solution to suffice. Consequently, it does not matter much whose

actions or omissions first initiated the scandal because moral responsibility for producing

scandal and divisiveness is just as frequently attributed to those who take offense

(perhaps where none is warranted) than to the perpetrator of what is retroactively

constructed as a socially benign act. It is a common reaction when scandal involves a

dispute between two communities for one community to defend itself against the

propagators of scandal by accusing them of their own hypocrisy in having actually

produced rather than defended against the possibility of social antagonism. Such a gesture

acknowledges scandal as a socially constituted phenomenon at the same time as it turns

the discourse of scandal back upon the original "scandalmongers," beginning a potentially

infinite cycle in which the opponents of the scandalized construct their

"scandalmongering" enemies as the scandalizers (the "true" source of scandal) but, in

doing so, leave themselves open to the same charge. The discursive and practical

complexity of scandal poses a problem for historiography just as it posed a problem for

Hammond and Durham. Against today's view of scandal as trivial or false, seventeenth-

century thinkers recognized that scandals would only arise when two or more sides of a

dispute had some claim to justice. For instance, Hammond's resolution to conflict is to

reduce social divisions and disputes over kingly authority to matters of concern only for

the individual's conscience that need not embroil the entire nation in a bloody war. This

same argument will be reasserted by non-conformists against sovereign power at the

Restoration of Charles II and who will then be accused of trying to destroy national unity

and peace. Hammond and Durham occupy liminal spaces, as both speak for the

established churches in England and Scotland at the very moment when their authority is

on the brink of being utterly subverted. Are they quelling scandal among rebels for the

sake of the establishment, or are they charging the usurpers of power with causing

scandal? The dividing line between oppressor and oppressed becomes entirely blurred,

and this blurring is one of the constitutive functions of scandal itself.

The theological works discussed above comprise some of the "buried scholarly

knowledge" that Foucault describes as "subjugated."[93] One can readily understand how in

the process of writing official or "institutional" history, one could feel compelled to

overlook scandal's messy political and philosophical implications. Yet another paradox

of scandal is that its suppression confers onto the discourse the very attribute of being

"scandalous"; that is, without an opposing force to contest scandal's authority or to make

an act appear "irregular," to repeat Durham's words, it cannot assume the dialectical form

(the embodiment of division and secrecy) that is responsible for producing its

hermeneutic power. Potentially scandalous actions that evoke no antagonistic reaction

merely fall into oblivion without ever transforming into a scandal of the kind that can

only be constituted in and by public outrage and reaction. This means that scandal

suppressed by institutional knowledges only lies dormant for a time, waiting to be

---

[93]Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* 8.

unearthed, waiting to represent a different, "distorted" reflection of history than that which has been institutionalized so far.

Unfortunately, the greater the tendency for any institution to lean towards authoritarianism, the easier it is to eradicate even the future potential for scandal. Beyond the tracts on scandal written by prominent theologians, many more pamphlets are not extant that must have been produced, banned, lost, and burnt during the turmoil of the civil wars. These documents comprise another kind of subjugated knowledge, made up of "a knowledge that is local, regional, or differential, incapable of unanimity. ... knowledges that were disqualified by the hierarchy of erudition and sciences."[94] These knowledges—existing in the realm of the social or "what people know"—lack even the cultural capital of the treatises discussed above, which were suppressed but not eradicated. Only speculation about this utterly disqualified kind of scandal is possible; but one can presume that the institutional fervour and efficiency with which such knowledge proceeded to be destroyed implies the scandalous immediacy of its concerns. With respect to the civil war, once parliament had wrested control from the Charles I, the epithet of scandal was applied to any oppositional writings or utterances—to any "diverse scandalous and dangerous Words spoken ... against the State." For instance, parliamentary records for the year 1741 tell a story in which a Mr. Chamberlyne appeared before the Commons to report a conversation he had with a schoolmaster from Highgate

---

[94]Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* 8.

named Carter in which the latter argued that the recent actions of parliament had been

designed "to maintain the Privilege of Parliament [...] against the King and State." One

shudders at the parliament's resolution that Carter should be "forthwith sent for, as a

Delinquent, by the Serjeant at Arms."[95] As this incident and many others through the

records suggest, the power of the state meant that certain knowledges would not only be

"buried" or removed from circulation but also utterly disqualified from the categories of

truth and knowledge altogether. Foucault calls these knowledges "what people know at a

local level," excluded from history through the "silence, or rather the caution with which

unitary theories avoid the genealogy of knowledges." For this very reason, Foucault views

the genealogical project as one that seeks to "unearth more and more genealogical

fragments, like so many traps, questions, challenges" to dominant narratives.[96] The

bringing to light of repressed knowledges becomes a scandal or trap for all those who try

to unify and institutionalize one version of history, one dominant narrative of the history

of ideas. With the discourse of scandal, Foucault's thesis of the repressed knowledges

becomes relevant for those knowledges deemed "scandalous" by the dominant

institutions that authorized and controlled the knowledge of any given period—anti-

monarchical, anti-clerical, or anti-parliamentary discourse, for instance. What is more

---

[95]"House of Commons Journal Volume 2: 08 November 1641," *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 2: 1640-1643* (1802), 307-08. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=8052. Date accessed: 04 March 2006.

[96]Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* 12.

significant for the seventeenth century, however, is not simply the nullification of

scandalous cultural production but the disavowal of the very presence and idea of scandal,

as the embodiment and articulation of a social divisiveness that threatened to become the

permanent defining trait of English politics. The dominant discourse of the Restoration

promised peace, unity, and protection against this threat of an eternal antagonism.

Scandal as a discourse quickly became intolerable, projected onto a past era that had now

come to a close, the abject offspring of a period of English history characterized by

fanaticism, sectarianism, and regicide.

III. *The restoration of the king and the rebirth of scandal*

> *Parables have been used in two ways, and (which is strange) for contrary
> purposes. For they serve to disguise and veil the meaning, and they serve
> also to clear and throw light upon it.*[97]

When the year 1660 saw the English monarch returned to the throne, bringing the

violent period of civil war to an end, the possibility that scandalous divisions and schisms

might represent a constitutive rather than aberrant element of English politics was

rigorously rejected. Measures were taken by the state to impose unity where clearly none

existed. Despite Charles II's earlier promise to the Scottish Covenanters to make

Presbyterianism the official denomination of the three kingdoms in return for their

---

[97]Francis Bacon, *The Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609), in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Longman, 1861), VI: 698.

support, and his committment in the Declaration of Breda to extend "liberty to tender

consciences ... for differences of opinion in matter of religion which do not disturb the

peace of the kingdom,"[98] in a short time even this far less radical concession of religious

toleration for dissenting sects was rejected. Beginning in 1662, parliament passed a series

of persecutory laws against all the denominations and their members that failed to

conform to the liturgy of the Church of England. These laws included: the Corporation

Act (1661) that required all elected officers of municipal governments or corporations to

swear an oath of allegiance to the monarch as Supreme Governor of the Church of

England and to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Church of England

within a year of their election; the Act of Uniformity (1662) that required all churches to

adopt the liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer*; the Five-Mile Act (1665) that forbade

non-conformist ministers from going within five miles of any town that had a Church of

England congregation and from teaching in schools; the Conventicle Acts (1664, 1670)

that forbade all non-conforming religious assemblies and inscribed penalties of fines,

imprisonment, and banishment for offenders while rewarding informers; and the Test Act

(1673) that extended the earlier Corporation Act by barring non-conformists from holding

any public office, civil or military, while demanding subscription to a declaration against

the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. If England was nowhere close to being

---

[98]Charles II, "Declaration of Breda" (1660), in *The Stuart Constitution, 1608–1688: Documents and Commentary*, ed. J.P. Kenyon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 331–32.

unified on religious and political matters in 1660, the parliament and official church were

at least going to ensure their opponents lacked the power to instigate another civil war.

Like the Church of England, the king, and parliament, England's nobility and

gentry also sought to restore their authority in 1660. The number of prosecutions for

scandalum magnatum reached its highest point during Charles II's reign. The statute gave

the nobility special privileges to charge their inferiors with slander or libel, because as

"Peers of the Realm of England," they could bring a suit on behalf of the King as well as

themselves. The law supposed that "any false News, Lyes, or other *such false Things* ...

whereof Discord or any Scandal might arise" would also cause "great Disturbance of the

(publick) Tranquillity of this Kingdom, in Contempt of the said Lord the now King."[99]

Michael McKeon suggests that the growing number of actions invoking *scandalum*

magnatum during the seventeenth century implies less that traditional institutions were

exhibiting power and stability than that they were demonstrating a need to forcefully

reassert themselves due to "an increasingly defensive awareness that social hierarchy was

under assault."[100] The ongoing presence of religious and civil disputes throughout the

Restoration period, along with the historical accounts of J.G.A. Pocock and others,

confirms Foucault's inversion of Carl von Clausewitz's famous statement regarding war

---

[99]The statute for *scandalum magnatum* is quoted from William Bohun, *Declarations and Pleadings: In the Most Usual Actions Brought in the Several Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas at Westminster* (London [in the Savoy]: E. And R.Nutt, and R. Gosling, 1733), 2, 4.

[100]Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, 151.

as a continuation of politics. Foucault writes: "politics is the continuation of war by other means. ... Repression is no more than the implementation, within a pseudopeace that is being undermined by a continuous war, of a perpetual relationship of force."[101] The aggressive persecution of dissenters and the efforts to quell religious, political, and class dissent at the Restoration suggest not an end to war but a new modality of war and struggling over power that included the determination of what could be called knowledge, history, and truth, and, beyond this, the production of particular forms of subjectivity along with what was deemed "knowable" within the new social order.

Another one of the tactics by which the royalist cause sought to restore its authority was to attribute the civil wars to a set of religious radicals engaged in the endless production of scandal. Dryden in the preface to *Religio Laici* suggests this repudiation of scandalous rebellion and rebellious scandal from official history when he states, "*Martin Mar-Prelate* (the *Marvel* of those times) was the first Presbyterian Scribler who sanctify'd Libels and Scurrility to the use of the Good Old Cause."[102] Dryden's account of the "Presbytery and the rest of our Schismaticks, which are their Spawn" is not only invested in the martyrology of Charles I but also heavily inflected with class prejudice, as he suggests that scandal was used by the pro-parliament writers to "hedge in a stake amongst the Rabble." Furthermore, for Dryden, the contemptuous use

---

[101]Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* 15, 17.

[102]Dryden, "Preface" to *Religio Laici*, in *Works of John Dryden*, ed. Swedenberg, Jr., 106.

102

of scandal for the "villifying of the Government" revealed the vulgar taste and inferior

reasoning of the radicals themselves: "if Church and State were made the Theme, then the

Doctoral Degree of Wit was to be taken at *Billingsgate*." It is unacceptable for Dryden

that the radicals tried to justify "King-killing" when they called it "a judgment of God

against the Hierarchy," and he insinuates that their real motivation for rebellion was a

resentment of their social superiors rather than the religious faith they professed.

Similarly, in the *The Medall*, also published in 1682, Dryden uses scandal conveniently as

the point of connection between Shaftesbury's party and the regicides when he

sarcastically ventriloquizes the emerging "Whig" faction, whom he supposes equate the

exercising of an utterly debased notion of liberty with the freedom to produce scandal:

"for, if scandal be not allow'd, you are no freeborn subjects."[103] Dryden's poetry deepens

the hostility towards scandal, associating it with insurrection in the overlapping realms of

religion, politics, and class. His view of scandal as *un-English* and *distasteful*, rather than

as a product of treason or spiritual conviction, anticipates the way in which the backlash

against secular scandal would evolve over the course of the eighteenth century. But

Dryden has another contemporary antagonist in mind when in *Religio Laici* he writes the

history of the civil war from a royalist perspective, calling the "Sectaries ... foul-mouth'd

and scurrilous from their Infancy." Publishing in the middle of the conformity

---

[103]Dryden, "Epistle to the Whigs," in *The Medall. A Satyre Against Sedition* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1682), in *Works of John Dryden*, ed. Swedenberg, Jr., 41.

controversy arising from the persecution of dissenting sects, Dryden argues that

dissenters—the heirs of war-mongering hypocrites—could only redeem themselves and

their religion from a bloody legacy by behaving as "true *Englishmen* when they obey the

King, and true Protestants when they conform to the Church Discipline."[104] If the proof of

true patriotism for Dryden is fostering national unity and peace against schisms and war,

then the proof of true Christian faith is abstinence from the discourse of scandal, by

refraining both from accusing others of scandalous corruption and from sanctimonious

posturing as the scandalized.

As Dryden's poetry suggests, the issue of non-conformity plays an important role

in the changing attitudes towards scandal. Before and during the civil wars, discourse

against scandal and divisiveness is typically used to promote consent on *behalf of the*

establishment—whether the Anglican Church, the monarch, or the parliament—and

justifies the restraint of individual "Liberty" and the subordination of the individual

conscience to the interests of the community or nation. Paradoxically, scandal reemerges

at the Restoration with a much different purpose, having been appropriated by dissenters

as a means to advocate religious pluralism *against the views of the establishment.*

According to the dissenters, the acknowledgement of differences would be the only way

to prevent scandal, and they now framed conformity as a scandal against "freedom of

---

[104]Dryden, "Preface" to *Religio Laici*, in *Works of John Dryden*, ed. Swedenberg, Jr., 106, 108.

conscience."[105] This controversy over the penal laws and practices surrounding

conformity produced a flurry of pamphlets in the late 1670s and 1680s, in which the

discourse of scandal figured prominently.[106] As a result, cultural perceptions of scandal

changed. To explain these changes, it is necessary to discuss briefly some representative

texts and authors who participated in the debate.

One of the major figures in the conformity controversy was John Owen, a

renowned Independent theologian whose radical work in favour of non-conformity

provoked responses from both Anglicans and moderate Presbyterians.[107] Owen's *An*

---

[105]Nenner, 185.

[106]The long titles for these pamphlets are very instructive. See William Assheton, *The Cases of Scandal and Persecution being a Seasonable Inquiry into these Two Things : first, whether those Nonconformists, who otherwise think Subscription Lawful, are therfore obliged to forbear it because their Weak Brethren do judg it Unlawful? : Secondly, whether the Execution of Penal Laws upon Dissenters, for Non-Communion with the Church of England, be Persecution? : wherein they are pathetically exhorted to return into the bosome of the church, the likeliest expedient to stop the growth of popery* (London: Printed by J.D., 1674); Richard Baxter, *The Judgment of Non-Conformists about the Difference between Grace and Morality,* containing "The Judgement of Non-Conformists of Things Sinful by Accident, and of Scandal" (London, 1676); Thomas Beverley, *The Woe of Scandal, or, Scandal in its General Nature and Effects, Discours'd as One Strongest Argument Against Impositions in Religious Things Acknowledg'd to be Indifferent* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1682); Joseph Read, *Mr. Read's Case Published for Prevention of Scandal to his Brethren & People for Encouragement to Suffering Protestant Dissenters, for a Rebuke to their Lawless Adversaryes* (London: Richard Janeway, 1682); Benjamin Calamy, *Some Considerations About the Case of Scandal or Giving Offence to Weak Brethren* (London: H. Hills et al., 1683); Samuel Clark, *Of Scandal: Together with a Consideration of the Nature of Christian Liberty and Things Indifferent* (London: Benj. Alsop, 1683); Henry Hesketh, *The Charge of Scandal and Giving Offence by Conformity Refelled and Reflected Back Upon Separation : and that Place of St. Paul I Cor. 10:32 that hath been so usually urged by dissenters in this case asserted to its true sence and vindicated from favouring the end for which it hath been quoted by them* (London: Fincham Gardiner, 1683). See also Thomas Lewis, *A Modest Vindication of the Church of England, from the Scandal of Popery* (London: J. Baker, 1710).

[107]Owen was also renowned as the vice-chancellor of Oxford University from 1651–1658. Patrick Romanell suggests that John Locke's work in favour of religious toleration was influenced by his contact with Owen during "his student days at Oxford." See Romanell, "Introduction," in John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 5.

Answer unto Two Questions, which circulated in manuscript form from around the time

of the author's death in 1683 until it was published in 1720, cites scandal as one of the

arguments that reveals conformity to be "unlawful" (248).[108] Owen's argument is multi-

faceted, and it will help to cover some of his main points here. Owen outrightly disagrees

with conformist arguments that suggest that taking the Lord's Supper is a universal

Christian practice—the same God is being worshipped despite variations of form—and

the Anglican liturgy is simply a specific form, participation in which is thus a guilt-free

exercise of Christian "liberty." Owen argues, by contrast, that without the persecutory

law, there would be no reason for a non-conformist to participate in another

congregation's communion so to conform would be to assume additional obligations to

the state that "we are not divinely obliged to do" (242). To conform, then, would be to

perform a "duty to God that is not an act of obedience with respect unto his authority,"

but is instead only an act of obedience to the state (242). Such obeisance to worldly

authority means to "renounce the kingly office of Christ" (251). Owen asserts further that

there is a positive, divine obligation to share communion with one's own congregation

and to serve God with what we conscientiously deem our *"best"* offering in worship

---

[108]John Owen, *An Answer unto Two Questions: With Twelve Arguments Against any Conformity to Worship Not of Divine Institution* (ca. 1683), first published posthumously in John Owen, *Seventeen Sermons* (London: William and Joseph Marshall, 1720). The edition to which I refer is in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 16, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1862). The circulation of the manuscript pamphlet is referred to by the Presbyterian moderate, Richard Baxter, in *Catholic Communion Defended, Part V, An Account of the Reasons Why the Twelve Arguments, said to be Dr. John Owen's Change Not My Judgment About Communion with Parish-Churches* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1684).

(242). The standardized liturgy is the product of the "dead machine" of the Anglican

church and only a paltry substitute for a living congregation worshipping "by the

assistance of the Spirit of God" (250, 243). Owen asserts several additional arguments

against conformity. For one, coercion invalidates "liberty," which is lawful, and

substitutes it for a mere "pretence of liberty" (252). Second, the Anglican liturgy as one

specific, fixed form of the liturgy cannot be a divine institution since it is a human

institution without divine appointment, and therefore is "false worship" (251). Since

Christ and the apostles "destroyed the legal ceremonies" associated with Judaic law,

turning the Anglican liturgy into law is to "build again" what God has destroyed, making

the legislators into transgressors (241). Third, engaging in "public worship" means that

conformity cannot be a matter of private conscience only but a matter that affects the

entire community to which one belongs (248). When dissenters professing membership in

a dissenting community engage in actions that *perform* membership in another

community, the latter becomes effectively true, since church membership is essentially

defined as a performance of communion with others that is a "testimony of ... practical

profession" (246). Consequently, to become a member of the Church of England that

"receiveth him as one belonging unto itself only" and that deems all other churches

"schismatical" and other Christians as "profane and ignorant" is to invalidate one's

membership in any other church (246). Implied throughout Owen's argument is the

familiar notion that any "devised way of worship" that claims to be "the only true way" is

a tyrannical imposition of a mediating structure that usurps the only true grounds for

authority in worship: the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (250).

According to Owen, for all the reasons listed above, conformity results in

"unavoidable scandal" that continues to produce "endless" other scandals (252). In

Owen's tract, the avoidance of scandal is used as a justification for non-conformity in at

least five instances. The first occasion for scandal arises when the dissenters' enemies see

them attend the Anglican liturgy; as a result, those enemies could cast aspersions on the

integrity of the former dissenters, whose former objections to conformity seem then only

to be "pretended conscience" since they ultimately complied with "outward

considerations" (252). The second scandal arises from the implications of one person's

conformity for the rest of the non-conformists. To avoid personal suffering through

conformity renders all one's past suffering "vain" and the continued suffering of one's

brethren "vain" (242). This is an action against God who promises not to allow his

children to suffer in vain. But it is also an action against one's brethren: casting one's lot

with those who persecute one's brethren sanctions their persecution (244). The

conformity of one declares that all others' non-conformity is invalid and ungodly, based

on human rather than divine will. In this instance, Owen declares, "no offence or scandal

can be of a higher nature" (244). Third, to conform is not only to dissociate with one's

brethren but potentially to cause the further scandal of divisions in the congregation.

Fourth, those who follow the *example of others* " might be led to conformity against their

own consciences (244). Finally, conformity provides a justification for adversaries to call

steadfast non-conformists "factious and seditious" on the grounds that one has complied

in good conscience where others have not complied (244). Owen makes several further

arguments, but he needs only to win on one point—to plant one seed of doubt in the

conscience of his reader—in order to invalidate conformity as a lawful practice performed

in good conscience without dissimulation.

The tract *Some Considerations about the Case of Scandal* by prominent Anglican

divine and royal chaplain Benjamin Calamy can be discussed as an "official" response to

the conformity controversy and as a counterpoint to Owen's arguments regarding

scandal.[109] Calamy addresses his pamphlet to non-conformists who refuse to participate in

the Anglican communion on the grounds that it might offend their brethren. Calamy

assumes that those who present scandal as their main objection to conformity would

otherwise accept the Anglican "Prayers and Ceremonies" as lawful (2). Calamy first

acknowledges that scandal is a "heinous" sin, but the verses he cites as the doctrinal

foundations reveal his particular attitude towards the plea of scandal. For instance,

Matthew 18:6 commands Christians to avoid causing "little ones" to stumble, which

implies in the context of Calamy's argument the infantilization of any who would take

offense from the conformity of others. The other cited verse, Romans 14:5, exhorts

---

[109]All citations are to this edition: Benjamin Calamy, *Some Considerations About the Case of Scandal or Giving Offence to Weak Brethren* (London: H. Hills et al., 1683).

Christians not to judge one another: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." In this context, the causes for scandal are made to appear trivial, simply as matters of personal preference to be considered indifferent next to fundamental articles of faith. Situating the scriptural examples in a historically specific context, Calamy determines that in cases of scandal the fault resides most often on the side of those who take offense rather than with those whose behaviour provokes the offense. Calamy, like Owen but with different results, turns to the authority of Scripture to determine insignificant matters of difference, indicating that God's command to obey earthly authorities is, unlike the doctrine of scandal, unequivocal. The argument of scandal should not be used to pressure "Governours and Superiors" to "condescend to the weakness, ignorance, prejudices and mistakes of those under their care and charge" (2–3). But the main audience to whom Calamy addresses his pamphlet is comprised of non-conformists. To these people, he poses this central question: "*Whether there doth lye any obligation upon any private Christian (as the case now stands amongst us) to absent from his Parish Church, or to forbear the use of the Forms of Prayer and Ceremonies by Law appointed, for fear of offending and scandalizing his weak Brethren?*" (3). Calamy's answer is two-pronged. First, he challenges the validity of the dissenters' rationale to avoid scandalizing their own communities, a rationale that produces a contradiction, which, on the one hand, assumes ignorance and weakness prevail within the community yet, on the other hand,

displays self-righteous conceit by justifying non-conformity as "the effect of an higher

illumination, greater knowledg than other Men have attain unto[;] they rather count us the

weak Christians" (11). After arguing from the Scriptures that scandal arises from the

weakness and ignorance of those who take offense (rather than from a legitimate spiritual

concern), he claims dissenters cannot cite their own ignorance as a cause of scandal.

While the early Church needed to be careful to avoid offending new converts from

Judaism and paganism in its "Infant State" (6), Christianity is a long-established religion

in England: "There is not now amongst us any such competition between two Religions,

but every one learneth Christianity as he doth his Mothers Tongue. ... there are no such

weak persons now amongst us, as those were for whom the Apostle provideth, or as those

little ones were, for whom our Saviour was so much concerned" (8, 9). Rejecting the

dissenters' teachings that construct scandal as an offense taken by the ignorant, Calamy

asserts that more pernicious motives underlie the production of scandal within the

dissenting communities. For instance, to ongoing criticisms against the Anglican practice

of kneeling during the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he replies "if after all this, people

shall still clamour against this gesture as Popish ... it is a great sign that it is not infirmity

only, to which condescension is due, but something worse that raiseth and maintaineth

such exceptions and *offences*" (14). The argument of scandal, he suggests, acts as a

smokescreen for more self-interested purposes: "they that pretend that this fear of

offending, that is, displeasing their *weak* Brethren hinders their complyance with the

Church, ought seriously to examine themselves, whether it is not really only the care of their credit, and reputation with their party, that keeps them from Conformity" (18). For Calamy, "credit" translates not simply into others' good opinions but also into money, since conformity for dissenters who "get their livelyhood from such a Congregation" means risking "their trade" and disobliging "their good customers" (19). For Calamy, neither "private persons" nor "publick Laws" should be enslaved by the tyrannical "opinions and fancies of others" that speculate upon the outcome of a "probable" scandal by demanding the impossible reckoning of "Remote possibilities and contingencies" (47, 20, 27). Elaborating upon a commercial metaphor, Calamy concludes that a concern with justice should override acts of charity. Since Englishmen owe a great "debt" to "our Superiours," the reciprocating gesture of obedience is required before an act of "charity," which in turn cannot be used as a justification for committing the sin of "wronging our Superiours" (43, 44).

The second part of Calamy's argument suggests that if non-conformists continued to use the avoidance of scandalous offense as a principle guiding their behaviour, then they should be more concerned with the far greater scandal that would arise from the "publick condemning of the Government, Orders, Discipline or Doctrine" of the national Church as well as the "disturbance of the Publick Government, and endangering of the Civil Peace" with "one Party continually endeavouring to overtop the other" (56, 58). In particular, Calamy laments that so many "Factions" exist within the nation, with the

112

effect that the behaviours and language of the different dissenting sects appear "strange" and "uncouth" even among themselves and hardly "all agree in one way and speak the same Language" (48, 56, 55). As long as non-conformity is practiced, there will always be some "Party" ready to take offense at an action (58). Instead, people should rely on the established "Constitution of our Church" and the "great wisdom and deliberation" that produced secular laws (12, 43). To avoid the "sin of *Schism*," Calamy exhorts his readers to "return" to their Parish-Church in good conscience: "let them lay aside all Zeal of parties and little singularities, and learn to judge righteously and soberly of themselves and others, and then the cause of all this *offence* will be soon removed" (18). In addition to remedying "the present distracted condition of our Nation," a sincere act of conformity—as opposed to *"Occasional Communion"* or the antics of the insincere, ranging from wearing hats during the service to sitting during the Sacrament to making "sour faces at our Devotions" (60)—will prevent scandal or the spiritual downfall of others in its "true and proper sense" by considering the interests of all Englishmen and supporting "the Peace and Unity of the Church, the maintaining of Charity amongst Brethren, the keeping out Popery, and Atheism, the preservation of the Authority of the Magistrate, and quiet of the Society we are members of, the honour and credit of our Religion" (58). A conforming individual corrects rather than affirms the prejudices of dissenters against the Church through both public example and education, setting "before them the reasons on which his change is grounded" so that "all may see they Conformed

with a willing mind" in good conscience (29, 60).

According to Calamy, the dissenters have drummed up obstacles to conformity that do not have any spiritual origin but are simply self-imposed. If the conscience of a dissenter implores one to participate in the Anglican liturgy as a duty to peace, stability, and social order and in obedience to God's command to submit to earthly sovereigns, then it is a sin against one's own conscience to fail to do what one knows should be done. If such actions cause some to stumble, then it is because of their malicious predisposition to judge others. In such cases, no sin can be justly attributed to the conformist for having acted in good conscience; rather, the scandal is produced by the others' childish or malicious responses. Of course, Calamy readily admits that his argument hinges on the assumption of complete legitimacy for the Anglican liturgy, a point that Owen's brand of resuscitated Calvinism would never allow.

These two examples of literature arising from the conformity controversy show the passion, skill, and insight as well as erudition that went into cultural considerations of scandal in the seventeenth century. They also perhaps help to explain how one dominant view of scandal throughout the eighteenth century associates the discourse of scandal with intractability and socially malignant concerns, as the disputing parties discussed above seem equally able to manipulate the ambiguities of the doctrine to justify entirely antithetical positions. The strengthened association of scandal with marginalized sects and resistance against state authority as a result of the controversy would eventually work

to disqualify scandal as a "legitimate" knowledge among institutional discourses.

Meanwhile, for Restoration culture, the problem of dissent would be mitigated, if not

resolved, by taking two measures that confessed a need for moderation and conciliation.

First, religious toleration would be granted to Protestants through the Toleration Act of

1689, as non-conformity appears less threatening, and the separation of law and religion

appears more necessary. Second, the discourse of scandal would be secularized so that it

becomes far less concerned with inner conscience and disagreements within relatively

isolated religious communities and more directed at finding a common language of

outward behaviours and way of interpreting what they signify, thereby ameliorating the

"corruption of manners" within one large imagined community: the nation.

After the Exclusion of James II and the Glorious Revolution, the discourse of

scandal emerges from the close confines of theological treatises and doctrinal

argumentation out into the political realm in full force and can be connected to the birth

of party politics. Scandal, while serving as a means to achieve relative social stability by

rooting out disruptive and power-hungry individuals, argues that it is the public's

responsibility to check the excesses of the persons and institutions to whom it has

entrusted governance. However, even as scandal articulates the abuse of the trust invested

by citizens in those political representatives who are only supposed to wield power for the

sake of the commonwealth, the discourse also foregrounds the openness and

provisionality of such codes, and the sheer variety of social antagonisms and individual

proclivities that necessitate their existence. Scandal thereby incorporates skepticism into a

positive vision of and hope for a nation-wide "reformation of manners" that could

accommodate and tolerate differences in belief as long as one's manifest actions caused

no harm to the others.

Howard Nenner's account of the Glorious Revolution suggests that both Whigs

and Tories were reconciled to the succession of William and Mary through a renewal of

the "idea of trust," the meaning of which had changed dramatically in 1649 when

sovereignty was realigned with parliament or elected officials rather than king. In 1689,

Tory and Whig—who disagreed on the points of whether or not James II had been

deposed through conquest or William and Mary had been elected—could both accept that

James II had forfeited the trust of the people by fleeing from England, a somewhat

ambiguous legal decision that neither undermined the principle of hereditary monarchy

nor suggested the dissolution of government, although it did underscore the importance of

the constitution in the concept of the public trust.[110] The renewed significance accorded to

trust, along with the Bill of Rights, produced a new political climate in which the

representational nature of government was legitimated and entrenched. England had

further secured this relationship of trust and representability through ensuring that no

future monarch would ever be a "papist." Without the threat of Roman Catholicism

looming over the nation, the Act of Toleration of 1689 suspended the Test Acts and penal

---

[110]Nenner, 202.

laws for non-conforming Protestants. Subsequently, the 1701 Act of Settlement, by

enshrining in law the Protestant Succession, pretty well guaranteed that James II would be

the last English monarch to be caught eating meat in the idol's temple. Without the

Church of England and the monarch as major antagonists, dissent could now turn from

religion and state towards secular culture and civic politics, further developing scandal as

a philosophy of "trust" based upon public virtue and common interests that could combat

sources of corruption in the electoral system, with patronage and party divisions

providing ample opportunity for designating new enemies of the state.

In the preface to *Fables Ancient and Modern*, Dryden defends Chaucer's anti-

clericalism by arguing against a doctrine of scandal that views a person primarily in terms

of his or her representative function for the whole community. Dryden states that "the

Scandal which is given by particular Priests, reflects not on the Sacred Function. ... When

a Clergy-man is whipp'd, his Gown is first taken off, by which the Dignity of his Order is

secur'd." Dryden claims that those priests who argue against public scandal on the basis

that it "brings the whole Order into Contempt" are self-interested and complicit, denying

justice for the whole society—good priests and parishioners—because they are more

concerned for their own "private" reputations than for "their Publick Capacity." Dryden

points out that if one were to assume the detractors of scandal to be correct regarding

scandal's effect of tarnishing the virtue of the whole community, then those who would

have scandals judged internally within the church or community itself would not be

disinterested enough to cast proper judgments, being "all in some sort Parties: For, since

they say the Honour of their Order is concern'd in every Member of it, how can we be

sure, that they will be impartial Judges?" Dryden thus justifies scandal as matter of public

responsibility against those individuals who represent the public, carving a space for the

impartial writer as the spokesperson for the public and an instrument of social justice: "A

Satyrical Poet is the Check of the Laymen, on Bad Priests."[111] Dryden resists the

allegorical interpretation of scandal that assumes the individual's actions incriminate all

those who occupy the same social function or are part of the same community, while

insisting instead on a literalist interpretation of scandal—the scandalous act implicates the

actor alone. I would suggest that Dryden's opinion of scandal, proferred in defense of a

"modern" text, is itself thoroughly modern, signalling as well an important difference in

emphasis between religious scandal and the secular scandal that flourishes

contemporaneously with Dryden's reflection. The theological doctrine assumes an

organic connection between the individual and the community that leads to an allegorical

reconstruction of the significance and meaning of the scandalous act in terms of how it

reflects upon the virtue of the entire community and each of its individual members.

Within this view, there is no concept of a larger social formation beyond the insular

community that could hold individuals accountable for their transgressions. Dryden's

---

[111]John Dryden, "Preface" (1700), in *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 35–36, lines 420–445.

118

argument, by contrast, presents a secularized view of scandal as a discourse that targets

individuals as fully autonomous agents whose actions concern the general public but do

not necessarily implicate the public in their transgressions. This suggests, of course, that

the discourse of scandal is transformed by the emergent idea of a general "public," which

would subsume within its commonality a multiplicity of diverse subjects whose "private"

religious beliefs would be henceforth divided from and subordinated to the public

interest. The new secular discourse of scandal undoubtedly contributed to the acceptance

of the public as a pleasing fiction of national stability, if not a fully established reality.

This form of scandal also made it easier to conceptualize the individual as split into a

public and private identity: this dualistic model of identity formation is vividly suggested

by Dryden's image of the defrocked priest as simply representing a "man." At the same

time, Dryden's use of the term "Parties" cannot but help resonate with the party politics

that were raging in England at the time. Dryden recognizes that within a general public,

divisions will form along common interests and identities. These differences then become

the condition for scandal, since the accommodation of difference does not necessary

entail the *toleration* of difference. As a party cannot be expected to pass impartial

judgment on its own members, other parties must step up and pass judgment against it in

the exercise of their public duty. Significantly, this new conception of scandal

presupposes identities that are no longer essential aspects of the subject: they are like

clothes to be put on or taken off depending on the occasion. Against the tyranny of fixed

organic membership to a single community (for instance, a religious sect), the new social

identities both open up the possibility of affiliation through choice and multiply possible

allegiances, which makes scandal all the more relevant as a judgment of particular actions

with specific, timely effects.

These new conditions suggest in part why Restoration literature increasingly

becomes topical—it begins to use political and historical allegory rather than just moral

allegory (allegory here defines a form that encloses meaning within its own structure and

expects readers to decode multiple levels of meaning implied by it).[112] In the early

modern period, scandal and satire do not seem unlikely bedfellows: the former as a

Christian discourse that interprets a particular event in terms of its moral repercussions

for a community; the latter as a classical discourse that scourges vice on behalf of all

"Mankind." Both discourses construct the subject's relationship to the world using an

allegorical structure that mediates between the particular and the general. Dryden's

Absalom and Achitophel (1681) straddles these two discourses as a versification of a

Biblical story that encodes both moral allegory and political satire. What further

distinguishes scandal literature of the Restoration and early eighteenth century is its secret

encoding of topicality *through allegory* that accomplishes several things at once: first, the

clever use of familiar generic forms that avoid strictly mimetic representation to depict

---

[112]For an illuminating discussion of allegory, see Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Idea in English Renaissance Poetry* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1979), 169.

"real" life; second, an ironic parody of the genres and allegorical mode so crucial to earlier sacramental thought and literature, signifying both continuity and discontinuity with the past; third, a way to attract contemporary readers of all kinds to decode meanings of immediate relevance to their own political and social lives. As eighteenth-century literature moves from closed to open forms, from allegorical to mimetic representation,[113] scandal literature later in the century exhibits less and less of the formal complexity that once used secrecy to maximum advantage by embodying it in an allusive "secret form." Scandal literature of the first half of the eighteenth century can therefore be seen as *transitional*—a collision of early modern and modern world views, of ancient and modern literary forms. As a result, allegory is also transformed. It is still deployed as a means of referral, but readers are no longer required to fit the text into a stable, preconceived spiritual paradigm; rather, they only need to make connections between the textual representation and the world immediately outside the text, which is increasingly depicted as in a state of constant flux, the particular case always exceeding efforts to impose or construct a paradigmatic account of the whole. Jonathan Swift lamented such altered reading practices that diminished the moral authority and reforming edge of satire by encouraging readers to seek out and locate their offense in "real" people external to the

---

[113] For the movement from closed to open literary forms, see Margaret Anne Doody, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 57-83. Terry Eagleton outlines a fascinating "historical typology of fiction" that opposes "myth and allegory" to "realist fiction"; see Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 18–20.

text and to themselves. No longer a mirror for self-reflection, and not quite a window on the world, satirical literature had become, Swift argues, "a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own."[114] With the religious foundations of society permanently shaken—along with the increasing challenge posed to absolute political authorities, epistemological certainties, and stable signification by historical and political exigencies, philosophical skepticism, and a factious public culture—the Restoration inaugurated the modern production of scandal as a secular discourse, literature, and phenomenon.

---

[114] Jonathan Swift, Preface to "The Battle of the Books," in *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Angus Ross and David Wooley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 104.

CHAPTER TWO

Moral Economies of Scandal in the Eighteenth-Century Comedy of Manners

Defamation ought to be more severely punish'd than Theft. It does more Injury to Civil Societies, and 'tis a harder matter to secure one's Reputation from a Slanderer, than one's Money from a Robber.

—Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical* (1700)[115]

When *The Rehearsal* was first performed in 1672, it introduced scandal into the culture of the Restoration stage by representing the poet laureate, John Dryden, as "Bayes," a playwriting character marked by the same grandiose pretensions and speech that appeared in his own "heroic" dramatic productions. John Lacy's prologue to *The Rehearsal* ridicules Dryden's championing of this kind of drama by suggesting that contemporary audiences feel alienated from what could only be perceived as absurdly idealized rhetoric, characterization, and action—the current, disillusioned age interpreting as empty nonsense the meanings and motivations of heroic drama just as it now eagerly exploited drama's power to forge identifications with its viewers. Lacy's prologue makes two deadly insinuations regarding Dryden's character: first, that Dryden's productions are the personal indulgences of a poet laureate whose position enables him to disregard an evident shift in audience tastes; second, that the more audiences "now despise" what they "once so prais'd," the more they could expect a vigorous defense from Dryden, who would employ the same bombastic language that Lacy and others alleged was

---

[115] Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical* (London: John Nutt, 1700), 61.

characteristic of his plays.[116] It was perhaps because of this second jibe that Dryden kept

silent against his detractors, later touting his display of "Christian charity" in not seeking

a justifiable revenge when "More libels have been written against me, than almost any

man now living."[117] Although Lacy is parodically mimicking Dryden when he claims to

have "reform'd" the stage by reintroducing wit and humour to comedy, it is the element

of scandal that ensures the novelty of *The Rehearsal.*

The comedy of manners, with its focus on the private lives and social interactions

of its characters, encourages identification between the audience and players with a

degree of intimacy that heroic drama apparently could no longer generate. The

introduction of topical satire modernizes the genre of comedy for audiences who enjoyed,

if not demanded, dramatic productions that would represent the familiar fashions of the

times in both a humorous and an instructive way. Not only did scandalous references to

living persons make their way into the *drame-à-clef* of the eighteenth century,[118] but

scandal itself becomes a social discourse and practice inseparable from the fictional

comedy's more or less facetious mandate to represent and reform its audience's manners.

---

[116] John Lacy, "Prologue," in *The Rehearsal*, a play by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (London: Thomas Dring et al., 1672), n.p.

[117] Dryden, *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1693), in *Essays of John Dryden*, Vol. 2, ed. W.P. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), 79, 80.

[118] John Brewer suggests that "many cultural forms" of the early eighteenth century not only incorporated "a deliberate mixing of genres from high and low culture" but also featured "topical reference to current issues and [a] preference for variety of expression rather than formal unity or coherence. " John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) "epitomized" such a "trend." See Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997), 371.

Changing attitudes towards scandal can be better understood through an overview of the shifting perceptions of scandal in eighteenth-century comedies. As Raymond Williams in *The Long Revolution* reminds us, dramatic productions are "a major and practical index to change and [a] creator of consciousness," and changes in the form and content of eighteenth-century drama indicate a gradual transition in cultural ideology from an aristocratic towards a middle-class bias. Nevertheless, Williams warns against the preponderance of scholarship that mourns the *embourgeoisement* of late eighteenth-century drama, arguing instead that "we should be prepared to recognize that in the point of moral assumptions, and of a whole consequent feeling about life, most of us are its blood relations."[119] Indeed, the largely negative attitudes towards scandal expressed in literature of the second half of the eighteenth century for the most part remain the dominant way of thinking about scandal, at least until the relatively recent acknowledgment in scholarship and wider society that scandal might very well play an important and complex role in shaping politics, culture, and the economy.

In what follows, I will begin by tracing the different cultural functions and meanings ascribed to scandal in the Restoration comedy of manners, particularly through the construction of scandal's relationship to the new economy based on credit. Michael McKeon notes how seventeenth-century writers like Andrew Marvell display an

---

[119] Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961; repr. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 299, 286.

understanding that "commercial enterprise and Protestant ethics alike require a systematic dependence on reputational credit."[120] While Chapter One discussed the highly variable moral doctrine and ethics of scandal that emerged from the specific concerns of diverse Christian communities during the early modern period, this chapter is concerned with scandal's wider impact on personal reputation in the secular moral contexts that surround eighteenth-century theatrical and commercial culture. Scandal's earlier concern with articulating and resolving differences of opinion and divisions on multiple levels of the Christian faith—from a single community of believers to different Protestant sects in England to the nationally distinct Churches of England and Scotland to the Reformed and Roman Catholic branches of Christianity itself—is adapted to address the secular concerns of the English social order. In the process, scandal's divisive influence is counteracted, although not diminished, by its role in forging a public consensus around secular norms of social propriety that could transcend doctrinal differences among the various Protestant communities.

During the Restoration and early eighteenth century, the determination of a person's virtue becomes intimately linked to his or her attainment of reputational credit, which could in turn work to support financial credit. One's reputation, however, relies not on one's own belief in one's virtue but on outward conformity to established norms. For

---

[120] McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 198.

this reason, the absolute determination of a person's moral virtue always remains uncertain and dependent on maintaining the good opinion of others. A public scandal arising from either true or baseless allegations could nevertheless destroy the reputation of one "good" person even as it affirmed the reputation of a "bad" person. Scandal becomes especially dangerous when it not only points to non-fundamental differences among individuals who typically identify with each other but also destabilizes the very foundations of identity categories such as gender and class. Consequently, scandal's own credibility as a discourse gradually diminishes over the century as it is pushed to the outskirts of an increasingly homogeneous social order that eschews the social determination of moral norms or "manners" in favour of an ideology of innate moral virtue or "sensibility." (Of course, the general persuasiveness of this later ideology becomes possible only through the gradual naturalization of normative moral codes.) As a consequence of this cultural shift over the century, scandal exits the spaces of public circulation represented in Restoration comedy and is confined by later comedies to private drawing rooms and the gatherings of private societies and clubs.

The first section of this chapter considers how scandal is represented in *The Country Wife* (1675), *The Rover* (1677), and *The Man of Mode* (1676) as part of the coterie life and self-referential playfulness of the Restoration court. Critiquing both court values and the property relations intertwined with aristocratic marriage, these plays comment satirically on and ultimately distance themselves from an emergent commercial

127

culture. However, in the decades following the patronage of Charles II and the stage

productions of the courtier patentees, John Brewer suggests that the court-centred ethos of

the English stage is changed through the buying and selling of shares in the royal patent,

ushering in a new era of financial speculation in the dramatic arts.[121] This

commercialization of the theatre coincides with different and frequently imbricated

representations of the new market economy and scandal. In *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*

(1718), scandal retains its Restoration vitality but is taken more seriously as its sphere of

influence is enlarged to encompass the exchange of and trade in public "news" on a

national scale. A combination of commerce and scandal in this later play opens the door

to novel forms of corruption and uncertainty as notions of "security," "trust," and "credit"

are increasingly mediated by oral and print forms of intelligence. In a new economy that

intermingles imperial conquest, capitalist enterprise, bankrupt gentry, and *nouveau riche*,

a person's moral reputation and economic credit are no longer dependent on and

stabilized by social status. As a result, McKeon suggests the early eighteenth century

witnessed a change in the former system of credit: "As with the notion of 'honour' ... a

complex transformation in the way credit has traditionally been accorded and withheld ...

now relativizes and endangers it as a system of tacit, unquestioned knowledge."[122] Within

this cultural climate of uncertainty, people not only need to be careful about whom they

---

[121] Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 359–361.

[122] McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, 198.

trust in financial matters; they also need to exercise discretion in choosing an honest

partner in the business of marriage. Reputation increasingly becomes a means of

corroborating a person's moral integrity; yet it paradoxically remains susceptible to

others' false constructions. As indicated by the epigraph to this chapter, reputation could

now be readily objectified as a type of personal property that could be stolen by scandal-

mongers just as easily as money could be taken by thieves. The threat of being *discredited*

is heightened by a perceived absence of moral coordinates to guide people's social and

economic activities. As the discourse of scandal is invoked to address problematic social

behaviours in secular contexts, its reliance on the public's capacity to interpret outward

signs of inward virtue as the only "knowable" aspect of character (in order to translate

manners into reputation) inscribes uncertainties and contingencies into the determination

of credit. Scandal might serve a useful function by creating a common moral language

and connecting it to the acquisition of social and economic credit but it also produces

great anxiety over the fluctuations in reputation potentially incurred by such a connection.

Consequently, commerce and scandal are criticized for engendering the desires for luxury

and verbal extravagance, respectively, both of which are coded as new, publicly

dangerous kinds of libertinism that risk "creating a world of appearances and false

desires."[123] This cultural ambivalence towards scandal's mediation of commercial

exchange and reputational credit is a central theme of the comedy of manners, which

---

[123] Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, xxi.

adapts over the century to articulate new ways of understanding and governing both *homo economicus* and the moral economy of scandal.

This chapter proceeds with a consideration of how the moral ambiguities that inform the representation of scandal and other libertine and commercial activities of the sort portrayed in the comedies of Wycherley, Behn, and Etherege become the occasion for the public scandal involving Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Prophaneness of the English Stage* (1698). The consequence of Collier's attempt to scandalize playwrights by enumerating every immoral element in their plays only produces more scandal, as Collier is subsequently accused of muck-raking, and the debate mushrooms into a "culture war" over the role of the stage in promoting or discouraging the moral virtues and vices of its audience. The Collier controversy forms part of a growing body of educational literature in the eighteenth century.[124] A discussion of Collier and the way his thought is extended and opposed in the development of scandal and the eighteenth-century pedagogical imperative concludes the first section of this chapter.

The second part of this chapter enlarges the discussion of the pedagogical "reformation of manners" as it takes on new meanings in Sheridan's *School for Scandal*

----

[124] Another important example of education literature is the conduct book, which is directed towards female readers. On conduct books and their connection to middle-class consciousness, see Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of the Domestic Woman," *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 59–95.

(1777) and Burney's *The Witlings* (ca.1780). In contrast with the earlier comedies, both plays are explicit in their criticism of scandal, which is now constructed as the monstrous creation of aristocratic "labour" and the socially detrimental "industry" of a leisure class, whose consumer habits become a perverse form of cultural production when its *schools* and *clubs* circulate personal information about others in order to destroy their reputations. The insularity of the self-taught coterie not only maintains its ignorance of a dominant culture engaged in the edifying promotion of a propriety and decorum suitable for middle-class life but also threatens the dominant culture through the publication of its local and uncorroborated "intelligence" in newspapers and other forms of print. With the Restoration libertine now transformed into a *liberal*, and the misanthropist into a *philanthropist*, these two plays ultimately reject scandal as an artificial discourse and practice in favour of more "natural" pursuits, but not without first indicating scandal's subversive location inside the field of public discourse and cultural production.

I. *The scandal of Restoration comedy*

> MRS. DAINTY FIDGET   Besides, an intrigue is so much the more notorious for the man's quality.
> MRS. SQUEAMISH 'Tis true, nobody takes notice of a private man, and therefore with him 'tis more secret, and the crime's less when 'tis not known.

> LADY FIDGET   You say true; i'faith, I think you are in the right
> on't. 'Tis not an injury to a husband till it be an injury to our honors; so
> that a woman of honor loses no honor with a private person...
> <div align="right">(II.i.451–459)[125]</div>

<div align="center">***</div>

> HORNER: ...your women of honor, as you call 'em, are only chary of
> their reputations, not their persons, and 'tis scandal they would avoid, not
> men.   (I.i.191–194)

In the form of an oral culture of gossip, scandal was an integral part of the lives of

eighteenth-century men and women.[126] Indeed, this could not be better demonstrated than

by the way scandal permeates the characters, themes, and spectacle of eighteenth-century

drama. The issues raised by scandal—namely publicness or publicity, sexual mores,

gender roles, class difference, leisure, commodification, and dissimulation—recur

throughout eighteenth-century literature but are particularly interesting when they appear

in a theatrical context because scandalous representations trope both the specular, by

drawing public attention to a concealed incident in a way that recalls a discovery scene,

and the speculative, by troubling that which has been generally accepted as truth.

Restoration drama tells us several other important things about the culture in which

scandal flourished. For example, public image suddenly competes with titles and wealth

---

[125] William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, in *The Plays of William Wycherley*, ed. Peter Holland
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 227–341. All references are to this edition and the play's
title is abbreviated to *CW*.
[126] See Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).

as a determinant of one's social status. At the same time that one's designated social

position alone can no longer be seen as a guarantor of certain inherent virtues, the

literature supposes that one's identity is actually produced by the dialectical interaction

between what others know about you and what you know about yourself. Restoration

culture seems to favour, in the last instance, a prudent management of the perceptions of

others—in the same way an actor might play a character on the public stage—with the

paradoxical result that an emphasis on exhuberant outward display coincides with a deep-

seated suspicion of all appearances. While the discourse of scandal provides the

dialectical framework through which to engage and understand complex social

interactions, scandal literature seems to generate more ideological conflicts than

resolutions, as demonstrated by the controversy and debates over the role of the theatre in

public life. As a consequence of these debates and other social changes, one can

anticipate trends that will later become evident in the plays of Sheridan and Burney: the

dominant culture's gradual embrace of the ideological resolution supplied by the

bourgeois notions of separate public and private spheres as well as an effort to reconstruct

and diminish the influence of scandal over the course of the eighteenth century.

The quotations above from *The Country Wife* illustrate several important themes

germane to discourse of scandal in eighteenth-century Britain. The first theme involves

the negotiation of publicity and privacy in order to avoid scandal. Mrs. Dainty Fidget's

assertion that a man's social status directly impacts his degree of notoriety—that is, the

amount of knowledge circulating about him in the public realm—indicates that the public

has a vested interest in knowing the private "secrets" of individuals with social power.

"Interest" in this context not only refers to the titillating pleasure derived from gossiping

about well-known figures; it also pertains to the cultural capital acquired by the "tattling"

subject in the process of socio-symbolic exchange. In other words, the urge and desire to

participate in the exchange of "town talk" is not motivated by prurience alone; it is rather

part of an information economy which supports the celebrity of "the Quality" even as it

furthers the dissemination and redistribution of voyeuristic intelligence within and

between the aristocracy and the general "publick."[127] Scandal thus mediates the

relationship between these public figures and the power they possess, and perhaps more

importantly, between those individuals who wield political and moral authority and those

who are subject to their rule.

The second theme surrounding scandal arises from the belief that scandal could

have very real social effects; consequently, it is situated within other social and economic

processes of exchange. The performative effect of scandal not only sets out to destroy

reputations but also paradoxically has the effect of granting a scandalous person (who

might otherwise seem socially insignificant) enough social value such that their private

---

[127] My suggestions here that knowledge can be a form of social power and "cultural capital" are indebted to the work of Foucault and Bourdieu, which makes an important divergence from conventional definitions of power as residing exclusively in the spheres of property ownership (control of material wealth and the means of production) and/or government (direct political influence). As discourse analysis and cultural studies have shown, the operations of power are much more diffuse and rely for their constitution and negotiation as much on "subjective" ideological and symbolic networks as they do on the "objective" socio-economic system.

lives warrant public scrutiny. Within this context, the exchange-value attributed to a public figure by scandal interacts with the actual position that such a figure occupies in the social system, while working to confer a new discursive or cultural status on the figure. The hidden operations of scandal create the illusion, however, that value inheres in the person and that the subject's desire for knowledge of and power over the person is the natural product of the person's essential qualities rather than the discursive relations that have constructed a "character" in particular ways. Nevertheless, scandal becomes a vital component of material-social relations and, in the form of print, an important commodity within the flourishing literary marketplace of the early eighteenth century. Far more than mindless entertainment for tea-sipping ladies of leisure, the discourses of scandal surrounding the social élite in early eighteenth-century Britain involved challenges to and negotiations of the political and moral legitimacy of the authority possessed by powerful figures.

The epigraph above suggests two more themes surrounding scandal: gender and class relations, which are impacted by the differential access to publicity and privacy enjoyed by aristocrats, citizens, men, and women. Wycherley's ladies assert that a "private man" or bourgeois citizen is less likely to be exposed to the scrutiny of the public gaze, whereas a titled man by definition already possesses a public "reputation." If a person's social position made her or him more "interesting" (in the sense of both generating curiosity and cultural capital), eighteenth-century England realized that the

135

converse was also true: scandal had the potential to undermine status as well as to confer

it. At first glance, it might seem that the content of the scandal would dictate its general

effect by disclosing the good or bad moral character of a public person; but it also

mattered as much *who* was being talked about. The main factor that determined whether

benefit or harm was done to the person under discussion is actually gender. As Wycherley

indicates, the dangers of scandal could be particularly acute for women. Since men were

expected to circulate in the public realm, scandals of any kind could enhance their

cultural authority as exemplified by the largely sympathetic treatment of libertine rake

figures, such as Horner, so common to Restoration drama. By contrast, the cost for

women affected by scandal (almost always of the sexual "intrigue" kind) was reduced

marriage marketability or, as Lady Fidget notes, "injury to a husband" and his public

reputation, since women's legal and social value was defined by their purity as a vessel

for procreation within the marriage contract. This double standard is indicated by the term

"honor," which carries a different connotation when applied to women than men: for "the

sex," whose identity was often reduced to embodiment, honour was limited to chastity, or

physical integrity, rather than to that abstract sense of nobleness of mind and moral

integrity possessed by "great" men. Wycherley's women wittily take advantage of this

double sense of honour; they do indeed lose "no honor" in the elevated, manly sense from

a sexual tryst since such an attainment of dignified virtue based on conscious duty is not

credited them in the first place. Nor would they risk dishonour in the practical sense if

they could conceal their activities: for a woman's identity was defined primarily by and through her external relation to others, and consequently only the opinion of others could compromise it.

Thus the concept of "reputation" is another important theme in the eighteenth-century discourse of scandal and occupies a place of prominence in scandal stories about women. Those women who circulate in the public sphere are already viewed with suspicion (perhaps the only exception being the Queen to whom royalist ideology since Elizabeth I conveniently granted two persons);[128] so women who acquire public identities through the circulation of scandal are far less likely than men to enjoy the benefit of increased social power. According to Roy Porter, "virtuous women had been placed on a pedestal which gave them little room to move, except to fall. ... It was easier for a woman to achieve notoriety than power."[129] The cultural obsession with female sexuality meant that women were held in check by a higher standard of fidelity than men; yet scandal stories, like Wycherley's satirical portrait of the "women of honor," also undermine the gender ideology that women are innately virtuous and less sexually precocious than men.

---

[128] This ideology is expressed, for example, in Spenser's account of allegory in *The Faerie Queene*: "In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular, I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet, in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresses, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull Lady ... ." From a letter to Ralegh, cited in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, ed. Ward and Trent, et al. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907-21), Vol. III, Part XI, Section 12. Online edition (New York: Bartleby.com, 2000): <www.bartleby.com/cambridge>.

[129] Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Penguin, 1982), 47; see also 37-40.

Restoration culture depicts women as desiring subjects on a par with men; nevertheless, discretion is always favoured in the last instance, and the successful female characters must be savvy enough to satisfy their desire without drawing unwanted publicity for having breached conventional codes and fashionable standards of conduct.

As a result of the economic and social power ascribed to scandal as well as its epistemological implications, the concepts of "credit" and "trust" become significantly interrelated with representations of scandal. Angellica Bianca, a character in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, illustrates the difficulty faced by eighteenth-century women who negotiate between legal and social constraints and the development of their own subjective desires.[130] A beautiful courtesan, Angellica resorts to public prostitution in order to support herself when her "gallant," a Spanish general, dies. Although indicating the lack of financial and employment opportunities for women, Angellica's choice to participate in a commercial economy in which sex is just another commodity leads to her downfall. She "credits" the rake Willmore, by trusting his professions of constancy and love, agreeing to a sexual liaison without the contractual guarantee of marriage, and giving him money rather than collecting her fee. In the first scene of Act Three, Willmore announces to his friends that he has enjoyed "All the honey of matrimony, but none of the sting" and celebrates his new found fortune for his "soul grew lean and rusty for want of credit" (III.i.111, 116). Behn's choice of language is indicative of England's commercial

---

[130]Aphra Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, ed. Jane Spencer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1–88. All references are to this edition and the play's title is abbreviated to *R*.

and imperial expansion during the period in which she writes, a period that experienced, in Roy Porter's words, "a mushrooming of sophisticated credit finance." For individuals, this meant that "Credit transactions were vital, not least because England was endemically short of circulating coin. ... But credit enabled business to expand by trading upon expectations." Porter adds, "because most of the money needed to set up in business was not fixed but circulating capital, it might be largely 'illusory', floated chiefly by credit (that is, in effect footed by other people)."[131] These statements resonate well with the scenes in *The Rover* when Willmore asks Angellica basically to engage in a "trade" with him upon the "expectations" of his commitment to her. But Willmore prefers to be a "circulating" rather than "fixed" lover, and his professions of constancy are "illusory." Angellica ends up "footing" the bill, both in terms of spending money to support Willmore and assuming the costs of their liaison in a damaged sense of self-worth. In this world of ephemeral credit and honour, Willmore and Hellena's exchange is more substantial: he agrees to a marriage contract that saves her from the convent while she transfers her fortune of "three hundred thousand crowns" and her "birth and quality" to him (V.i. 522, 513-14).

Throughout Behn's play, pecuniary power is connected to social power and both depend on the illusion if not the reality of having a trustworthy character. The women of

---

[131]Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 123, 204, 340. See also Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

title and fortune who enjoy the possession of substantial wealth need not stoop to secure

credit. For men like Willmore, however, having "credit" is advantageous, as is having

"honour." But *wanting* either credit or honour is indicative of diminished class status and

even personal degradation. The play's witty use of commercial rhetoric often contrasts the

moral and material solidity of property with credit, which acts a mere substitute or

signifier for "real" wealth. Although in social exchange credit appears legitimately to

have value, such value can as easily evaporate as it appeared. Because of its immaterial

foundations in trust, credit is thus held responsible for the propagation of licentiousness

and libertine sexuality in Behn's play, that is, procurement and enjoyment at another's

expense without personal commitment or guarantee. By contrast, the possession of

property, even "moveables" (V.i.58) such as jewellery, is taken as proof of a person's

"quality" since "bills of exchange may sometimes miscarry" (IV.v.122; III.i.211–12). A

person's character may be credited, but more often than not such credit and the power it

confers is based on a blind faith that lacks any substantial corroboration.

The epistemological quandary produced by an absence of a knowable and

locatable substance—particularly the substance of virtue—from which a character, credit,

sign, or idol could derive and legitimate its power, is the same dilemma that concerns

scandal. In scandal's most confident forms, the power of such objects is utterly dispelled

and demystified. But there always lingers a kind of uncertainty about such strong

assertions of truth and knowledge because they depend on the construction of an

underlying, imperceptible *absence*. If knowledge is based on a mere void, then how can

be it considered knowledge? Is not the positing of absence as much based upon arbitrary

belief as the positing of substance? The dangerous implications of scandal, exploited by

Restoration comedies, is that substance ultimately does not matter but only appearances

that are capable of producing credulity in others. It is Angellica's too eager willingness to

believe Willmore's performance that precipitates her downfall. Unlike the aristocrats,

Hellena and Florinda, who obliquely and safely approach sexual interactions by literally

"masking" their expressions of desire in costumes that conceal their identity,[132] Angellica

openly allows her love for "the rover" to supersede her interest. When Willmore, charmed

by the "sign" of Angellica, cannot convince her to lower her price, he feigns anger, stating

"that which is love's due / Is meanly bartered for. / ... Poor as I am I would not sell

myself" (II.ii.15–16, 54). Willmore's indignation at Angellica's "mercenary" motives,

sullied "fame," and infamy ignites her own conscience. When he employs the elevated

rhetoric of courtly love—invoking image-worship and divine purity—Angellica commits

the crucial mistakes of first believing his professions of constancy and love, and then

abandoning the commercial nature that defines her "business" with him (a mistake

Hellena does not make) in favour of an antiquated romantic idealism (II.ii.89, 73). The

---

[132] Although Angellica is the one directly engaged in trading a "commodity" (II.i.99–100), Hellena's witty application of mercantilist rhetoric to the "business" of love suggests that women's participation in commerce could be empowering by enabling them to take advantage of the provisional equality between individuals required by capitalist exchange. For further discussion of equality, see Jack Amariglio and Antonio Callari, "Marxian Value Theory and the Problem of the Subject: The Role of Commodity Fetishism," in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, ed. Emily Apter and William Pietz (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 186-216.

conventionally immoral nature of Angellica's trade contrasts with the moral economy associated with courtly love, and she condemns herself for having lost her "honour" (V.i.289). Love permits her to see herself through the eyes of Willmore, and such an "undeceiving glass" reveals that she is not a true goddess deserving of "blind devotion," but merely "a long worshipped idol" characterized by a "weakness," a lack, which having been first exposed by him, produces her desire for Willmore as the object that can compensate for her deficiency (V.i.287, 292, 288). By aspiring to love, Angellica transgresses the limits typically imposed on fallen women, only to be thwarted by socially imposed constraints, namely public acceptability: "Nice reputation, though it leave behind / More virtues than inhabit where that dwells, / Yet that once gone, those virtues shine no more" (IV.ii.406–407). "Honour," mediated in this way by public perception, is ironically less concerned with virtue in a positive sense than with the ability to fulfill social expectations. Yet to lose one's honour means that any claim to virtue is ineffective, since the loss of public approbation ultimately thwarts its recognition as such. Angellica, as a famous courtesan, "honours" her social role as long as she engages in straightforward "business" with her clients. She produces and satisfies desires in others, and they in turn provide her with wealth and adoration. Her trade is acceptable as the office of highly regarded courtesan, but the exchanges between her and her clients must be recognized by both parties as material transactions, uncomplicated by love in its ideal form. Angellica is dishonoured and undone by bestowing her affection on the unworthy Willmore and by

wanting his love. Her desires exceed what Willmore is willing to give in return for physical love—she effectively demands a promise from him, not unlike a promissory note that substitutes for his inability to pay in specie. This converts their straightforward material exchange into one based on credit, thus exceeding the original agreement and introducing into the transaction all kinds of uncertainties based on trust. As a man and a "rover of fortune" (V.i.511), Willmore circulates more easily than Angellica in the new economy of credit, but ultimately the banished cavalier's withdrawal from the credit economy (figured as his relationship with Angellica) in favour of a return to the old values of marriage, property, and title suggest that only one kind of loyalty and constancy (to substantial value and the King's authority) will come with a worthwhile reward.

In contrast to Angellica, Behn's successful female characters have the "wit enough to manage an intrigue of love" (IV.ii.375) and realize from the start that nothing should enthrall them to such a degree that it overtakes a prudent concern for their own reputation. Scandal can have very real consequences for their lives. For women in particular, whose identities are primarily defined through social relations, maintaining at the very least an illusion of virtue is crucial. While at first glance, it might appear that scandal serves to control deviant or defiant social behaviour, the structure of scandal undermines its capacity for social control by relativizing the very norms it attempts to establish. Wycherley's "ladies of honor," for example, agree that "the crime's less when 'tis not known," and an ingenuous belief in the transparency of virtue is rarely found in

143

Restoration comedy. Instead, what matters in determining how one should proceed is the *optics* of the situation: how others could potentially perceive and attribute meanings to one's actions. Harriett Hawkins explains the outcome of this moral ambiguity when she describes the "purpose" of *The Man of Mode* as "neither immoral nor moral, but rather spectacular—to exhibit, rather than to censure, the features of fashionable vice, fashionable virtue, and unfashionable folly, and to show their interaction in a glittering, amusing, and witty dramatic spectacle. And if the play reveals that fashionable vice and fashionable virtue frequently were one and the same when the play was written, just as they are now, this is true to the subject and important to the spectacle."[133] Hawkins is right when she argues that the subjectivities constructed in Restoration drama are explicitly performative, that is, fully constituted within and contingent upon social relations in which the perception of the other defines the self. In effect, an *essential* rightness or wrongness of an action does not matter but how it might be construed by others. Nevertheless, moral considerations are not only important, but crucial, to an adequate understanding of the plays and libertine culture. Although "spectacular" morality does not fit neatly into conventional moral codes, it does not abandon morality altogether. In fact, moral discourse permeates Restoration drama. Characters have a conscious—even exaggerated—awareness of their virtue and honour, but not in the sense of God-given, innate qualities. Virtue and honour depend on the perceptions, judgments,

---

[133] Harriett Hawkins, *Likenesses of Truth in Elizabethan and Restoration Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 94.

and desires of spectators. Thus the rakish Willmore denounces virtue and honour in women as obstacles to his pleasure: "Virtue is but an infirmity in woman" and "Honour? I tell you, I hate it in your sex" (*R* IV.ii.175, IV.iii.367). Most significantly, scandal does not thwart the possibility of declaring any action to be right or wrong but instead inscribes the moral determination of an action as entirely contingent on the social circumstances surrounding its occurrence.

Written not long after absolutism was decapitated by puritan zeal, Restoration plays exuberantly flount moral absolutes in favour of self-interested pragmatism. Those who wish to be rational and virtuous simply need keep up the pretense of reason and virtue, since only that which can be seen really matters. Horner reveals as much about "ladies of honor": "For your bigots in honor are just like those in religion; they fear the eye of the world more than the eye of Heaven, and think there is no virtue but railing at vice, and no sin but giving scandal" (*CW* IV.iii.23–27). In such a moral economy, avoiding scandal is tantamount to safeguarding virtue. The satire of Restoration drama relies on exposing this dual reality, often represented as a conflict between public image and private substance. In a similar manner, the discourse of scandal claims to probe beyond façades to disclose a hidden reality; in doing so, scandal not only constitutes and blurs the notions of "public" and "private," but also the basis of its own "truth." It does not represent a preexisting, authentic reality so much as it creates that reality while constantly undermining its authenticity. Inquiring minds may really want to know, but

scandal's dualistically structured reality acts as a perpetual obstacle thwarting the subject's capacity to truly know. Lacking the assurance of absolute knowledge, more often than not the outcome of scandal is simply more scandal.

The contrast between surface appearances and underlying essences is a central concern that permeates much of eighteenth-century culture, and indeed remains a key trope of scandal and modernity in general.[134] Restoration drama represents this opposition visually through scenes of "discovery," in which the stage set unfolds to catch the players engaged in clandestine activities quite literally behind the scenes. The ironic incongruity between appearances and essences goes to the heart of the epistemological crisis affecting the early modern period. How does the subject secure truthful knowledge of the other? Even as Restoration comedies depict a culture more skilled in artifice, knowledge acquired solely through the senses becomes more and more suspect, especially concerning those abstract attributes of "honor," "virtue," and "truth." By challenging the culture's ability to interpret signs, scandal both reflects and contributes to the changes in ideological and social structures that affect Restoration culture, that is, the gradual shift from socially stable hierarchies supported by ideologies of absolutism and divine providential order towards a predominantly secular, bourgeois society characterized by unsettling epistemological and moral ambiguities.

---

[134] For instance, both classical Marxist ideology critique and Freudian psychoanalysis (especially dream interpretation) rely on this appearance/essence structure to explain the persistence of irrationality in individuals and social organization.

Scandal could potentially impact much more than just the reputations of

individual persons (although its effect in this regard should not be underestimated); it

could also upset the entire socio-economic system. On a smaller scale, a damaged

reputation directly affected a person's ability to get credit, both in social and economic

terms. As demonstrated by the multiple meanings applied to credit in *The Rover*, a

creditor (whether providing sexual or financial means of acquisition) needs to be secure

in the knowledge of a person's trustworthiness. For this same reason, Thomas Frank,

writing to a Scottish Member of Parliament in 1732, laments the infectious spread "in

most of the Papers published" of a "Spirit of Envy, Scandal and Detraction" which could

"wound the Reputation." The importance of a reputation free from scandal for success in

the new eighteenth-century economy of paper credit is emphasized by Frank:

"Reputation! or a good Character is what has supported and handsomely maintained vast

Numbers of Men in all Ages, who perhaps had not any thing to bring up their Families

with, which very often are large, and yet, by virtue of their Credit, have provided for them

all, and died as honourably as they lived, and by a good Example have done Service to

after Ages."[135] Even as early as 1651, Thomas Hobbes makes a connection between a

man's financial power and how he is perceived by others: "The *value* or WORTH of a

man, is as of all other things, his price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the

use of his power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependent on the need and

---

[135] Thomas Frank, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament in the North; Concerning Scandal and Defamation* (London: A. Millar, 1732), 7, [16]-17.

judgement of another....For let a man (as most men do,) rate themselves as the highest

Value they can; yet their true Value is not more than it is esteemed by others." Like a

commodity of which "the buyer determines the Price,"[136] a man's value does not depend

on his intrinsic qualities independent of social relations but on the network of signifying

practices through which others' perceptions of him acquire for and impose "value" on his

character.

During the Restoration period, in both the court and city, Harold Love suggests an

increasingly importance was attached to people's knowledge of what "avenues of

advancement" were available as well as who and what had credit and value, particularly

"whose star was rising ... and how commodities were likely to perform on the

exchange."[137] The possibility of gain through quick and reliable access to knowledge

means that scandal or "news" becomes an important commodity that mediates the

distinction between private and public life. In the very first scene of *The Man of Mode*,[138]

for instance, the drama is set in action when Dorimant pays an orange woman who is

hawking fruit for "news" and is told that a pretty young heiress has come to town (I.i.32).

Adding to or renewing a "fortune" through marriage was an important economic practice

in the eighteenth century, especially for an aristocracy whose pursuit of luxury

---

[136] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), ed. C.B. Macpherson (London: Penguin,1985), Part I, Chapter X, 151-52, 152.

[137] Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 192.

[138] See George Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, in *The Plays of Sir George Etherege*, ed. Michael Cordner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 209–333. All references are to this edition.

accumulated debts. The unseemliness of inquiring about other members of the upper class

could be avoided through commercial transactions with the working class and with

servants, although scandal is practiced by everyone. For example, Medley's witty and

cruel treatment of the orange woman, whom he calls a "cartload of scandal" (I.i.77), is

later turned back on himself when another character calls him "a living libel, a breathing

lampoon" (III.ii.6).

On a larger socio-economic scale, scandal not only establishes, reinforces, and

mediates social distinctions in the early eighteenth century; it also influences the vagaries

of the market economy. Daniel Defoe's *Anatomy of Exchange-Alley* (1719) represents a

nation caught up in frenzy of financial speculation largely based on the illusions created

by verbal exchange. He warns against the "scandalous trade" of stock-jobbers, those

notorious men who skilfully enticed others with money-making schemes and stood to

profit from "preying upon the weakness of those whose imaginations they have wrought

upon." Defoe goes so far as to compare the stock-jobbers' alleged practice of "coining

false news" with "publick knavery" and "treason." Worse even than highway robbers,

"remorseless" stock-jobbers steal from their "intimate friends" and "rob securely."[139]

Despite the later entrenchment of the bourgeois myth of the free market, Defoe's

portrayal of early capitalism—as well as numerous accounts of the South Sea

---

[139] Defoe, *The Anatomy of Exchange Alley; or, A System of Stock-Jobbing*, in *The Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, ed. W.R. Owens and P.N. Furbank (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), VI: 332, 345.

bubble—depict an unstable economy reliant on the circulation and manipulation of rumours and secrets, which are often based as much on lies as on truth. Susanna Centlivre's *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*[140] illustrates the effect of "news" on individuals and the market when the Colonel (disguised as a Dutch merchant) tricks Tradelove into betting with him and buying South Sea stocks by circulating false news about a political situation that could improve the market (IV.i). The Colonel's exploitation of Tradelove's greed gains him the guardians' consent to wed Mrs. Lovely, whom the *Dramatis Personae* describes, in lieu of a profession, as having "a fortune of thirty thousand pound." Thus, although "news" may lack credibility, it nevertheless has very real effects on the perceptions and status of individuals living in an investment economy. When made public, such news encourages collective action, resulting in fluctuations in the market but also in commercial trade, which, as Tradelove points out, creates the new consumer culture: "the merchant is of more service to a nation than fifty coxcombs ...'Tis the merchant makes the belle" (V.i.89–90, 93).

Early eighteenth-century literature depicts a culture in the midst of formulating a collective identity, for which traditional identificatory models authorized by Church and State could no longer suffice. The emphasis in the discourse of scandal moves away from specialized theological disputes over moral behaviour, which largely characterized scandal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, towards more general reflections about

---

[140] Susanna Centlivre, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, ed. Nancy Copeland (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1998), 49. All references are to this edition.

how to negotiate social relations in a nation split along party lines as well as religious

convictions. Scandal, defined in part by its constitutive ambiguity, reaches a height of

frenzy as it is embraced and energized by the irreverence for authority and the skepticism

that pervade Restoration culture. Scandal, having never been about a search for absolutes

but rather about arriving at a pragmatic resolution acceptable to the community, made

only a very uneasy alliance with church authority and doctrine, as discussed in Chapter

One, but marries quite well with the secular politics of the eighteenth century, as the

concern with purity and freedom of conscience is edged out and complicated by a concern

with what Jessica Munns calls "the public demands of 'Forms and ceremonies.'" These

codes of polite behaviour, as Munns suggests, may have been seen as "confining and/or

false," but, as forms of "ocular" display, were nevertheless acknowledged to yield very

real effects since they represented a substantial contribution—along with scandal—to the

sum of knowledge upon which a judgment of others could be based. Munns describes the

historical and ideological features that distinguish the Restoration stage: "what is

dramatized is man as a divided creature living in worlds that cannot accommodate all his

needs or desires. The structure of authority that would demarcate firm boundaries, and

establish what was owed to self, society, and God, or that could satisfactorily define self,

was often longed for as much as rejected, but had been weakened." These ideological

changes also had ramifications for language. "Reference to the failure of language to

establish singular and unambiguous meanings," which Munns also observes throughout

Restoration culture, parallels the socio-symbolic order's failure to demarcate clearly the signification of one's self towards others. The comedy of manners as a genre suggests that the contingency of social determinations of "good" and "bad" behaviour can be seen as a cause for iconoclastic celebration rather than lamentation. In this way, the emergence of scandal literature represents a continuance of libertine philosophy checked by the practical need for public moral codes against the socially divisive and threatening possibilities of either a reversion to dogmatic forms of religion or a retreat into "anarchic solipsism."[141] Eighteenth-century scandal literature is neither merely about scandal in terms of theme and content nor simply scandalous in its social reception. It may possess these two attributes; but more importantly it must be a literature of obvious topical concern that targets particular individuals or institutions and is designed to instigate a public occasion for scandal.

In the early eighteenth century, the discourse of scandal influences a variety of literary genres. Consequently, the category "scandal literature," whose goal is to inform (if not reform) readers through the use of scandal, encompasses diverse forms and modes of signification, which in turn construct different meanings and deploy different degrees of irony and literalism. Scandal literature can be seen to include even the seemingly opposed genres of social satire and earnest social criticism. As an example of the latter,

---

[141] Jessica Munns, "Change, Skepticism, and Uncertainty," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151–53.

Jeremy Collier's *A Short View* sets out to prove "the *Misbehaviour* of the *Stage* with respect to *Morality* and *Religion*" and to "shew both the *Novelty* and *Scandal* of the *Practise*." A brief discussion of the controversy produced by Collier's work will help to distinguish more clearly between objects that are simply *scandalous*, in this case the various elements of Restoration stage productions enumerated by Collier, such as the "*Poets* [who] make *Women* speak smuttily,"[142] and scandal literature that uses the discourse of scandal against particular object of immediate social concern. This discursive tradition is the one to which Collier's attack and the subsequent pamphlet controversy over the morality of the stage properly belong. Herein also lies the difference between scandal that appears in fictional literature and scandal literature that expressly engages with the moral implications of social behaviour and public knowledge about it. At the heart of the controversy over scandal literature, then, is the problem of perception and emulation, which arises from the publicity surrounding certain actions and the pedagogical responsibility of incorruptible and educated members of the public to mediate such representations by placing them in a proper moral framework. Any form of publication—whether in the form of theatre production or print material—has the potential to mislead, or worse, to transform through identificatory processes an indiscriminating audience that fails to recognize the representation as a negative example.

John Dennis defends the stage against Collier's attack by conceding the court's

---

[142] Jeremy Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698), ed. Benjamin Hellinger (New York: Garland, 1987), 8–9, 15.

"deprav'd Tastes" and the "Lewdness of their Plays," but also by arguing that the

"Corruption of Manners upon the Restoration, appear'd with all the Fury of Libertinism,

even before the Play-House was re-establish'd." The "Spirit of Libertinism," he argues,

arises from the puritanical repression imposed on England by the civil war—a "Sham

Reformation of Manners"—in combination with the "Foreign Corruption" of the English

court during its exile in France and Holland. Dennis defends the stage in principle

because it provides the action for "Poetry," which is both pleasurable and instructive,

with the result that "the Theatre is certainly the best of Schools."[143] Dorothea E. von

Mücke outlines a persuasive model for the convergence of "poetics, pedagogy, and

perception" in the eighteenth century as well as the various changes undergone by

Britain's "pedagogical project." Dennis' claim for the pedagogical efficiency of the

theatre fits into this project, as does Collier's critique of the stage. It is the latter form of

pedagogy, suggests Mücke, that influences a paradigmatic shift beginning in the

eighteenth century. This shift is characterized by an anti-theatrical "aesthetic-pedagogical

program," which encompasses the formation of new self-regulating subjects, generic

innovation favouring "an obliteration of the artificiality of the poetic construct," and a

new ideal of signification in which the sign is "a perfect duplicate of the thing

represented." A sense of immediacy is created through representation that acts to "*veil* the

materiality of the signifier, the structures of semiotic mediation, and the labor of artistic

---

[143] John Dennis, *The Usefulness of the Stage* (1698), in *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939), I: 154, 162.

production," in order to suggest "a quasi-natural acquisition of knowledge." The realist

novel that can be consumed in a private, self-absorbed manner—instead of the social

scene of the theatre or any other kind of visual medium that draws attention to itself as

representational—becomes a primary vehicle for the pedagogical agenda associated with

bourgeois values and manners. Mücke further suggests, following Foucault's thesis in

Discipline and Punish, that by the end of the eighteenth century, as the state undergoes

instititutional reforms towards increasing transparency of control and bureaucratization,

art is gradually set apart in a distinct, autonomous realm divorced from politics, and its

former ideal of transparency is replaced by "the concept of intransitive, self-referential

signification" that has been generally associated with Romanticism.[144] Although this

general schematic holds true for the larger picture and the voices subsequently ascribed

with the most authority in the period, it overlooks the way in which eighteenth-century

writers continuously engage in debate and disagreement over the moral effects and

responsibilities that should be aligned with cultural production.

Another important development of the eighteenth-century pedagogical debates

over the theatre is Dennis' *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter* (1722), published somewhat

belatedly in response to Richard Steele's criticisms of Etherege's comedic representation

---

[144] Dorothea E. von Mücke, *Virtue and the Veil of Illusion: Generic Innovation and the Pedagogical Project in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 6, 7–8, 10. For a discussion of didacticism in the context of the eighteenth-century novel, see Richard A. Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

of vice. The main concern in this debate is audience perception and how playwrights

should address the audience in order to guide it through to a desired moral outcome.

Dennis responds that Steele and the play's other detractors fail to understand how comedy

achieves its end of moral edification, pointing out that "True Comedy" does not only "set

us Patterns for Imitation" but also "expose[s] Persons to our View, whose Views we may

shun and whose Follies we may despise; and by shewing us what is done upon the

Comick Stage, to shew us what ought never to be done upon the Stage of the World."

Dennis never disputes an assumption that pervades eighteenth-century literature and is

still repeated today in the rhetoric of the culture wars: namely that the power of

representation resides in its ability to short-circuit its own mediating form and to produce

an immediate, unthinking identification in the viewing or reading subject. Steele and

Dennis both accept the fact that representation works upon the subject in such a manner

and both agree that cultural productions serve an important social purpose in their moral

instructiveness, but each draws different conclusions as to the means to achieve this end.

While Steele desires only exemplary characters in comedy, Dennis wants comedy to be

more realistic ("a true Resemblance of Persons both in Court and Town") and thereby to

produce a closer initial identification in order to use the audience's increased pleasure

(laughter at the "reigning Follies and Vices" displayed by the characters) as a foundation

for even more extreme disidentification and greater incentive to reform: comedy will

156

cure "Spectators of Vice and Folly, by the Apprehension of being laugh'd at."[145] Although Dennis does not seem to be as wary as Steele of the grave danger posed by an audience's uncritical mimicry of the behaviours and opinions laid out on the stage, what is striking about both of these arguments is that neither of them expresses much faith in the audience's ability to interpret irony. The moral message must be straightforward. In the case of Steele, the absence of vice safeguards both the audience from potential misinterpretation and the author's reputation from speculations about why and how vice has been chosen for representation. But, for Dennis, the comedic mechanism alone—if executed successfully—achieves the same end without censoring the content of the plays.

The debate between Dennis and Steele points to an increasingly evident contradiction in the pedagogical program of the eighteenth century. While pedagogy has faith in a subject capable of learning and transformation, it must also presume a pre-pedagogical subject that is naive and impressionable. For this reason, the burden to provide proper interpretations and moral clarity is increasingly shouldered by the author rather than the audience. Because the subject is necessarily embedded in the social life, its experiences and environment constantly present new sources for learning, with the potential for corruption requiring a constant vigilance and filtering of the kind of experiences made available for general public consumption. The result in the eighteenth century is a distrust of and desire to reform various areas of culture, and the comedy of

---

[145] John Dennis, *A Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter*, in *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, II: 215, 248.

manners is an obvious target. Dennis argued that the licentiousness of comedy was not an inherent aspect of the form. But this argument becomes less tenable with the emergence of other genres, such as the novel, that set out to resolve many of the moral ambiguities implied by theatricality. It becomes less and less possible to deny the fact that the Restoration comedies both playfully exaggerate the ways in which morality is performative and undermine transparency through the use of irony, which risks misprision on the part of an audience rapidly growing beyond the confines of the court and perhaps no longer "in the know." The overall trend throughout the eighteenth century is generally towards pedagogical transparency—although canonical literature should be interrogated in terms of how it actively constructs and challenges, rather than merely reflects, this assumption —but it is nevertheless also true that some authors take it upon themselves to respond to attacks on the theatre by heightening the moral ambiguities and theatrical elements of comedy, thereby producing another kind of satirical scandal literature that would grow in popularity in the first two decades of the eighteenth century.

As early as 1696, the anonymous playwright "Mr. W. M." addresses anti-theatrical attacks on the stage in *The Female Wits*, which proclaims itself an "imitation" of *The Rehearsal* and a satire of three Bayes-like women writers, Delarivier Manley, Mary Pix, and Catherine Trotter. The author claims that his "Drama's [sic] would instruct the Times" and that "Our Reformation center[s] in the Queen," rather than in the anti-theatrical and anti-court rhetoric of critics, like Collier, whose "luckless Hit / Has taught

158

us want of Laugh, and want of Wit." The playwright will amend the "Times" by teaching

instead how appearances are deceiving and how laughter can reform foolishness. The

censorious critic is depicted as a "Sinner" who cannot laugh at vice because he fears

being tempted into it, and by "wanting Law [he] instructs us in the Laws." The critic's

zeal against the stage is used as incriminating evidence of his own attraction to vice,

which results in a kind of perverse regulatory pleasure rather than direct enjoyment. The

playwright prefers instead the disingenuous but less imposing morality of the eponymous

heroines, who simply wear the "Masks" of virtue. In addition to the implication of

hypocrisy, there is also a pun intended by the term "Masks," an epithet commonly used

for prostitutes. The playwright claims to expose the pretensions of the women writers by

showing their "True Colours," but further blurs the distinction between false and true:

"Thanks to the Strumpets that would mask'd appear, / We now in their True Colours see

'em here: / False, I should say, for who e're saw before, / A Woman in True Colours and

a Whore?" The playwright's message—and indeed the lesson to be taken from

scandal—is that appearances remain unmarked by vice so knowledge of what is true or

false regarding another's character is always taken "on Trust," such that any

representation might be as equally "False" as the "True Colours" put on display by the

female wits. Moral distinctions are further put into question by the playwright's assertion

that deceptive women can be better counted on to exercise discretion in an intrigue

because "Their Understanding's safe as well as sound."[146] This kind of duplicitous

sophistication and social intelligence, which comprise the curriculum of scandal, is not

something that Collier and other pedagogues are willing to risk in a general project of

moral reform. Any kind of theatricality in self-representation that might entrench a

division between essence and artifice must be substituted by an earnest literalism that

assures knowledge of one's self and others through reference to and comparison with

models of exemplary virtue.

In 1750, Samuel Johnson revives some of the debates surrounding exemplariness,

stating his decisive preference for the Richardsonian moralistic novel and literature that

does not "confound the colors of right and wrong." For Johnson, there would be no point

in reading if it did not foster the improvement of humanity by drawing "boundaries"

between virtue and vice; otherwise, why not simply look around "as upon a mirror which

shows all that presents itself without discrimination." It is the task of the writer to make

such discriminations on behalf of the impressionable reader. In the first half of the

eighteenth century, writers of scandal literature implicitly agree upon the need for a

pedagogical project, although they disagree in terms of what kinds of methods are best to

---

[146] *The Female Wits* (London: William Turner et al., 1704), A1v, A2v–A3r. The mask also
became an important symbol of the early modern challenge to traditional modes of signification, especially
in terms of gender and class. On the masquerade and its "extraordinary cultural resonance" in early
eighteenth-century England as well as its specific concerns with "identity play," see Dror Wahrman, *The
Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale
University Press, 2004), 157–165. See also Terry Castle's seminal study, *Masquerade and Civilization: The
Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,
1986).

achieve an informed citizenry. Some suggest, like Collier, that there should be no moral

ambiguity in representation: virtue must be clearly rewarded, and vice must be punished.

Others, however, represent the rich and powerful as secretly vicious, and leave open the

possible interpretation that the way to success can be had through dissimulation. It is not

surprising, then, that Johnson suggests that such a literature seeking to convey a

"knowledge of the world" will more often serve to "make men cunning [rather] than

good." The two pedagogical approaches also disagree on which segments of society are

most in need of reform. As audiences of plays and literature expand to include more

middle-class consumers, particularly women, pedagogues like Collier emerge who argue

that audiences cannot be counted on to decipher and apply moral messages that are

anything other than entirely transparent. Likewise for Johnson, writing fiction provides

the moralist with an opportunity to exercise judgment in the treatment of the characters,

and carefully crafted narratives should not leave their moral conclusions up to the

imagination of the "common mind."[147] Meanwhile, scandal writers who claim to be also

interested in "reforming" the courtiers, politicians, and false wits, like Mr.W.M., suggest

that direct perception cannot be trusted because people's outward behaviours rarely, if

ever, reveal who they really are to onlookers. In epistemological terms, scandal makes the

immediacy and transparency of Johnson's "mirror" of social life seem fanciful by instead

constructing observations of the world as more akin to watching a play than to viewing

---

[147] Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* No. 4 (March 31, 1750), in *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, ed. Donald Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 177.

things as they really are. Finally, each pedagogical project points to a different end in

terms of shaping the subjectivity of its pupils. The Johnsonian education focuses on the

cultivation of inner virtue as a way to provide the self-regulating subject with moral

agency and greater assurance regarding the motives of others. The pedagogy of scandal

emerging from the early eighteenth century, by contrast, locates the disciplinary

mechanism outside the subject and teaches the subject that the only means to acquire

agency—as *freedom from external moral regulation*—is to exercise prudence and

foresight in a chosen mode of self-representation. What distinguishes both of these

pedagogies from the one that develops later in the eighteenth century is the hint of

Hobbesianism in the assumption that individuals will naturally pursue pleasure, especially

if their subjectivities are not properly shaped and influenced by examples of virtue and

vice. With the later influence of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), this assumption is no longer a given. In Smith's

work, a capacity to empathize with others becames the highest social value, and, for

Rousseau, disciplinary forms of education are held at least partially responsible for

distorting and corrupting humanity's innate benevolence. I would suggest that these new

views of human nature and education significantly influence Sheridan and Burney in their

rewritings of the comedy of manners in the 1770s. The most scandalous behaviours in

both of these later plays arise from a lack of empathy rather than any other socially

detrimental behaviour.

II. *The new moral economy in* A School for Scandal *and* The Witlings

In this final part of my discussion of the eighteenth-century comedy of manners, I will complete the trajectory of scandal's transformation over the period and suggest some possible answers to the question, *what happens to the culture of scandal and scandal literature after 1750?* Early eighteenth-century scandal writing initially holds a place distinct from libel and slander. But a shift in popular attitudes towards scandal occurs gradually over the first half of the eighteenth century. This shift can be accounted for by examining the patterns that recur in cultural representations of scandal and by determining which aspects of scandal literature make it especially inhospitable to later articulations of bourgeois ideology and values in British culture. The trouble of accommodating scandal eventually leads to its domestication, a process through which scandal is reconstituted in five interrelated ways: as an apolitical discourse about others' private lives and personal concerns (despite the contradiction that scandal as such *must* circulate in the public realm); as a low-brow discourse unsuitable for polite society; as a pernicious self-indulgence that corrupts the nation; as a socially poisonous, gendered discourse that particularly enthrals women; and, finally, as a patently false discourse commensurable with slander and libel.

The comedies of Sheridan and Burney do not portray scandal in a wholly negative light but rather reconstruct scandal *ambivalently*, recognizing and exploiting its humorous potential in a way that looks back to their Restoration predecessors. Nevertheless, the

163

trend towards the repudiation of scandal is already quite evident in the 1770s. Sheridan

and Burney recode scandal in conjunction with three important departures from earlier

comedies. The points of difference, each of which will be discussed below, involve the

role of pedagogy in subject formation, the substitution of sexual intrigue with the more

abstract social exchange of intelligence, and the assignment of different moral qualities to

the rake-hero. These changes to comedy indicate some specific late eighteenth-century

concerns, particularly involving morality, class relations, and the, by then, ubiquitous

capitalist economy of credit and consumption. The plays represent the difficult

contradictions inherent to the new moral economy and ultimately seek a resolution in

curtailing the impolite and ignorant speech encouraged by certain forms of social

intercourse, favouring instead domestic retreat and self-reliance.

Perhaps the most significant difference in the later comedy of manners is its

rejection of the tutelary function of culture. The later comedies, influenced by the

discourses of innate sympathy and sentiment, actually eschew the need and mandate for

reformation in a much more straightforward manner than did the earlier comedies. During

the Restoration and early eighteenth century, a pedagogy of scandal is used by

playwrights to mock the earnest reformational efforts of Collier and others through a

parodic subversion of anti-theatrical moralism. Consequently, Restoration comedies teach

an egoistic self-consciousness that comes from a recognition of flexibility,

impermanence, pragmatism, and opportunism, all derived from the conditions of

sociality. If Johnson and others later advocate a pedagogy that teaches subjective

consistency, interiorized virtue, sincerity, moral authority, and assurance of judgment,

then the moral message proposed by Sheridan and Burney could only be categorized as a

kind of counter-pedagogy, characterized by an ethic both of non-interference and

individual autonomy rather than by cultural absorption. Morality is a product of nature

rather than education. Sheridan's "school for scandal" and Burney's "Witlings club" are

grotesque parodies of schooling within the larger culture —particularly when its

principles of inclusion and exclusion are drawn along class lines and encoded in the

language of the group. To resolve this problem, social duties in both plays are minimized

in favour of individual and domestic pursuits, and these pursuits render scandal obsolete

as a particular social form of intercourse that negotiates the interrelated concepts of credit

and reputation.

Another way in which the later plays revise the earlier comedies is in their

representation of sexuality, which becomes a virtual absence in terms of both reference

and action. The promiscuity of Restoration culture embodied in the rake figure and the

commercial rhetoric used to describe sexual intercourse between characters are instead

transferred to scandal and gossip as titillating forms of social intercourse. Licentiousness

is now the attribute of the scandalmonger's capacity for invention in public situations

rather than the libertine's ability to arrange clandestine assignations in the pursuit of

sexual pleasure. The rake figure is transformed accordingly, such that Charles Surface

shares with Dorimant only a profligacy in the way he spends money and throws parties, and Censor displays Horner's misanthropy by ridiculing the pretensions to learning among the Witlings rather than cuckolding witless husbands. The result of these differences is not only the association of scandal with viciousness but also the creation of new codes for behaviour better suited to the emergent values and practices of the middle class. In other words, what emerges from *A School for Scandal* and *The Witlings* is a new moral economy that attempts to reconcile many of the contradictions arising from capitalist exchange relations and their interdependency with a flourishing print culture. In both plays, it is the hero's participation in these moral economies that ultimately becomes his means of redemption.

Jean Baudrillard's work on consumer society usefully identifies the central paradox of capitalist society, namely that capitalism must make a virtue out of individual consumption at the same time as it must ward against an excessive individualism that could unravel the entire social fabric. It achieves the former through conflating citizenship with the right and duty to consume, while it ensures the latter through the "fiction of a social, altruistic morality." On the one hand, social merit is ascribed to those who promote capitalist systems of credit and exchange through continuous consumption, which becomes in itself a form of production or *"social labor."*[148] On the other hand, antagonisms among individuals are reduced through the encouragement of acts of charity

---

[148] Jean Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 52, 53.

that supplement the system of capital. If such benevolent acts could be seen to emanate

naturally from the subject's recognition of the equivalence of its own "interest" with the

feelings of "pleasure" attained from the production and consumption of others'

"happiness," as Adam Smith argues,[149] then capitalism itself could be naturalized as the

best system to realize full human potential and a moral society.

Sheridan develops this idea of an intrinsic connection between consumption and

generosity by revising the stereotypical libertine figure in the character of Charles

Surface. Charles is introduced by the scandal club as a person who is "Bankrupt in

Fortune and Reputation" (I.i.361), who is on the brink of financial "ruin," and whose

"credit" has been destroyed by extravagant consumption.[150] But it turns out that Charles'

cultivation of friendship and his familial loyalty restore him both as "a Credit to his

Family" (II.iii.385) and as a worthy investment for his benefactor, Sir Oliver. Charles'

lack of "Prudence" in his expenditures is shown to be an asset when his extravagance is

extended to include charity (II.iii.387). His financial distress does not prevent him from

helping a near relation recover from bankruptcy, whereas the frugality of his brother,

Joseph, is shown to be unwarranted selfishness. As a state of indebtedness is first

required to build credit, Charles' ongoing consumption becomes a credit to him that

---

[149] See Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondance of Adam Smith*, Vol. I, ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982), 12.

[150] Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *A School for Scandal*, in *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, Vol. I, ed. Cecil Price (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 355–443. All references are to the Act, Scene, and page number of this edition.

substitutes for the kind of credit the scandalmongers attempt to destroy. As the drama

unfolds, Charles is shown to be the embodiment of the new capitalist morality described

by Baudrillard. He eagerly borrows money on credit from money-lenders such as an

"honest Israelite," who appears in a far more positive light than the anti-semitic humour

might at first suggest (III.i.388). Charles' willingness to consume voraciously—unlike

Willmore, he desires commodities rather than women—and to share his consumables and

money with friends, all the while becoming more indebted to bankers, is ultimately seen

as being *to his credit*, rather than as a sign of weakness. Moreover, what Charles might

lack in ready money, he gains in credit, not least of all through "plain Dealing in

Business" (III.iii.419). When Charles expresses gratitude to Rowley, who is willing to

vouch for his benevolence—to *credit* Charles with natural goodness—Rowley replies: "If

my Efforts to serve you had not succeeded you would have been in my Debt for the

attempt—but deserve to be happy—and you overpay me" (V.iii.440–41). Because

Charles rises to the occasion when his character is tested and he proves Rowley to be

right, he confers credit back onto Rowley. This moral economy based on mutual self-

interest and trust is inextricably connected to participation in a capitalist economy of

contractual exchange, and both sets of relations are in turn linked to the proper fulfillment

of civic and familial duties. The new libertine is no longer one who asserts his liberty

against social and moral constraints but is one who keeps "Family Secrets," exercises

liberality and charity towards others, and ultimately chooses the "Sanctuary" of love over

scandalous society (V.iii.437, 441).

Joseph Surface, the villain of the play is, by contrast, a "Sentimental Knave" (I.i.361), a gross parody of Smith's sympathetic capitalist. Joseph, corrupted by the school's emphasis on "Forms" and the "world's opinion," carefully guards what he says and how much others know about his true motivations (IV.iii.412). In contrast to Charles, Joseph is far more interested in appearing charitable and benevolent than in actually being so, particularly when his family is concerned. As Patricia Spacks points out, Charles is extravagant with material goods while Joseph's extravagance is merely "linguistic."[151] His speech is full of incontrovertible "French" sentiments—such as "to pity without the Power to relieve is still more painful than to ask and be denied" (V.i.426, 425)—that lack any application or conviction. Joseph does not even remain loyal to his own machinations, and is accused by Lady Sneerwell of accumulating for himself "an unfair monopoly" on "Crimes" (V.iii.434). Joseph's grasping for power through secrecy and a devious manipulation of signs undermines a capitalist ethic of equal and fair competition even among his scandalous cohorts, and prevents those around him from attaining social and material prosperity—the ultimate betrayal of the capitalist ethic.

In addition to Joseph Surface, Sheridan's play has another villain: scandal. Like the activities of the Surface brothers, scandal also suggests a close relationship between social manners and economics. The cabalistic school is a circle of conspirators comprised

---

[151] Spacks, *Gossip*, 137.

of members from a leisure class, whose parasitic and self-parasitizing nature involves its consumption of the products of its own "industry"—products that perversely destroy rather than create value—resulting in attacks on various individuals' reputations and a consequently monstrous distortion of normal economic relations (I.i.359). Lady Sneerwell and her companions invert the natural order through a combination of, on the one hand, unproductive labour that damages people's credit and relationships with others, and, on the other hand, productive consumption that generates ever more libels and lies anew where there should be only refuse and waste. The latter form of consumption in particular characterizes Garrick's portrayal of scandal in the Prologue as a self-propagating "Hydra" that can be neither eradicated nor silenced (356). Lady Sneerwell's claim to know "no Pleasure equal to the reducing others, to the Level of my own injured Reputation" (I.i.360) constructs scandal as a discourse of revenge and malice. Those who have acted viciously and have relied on secrecy are inclined to harbour an unnatural suspicion of others' secret vices. Among these scandalmongers, the more virtuous one appears, the more likely one is to be suspected of hiding something. The pedagogy of the school for scandal encourages a willful deception of the self and others, but the need for such deception arises only among those individuals like Lady Sneerwell who already suffer from a tarnished reputation. They can only deflect criticism of their own characters and legitimate their moral authority by attacking others for an alleged lack of virtue. But Sheridan portrays the desire for scandal as itself based on a dangerous subversion of

empathy in that it seeks to establish a relation of difference rather than identity between the self and other.

Sheridan's depiction of scandalous conversation in the second scene of Act Two tends to maximize the humour and minimize the harm associated with gossip as oral communication that concentrates on relatively trivial and innocuous aspects of dress, make-up, and physical appearance, but the introduction of scandal in the first scene belies this later comedic portrayal by indicating at once the grave consequences of libels that expose sexual and moral deviance in public forums and literatures such as the *Town and Country Magazine*. Moreover, the characters of moral conscience take scandal very seriously. They interpret scandal unanimously as slandering private individuals rather than as exposing legitimate transgressions with political repercussions. Slander is feminized: "the male-Slanderer—must have the cowardice of a woman before He can traduce one" (I.i.364). Scandal also bears no resemblance at all to truth. Finally, the best way to avoid the negative social effects of slander is not, as one might expect, a pedagogy of virtuous reform that could counteract the pedagogy of scandal. Rather, the solution is to insert slander into an economic-legal framework such that "in all cases of Slander currency whenever the Drawer of the Lie was not to be found the injured Party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers" (II.ii.382). This proposed moral regulation of scandal based on commercial contracts, a recognition of social interdependency, and an ethic of trust provides a check on scandal's licentiousness, while suggesting the

superiority of an impartial, straightforward economic system that liberates individuals to realize their universal moral nature as opposed to a contrived, artificial system of manners derived from the particular habits and prejudices of an anti-social elite. Nevertheless, *A School for Scandal* never fully resolves the contradictions of capitalism and scandal, freedom and constraint, production and consumption, prudence and excess. For even as scandal destroys characters and imposes certain moral constraints, it also generates discursive liberties and dangerous forms of excess. Ultimately, scandal's attempts to thwart commerce by exaggerating people's licentiousness and destroying their reputational credit fail, but not because of capitalism's superior regulatory mechanisms. They fail because capitalism secretly thrives on excess rather than frugality—on spending rather than saving—and can use scandal's abundant energies to its advantage. Capitalism's structuring of subjectivity and desire *require* the extravagances of scandal literature that drive consumption as much as Charles' benevolence and generosity.

The moral economy and the skeptical view of public pedagogy in *A School for Scandal* are similar in many ways to Francis Burney's message in the, until recently, unproduced and unpublished play, *The Witlings*.[152] The two plays differ, however, in their representation of scandal, particularly in the degree of social significance ascribed to

---

[152] Francis Burney, *The Witlings and the Woman-Hater*, ed. Peter Sabor and Geoffrey Sill (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002), 45–172. All references are to this edition. The editors indicate that Sheridan wanted to produce Burney's play but she was discouraged from making it public because Lady Smatter bore too close a resemblance to Elizabeth Montagu, to whom Burney in a letter obliquely refers as "our *Female Pride of Literature*" (cited on page 17 in above). If the play had been produced, it would have likely caused a great scandal.

scandal and in advice on the best ways to avoid it. It is possible that Burney's more

focused treatment of scandal arises from a recognition of the ongoing power and

heightened effects of scandal on women's lives, a power that is barely registered by

Charles' "ruin" and by Sheridan's play more generally. In Sheridan's play, scandal is

ultimately subordinated to the main action, dismissed as slander, and does not impair

Charles' successful acquisition of an inheritance and a wife. In *The Witlings*, however,

scandal is directly responsible for the preferred moral outcome of the play, and Burney's

hero is only too willing to use scandal to achieve a virtuous end—an opportunistic action

that her contemporaries would have undoubtedly found objectionable in the moral

examplar of the play. The play's outcome is achieved when Censor blackmails Lady

Smatter into approving her nephew's marriage to the virtuous Cecilia by threatening to

publish ballads, lampoons, epigrams, and libels that expose her lack of charity

(V.923–930). Censor is the figure of social intelligence of the play, but his willingness to

use scandal as a weapon against Smatter's lack of empathy for Cecilia has interesting

ramifications for Burney's construction of scandal. Censor exploits Lady Smatter's

"desire for celebrity" (II.28), which is also cited as the motivation for her establishment of

the Witlings club in which she can publicly display her smattering of "intellectual

accomplishments" (I.15–16). Lady Smatter's capitulation to Censor prevents the

defamatory accusations from entering public circulation through print and causing a

scandal. Smatter is only motivated by a concern for her own reputation, a concern that the

play suggests arises from an exaggerated consciousness of social position—a kind of

aristocratic bigotry produced by a class-based education that concerns itself with social

visibility rather than inner virtue. As with the "school for scandal," problems arise when

individuals' sense of identity and self-worth rely exclusively upon the opinions of others,

which can only be based on outward signs. Because of her craven desire for "Fame"

(V.910), Lady Smatter focuses all her energy on appearing intelligent, rather than on the

cultivation of real intellect or virtue. As a result, Lady Smatter's affectations, like Joseph

Surface's sentiments, ultimately make her vulnerable to exposure when her actions belie

her public persona. Although Burney suggests that scandal can be used for virtuous ends,

and is not always slanderous, Censor's preemptive accusations remain only a fiction, and

their effectiveness depends upon Lady Smatter's willingness either to maintain or to

change her course of action for fear of appearing publicly contemptible in having caused

"the injuries of Innocence" (V.916). Consequently, scandal's social role is symptomatic

of the "partial caprices and infirmities of Human Nature" (V. 1057–58). It neither asserts

the public's right to know nor does it concern itself with political corruption. Its subject

matter and effects remain entirely personal. In *The Witlings*, scandal is both an

exhortation to prudence and a mechanism to check personal vanity, while vanity then

becomes linked to scandal as a precondition for the subject's vulnerability. People who

are secure in their sense of self and its compatibility with their public image would not be

overly concerned about scandal and detraction. Censor ultimately convinces Lady Smatter

to comply with his wishes by using flattery when he proposes to write "panegyric" and "songs of Triumph" that will associate her "name with Honour to Posterity" (V. 937–38, 965). Scandal, unlike celebrity, provides no model for proper conduct; it can only appeal to the self-interest of the persons involved. That is, it can only function as a *negation* of the ill effects of Smatter's conduct, not as a beneficial discourse of moral reformation that can teach the subject to exercise empathy and social intelligence regarding the impact of one's actions in public contexts. In the end, scandal is renounced when the desired ends of peace and charity are achieved.

While Censor displays a Machiavellian sense of pragmatism and a general "suspicion" of "Worldly transactions" (III.708), he is not the cynical curmudgeon of Restoration drama. In a deliberately private arrangement, he presents Cecilia with an unexpected gift of a considerable sum of money in order to repair her fortune, which has been at first declared lost when the banker to whom she had entrusted her money is financially ruined. Censor's sympathy for "distressed Innocence" and subsequent "Liberality" are interpreted as signs of his "Benevolence," although Censor dismisses praise by arguing in a Smithean way that he is only "gratifying his own humour" (III.689, V.992–1006). Censor's relationship with Cecilia suggests the need for random or disinterested acts of charity in a market economy that generates uncertainty and the "common vicissitudes of Human Life" (V.1057). Their relationship is contrasted with the mutual self-promotion and partiality that characterize Lady Smatter's patronage of

175

Dabler. Not only is charity purified of selfish motivations but it also acts as a redistributive mechanism based on an individual's autonomous decision rather than on coercion or expectation. Altruistic charity renders obsolete the individual's undignified dependence on the whims of benefactors. The moral message of the play, spoken by Beaufort in anticipation of his marriage to Cecilia, approves "Self-dependance" as the only means to happiness (V.1054). Burney's resolution to the problem of scandal is thus different than Sheridan's, which depicts scandal as false, feminized, trivial, and already domesticated. For Burney, scandal may continue to play a role in the lives of public individuals, but exclusive clubs, social engagements, and public relations have become less appealing than domestic retreat, the preference for which also implies a desire for immunity from scandal and for the diminished power and possibilities of scandal throughout British culture as a whole.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Early eighteenth-century British culture recognizes in varying degrees the social significance of scandal as part of a pedagogical project, which, beyond merely disseminating information, educates the public in the practical language of social intelligence. On one hand, scandal functions politically to demystify aristocratic and traditional moral authority by representing the private interests, desires, and corruptions underlying court policies and party politics. On the other hand, scandal functions economically by providing a medium of exchange for "news" about markets, overseas

<p style="text-align:center">176</p>

investments, imperial wars, and trade, becoming both a commodity and a support to

commodity exchange in a relation that is nevertheless troubled by scandal's constitutive

uncertainty. Most importantly, scandal functions socially to secure certain norms and

values as a basis for communication and for what Raymond Williams calls the "social

character" of society, a crucial aspect of any educational effort.[153] Yet the ways in which

scandal embodies conflicts and division—through its secret form, which claims to expose

powerful individuals as false representatives of the public interest, and, more

dangerously, implies the inadequacy of representation as a problem for democracy—leads

to increasing efforts to contain and diffuse its destablizing potential within the larger

culture. The gradual ossification of modern conceptions of privacy, politeness, individual

rights, and a "rational" public relates in a complex, often antagonistic, way towards

scandal. Scandal is gradually reconstructed over the first half of the century from a largely

political discourse focused on citizenship and national identity to a derided discourse

more or less stripped of its political content. Yet scandal remains a politically-charged

topic of public debate. Scandal's earlier claim to ameliorate national crises is supplanted

by the claim that scandal itself is a cause of national crises. Consequently, scandal is

represented as either a "private" self-indulgence, an aristocratic luxury intent upon the

circulation of personal secrets for the sake of causing personal harm rather than realizing

public benefits, or as the product of scurrilous hack writers who just want to sell

---

[153] Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 146.

177

newspapers. These anxious efforts to reconstitute scandal as a class-specific discourse, associated with the upper class and the lower class, but not the middle one, belie its persistence in various guises in late eighteenth-century popular culture. Its ongoing consumption by a "polite" public is openly disavowed regardless of frequently reiterated suspicions that it might very well still be influencing broader public discourses.

CHAPTER THREE

The Secret History of the British "Publick": News, Scandal, and Defoe's *Review*

Every time the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to reorganize the cultural hegemony.

—Antonio Gramsci[154]

I should never have done, were I minded to set down all the Contrarieties that are to be found in the Publick, *since it possesses all the* Vertues, *and all the* Vices, *all the* Forces, *and all the* Infirmities *of Mankind.*

— Tom Brown[155]

When in 1717, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu visited a Turkish women's

bathhouse, her observations of "so many fine Women naked in different postures, some in

conversation, some working, others drinking Coffee or sherbet, and many negligently

lying on their Cushions" led her to conclude: "In short, tis the Women's coffee house,

where all the news of the Town is told, Scandal invented, etc."[156] One wonders how

Jürgen Habermas' famous idealization of the eighteenth-century coffeehouse as the

"bourgeois public sphere" might have been different had he been required to envision

Addison, Steele, Swift, and Defoe engaged in vigorous debate wearing nothing but their

---

[154] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. William Boelhower (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 183-84.

[155] Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical* (London: John Nutt, 1700), 158.

[156] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Selected Letters*, ed. Isobel Grundy (London: Penguin, 1997), 149.

perriwigs.[157] Nevertheless, it might have dampened Habermas' enthusiasm for eighteenth-century public discourse if scandal had been recognized as integral an element as Montagu would have us think, granting scandal a place of prominence equal to the "news." Indeed, one of the major vehicles that reported on "publick Transactions of the WORLD," Defoe's *Review* (1704–1713), initially featured a column entitled "*Mercure Scandale*: or, Advice from the Scandalous Club: Being, a *Weekly History of* Nonsence, Impertinence, Vice *and* Debauchery."[158]

When Defoe begins the *Review* in 1704, it has two distinct parts. The main "Body" is comprised of an essay on trade and politics that claims to be "True History" (I: A3v). Importantly, Defoe insists that he employs "an Impartial and Exact Historical Pen" in order to provide an account "stript from the false Glosses of Parties" (I: 3–4). The second feature, the *Scandal. Club* column, is appended to the end of the periodical essay, allegedly as an "Innocent Diversion" contrasting with the "more weighty and serious

---

[157] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962), trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

[158] Daniel Defoe, *A Review of the Affairs of France* (London, 1705). "Advice from the Scandal. Club" appears in Vol. I & II. I will abbreviate this title to *Scandal. Club.* Defoe also published, in conjunction with the *Review*, the *Supplementary Journal to the Advice from the Scandal. Club* (London, 1704) and *The Little Review: or, an Inquisition of Scandal* (London, 1705). All citations are to these editions. A facsimile of these publications is available in Vol. 1–5 of *Defoe's Review*, Introduction by Arthur Wellesley Secord (New York: AMS Press, 1965). A selection of the *Review* is available in *The Best of Defoe's Review*, ed. William L. Payne (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951). See also Payne's published thesis, *Mr. Review: Daniel Defoe as Author of the Review* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1947). Several excellent critical biographies of Defoe also discuss his work in the *Review*: see Paula Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Maximilllian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and John Richetti, *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography* (London: Blackwell, 2005).

Part" (I: A3v). Given the apparent popularity of the *Scandal. Club* in the first year of its issue and the sheer volume of positive and negative reactions it receives, Defoe probably exaggerates the triviality of its content in order to heighten the significance of the principal essay, which he intends to be the main vehicle through which to shape the existing field of political discourse. The *Scandal. Club* consists of an "allegory" in which a society of "Gentlemen" hears complaints from members of the public who feel they have been imposed upon in some manner by a person or people who should be reasonably expected to know better. Due to the corruption of the men who administer justice in the church and secular courts, the scandalized individuals have no other recourse than to apply to the Scandal Society, which, hearing the complaint, votes whether or not to proceed with a public censure. Defoe claims a "secret hand" guides the writing of the Scandal Society's proceedings, the "Entertainment" of which he hopes will overcome his audience's "Natural Aversion to a Solemn and Tedious Affair" and will lead them to buy and to read the principal essay (I: A3v). Defoe suggests that the *Scandal. Club* is merely a tactical manoeuvre: he hopes to "hand on" to his readers the more useful information by making "a diligent Enquiry after Truth, and laying before the World the Naked Prospect of Fact" (I: 4). But he also justifies the *Scandal. Club* as beneficial to the public good: "The Business of this Society is to censure the Actions of Men, not of Parties, and in particular, those Actions which are made publick so by the Authors, as to be, in their own Nature, an Appeal to the general Approbation" (I: 16). As suggested by this reference to

181

"Authors," the most frequent satirical targets of the *Scandal. Club* are other journalists, whom he warns to "be careful, not to Impose Absurdities and Contradiction in their Weekly-Papers" (I: 4). This question of language and signification is a theme that recurs throughout the *Scandal. Club*, and it is integral to an understanding of how Defoe constructs an early eighteenth-century British public.

This chapter will begin by examining some features of Defoe's *Scandal. Club*, paying special attention to how the discourse of scandal is used by Defoe and how the presence of scandal can expand or complicate the way we conceptualize the formation of "the public." In particular, I will suggest that the tremendous effort Defoe devotes to shaping and refining language can be interpreted in terms of what Antonio Gramsci calls the development of a "normative grammar"—the cultural means through which a provisional "unitary national linguistic conformism" contributes to the formation of a national public.[159] Defoe's efforts to establish a collective identity through offering a view "stript from the false Glosses of Parties"—a view made possible by the discourse of scandal but nominally and conceptually distinct from it—suggests the kind of rationalized public that would later become the "phantom" ideal of liberal democracy, an ideal secured only through the ongoing repudiation of scandal.[160]

From the very beginning, Defoe's presentation of the *Scandal. Club* is

---

[159] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, 181.
[160] See Bruce Robbins, "Introduction: The Public as Phantom," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), ix.

characterized by ambivalence. This ambivalence derives in part from the way in which he

satirically undercuts the authority of the Scandal Society. It is also suggested most clearly

by his construction of the Society as a French "Corporation" at a time when England was

at war with France (I: 15). The *Scandal. Club* is supposed to be transactions translated

from the French of a "Society ... long since established in Paris" with a patron named

"Mons. *Pasquin* at *Rome*" (I: 15, 43). Moreover, the *Scandal. Club* only remains part of

the first two volumes of the *Review* (roughly 130 numbers) before Defoe replaces the

column with another periodical essay simply titled *Miscellanea*. Defoe explains his

decision to abandon the *Scandal. Club* about a quarter of the way through the second

volume when he deems the parliamentary election to be a "Publick and more Weighty

Subject," stating "The Author of this Paper ... thought fit to Adjourn the Diverting Part,

till those more Valuable Matters were something over. But finding the Multitude and

Variety of Things before him, not less pressing now than ever, and the Brevity of the

Paper not giving any tolerable Dispatch, he has resolv'd, for the future, to leave quite out

the said part, call'd *Advice from the Scandal. Club*" (II:123). While writing the first

volume of the *Review*, Defoe, claiming to be "Letter-baited by Querists" from the reading

public (I: A3r), issued five monthly supplements from September 1704 to January 1705

under the title *A Supplementary Journal, to the Advice from the Scandal. Club*, which

focused on more general concerns than the *Scandal. Club* by endeavouring in an earnest

manner to answer questions posed by readers regarding "Divinity, Morality, Love, State,

183

War, Trade, Language, Poetry, Marriage, Drunkenness, Whoring, Gaming, Vowing, and the like" in a manner that Defoe compares to Dunton's *Athenian Mercury*.[161] The trend towards this type of content matter continued when Defoe, after discontinuing the *Scandal. Club* in April 1705, enlisted the help of other writers to publish *The Little Review; or, an Inquisition of Scandal, Consisting in Answers of Questions and Doubts, Remarks, Observation, and Reflection*. This publication continued for only a three-month period, ending abruptly well before the end of the second volume of the *Review*. Unlike the earlier *Scandal. Club*, which rarely hesitated to indicate with only initials or consonants the particular person charged with scandalous activity, the *Little Review* declared its intent "to avoid all pointing at Persons, and hopes no Gentleman will make this Paper be the Handle of Private Resentments."[162] The format of the *Little Review*, although continuing to answer some political queries, dispensed with the proceedings of the Scandal Society in favour of a question-and-answer format similar to the *Supplementary Journal*.

Even though the *Scandal. Club* became popular enough to warrant its own paper, Defoe's choice of title for the later publication—*The Little Review*—emphasizes the

---

[161] *Supplementary Journal*, "Introduction," 4, in vol. 3 of *Defoe's Review*, ed. Secord. The contents of the *Scandal. Club* already anticipated this shift towards the readers' general moral and personal concerns—concerns we now characteristically associate with advice columns—when it diverges from its usual subject matter in order to publish a letter from a young man who seeks advice from the Society. The letter-writer, after having "courted" an unmarried, young woman into bed and subsequently talked about it, declaring that "keeping a secret" was "none of my Talent," was then threatened with a law suit from the lady's father (I: 227). Defoe justifies the publication of the letter for "Sundry Reasons" and as "a sufficient Caution to the Sex" (I: 227).

[162] *Little Review*, "Introduction" (June 6, 1705), 2, in vol. 5 of *Defoe's Review*, ed. Secord.

subordination of less "weighty" matters. Why does the discourse of scandal slide from a "newsworthy" to a diminutive status as suggested by the epithet "little"? The transformations of Defoe's *Review*—especially the eventual supercession of the scandal column with the advice column—coincides, I suggest, with other trends in eighteenth-century culture, particularly the bourgeois conceptions of the public and "polite" society. Indeed, Defoe later writes that he is "glad to see the [Scandal] Society honoured by the succession (in those just endeavours) of the venerable Isaac Bickerstaff [Richard Steele]."[163]

Richard Steele and Joseph Addison follow closer in the footsteps of the *Little Review* than the *Scandal. Club* by addressing sundry matters regarding polite morals and fashion rather than politics,[164] Addison, in particular, refusing to "season" *The Spectator* with "Scandal" and scoffing at a "way of writing [that] was first introduced by *T—m Br—wn*, of facetious Memory, who, after having gutted a Proper Name of all its intermediate Vowels, used to plant it in his Works, and make as free with it as he pleased, without any danger of the Statute."[165] Addison and Steele's battle with scandal writers helps draw a boundary that continues as a feature of journalistic culture: the difference in

---

[163] Defoe, cited in Payne, "Introduction," *The Best of Defoe's Review*, xvi.

[164] Brian Cowan argues that Addison and Steele's Whig politics produced a "social reform project was to close off and restrain, rather than open up, venues for public debate and especially public debate on matter of political concern." See Cowan, "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, No. 3 (2004): 345–346.

[165] Joseph Addison, *Spectator* No. 567 (July 14, 1714), in *The Spectator*, ed. D.F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), IV:537.

form and content between, on the one hand, the periodical essay and polite journalism, and, on the other, the scandal sheet and tabloid journalism.[166] Although the former is strongly associated with a modern conception of the public and civil society in the work of Habermas and others, there can be no doubt regarding the persistence of the latter as a relatively invisible but no less significant feature of public culture. Examining how these distinctions came into being in the early eighteenth century carries the additional value of alienating us from entrenched elements of "bourgeois" culture that are too often still glossed as natural or commonsensical among readers today.

Defoe's *Review* helps to articulate this modern division between "weighty" news of immediate relevance to state politics and "light" news relating to "sundry" matters of public interest. For example, by 1709, the anonymous publication *Gazette-A-la-Mode: or, Tom Brown's Ghost* seems to accept uncritically the distinction between hard news and the soft content of his own paper, a distinction that at least initially requires some effort on Defoe's part to establish in the first place. The author of *Tom Brown's Ghost* writes: "The Politicians are so busie now about News, I shall find it a difficult thing to amuse the Town with Triffles, while the Rich are hurried to get Money to pay into the Bank, and the Poor perplexed to get Bread to put into their Bellies. I cannot forbear smiling to think I have nothing to do with *News* and *State Affairs*, but lye as soft as a Down Bed, and walk

---

[166] For further discussion regarding how the *Tatler* and *Spectator* aim to establish a Whig ethic of "politeness," see Lawrence Klein, "Property and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Whig Moralists: The Case of the *Spectator*," in *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, ed. John Brewer and Susan Staves (London: Routledge, 1995), 221–33.

as light as a Feather." Language becomes a further means of delineating these two kinds

of news in the eighteenth century. The "true history" bases its authority on an assumed

impartiality and transparency of expression, while the "secret history" claims to provide

entertainment *through* its partial and biased forms of representation. *Tom Brown's Ghost*

describes this latter type of representation as appealing to the "Common Reader" who

desires "Allegories and obscure Characters, on purpose to imploy the Wit of some Men ...

or else to gratifie whimsical Fancies of the *Woud-be-Wits*, who admire every thing they

don't understand, for no other Reason, than because 'tis unintelligible like themselves."

The satirical author not only admits his own self-interested motivations in offering "this

Sort of Writing, most likely to take, because it hits every Bodies *Taste*"; he also cannot

help slighting his own readership by stating his ambition to pursue "much the easier

Task" of appealing to "the Multitude," instead of aiming "to please a few good

Judges."[167] It is significant that these two modes of expression—the true, factual history

and the secret, allegorical history—are both embodied in Defoe's initial conception of the

Review.

The political implication of Defoe's distinctions between factual news and

entertainment as well as his attempts to fix an English system of grammar reflect and

support other cultural efforts to establish a quintessentially English literary canon and a

---

[167] *Gazette-A-la-Mode: or, Tom Brown's Ghost* No. 5 (June 9, 1709), a single news sheet reprinted in *Contemporaries of the 'Tatler' and 'Spectator,'* with an introduction by Richmond P. Bond, Augustan Reprint Society No. 46 (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library, 1954), n.p.

modern pedagogy derived from national literature rather than classical rhetoric. Samuel

Johnson, for instance, claims to base his *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) on

the language employed by "writers before the Restoration, whose works I regard as *the*

wells of English undefiled, as the pure sources of genuine diction."[168] This process of

ignoring certain historical grammars "connected to traditional developments"—for both

Johnson and Defoe, the tradition that needs to be suppressed is the pernicious infiltration

of the English language by gallicisms—is deliberately selective and designed to produce

what Gramsci calls "cultural hegemony," the outcome of processes that universalize one

particular view at the expense of other subordinated views. But while subordinated views

remain unrecognized, they persist within the culture as relatively disorganized,

incoherent, and "unofficial " knowledges that threaten to disrupt the provisional and

always partial hegemony. For Gramsci, individuals in a position to articulate the

"normative grammar"—members or affiliates of the ruling class—are the ones whose

interests hegemony is designed to serve, although hegemony also facilitates social

stability through garnering the consent of subordinated class.

In Gramscian terms, language, understood broadly as a signifying system, is the

medium through which subjects relate to each other and their surroundings. Each

community establishes through consent and coercion (grammar schools, "normal"

---

[168] Johnson, "Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language*," in *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, ed. Donald Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 319.

schools) the communicative norms that guide individuals' speech and manners so as to make them intelligible to others. But there is always potential for the subversion or transgression of these norms through reference to other grammars that cannot be simply reduced to "private" idiosyncracies. The development of "normative grammar" does not erase the traces of historical grammars; rather, it can only attain its status through what Gramsci calls a "whole complex of actions and reactions come together" in an ongoing process of drawing of boundaries between itself and those other grammars. The normative has no stable existence outside of its discursive constitution, which is "made up of the reciprocal monitoring, reciprocal teaching, and reciprocal 'censorship' expressed in such questions as 'What did you mean to say?', 'What do you mean?', 'Make yourself clearer', etc., and in mimicry and teasing." The discourse of scandal asks these same kinds of questions regarding individuals' actions, and consequently helps to "establish 'norms' or judgements of correctness or incorrectness."[169] But scandal articulates the presence of differences in a way that suggests such norms are not uniformly understood and thus can only be *merely normative* and, more often than not, reflective of particular interests as well. Scandal's articulation of social antagonisms foregrounds the performative dimensions of publicity and of the public as a signifying network that operates like language and always threatens to exceed the acceptable boundaries arranged by a culture's norms.

---

[169] Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, 180.

In addition to exploring Defoe's concern with language, I will also suggest that the initial format of the *Review*, which includes the *Scandal. Club,* provides us with an excellent conceptual map for understanding the discursive formation of the early modern public, a formation that may have its origins in the eighteenth century but continues to affect us today. This argument is based on the assumption that the *Review* embodies the social totality in its very form: the separate spaces literally occupied by the main essay and the subordinated scandal column *together* offer us a representation of the public in its formative complexity. The conceptual map provided by the *Review* also has sufficient complexity to illuminate contemporary, post-structural models of the social, particularly the one developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,*[170] which benefits in turn from the specific ways Defoe's work reveals its historical contingency.

The first part of the *Review*, Defoe's periodical essay, represents the beginnings of an official conception of the public as a closed or bounded system of individuals who enjoy their equal and autonomous differences. Defoe refers to these individuals, his readers, as "Gentleman-Freeholders" (II: 75), men of property with voting privileges. The Gramscian model of language also figures the composition of this public: grammatical norms establish a set of relationships between words that are organized within a linguistic

---

[170] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985), 2nd edition (London: Verso, 2001).

structure in which every individual element is conferred a stable meaning through its

difference from all other elements. This grammar, then, is simply "normative" insofar as

it is the outcome of historically contingent negotiations. However, when normative

grammar and a particular version of the public attain official status, they increasingly

erase the conditions of their production and assume a naturalized status: they pose as

being identical with "common sense" as the meanings and positions of difference become

more rigid and fixed. Articulations based on this commonsense ideal are viewed by the

consenting participants as rational or reasonable because they can be commonly

understood among those who have been granted the authority to dictate what is rational,

what is "Impartial and Authentick Truth" (*Review* I: 4). Anything that might challenge the

stability of the system is automatically designated "irrational." There can be no

acknowledgement that this apparently natural order continuously depends on exclusions

in order to maintain its dominance. Indeed, no elements can be admitted to this public

that are not already granted status as equal and independent units, a status based on the

dominant ideology of the bourgeoisie and granted only to propertied men in the

eighteenth century.

My argument agrees with scholarship that suggests that a process of

embourgeoisement in England over the course to the eighteenth century enables one

particular Enlightenment concept of the public to become dominant. Consequently, many

potential, competing ideas and historical "phases" of the public are subordinated to a

single idea or phase, which, in Gramsci's terms, attains hegemony as the "'exemplary

phase'" declared to be "the 'only' one worthy to become, in an 'organic' and 'totalitarian'

way, the 'common' language of a nation."[171] Georg Lukács suggests that the bourgeoisie

denies its own historicity as particular phase in capitalist development. It prefers the idea

that its presence and power are the effects of transhistorical, permanent conditions.

Bourgeois individuals might highlight their own labour, industry, and charitable

benevolence as the basis for their economic success, but the privileged position of the

bourgeoisie means that it evades scrutiny. Its class-specific interests become human

interests. The middle class need not develop its own class consciousness because it

already sets the universal standard. Class itself becomes an ex-nominated or unarticulated

facet of bourgeois identity, producing an effect whereby the very term "bourgeois"

becomes scandalously objectionable as an imposition at odds with individuals' self-

definitions, which increasingly employ "ideological" categories such as gender and race

as markers of identity whose origins are less easily objectified by and attributed to

specific material determinants and social structures. According to Lukács, the bourgeoisie

is "unable to comprehend the reality and the origins of bourgeois society" because to do

so would transform its apparent universality into a fully contingent phenomenon and

---

[171] Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, 181. Laclau and Mouffe define hegemony as the occasion when a "particular social force assumes the representation of a totality that is radically incommensurable with it" (x).

expose the ways in which it maintains its power through concealing exploitation.[172] In this sense, Habermas' construction of the "bourgeois public sphere" is an enormous contribution to a Marxist project that seeks to uncover the historically-specific class and (to a lesser degree) gender content that informs our limited contemporary ideas of the public. Habermas draws attention to the history of the public's development as a function of bourgeois hegemony, of the universalizing of the particular ideas and values of one class. However, Habermas' view is necessarily partial: he not only essentializes "Reason" as having an existence independent of its discursive production (men adapt to the eternal principles of reason, rather than the other way around) but he also idealizes the closedness of the public, its necessary drawing of hermetic boundaries—between the public and the private, for example—and its ability to provide stability for the social order.[173] Many of these ideals, as will be discussed below, are articulated by Defoe in the *Review*.

A consideration of the *Review* as a whole, however, makes clear the heterogeneous and conflicted composition of both the diverse elements that make up the early eighteenth-century English public and the various contemporary constructions of it,

---

[172] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectic*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 156.

[173] The politics outlined extensively in Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), the first volume of which is unambiguously titled *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, makes clear that his project is to reinstate the rational society. For this reason, Habermas has a particular affinity for the Enlightenment period (often reduced to and conflated with the philosophical tradition and discourse of reason), to which he self-professedly looks for an "ideal type of the bourgeois public sphere." See Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 421–462.

neither of which are adequately represented by Habermas' concept of a rationalized

bourgeois public sphere. Laclau and Mouffe's critique of Habermas is based on the

necessary presence of "irrational" antagonisms with the social:

> For us, a non-exclusive public sphere of rational argument is a conceptual
> impossibility. ... we will never be able to leave our particularities
> completely aside in order to act in accordance with our rational self. ...
> Indeed, we maintain that without conflict and division, a pluralist
> democratic politics would be impossible. To believe that a final resolution
> of conflict is eventually possible—even if it is seen as an asymptotic
> approach to the regulative idea of a rational consensus—far from
> providing the necessary horizon for the democratic project, is to put it at
> risk.

Laclau and Mouffe's post-structuralist account of the social as constituted by language

persuasively argues that the social operates like a language: moments of political

articulation "establish a relation among elements" by positioning each "unique" element

in an oppositional arrangement to each other element. The public is constituted by these

delineations, which together form a "structured totality" that compels collective

identification through its representation as such. This identification is based on the

stabilization of mutually dependent differences that are constituted by the linguistic

operation and only *appear* to emanate independently from *essential* differences residing

within each of the elements. By emphasizing *moments* of articulation rather than spaces,

Laclau and Mouffe further distance themselves from Habermas, whose spatialized

metaphor of the bounded "sphere" (the English translation of *Öffentlichkeit*) risks a kind

of literalization, evident in the frequent conflation of "public sphere" with actually existing "public space." What Laclau and Mouffe's work makes clear is that the "space" of the public is fundamentally discursive: it has no substance but exists in an immaterial realm of intersubjective communication. Laclau and Mouffe also emphasize that discursive spaces are constituted within time; they cannot preexist the "moments" of public-political "articulation" through which they are constituted.[174] This qualification extends to literature as well: the occupation of space by text must coincide with moments in which the subject engages with the textual meanings and is subsequently reconstituted by the reading process—only in those moments can text be transformed into discourse. Conceptualizing the public as a discursive space means recognizing that its only "real" boundary exists outside the field of discursive possibility, which makes positing such a boundary essentially meaningless. The only way the public can acquire the *appearance* of being bounded is through the articulation of a particular, official discourse in opposition to those elements that remain unofficial and that more often than not are constructed as "private."[175] Thus, the only boundaries—around the official public, for example, or

---

[174] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, xvii–xviii, 105.

[175] I am suggesting here that what qualifies as "private"—a useful category in law, for example—can only be constituted within the realm of public discourse. If an effort needs to be made to exclude something "private" from the public realm, then the so-called "private" matter has already been made public and can only retroactively be labelled "private." This means that discussion surrounding privacy and what such a category might mean is an intensely political issue. In Pocock's terms, privacy becomes an important "political idiom" over the course of the eighteenth century. However, the discursive constitution of privacy and specific acts as "private" should be distinguished from the "truly" private, which could never be represented in the communicative medium of discourse at all without nullifying its private nature in the process.

between the public and the private—that *can* be drawn must exist *within* the public itself

and are therefore permeable and unstable. It is in the context of these unstable boundaries

that Paula Backscheider's substitution of "liminal space" for "public sphere" is insightful,

although she seems to construct the "liminal space" as a kind of third space that mediates

between "Habermas's authentic public sphere" and the private sphere, rather than

proposing as I would here that the "liminal space" is an integral part of the public itself.[176]

At the margins of the boundaries erected by official discourse reside various elements of

the social not included within the hegemonic discursive formation but still qualifying as

constitutive of the public. These elements are most effectively symbolized in terms of

their differences from the hegemonic discourse, against which their symbolization

appears "antagonistic" because they express a "failure of difference" that cannot be

accommodated by the hegemonic discourse.[177] This latent possibility of an alternative,

counter-hegemonic mode of signification is made manifest by Defoe's *Scandal. Club.*

Few proponents of the Habermasian "public sphere" model, in which the press is

assumed to be a tremendous formative influence upon the reasoning public and the major

vehicle of rational public expression, would be able to account for the presence of the

Scandal. Club in Defoe's periodical. In contrast to the main essay, the *Scandal.Club* is a

necessarily open system that enables Defoe to interact with and publish letters written by

---

[176] Paula Backscheider, "Introduction," *The Intersections of the Public and Private Spheres in Early Modern England*, ed. Paula Backscheider and Timothy Dykstal (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 13.
[177] Laclau and Mouffe, 125.

his readers. It represents the realm of the public in which values and norms are contested; differences are confounded; and the public and the private intermingle. Stable meanings and differences within this space cannot be taken for granted. In fact, the purpose of the *Scandal.Club* is to arbitrate among a multiplicity of overlapping voices in order to produce some kind of "normative grammar" where none has previously existed. If the periodical essay assumes a single, coherent voice speaking on behalf of a unified public and characterized by linguistic transparency, then the *Scandal.Club* is comprised of what must be excluded in order to construct that unity and coherence. Defoe uses the *Scandal. Club* to represent a series of negative examples that bolster the authority of his principal essay and pressure other news-writers to conform to its positive example. Yet even as the *Scandal. Club* initially acts as a support to the official publicness of the essay, its ongoing presence threatens to reveal that the essay's "facts" are not essentially factual but are instead the outcome of processes that are contingent—the articulation of these processes threatens to reveal the contingent nature of the official public itself. Once the hegemony of Whig values and a bourgeois public becomes possible, the presence of the *Scandal. Club* becomes too dangerous. Nevertheless, what can no longer be positively admitted to official public discourse still remains a constitutive part of the public. Given that the language of the public and publicness is one of the important "idioms of political discourse" in the eighteenth century, it seems important to try develop an historical understanding of the concept, following J.G.A Pocock's model of historiography that

197

acknowledges "the utterance of diverse and contrary propositions."[178] Within this

framework, references to a unified public sphere or public opinion can only be thought of

as retroactive labels designed to legitimate one particular outcome of a public occasion

and assigned by those individuals who have the representative and discursive power to

make such designations stick. Nevertheless, one can still speak of an eighteenth-century

public political consciousness consisting of various interests and factions without

nullifying the value of "the Publick" as a conceptual category.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Many scholars, including Habermas,[179] have accepted and expanded upon

Raymond William's argument that "the foundation of the English Press is, in its first

stages, the story of the growth of a middle-class reading public,"[180] although there is some

skepticism expressed regarding the extent of this public due to the limited circulation of

the newpapers by today's standards. Setting aside what J.A. Downie calls the "question of

circulation,"[181] it is nevertheless the case that *a reading public* first becomes thinkable in

this period. Linda Colley argues that even if newspapers were actually read by only "the

minority who could afford them," an awareness of the existence of newspapers made it

---

[178] See Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 9.

[179] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 14–26. See also Benedict Anderson's "The Origins of National Consciousness," Chapter 3 of *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), in which print capitalism is given a significant role in the development of national identity.

[180] Williams, *The Long Revolution* (1961; Repr. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 201.

[181] Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 6.

possible for Britons to "imagine Great Britain as a whole. ... they would be constantly reminded that their private lives were bounded by a wider context, that whether they liked it or not they were caught up in decisions taken by men in London, or in battles fought on the other side of the world."[182] Williams' account of eighteenth-century print culture also establishes a hierarchy of materials that appeared in the press, listed in descending order as "original work that can properly be classed as literature, through polite journalism, to an obvious 'digest' function." Williams indicates that by "digest" he means second-hand summaries of news items, which might include "good writing" but is also quite clearly comprised of "much self-conscious 'pre-digested' instruction in taste and behaviour, and some exploitation of such accompanying interests as gossip and scandal about prominent persons." Williams groups scandal with poor quality writing and with the exploitation of the audience's interests rather than with the more reputable service of providing "first-hand acquaintance with facts, literature, and opinion."[183] Defoe has this latter intention in mind when he presents the *Review* as literature that should be distinguished from the "Errors and Nonsense of our News-Writers" (I: 6). But in the eighteenth century, such distinctions could not yet be taken for granted, or else Defoe would not have needed to emphasize repeatedly the *differences* embodied by the *Review*.

Defoe's effort to establish his periodical as the authoritative resource for national

---

[182] Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 41.

[183] Williams, 205.

affairs must be understood within the context of Defoe's employment by Robert Harley,

the Secretary of State. J.A. Downie's *Robert Harley and the Press* provides a detailed

account of Harley's effort to use the new print culture and writers such as Defoe to create

"a government propaganda machine." Defoe's statements in the *Review* often

ventriloquize Harley's political platform, which was basically a "non-party scheme" that

supported toleration and a quick peace in the war against France and Spain, which started

in 1701 over whether a French or Austrian monarch would assume the Spanish throne.

According to Downie, Defoe worked for Harley in exchange for some money and a

pardon for a seditious libel conviction associated with Defoe's pamphlet, *The Shortest*

Way with the Dissenters, which satirized the Anglican Church's persecution of non-

conformists.   Downie further asserts that Harley was the first British politician to

recognize fully the power of the press to cultivate "favourable public opinion." The

public certainly became an important factor when the Triennial Act of 1694 limited the

duration of each Parliament to three years, and thus established "a connection between

electoral activity and the rise of a virulent political press." Although Harley was doubtful

about the benefits of a continental war, among his major concerns in 1704 was trying to

build parliamentary support for government policies, which included "national solidarity"

in favour of the war.[184] Queen Anne required the support of Parliament to pass important

tax legislation that would fund the war, but the Parliament was comprised of a significant

---

[184] Downie, 63, 72, 63, 58, 1, 58.

number of High Churchmen who seemed more concerned with denying dissenters the

power to hold public office that the Toleration Act had allowed in 1689. In 1702, the

House of Commons initiated an Occasional Conformity Bill that was rejected by the

House of Lords. The Bill sought to penalize dissenters who were accused of attending the

Church of England in order to receive "the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, to qualify

themselves to have and enjoy such Offices and Employment, and do afterwards resort to

Conventicles and Meetings for the exercise of Religion in other manner."[185] If the

dissenting sects who used the language of scandal to argue for freedom of conscience in

worship seemed best positioned to exemplify Habermas' bourgeois public comprised of

"private people, come together ... to compel public authority to legitimate itself before

public opinion,"[186] then the English state in the early eighteenth century was nowhere

close to granting autonomy to such a public. In fact, such a public would be effectively

constituted only by ongoing state interference. In 1704, the Bill was put forward again,

and the House of Commons voted whether or not to "tack" it onto a supply bill, which

would give much-needed support to the Queen for the war, in order to make it much more

difficult for the House of Lords to reject it again. The "tackers" failed, but Defoe

interrupted the *Review*'s disquisition on English trade in order to launch a campaign

---

[185] "The First Parliament of Queen Anne: First Session - Act Preventing Occasional Conformity - Begins 20/10/1702," *The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons: Volume 3: 1695–1706*, 212–17. Online: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=37664 (accessed 17 March 2006).

[186] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 25–26. See also Ana M. Acosta, "Spaces of Dissent and the Public Sphere in Hackney, Stoke Newington, and Newington Green," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27, No. 1 (2003): 1–27.

against the "Enemies of Peace" in May 1705, describing the tack as a "Monster big with unknown Embrio's, and brooding all the Civil Plagues that can be imagin'd possible to befal this Nation" (II: 97). The High Churchmen retaliated with an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Daniel the Prophet No Conjurer*, in which Defoe is accused of "Commonwealth" radicalism and of encouraging "all such as are *Ill Dispos'd* to act over those *Melancholy Scenes* again which the Nation yet *Smarts* for."[187] It is precisely this kind of party language, inflected with overtones of religious piety and designed to tar one's opponent with extremism, that Defoe was most desirous of avoiding in the *Review*.[188] With the Bill defeated, he exhorts dissenters to "BE CONTENTED" that the Toleration was upheld and then proceeds to ask the same of High Churchmen, who should rest secure in that "the Queen, the Government and the Dissenters on one Plot together" are not conspiring against the Church of England (II: 497, 502). Peace, for Defoe, means the stabilization of differences within the nation, but this could only be achieved through the recognition of difference on an individual level and the project of a common language.

The idea that peace and social stability could be achieved through recognizing differences and guaranteeing the equal autonomy of each individual word or man provides an outline of the guiding principles of liberal democracy. In this way, Defoe was

---

[187] *Daniel the Prophet No Conjurer: or, His Scandal. Club's Scandalous BALLAD called The Tackers* (London, [1705]), 3–4.

[188] For further information on how religion and party politics intermingled through the century, see James E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution, and English Radicalism: Non-Conformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

applying to domestic politics a similar demand for equilibrium between opposing forces

that was used as a justification for England's support of the Austrian claim to the Spanish

throne. Queen Anne told Parliament in 1705: "Nothing can be more evident, than that, if

the *French* King continues Master of the *Spanish* Monarchy, the Balance of Power in

Europe is utterly destroyed; and He will be able in a short Time to engross the Trade, and

the Wealth, of the World."[189] An understanding of a need for a balance of power extended

as well to an England divided by party strife and extremism. The purpose of the House of

Commons was to consolidate the public interest—understood as secular political and

economic interests—and to communicate it to the Crown, which could not act in turn

without the consent of Parliament.[190] Defoe saw party in-fighting, divisions in the House

of Commons, bribery, and behind-the-scenes conspiracies as not only subverting the

effectiveness of Parliament but also aligning individuals with overlapping, factious

interests, which seemed to derive from the desire more for personal advancement than for

the public or national good. Within such a framework, the dissenting cause also had an

important role in preventing the Church of England from becoming the only arbiter of

---

[189] "House of Lords Journal Volume 18: 27 October 1705," *Journal of the House of Lords: Volume 18: 1705–1709* (1802), 6–9, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=29366> (accessed 17 March 2006).

[190] Alongside his official attack on the "tackers" in the *Review*, Defoe included an account of the events in his secret memoir, *The Consolidator or Memoirs of Sundry Transactions from the World in the Moon* (1705), in which the "Consolidator" or "Mechanick Engine" refers to the House of Commons and is comprised of "Men of the Feather" who would enable the "Machine" to fly quite easily to the moon if it were not for the presence of the "light fluttering Feathers, and the fermented Feathers." See Defoe, *The Consolidator* (London: Benj. Bragg, 1705), 322. A facsimile reprint is available with an introduction by Malcolm J. Bosse (New York: Garland, 1972).

conscience and morality. The achievement of a peaceful union—the principle of union

was at the forefront of English political thought during this period, which culminated in

the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707—should not require conformity

or uniformity but the stabilization of differences. According to Manuel Schonhorn,

"Defoe's language is so often about reconciling and reconciliation that the words can be

considered guideposts to his special vocabulary. For him the words call up the image of

balance, of equilibrium, of harmonizing oppositions, not dissolving differences." The

only way national unity could be achieved and justice could be maintained was through

"a healthy tension of opposites."[191] In light of Defoe's desire for conciliation through

difference, party-based politics posed a particular problem. Not only did it upset a

dialectical balance by interposing new interests between individual interests and public

interests, but it also compromised the ability of the state to represent public interests.

Only a publication like the *Review*, based on a "plain" design and communicated in a

plain language stripped of party innuendo (I: A2v), would provide a firm footing for the

emergence of a British public. Defoe sets out to constitute a British public through a

particular focus on linguistic clarity that coincided with Harley's political project to

overcome the party divisions, disputes, and anti-government views that were impeding

government policy and blocking the passage of legislation favourable to state interests.

---

[191] Manuel Schonhorn, "Defoe and the Limits of Jacobite Rhetoric," *English Literary History* 64, No. 4 (1997): 883.

But for Defoe's contemporaries, as Downie suggests, the possibility of party neutrality could not be countenanced, and they unleashed "a counter-campaign against 'false moderation.'"[192] Party politics articulates only one of several fundamental antagonisms that I argue—*contra* Defoe—should be understood as constitutive of the public, rather than as obstacles or barriers to its formation.

Politics based on individualized differences had once enabled moderate and principled politicians like Robert Harley to vote and act with some personal integrity in the service of the nation and the Queen, without needing to club together with any particular group or party. By fostering alliances, the party system, which had been raging since 1689, now confounded the desire for stabilized, individual differences by adding a new layer of party ideologies to personal and public interests. It might seem counterintuitive at first to think of the conflicts proceeding from the party system as arising *not* from difference but from a lack of individualized difference. It is precisely the cabalistic and colluding identities formed by party affiliations that Defoe finds most dangerous. The major challenge facing Defoe involved overcoming the various idioms of party politics that created intractable divisions when national unity should be granted a priority. The presence of these schismatic parties is suggested by Tom Brown's description of London coffeehouses as each catering to a specific faction: "I should never have done, if I should attempt to run through all the several Countries within the Wall of

---

[192] Downie, 72.

London; as the long Robe, the Sword, the Treasury. Every State, in brief, is like a separate

Country by its self, and has its particular Manners and Gibberish." Among the various

countries represented within coffeehouse culture is the *"Cold Country of the News-*

Mongors, that Report more than they hear, affirm more than they know, and swear more

than they believe, that Rob one another, and lye in Sheets for want of a Coverlid."

Brown's clever pun on "sheets" suggests that news published in scandal sheets conveys

"lyes" that would not be acceptable for respectable periodical publication, and at the same

time likens the exchanges of news-mongers with the lewdness of a hasty sexual

encounter. Brown further describes the coffeehouses as "smoaky Territories" in which the

"Liquor as Black as Soot" produces fumes that, penetrating the "Noses, Eyes, and Ears,"

induce the drinkers to behave "Foppishly" by telling grossly exaggerated stories.[193] In a

similar fashion, Defoe suggests that in newspapers "all the Observations or Reflections I

ever yet met with, serves but to Amuse Mankind, Byass our Judgments to Parties, and

make us Partial to our selves" with the consequence that writers have the ill effect of

raising "Clouds before Men's Eyes" by dosing "Readers with continued Fumes of our

own Brain" (I: 3). Not only did each party speak to its own members in a coded language

unintelligible to all others, but members gave their blind support to party policy without

considering the general repercussions that might ensue.[194] A satirical, eighteenth-century

---

[193] Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical*, 117, 118, 116.
[194] Harold Love's important reassessment of the Habermasian coffeehouse suggests that it was, in fact, "more restricted and intimate" than the "oral information-gathering" that characterized spaces such as churches, taverns, and the Exchange. Love writes: "From an early period they became highly specialized in

account of coffee houses describes them as "a perpetual Hurry of News, Business,

Politicks, Plots, Conspiracies and Battles; Medlies and Confusion of Sounds and

Discourses" in which "Politicks are but Fewel to Faction, and Fosterers of ripening

Rebellion, both from the Violence of those that are uppermost, and the hot-headed Hopes

and Presumptions of those that wou'd be so."[195] Instead of coffeehouse faction, Defoe

suggests that politics requires men like Harley, who are more willing to engage in open

collaborations than to conspire against a general, national interest.

With the *Scandal. Club*, Defoe sets out to combat the idiosyncratic "Manners and

Gibberish" of a chaotic social body that posed an obstacle to the formation of a British

public. The *Scandal. Club* hearings that end in a vote whether or not to "censure"

scandalous authors and actions are presented as inquiries into truth and tribunals for the

realization of justice that delegitimize the spurious claims made in the *London Post* and

other contemporary papers. This initial association of the *Scandal. Club* with the grave

rhetorical dignity of church and school is nonetheless undercut by the exaggerated

indignation and hyperbole with which it pronounces against the grammatical,

---

terms of clientele, many performing the role of semi-private clubs for patrons of varying trades, faiths or political views." Harold Love's description of vast oral communities being supplanted by "a multitude of separate, more specialized exchanges" is corroborated by the contemporary association of coffeehouses with cabalistic exclusivity and secrecy. See Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 194, 203–207.

[195] James Wright, *The Humours, and Conversations of the Town* (London: R. Bentley, 1693), 106, 42. A facsimile version (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1961) with an introduction by Brice Harris is available. Harris attributes the authorship to James Wright, an "antiquary and miscellaneous writer" (vi).

geographical, and linguistic *faux-pas* committed by the authors of newspapers, some of whom are described as "a Triumvirate of Blook-selling [*sic*], Nonsense-Writing, Ignorant, News-Merchants" and are "Entred in the Books upon Record, never to be cros'd out till some Coxcombs are brought before the Society for giving any heed to what they Write, and so may stand Recorded for greater Blockhead than themselves" (24). On one hand, the use of humour and ridicule would seem to confirm Defoe's claim that the *Scandal. Club* is an "Innocent" triviality and amusement. On the other hand, the Society's concerns are always oriented towards matters of a public nature: the errors of news-writers; the follies of magistrates, clergymen, and the Society for the Reformation of Manners; or the corruptions of stock-jobbers and petty-fogging lawyers.

The motivation that consistently seems to guide the *Scandal. Club*'s diverse content is addressing the absence of a common language for guiding both public behaviours and the grammar used in public literature. Although the *Review* essay exemplifies Defoe's normative grammar, the responsibility of addressing the question of language is delegated to the *Scandal. Club*. In the mock-proceedings of the Society, complainants ask the "Gentlemen" to elucidate and rule upon certain issues, ranging from the accuracy and meaning of statements made in newspapers to the various "Crimes" of "Capital Offenders," typically men of public account whose behaviour either has gone unnoticed because of their position of power (being themselves magistrates) or has gone unreprimanded because there is not "a Law to Punish it" (I: 111, 60, 115). One humorous

example of the former case involves a drayman being brought before the Society for having been "at the Vulgar Employment of Carrying and Starting Strong Beer, on the 30th of *January* last, contrary to My Lord Mayor's Express Order for the Observation of that day." An inquiry into the situation reveals that the drayman belongs to a "Sir J—n P—s," the Lord Mayor himself. The Society dismisses the man "in respect to the Ruler of the People," noting it down in "their Book of Remembrance, How Beneficial a thing it is, to be a L—d M—'s Drayman" (I: 40). The further proceedings of the *Scandal. Club* are peppered with instances, in Defoe's words, of eminent citizens and magistrates engaged in "Whoring, Drunkenness, killing Folks, Duelling, and the like" (I:111). Where his readers seem eager to draw distinctions between the great and *"little"* crimes, Defoe's "List" that equates "Whoring" with murder signals his willingness to confound differences for the sake of scandal. It is a problem for Defoe when English magistrates and clergymen are just as likely as anyone else to be foolish drunks. The man in public office nullifies his authority when he cannot follow the same rules that he prescribes for others: "We are of Opinion, where Men Commit open Crimes, under the Character and Protection of Authority, and Punish those Crimes in others, the Law having no reach upon them; or, in *English*, when Magistrates Commit the Vices they Correct; every Man has a Title to Complain; for the Injustice is General, and every Man is Injur'd" (I: 148). Differences can only relate to other differences in a stable way when each person follows the same rules. For this reason, Defoe declares: "The Society resolv'd upon the whole,

That the Laws against Vice ought to know no difference between *Aldermens Fellows* and

Whores Fellows" (I: 132). No difference of class or gender should exempt an immoral

person from censure; such artificial distinctions undermine the fundamental differences

between individuals upon which equality and freedom depend. At the same time,

administrators of justice will never be altogether without some moral frailty, but one's

own moral perfection need not be a prerequisite for knowing clearly when another's

action deserves "Publick Reproof" (I: 83). The worst of all possible scenarios is that

which devolves into moral relativism, in which the establishment of difference is so

absolute that making distinctions becomes useless. Such a relativism would be "a

Common-wealth Principle with a Vengeance, for there must be no King in *Israel*, but

every Man must do what seems good in his own Eyes" (I: 83). If moral virtue and truth

should be the only determinants of social status, then those in power require common

guidelines for assessment, which the *Scandal. Club* sets out to provide for its readers.

Another scandalous example used by Defoe reveals the inadequacy of the legal

system and the dire public effects of falsified news. The Society makes an inquiry on

behalf of "the Poor, concerning the Price of Coals," which had apparently been driven up

by the recent news that some coal shipments had been lost to French pirates. The news

turns out to be the fabricated by a "Coal-Jobber" in collaboration with the coal merchants,

who would "keep 50 or 60 Sail back ... till the price of Coals should rise again" (I: 60).

The Society condemns the practice, proclaiming that "to forge Letters of publick

Disasters when there is none, *Real ones coming fast enough*, or to make them greater than they are, to raise the Price of Coals, is a Scandal to this Nation, and a Reproach on the Laws as deficient, in not ascertaining a Punishment for such a publick Mischief" (I: 56). Once again, the problem of merchants not fulfilling their social responsibilities towards their countrymen is closely related to an inability to discern between true and false news and to hold the writers of news directly accountable for the effects of their communications. But for a person to be held legally accountable in such cases would require making meaning clear through common understanding, grammatical consistency, and plain language. As with party politics, the source of conflict arises from a failure of clear signification based on stable differences between words that enable the detection of what is true and false in both the social and symbolic order.

The problems Defoe perceives in the English legal system and public reportage follow the same pattern as those problems he detects in the national language and grammar. According to Laclau and Mouffe, "If language is a system of differences, antagonism is the failure of difference." The analogy they offer to illustrate that antagonism is the *negation of difference*, rather than a positive embodiment of difference in the sense of an opposing force, is the outcome of a conflict between a landlord and a peasant: as long as the peasant and the landowner coexist as mutually reinforcing differences, there is no antagonism that unsettles the production and understanding of differential meanings; but when the landowner expels the peasant from his land,

antagonism arises from the fact that the "peasant *cannot* be a peasant."[196] For Defoe,

successful economics and politics on a national scale require that each man fulfill his

different social duty as a contribution to the whole. If all men did so, then their primary

identity category would be simply their individual belonging to the nation. The other

categories of identification that dominate in the early eighteenth century—particularly

political ideology, religion, and social status—would then become matters of individual

choice and conscience, no longer weakening the bond of national allegiance or interfering

with the exercise of civic duty by creating factious, secondary alliances. If conciliation is

made possible through the recognition of individualized difference, then antagonism

arises from collapsing and overlapping differences. As I have argued previously, while

scandal depicts an individual as "other," it ultimately implies a lack of difference, in that

the individual's actions require attention only because he or she resides *within* the

community. Only those within the communal range of influence can produce scandal. As

the notion of community is reconfigured in the early eighteenth century, expanding to

accommodate the entire nation and then the world, the potential for scandal increases

accordingly. Scandals also occur when different communities overlap in a way that causes

a conflict between different modes of signification and competing norms. Consequently,

an increased presence of scandal would seem to indicate social upheaval and reformation

rather than stability. The happy coexistence of independent elements (rather than insular

---

[196] Laclau and Mouffe, 125.

communities like parties), if achieved, would make scandal unnecessary. Scandal

represents an attempt to redraw lines of difference once they have been blurred, and it

arises when a person or party fails to discriminate properly between right and wrong, in

both grammar and morals. Even so, such discriminations, Defoe implies, are not innate

but inculcated through culture, which makes it incumbent upon news-writers, as public

purveyors of "Intelligence," to be more responsible and accountable for their actions.

Defoe's attack on "*forg'd News*" is only a little more virulent than his attack on

the "Gibberish" that pervades the newspapers. Indeed, Defoe's central concern

throughout the *Review* is to avoid "writing Nonsence, or translating Foreign Nonsense to

English Nonsense" (I: 107). The main essays of the *Review* are presented as a necessary

counter to the tendency of newspapers to use inflated patriotic rhetoric in their

descriptions of English victories after the style of "*French* Rhodomontades"; Defoe

emphasizes instead that France, being a "Martial Terrible Nation," is not such an easy

conquest, and the war consequently requires all the support and resources that can be

mustered (I: 2,8). But the actual task of chastening journalists falls to the *Scandal. Club*,

which specifies instances of inaccuracy, ambiguity, impertinence, and nonsense,

especially in foreign news about the war. In one example, the author of the *Post-Man* is

called before the Society and the proceedings are recorded as follows:

> First, He was Charg'd with filling up his Papers with long Harangues of
> his own, and making News for us, when the Posts were not come in to

supply.

This, he Answer'd, Was the general Practice of all the Tribe, and therefore he Claim'd to have Neighbour's fare, and take his Fate with his Brethren.

Then he was Tax'd with *Scandalum Magnatum*, in making long speeches for Foreign Ambassadors, and wise Answers for the *Swiss*, who all Men know never pretended to the Gift of good Language.

To this he Answer'd, He would produce his Original, but being a little puzzl'd to find some of them, he had time given him for that purpose.

He was then Charg'd with *Petty Treason* against the English language; for that he, not having the Dictionary before his Eyes, did willfully Make, Forge, and Coin, in the Unlawful Mint of his own Brain, certain new unheard of barbarous and uncouth Words, not heretofore known or used in these Nations.

'Twas a hainous Crime, and he pleaded Not Guilty, and began to be quarrelsome; said he Wrote as good English as any Man, and demanded the *Fact* to be proved. (I: 35–36)

The author of the *Post-Man*, identified as "*Mons*. Fon—," fails to convince the Society

that the words "Dethronization" and "Catholicity" are not "Exotick and Unpolite," and,

for his "Gallicisms and odd Expressions," he is "Voted Guilty, and Recorded in the

Register of Impertinence" (I: 36). In the dozens of cases of faulty grammar recorded by

the *Scandal. Club*, Defoe makes his project very clear: the ability to differentiate in

seemingly insignificant matters between mannerly and unmannerly use of words is related

to the the public's ability to discriminate between proper and improper behaviours. Only

through the public identification of these "scandalous" acts can a normative grammar of

English speech and manners be established.

Defoe's attack on other journalists elicits several counter-attacks, which he

publishes and responds to with relish. The counter-attacks take the form of criticisms

against Defoe's own grammar as well as questions concerning the appropriateness of the

specific appellation *Scandal. Club* and the use of scandal more generally as a means for

social reproof. Despite Defoe's stated intentions to establish solid differences between

right manners and words, the *Scandal. Club* ultimately represents a public full of Tom

Brown's "contrarieties" in which differences are always on the verge of being collapsed

into identities. As a satirist, Defoe sets the precedent for the counter-attacks by calling

himself before the Scandal Society in order to defend the *Review*'s publication of an

advertisement for Dr. H—'s cure for "a scandalous distemper" in "Venereal Persons"

next to the *Scandal. Club* column (I: 51–2). The "Undertakers" of the *Review* defend their

choice to print the advertisment, stating that as long as they set out "to reform Men from

the Vice [of Whoring], they should help 'em to a Doctor for the Disease" (I: 52). The

Doctor too is called before the Society to present an argument for the "Dignity of his

Profession," during which "he began to be somewhat Satyrical upon the Times, to tell

'em, That few People read this or any other Papers but what some way or other had

Occasion for him" (I: 52). This seems to be the kind of story with which Defoe intends to

"Entertain" as well as edify his readers, who are nevertheless quick to point out when the

Scandal Society's activities appear to undermine Defoe's more "weighty" design. For

example, he is "tax'd" by some readers with "a breach of Civil Society" in having made

public his "Neighbour's Misfortunes," to which he responds with the claim that the

intention is to "Censure Actions, not Persons" (I: 87). Defoe's fine distinction, which suggests it is acceptable to censure the actions of particular persons but not the persons who commit the actions, is not readily accepted by his readers, whom he criticizes for erroneously conflating the term "Scandalous" in the title "Scandalous Club" with the objectionable practice of "Personal Scandal" (I: 168). Such a conflation, Defoe argues, unnecessarily taints the good intentions with which he sets out to correct "Vice and Publick Crimes" (I: 99). Moreover, the reader who insists on applying "*Inuendo*" to Defoe's stories bear the guilt of personal scandal: in having "Saddled the Man's back with the Crime ... he fathers the Crime of Scandalizing the Man upon himself" (I: 80).

Why does Defoe devote so much time to these debates with his readers in which he justifies the use of scandal? The discussions regarding scandal seem to be entered with earnest intentions (as opposed to many of the Society's transactions) and are especially significant because they enable Defoe to outline a clear policy for language use that is generally consistent with the overall design of the *Review*. Defoe's policy for language use can be inferred from both the negative examples he cites from other newspapers, and the defense of his own choice of words and actions as readers increasingly demand that the author of the *Review* be brought before the Society. Although Defoe acknowledges he shares personal "*Infirmities*" with other men, he is staunch in his defense of language, arguing that none can charge him with "the same Errors he has reprov'd, he has neither Sin'd against Sense nor against *English*, as the

Persons he reproves have done" (I: 84). Defoe's general program develops as follows. Authors should have control over their texts and the "Liberty of Explaining our own Meaning" so that readers do not have either the chance or the authority to attribute to them unintentional or mistaken meaning (I: 147). To make authorial intentions unequivocal and easily understood, Defoe advocates the use of clear, direct language and the representation of "Truth, Matter of Fact, and plain Demonstration" (I: 147). Speaking the truth should never be counted a crime, and Defoe insists, "I never yet heard the Court of Mareshals fin'd a Person for Reproach, while he only slandred the Man with the Matter of Truth" (I: 107). Implicit in Defoe's position is a critique of seditious libel laws that prevented criticism of the government as well as the *Scandalum Magnatum* statute, which another writer calls the "Devil" for allowing that authors' "Quality secures them against the Attacks of Critics."[197] Related to this defense of truth was Defoe's insistence that any claim should be backed by a reliable source and that news-writers should be able to produce their sources when required by the public to do so (I: 115).

Endorsing direct language for the news, Defoe also insists that readers be able to distinguish between plain language and figurative language. For example, Defoe defends the title, "Scandalous Club," by claiming it is an "allegory," and allegorical titles are not "bound up to the Literal and Grammatical Signification of the Term" (I: 168, 115). When a letter-writer argues that the epithet "Scandalous" appears to "make the Scandal rest"

---

[197] James Wright, *Humours and Conversations of the Town*, 80.

upon the Society itself rather than upon the objects of its reproach, Defoe again insists

upon a proper discernment of difference, since any informed reader should know better

than to squabble over a "*Nom de Guerre* a made Name to a thing" (I: 168, 87). Here

Defoe insists that the title of the column is nominal only and does not identify the Club as

scandalous but instead describes the persons and events targeted by the column's satire.

Defoe's choice of "*Nom de Guerre*" rather than *nom de plume* resonates suggestively with

the Scandal. Club's *raison d'être*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "nom de

guerre" as a "name assumed by or assigned to a person ... freq. in order to conceal his or

her true identity," and associates the practice of using such a name with publication as

well as espionage.[198] As part of Defoe's war with language and signification, the fictional

members of the Scandal. Club are figured as collaborators with the secret spies among the

members of the public, who contribute letters to the society as informers against bad

writers. But at the same time, Defoe fully demystifies the allegory of the *Scandal. Club* by

affirming that it is a mere trope for the column and unlike the real-world matters

discussed by news-writers, who should only use names that can be clearly associated with

things, does not require a name that can only be interpreted as a faithful description of its

referent.

The kind of reader who assumes a mere fictional name *is* one and the same as the

---

[198] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "nom de guerre, *n.*" Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Online Edition (Oxford University Press, 2004): <http://www.oed.com>.

thing to which it refers is the same kind of reader who might be susceptible to mistaking the difference between figurative and literal language. This illusion of identity (collapsing two differences into one) could be all the more powerful because it constructs "true" knowledge as hidden within the tantalizing container of a secret—the *nom de guerre* or the *innuendo*, which conceal a secret identity or meaning—that the reader must then discover for himself or herself. But Defoe repeatedly admonishes his readers for applying innuendos to his stories. News-writers should ward against such mistakes by leaving the public no room for error. Nevertheless, the public's aptitude for misprision suggests that language is never really neutral and transparent. Rather, as one of Defoe's correspondents claims, language is "so disputable and precarious ... that it is like to give you trouble" (I: 156). This is something Defoe is eventually compelled to admit himself. His resolution to the question of language is ultimately to look to past precedents in literature. Writers should be able to follow patterns established by writers who have been acknowledged to have some authority. For instance, he points out that the allegory and title of the *Scandal. Club* is itself based on "Examples" such as Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* and Milton's *Smectymnuus*, which resort to metaphor as an attempt to represent a kind of reality that might not be representable using plain language (I: 87). Similarly, Defoe concedes that the guidelines for speech are at bottom based on "Custom," and outlines the development of linguistic rules as follows:

Thus it appears, I think, fully, ours is not a boldness without Example, and

219

> if all these Examples will not justify us, then Custom must no more pass
> for an Authorito [*sic*] in Speech, which I think it must, and ought to do,
> especially in our Language, which has no *Syntax*; and which owes all its
> Beauties and Cadence, to the Improvements and Amendments of Modern
> Pens, to whom we are beholden for making the *English* Tongue. (I: 168)

This proposal for a normative English grammar suggests that meaning does not inhere in

language but is created through social discourse. Writing during a transitional period,

before the age of "Whig supremacy,"[199] Defoe takes upon himself the institution of a

common grammar for behaviours and language, which becomes an important factor in

enabling the formation of a "Modern" British public. The discourse of scandal and the

allegory of the Scandal Society allows Defoe to dramatize this active process of

delineating differences, drawing boundaries, and generating norms, a process that must

later be rendered invisible in order to make language seem like a transparent window on

the world and the bourgeois achievement of power appear timeless and natural. But it is

in the space of the *Scandal. Club*, rather than periodical essay, that we are given a

glimpse of an eighteenth-century literary public. The *Scandal. Club* remains a historical

testament to the contingency of the social, a condition which, despite all efforts to

partition fact and fiction, vice and virtue, public and private, inscribes as an immanent

feature of public life the possibility of scandalous antagonisms.

<div align="center">***</div>

---

[199] This phrase is taken from Basil Williams, *The Whig Supremacy, 1714–1760*, Oxford History of
England Series, 2nd ed. revised by C.H. Stuart (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962).

According to Nicholas Phillipson, Defoe's "linguistic skills were phenomenal," and his satirical pamphlets demonstrated a versatile ability to "catch the ear of party men of all political persuasions, by mimicking and manipulating the political languages they spoke." Defoe's journalistic persona, by contrast, "continued to preach the virtue of moderation in the use of political language." But the scandalous and scandalizing grammarians of the *Scandal. Club* do not fit clearly into either of the "two personae" identified by Phillipson.[200] Mr. Review's principal goal of elaborating a moderate linguistic agenda that eschews the idioms of party politics, as Defoe's detractors pointed out,[201] could seem more like meaningless equivocation or dissimulation. For that reason, Defoe devises and vigorously defends the "allegory" of the *Scandal. Club* as an attempt to amend laws and fix rules for signification, especially for the news-writers and public officials who were concerned or, as he thought, *should be* concerned with making their signifying practices intelligible to the general public. The *Review* essay initially requires the presence of the *Scandal. Club* to establish with precision a stable set of individualized differences among words and mores by representing social actors as accountable first and foremost to the "publick" interest, allegorically represented by the Scandal Society to whom English readers could appeal to settle "Cases of Conscience, Enigma's, Difficulties

---

[200] Nicholas Phillipson, "Politics and Politeness in the Reigns of Anne and the Early Hanoverians," in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 223.

[201] See Downie, 73; Phillipson, 224.

in Philosophy, Politicks, Aethicks, Oeconomicks, and what not."[202] By hooking his

readers with the prospect of scandal, Defoe's periodical does not divorce itself entirely

from its "Brethren of the Worshipful Company of *News-Writers, Fellows* of *Scriblers*

College, Students in *Politicks*, and *Professors* in *Contradiction*" (I: 4). Instead, Defoe

deploys a satirical voice for the *Scandal. Club* that suggests a combination of pedagogical

and conscientious reproach that one might expect from a writer influenced by the

principle of dissent.

The *Scandal. Club* combined with Defoe's views on language and Gramsci's

theory of "normative grammar" provides an important counterpoint to Habermas' model

of the "bourgeois public sphere," which has had a profound impact on eighteenth-century

studies. Paula Backscheider suggests that the "public–private construct is very deep in our

culture," and she detects references to it "everywhere in the literature of the early modern

period."[203] For us today, the eighteenth-century public leaves its traces on a historical

record comprised of performances fixed within and limited to verbal and visual texts. As

a result, any account of an eighteenth-century public must be content with an ever-

expanding yet partial view of the discursive complexity that characterized the social

relations of the period.[204] Nevertheless, the establishment of "normative grammar"

---

[202] *Supplementary Journal to Advice from the Scandal. Club*, "Introduction," 4.

[203] Backscheider, "Introduction," *The Intersections of the Public and Private*, ed. Backscheider and Dykstal, 6–7, 3, 1.

[204] For this reason, Paula Backscheider argues, "Literary critics and historians have probably overestimated the part that printed texts and literacy played—and play—in the formation of public opinion and of a politically involved public." Backscheider suggests that a more complete cultural view should also

suggests that the relations of power involved in the standardization of language

encompassed the entire society. Similarly, Gramsci suggests in the chapter's first

epigraph that language is also a crucial element of the more general process through

which the diverse social groups consent to their representation as a single "national"

consciousness, based primarily on the "universal expansion" of the interests of a

dominant group and the subordination (although not an erasure) of other groups' interests.

The organization of the social order in favour of a "dominant fundamental group" is the

outcome of "a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on

the juridical plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of

subordinate groups."[205] An important component of hegemony, then, is the way in which

language mediates the asymmetrical negotiations and interactions between dominant and

subordinate groups. The establishment of a "normative grammar" coincides with the

establishment of hegemony; both are the outcomes of coercion (grammar schools and

books) operating in tandem with consent (self-regulating speech).[206] So long as the

normative grammar is adequate to serve the needs of communication and intelligibility

---

consider how the spectacles of theatre and state contributed to public politics. I agree that spectacles (along with social activities in coffeehouses, domestic parlours, and other spaces) were undoubtedly part of the important discursive relations that constituted the public, but the possibility of recovering how they might have signified to a public without resorting to literature seems remote. See Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), xvi.

[205] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 182, 12, 182.

[206] For further reading on this relationship, see Peter Ives, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).

for most of society, it will support and maintain hegemony.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe develop Gramsci's concepts to suggest that language is more than simply a component of hegemonic relations. Language is instead the medium through which hegemony becomes possible at all. Furthermore, in their view, it is not only that relations of power or politics function *like a language* by legitimating common meanings and actions—this is undoubtedly the point of Habermas' model of deliberative democracy based on rational discussion and consensus—but that language is *constitutive of politics itself,* which can have no objective reality outside of the way it exists as a function of language. On this ground, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the social can only be conceived as a "*discursive* space" with no positivity or locatability within really existing spaces, whether those spaces are designated as "public" or not. The transformation of the social into the hegemonic relation denoted by the terms "public" and "public opinion" is achieved, for Laclau and Mouffe, when a political articulation produces an identification among subjects that privileges one particular identity as the "normative" one.[207] Indeed, where public opinion is conventionally viewed as the authentic utterance of agreed upon public interests, Laclau and Mouffe suggest that "politico-hegemonic articulations retroactively create the interests they claim to

---

[207] For many twentieth-century thinkers, such as Baudrillard, the normative identification in Western democracies is that of the consumer, and any articulation that supports "the sovereignty of consumers" then becomes "eulogized as 'public opinion,' that mystical, providential, and *sovereign* reality." See Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 55.

represent."[208] The public is never fully commensurable with either public opinion or the official public.

It is possible to think of the eighteenth-century public in a similar way, that is, *not* a structural space positively embodied by the bourgeoisie's rational deliberations but as a conceptual product of discursive struggle through which one subject position is granted greater symbolic efficiency than others. The public is a type of collectivity that operates in the realm of identification rather than materiality. Although the eighteenth-century bourgeois public makes an effort to establish itself against the barbaric physicality and "irrationality" of the mob, this official public is not without its own forms of symbolic violence, emerging at the intersection of various interests and antagonisms—of overlapping public and private concerns that become separated only through the development and application of a normative grammar that eventually becomes sedimented but never irrefutable.

Through the reification of an Enlightenment concept of reason, the Habermasian public sphere repeats the hegemonic gesture of the eighteenth-century Whig public, which requires the suppression of scandal as one of its "irrational" yet nevertheless constitutive elements. Defoe's *Review* in its early stages, by blurring the line that is often drawn between official news and scandal as a form of anti-news, demonstrates how journalism as the communication of newsworthy intelligence and scandal as the

---

[208] Laclau and Mouffe, xi.

communication of social intelligence are both legitimate public interventions.

Importantly, the differences between respectable journalism and scandal need not imply

multiple publics or counter-publics.[209] Within such reconceptualizations, a notion of an

official public either remains unchanged or loses its symbolic efficiency as an articulation

of collective social identity. Instead, we should allow the presence of divisions and

antagonisms *within* the public to transform our idea of it, along with our ideas of the

relations between identity and difference as important aspects of modern life. Scandal's

ungovernable circulation of secrets does not occur outside the public realm but rather

participates in the constant struggle for hegemony by articulating fundamental

antagonisms, questioning political legitimacy, and venting frustration regarding

sedimented differences among diverse identity categories, such as gender, religion, and

class. Despite the efforts of social historians and literary scholars to harmonize the

eighteenth century, scandal literature remains as a recalcitrant obstacle that impedes the

construction of an orderly and rational body politic. Until recently, the pervasiveness of

scandal (even within canonical literature) was itself kept secret, concealed by the illusion

---

[209] For critiques of Habermas that propose multiple publics and/or counter-public spheres, see Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 154-182; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), 56-80; various essays in *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Mike Hill and Warren Montag (London and New York: Verso, 2000); and Michael Warner, *Public and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002). Jodi Dean's *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002) represents a more exacting challenge to Habermas' conception but does not at all engage with formal and ideological complexities of scandal as discourse. Consequently, although my study shares some of Dean's theoretical concerns, the conclusions I draw here are quite different.

of a rationally organized and just civil society.

Within the model of the public outlined above, scandal represents counter-hegemonic discourse and antagonism. Because hegemony requires the suppression of antagonism, the presence of scandal within the hegemonic discourse becomes a logical impossibility. Yet the bourgeois public's imposition of silence is itself a constituting action, an action that *makes* the suppressed articulation into a scandalous secret. This is why Defoe and his contemporaries employ the discourse of scandal to represent the diversity of interests that could not be encompassed by official discourse, and why the public articulation of these unofficial interests is subsequently labelled as "scandal." But scandal's negativity vis-à-vis the bourgeois public does not preclude the effects it continues to have as it hovers around the outer limits of public discourse and functions as an obstacle to official intelligibility. It continues as subaltern moments of articulation during which differences collapse and antagonisms take shape but cannot be fully symbolized within official discourse. Consequently, scandal reveals inadequacies within the conventions and structures of public representation, exposing for instance the regulations wherein the interests of women and the poor have been ignored or erased as norm-based and also possibly invalidating them as grounded upon illogical double standards.[210] This unofficial realm of the public is an ironic disarticulation of the official

---

[210] For discussion of how Defoe's gender politics relate to his economic ideas in later volumes of the *Review*, see John F. O'Brien, "The Character of Credit: Defoe's 'Lady Credit,' *The Fortunate Mistress*, and the Resources of Inconsistency in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain," *English Literary History* 63, No. 3 (1996): 603–31; and Kimberley Latta, "The Mistress of the Marriage Market: Gender and Economic

public—its secret history—that reveals the arbitrariness of settled meanings and suggests the existence of an unbridgeable gap between signifier and signified. In the early eighteenth century, the designations of what particular matters might qualify as "official" or "unofficial" aspects of public life are still being negotiated, as suggested by Defoe's efforts to differentiate between the socially benign and the scandalous. Over the course of the century, such differentiations become more stable but can still undergo change depending on the particular circumstances and needs of a specific historical context. Nevertheless, the negatively constituting function of unofficial or scandalous interests remains the same, repeatedly shattering the illusion of fixed difference between signs and between those free and equal individuals who are supposed to relate to one another in a pattern of harmonious contiguity. The meanings and perspectives that emerge from this obscure realm of scandal are admittedly based on partial perspectives and often resort to the strategic use of metaphor and allegory. In the textual space of Defoe's *Review*, this unofficial public—itself expansive and extending beyond the confined space of the *Scandal.Club* column—is first separated from the official public and turned into its own publication but eventually disappears altogether, becoming an absence that imposes a limit on what can and cannot be publicized by the official literary organs of Whig power. Any subsequent articulation of this unofficial yet constitutive dimension of the eighteenth-century public becomes scandalous.

Ideology in Defoe's *Review*," *English Literary History* 69 (2002): 359–83.

Throughout this chapter, I have considered how scandal, with its negotiation of the fluid boundary between the public and the private, plays a constitutive role in defining an early eighteenth-century public and poses a challenge to Habermas' influential conception of the "public sphere," which Timothy Dykstal describes as "normative" for us today.[211] I have also suggested that an understanding of how language is used in Defoe's *Review* opens up the possibility for new ways of conceiving the public. The picture of eighteenth-century life that emerges from Defoe's *Review* and from other contemporary sources suggests a public *defined* by the presence of irresolvable and interminable divisions, a public that is better understood through Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's model of antagonistic democracy. The development of the connections between "the publick" and Laclau and Mouffe's perspective on "the social" as a language leads to several interrelated conclusions. First, there is an abundance of eighteenth-century print and manuscript materials that suggest the concept of the public was highly contested, and these materials together comprise the limits of what can be known about the heterogeneous composition of the public. Second, whatever historical residues of the culture are not readily admitted to public discourse need not be automatically designated as "private." Instead, it is more useful to reconceive of the public as a collection of unlike elements that always threaten to become the same. The public is, in fact, constituted not

---

[211] Timothy Dykstal, "Introduction," in *The Intersections of the Public and Private*, ed. Backscheider and Dykstal, 33.

by unity and identity, but by division and difference. Such a "discursive space" can be illuminated through a return to important rhetorical structures that influenced eighteenth-century thought because they resonated well with contemporary experience. For instance, the concept of *discordia concours*—which, according to Samuel Johnson, accounts for instances when "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together"[212]—is only one example that seems to embody an important political idea as well as a principle of literary expression. Discourses informally excluded from the "normative" should be represented as constituting neither an alternative public nor a counter-public. Instead, they should be considered in terms of how they might quietly and diffusely pervade every commonsense articulation of the official public in a way that both affirms and disrupts the collective assignment of meaning. By constructing such a provisional picture of the "field of conflict" that is public opinion and the public itself in any given historical period, it becomes easier to achieve Pocock's recommended "familiarization" with the "diverse idioms of political discourse as they were available in the culture and the time."[213] Understanding the role that scandal played in the news culture of the early eighteenth century adds a new dimension to our perspective on eighteenth-century public life and offers us new possibilities for how to conceive of the public today.

---

[212] Johnson is discussing the "metaphysical poets" of the seventeenth century, who were writing during and after the Interregnum. For Johnson, it is the application of "wit" that enables the such differences to be reconciled. See "Cowley," *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, ed. Greene, 678.

[213] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Penguin, 2004), 263; Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 9.

CHAPTER FOUR

Consuming Desires:
The Politics of Secrecy in Manley's *New Atalantis* and *Memoirs of Europe*

*But do you know what has happened to the unfortunate authoress? People
are offended at the liberty she uses in her memoirs, and she is taken into
custody. ... After this, who will dare to give the history of Angella? ... now
she will serve as a scarecrow to frighten people from attempting any thing
but heavy panegyric; and we shall be teized with nothing but heroic
poems, with names at length, and false characters, so daubed with flattery,
that they are the severest kinds of lampoons, for they both scandalise the
writer and the subject, like that vile paper the Tatler.*

— Lady Mary Wortley Montagu[214]

In order to understand eighteenth-century literature and culture, it is crucial to

acknowledge the role played by scandal in constituting the British public. Denying

scandal literature any kind of legitimacy as a public discourse tends to support the

exclusion of women writers, such as Delarivier Manley and Eliza Haywood, from

political debates, despite the fact that several of their texts were both scandalous and

considered politically dangerous. Like Defoe, Manley and Haywood were arrested for

seditious libel, although neither seems to have been prosecuted.[215] Historian G.M.

Trevelyan grudgingly admits that while Swift and Defoe were writing for Harley in 1709,

---

[214] Montagu, *Selected Letters* (November 12, 1709), ed. Isobel Grundy (London: Penguin, 1997),
14.

[215] Manley wrote an autobiographical account of her arrest in *The Adventures of Rivella*, ed.
Katherine Zelinsky (Peterborough: Broadview, 1999). On Haywood, see Catherine Ingrassia, "Additional
Information about Eliza Haywood's 1749 Arrest for Seditious Libel," *Notes and Queries* 44, no. 2 (June
1997): 202-204.

"the publication that did most harm to the [Whig] Ministry that year was a book of the lowest order, the *New Atalantis*, wherein Mrs Manley, a woman of no character, regaled the public with brutal stories, for the most part entirely false, about public men and their wives, especially Whigs and above all the Marlboroughs."[216] Scholarly interest in Delarivier Manley has flourished since the 1930s, when the status of her work (and apparently her "character" as well) within English history became a particular thorny issue for Trevelyan and Winston Churchill.[217] Since the late 1980s, feminist criticism and studies of the early novel have been important advocates for a critical reevaluation of Manley's work that engages its literary and ideological complexities, while setting aside the earlier misogynist reflections surrounding the author's virtue.[218] It is not surprising,

---

[216] G.M. Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1934), 62.

[217] Ibid., 10–13. Trevelyan first disparaged Manley when he publicly disputed Winston Churchill's claim that the *New Atalantis* had influenced Macaulay's unfavourable depiction of the Duke in his famous *History of England* (1849–61). Trevelyan was Macaulay's nephew. See also Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, Vol. 1 (London: G. Harrap & Co., 1933).

[218] Early studies of Manley's work, predominantly biographical, include: Paul Bunyan Anderson, "Delariviere Manley's Prose Fiction," *Philological Quarterly* 13 (1934): 168–88, and "Mistress Delariviere Manley's Biography," *Modern Philology* 33 (1936): 261–278; Gwendolyn B. Needham, "Mary de la Rivière Manley, Tory Defender," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12 (1949): 253–88, and "Mrs. Manley: An Eighteenth-Century Wife of Bath," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 14 (1951): 259-84; Patricia Köster, "Delariviere Manley and the DNB: A Cautionary Tale about Following Black Sheep, with a Challenge to Cataloguers," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 3 (1977): 106-11; and Dolores Palomo, "A Woman Writer and the Scholars: A Review of Mary Manley's Reputation," *Women and Literature* 6, No. 1 (Spring 1978): 36–46. More recently, extended treatment of Manley's work can be found in Fidelis Morgan, *A Woman of No Character: An Autobiography of Mrs Manley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986); Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Writers Before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986), 66–81; Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660–1800* (London: Virago, 1989); Rosalind Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992); Jeslyn Medoff, "The Daughters of Behn and the Problem of Reputation," in *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 33-54; Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 88–144, and "Political Crimes and Fictional Alibis: The Case of Delarivier Manley," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 23 (Summer 1990): 502-21; Melinda

232

however, that the *New Atalantis* (1709) might provoke recriminations back upon the

author herself when Manley purports to reveal the *Secret Memoirs and Manners of*

Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes and to deploy "reforming Satir" to "mend a

vicious Age."[219] Instead of the "names at length, and false characters" for which Montagu

despised panegyric, Manley offered false names and true characters at length in her

portraits of Whig politicians that claimed to expose the vices lurking beneath the

"daubed" appearances through the *contrasting effect of shading*, an effect also called

shadowing by earlier English writers such as Francis Bacon, who wrote of "shadowed"

meanings in fables and suggested that "under some of the ancient fictions lay couched

certaine mysteries and Allegories, even from their first inuention."[220]

Alliker Rabb, "The Manl(e)y Style: Delariviere Manley and Jonathan Swift," *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. Donald C. Mell (London: Associated University Press, 1996), 125-53; Carole Fabricant, "The Shared Worlds of Manley and Swift," *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*, ed. Donald C. Mell (London: Associated University Press, 1996), 154-78; Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678–1730* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 217–284; Ellen Pollak, "Guarding the Succession of the (E)State: Guardian-Ward Incest and the Dangers of Representation in Delarivier Manley's *The New Atalantis*," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 29, No.3 (Fall 1998): 220–237; William Beatty Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 88–127; Alison Conway, *Private Interests: Women, Portraiture, and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709–1791* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 50–77; and Ruth Herman, *The Business of a Women: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003).

[219] Frontispiece to the Second Volume of *Secret Memoirs ... from the New Atalantis* (London: John Morphew, 1709). My references to this text will abbreviate the title to *NA* and will refer to the volume number and pagination of the first edition, which is available as a fascimile reprint with an introduction and index by Patricia Köster, *The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley*, 2 vols. (Gainsville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971). Köster's reprint also includes Manley's *Memoirs of Europe* (1710), published as the third and fourth volume of the *New Atalantis* in the 1716 edition and thereafter. For clarity, however, my references to this text will be distinguished by the abbreviation *ME* and the volume and page numbers of the first edition.

[220] Bacon, *The Wisedome of the Ancients*, trans. Arthur Gorges (London: John Bill, 1619), A7r.

Beyond the trope of portraiture suggested above, the early modern idea of

"shadowing" in literature resonates in a number of ways.[221] It suggests most obviously

topical allegory, or the revelation of truth through an otherwise obscure figure. As a

representational strategy, shadowing involves indirection, and requires the reader's proper

discernment of the structuring dichotomy between the true and the false, and the

figurative and the literal. In itself, the shadow means nothing—it does not signify—unless

juxtaposed with the object to which it alludes and from which it takes its shape. Like an

image intimated by a photographic negative, the shadow signifies only through its

contrast to what is not literally represented. The obscure object that is supposed to be

located in the real world of substances cannot be seen by the naked eye; it only appears

through the presence of a shadowy outline. In this sense, shadowing seems the perfect

mode through which to represent scandal's negativity: scandal as that which names a

lack of moral rectitude or virtue, rather than the positive presence of vice.

As Montagu observes and the publication of "Keys" confirms, the *New Atalantis*

circulates secrets about powerful figures in British culture and politics, thereby exposing

latent or imperceptible corruption. According to Janet Todd, Manley's work suggests that

"the driving force of humanity is desire."[222] I want to extend this idea to suggest that

Manley's scandal writing not only provides ample examples and assertions of the

---

[221] For a fascinating study of the eighteenth-century connection between portraiture and narrative representation, see Conway, *Private Interests.*
[222] Todd, 90.

principle that desire mediates all human relationships, both sexual and non-sexual, but also makes desire the basis for literary production and consumption. This chapter will consider how the *New Atalantis* and its sequel *Memoirs of Europe* (1710) represent vice and virtue as learned ways of thinking that can either distort desire or enable one to regulate desire in a manner than benefits society, which is indistinguishable from benefiting one's self. As a result, Manley's writing encodes and structures her readers' desire in ways that inscribe a particular model for political and sexual relations. Although Manley makes desire an explicit theme in the seduction stories that populate her texts, I will explore two aspects of Manley's sophisticated theory of desire that have received far less consideration in scholarship to date: her use of topical allegory or secret form, and her representation of desire's effects on British party politics, especially as it relates to the power of the Marlboroughs. Despite cultural efforts to neutralize scandal by associating it with French influences and with gender-specific discourses, Manley's work demonstrates how scandal is always intertwined with public politics and relations of power. Even when the scandal stories risk appearing on the surface to be about people's private affairs, Manley consistently draws connections between the personal and political contexts in which events occur and specifically focuses on the public positions occupied by the scandalous figures, who are supposed to use their power in service of the state but repeatedly fail to do so. Their "secret" lives and the way they represent themselves to others shed light on the character of the underlying desires that also motivate their

political decisions. If one is prone to dissimulation in affairs of love, then how can one be trusted to represent the public interest in affairs of state? Both the private and the public realm obey the secret laws of desire. Furthermore, representation for Manley is a crucial dimension of sexual and state politics. A Queen too willing to trust her advisers is just as likely to be taken advantage of as a too-trusting lover. Governance of individual desires as well as governance of the state relies on "intelligence" acquired through the representations of others. This central motif is encapsulated by following statement: "'Tis impossible a Prince can come to the knowledge of things but by Representation; and they are always represented according to the sense of the Representator; either Avarice, Revenge, or Favour, are their Motive, and yet, how is it possible to prevent it? A Prince knows not how to distinguish by the out, and are seldom let into the inside" (*NA* I: 204). The paradox that continues to qualify Manley's claim to inform the public (and the Queen) by revealing the "inside" is that she also offers a representation, and one as duplicitous in outward appearance as those individuals targeted by her criticism. In effect, the form and trope of secrecy render both Manley and her readers complicit in an information economy that circulates secret knowledge and fundamentally depends on the endless production and consumption of desire.

I. *Secrecy and the production of desire in the* New Atalantis

The *New Atalantis* consists of a dramatized framework in which fantastic

narrators recount and comment on scandalous stories. We are first introduced to Astrea, the goddess of Justice, who "had long since abandon'd this World" and who returns to the earth "to see the Change of Manners ... to view the Magistrate, who presumes to hold the Scales in my Name, to see how remote their profession is from their practice; thence to the *Courts* and *Cabinets* of *Princes*, to mark their *Cabal* and *disingenuity*, to the *Assemblies* and *Alcoves* of the Young and Fair to discover their Disorders, and the height of their Tempations" (*NA* I: 8–9). Astrea soon encounters her mother, Virtue, who appears forlorn and neglected, having been "thrust out from *Courts* and *Cities*" (*NA* I:3). In this allegorical construction, Manley reinforces her definition of vice as an *absence of virtue*, which would provide guidelines for restraint and without which vicious actions are granted free reign. The goddesses are soon joined by the Lady Intelligence, dressed in "*Hieroglyphicks*," who is "the first Lady of the *Bedchamber* to the *Princess Fame*" and who loves to report secrets, although we are told "she is but rarely concerned" with truth (*NA* I: 18). Virtue insists, however, that "*Truth*" be "summon'd to attend" Lady Intelligence, who then proceeds to take the two goddesses on a tour of Atalantis (England). They make themselves invisible to mortals for the sake of attaining "ocular proof" of human corruption (*NA* I: 9). Manley suggests here that vicious actions typically do not materialize in the presence of Virtue and Justice, and if they did, they would not be rendered in ways that would make them immediately perceptible to other human beings. Only the omniscient gaze can penetrate the hidden recesses of the court and the domestic

spaces of the country villa in which the "dangerous commerce" of love-making and

politics occur (I: 67). The visual prerogative of the goddesses, however, appears of little

use since they acquire most of their knowledge through scandal relayed by Lady

Intelligence. The fantastic world and fallible narrators that mediate Manley's depiction of

reality render just as dubious the truth of the scandal stories being told.

Scandal literature establishes a method of inquiry that characteristically privileges

a visual economy, invoked through the figures of the spy, the spectator, and the

supernatural observer. The cultural immersion of the author or subject within a localized

cultural experience contrasts with earlier allegorical writing, signalling a fascination with

the contemporary moment that is characteristic of early modern culture. The transition

from premodern to modern ideology alters generic conventions as they are reshaped to

translate contemporary realities and concerns. When scandal literature is examined from a

discursive rather than strictly literary perspective, it becomes easier to decipher a unique

rhetorical structure with a capacity to adapt to several different genres. The structuring

form of the secret, rather than any other convention, is precisely what drives the

production and consumption of scandal literature. The keys to Manley's texts decode the

allegorical names, "unlock" the author's intentions, and confirm the readers' suspicions.

Yet even with the keys, the exaggerated representations of the characters remain always

in excess of believable reality. Furthermore, the keys, as Catherine Gallagher observes,

are "remarkably insufficient" and "complicate rather than solve" the "relationship

between names and persons."[223] Even with the keys to the *New Atalantis* and *Memoirs of Europe*, which Manley may have had a hand in producing, the readers' access to truth is always mediated by a fantasy. In other words, Manley does not present her readers with a physical image or text that accurately embodies false and true perception; rather, she provides an idea that acquires shape and meaning through the readers' own desire-infused constructions. In addition to or even in spite of the claim to be selling truth, it is desire itself—and the sanctioned opportunity to be a desiring subject—that becomes the commodity sold to readers of scandal literature.

The *New Atalantis* contains its own sophisticated analysis of desire. The story of a Duke's (William Bentinck, Earl of Portland) seduction of his young ward named Charlot (Stuarta Werburge Howard) offers us an analogy that illuminates the relationship between the reader's desire and the scandalous text. The Duke's amorous desire begins when, for his amusement, Charlot acts out a play in which she performs as the goddess Diana: "she Acted with so animated a Spirit, cast such Rays of Divinity about her, gave every Word so twanging, yet so sweet an Accent, that awaken'd the Duke's Attention, and so admirably she varied the Passions, that gave Birth in his Breast, to what he had never felt before" (*NA* I: 57). The Duke does not actually fall in love with Charlot herself, who we are told is agreeable but "no great Beauty" (I: 52). Rather he falls in love with a fantasy: the fiction and image of Charlot as virtuous Diana constructs a screen upon which the

---

[223] Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, 126.

Duke can project his desire for an ideal beloved. The idea that the subject's perception of

an object is mediated by fantasy and desire is suggested by the Duke's awareness that

Charlot's first appearance at court would draw admirers because, in the absence of great

beauty, "the gloss of Novelty was enough to recommend her" (I: 62). The desire for

novelty mediates the subject's perception of the Charlot, thwarting objective knowledge

in ways of which the subject may not even be aware. For this reason, desire is described

as a "Poyson" that diffuses imperceptibly through the Duke's veins (I: 57). It has a

dangerous agency and possesses the subject's mind and body regardless of the subject's

will. Love is a powerful form of delusion that blinds the subject to reality and reason.

Like the economy of desire operating in courtly love, the Duke's desire for Charlot is

maintained precisely because of the obstacles that keep him from possessing her and thus

from confronting the person in the flesh who lies behind the illusory and elusive love

object. Desire increases its power the more it is prohibited: "Mean time *Charlot* was

never from his thoughts. Who knows not the violence of beginning Love! especially a

Love that we hold opposite to our Interest and Duty? *'Tis an unreasonable excess of*

Desire, which enters swiftly, but departs slowly. The love of Beauty is the loss of Reason.

Neither is it to be suppress'd by Wisdom, because it is not to be comprehended with

Reason" (I: 59–60). While Charlot's innocence allows her to believe the Duke's

professions of constancy and love, the Duke's desire predictably wanes with unimpeded

possession. Manley repeatedly presents this waning as a truism, the inevitable fate of all

240

lovers: "who does not know that undisturb'd possession makes Desire languish" (I: 78).

Another character in the *New Atalantis*, the Count Fortunatus (John Churchill, Duke of

Marlborough), makes this very point: a lover in full possession, he asserts, is "cloy'd

with too luscious Entertainment ... there's a vast difference between *Desire* and

Enjoyment ... yet tho' we surely know we shall be *Sated*, we can't help desiring to *eat*,

'tis the Law of *Nature*, the pursuit is pleasing, and a Man owes himself the Satisfaction of

gratifying those Desires that are importunate, and important to him"(I: 32–33). The

consummation or enjoyment of love thus shatters the fantasy around which the subject's

desire circulates. The Duke abandons the naïve Charlot and instead marries her

companion, the worldly Countess (Martha Jane Temple), who does not repeat Charlot's

mistake of consenting to the "dangerous intimacies" of love without first protecting her

interests and reputation by insisting upon marriage. We are told that "the Countess ...

was bred up in the fashionable way of making Love, wherein the Heart has little or no

part—quite another turn of amour. She would often tell *Charlot* that no Lady ever

suffer'd herself to be truly touch'd but from that moment she was blinded and undone; the

first thing a Woman ought to consult was her Interest and Establishment in the World"(I:

73). Ironically, while the text warns women against believing "the Vows and pretended

Passion of Mankind"(I: 83), it advocates that women (who are just as susceptible to

desire and inconstancy as men) dissimulate their feelings so as to secure a position for

themselves as rulers of the "Empire" of Love, since other power "seems to be politically

deny'd them, because the way to Authority and Glory is stopp'd up" (I: 55). Chastity as a

virtue is thus justified on the basis of pragmatism and because of a sexist double standard:

"Men may regain their Reputations ... but a Woman once departed from the Road of

Virtue, is made incapable of return"(I: 83–84).

The triangulated relationship among the Duke, the Countess, and Charlot

illuminates Manley's own manipulation of the reader's desire. Manley is not only the

seductress who lures libertine readers into a web of sex, lies, and politics by providing for

the readers' encounter with a constant variety of episodic narratives. I want to suggest that

Manley's texts form a much more complex relationship with the reader's desire. For

Manley, the perpetuation rather than the satisfaction of desire empowers and protects the

interests of women. In the *New Atalantis* and *Memoirs of Europe*, Manley ensures that

her reader's desire, coded as a universal as opposed to a gendered phenomenon, never

abates precisely because knowledge (sexual or material) of the real object is ultimately

deferred. Manley as a writer thus protects her own interests. The fantastic excess and

allegorical structure of the *New Atalantis* engenders the readers' curiosity and the pursuit

of authentic news in a variety of stories. But the text's lack of closure and the blurring of

fiction with real life make the truth ultimately inaccessible and so ingeniously prevents

the abatement of the readers' desire by thwarting a full consummation.

Manley further elaborates upon the prolongation of desire in *Memoirs of Europe*

when two characters, Horatio (Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough) and Merovius

(Melchior de Polignac, French ambassador to Poland), discuss the nature of love.
Merovius explains why Horatio continues to love Ximena (Peterborough's wife, Carry
Mordaunt), now deceased, in the absence of her physical body. Merovius counters the
idea that love is merely "a *Desire* for *Beauty,*" which not only would require the presence
of the beloved but would cease upon possession and satisfaction of the desire (*ME* I: 30).
Instead, Merovius argues that "*Love* is a *Motion* of the *Appetite,* by which the *Mind unites
itself* to *that* which appears to it *amiable* and *Good*" (I: 31). Love denotes a "*Passion*"
fixated on a sublime object, which, because it exists in the realm of "*Ideal,*" never allows
for an "*intentional* Union" that would fully satisfy desire. Instead, desire is perpetually
satisfied in the "*Imagination*" as a union with the mental "*Image*" of the beloved. Manley
describes this structure of desire as a "*Motion*" of the subject in relation to the image that
involves "Sometimes *dwelling* on the beloved Object as if they were fix'd, then turning
away, as tho' their Sight were *dazzl'd*" (I: 33). The sublimation of the object of desire as
image produces the constant cycling of the subject through a circuit of desire that reaches
no point of finality. The production of desire is achieved through mediation of the image
or idea, while the direct access to the body of the beloved is denied. In the episode with
the Duke and Charlot, this ideal love is figured by Charlot's preference for the Duke's
"Picture in little" (I: 66); her noble desire for the miniature image contrasts with the
Duke's opportunistic desire to possess her body.

   This model of desire explains the kind of sexual relationships Manley advocates

for women, as well as the way her texts construct the readers' desire for knowledge. In the former case, Manley is always a great defender of the virtue of love. Desire is seen as the foundation of a passion that produces equality between the sexes: it is the "Leveller of Mankind; that blender of Distinctions and Hearts" (*NA* I: 66). Love and desire that provide for the interests of the beloved as well as the self only become tainted when the "whole Care is outward" (I: 3). Love that focuses on the "Body," without any consideration of the virtue of the beloved, according to Manley, is "Diabolical" (I: 3). Desire only for physical possession can lead both to the rape and ruin of women (as in the case of Charlot) and to the destruction of desire itself. Women need to present an image that can be esteemed as virtuous and good in order to prolong desire. Because of a learned double standard in sexual mores, lamented by Manley who risks moral equivocation by pointing to the normative constitution of virtue and vice, a woman who is perceived to engage in an intrigue is ruined as the "World suffers her to perish loath'd, and unlamented" (I: 84). Like the Duke, whose cunning is learned from being a Whig "Statesman," men who lack imagination but have the capacity for "*Dissimulation*" pose a great threat to women, particularly outside the confines of marriage (I: 52). Interestingly, Manley does not condemn the Duke for rape so much as she condemns him for deceit—for appearing outwardly in a manner that suggests his esteem and admiration for Charlot when he secretly never intends to secure her interests through marriage. Janet

Todd notes how Manley ascribes a "social not moral significance" to vice.[224] The Duke's

actions are characterized by a lack of thoughtfulness towards Charlot and an absence of

conscience regarding the effects of his actions and how they might reflect upon the whole

of Atalantis (England). In a similar way, Charlot is condemned not for acting upon her

feelings of desire but for trusting the Duke's professions of love. Unfamiliar with the art

of dissimulation, she is simply a *"pauvre Fille trompez,"* who lacks the social intelligence

to properly assess the Duke's intentions (I: 78). Manley thus provides readers with an

interpretive framework for learning the secret operations of desire in both sexual and

political affairs and suggests a model for the emergent public as undeceived beholders of

dissimulating politicians and other famous public figures.

Secrecy is embodied in the formal construction of Manley's secret memoirs,

through which her account of real objects is mediated not only by language that presents

ideas rather than objects but also by the fantasy of the narrative itself. Instead of

confronting the reader directly with the real target of scandal, she simply refers to it

through a clever mechanism of indirection that serves her purposes of generating the

reader's desire through both thematic content and form. This indirection is suggested

through the use of visual tropes. For example, at the end of the *New Atalantis*,

Intelligence states that she will defer the rest of her story until "the Sun is no longer the

visible Object of Adoration, and the World is enlighten'd but by *Reflection*. When all

---

[224] Todd, 95.

Objects *disappear* but *those* which *Fancy* represents" (I: 272). Manley suggests that her story is most captivating when the material world is shown by the indirect light reflected by the moon. This idea is captured visually in the Frontispiece to the second volume of the *New Atalantis* (see Figure 1), which depicts the goddess Virtue within the shadows beyond the rays of light that illuminate Astrea. As suggested above, virtue has only a shadowy rather than an absolute and decisive presence in the *New Atalantis*. Manley represents Virtue as absent from both the country and the Court, hidden from the signifying spaces of human intercourse. The human world displays a scandalous lack in having forced Virtue into exile. Moreover, Virtue's presence among the shadows cues the reader to look within the *shadows* of Manley's text in order to find true meanings that are hidden from their immediate view. The reader is to look for Virtue, who bears the sign of Apollo, god of Wisdom (the reader's desired object), concealed within the shadows, in the textual fantasy that only alludes to the true meanings that cannot be directly represented.

Manley's work challenges the assumption that knowledge can be safely acquired through sight at the same time as it validates its representation through reference to "ocular" evidence. The visual economy of Manley's text is itself a trope of the secret form. When the reader is properly positioned by the text, the secret form reveals an alternative reality that is nevertheless closer to the truth than the information one can gather from a direct examination of the world. Yet the reader accesses this truth through

O Sacred Truth inspire and rule my Rage,) —
So may reforming Satir mend a vicious Age: —
Whilst thy Enlightning Rays adorn & guard y Place,)
Astrea's glorious Form Surveys the Race. —
And Virtue wears the bright Ormonda's Face)

Fig. 1. Frontispiece to Manley's *New Atalantis*, Vol. II (London: John Morphew, 1709).

the fantastic framework, which, as a source of knowledge, ultimately leaves its truth-value suspect. The secret form can be thought of as an anamorphosis,[225] which when examined straight on appears distorted, but from an angle comes into clear view. Similarly, with a key to indicate the proper perspective, the meaning of the secret memoirs is revealed. Slavoj Žižek suggests that fantasy produces the subject's desire for an object in the subject through situating the subject in a position of "looking awry" at the object. The object can only be seen clearly by looking at an angle, "with an 'interested' view, supported, permeated, and 'distorted' by *desire*." The secret structure of Manley's text is the anamorphosis that mediates the reader's relationship to the worlds inside and outside the text insofar as it suggests that if the reader "looks" in a particular way, she or he will see the truth. The text makes no explicit reference to the world outside its pages, as would a newspaper, for such a world is likewise comprised of mere appearances; rather, the reader is to believe that the truth lurks within the text, represented indirectly through the fantasy. Paradoxically, truth in this instance can only be a "pure semblance"—a "something that comes from nothing," that comes from a complete lack of signification—not an objective reality. The reader of Manley's texts observes shadows that provide the outline of something, but it is the reader's desire that projects positive substance onto the outline that signifies as "truth." Desire is *produced* rather than "given

---

[225] For further reading on anamorphosis from a psychoanalytic perspective, see Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), 75–81. Žižek is developing Jacques Lacan's idea of courtly love as anamorphosis; see Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, Book VII of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, trans. Dennis Porter, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 139–154.

in advance," and "what the fantasy stages is not a scene in which our desire is fulfilled, fully satisfied, but on the contrary, a scene that realizes, stages, the desire as such."[226] In other words, curiosity—the name for desire whose object is truth—depends on the perception of secrecy more than the actual disclosure of the content of the secret. The subject's immersion in the secret structure produces the desire for the transmission of truth but never the satisfaction that truth has been fully attained. In this way, the subject's desire is renewed despite being constantly *consumed*.

Jean Baudrillard in *The System of Objects* defines consumption as "an active form of relationship (not only to objects, but also to society and to the world)." Consumption, according to Baudrillard does not consist in receiving the content of any messages or in using up an object, but rather in how those messages and objects are organized into a "signifying fabric ... as a more or less coherent discourse." Consumption is not about passively accepting cultural meanings vested in messages, images, or objects, but about actively making those meanings through "*an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs*." Because the object of consumption is also a sign that mediates human relationships, the sign itself is ultimately substituted for the relationship between the subject and the object; the sign *becomes* the relationship of consumption. As a consequence of this substitution of the sign for the object, Baudrillard suggests it is now

---

[226] Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 12, 6.

"the idea of the [consumer] relationship that is consumed in the series of objects that displays it." In other words, what is "used up" in the process of consumption is neither the object of consumption nor the subject-object relation, but what the subject-object relation *means for the subject and for others*. For consumers, the relation with an object means the production of desire in the self and others—the desire is not for the object but rather for engaging in a relationship of consumption with the object in a way that produces desire. Without desire, there can be no enjoyment or satisfaction of desire; and without deferring the prospect of enjoyment, there can be no desire. Enjoyment of the object itself, then, is less sustainable and productive in the long term than the enjoyment of the desire created by the subject's relationship to the object. Because the subject chooses to enjoy the idea or fantasy of consumption rather than the object itself, the enjoyment never needs to end; pleasure exists in a self-enclosed circuit of desire-production and consumption.[227]

In the case of scandal, a collection of signs *produced* in the very processes of exchange and consumption situates the subject in relation to an object of desire (the secret) so that the process of consuming scandal actually creates a subjective relation towards the secret object-cause of desire. The acquisition of the object would typically result in the relation being "at once consummated and abolished"[228]—in other words, the

---

[227] Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (1968), trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996), 199–200, 200, 201.
[228] Baudrillard, *System of Objects*, 200.

250

enjoyment of the object fulfills and therefore annihilates the desire. But, for Baudrillard, the object of consumption ultimately becomes the meaning that signifies and substitutes for the material relationship between the subject and object. The objective of consuming scandal, then, becomes the production of a relation that generates desire and the object of consumption becomes desiring affect itself. With secrets as the object of consumption and scandal as the organizing system of signs through which the subject-object relation comes into being, then, following Baudrillard, it is the *idea* of learning secrets, of gaining insight into another person's character, that propels the exchange of scandal. And it can only be the *idea* because the nature of the secret makes full knowledge and corroboration impossible—or else the secret would henceforth be something other than a secret. Put another way, the subject's desire is constituted by what is ultimately an absent relation—the unbridgeable gap between the subject and the object of desire, between what the subject knows and what the subject *wants* (what it both lacks and feels it needs) to know. Each individual secret is basically equivalent to each other secret and, for that reason, there is no end to the proliferation of secrets, each one becoming the instantiation of the fundamental lack in the subject's relations to other things and people—the subject's inability to know for certain but its hope in the possibility of certain knowledge; its inability to forge a permanent connection between signifier and signified in the endless differential process of human communication but its ongoing efforts to make connections nonetheless; its inability to rely upon an essential agreement between signs and their

251

referents in the world but its faith that a coherent picture of reality might still emerge.

For the discourse of scandal, although character assassination might seem like the logical end, in actuality, speculation and disbelief combine to resurrect the character after each telling of the secret so that it can be killed anew. (Here, "character" can be taken to refer to a distinct entity, a product of social meaning-making attached to but not identical with the person to whom it is supposed to belong.) Moreover, the act of consumption can easily transmute into the production of another social relation as the possessor of the secret passes it on to another, both of whom are engaged in affective labour that produces the social bonds and networks without which society itself becomes impossible. Although the subject's relationships are founded upon the inadequacy of knowledge and communication, a confrontation with an "absent" reality is deferred in a productive sense, through an effort not to relinquish the world of signs and a tenacious faith in the assignment of meaning to objects even if the result is a frustrated or "disappointed desire for totality."[229] Scandal's capacity to forge or break social bonds in order to include or exclude others from a privileged sense of belonging that revolves around the acquisition of particular forms of intelligence is one of the important "productive forces" of scandal that make it a worthwhile object to be bought and sold.

If Žižek's visual metaphors provide us with a model for understanding the reader's desire for "truth"as generated by the anamorphosis of Manley's texts, then her

---

[229] Baudrillard, 205.

texts themselves also suggest the production of desire through the *trompe l'oeil* or visual trick—the kind of deception that lures a desirous lover into mistaking another person as her or his beloved. Ballaster observes this representational technique in more than one of Manley's erotic scenes.[230] Its presence in Manley's work indicates an awareness that desire can be fraught with dangers—a subject's gaze infused with desire is apt to mistake the worthiness or appropriateness of the physical object before her or his eyes. In the *New Atalantis*, the Count Fortunatus (John Churchill) devises a trick to justify dumping his mistress, the Duchess *De L'inconstant* (Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland). The trick involves constructing a scene in which another young man would pretend to sleep on the Count's bed with his "Face turn'd on one side (to favour the Deceit)" and "in a dress and posture not very decent to describe" so that when the Duchess entered the room, she would believe it was the Count himself (I: 34, 33). We are told that the Duchess "who had about her all those *Desires*, she expected to employ in the Embraces of the Count, was so blinded by 'em, that at first she did not perceive the Mistake" (I: 34). The narrator emphasizes again that "her own Desires help'd the Deceit; she shut her Eyes with a languishing Sweetness, calling him by intervals, her dear Count, her only Lover, taking and giving a thousand Kisses, he got the possession of her Person, with so much transport, that she own'd all her former Enjoyments were imperfect to the Pleasure of this" (I: 34). The Duchess is not portrayed as a victim of another's seduction but as the

---

[230] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 149.

dupe of her own desires and the particular "warmth of her Constitution" (I: 38). When the Count bursts into the room to discover the lovers in bed, he upbraids the Duchess as the "most *immoderate* of her Sex; what the first moment to bestow your self upon another! whilst my Image yet wanton'd before your Eyes! whilst your Blood yet mantled with those desires my Idea had mingled with it!" (I: 38). Thus the desires produced by the Duchess's fantasy, her contemplation of the Duke's image in her mind, becomes powerful enough to overwhelm her physical senses. Solipsistic subjects caught up in their own passion without a care for the world, such as the Duchess, especially risk the possibility that the object of their desire is completely a figment or trick of their imagination, and, what is even more dire, that the object might be dissimulating the authenticity of their love, the virtuous existence of which Manley presupposes can be the only real foundation for reciprocal passion. Lovers caught up in their own desire forget to consider that their passion could set off "a whole chain of consequences that regulate [their] 'material,' 'effective' life and deeds."[231] By drawing attention to scandal, Manley encourages her readers to consult the the effects their actions will have on themselves and others.

As this discussion of desire and consumption suggests, the author and reader of the *New Atalantis* do not remain uncontaminated by desire: they are assumed to be desiring subjects like the characters represented by the text, and desire is assumed to be the psychic foundation for the most glorious aspects of human existence. Consequently,

---

[231] Žižek, *Looking Awry*, 12.

readers are fully implicated in the voyeuristic pleasure they derive from the production and consumption of scandal and their participation in its circulation of desire. Manley's texts generate the readers' desire to know the truth and to satiate their curiosity about the personal lives of public figures. Manley's readers, therefore, are interpellated as desiring subjects in their own right and provided with an ambivalent subject position that identifies them as both vicarious consumers and vigilant prohibitors of transgressive behaviour. In other words, while the characters in the text are consumed by desire, the readers of the text consume the characters' desire and the desire created by their own productive consumption through participating in the economy of exchange that informs the entire narrative. When Manley describes the "sweet and dangerous Commerce" of sexual relationships, she could as easily be describing the relation between a reader and the secret memoirs.

Secrets are *perceived* as important bearers of knowledge, whether the information they convey is true or not. Insofar as knowledge and value are identified with power, secrets are a mechanism whereby otherwise mundane objects—images, bodies, and texts—become animated with the subject's desires and become fixed in a position that enables the perpetuation of desire. Secrets function as phenomena that not only carry the potential to trangress the boundary between the hidden and the revealed, between the personal and the political, but also perhaps more significantly contribute to the production of such a boundary, and therefore also to the pleasures of its transgression. Roger Simon

and Henry Giroux describe popular culture as a "dual form of address" that "serves as a semantic and ideological referent for marking one's place in history and also brings about an experience of pleasure, affect, and corporeality."[232] Manley's work undoubtedly presents readers with just such a dual experience in its construction of the subject both as a political participant in a moment of history and as a desiring consumer of scandal. Understanding the form of her work helps us to imagine and understand the ways in which it affected her contemporary readers as *scandal*, since the erotic and political content for us today no longer seem quite as scandalous. That is, we no longer respond with shock and lament if we learn a woman has engaged in pre-marital sex or a leading politician has acted in corrupt ways. A reader today might easily enjoy Manley's stories as *fiction* but cannot fully appreciate them unless it is also understood that the content encodes secrets. The secret form is necessitated by the scandalous content, and the form in turn also constitutes the content as a scandalous secret. It should matter less that Manley's work has "a certain built-in obsolescence," as Ballaster notes,[233] when we recognize that what makes something scandalous in any given period is always historically contingent. There is nothing inherently scandalous about a particular action unless it is deemed so by other social actors within the contexts in which it occurs and is subsequently represented. In other words, the cause of scandal does not reside in the

---

[232] Giroux and Simon, "Popular Culture as a Pedagogy of Pleasure and Meaning: Decolonizing the Body," in Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 187.

[233] Ballaster, "Introduction," xix.

action itself but in how the action interacts with larger social structures, in how it is *read*

by the public as a source of general grievance. What makes something scandalous? What

made it scandalous in the eighteenth century when it is no longer scandalous for us today?

Scandal literature situates and frames actions within a larger picture, which in turn reveals

that a person who wields authority and influence has somehow misused the power with

which she or he has been entrusted. "Scandal" denotes a challenge to hegemonic power,

which is in a constant struggle of consolidation and transformation. Manley's work

provides us with a lens, however obfuscating, that highlights the specific cultural and

political conditions that enable the production of scandal in the first place.

II. *The politics of scandal literature*

A mutually illuminating relationship exists between the secret form and secret

content of Manley's work, which exceeds generic categorizations such as *chronique*

scandaleuse, amatory fiction, or political satire. The majority of studies on Manley's

"scandal fiction"continue to privilege the fiction over the scandal and have produced

fascinating readings that elaborate upon the allegorical possibilities of fictionalized

narratives of seduction, incest, and novel-reading, particularly in terms of gender

relations.[234] All of these readings add new layers of complexity to Manley's work. But,

---

[234] In addition to Pollak, Ballaster, and Todd, see also Toni Bowers, "Seduction Narratives and Tory Experience in Augustan England," *The Eighteenth Century* 40, no. 2 (1999): 128–154; Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38–65.

for the most part, such readings could just as easily be discussing the purely imaginative,

and they often place Manley's work within a comparative framework alongside fictional

texts. Manley is doing more than entertaining with erotic stories, moralizing about sexual

relations, and instructing the public on proper manners, all tasks that could be arguably

better achieved through writing fiction. Manley's medium is the *secret memoir*. Isabel

Rivers cautions against overlooking the topical dimensions of early modern literature:

"Political and historical allegory is likely to matter less to the modern reader than the

other levels of meaning, but it deserves to be taken seriously, and not regarded simply as

a key to historical events and characters."[235] In the case of Manley's work, when one puts

the question of the secret history or memoir at the forefront of inquiry, then a wholly new

and productive set of intriguing questions and concerns arise, and the answers are not all

immediately obvious. Why is topical allegory being used in these texts, and how is

allegory as a literary form and way of thinking transformed by scandal? What does the

pervasiveness of scandal literature tell us about various material and ideological aspects

of early eighteenth-century British culture? And, more specifically, how does scandal's

topicality function to mediate the reception of these texts?

The pioneering study by Rosalind Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory*

Fiction 1684 to 1740, situates Manley, Haywood, and Behn as women writers whose

---

[235] Isabel Rivers, "Allegory," *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1979), 171.

slightly overdetermined concern with sexual relationships produces innovations in literary conventions. Although Ballaster recognizes the satirical dimensions of the *New Atalantis*, she privileges gender politics in her readings and alludes somewhat regretfully to the excessive Tory partisanship of the text that subverts what Ballaster claims to be "Manley's feminocentric sensibilities [and] early or proto-feminist thinking."[236] It certainly seems easier to extract feminist intentions from earnest speech than from ironic speech, which tends to express not only misanthropy but misogyny as well. But if Manley's party loyalty routinely trumps her gender allegiances as part of a general demand for inclusion and recognition within the political and commercial aspects of print culture, then to suppress the satirical form and content of the Manley's work would seem to repeat again the very gesture that Manley adamantly resists: namely, to suggest that women are somehow naturally formed for "the art of love," by contrast with which "politicks is not the business of a woman."[237] Ballaster's reading of Manley's work in *Seductive Forms* is incisive and intelligent, but her inclusion of the *New Atalantis* within a study of "amatory fiction" by Behn and Haywood can be misleading for readers who are not attentive to Ballaster's arguments that Manley resists both "the imposition of generic norms" and the misogynist "male libertine" figure who consistently interprets her work as "biography or romance" rather than political satire. Ballaster suggests that normative

---

[236] Ballaster, "Introduction" to Manley, *New Atalantis* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1991), xiii.
[237] Manley, *The Adventures of Rivella*, 46, 112.

259

gender roles in the eighteenth century discourage women's political participation via

satirical writing, and that Manley resists being pigeon-holed as a woman writer as much

as she resists the idea that women can only write in fictional genres and about love. If

Ballaster seeks to resist the essentialization of satire as masculine, then it seems rather

contradictory to align amatory works exclusively with the feminine. Yet Ballaster

repeatedly uses the terms like "feminocentric tradition," arguing that the *New Atalantis* is

"almost exclusively narrated to women by women and about women" and that the second

volume of Manley's "novel" portrays scandal "now firmly associated with an exclusively

female sphere."[238]   Such readings not only reduce the originality of Manley's literary

contributions to an effect of her gender identity but also inadvertently limit the extent of

her work's public influence.[239] Subsequent scholarship on Manley's scandal writing has

tended to adopt the term "amatory fiction," a useful provisional term in Ballaster's study,

without taking into account Ballaster's definition of a subset of "amatory fiction" as

---

[238] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, 151, 115, 145, 146.

[239] Isobel Grundy, in response to a paper I presented at Acute 2003 in Halifax, critiqued the assumption that the audience for the *New Atalantis* was only (or even primarily) women. The gender of the author of the *New Atalantis* was not known until Manley was taken into custody in November 1709, and historical evidence seems to suggest that Manley found an audience among both men and women. For example, Arthur Maynwaring wrote to Sarah Churchill in October 1709 that the *New Atalantis* was likely to cause "mischief; for so long as people will buy such books, there will always be vile printers to publish them." See *The Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, 2nd ed. (London, 1838), I: 239. Thomas Hearne also transcribed the key to the *New Atalantis* in his diary for October 4, 1709. See *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, ed. C.E. Doble (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886), II: 292. Defoe cites Manley as his model for his *Atalantis Major* ([Edinburgh], 1711) and an anonymous author identified as "men of morality" produced erotica under the title *A New Atlantis, for the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-Eight*, 2nd ed. (London: M. Thrust, 1758), ii.

including "specific allegorical correlatives in the world of party politics."[240] Even when

William Warner refutes the gendering idea that the "novels of amorous intrigue published

by Behn, Manley, Haywood" are "feminine," and instead asserts that they are marketed to

a general reader,[241] he nevertheless accepts the construction of Manley's work as amatory

fiction, which leads to the even more egregiously depoliticizing assertion that it should be

read as "formula fiction" and as a precursor to the modern-day Harlequin romance.[242]

Regardless of the gendering of today's romance novels, early eighteenth-century writers

and readers of secret histories and memoirs were both male and female: men discussed

amorous intrigues, hinted at sexual innuendos, and attacked personal frailties as often as

women discussed party politics, aligned themselves with factions, and charged political

leaders with corruption.

Scandal literature's use of topical allegory or shadowing provides a mechanism

through which writers could allude to those individuals whom they could not otherwise

represent, at least not without the threat of persecution for libel. According to Michael

Seidel, with official censorship legislated by the Licensing Act of 1662, "satirists and

lampoonists were ingenious in figuring ways to represent current state affairs

---

[240] For example, the term "amatory fiction" applies very well to Manley's later work, *The Power of Love: In Seven Novels* (1720), but seems inadequate to encompass the unique characteristics of secret histories and memoirs. See Ballaster, 153–54.

[241] William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 88.

[242] Ibid., xv.

indirectly."[243] Seventeenth-century scholars, most notably Lois Potter and Annabel

Patterson, have also shown how censorship and charges of treason during the Interregnum

were negotiated by Royalist writers through the development of secret codes.[244] The

publication of political satire explodes during the Restoration, which Seidel characterizes

as a time of "expanding civic consciousness," and flourishes despite (or perhaps because

of) laws designed to stifle dissent and promote social stability. The political climate

combined with a growing print culture results in innovations of "traditional forms of

literary representation."[245] Literature that represented various scandals appears on the

public stage as one of the ways to inform the electorate about the behind-the-scenes

workings of the government. Consequently, eighteenth-century scandal literature can be

seen as an ambivalent tribute to court culture in that its secret form not only glamourizes

a destabilized aristocracy but also enables writers to criticize those individuals charged

with upholding the public interest.

Within this context, shadowing acquires yet another dimension. Manley's satirical

portrait of Queen Anne in *Memoirs of Europe* as a weak and docile child governed by a

---

[243] Michael Seidel, "Satire, Lampoon, Libel, Slander," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 42. On libel in eighteenth-century contexts, see also C.R. Kropf, "Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8 (1974-5): 153-68; Susan Sage Heinzelman, "Women's Petty Treason: Feminism, Narrative, and the Law," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 20 (1990): 87-106; and Clare Brant, "Speaking of Women: Scandal and the Law in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*, ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992), 242-70.

[244] See Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

[245] Seidel, 38.

monstrous mother (Sarah Churchill) signals a departure from and demystification of

Edmund Spenser's glorious allusion to Elizabeth I as the otherworldly "Faerie Queene."

In effect, Manley layers shadows upon shadows: the people she scandalizes can be

publicly known only by their outward show of "airy Virtue" that conceals a more

fundamental "Nature" characterized by the hidden operations of desire (*NA* I: 67). But

even this secret world of desire remains hidden to the consciousness of the individuals

whom it preys upon like an "irremediable Poison" diffusing through their "Veins" (*NA* I:

57). Manley also figures desire as a disease or "Disorder," an absence of health (*NA* I:

23). Desire is the ominous shadow that can neither be seen nor heard but remains the

underlying motivation for every human behaviour. And desire can only exist in the

absence of what it *wants*, that is, what it both lacks and longs for: we are told one of the

"Maxims of Mankind" is that "undisturb'd possession makes Desire languish" (*NA* I: 78).

Desire transformed into love can perpetuate itself through the contemplation of the

sublime "*Impression* the *lovely beloved Object* has *made* on the *Mind*" (*ME* I: 31). But

passion that remains bent on possession of a physical object—money, power, fame, or

sex—fixates upon a mere "idol," an object that fails to embody the authority and power

that its duped worshipper nevertheless believes are in its possession. This is the same

term Manley repeatedly uses to describe Sarah Churchill's status as the "Idol of the

Court" and the Queen's "*Favourite*" (*NA* I: 205). Sarah Churchill as idol conceals a lack

through "Artifice" and "Hipocrisie": she wants the power to signify as both the true

Queen and authentic virtue. Within her own private closet, we are told that she worships

at the pagan altar of "three Figures, inscrib'd, *Corruption, Bribery,* and *Just Rewards*" (I:

205). It is this hidden, complex realm of desiring subjects and objects of desire that

Manley seeks to throw light on as part of a project to decode the meanings signified by

human behaviours, particularly the pernicious actions and policies of Whigs, whom she

portrays as sacrificing national interests in order to pursue the satisfaction of their own

self-interested desires.

As Patricia Köster and my discussion of earlier scandal literature point out,

Manley is not the originator of the secret memoir, but she does make interesting

innovations to both the romance and the satirical literature of the Restoration by writers

such as Dryden and Samuel Garth, author of the burlesque poem *The Dispensary* (1699),

both of whom Manley acknowledges as influencing her work.[246] It would be more correct,

I think, to argue that Manley transforms political writing of the period by incorporating

---

[246] See Köster, "Introduction," xi–xii. Manley cites Dryden in *NA* II: 526–528 and Garth in *Court Intrigues, in a Collection of Original Letters, from the Island of the New Atalantis* (London: John Morphew, 1711). The popularity of keys and other critical apparatuses (such as glosses) in the first three decades of the eighteenth century is suggested by the appearance of keys for the following texts: Butler's *Hudibras* (1663-1678) in 1715; Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) in 1716; the French translation of *Queen Zarah* (1705) in 1711; keys to Manley's *New Atalantis* (1709), *Memoirs of Europe* (1710), and *Adventures of Rivella* (1714) appeared shortly after the texts were published; the anonymous *The Court of Atalantis* (1714) in 1717; Swift's *Tale of a Tub* (1704) in 1710 and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) in 1726; and the key to Haywood's *Memoirs of a Certain Island* (1725) was likely published with the first edition as part of the text. Based on this list, it is interesting to note that the trend seems to begin with the key to the *New Atalantis* in 1709. Alexander Pope not only satirized the "*Atalantis*" as the reading material of the Baron and the Court (*Rape of the Lock* III: 165) but also mocked the rage for keys and "secret Satyrs upon the State" in *A Key to the Lock* (1715) and the Scriblerus notes in the *Dunciad Variorum* (1729). See Pope, *The Poems of Alexander Pope: The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems*, Vol. 2, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson (London: Methuen, 1940), 181, and "A Key to the Lock," in *Selected Prose of Alexander Pope*, ed. Paul Hammond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 88.

new concerns regarding love and sexual relations, drawn not only from continental

influences such as the *chroniques scandaleuses* of Roger de Rabutin (Comte de Bussy)

and Marie Catherine La Motte (Baronne D'Aulnoy) but also from an established English

tradition of pastorals and heroic romances that employed a secret form.[247] Because

scandal literature's detractors have relied often on English xenophobia to dismiss and

even repudiate scandal as a foreign influence, I think it is important as well to question

the extent to which French *nouvelles* and *chroniques scandaleuses* influenced English

scandal literature. The development and vacillations of English and French scandal

literature seem more indebted to the specific national-political climates surrounding their

cultural production than to a concern with literary forms and traditions. In the French

context, Robert Darnton's work on *libelles* in the 1770s and 1780s suggests that scandal

literature only became political leading up to the French Revolution. During Louis XIV's

reign from 1661 to 1715, there was a "relative paucity" of *libelles* against the court.

---

[247] Some early examples include the already mentioned *Faerie Queene* (1590) by Edmund Spenser as well as his *Shepherdes Calender* (1579), in which a mysterious annotator "E.K." guides the reader through a labyrinthine network of "secret meaning" and "feigned names" and asserts that "this generally hath bene a common custome of counterfeicting the names of secret Personages"; see Spenser, "The Shepherdes Calender," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. H. Maclean and A.L. Prescot (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 505, 508n2. Other examples that have been widely acknowledged by critics as examples of English topical allegories: Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania* (1621), John Barclay's *Argenis* (1627), and Kenelm Digby's manuscript memoirs (ca. 1628). On *Urania*, see Josephine A. Roberts, "Introduction," in Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. Roberts (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995), and Kate Lilley, "Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth-Century Women's Utopian Writing," in *Women, Texts, and Histories 1575–1760*, ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992). On *Argenis*, see Pope, "A Key to the Lock," 73, 88. Digby's memoirs have been compiled into an edition from the manuscript in the Harleian collection of the British Library, published as Digby, *Loose Fantasies*, ed. Vittorio Gabrieli (Roma: Edizioni Di Storia e Letteratura, 1968).

Instead, libertine courtiers like Bussy-Rabutin circulated novellas of sexual intrigue, which portrayed the king's gallantry "in a favorable light" and lacked "any obscenity, political comment, or indeed any reference to the world outside the court." The "shift from the defamation of individuals to the desecration of an entire regime" that Darnton observes later in the century coincides with a series of political disasters during the reign of Louis XV that helped to spawn literature that "accused the monarchy of degenerating into a despotism."[248] In the English context, the civil wars, the Exclusion crisis, and the development of a party system produced different and earlier conditions for the growth of scandal as a political discourse.

During the Restoration, scandal literature of the early kinds identified by Darnton circulated in manuscript form within court circles. For example, *An Essay of Scandal* describes Charles II's mistresses but seems morally indifferent to the king's philandering. The poet obliquely suggests that the royal mistresses are responsible for the impoverished treasury, for encouraging the king to adopt French habits, and for tempting him to the playhouse when he should be in the "senate."[249] But the poet is not demanding political change, and the vulgar language used in the poem undercuts any serious message. Harold Love suggests that "scribal publication" necessarily implied that the "power to be gained from the text was dependent on possession of it being denied to others." Court satires

---

[248] Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 210, 213, 210–11, 199, 213.

[249] Anonymous, "An Essay of Scandal" (ca. 1681) in *Court Satires of the Restoration*, ed. John Harold Wilson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976), 65.

provided an outlet for criticizing individuals within an élite circle, but they also generated

the solidarity and exclusivity of the court community in a way that ultimately reinforced

rather than challenged its political authority and privilege. By contrast, the commercial

economy of printed texts, as Love observes, aimed for "indiscriminate circulation, that

could be regarded as wholly transcending any particular preexisting community of

sympathizers."[250] In 1689, the solidarity of the English court was permanently shattered

by party divisions, and the political ideology of the king-in-parliament shared by both

Tories and Whigs suggested an already desacralized notion of the monarchy. It seems all

the conditions were in place for Manley to use her privileged knowledge of the court for

personal gain and political advantage through the public medium of print. In England,

unlike in France, it was the early eighteenth century that witnessed the combination of

specific cultural and historical elements—the uncertain legitimacy of the court and ruler,

the emergence of a modern reading public, and the struggle for hegemony, among other

things—required for the development of scandal as a vehicle for political dissent. As a

result, Manley's scandal literature politicizes the conventions of romance and *chroniques*

scandaleuses, while also generating a radically new language for politics through the

representation of the political in terms of sex and desire. In other words, one level of

Manley's work focuses on the reader's psychology and social position, emphasizing that

---

[250] Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 183, 190.

private sexual relations are always about power and that women in particular should be wary of both the immediate and cumulative social effects of their personal decisions. Another level of meaning—arguably the more revolutionary contribution of Manley's work—resides in the oblique suggestion that political relations under the reign of Sarah Churchill and her Whig allies had been reduced to a series of private liaisons that shunned considerations of the public interest. In fact, rather than encouraging her readers to associate the narrative with their own individualized concerns, Manley's criticism of court politics is precisely that it had been reduced to private intercourse among individuals. Political relations had been perverted by the exclusion of the public in favour of negotiating personal preferment and self-interest. Manley is not only educating women to consolidate their "Interest and Establishment in the World" through marriage before granting their lovers the greatest favour in their possession (*NA* I: 73). Manley is also assuming the far more ambitious role of educating statesmen, the reigning Queen, and even the future Hanoverian kings of England in how to discern flattery and dissimulation from sincerity and virtue.

III. *Idolatrous desire and the art of dissimulation in Queen Anne's court*

In her work, Manley exploits the readers' desire for truth in order to marshal hostility against the "idols" of the time, using the celebrity of public figures such as Sarah Churchill to draw attention to wider systemic corruption. Manley suggests that the

unbridled passions of the Whig aristocracy threaten the social fabric through a policy of

thoughtless and selfish conquest—sexual, political, and imperial in nature. Manley uses

the secret form of the text to constitute the reader of scandal literature as an astute

detector of dissimulation. Readers, already educated in the technique of deciphering

"Hieroglyphicks" that encase "Intelligence," must now apply their skills to the

representations of prominent politicians and act as the government's moral legislators,

keeping watch over the political and cultural élite. In *Memoirs of Europe,* Manley uses

eighth-century chronicles of Charlemagne's empire to shadow the events leading up to

fall of the Whig government in 1710. She devotes much attention to the prosecution for

seditious libel of High Church clergyman, Henry Sacheverell, who argued in two

incendiary sermons that the Church of England was in danger from the Whig

government's failure to reprove occasional conformists. The trial, which lasted from

February 27 until March 23, 1710, sparked riots in support of Sacheverell and ended in

disaster for the Whig ministry. Queen Anne's dismissal of several Whig ministers and

Goldolphin in August 1710 led to the installation of Tory ministers and Robert Harley as

Chancellor of the Exchequer. Manley's account attributes the Tory success to the will of

the "Citizens of *Constantinople*" (London) and, more significantly, to the ascendency of

Abigail Masham, Harley's cousin and supporter, as the Queen's favourite in lieu of Sarah

Churchill (*ME* I: 244). While Manley extols the virtues of Masham as "the glorious

Orthodox Empress," now wedded to the Emperor Constantine Caesar (Queen Anne, the

"son" of Empress Irene or Sarah Churchill), she reprimands Harley and James Butler,

Duke of Ormonde, for having too readily abandoned their posts to Whigs in the first

place, warning them that "if they again depart for Pique or Resentment, or any other

Injury or Reproach, (as having beheld the Mischief their Desertion occasion'd) they

deserve to be never forgiven; for had they at first suffer'd boldly, and endur'd the

Prosecutions of the Idolators, even to Neglect and Contempt, 'till they had durst to have

crowded others in their Places, these Calamities possibly of the Empire had never been"

(I: 246). In contrast to the implied weakness of the politicians, Sacheverell as "Patriarch

of *Constantinople* ... is not so passive, he asserts the Purity of Primitive Times, and

opposes all Innovations" (I: 132). As these statements suggest, religion becomes the

ideological ground upon which party conflicts came to a head in 1710, and religious

allusions are one of the most interesting elements in the *Memoirs of Europe*. Manley

aligns Church of England supporters and Tories with "Greek Orthodoxy" (which refuses

to recognize the authority of the Pope) while Dissenters and Whigs are associated with

"*Heterodoxy*" (I: 132). The Whig Junto and others specifically aligned with Sarah

Churchill are depicted as "Romanists" and "Idol-worshippers." Manley thus harnesses

some of England's virulent anti-Catholic feeling and rhetoric to discredit the Whig Junto

and the Marlboroughs as "Papists" (I: A8r).[251]

---

[251] For an account of the role of anti-Catholicism played in establishing British national identity during this period, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Patricia Köster suggests that Manley's use of historical rather than fantastic figures in *Memoirs of Europe* at times causes "confusion," particularly "with the terms *Orthodox* used for the Iconoclasts and representing the High Church side."[252] I want to dispel some of this confusion, caused perhaps by the association of iconoclasm with Puritanism, and to suggest instead that Manley's construction of iconoclasm is an attempt to unite Tories and disaffected Whigs through a *conservative* platform designed to dismantle the power of Junto Whigs as the "Idol Party" (I: 230). Manley is able to align iconoclasm with conservatism precisely because of her brilliant use of historical allegory, which draws attention to the period when independent Christian countries across Europe were forcibly united under the banner of the Holy Roman Empire, implying by allusion that Great Britain hovers on the edge of a similar transformation if the people continue to accept the rule of the Whig Junto, Godolphin, and the Marlboroughs. Manley thus harnesses anxieties regarding the threat of Great Britain being subsumed by both Roman Catholicism and continental power, a threat that might have seemed more real because of the Whig ministry's ongoing pursuit of an expensive war on the Continent and the Marlboroughs' alleged connections to James II during William III's reign (see *ME* I: 179–80).

Manley's construction of idolatry also resonates in fascinating ways with the structure of desire outlined above (I: 230). In *Memoirs of Europe*, especially the first

---

[252] Köster, "Introduction," xvi.

volume, Manley develops the full potential of desire as a model for politics. Her criticism

of the Whigs is based on their becoming enthralled to Sarah Churchill, who has set

herself up as an idol and a physical image, having usurped the rightful place of the true

monarch. Queen Anne, by contrast, is unlike the idol that elicits the subject's fear and

desire through its embodied form (behind which lies nothing but a void) and is described

as among "Those whom *Royal* Birth have made conspicuous, and whose splendid

Vertues have fix'd those Eyes which their Quality but attracted" (I: 19). The Queen

possesses virtue that is "*Real*," regarding which even Whig sympathizers "in their Mind

(however hardn'd) ... cannot but reverence" (I: 19). The "*Ideal*" image of the beloved that

the lover adores in his or her mind is embodied by the Queen's image in the minds of her

subjects (I: 32), but such proper worship has been perverted by Sarah Churchill's

substitution of her own false, physical image as the object of adoration. The Queen's

sublime form refers to the authentic "glorious *Substances*" derived from her royal lineage

and her personal virtue, whereas the false image of those who "outwardly aim to imitate"

the monarch refers only to "*Shadows*," the absence of substantial, corroborating virtues

and the lack of legitimate authority (I: 19). In the *New Atalantis*, Manley already lays the

groundwork for the trope of idol-worship and for Sarah Churchill as the ring leader of the

idolaters. The Duchess of Marlborough is there described as "a beautiful Appearance,

adorned with every thing that's Splendid and Ravishing! Sweetness in her Eyes!

Invitation in her Looks! She is call'd by all, that but superficially behold her, *Virtue*. She

deceives People at first view, but then with a very little acquaintance, we find 'tis only

Virtue pretended" (*NA* I: 205). The Duchess's dissimulation conceals licentious desires

for wealth and luxury as well as her clandestine worship of pagan idols associated with

ancient "*Rome*" (*NA* I: 205).

   In *Memoirs of Europe*, the Duchess of Marlborough, as the Empress Irene, is said

to have "introduc'd *Image-Worship*, and has got a *Pope* to her own Heart's Desire, Dull!

Stupid! and as little tenacious of the Right of the Pontificate, as she cou'd desire" (*ME* I:

132). The Empress, depicted as seeking personal advancement through the exchange of

favours and bribes, creates a new religion with herself at the centre surrounded by those

"contented to worship *Irene* as their Sun" (I:184). The Empress departs even from the

path of heterodoxy, regressing back to the practices of "*Barbarians*" (I: 131). Manley

conflates the papists with the idolaters, and situates them against the virtuous Christianity

of orthodox and heterodox believers, who are at least both loyal to the Emperor (Anne

and the Protestant succession). Thus, the cult of the Duchess, tainted by association with

Jacobitism, perverts even the founding principles of the Whig party based on those "old

Roman Vertues" that upheld the "Love of Glory! Love of their Country! and

Constitution!" (I: 131). Manley's clever construction of the Duchess's religious

"Innovations" based on pagan idolatry creates an "other" against which she encourages

solidarity among the divisions of religion and party that plagued England throughout the

seventeenth century and Restoration. High Church and Low Church, Tory and Whig,

could both agree on the abomination of the Duchess's despotic inclinations, and unite together under the banner of iconoclasm as defenders of Protestantism, of Queen Anne as the people's chosen ruler, and of civil liberty for the whole of Great Britain.

Although Manley criticizes Emperor Constantine (Anne) at several points as a lethargic and indulgent monarch, she marshals the readers' sympathy for the Emperor's well-known health problems, which she then develops into a figure of the diseased body politic. Manley claims that all of Anne's suffering is caused by the fact that the "Physicians, upon whom [she] depends" repeatedly tell her that there is no need for "Remedies" when the body is in a perfect "State of Health" (I: 227). Similarly, the Queen's advisers delude her into thinking that she is "truly, luckily belov'd by [her] People, and no less happy abroad" and that she is "ador'd as a visible Divinity" when in fact a "real rankling Sore ... lay latent and was but skin'd over by the artful Gloss *Irene* and *Aemilius* [Godolphin] gave" (I: 227). Manley taints the Queen's relationship with the Duchess even more by suggesting that the Emperor's "artful Mother," through the "Encouragement" of all her son's "Desires ... wou'd have made him another *Nero*, and caus'd *Constantinople* to blaze with Fires, as obscene, as those that destroy'd *Rome*" (I: 182). The Queen's ingenuous nature is ultimately contrasted with the Duchess's dissimulating art, which enables Sarah Churchill to generate in others an unnatural desire for idol-worship. Thankfully, the Queen is undeceived by the Sacheverell crisis in which the "unnatural Divisions" of parties are overcome when "an universal Spirit of Mutiny

seiz'd the People ... and Petition'd *Caesar, That he would be pleas'd to Reign alone*" (I: 133). By depicting the Whigs as having turned away from the true monarch and having set up a false monarch in the person of Sarah Churchill, the first volume of *Memoirs of Europe* seeks to harness the anger of the people against the Whigs and the Marlboroughs. Manley's definition of desire as "a *Motion*" that incites the subject towards change suggests that she also uses scandal literature's ability to structure desire as a means of mobilizing readers out of a state of political apathy in order to renew their loyalty to the Queen. The landslide Tory election victory of October 1710 indicates that Manley was at least in tune with popular sentiment, if not also actively shaping it. Manley continues to attack Sarah Churchill in the second volume of *Memoirs of Europe*. But it is not until the end of 1711 that the Marlboroughs are dismissed from court, charged with embezzlement, and permanently retire from politics to the luxurious Blenheim palace erected with the wealth accumulated during their service to the Queen and country.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Readers of *Memoirs of Europe* and the *New Atalantis* are instructed to be canny observers, never trusting mere appearances or words, both of which can easily be used to conceal insidious motives. Secrets, which point to a hidden reality that defies surface appearances, inform every aspect of Manley's work. Not only do the fantastic characters keep secrets from one another but the text itself is a "shadow" that the reader must associate with a real object in order to see the underlying truth. Yet the truth, like the

<p style="text-align:center">275</p>

figure of Virtue in the *New Atalantis*, is elusive. Its certain discovery would put an end to the pleasure of secrecy. By masking her intentions, Manley not only protects herself from libel suits but also ensures that her readers' desire for factual knowledge is never fully satisfied. The *New Atalantis* and *Memoirs of Europe* acquire an aura of secrecy that imbues the texts as a whole. The form and content of the texts work together to interpellate readers as desiring subjects with a particular taste for scandal while producing the readers' enjoyment in experiencing and consuming desire itself. Manley's scandal literature empowers the public through its circulation of secrets within an economy of knowledge and desire, represented as even more fundamental to national politics than commercial exchange.

The inadequacy of visual representation is a major theme in Manley's work. Perception is unreliable because corrupt people are prone to dissimulation. How can one be sure that virtue is not a mere semblance? Instead of relying upon one's own assessment, each of us, like the Queen, should carefully select a circle of trustworthy advisers from which to gather and corroborate our impressions of others. Lacking any other signs of virtue and truth, one must be informed of the representations of different characters circulating in public discourse and carefully discern which accounts deserve to be credited. The significance of the social intelligence to be gleaned from scandal is affirmed, not only in terms of its direct impact on social relationships, but also in terms of how it educates men and women in the careful negotiation of their own reputations and

acts as a check against private vices that are sure to be found out under the penetrating gaze of Intelligence and Justice.

Manley's use of scandal to pass moral judgments on others' actions draws charges of scandal upon herself. Richard Steele in *Tatler* No. 63 turns the accusation of artifice back against Manley, lampooning her as "Epicene, the writer of Memoirs from the Mediterranean, who, by the help of some artificial poisons conveyed by smells, has within these few weeks brought many persons of both sexes to an untimely fate."[253] Thomas Hearne describes Manley "an old sinner" and implies that she wrote the *New Atalantis* to redeem herself through a "Book ... carried on under all y^c semblance of Virtue."[254] From a historical perspective, such charges lend even greater potency to the way Manley appropriates the discourse of "reputation," traditionally used to control female sexual and social behaviour, and turns it against influential Whig politicians, male and female alike, by exposing their deceptions. Scandal thus enables Manley to intervene in eighteenth-century debates regarding power and political legitimacy while also offering readers an "informed" position from which to critique the Whig-dominated court. Manley's decoding of desire places the naive reader in a better position to perceive correctly the self-interested motives and deceptions of others. The fact that the reigning monarch was a queen rather than a king makes Manley's allegories of female gullibility

---

[253] Steele, *The Tatler* No. 63 (September 3, 1709), Vol. 2, ed. George A. Aitken (New York: Hadley & Mathews, 1899), 104.
[254] Hearne (November 3, 1709), 297.

far more pointed as critiques not simply of gender politics but of state politics as well.

Eighteenth-century scandal literature extends the secret content and rhetoric of secrecy to literary form itself, as texts embody a dialectical structure that posits a fundamental antagonism between a deceptive "fictional" container and a hidden kernel of "truth," sometimes mediated by a key that unlocks the encoded secrets. Secrecy—the revelatory process through which what has been hitherto hidden or unknown is given epistemological valence—relies on validating evidence for its claims, often invoking eye-witness testimony, at the same time as the secret's very implausibility perpetuates its hermeneutic power. The secret form of scandal literature is the most important structuring element that generates the reader's curiosity and desire for knowledge or "intelligence." The power of scandal to produce desire does not arise at all from the transmission of secret truths but from the staging of that very transmission. The indeterminacy of scandal's truth-value (the perception of ongoing secrecy rather than the resolution of the truth/fiction dialectic) reproduces the appearance of lack. Consequently, the "truth" remains an infinitely elusive object of the readers' desire. The truth claim of "secret memoirs" coexists with the text's actual thwarting of the readers' ability to ascertain the truth; this is precisely the structure that maintains the endless movement of readers' desire within a closed circuit. Manley's work takes the secret structures of desire and allegory and adapts it to her own specific political purposes, and in doing so amply demonstrates that politics is not only her business but also the business of scandal.

278

CONCLUSION

Situating early eighteenth-century scandal literature within the larger contexts of power in which it first emerged and arguing for its importance as having widely influenced cultural and political life should not lead us to disregard the fact that scandal also operated as kind of pastime and entertainment. In fact, scandal had an intimate presence in and brought pleasure to the daily lives of early modern women and men. Its proliferation in the eighteenth century was likely due as much to the emotional investment and subjective desires it generated as to its political interventions. Even with the bourgeois gesture that disavows scandal as part of polite discourse, the consumption of scandal by all classes continues as a secret of modern popular culture that not only threatens the bourgeoisie's ideal self-image but also supports it as its constructed and necessary antithesis.

Scandal as a cultural practice can only be fully understood by exploring how the rhetorical and textual structures of secrecy and the representation of knowledge as power constitute the subject, and, by extension, the subject's capacity to identify with others collectively as a general public and a nation. For early modern subjects, participating in the production and consumption of scandal becomes a means of ordering, influencing, and rendering intelligible and pleasurable those socio-economic and ideological changes associated with modernity as well as their impact on personal lives and collective identities. For contemporary scholars, exploring the cultural origins and persistence of

279

scandal is important to understanding the genealogy of some of the epistemological and identificatory categories that we now consider characteristic of modern selfhood and social practice.

In early eighteenth-century England, scandal adapts personal and political satire with the objective of ameliorating the existing social order by focusing on those individuals who have the power to change it. One issue that arises among scandal's detractors, such as Richard Steele in the *Tatler*, is the wanton harm done by scandal to another person's reputation.[255] Additionally, arguments against scandal literature also take issue with the difficulty faced by a reader who must determine both the accuracy of the writer's portrayal as well as the author's motivations in making the matter a public affair, that is, whether the scandal has been published out of a genuine desire for social justice or some less honourable motivation, such as envy, malice, and personal revenge. Within a culture divided anew by political pluralism and wherein party alliances acquire crucial importance as the source and site for the acquisition and administration of power, a writer could very well have something to gain from tarnishing a political enemy with scandal. Delarivier Manley defends her scandal writing by turning accusations of self-interest against Steele, arguing that the publication of topical satire is all the more crucial in the present age, even if such reformational efforts put the writer at risk:

---

[255] Steele, *The Tatler* No. 74 (September 29, 1709), Vol. 2, ed. George A. Aitken (New York: Hadley & Mathews, 1899), 183–185.

> Who tho' He [Steele] allows *Ingratitude, Avarice,* and those other *Vices,*
> which the *Law* does not reach, to be the *Business of Satire*; yet in another
> Place he says, these are his Words, *That where Crimes are Enormous, the*
> *Delinquent deserves little pity, but the Reporter less.* At this rate Vice may
> stalk at Noon secure from Reproach, and the *Reformer* skulk as if he were
> performing an *inglorious* as well as *ingrateful* Office. Ingrateful only to the
> Vicious. Whoever is with-held by the Consideration of *Fear, Danger, Spiteful*
> *Abuses, Recriminations*, or the mean *Hopes* of missing *Pity*, has *Views* too
> *Dastardly* and *Mercenary* for *lofty, stedfast Souls*, who can only be agitated
> by true Greatness, by the *Love* of *Virtue*, and the *Love* of *Glory*!
> (*New Atalantis* II: A5v–A6r)

In this passage, Manley not only aligns the writing of scandal with religious persecution

and martyrdom but also argues that writers who avoid exposing vice do so only because

they are cowardly and allow their fear to override the public moral good; or, even worse,

they place their own reputations and chances for advancement above their social

responsibility. Clearly, two different notions of civic duty are represented by Manley and

Steele: Manley's call to hold public figures accountable for their actions because they

cannot be trusted contrasts with Steele's preference for a polite code of social interaction

that refrains from damaging anyone else's reputations and fosters mutual trust. Despite

advocating different means, Manley and Steele in the end share a similar recognition of

the power of the self-regulating subject whose agency derives from the control over how

one signifies within public contexts.

Despite Manley's claim that her work is motivated by a desire to combat social

injustice (or, what is more likely, *because* of her ambitious claim), her contemporaries as

well as later literary critics tend to attribute to her a "private" motive that is nevertheless

belied by their clear anxiety over a woman's participation in politics. Maria Edgeworth,

for example, invokes the dangers of scandal literature as a rationale for the denial of any

political power to women: "I should not refer you to the scandalous chronicles of modern

times, to volumes of private anecdotes, or to the abominable secret histories of courts,

where female influences, and female depravity are synonymous terms. ... the influence,

the liberty, and the *power* of women have been constant concomitants of the moral and

political decline of empires." While Edgeworth refers to scandal literature's

representation of powerful female characters, such as Sarah Churchill, her refusal to

recommend these texts in lieu of "the open equitable page of history"[256] also implicates

women like Manley who write political literature.

As Edgeworth's critique suggests, the gendering of scandal as a discourse is one

of the reasons why the history of scandal literature to date has been very partial. Over the

course of the eighteenth century, scandal is gradually repudiated from polite circles as its

associations with low-brow literature, gossip, and illicit desire are increasingly

sedimented. An anonymous print and poem entitled *The Tea-Table* (see Figure 2)

transforms the mythical multi-headed hydra traditionally associated with scandal into a

female Medusa who chases Justice and Virtue out of a circle of gossiping women. Not

only are the women in the image shown with a lascivious-looking satyr hovering around

---

[256] Maria Edgeworth, *Letters for Literary Ladies* (London: J. Johnson, 1795), 11-12, 11.

Fig. 2. *The Tea-Table* (London: Jn Bowles, n.d). This print can be dated no earlier than 1768 and no later than 1779, the period when John Bowles' print shop was located at No. 13 Cornhill. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

their petticoats, but the male poet 'declares, "How we Scandal (for our Sex too base) / Seat

its dread Empire in the Female Race." It seems detractors of scandal become as adept as

scandal writers at reconstituting a historical object or event as scandalous—here, the

target is scandal itself, now signified as both a feminine discourse and "blackning

Falsehood[']s Mint of Lies." Ironically, scandal literature becomes a victim of its own

scandalizing tactics. If the discourse of scandal in the eighteenth century seems to possess

the mythic power of self-propagation, then it also precipitates the demise of its own

authority as representations of the scandalous that threaten the integrity of the community

become themselves undesirable.

This does not mean that Manley's brand of scandal literature is altogether

eradicated later in the century—the political writings of John Wilkes would, for example,

attest to its "underground" persistence. It means, rather, that scandal faces more extreme

opposition in public discourse when it is delegitimized through constructions that render

it commensurable with libel and slander. Tobias Smollett likely had John Wilkes in mind

when his fictional curmudgeon Matthew Bramble in *Humphry Clinker* comments

peevishly on the "rancorous knave" who takes "a stab at the first character in the

kingdom, without running the least hazard of detection or punishment." Bramble then

turns his attention towards the publisher whose popularity and wealth increase after being

charged with libel: "The multitude immediately take him into their protection, as a martyr

to the cause of defamation, which they have always espoused—They pay his fine, they

contribute to the increase of his stock, his shop is crowded with customers, and the sale of his paper rises in proportion to the scandal it contains." This statement seems to indicate that over the century newspapers become more strongly associated with scandal even as scandal is excluded from more respectable literary genres, namely novels, drama, and poetry. Furthermore, the dominance of one particular definition of scandal—as a discourse "degenerated to a total extinction of honesty and candour ... the most cruel and perfidious defamation"[257] —makes it more likely that even those individuals engaged in scandal writing according to the definition of this study would not themselves have labelled their work as "scandal." Unlike Manley, who defends scandal by arguing for its social benefits and truth-value, late eighteenth-century writers increasingly display a willingness to draw boundaries between fiction and truth, and art and politics. The meaning of scandal is therefore divorced from its earlier religious and secular conceptions, both of which credited scandal as a discursive means whereby a community or public could instill civic values and an awareness of social interdependency in each of its members.

While the early eighteenth century is often associated with the emergence of natural philosophy, empiricism, and plain language, the popularity of scandal literature also indicates the persistence of religious and allegorical ways of thinking that do not

---

[257] Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 102–103.

simply repeat the allegorical structures of the past but also critically revise and modernize

them in dialogue with the secular philosophies of rationalism and skepticism. In this way,

the discourse of scandal can be seen as another, slightly different response to the

ideologies that support social hierarchy and absolute rule. In contrast to the new Baconian

philosophy of science, scandal's iconoclastic effort to contest misinformation,

dissimulation, and various forms of superstition and idolatry construct an anti-

foundationalism that refuses to authorize sensory perception as the basis for a new

epistemology. Despite attempts to validate its own claims, scandal's inability to resolve

the dialectical opposition between appearance and essence only serves to produce greater

uncertainty, which leaves scandal stories understandably open to accusations of falsehood

and moral ambiguity. I would suggest that, far from undermining scandal's authority,

such attacks emphasize an element of uncertainty already present in and constituted by

the sophisticated narratives themselves. It is this paradox of uncertain truth—packaged in

the form of secrets—that is exploited and enjoyed by producers and consumers of

scandal. Located somewhere between the shifting poles of "extreme skepticism" and

"naive empiricism,"[258] early eighteenth-century scandal literature routinely acknowledges

and extends a suspicion of motivations to the narrators of scandal, whose perceptions are

just as susceptible to being compromised or distorted by passion and fantasy as the

---

[258] For a discussion of how these two epistemological approaches operated in dialectical tension
during the early modern peioed, see Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740*
(Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 47–52.

scandalous characters themselves. In contrast to the claims of reasoned and unbiased

transparency common to the later eighteenth century and to today's scandals, the secret

form of early scandal literature suggests the impossibility of determining the truth once

and for all. But contingency does not lead scandal writers to withdraw their social

commentary, despairing of the possibility of amelioration. On the contrary, their work

grounds scandal's authority precisely upon the assumption that morality, or the

determination of virtue and vice, derives from pragmatic judgments, a careful assessment

of social consequences, and the normative determinations of a typically conflicted

interpretive community.

All of these features of early eighteenth-century scandal literature enhance its

ability to make use of the duplicitous irony characteristic of the popular satirical

literature. Various kinds of parody—in Restoration manners comedy, Sheridan and

Burney's bourgeois comedy of manners, Defoe's mock newspaper column, and Manley's

satirical romances—effectively "modernize" literary forms and help to demystify

aristocratic ideologies but not without also expressing a hint of nostalgia for a distant past

in which signification was far less clouded by ideological divisions, challenges to

governing authorities, and instability in religious belief and practice, gender identity, and

other social categories. But it is also the case that such cultural changes—civil war, socio-

economic transition, and hegemonic contestation—precipitate the very conditions in

which scandal could flourish. As this study demonstrates, the period of scandal's greatest

influence in English print culture begins with the decades leading up to the civil wars and

gradually peters out with the establishment of Whig values and bourgeois hegemony over

the course of the eighteenth century. This is not to say that the discourse of scandal does

not persist in various forms as a feature of a desacralized modernity. In fact, eighteenth-

century scandal literature anticipates later kinds of mass-mediated scandal through the use

of visual metaphors, which in turn suggest in a conflicted way the self-regulation and

panoptical authority that accrue to the modern subject and the general public. If the

eighteenth century witnesses the failure of language and other signs as guarantors of

meaning, then scandal precludes the possibility of transcendent meaning even as its

topicality asserts most emphatically, against both platonic idealism and religious

authority, the immanent and normative determination of signification. The discourse of

scandal therefore plays an important role in redirecting the thoughts, judgments, and

actions of a reading public towards issues of immediate social and political relevance.

As suggested by these connections between scandal and the specific historical

climate of eighteenth-century England, the controversy regarding scandal as a discursive

form and practice is closely related to other modern controversies, such as the ideological

and literary disputes between the moderns and the ancients and the Collier controversy

surrounding the "immorality" of the Restoration stage. In the former case, scandal

literature's articulation of social divisions and difference as well as its constitutive

instability lead to its eventual characterization as a debasement of satire and other literary

288

forms in addition to being an obstacle to social and individual refinement. In the latter

case, scandal literature's representation of various corrupt activities as a kind of negative

pedagogy, its concern with licentious court culture and anti-clericalism, and its

attentiveness to a *lack* of virtue and the improper administration of power, all contribute

to a backlash against scandal. Most significantly, scandal's awareness of and refusal to

hide the contradictions and conflicts that surface as a result of the civil wars and other

social, economic, and political changes that affect England in the early modern period

make it threatening to the establishment of bourgeois hegemony, which then requires

scandal's subjugation as "unofficial" discourse.

The neglect of scandal in scholarship, at least until recently, is due in large part to

the uncritical adoption of a particularly domesticated notion of scandal (associated with

gossip and slander), which limits the political potential of scandal and constructs its

concerns as based exclusively on private interests and desires. A critical definition of

scandal as a discourse or literary genre must take into account scandal's historical

development while guarding against the reduction of scandal to either pure fiction (in the

form of entertaining lies) or pure history (in the form of chronicled truths). Yet it is

misleading to say that historical and current forms of scandal have been actually

"depoliticized" when they continue to display, in more or less covert ways, a politics,

mainly through their address of the public and their representations of power relations,

from sexual relationships to governing institutions. It would be interesting to consider the

ways in which scandal as a highly politicized discourse and socially-oriented moral

philosophy might be rejuvenated for a contemporary democratic politics, despite over two

centuries of pejorative associations and diminished cultural status. The mechanisms by

which bourgeois hegemony in England is eventually achieved and sedimented as part of

the process of modernization are set in relief through an exploration of changes that occur

to dominant cultural constructions of scandal over the course of the eighteenth century.

Similarly, the cultural structures and ideologies that propel the emergence of modernity at

the beginning of the eighteenth century are illuminated by a serious consideration of

scandal. Looking beyond the work done by this study, a further examination of early

modern scandal literature promises to provide even more insights into the complexity of

the discourse of scandal during a particularly vibrant period of its cultural development

and influence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Pre–1800 Texts

Addison, Joseph and Richard Steele. *The Spectator*. Ed. D.F. Bond. 5 vols. Oxford:
    Clarendon, 1965.

Aquinas, Thomas. *The "Summa Theologica" of Thomas Aquinas*. Trans. the Fathers of
    the English Dominican Province. 22 vols. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne,
    1916.

Assheton, William. *The Cases of Scandal and Persecution*. London: Printed by J.D.,
    1674.

Bacon, Francis. *Novum Organum*. In *The Oxford Francis Bacon*. Vol. XI. Ed. Graham
    Rees and Maria Wakely. Oxford: Clarendon, 2004.

―――. "Of Unity in Religion." In *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*. Ed.
    Michael Kiernan. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985. 11–16.

―――. *The Wisdom of the Ancients*. In *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Vol. VI. Ed. James
    Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath. London: Longman,
    1861.

―――. *The Wisedome of the Ancients*. Trans. Arthur Gorges. London: John Bill, 1619.
    Reprinted Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1968.

Baxter, Richard. *The Judgment of Non-Conformists*. London, 1676.

―――. *Catholic Communion Defended*. London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1684.

Behn, Aphra. *The Rover and Other Plays*. Ed. Jane Spencer. Oxford: Oxford University
    Press, 1995. 1–88.

Beverley, Thomas. *The Woe of Scandal*. London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1682.

Blair, Robert. "The Original Preface." In James Durham, *Concerning Scandal*. Ed.
    Christopher Coldwell. Dallas: Naphtali Press, 1990. xiii–xix.

Bohun, William. *Declarations and Pleadings: In the Most Usual Actions Brought in the Several Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas at Westminster.* London: E. and R. Nutt, and R. Gosling, 1733.

Brown, Tom. *Amusements Serious and Comical.* London: John Nutt, 1700.

Burney, Francis. *The Witlings and the Woman-Hater.* Ed. Peter Sabor and Geoffrey Sill. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002. 45–172.

Calamy, Benjamin. *Some Considerations About the Case of Scandal.* London: H. Hills et al., 1683.

Calvin, John. *Concerning Scandals.* Trans. John W. Fraser. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1978.

Centlivre, Susanna. *A Bold Stroke for a Wife.* Ed. Nancy Copeland. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998.

Charles II [of England]. "Declaration of Breda." In *The Stuart Constitution, 1608–1688: Documents and Commentary.* Ed. J.P. Kenyon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Churchill, Sarah. *The Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.* 2 vols. 2nd ed. London, 1838.

Clark, Samuel. *Of Scandal.* London: Benj. Alsop, 1683.

Collier, Jeremy. *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage.* Ed. Benjamin Hellinger. New York: Garland, 1987.

Daniel the Prophet No Conjurer: or, His Scandal. Club's Scandalous BALLAD called The Tackers. London, [1705].

Defoe, Daniel. *The Anatomy of Exchange-Alley; or, A System of Stock-Jobbing.* In *The Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe.* Vol. 6. Ed. W.R. Owens and P.N. Furbank. Vol. 6. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000.

———. *Atlantis Major.* [Edinburgh], 1711. Reprinted with an introduction by John J. Perry. Augustan Reprint Society No. 198. Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1979.

———. *The Consolidator.* London: Benj. Bragg, 1705. Reprinted with an introduction by Malcolm J. Bosse. New York: Garland, 1972.

———. *The Little Review: or, an Inquisition of Scandal.* London, 1705. Reprinted in *Defoe's Review.* Vol. 5. Introduction by Arthur Wellesley Secord. New York: AMS Press, 1965.

———. *A Review of the Affairs of France.* Vol. 1 and 2. London, 1705. Reprinted in *Defoe's Review.* Vol. 1–5. Introduction by Arthur Wellesley Secord. New York: AMS Press, 1965.

———. *Supplementary Journal to the Advice from the Scandal. Club.* London, 1704. Reprinted in *Defoe's Review.* Vol. 3. Introduction by Arthur Wellesley Secord. New York: AMS Press, 1965.

Dennis, John. *The Usefulness of the Stage.* In *The Critical Works of John Dennis.* Vol. I. Ed. Edward Niles Hooker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939.

———. *A Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter, a Comedy.* In *The Critical Works of John Dennis.* Vol. II. Ed. Edward Niles Hooker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939. 241–250.

Digby, Kenelm. *Loose Fantasies.* Ed. Vittorio Gabrieli. Roma: Edizioni Di Storia e Letteratura, 1968.

Dryden, John. "Argument to the Sixth Satyr." In *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis, Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden and Several Other Eminent Hands.* London: Jacob Tonson, 1693. 104–110.

———. *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire.* In *Essays of John Dryden.* Vol. 2. Ed. W.P. Ker. Oxford: Clarendon, 1926. 15–114.

———. "The Medall. A Satyre Against Sedition." In *The Works of John Dryden: Poems 1681–1684.* Vol. 2. Ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972. 38–52.

293

————. "Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern; Translated into Verse." In *The Works of John Dryden*: *Poems 1697–1700*. Vol. 7. Ed. Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. 24–47.

————. "Religio Laici." In *The Works of John Dryden: Poems 1681–1684*. Vol. 2. Ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972. 98–122.

Durham, James. *A Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland, or, A Treatise Concerning Scandal*. London: Company of Stationers, 1659.

Edgeworth, Maria. *Letters for Literary Ladies*. London: J. Johnson, 1795.

Etherege, George. *The Man of Mode*. In *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Comedy*. 2nd ed. Ed. Scott McMillin. New York: Norton, 1997. 87–167.

The Female Wits. By Mr. W.M. London: William Turner et al., 1704.

Frank, Thomas. *A Letter to a Member of Parliament in the North; Concerning Scandal and Defamation*. London: A. Millar, 1732.

Garrick, David. "Prologue" to *The School for Scandal*. In *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Comedy*. Ed. Scott McMillin. New York: Norton, 1997. 385–86.

Gazette-A-la-Mode: or, Tom Brown's Ghost No. 5 (June 9, 1709). Reprinted in *Contemporaries of the 'Tatler' and 'Spectator.'* Introduction by Richmond P. Bond. Augustan Reprint Society No. 46. Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library, 1954.

Hammond, Henry. *Of Scandall*. Oxford: Henry Hall, 1644.

Harvey, Stephen. "Ninth Satyr." In *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis, Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden and Several Other Eminent Hands*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1693. 176–188.

Hearne, Thomas. *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*. Ed. C. E. Doble. 11 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1884–1918.

Hesketh, Henry. *The Charge of Scandal*. London: Fincham Gardiner, 1683.

History and Proceedings of the House of Commons (Of Chandler). Originally published in 1742. 10 vols. British History Online. University of London and the History of Parliament Trust, 2003–2006. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. C.B. Macpherson. London: Penguin, 1985.

Hume, David. *The Natural History of Religion*. Ed. H.E. Root. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956.

Johnson, Samuel. "Cowley." In *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*. Ed. Donald Greene. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984. 677–697.

———. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 vols. London: W. Strahan, 1755. Repr. New York: AMS Press, 1967.

———. "Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language*." In *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*. Ed. Donald Greene. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984. 307–328.

———. *Rambler* No. 4. In *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*. Ed. Donald Greene. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984. 175–179.

Journal of the House of Commons. British History Online. University of London and the History of Parliament Trust, 2003–2006. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>.

Journal of the House of Lords. British History Online. University of London and the History of Parliament Trust, 2003–2006. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>.

Lacy, John. "Prologue." *The Rehearsal*. London: Thomas Dring et al., 1672.

Lewis, Thomas. *A Modest Vindication of the Church of England, from the Scandal of Popery*. London: J. Baker, 1710.

Mandeville, Bernard. *The Fable of the Bees*. Ed. Phillip Harth. New York: Penguin, 1970.

Manley, Delarivier. *The Adventures of Rivella*. Ed. Katherine Zelinsky. Peterborough: Broadview, 1999.

————. *Court Intrigues, in a Collection of Original Letters, from the Island of the New Atalantis*. London: John Morphew, 1711.

————. *Memoirs of Europe, Towards the Close of the Eighth Century*. London: John Morphew, 1710.

————. *The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley*. Ed. Patricia Köster. Gainesville: Scholars' Fascimiles and Reprints, 1971.

————. *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes, from the New Atalantis*. 2 vols. London: John Morphew, 1709.

Molière. *Tartuffe or the Hypocrite*. In *The Works of Molière, French and English*. 10 vols. Trans. Henry Baker and James Miller. London: John Watts, 1739.

Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley. *Selected Letters*. Ed. Isobel Grundy. London: Penguin, 1997.

A New Atlantis, for the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-Eight. 2nd ed. London: M. Thrust, 1758.

Owen, John. *An Answer Unto Two Questions: With Twelve Arguments Against Conformity*. In *The Works of John Owen*. Vol. 16. Ed. William H. Goold. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1862.

Pope, Alexander. "A Key to the Lock." In *Selected Prose of Alexander Pope*. Ed. Paul Hammond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. 73–88.

————. *The Poems of Alexander Pope: The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems*. Vol. 2 of 6 in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*. Ed. Geoffrey Tillotson. London: Methuen, 1940.

Read, Joseph. *Mr. Read's Case Published for the Prevention of Scandal*. London: Richard Janeway, 1682.

Rutherford, Samuel. *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication [and] A Brief Tractate of Scandal*. London: John Field, 1646.

Shakespeare, William. "The Rape of Lucrece." In *Shakespeare: The Poems*. Ed. John Roe. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 139–230.

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley. *A School for Scandal*. In *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. Vol. I. Ed. Cecil Price. Oxford: Clarendon, 1973. 355–443.

Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondance of Adam Smith*. Vol. I. Ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982.

Smollett, Tobias. *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*. Ed. Lewis M. Knapp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Spenser, Edmund. "The Shepherdes Calender." In *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*. Ed. H. Maclean and A.L. Prescot. New York: W.W. Norton, 1993.

Stanhope, Philip Dormer. *Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son*. Ed. Oliver H. Leigh. New York: Tudor Publishing, n.d.Letter LIV, October 14, 1798.

Steele, Richard. *The Tatler*. 4 vols. Ed. George A. Aitken. New York: Hadley & Mathews, 1899.

Swift, Jonathan. "The Battle of the Books." In *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*. Ed. Angus Ross and David Wooley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

The Tea-Table. London: Jn Bowles, n.d. From *The Lewis Walpole Library Digital Collection*. (Call No. 766.0.37). Yale University, 2005. <http://lwlimages.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/oneITEM.asp?pid=lwlpr02596&iid=lwlpr02596>.

William III [of England]. *His Majesty's Letter To The Lord Bishop of London*. London, 1689.

Wright, James. *The Humours, and Conversations of the Town*. London: R. Bentley, 1693. Repr. with an introduction by Brice Harris. Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1961.

Wycherley, William. *The Country Wife*. In *The Plays of William Wycherley*. Ed. Peter Holland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 227–341.

Post–1800 Texts

Acosta, Ana M. "Spaces of Dissent and the Public Sphere in Hackney, Stoke Newington, and Newington Green." *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27, No. 1 (2003): 1–27.

Amariglio, Jack and Antonio Callari. "Marxian Value Theory and the Problem of the Subject: The Role of Commodity Fetishism." In *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*. Ed. Emily Apter and William Pietz. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1983.

Anderson, Paul Bunyan. "Delariviere Manley's Prose Fiction." *Philological Quarterly* 13 (1934): 168-88.

———. "Mistress Delariviere Manley's Biography." *Modern Philology* 33 (1936): 261–278.

Apostolodis, Paul and Juliet A. Williams. *Public Affairs: Politics in the Age of Sex Scandals*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

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

Backscheider, Paula. *Daniel Defoe: His Life*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

———. "Introduction." In Backscheider and Dykstal, eds., *Intersections of the Public and Private*. 1–21.

———. *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Backscheider, Paula and Timothy Dykstal, eds. *The Intersections of the Public and Private Spheres in Early Modern England*. London: Frank Cass, 1996.

Ballaster, Rosalind. "Introduction." In Manley, *New Atalantis*. Ed. Ballaster. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1991. v–xxi.

————. "Manl(e)y Forms: Sex and the Female Satirist." *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*. Ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss. London: Routledge, 1992. 217-41.

————. *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

————. "Seizing the Means of Seduction: Fiction and Feminine Identity in Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley." *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740*. Ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992. 93-108.

Barker-Benfield, G.J. *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Barney, Richard A. *Plots of Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Barr, William, ed. *Juvenal: The Satires*. Trans. Niall Rudd. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

————. *The System of Objects* (1968). Trans. James Benedict. London: Verso, 1996.

Benedict, Barbara M. *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Bird, S. Elizabeth. *For Enquiring Minds: A Cultural Study of Supermarket Tabloids*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

————. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Bowers, Toni. "Seduction Narratives and Tory Experience in Augustan England." *The Eighteenth Century* 40, no. 2 (1999): 128–154.

Bradley, James E. *Religion, Revolution, and English Radicalism: Non-conformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Brant, Clare. "Speaking of Women: Scandal and the Law in the Mid-Eighteenth Century." In *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*. Ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss. London: Routledge, 1992. 242-70.

Brewer, John. *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997.

Brown, Laura. *English Dramatic Form, 1660–1760: An Essay in Generic History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

————. *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, The New. Vol. 2. Ed. George Watson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Cambridge History of English and American Literature. Ed. Ward and Trent, et al. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907–21. Online Edition. New York: Bartleby.com, 2000. <www.bartleby.com/cambridge>.

Castle, Terry. *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.

Churchill, Winston S. *Marlborough: His Life and Times*. Vol. 1. London: G. Harrap & Co., 1933.

Cohen, William A. *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Conway, Alison. *Private Interests: Women, Portraiture, and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709–1791*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Cowan, Brian. "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, No. 3 (2004): 345–366.

Clark, Anna. *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Clifton, Robin. "The Fear of Popery." In *The Origins of the English Civil War*. Ed. Conrad Russell. London: Macmillan, 1973. 144–167.

Daly, Glyn. "Introduction: Risking the Impossible." In Slavoj Žižek and Glyn Daly, *Conversations with Žižek*. Cambridge: Polity, 2004. 1–22.

Darnton, Robert. *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995.

Davidson, Jenny. *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Dean, Jodi. *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

———. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Doody, Margaret Anne. *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Downie, J.A. *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Dykstal, Timothy. "Introduction." In Backscheider and Dykstal, eds., *Intersections of the Public and Private*. 22–40.

Eagleton, Terry. *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Fabricant, Carole. "The Shared Worlds of Manley and Swift." *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*. Ed. Donald C. Mell. London: Associated University Press, 1996. 154-78.

Felski, Rita. *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Fisher, Trevor. *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain*. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1980.

———. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Trans. David Macey, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. New York: Picador, 2003.

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

Gallagher, Catherine. *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace 1670-1820*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

———. "Political Crimes and Fictional Alibis: The Case of Delarivier Manley." *Eighteenth Century Studies* 23 (Summer 1990): 502-21.

Garment, Suzanne. *Scandal: The Culture of Mistrust in American Politics*. New York: Times Books, 1991.

Giroux, Henry A. *The Terror of Neoliberalism: Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of Democracy*. Boulder.: Paradigm, 2004.

Giroux, Henry and Roger I. Simon. "Popular Culture as a Pedagogy of Pleasure and Meaning: Decolonizing the Body." In Henry A. Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 180–206.

Glynn, Kevin. *Tabloid Culture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000.

Gonda, Caroline. *Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709–1834*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from Cultural Writings*. Trans. William Boelhower. Ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

––––––. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Greaves, Richard L. *Enemies Under His Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664–1677*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

Habermas, Jürgen. "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere." Trans. Thomas Burger. In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Ed. Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992. 422–62.

––––––. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962). Trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

Harth, Phillip, ed. "Introduction." In Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*. New York: Penguin, 1970.

Hawkins, Harriett. *Likenesses of Truth in Elizabethan and Restoration Drama*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Heeren, A. Van Der. "Scandal." In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. XIII. Online Edition. K. Knight, 2003. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13506d.htm>.

Heinzelman, Susan Sage. "Women's Petty Treason: Feminism, Narrative, and the Law." *Journal of Narrative Technique* 20 (1990): 87-106.

Herman, Ruth. *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003.

Hill, Mike and Warren Montag, eds. *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere*. London: Verso, 2000.

Holquist, Michael. "The Politics of Representation." In *Allegory and Representation*. Ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981. 163–183.

Hunter, J. Paul. *Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1990.

Ingrassia, Catherine. "Additional Information about Eliza Haywood's 1749 Arrest for Seditious Libel," *Notes and Queries* 44, no. 2 (June 1997): 202-204.

————. *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Ives, Peter. *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*. London: Pluto Press, 2004.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Kirschner, Suzanne R. *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Klein, Lawrence. "Property and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Whig Moralists: The Case of the *Spectator*." In *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*. Ed. John Brewer and Susan Staves. London: Routledge, 1995. 221–33.

Köster, Patricia. "Introduction." *The Novels of Mary Delariviére Manley*. 2 Vols. Ed. Köster. Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971.

————. "Delariviere Manley and the DNB: A Cautionary Tale about Following Black Sheep, with a Challenge to Cataloguers." *Eighteenth-Century Life* 3 (1977): 106-11.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Kropf, C.R. "Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8 (1974-5): 153-68.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960.* Book VII of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan.* Trans. Dennis Porter. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

———. "The Mirror-phase as Formative of the Function of I." Trans. Jean Roussel. In *Mapping Ideology.* Ed. Slavoj Žižek. London: Verso, 1994.

Lachman, David. "Introduction." In James Durham, *A Treatise Concerning Scandal.* Ed. Christopher Coldwell. Dallas: Naphtali Press, 1990. iii–xii.

Laclau, Ernesto. "Preface." In Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* xiii-xv.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985). 2nd edition. London: Verso, 2001.

Latta, Kimberley. "The Mistress of the Marriage Market: Gender and Economic Ideology in Defoe's *Review.*" *English Literary History* 69 (2002): 359–83.

Lilley, Kate. "Blazing Worlds: Seventeenth-Century Women's Utopian Writing." In *Women, Texts, and Histories 1575–1760.* Ed. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss. London: Routledge, 1992.

Love, Harold. *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectic.* Trans. Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971.

Lull, James and Stephen Hinerman, eds. *Media Scandals.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Lynch, Deidre Shauna. *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

McKeon, Michael. *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

McDowell, Paula. *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678–1730.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

McKenzie, Kirsten. *Scandal in the Colonies.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004.

Man, Paul de. "Pascal's Allegory of Representation." In *Allegory and Representation.* Ed. Stephen J. Greenblatt. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981. 1–25.

Markovits, Andrei S. and Mark Silverstein, eds. *The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal Democracies.* New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume 1.* Trans. Ben Fowkes. Ed. Ernest Mandel. London: Penguin, 1976.

Maurer, Shawn Lisa. *Proposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-Century English Periodical.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Medoff, Jeslyn. "The Daughters of Behn and the Problem of Reputation." *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740.* Ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992. 33-54.

Mellencamp, Patricia. *High Anxiety: Catastrophe, Scandal, Age, & Comedy.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Morgan, Fidelis. *A Woman of No Character: An Autobiography of Mrs Manley.* London: Faber and Faber, 1986.

Mücke, Dorothea E. von. *Virtue and the Veil of Illusion: Generic Innovation and the Pedagogical Project in Eighteenth-Century Literature.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Munns, Jessica. "Change, Skepticism, and Uncertainty." In *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre.* Ed. Deborah Payne Fisk. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 142-157.

Needham, Gwendolyn B. "Mary de la Rivière Manley, Tory Defender." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12 (1949): 253-88.

306

————. "Mrs. Manley: An Eighteenth-Century Wife of Bath." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 14 (1951): 259-84.

Nenner, Howard. "The Later Stuart Age." In Pocock, *The Varieties of British Political Thought*. 180–208.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature Online. "The Early Seventeenth Century: Civil Wars of Ideas." W.W. Norton, 2003–2006. <http://www.wwnorton.com/nto/17century/topic_3/welcome.htm>.

Novak, Maximilllian E. *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

O'Brien, John F. "The Character of Credit: Defoe's 'Lady Credit,' *The Fortunate Mistress*, and the Resources of Inconsistency in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain." *English Literary History* 63, No. 3 (1996): 603–31.

Oxford English Dictionary. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. Online Edition. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oed.com>.

Patterson, Annabel. *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.

Payne, William L. "Introduction." *The Best of Defoe's Review.* Ed. William L. Payne. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.

————. *Mr. Review: Daniel Defoe as Author of the Review.* New York: King's Crown Press, 1947.

Peter, John. *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

Phillipson, Nicholas. "Politics and Politeness in the Reigns of Anne and the Early Hanoverians." In Pocock, ed., *The Varieties of British Political Thought.* 211–245.

Pocock, J.G.A. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

————. *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

————, ed. *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Pocock, J.G.A. and Gordon J. Schochet. "Interregnum and Restoration." In Pocock, ed., *The Varieties of British Political Thought*. 146–179.

Pollak, Ellen. "Guarding the Succession of the (E)State: Guardian-Ward Incest and the Dangers of Representation in Delarivier Manley's *The New Atalantis*." *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 29, No.3 (Fall 1998): 220–237.

Porter, Roy. *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Penguin, 1982.

Potter, Lois. *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Rabb, Melinda Alliker. "The Manl(e)y Style: Delariviere Manley and Jonathan Swift." *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*. Ed. Donald C. Mell. London: Associated University Press, 1996. 125-53.

Richetti, John. *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography*. London: Blackwell, 2005.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

Rivers, Isabel. *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1979.

Robbins, Bruce. "Introduction: The Public as Phantom." In *The Phantom Public Sphere*. Ed. Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. vii–xxvi.

Roberts, Josephine A. "Introduction." In Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*. Ed. Roberts. Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995.

Rogers, Pat. *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture*. London: Methuen, 1972.

————. *Literature and Popular Culture.* Sussex: Harvester, 1985.

Romanell, Patrick. "Introduction." In John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration.* New York: Macmillan, 1950.

Ross, Trevor. *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998.

Rumbold, Valerie. *Women's Place in Pope's World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Sandys-Wunsch, John. "Graven Image." In *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature.* Ed. David L. Jeffrey. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992. 320–321.

Schochet, Gordon J. "Why Should History Matter?" In Pocock, ed., *The Varieties of British Political Thought.* 321-357.

Schonhorn, Manuel. "Defoe and the Limits of Jacobite Rhetoric." *English Literary History* 64, No. 4 (1997): 871–886.

Seidel, Michael. "Satire, Lampoon, Libel, Slander". In *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740.* Ed. Steven N. Zwicker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 33-57.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *Gossip.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.

Spender, Dale. *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Writers Before Jane Austen.* London: Pandora, 1986.

Spraggon, Julie. *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War.* Rochester: Boydell, 2003.

Temple, Kathryn. *Scandal Nation: Law and Authorship in Britain, 1750-1832.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse-Counter-Discourse.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Thompson, John B. *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age.*
Cambridge: Polity, 2000.

Trevelyan, G.M. *England Under Queen Anne.* London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1934.

Wahrman, Dror. *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Warner, Michael. *Public and Counterpublics.* New York: Zone Books, 2002.

Warner, William Beatty. *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

White, T.H. *The Age of Scandal.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1950.

Wilde, Oscar. *Lady Windemere's Fan.* In *The Works of Oscar Wilde.* Vol. 5. New York: Lamb Publishing, 1909. Repr. New York: AMS Press, 1972. 7–155.

Wilkes, Roger. *Scandal: A Scurrilous History of Gossip.* London: Atalantic Books, 2002.

Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1961. Repr. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001.

Williams, Robert. *Political Scandal in the USA.* Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1998.

Wilputte, Earla. "Introduction." In Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo: A Pre-Adamitical History.* Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999. 9–34.

Wiltenburg, Joy. *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Fragile Absolute, or Why the Christian Legacy is Worth Fighting For.* London: Verso, 2000.

———. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1991.

———. *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality*. London: Verso, 1994.

———. *On Belief*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

———. *The Plague of Fantasies*. London: Verso, 1997.

———. "Preface: Burning the Bridges." In *The Žižek Reader*. Ed. Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

———. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989.