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**BEYOND SPECTACLE: ELIZA HAYWOOD'S FEMALE SPECTATORS**

By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

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Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

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**BEYOND SPECTACLE: ELIZA HAYWOOD'S FEMALE SPECTATORS**



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## **ABSTRACT**

Through an examination of scenarios of seeing and being seen in selected texts of Eliza Haywood, the dissertation examines how forms of power are conducted through the operations of sight and seeing, with the specific task of theorizing forms of agency for women that would allow them to evade a dominating, often voyeuristic, male gaze. Eighteenth-century texts that foreground ocular experience, including Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, Johnson's *Rambler* and Le Sage's *Le Diable Boiteux*, historicize and contextualize the discussion. Lacan's theory of the gaze, whereby subjectivity is conferred within the visual field, informs the argument, as do theories of the female gaze developed by feminist film critics. Haywood explored strategies which undermine the conventional male spectator/female spectacle structure of looking, and demonstrated that by manoeuvring within the limitations imposed by their role as objects of sight, women can exercise forms of power. Ultimately the thesis argues that Haywood's own strategy as an author involved the direct appropriation of the spectator position as a means of establishing discursive authority.

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## Introduction

A scene near the end of Eliza Haywood's *History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), has Betsy, now Mrs. Munden, gazing tenderly and regretfully on a miniature of Mr. Truworth while she is seated in an arbour:

'Though I no more must see himself,' said she, 'I may at least be allowed to pay the tribute of my gratitude to this dumb representative of the man to whom I have been so much obliged.' -- At this instant, a thousand proofs of love given her by the original of the copy in her hand occurring all at once to her remembrance, tears filled her eyes, and her breast swelled with involuntary sighs. (542)

As a substitute for her former lover, the portrait, which Betsy keeps with her always, compensates for his absence; gazing upon it, Betsy summons not only memory but desire itself.<sup>1</sup> In the seeming privacy of the garden, with Truworth safely contained within the frame of the portrait, Betsy contemplates this representation because it is the only experience of desire permitted now that she is married to another. Not fully conscious at this point that she indulges in erotic fantasy, Betsy displaces her sexual feelings onto feelings of gratitude, esteem and friendship. Her

look is an example of what Joan Dejean names the "memorializing gaze," which makes "the object of desire strangely plural, capable of functioning in reality and in 'reverie'" (213). For Dejean, female visual agency is enacted through an erotic reverie that conjures past and present.<sup>2</sup> But although the gaze, memory and erotic longings are conflated in Betsy's reverie, Haywood complicates the issue of female visual agency when, in a move typical of the various trajectories the gaze follows in Haywood's texts, into this scene of scopic desire another pair of eyes is introduced, that of Truworth himself.

Unbeknownst to Betsy, he has discovered her in the garden; "gazing on her with...uninterrupted freedom" he foregoes his desire to speak to her "lest by doing so he should be deprived of the pleasure he now enjoyed" (543). Truworth's looking is purely voyeuristic, his pleasure arising from being able to look "uninterrupted," without a returning gaze to challenge or arrest his own.<sup>3</sup> If this were all to the scene it would simply consist of two discrete cases of unidirectional looking: Betsy at the portrait, Truworth at Betsy. But, in fact, this scopic scenario is a deconstruction of the spectator/spectacle structure itself. Betsy believes she looks without being seen herself, until a "rustling among the leaves" alerts her to someone else's presence and

makes her aware that she is under scrutiny. As for Trueworth, not only does "the first glance of [Betsy's] eyes" bring an end to his pleasureable voyeurism, but he also becomes aware of his own role as a spectacle when he discovers that he, in representation, is the object of Betsy's gaze:

what was his amazement to find it was his own picture! that very picture, which had been taken from the painter's was the object of her meditations! -- he heard her sighs, he saw her lovely hand frequently put up to wipe away the tears that fell from her eyes while looking on it; -- he also saw her more than once, though doubtless in those moments not knowing what she did, press the lifeless image to her bosom with the utmost tenderness...scarce could he give credit to the testimony of his senses, near as he was to her, he even strained his sight to be more sure. (543)

To be an object merely in representation cannot compromise Trueworth's subject position and the knowledge he acquires through it. On the contrary, to learn that he is the object of Betsy's sight enhances his own visual agency. Until seen himself, Trueworth surveys Betsy's desiring gaze, interprets the scene he beholds, and acquires a more complete knowledge of Betsy's heart than she herself possesses. Male knowingness is quite explicitly contrasted to female unknowingness, Betsy "doubtless...not knowing what she did" when she presses the portrait against her breast.

Betsy, not Truworth, is the real spectacle here; it is she who is subjected to an intrusive gaze. The garden supposedly provides a secure place for her to indulge her desire safely, but the rupture of her fantasy is a reminder of the threat posed by male voyeurism. Truworth does not hesitate to exploit his epistemic privilege; in possession of Betsy's secret, he pushes his advantage by encroaching on her body. The danger of Truworth's real presence, "no visionary appearance," is manifested when "not regarding the efforts she made to hinder him...[he] clasp'd her to his breast with a vehemence, which in all his days of courtship to her he never durst attempt" (545). Because he is fundamentally worthy, Truworth later regrets his eagerness to benefit from knowledge he has surreptitiously acquired, "thinking he ought to be content with knowing she loved him, without putting her modesty to the blush by letting her perceive the discovery he had made" (553). In the unfolding of this scene, however, it also becomes apparent that the revelation of "the secret of her heart" is the central issue for Betsy as well, and the distinction Haywood is careful to make between an "original" and a "copy" is critical to this process.

Betsy's erotic reverie, mediated through Truworth's "dumb representative," produces the loss of self-consciousness Truworth



witnesses; female fantasy thus does not appear to facilitate self-knowledge. Significantly, when confronted with the "sight of the real object whose image she had been thus tenderly contemplating," Betsy drops the picture (542). In this moment of visual exchange, the full meaning of her desiring gaze is revealed not just to Truworth but also to Betsy:

the accident, which had betrayed the secret of her heart to him, had also discovered it to herself. -- She was now convinced, that it was something more than esteem, -- than friendship, -- than gratitude, his merits had inspired her with; -- she was conscious, that while she most resisted the glowing pressure of his lips, she had felt a guilty pleasure in the touch...(547)

Exchanging the painted for the real Truworth, Betsy moves from a spontaneous, unknowing experience of desire, to become fully conscious of her body and her heart.

The moment of her self-discovery is mediated by the dialectic between absence and presence, the "image" and the "real object." The fact that she possesses a portrait never intended for her is the sign of Betsy's unconscious desire, but it takes Truworth's interpretive gaze, reading and acting upon Betsy's desiring look, to expose it.

That Betsy possesses a desiring gaze suggests that this complex

scenario is an instance of female visual agency. Yet, the epistemic privilege Truworth acquires through his voyeuristic looking makes this a tentative conclusion at best, at least with regard to this particular visual scenario. Haywood holds in reserve, however, her recognition that the female gaze is not inevitably locked into issues of power and dominance when she gives the final look, the look of sympathy, to Betsy. Truworth, because he has accepted their permanent separation, leaves her in dejection, and Betsy, "Pursuing him with her eyes till he was quite out of sight," now pities "Poor Truworth" (546). The significance of Betsy's look of sympathy lies in her former career as a coquette, where such a look is impossible: as a coquette Betsy enjoyed the suffering of her lover as a sign of her power. This final look of commiseration, therefore, signifies the final step in Betsy's transformation from self-regarding coquette to sympathetic lover. Here, Haywood suggests another form of female visual agency, one that follows a principle of empathy and replaces an outward gaze for the narcissistic gaze of the coquette.

I have lingered over a reading of this scopic scenario because it demonstrates some of the diverse and complex ways in which "seeing" and "being seen" function in Haywood's fiction: desire and indifference, presence and absence, the 'Real' and its copy, knowledge and innocence,

are connected and negotiated through the operation of the gaze. The passage also raises questions regarding Haywood's exploration of female visual agency; she repeatedly conceives of women specifically as objects of sight, while simultaneously insisting that women are also desiring subjects. Female oppression is related to a system of looking whereby relations of power are conducted within a subject/object dichotomy. In this 'ocular regime',<sup>4</sup> power is traditionally believed to accrue to the subject position, a position held by men who make women the objects of their gaze. I will argue, however, that Haywood's feminism arises from her challenge to the way power is distributed within this structure. The presiding issue in Haywood is whether women can, from their position as objects, as spectacles rather than spectators, exert some control over their destiny. Or, conversely, can they successfully become spectators and acquire the authority the subject position confers.

The problem of the female gaze may not be a simple reversal of roles, as the crucial portrait scene in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* demonstrates. Initially it appears to be an instance where a woman unequivocally appropriates the position of spectating subject. After exercising an approving yet critical eye in surveying Pemberley, Elizabeth gazes on the portrait of Darcy:

as she stood before the canvas, on which he was represented, and *fixed his eyes upon herself*, [emphasis added] she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression. (220)

What we might expect to be a situation where Elizabeth makes Darcy the object of her gaze becomes a moment where the primacy and power of Darcy's gaze is affirmed. The scene is the final step in the correction of Elizabeth's perception of Darcy, where she learns to realign her look with his. Although she has been shown to have a critical, scrutinizing gaze, in the crucial matter of how she is to regard Darcy's character and, more importantly, how she is to appreciate the significance of his condescension in a connection with her family, Elizabeth must come to see them and herself, through Darcy's eyes. Much of this transformation in her perception is accomplished through his letter, her interpretation, through "viewing," Pemberley's grounds (the taste everywhere displayed reflects well on Darcy's character) and the testimony of Mrs. Reynolds; all have a role to play in the revolution in Elizabeth's perception. But it is the portrait scene, with its focus on Darcy's gaze rather than Elizabeth's, that confirms whose point of view prevails.<sup>5</sup>

A woman's look, then, is fraught, and a forthright usurpation of

the power of the gaze cannot be assumed. It is this insight that is at the centre of my discussion of Haywood's preoccupation with seeing and being seen. Aware of the primacy of the visual dimensions of women's lives, she understands that any attempt to challenge masculine power and develop strategies for female agency must reconfigure women's role within the visible field.

Haywood creates many diverse scenes of looking that allow her to explore the complexity of the relationship between vision and power. The benign exchange of glances between lovers facilitates courtship, but the longing gaze of the lover can also become sinister as voyeuristic practices proliferate in Haywood's texts; repeatedly women are spied upon covertly by men -- an act presented as ultimately threatening. Haywood also lingers over the pleasure women derive from being looked upon. The self-regarding "coquette," perpetually chastised in eighteenth-century literature, is the central character of *Idalia* as well as in *Betsy Thoughtless*. Haywood does not, however, simply condemn female vanity; rather, she explores vanity's important role in the formation of female subjectivity itself. Women construct themselves to be seen, and the desire to be desirable is central to their identity and their sexuality. Not only does Haywood reveal the effects of male looking

on women's psychic life, she also shows how on a broader social level a self-censoring, internalized patriarchal gaze is essential to the regulation of female conduct. Her examination of women's lack of social power depends largely on the complexity of her understanding and representation of the specular elements of female experience.

Encouraged to believe in the power of their "killing eyes," Haywood's female characters, nevertheless, see themselves defeated in their conflicts with men, political and sexual struggles that often lead to death or isolation, marginalization and voicelessness. Yet she also repeatedly challenges the limitations imposed on women by this scopical regime, both in her authorial practice and her fictional representations. For example, the coquette is universally criticised for her vanity and levity, but her refusal to look upon any lover with desire accords her a degree of autonomy which is a form of female resistance. Betsy's desire, for example, to gather numerous lovers around her, choosing none, is prompted as much by her reluctance to marry as it is by her vanity.

Ultimately Haywood's interest lies in women's ability to acquire knowledge. Her awareness of woman's place as object rather than subject leads her to questions regarding the relationship between seeing and knowing. Women's uncertain access to the subject position means

that their relationship to knowledge and the semiotic process -- interpreting the world around them -- is extremely problematic. As objects, where they are seen and cannot look (or can do so only in subversive ways), women find themselves unable to read cultural signs with any accuracy.

Given her endeavour to conceive of a negotiated position for women within the visual order, Haywood must be included in any discussion of eighteenth-century feminist discourse. Simultaneously cynical about the possibilities for female empowerment, Haywood frequently emphasized women's impotence in the face of systemic patriarchal power, yet she was also a committed strategist both materially on her own behalf as a professional writer, and discursively, on behalf of the cause of female agency.

The significance of her ideas to the history of feminism, however, has been questioned. As Polly Stevens Fields notes in "Manly Vigor and Woman's Wit," "while Behn has increasingly received attention for her feminist perspective, Haywood informs her dramas with far more feminism than has been credited to her, until now" (257). For Fields, Haywood's feminist "dogma" is to be found in her plays where women are "neither angels nor devils...have the right to define their own sexual

realities and to embody an inviolable selfhood" (257). While I do not agree that in order to be a feminist writer Haywood requires a dogma, Fields does address the lack of agreement on Haywood's place in eighteenth-century feminism. Katherine Rogers in *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* excludes Haywood, and professional women writers in general, from feminist discourse. Despite a flexible definition of "feminist feeling" -- "feminism need not be limited to single-minded, systematic campaigning for women's rights, but should include particular sensitivity to their needs, awareness of their problems, and concern for their situation" (4) -- she is unable to accord any kind of feminist impulse to Haywood. Rogers dismisses the work of professional women writers as nothing more than hack writing, arguing that their opportunism "precluded the free experimentation that would have encouraged them to modify the male-created forms to express new feminine insights" (103).<sup>6</sup> John Richetti is more ambivalent; for him Haywood "is the female prophet of an oppressed and maligned sex against an organized male conspiracy...to read such sentiments is to participate in an exhilarating manner in an eighteenth-century feminism, not yet a political movement, of course, but a set of apparently stirring moral and emotional affirmations" (*Popular Fiction* 181). Yet for Richetti



Haywood's role as a reformer is merely a "pose;" the "unsympathetic modern reader" or the "discerning" contemporary can easily expose her real intentions, to "provoke erotic fantasy." Her didacticism, effective because it is "implicit and pervasive," is a result of "instinct" rather than "technique," and she evokes in her readers "a moral-emotional sympathetic vibration rather than a self-conscious and deliberate assent to moral ideas" (182).<sup>7</sup>

Critics such as Ann Messenger and Marilyn Williamson, on the other hand, see Haywood as a feminist who advocated a politics of pragmatism. In *Raising Their Voices* Williamson states that Haywood wrote "to aid women in their struggle for survival within existing social structures" (239). For Messenger, *The Female Spectator* "instructs the fair sex in strategies for survival: social, emotional, mental, financial, and physical survival" (110). I similarly regard Haywood as a strategist who, as a writer seeking discursive authority and as a feminist seeking methods for women to increase their cultural, sexual, and economic power, emphasized prudence, discernment and self-awareness precisely because women's powers of interpretation are compromised by their exclusion from the privileged connection between seeing and knowing. Many of Haywood's female characters are unable to distinguish between

truth and lies, or to penetrate the veil between reality and appearance; consequently, their ability to protect themselves from the abuse of power is limited. Yet Haywood's most interesting female characters are those who either find ways to manoeuvre and exercise power within their role as sexual objects or who attempt to appropriate the male subject position outright.

The transgressive, anti-authoritarian elements in the experience of compulsive desire is another source of Haywood's feminism. In the surrender to an unconquerable passion, female desire can be viewed as a form of resistance to the ideological constraints on women's lives; the demand that women govern their sexuality is forgotten in a single moment of "transport."<sup>8</sup> Haywood's metaphor is an interesting one: to be 'carried out of oneself' (OED) is to experience an ontological transformation, to be conveyed beyond the reach of rational consciousness. Genuine desire and self-control are mutually exclusive in Haywood, and submission to involuntary passion entails a loss or forgetting of the self-policing aspects of consciousness. "Love, is what we can neither resist, expel, nor even alleviate...Reason, Pride, or a just Sensibility of conscious Worth, in vain oppose it" (*Love in Excess* 150). Giving oneself up to desire's chaotic and irrational impulses can be seen

as an attempt, in spite of the consequences, to seek freedom through the liberation of the body, another means of wresting "a Realm of Freedom from the Realm of Necessity" (*Political Unconscious* 17).<sup>9</sup>

The fact that this moment of freedom is transient, illusory and self-destructive does not detract from its status as a moment of political and personal resistance available to those unwilling to submit to an oppressive ideological agenda.<sup>10</sup> It is true, however, that the efficacy of this strategy for women is debatable. The moment of "transport" is attained only through a masculine economy of desire. Haywood does not suggest that the structure of dominance and submission that governs sexual relations can be transformed. In fact, the eroticism of her texts depends on a heroine's gradual submission to her lover's urgent sexual demands - the granting of the "last favour." For a writer of cautionary tales, the answer could not lie in an embrace of the chaotic, heady world of sensation and pure feeling; although Haywood creates an enticing fantasy, it is shown to be dangerous and is ultimately withdrawn. Women who rebel suffer, and Haywood's heroines pay heavily for their abandonment to desire. Inevitably, they experience that other form of abandonment -- their lovers quickly tire of them; masculine desire, once appeased, is soon sated -- the theme of male inconstancy is ubiquitous

in Haywood's canon. For the abandoned woman, the consequences are either death or isolation, often in the form of forced retirement to a convent. Yet Haywood's sympathy for female desire is clearly apparent, and a subversive element of regret regarding women's inability to achieve a measure of erotic freedom runs through her texts.

The size and generic diversity of Haywood's canon also makes her an essential figure in the feminist project of recovering neglected women writers.<sup>11</sup> Most often her work is examined within a framework of the broad issues of literary criticism. For example, she is central to feminist discussions of the novel's development and the relationship between gender and genre. Critics include Haywood in revisionist histories of eighteenth-century fiction that seek to include women writers. With understandable incredulity, Dale Spender claims in *Mothers of the Novel* that "only more extraordinary than [Eliza Haywood's] achievement is its removal from the records of literary innovation and accomplishment" (Spender 81). Spender points out that Haywood is ignored in Walter Allen's *The English Novel* (1980) and Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957).<sup>12</sup> As Spender's title indicates, she is interested in naming women writers as originators of an important new literary form. In the progress of Haywood's career, Spender sees the model for

the novel's development: "beginning with *Love in Excess*; or, *The Fatal Enquiry* published in 1719, through to *The History of Betsy Thoughtless* in 1751, we witness in the work of Eliza Haywood, the rise of the novel" (83). Jane Spencer takes a similar view in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*: Haywood's career is "a paradigm for that of the eighteenth-century woman novelist generally: at first praised as amorous, then castigated as immoral, and finally accepted on new, and limiting, terms" (77). Spencer, in tracing how the public came to accept women writers, discusses the literary marketplace and the territory women were mapping out for themselves with the approval (for the most part) of the culture at large; women were permitted to write, but with certain restrictions. Ros Ballaster also describes how the early writers of prose fiction -- Behn, Manley and Haywood -- were considered "negative precedents" who needed to be rejected in order for later women writers to gain respectability (*Seductive Forms* 198). Within this paradigm, Haywood can be recuperated on the basis of her later work, especially after 1740 with such works as *The Female Spectator* (1744-46), a conduct or courtesy periodical, and her respectable novels of domestic sensibility -- *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) or *The History of Jenny and Jemmy Jessamy* (1752).

Haywood was never entirely left out of discussions of the 'development' of the novel, however. On the contrary, she has often been regarded as an important 'precursor' to the masters of early English fiction, Richardson and Fielding. George Whicher's influential *The Life and Romances of Eliza Haywood* (1915),<sup>13</sup> an early commentary on Haywood, sets the tone and outline for later criticism: "Mrs. Haywood's best volumes are doubtless dreary enough, but even if they only crudely foreshadow the work of incomparably greater genius, they represent an advance by no means slight" (26). To value Haywood for her contribution to the novel undoubtedly helps to increase her profile and creates for her a role in the transformations of genre. Yet, it also produces assessments which emphasize the deficiencies of her writing.

For some critics, to evaluate Haywood in reference to an "art" of the novel makes it possible to dismiss her work on aesthetic grounds. The narrative of progress where the critic looks to the pinnacle achievement of the novel and then looks back in history to see how it got there, inevitably characterizes women as secondary players in the movement of literary history. Thus, Haywood's perceived failures are highlighted when measured against the aesthetic norms of realist fiction. Even Margaret Doody, who generally writes with insight on Haywood,

ultimately must damn with just such faint praise. In *A Natural Passion* she repeatedly shows how Haywood's innovations are overwhelmed by Richardson's superior genius. In describing the many similarities between the two authors, Doody credits Haywood with establishing "the seduction novel as a minor genre in English fiction" (149). Yet, invariably it is Richardson who "saw the deeper, more universal application of the main conflict in the rape tale"; using the same situations and conventions, he creates "real instead of pasteboard tragedy" (150). Both writers develop a rhetoric of desire yet "Richardson's use of the language of love is designed (like Mrs. Haywood's in her lesser degree) to convey the erotic as constantly significant" (143-4). It is this constant return to Haywood's "lesser degree" that is so disconcerting and which needs to be challenged. Many critics reserve a brand of judgemental criticism for Haywood and seem compelled to undermine their own appreciation for her achievements.<sup>14</sup> To her credit, however, Doody acknowledges (perhaps initiates) an area of study which has gained much critical interest -- Haywood's discourse of female desire. The heroine "is victorious in the novel in being perpetual subject, the centre of the emotional action. The experience of passion as felt by a female is presented as a full emotional experience, as something that matters"

(19). In his introduction to a recent edition of Haywood's *Love in Excess*, David Oakleaf also emphasizes Haywood's representation of women as subjects in and of desire. In her first novel

Haywood confronts directly the social conventions which, by making female sexual desire unspeakable, silence her protagonists. Indeed, Haywood won praise precisely for finding a language through which to express passion....She strikingly crafts a public space for subjectivity, especially for the desiring female subject. (8)

My own examination of Haywood's view of female power and agency is in line with the prevailing interest in Haywood as a spokeswoman for female sexual realities.

Ros Ballaster questions the wisdom of feminist theories of the novel that have failed to transcend the 'precursor' model:

feminist criticism proves itself to be as trapped in realist teleologies as its masculinist counterpart...Like Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) produce a determinedly linear account of female literary history viewed as a series of increasingly sophisticated aesthetic responses to the restrictions imposed by a 'patriarchal poetics'...The rise in prestige of the novel form through the century does not necessarily betoken increasing sophistication in narrative technique, nor should we allow our analysis of eighteenth-century fiction to be overly determined by the realist aesthetics that came to dominate in the century that followed. (*Seductive Forms* 20-23)



Janet Todd is unequivocal: "literature is not progressive; there is not really a rise of the male or the female novel" (2). It is understandable that feminist critics insist on assigning a significant role to women writers in the history of the novel, for there is no doubt either about their participation or that they have been marginalized by traditional theories of the novel. Yet, I think it is essential that Haywood be rescued from the stigma of 'precursor'. Like Ballaster and Todd, I believe that accounts of the novel's 'rise' based on "realist teleologies" is a faulty theoretical framework and as such can only inhibit our understanding of Haywood's significance to literary history. While it is important to determine how Haywood is in dialogue with other writers and, indeed, other aspects of eighteenth-century culture (for example, her association with the theatre is extremely important to her fiction and has not been addressed in any depth), it is an error to evaluate Haywood's writing according to aesthetic criteria that had not yet been formulated.<sup>15</sup>

With critical analysis of Haywood's work still in its early stages, much remains to be done both in terms of the broad examination of her canon and the close scrutiny of individual texts. My own discussion falls into the latter category. Without detailed analyses of her texts, criticism of Haywood will not develop beyond the general survey, and our

knowledge of her participation in eighteenth-century literary discourse will remain superficial. Given the size of Haywood's canon, there was a need to be selective in the choice of texts to consider. Obviously I have chosen those which most clearly address the issues central to my argument but this was not my only consideration. In the past Haywood's career has been divided into two entirely separate and discrete periods;<sup>16</sup> I have endeavoured, therefore, to cover the range of genres Haywood experimented with and, in doing so, span her entire career in order to show the continuity of Haywood's interests and strategies.

Haywood is not unique in her interest in ocular experience. Eighteenth-century visual and literary culture reveals a preoccupation with seeing and being seen; indeed, the celebration of sight is an easily discernible theme in many eighteenth-century discourses. My first task in Chapter One, therefore, is to provide a historical and literary context for my discussion of Haywood. I concentrate primarily on Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, not only because of its thorough engagement with so many of the aspects of sight and seeing, but also because of its anticipation of what we might now regard as post-modern forms of looking. The scenarios of looking represented in the *Spectator* foreground an issue of current critical importance to theorists of visual culture -- the

ongoing challenge to the Cartesian view of subject/object relations and the transcendent vision it implies. This theoretical work, which draws upon Lacan, is also essential to my view of Haywood's project. Therefore, the central features of the Lacanian gaze -- that spectator and spectacle are not discrete categories and that subjectivity is conferred within the visible field -- are also reviewed in this chapter and adapted to my own analysis.

In Chapter Two I turn to some of the conventions of vision and desire, and discuss Alovisa of Haywood's first novel, *Love in Excess*; or, *The Fatal Enquiry* (1719-20) in relation to these conventions. Although she is strong-willed and autonomous, Alovisa is a typical Haywoodian heroine in her ultimate powerlessness and lack of agency. This is due, I argue, to Alovisa's firmly entrenched position as an object; she is reluctant to give up her desire to be seen. *Fantomina; or Love in a Maze* (1724), where the themes of specularly, sex, and the theatre converge in interesting ways, is the focus of Chapter Three. In *Fantomina* female identity is a performance, hence changeable and dynamic. To link theatricality and subjectivity is to consider the constructed nature of human identity; the possibilities for enhanced female agency are clearly demonstrated in this text. For Haywood, the scopic regime governing

women's lives is a determining factor of female identity, experience and agency, thus Chapters Two and Three deal primarily with women's relationship to spectacle and the exercise of power. Chapters Four and Five continue in this vein but my discussion diverges to address women's access to discourse when visual agency fails or is denied them. In Chapter Four, the effects of the male gaze on the construction of female subjectivity is examined, leading to a consideration of how well female forms of discourse, especially those which aim at self-representation, can mitigate against the oppressive effects of this gaze. Chapter Five examines one of Haywood's most significant strategies as a female author -- the uniting of visual and verbal agency. In *The Female Spectator* and in a scandal chronicle such as *Bath Intrigues*, Haywood exploits the relationship between spying and writing to explore possibilities for the acquisition of discursive authority for women. Chapter Five argues that spectatorship is an authorial strategy as well as a theme in Haywood's writing.

The critical impulse in the study of a single writer is usually to develop a definitive statement on an author's literary and discursive practices, and to articulate what social, moral, political or ideological concerns she might have had. Initially this appears to be difficult in the

case of Eliza Haywood because she displays contradictory impulses. She exploited the possibilities for rebellion in the sensational and erotic elements of the scandal chronicle and amorous novella. Her tales of seduction and betrayal sympathetically portray awakening female desire and the subsequent transgression of the codes of modesty and chastity, yet as cautionary tales they urge restraint, self-control and prudent modes of conduct, not because such codes are just or correct in themselves, but for pragmatic reasons. This conflict between desire and self-restraint is fundamental to the ambiguity and the eroticism of her writing. Ideological instability is a pervasive feature of Haywood's writing; this makes her an ambiguous and enigmatic writer who nevertheless provides us with a unique opportunity to better understand the culture within which she lived and worked, provided we bring to her writing the serious, focused critical attention she deserves. It is the lack of critical scrutiny, more than anything else, that hinders our understanding of Haywood's place in eighteenth-century literary culture, including the century's most important generic developments. That she cannot be confined to a single ideological or moral position makes Haywood an interesting and richly-textured writer; to know this, however, requires a sustained critical analysis of her work, with specific

attention to her engagement with cultural and literary trends of her time.

### NOTES

1. This portrait was intended for Harriot, Truworth's wife, and not for Betsy. Posing as Truworth's sister, Betsy convinces the painter to give it to her so that she may deliver it to her 'brother.' Once Betsy realizes that she has lost Truworth's good opinion, she is determined to possess the portrait as a substitute for the loss of Truworth himself, but she is also pleased that his new love will be deprived of at least this symbol of his affection. The portrait also represents a gaze which I will not discuss and so will just briefly mention here - the implied gaze of the painter. Much is made in the text of his genius and the remarkable likeness of Truworth he has produced.
2. Writing of Racine's *Phèdre*, who "objectifies Hippolyte as the beautiful object of her contemplation, then endows him with her memories of his father's past", Dejean states that "It is this memorialization through and of the gaze, this use of the gaze to create an erotic scene in which past and present function simultaneously, that constitutes Racine's greatest insight into the gaze of the female desiring subject and into Woman's invasion of the 'dominant scopic economy'" ("Female Voyeurism," 203). Dejean is one of many feminist critics who have begun to theorize the possibility of a distinctly female gaze whereby women become agents of the look rather than objects of it.
3. Lafayette's *Princess of Cleves* (1678) is a likely source for the portrait scene in *Betsy Thoughtless*. Nemours secretly watches the princess as she gazes upon his portrait "with the intensity of meditation only passionate love can induce." The scene functions much as the scene in *Betsy Thoughtless* does, as a confirmation and revelation to the lover of his beloved's desire which cannot be spoken or communicated in any other way. The astonishment and joy of such knowledge is emphasized in both texts: "to see the person whom he adored, to see her without her knowing that she was seen, and to see her entirely occupied with matters relating to himself and to a love that she was concealing from him, is something no other lover has ever enjoyed or imagined" (*Princess of Cleves*, 148). Nemours also wants to be seen, however, and his

pleasure does not arise solely from the sight of Mme de Cleves. Anxious to reveal himself and talk to her, he is restrained by the problems his voyeuristic position creates. See *The Princesse de Cleves*, 147-9.

4. I borrow the term from Martin Jay who traces the "privileging of vision" which was in place by the beginning of the modern period, and discusses contemporary French challenges to Western ocularcentrism in *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Contemporary French Thought*. The ocular or scopic "regime" instituted by the Renaissance discovery of perspective in painting placed the "beholder [at] the privileged center of perspectival vision" (54). In doing so, "the specular intertwining of likenesses in viewer and viewed, was lost as the spectator withdrew entirely from the seen (the scene), separated from it by Alberti's shatterproof window" (55). Jay is also careful to note that such a regime, although ascendant, never became homogenous: "the modern era emerged with a much more complicated attitude toward vision than is often assumed" (45). It is my contention that a complex rather than a uniform view of vision is apparent in Haywood's texts. The separation of viewer and viewed is not always maintained, and where it is, the conventional gender configuration of male subject/female object is frequently overturned.
5. Peter Sabor discusses Jane Austen's use of portraiture in "'Staring in Astonishment': Portraits and Prints in *Persuasion*," and in "Gazing and Avoiding the Gaze" Douglas Murray examines seeing and being seen in *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice*.
6. Underlying Rogers' preference for the writing of upper-class women is the post-Romantic assumption that because they wrote to "express themselves," writers like Anne Finch, Katherine Phillips and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu were in control of their own discourse. Hack writers, on the other hand "used not personal experience, but stereotypes available to anyone" (101). It is as erroneous, however, to assume that self-expression has no place in the literature of professional writers as it is to suggest that the writing of upper-class women is not engaged with the "stereotypes" of literary and other social or cultural discourses.



7. Mary Anne Schofield unequivocally sees Haywood as a feminist. The more aggressive female characters in Haywood are, according to Schofield, vehicles for her outrage at women's oppression. Haywood is a pioneer of a new style of female writing in which the romance plot provides a cover masking "feminist, aggressive intentions and [exposes] as facile and utterly fatuous the fictions created by men" (Eliza Haywood 5).
8. Katherine Rogers objects to Haywood's insistence on the incapacitating effects of erotic desire: "by presenting romantic love as an irresistible force ...reduced its subjects to mere sexual puppets. And by emphasizing its greater importance to women ... tended to reduce women especially to helpless victims" (101).
9. Jameson refers here, of course, to class struggle, the "human adventure," the "single great collective story," the conflict between oppressor and oppressed. The phrase, however, applies equally well to the struggle of eros to assert itself against civilization's demands that sexuality, especially female sexuality, be strictly regulated. This conflict between desire and social necessity is at the heart of Freud's thought as well.
10. I disagree, then, with John Richetti who considers the discourse of passion in Haywood's stories of seduction and abandonment to be fundamentally conservative. Although Haywood creates the conditions for her heroines to "assert personality" -- their suffering is given full expression -- Richetti argues that "the myth of persecuted innocence...is deeply conservative and explicitly careful to avoid the implicit subversive possibilities it contains. The elaborate insistence upon the absolutely compulsive nature of passion...is a way of avoiding an active subversion of the male world, which is for ever safe from revolution. Any female aggression to alter this unjust male world would contradict in its assertiveness and independence the utter helplessness required for heroic status and for the erotic and pathetic pleasures such heroism delivers to the audience" (*Popular Fiction* 208). Her heroines, then, cannot be empowered because their tragic fate depends upon "utter helplessness." Richetti implies that female "assertiveness and independence" would provide an effective

challenge to male authority but Haywood's exploration of women's lack of power is more complex than Richetti's summary suggests. Not all of Haywood's female characters are helpless victims -- many attempt to exercise power by direct and subversive means.

11. New editions of Haywood's work are beginning to appear. *Love in Excess* (1994), a new selection from her *Female Spectator* (1993), and a collection of three of her novels, *The Distress'd Orphan*, *The Double Marriage* and *The City Jilt* (1995), and, most recently, a new Oxford World Classics edition of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1997) -- all signal the current initiative in republishing Haywood.
12. Spender is unapologetically polemical in her advocacy of Haywood's talents, and condemns the impetus behind the critical neglect of Haywood that has allowed a skewed account of the history of the novel to be written. Spender writes: "The growth and development of the novel can be illustrated with reference to the writing of this one woman, who reveals an extraordinary creative ability, who freely experiments with form and style, and who produces an unprecedented and perhaps unparalleled range of novels. Every enduring and exemplary feature of the new genre is to be found in her writing, and yet she has never been given credit for her contribution. And with the denial of her achievement it has been possible to locate the origins of the novel in the writing of men" (83).
13. Whicher has been until recently Haywood's primary biographer. New work on Haywood's biography has been done by Christine Blouch who raises serious and legitimate doubts regarding Haywood's supposed marriage to a clergyman named Valentine Haywood. See "Eliza Haywood and the Romance of Obscurity."
14. Critical reception of Eliza Haywood has traditionally been ambivalent. Repeatedly described as "prolific," critics are impressed by her output and generic range but in many cases diminish her achievements even while they praise her; in Ros Ballaster's words, "her immense corpus of texts both fascinates and repels contemporary commentators" (*Seductive Forms* 158).

This ambivalence manifests itself, for example, in Jerry Beasley's view that Haywood was a "seminal writer in her day, though in a minor way" (253). This kind of contradictory response is typical of the critical reticence with which Haywood's writing is often met. There are several possible reasons for this contrary impulse. First, Haywood's language is often an obstacle to a serious critical engagement with her work. Variouslly termed as "melodramatic fustian" (MacCarthy 237) or "expressive noise" (Richetti, "Voice and Gender" 266), the heightened emotional pitch of romance language justifies, for some critics, giving Haywood only a cursory reading. Also, Haywood's scandal chronicles have not won her many friends and account for a significant amount of critical hostility. In her own day she irritated Alexander Pope; he counted her as one of those "shameless scriblers...who, in libellous memoirs and novels reveal the faults or misfortunes of both sexes, to the ruin of public fame or disturbance of private happiness" (*Dunciad*, II. 157n). More recently, Bridgit MacCarthy, otherwise sensitive to the difficulties facing the professional woman writer, singles Eliza Haywood out for her harshest criticism. "Of Mrs. Haywood's key-novels one can only say that they are as scurrilous and as prurient as those of Mrs. Manley, with similar flashes of mordant pithiness" (237). *The Invisible Spy* is an "extremely distasteful book" and *The Injur'd Husband* is "as scandalous a piece of libel as has ever soiled paper" (238). MacCarthy published her book in 1946, but this kind of hostility towards Haywood remains current. In his recently published anthology *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (1989), Roger Lonsdale finds Haywood's depiction of Martha Sansom as Gloatitia in *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* "relentlessly coarse," "vindictive," and "hysterical" (86).

15. Clara Reeve's assessment in *The Progress of Romance* established a 'before' and 'after' pattern upon which Haywood's life and career are usually plotted. She emphasizes Haywood's apparent reformation: "she repented of her faults, and employed the latter part of her life in expiating the offences of the former.--There is reason to believe that the examples of [Behn and Manley] seduced Mrs. Heywood [sic] into the same track...[but she] had the singular good fortune to recover a lost reputation, and the yet greater

honour to atone for her errors" (121). In his *Biographia Dramatica*, David Erskine Baker continues this tradition: Haywood evolved from a writer who, to satisfy the "passion which then prevailed in the public taste for personal scandal...guided her pen to works, in which a scope was given for great licentiousness" to one who, "whatever errors she might in any respect have run into in her youthful days," was later "remarkable for the most rigid and scrupulous decorum, delicacy, and prudence, both with respect to her conduct and conversation" (215-6). Baker attempts to overcome the effect of Haywood's scandal chronicles on her reputation in order to defend her writing on the whole. While he does not vindicate "the libertinism of her subjects, or the exposing with aggravation to the public the private errors of individuals," he praises the "great spirit and ingenuity in Mrs. Heywood's [sic] manner of treating subjects" (215). Haywood inadvertently contributes to this 'before' and 'after' narrative. In the introduction to *The Female Spectator*, the author describes herself as a 'reformed coquette' and in *The Female Dunciad* admits to "little inadvertencies" in her past. Critics have a tendency to consider these oblique references to a questionable past as evidence of Haywood's own reformation. Of this, However, we cannot be sure. There is no evidence to suggest that the Female Spectator's persona is created from aspects of Haywood's won life, although some critics do assume it.

16. The role of Haywood's writing in the development of the novel is not the subject of this dissertation, but it is worth noting here that in Peter Brooks' book *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, forms of ocularity are central to novelistic discourse because they contribute to the revelation of the body as an object of desire and knowledge. His subject is, as he states, "the nexus of desire, the body, the drive to know and narrative: those stories we tell about the body in the effort to know and have it, which result in making the body a site of signification - the place for the inscription of stories - and itself a signifier, a prime agent in narrative plot and meaning" (6).

**CHAPTER 1**  
**OCULAR EXPERIENCE: ADDISON AND STEELE'S *SPECTATOR* AND**  
**THEORIES OF THE GAZE**

In *Spectator* 46 (1711) a letter is published from an "Ogling Master" wishing to show the Spectator his manuscript, *The Compleat Ogler*. After extensive travel throughout Europe, he claims to have perfected the "whole Art of Ogling" including the "Church Ogle" and the "Playhouse Ogle".<sup>1</sup> Reference to an "Art of Ogling" reflects the eighteenth-century preoccupation with seeing and being seen; for Foucault, "the foreign spectator in an unknown country, and the man born blind restored to light" were the two myths underlying eighteenth-century philosophy (65). In "Lumières et Vision: Reflections on Sight and Seeing in Seventeenth-and Eighteenth-Century France," Virginia Swain links the appearance of new visual technologies such as the microscope and telescope with a new interest in spectatorship:

One important consequence of [the] progress in optics, astronomy and microscopy was a new emphasis on the spectator observer. If Adam's progeny were no longer at the hub of a geocentric universe, their new role as observers and interpreters of their environment carried

with it, nonetheless, its own sense of power or control. (7)  
 As Swain also points out, Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la Pluralite des Mondes* (1686) is evidence that popular literature quickly explored the possibilities suggested by these new technologies.<sup>2</sup> In Haywood's *Love in Excess*, Melliora reads Fontenelle for her improvement. Although the text is unnamed, it quite certainly would include Fontenelle's popular speculations about life on other planets.<sup>3</sup> Marjorie Nicolson has written extensively on the influence of optical advances on literature. In "The Microscope and English Imagination," she documents how work done by the Royal Society to promote the microscope spread throughout popular culture. Nicolson pays particular attention to the popularization of the microscope amongst women, which, she states, "may be dated from [the] visit of the Duchess of Newcastle to the Royal Society on May 30, 1667" (37).<sup>4</sup> In addition to the scientific objectives of observation, eighteenth-century art and literature also foregrounded many other aspects of vision, including the epistemological, social and sexual.

References to seeing and being seen are numerous in Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, and spectatorship itself is fundamental to the periodical's discursive authority. The *Spectator* establishes his legitimacy as a writer and reformer from his position as a "silent

Looker-on." Conscious of the epistemological benefits of his role as a "Spectator of Mankind," he acquires a knowledge of life which is comprehensive and theoretical, and has made himself a "Speculative Statesman, soldier, Merchant, and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life." Moreover, he can "discern the Errors in the Oeconomy, Business, and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as Standers-by discover Blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the Game" (I: 4-5). Participation in the "Game" of life impairs perception, but through his detachment he can achieve a "knowing Eye." Curiosity is the Spectator's "prevailing Passion" and he considers the "Correction of Impudence" to be within his purview because "it is generally an Offence committed by the Eyes" (I: 85).

To convince us of his remarkable scopic abilities, the Spectator repeats a familiar theory: the loss or suppression of one sense produces heightened capability in another. The consequence of his voluntary "Resignation of Speech" therefore, is a discerning eye:

It is remarkable, that those who want any one Sense, possess the others with greater Force and Vivacity. Thus my Want or rather Resignation of Speech, gives me all the Advantages of a dumb Man. I have, methinks, a more than ordinary Penetration in Seeing; and flatter my self that I have looked into the Highest and Lowest of Mankind, and make shrewd Guesses,

without being admitted to their Conversation, at the  
inmost Thoughts and Reflections of all whom I behold.  
(I: 19-20)

The Spectator's claim to have access to the "inmost Thoughts and Reflections" which are concealed from the ordinary observing subject is based on the traditional links between vision, penetration and truth, the eye being the primary instrument of discovery and revelation. As an autonomous "subject placed at the centre of a world," (Bryson 87) he adopts the Cartesian position where he believes all is open to his unchallenged gaze, and assumes an unproblematic relationship between seeing and knowing.

The masculine character of this "Penetration in Seeing" is obvious; the Spectator specifically believes women to have less penetration because they are easily deceived and distracted by whatever is "showy and superficial." He knows, for example, of a young lady, "warmly solicited by a Couple of importunate Rivals," who was finally won when "one of the young Lovers very luckily bethought himself of adding a supernumerary Lace to his Liveries." While women's lack of discernment may be blamed on a faulty education which has made them shallow, capable of considering only the "Drapery of the Species" and not the more important "Ornaments of the Mind" (I: 66-7), the conventional



gendered split between masculine subject and female object underlies the Spectator's dim view of women's capacity to uncover the truth. Relations of power, traditionally conducted through this gendered division, give to men the power and privilege which accrues to the subject position; hence, the Spectator's superior "Penetration in Seeing" is as much a function of his sex as his silence.

This scopic prowess is demonstrated at the theatre -- a place notorious for seeing and being seen. He and his friend Will Honeycomb test their "Penetration in Seeing" as they scrutinize and evaluate the women around them. They disagree on the first object: the Spectator looks "with great Approbation at a young thing in a Box," but Will does not concur, believing the "Simplicity in her Countenance [to be] rather childish than innocent" (I: 20). When the Spectator persists Will pushes his critique further:

'I grant her Dress is very becoming, but perhaps the Merit of that Choice is owing to her Mother; for though, continued he, 'I allow a Beauty to be as much to be commended for the Elegance of her Dress, as a Wit for that of his Language; yet if she has stolen the Colour of her Ribbands from another, or had Advice about her Trimmings, I shall not allow her the Praise of Dress, any more than I would call a Plagiary an Author.' (I: 20)

The woman is rejected by Will because her appearance is a mere copy.

The value Will attaches to originality is made clear in the next object that meets their gaze, an object about whom they agree. Will speaks what the Spectator "looked":

'Behold, you who dare, that charming Virgin. Behold the Beauty of her Person chastised by the Innocence of her Thoughts. Chastity, Good-Nature, and Affability, are the Graces that play in her Countenance; she knows she is handsom, but she knows she is good. Conscious Beauty adorned with conscious Virtue! What a Spirit is there in those Eyes! What a Bloom in that Person! How is the whole Woman expressed in her Appearance! Her Air has the Beauty of Motion, and her Look the Force of Language.' (I: 20-1)

They concur on this ideal of femininity because they believe she embodies a match between inner form and outward appearance. Her "Countenance," the only object truly available for their contemplation, reliably signifies the qualities of her character. Open and readable, she stands fully revealed before them. At stake here is the affirmation of male scopic/epistemological power itself. If the "whole Woman [is] expressed in her Appearance," there is no danger that the male "knowing Eye" will be deceived by a misleading exterior. As a "Plagiary," the first woman represents the inauthenticity and deception of art, of mimetic representation itself. Apparently, Will's 'penetrating' eye discovers this; that the Spectator does not indicates the fallability of the scopic abilities

of which he is so proud. Thinking it prudent to look away, the Spectator then turns his attention to the unparticularized mass, "the Lump of that Sex" who "move a knowing Eye no more than the Portraits of insignificant People by ordinary Painters, which are but Pictures of Pictures" (I: 21). These women are not even worth the effort of interpretation.

Why, we might ask, are women anatomized in this way? What is the ultimate aim of this remarkable (and unquestioned) penetration? The urbane confidence and authority with which Will Honeycomb and the Spectator critique and categorize women is a mark of their privileged position as masculine subjects gazing upon female objects. In this demonstration of scopic prowess, they attempt to affirm the masculine subject as knowing, in command of the visual scene, and authorized to represent an ideal of femininity which offers a comforting guarantee of their "Penetration in Seeing." The female object who receives their praise does so because it is believed that beauty and virtue are met in her. As an entirely passive recipient of their critique, she confirms their belief that essential character, at a glance, can be discerned from outward appearance. Thus, the gap between (hidden) truth and appearance is overcome, its attendant anxieties resolved. She helps them surmount

the epistemological problems associated with the relationship of truth and art because she, in fact, represents feminine 'artlessness', an ideal with numerous literary antecedents.

However, the modern reader suspects that underlying this comforting fiction is a certain anxiety about male scopie penetration, a suspicion confirmed by Will's story of his "Adventure" with a "Pict." The association between women and deception is a familiar one, the mistrust of feminine 'arts' having a long connection with feminine adornment. In Spectator 41, the Spectator calls a woman who paints her face and uses other devices such as wigs, patches and "unguents" to alter her appearance, a "Pict." He is especially contemptuous of these "Impostures" because they don a mask and deceive the eye. As Will Honeycomb's adventure shows, the danger of the Pict is that she disarms scopie penetration. Will's Pict is a stereotype, the vain woman who "made it her Business to gain Hearts, for no other Reason, but to railly the Torments of her Lovers" (I: 175). When Will is rejected by her, he bribes the maid and conceals himself in her dressing room in order to watch her morning ritual:

He stood very conveniently to observe, without being seen. The Pict begins the Face she designed to wear that Day, and I have heard him protest she had

worked a full half Hour before he knew her to be the same Woman. As soon as he saw the Dawn of that Complexion, for which he had so long languished, he thought fit to break from his Concealment...The Pict stood before him in the utmost Confusion, with the prettiest Smirk imaginable on the finish'd side of her Face, pale as Ashes on the other...The Lady went into the Country; the Lover was cured. (I: 175)

Seeking revenge for being seduced by a false front, Will's "cure" is effected by penetrating the disguise of his mistress to expose the original.<sup>5</sup> As a Pict, she is inaccessible and unreadable; unable to detect her deceit, his "penetrating eye" is disarmed. Only by the covert act of spying -- of situating himself in the undignified position of voyeur -- can he enhance his spectatorial position and uncover the truth. It is this truth to which Will and the Spectator must have access; unreadable women cause anxiety, suspicion and contempt. Although the Spectator believes Will's mistress to be vain (readable to that extent), she still possesses the secret as to her true nature. The Pict's power resides in deception and disguise, as Will perceives it, but also in her power to reject and fail to satisfy her lovers. That she can put on a different face and a different lover every day makes her untrustworthy, her identity unstable. The idea, therefore, that an authentic truth/identity is available to the male "knowing Eye" is undermined. But to the Pict, such

an identity is of little value. Her painted face is the source of her self-composition and self-composure; it is the identity she chooses to present to public view.<sup>6</sup> The image of her split face, the "prettiest Smirk imaginable on the finish'd side" and "pale as Ashes on the other," not only represents the split between the private and public self, it reveals a protean aspect of female identity. Exposed before her composition is complete, her constructed identity (no less real as an identity) collapses, producing confusion and a loss of composure. She becomes an object of ridicule, appearing before us as a caricature. This does not lessen her potential power, however. Her smile may now be a mocking "Smirk," and her undiminished capacity for transformation continues as a reminder of women's defense against male attempts to anatomize, know and thus dominate them. Women are not as susceptible to 'penetration' as the Spectator might like to believe.

The scopic power the Spectator assumes is uncertain for yet another reason. While he does not reveal the reason why it is "Prudence to turn away [his] Eyes" (I: 21) from the women he scrutinizes, the reader suspects that he does not wish to be caught looking. In order to fulfil his "Pleasures [which] are almost wholly confin'd to those of the Sight," it is essential that he be the one who looks, for he admits that "the greatest

Pain [he] can suffer, is...being talked to, and being stared at" (I: 6). He must avoid the confrontation of a returning stare because his position as an autonomous subject can be challenged by the look of another.<sup>7</sup>

This possibility is explored in one of several papers dealing with the problem of "Starers." In No. 20, a woman writes to complain of the Spectator's "Imitators":

Ever since the SPECTATOR appeared, have I remarked a kind of Men, whom I chuse to call Starers; that without any regard to Time, Place, or Modesty, disturb a large Company with their impertinent Eyes. (I: 86)

The letter writer belongs to a congregation, made up chiefly of women, who suffer from the impertinence of such a Starer:

very lately one whole Isle has been disturbed with one of these monstrous Starers; He's the Head taller than any one in the Church; but for the greater Advantage of exposing himself, stands upon a Hassock, and commands the whole Congregation, to the great Annoyance of the devoutest Part of the Auditory; for what with Blushing, Confusion, and Vexation, we can neither mind the Prayers nor Sermon. (I: 86)

The women experience the discomfort of being openly scrutinized but, as the letter writer points out, the Starer also makes an object of himself; he forces the congregation to look at him, and in "exposing himself" draws the woman's criticism. In fact, by becoming a spectacle, the Starer has

inverted the structure and put himself in the 'feminine' position.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, he loses the scopic advantage the "Looker-on" has as long as his looking remains concealed. The Starer can be confronted -- 'stared down' -- but only by another man. The Spectator, in reply, rules out any other option:

a Starer is not usually a Person to be convinced by the Reason of the thing; and a Fellow that is capable of shewing an impudent Front before a whole Congregation, and can bear being a publick Spectacle, is not so easily rebuked as to amend by Admonitions.  
(I: 86)

Rather, his friend Will Prosper, armed with his own Hassock and the Spectator's directions "according to the most exact Rules of Opticks," will confront the "Starers Eyes where-ever he throws them" in order to make him "feel a little of the Pain he has so often put others to, of being out of Countenance" (I: 86-7). Women cannot meet the eyes of a Starer directly. Modesty demands that women keep their eyes averted, for a bold stare is a sign of a brazen sexuality. If the women in church look at all, it is because their glance has been extorted from them: "While we suffer our Women to be thus impudently attacked, they have no Defence, but in the End to cast yielding Glances at the Starers" (I: 87). Yet, what will happen when Will Prosper climbs upon his hassock? Will he too become a



spectacle and be robbed of the power of his gaze? Quite possibly, for the spectator is a spectacle in the eyes of another. Scopic power is transferred and given up in the endless process of the creation and dissolution of the subject/object structure.

While a position of unchallenged spectatorship cannot be guaranteed, a remedy is suggested by another correspondent who explains how new visual technologies can be put to work in the social field. He recommends "a convenient Mechanical way, which may easily prevent or correct Staring, by an Optical contrivance of new Perspective-Glasses, short and commodious like Opera-Glasses." The advantage of these glasses is that one can see without being seen looking: "A Person may by the help of this Invention take a View of another, without the Impertinence of Staring; at the same time it shall not be possible to know whom or what he is looking at" (II: 472-3). The glasses simultaneously enhance vision and foreground the act of looking. Paradoxically, seeing is made visible while an element of invisibility is also introduced into the scopic scenario. Furthermore, that the observer's look cannot be returned and challenged is a source of social, critical and sexual power. The writer is, therefore, careful to hint at a proper use of the glasses: "the Inventor desires your Admonitions,

concerning the decent Use of it, and hopes by your Recommendation that for the future Beauty may be beheld without the Torture and Confusion which it suffers from the insolence of Starers" (II: 473). The glasses facilitate the observation of women, while ostensibly rescuing them from the embarrassment and self-consciousness produced by an observer's stare. Unmistakably, their primary function is to assist male voyeurism. Reference to a "decent" use of the glasses is a sign of the ambiguous nature of observation. As Virginia Swain emphasizes, there were philosophical and social repercussions to the seventeenth-century developments in optics. The "role of the spectator was highly ambiguous" she states, and over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "viewing and voyeurism tend to merge":

the rethinking of God's design which accompanied the new discoveries, and the new uncertainties surrounding the place of humankind in the natural order which followed from this rethinking, also made sight an instrument of self-doubt. Was the gaze intruding where it did not belong? The penetration of the gaze where it is unexpected and perhaps unwelcome becomes a frequent literary and artistic theme. (8)

Addison and Steele show in the *Spectator* that retaining scopic power is problematic and uncertain. Although the Spectator would like to count on his "Penetration in Seeing" and distinguish his activity from the

"Impudence" of mere "Starers," he does not escape from the reader's sense that he is involved in a dubious activity. As a result, the Spectator's discursive authority is not without problems. If, as a reformer of manners and morals, the "Correction of Impudence" falls within his purview because it is an "Offence committed by the Eyes," how is this "Impudence" different from the Spectator's own looking? When he and Will debate the merits of the various women presented to their view at the theatre, does he think it "Prudence" to look away because he might be caught staring himself? The woman's complaint against "Starers" makes the connection, implying that the Spectator has set a trend which is now being copied. Yet the Starer's exhibitionism makes him a mere "awkward Imitator" (I: 86), a debased practitioner of the art of looking. He is, in fact, a ridiculous or comic copy; as an exhibitionist, he wants to be seen rather than to see. The Spectator, on the other hand, knows when to look away. Although his secretiveness enhances the privilege of his position, he cannot entirely avoid the taint of voyeurism, especially since the object of his looking is often a woman, scrutinized not only in order to confirm male scopic power but for her value as a desirable object. As Will and the Spectator rhapsodize over "Beauty chastised by Innocence," we might be distracted from the voyeuristic nature of their activity, yet a

sexual return on their looking is clearly registered. So while the Spectator does not tell us why it is "Prudence" to look away, his statement is significant for this gap; we suspect that we do not have full knowledge of the Spectator's specular motives. Despite his disarming irony and gentility, he may be no more than an "impudent Starer" himself.

The foregoing discussion shows how the privileges of Cartesian vision are uncertain even in a text such as *The Spectator* which so carefully (yet ironically) constructs an apparently autonomous observer, protected from the returning stare which would put his scopic advantage in jeopardy. The question to be asked now is how does this reconfiguration of the dominant visual model assist us in theorizing the woman's look, a look denied even by John Berger in the following much-quoted passage:

Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object - and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (*Ways of Seeing* 47)

The above quotation from John Berger's influential study of how we look at women in Western culture is disconcerting for at least two reasons.

First, as a formulation, uttered in matter-of-fact prose, it suggests that the specular situation of woman is readily understood. Second, it describes a woman's look as wholly self-reflexive, and as such reaffirms women's association with narcissism. When women do look, they can only look at themselves, either directly or mediated by the male look. This was not Berger's intention; on the contrary, *Ways of Seeing* attempts to reveal the specular relations by which women are oppressed. Berger's formulation is incomplete rather than incorrect. Women do internalize the male look, perpetually seeing themselves through the eyes of the Other, but this is only one look among many that women possess. What is now required is a fuller appreciation of, in Ann Kaplan's phrase, the "complex gaze apparatus."

Berger's discussion laid the foundation for the now concerted interest in the vexing problem of the female gaze. His Marxist analysis of women and representation has been continued and transformed by feminist film critics, many of whom draw upon psychoanalytic theory to explore woman's relation to systems of looking. Laura Mulvey, in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," states:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive female...In their traditional exhibitionist role

women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (19)

Mulvey's article, although influential, has been controversial because, like Berger, she posits the male subject/female object split as fixed and incontrovertible. Following Mulvey, Ann Kaplan in *Women and Film* claims that the "gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze...is to be in the 'masculine' position" (30). The inevitability of this gendered division is currently undergoing critical analysis by feminist theorists of the gaze. Challenging the "orthodoxy" of a male gaze, Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment argue that Mulvey's model is limited because of its basis in psychoanalytic theory:

Cultural analysts [find] it difficult to criticise the use of 'blanket' terms culled from psychoanalytic discourse without entering into debates about the usefulness of psychoanalysis for film theory, for feminism, or indeed for its own project. (5)

It is hardly surprising that the woman's look is effaced in Mulvey's account. The Freudian model of the castration complex and its consequences must inevitably relegate women to the position of passive object. As Luce Irigaray demonstrates in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, the Freudian account of sexual difference relies on visible anatomical

difference where "*The gaze is at stake from the outset.*"<sup>9</sup> The knowledge of castration is indebted to the gaze; woman, without the penis, "supposedly has *nothing* you can see." The nothingness discovered by this "age-old ocularcentrism" seals woman's fate: "Nothing can be seen is equivalent to having no thing. No being and no truth" (*Speculum* 47-8). Bounded by such a lack, woman's "entry into a dominant scopic economy" states Irigaray, "signifies, again, her consignment to passivity: she is to be the beautiful object of contemplation" (*This Sex* 25). The objective of Irigaray's critique is to theorize another model which might uncover a repressed femininity in order to suggest other possibilities for female agency and access to representation.<sup>10</sup> And, indeed, at the heart of this theoretical debate are concerns regarding the possibilities for female subjectivity and agency within a scopic regime which, at the very least, privileges male looking. For Gamman and Marshment, it is essential to consider whether the male gaze might be "merely 'dominant'" and if so, "how do we analyze the exceptions?" (5).<sup>11</sup> From another perspective, the flaw in Mulvey's argument, according to Kaja Silverman, is not her reliance on psychoanalytic theory for an explanation of the structure and pleasure of cinematic looking; it is her conflation of the look and the gaze which, according to Lacanian theory,

are not synonymous. The gaze

is by no means coterminous with any individual viewer, or group of viewers...The relationship between eye and gaze is...analogous in certain ways to that which links penis and phallus; the former can stand in for the latter, but can never approximate it. (59)<sup>12</sup>

What is the Lacanian gaze then? Following Merleau Ponty, Lacan argues that as subjects "we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world. That which makes us consciousness institutes us by the same token as *speculum mundi*" (75). It is through the gaze, "the all-seeing" nature of the world, that we become subjects:

What we have to circumscribe, by means of the path he [Merleau-Ponty] indicates for us, is the pre-existence of a gaze--I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides. (72)

Unlike the look, which is embodied, the gaze is "unapprehensible."

Lacan insists on the alterity of the gaze: "the function of...the gaze is both that which governs the gaze most secretly and that which always escapes from the grasp of that form of vision that is satisfied with itself in imagining itself as consciousness" (74). For Lacan, the gaze is not the Cartesian self-reflecting consciousness, an awareness of "seeing oneself seeing oneself". This is a "mere sleight of hand. An avoidance of the function of the gaze is at work there" (74). On the contrary, Lacan



challenges any notion of a Cartesian self-presence whereby consciousness is guaranteed by self-referentiality.<sup>13</sup> Our awareness as existents, as split between self and other, resides outside of us. "In the scopic field," states Lacan,

the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, *I am a picture*. [emphasis added] This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which...I am *photo-graphed*.  
(106)

For Lacan, all human subjects are simultaneously subjects and objects, spectators and spectacles. That the Spectator attempts to circumvent this fact -- to remove himself from the world's look -- is part of the playful fiction of his persona. He goes so far as to claim a kind of public invisibility:

He who comes into Assemblies only to gratify his Curiosity, and not to make a Figure, enjoys the Pleasures of Retirement in a more exquisite Degree, than he possibly could in his Closet...I can very justly say with the antient Sage, *I am never less alone than when alone*...I am insignificant to the Company in publick Places. (I: 19)

So insignificant is he that although his person is well known, he is

routinely referred to as "Mr. *what-d'ye-call-him*" (I: 19). He occupies an ambiguous position as both seen but nameless, as present but taken little notice of. While this may be a function of his speechlessness, it is also his method of appearing to reside only on the subject side of the look. He attempts to establish his discursive authority by situating himself on the margins of society; as an independent, autonomous observer, he can uphold the conventional connection between seeing and knowing. But whatever his claims to the contrary, he does not exist as an autonomous subject and is always in danger of becoming a spectacle, a reversal he is anxious to avoid. Full spectatorial power, in any of its aspects -- epistemological, social, sexual -- is an illusion.

The subject/object structure is, in fact, dynamic rather than fixed, and it is possible for women to exploit this instability. Women are never merely passive recipients of male looking; they do exercise power as subjects although the exact nature and ultimate value of that power requires analysis. Drawing on Lacan's view of the subject constituted within the gaze, Regina Schwartz rejects outright a dominant "male gaze":

If the scopophilic drive is a will to dominate, how is such domination possible when the object itself is inaccessible, distorted and disappearing in the very act

of perceiving? If subjects and objects are constituted by the act of seeing--the subject sees and the object is the focus of sight--what happens when the watching subject is watched and the object of sight looks back? Such questions push psychoanalysis, willingly or not, into the realm of politics, where insights into the complexities of the gaze could enable women to reclaim their gaze instead of leading to another patriarchal dead-end, "the male gaze". (86)<sup>14</sup>

The question is, then, what might a female gaze look like? Considering the number of scopic scenarios the Spectator ranges over, it is not surprising to find that he, too, has pondered this question.

Contradicting the Spectator's view that women have no defense against "Starers," a "reformed Starer" writes to complain of "Peepers" -- women who actively and provocatively solicit the male look. Recently, while in church, he found himself surrounded by beautiful women and despite his best efforts to keep his "Eyes from wandring...a Peeper, resolved to bring down [his] Looks, and fix [his] Devotion on her self." A Peeper uses "Hands, Eyes, and Fan; one of which is continually in motion, while she thinks she is not actually the Admiration of some Ogler or Starer in the Congregation." Attempting to look away, he is "detained by the Fascination of the Peeper's Eyes, who had long practised a Skill in them, to recal the parting Glances of her Beholders." The Starer's complaint is that the Peeper, Medusa-like, has paralyzed him and he has

lost the power to look away. Certain that the Spectator "will think a Peeper as much more pernicious than a Starer, as an Ambuscade is more to be feared than an open Assault," he makes a case for the considerable scopic power of the Peeper (I: 227-8). In this scenario, the "ambuscade," covert and indirect, is the traditional means of feminine power.<sup>15</sup>

Yet the Peeper's fan provides a gloss on the Starer's perspective; he comments on the impropriety of its picture: upon it is a sleeping Venus, half-naked and attended by Cupids who fan her as she sleeps. Behind her a Satyr can be seen "peeping" over a fence, "threatening to break through it." This voyeuristic scene, "improper to behold," figures the church scene itself. The Starer is invited to situate himself in the position of the voyeuristic Satyr as he gazes down upon the "most beautiful Bosom imaginable" (I: 227). The picture on the fan serves as a sexual invitation, but the Starer resists such an identification with the Satyr, believing that his look has been extorted from him.

The Peeper's capacity to "bring down" or transfix the male look is arguably an unsatisfying view of female scopic agency because it perpetuates the negative (for the eighteenth century especially) female stereotype of the coquette. Here, female power remains within a sexual

economy where women exploit their position as desirable objects to exert control over the sexual/visual exchange. However, the Starer's complaint may be a ruse. Holding up the fan/mirror, the Peeper shows the Starer how to position himself in voyeuristic relation to her. Their positions in a sexual economy based on male dominance is re-inscribed and the Peeper's Medusa-effect and the anxiety it creates is mitigated. The fan deals with the problem of the female look; it erases its threat, and reaffirms the Peeper as a passive object. It is a sexual invitation that does not leave the Starer as passive and "ambushed" as he would like us to believe.

Yet while the fan may reassure the Starer that he has never lost his dominant position, we must also remember that the Peeper herself is the instrument through which her Medusa-effect is obscured. Is this, then, the ruse? Does the fan persuade the Starer to set aside his doubts and submit to its enticing prospects? What will happen to him if he does? The Peeper and her fan raise more questions than they answer, and it is unclear who is in control of this specular conflict. From the Spectator's suspicious and hostile response to her, it is certain that she embodies a threat that must be overcome. His reply is brief: *"This Peeper using both Fan and Eyes to be considered as a Pict, and proceed*

accordingly" (I: 228). Proceed accordingly? Like Will, the Starer requires a "cure" for his project of reform is failing. Akin to the Pict, the Peeper must be unmasked and penetrated, her power in the specular order eliminated. The Starer's fear that he has lost control of his look and the Peeper's move to hide the threat she poses, weakens the argument that full spectatorial privilege resides solely with the male gaze.

Although this discussion of the relative scopic power of male "Starers" and female "Peepers" attempts to establish a gendered distinction between male and female looking, its effect is to obscure rather than to clarify. The Peeper presents one model of women's power within the specular order, but there are others. To find them, we must look beyond *The Spectator*, a thoroughly masculine text and one which consistently works (not always successfully) to affirm women as non-threatening objects of male desire. I have suggested above that feminist theoretical work on the gaze comes primarily from film criticism, but feminist literary critics such as Nancy Miller have also found the critique of the complex workings of the gaze relevant to textual analysis:

Because the gaze is not simply an act of vision, but a site of crisscrossing meanings in which the effects of power relations are boldly (and baldly) deployed,, it is not surprising that feminist theorists and writers should take it up as a central scene in their critique of

patriarchal authority. (*Subject to Change* 164)

If women cannot be held as utterly passive objects, even under the terms set by patriarchy, it is important to find the sites of resistance. Recent work by feminist literary critics has begun to show more accurately how women's position in a specular order is a negotiable one. Writing against "a critical climate that frequently represents the gaze as something sinister," Beth Newman argues that "it is easy to forget that being the object of someone's look can in some circumstances be pleasurable--even sustaining and necessary" ("Getting Fixed" 43). Robyn Warhol discusses the relationship between seeing and telling by examining "Austen's management of focalization" in *Persuasion*. According to Warhol, Anne Elliot "has to look, for the conditions of narration depend entirely on her observing everything that ought to be told" (6).

Historical changes also affect who looks and who is seen.

Virginia Swain claims that focus on the spectator produced a democratization of the observing subject:

The new emphasis on viewpoint both gave power and took it away--gave it, by placing the viewer at the optimum point of control, and refused it, by making this place open, democratically to everyone. (7)

Although Swain does not discuss the possibilities this might hold for the

female observer, it is clear from Eliza Haywood's writing that this democratization could provide new ways for women to acquire a subject position.

Throughout her career, Haywood explored women's capacity to exercise power both within and beyond the constraints of their role as objects of male desire. One of her strategies was to assert that the critical gaze of the spectator was available to women. For example, the persona she creates in her periodical *The Female Spectator* exchanges her former position as an object -- a coquette who seeks opportunities for "shewing" herself -- for that of subject when she becomes a spectator in her new role as writer and educator. The broad worldly experience she acquired as a coquette becomes the basis for her discursive authority. Perhaps ideally, in the manner of the Female Spectator, attaining a meaningful subject position requires achieving the position of the "Looker-on." More often, however, Haywood's heroines either take advantage of the inherent instability of the subject/object structure in order to avoid complete domination, or assert their subjectivity by self-representation through writing. Never a simple act of seeing, the gaze in Haywood is a vehicle of authority, subjectivity, erotic desire and the imperative to know. She was well aware of the interplay between



spectator and spectacle, and the intersubjectivity the gaze facilitates. In short, we find in Haywood's texts a visual regime consistent with forms of post-modern looking, and a critique of this gaze which explicitly exposes its more dubious aspects yet refuses to adopt a rigid moral stance against it.

My exploration of how Haywood perceived her female characters as subjects and objects will begin, in Chapter Two with an analysis of the standard view of Haywood's work -- that erotic desire is her main subject, and her stories of seduction and betrayal emphasize women as victims. It is undoubtedly true that the most familiar Haywoodian heroine is the victimized object of male desire, dominated and shaped by the male look. There are rebellious women in Haywood, however, who display a strong will to power. Alovisa in *Love in Excess*, is one of them. That women might attempt the "assault" position - an outright appropriation of the position of "Looker-on," and the consequences of this usurpation of male privilege, is explored through her tragic story.

## NOTES

1. Addison, Joseph and Steele, Richard. *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965). All page references are to volume and page number of this edition.
2. *A Conversation on the Plurality of Worlds*, given its structure as a dialogue between a knowledgeable man and an intelligent, inquisitive woman, is designed to appeal especially to women. Haywood's *Female Spectator* takes seriously the possibility of life on other planets with one reservation: "All that can justly be objected against any arguments made use of to prove the reasonableness of the belief of a plurality of worlds, is, that to us who live in this, it is no manner of concern; since there is not a possibility of our travelling to them, or of ever becoming acquainted with the inhabitants" (IV: 43).
3. In addition to Nicolson's "The Microscope and the English Imagination," see also her "'The 'New Astronomy' and English Literary Imagination," and "The Telescope and Imagination." Ernest Gilman's *The Curious Perspective* examines the seventeenth century's interest in optical "pictures or devices which manipulate the conventions of linear perspective to achieve ingenious effects...This fascination finds its way into verse not only through the importation of optical imagery but through a deeply-felt concern with the ways we look at the world" (1).
4. According to Nicolson, "The climax of the feminine enthusiasm for the microscope is to be found in *The Female Spectator* of Eliza Haywood." For a discussion of Haywood's endeavour to foster women's interest in the microscope see 'Microscope,' 47-50.
5. Will's observation of the Pict is in the tradition of dressing room satires which seek to "cure" men of their sexual interest through a demystification of femininity. A "cure" is effected through the revelation of, for example, in the case of Jonathan Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" or "A Beautiful Young Nymphy Going to Bed" a disgusting or malignant interior; uncovered, the authentic

woman is revealed. For Will, the exposure of the Pict signifies the discovery of a protean rather than a malignant female identity. Rochester's "Letter from Artemesia in Town to Chloe in the Country" again evokes this appeal to truth, but cautions men not to seek their own disillusionment, upon which their sexual pleasure depends. For a discussion of the aesthetics of the observer/object relation in Swift's dressing room satires, see Louise K. Barnett, "Voyeurism in Swift's Poetry."

6. Joan Riviere's discussion of female masquerade is informative here. She argues that "women who wish for masculinity may put on a mask of womanliness to avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men" (35). She further posits that masquerade is authentic femininity. If so, the Pict's smirk may also be read as a self-assured admission that her unmasking only confirms her phallic power.
7. Sartre's watcher in the park scene in *Being and Nothingness* shows how the anxiety of a returning look reminds us that we are always within spectacle.
8. *Tatler* 103 describes a similar scenario: a man using opera glasses foregrounds his own looking; by doing so he becomes a spectacle and places himself in the "feminine" position. In "Reconstructing the Gaze: Voyeurism in Richardson's Pamela," 419-431, Kristina Straub also draws attention to this scenario.
9. The gaze is, quite literally, at stake in Freud. He theorizes that the displacement of olfactory stimuli by visual excitation in human sexuality was a result of human evolutionary development - the upright posture. Consequently, sexuality and vision in civilized humans became inextricably linked. "The diminution of the olfactory stimuli seems itself to be a consequence of man's raising himself from the ground, of his assumption of an upright gait; this made his genitals, which were previously concealed, visible and in need of protection...The fateful process of civilization would thus have set in with man's adoption of an erect posture. From that point the chain of events would have proceeded through the devaluation of olfactory stimuli and the isolation of the menstrual

period to the time when visual stimuli were paramount and the genitals became visible, and thence to the continuity of sexual excitation..." (*Civilization*, 21: 99-100n). Although Freud concedes that "this is only a theoretical speculation," Irigaray is correct in insisting that for Freud, sexuality was tied to visible biological difference.

10. Despite Irigaray's stellar critique of Freud and phallographic philosophical discourse in *Speculum*, her ultimate retreat into yet another biological model based on anatomical difference has been disappointing for some feminist critics. Irigaray's model in *This Sex Which is Not One* of a new female economy of desire based on touch rather than sight, which opposes female multiplicity and plurality to a limiting male singularity, leads to a crippling essentialism. While Irigaray's impulse to remove women from an oppressive oculocentrism is understandable, yet another model based solely on the body is not helpful. Regrettably, she leaves the traditional dichotomies of masculine/feminine intact. However, her notion of a "disruptive excess" possibly has value for new theories of female agency. For an appreciation of the value of Irigaray's theory, and its problems, see Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 127-149.
11. Limitations are also imposed by the exclusive focus on gender, as Gamman and Lorraine point out. In Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*, a female servant's wish to ride in a coach or chair in order to "be short-sighted, or stare, to leer in the Face, to look distant, to observe, [or] to overlook" (I. i. 252-3), indicates the advantage social class bestows.
12. To qualify Silverman's criticism, however, it is important to emphasize that in representation, the look masquerades as the gaze frequently enough to legitimately speak of an oppressive male gaze. Silverman is not quite fair to Mulvey who has, after all, identified a pervasive and pernicious practice that demands a feminist critique. The weakness of Mulvey's account is that she reaffirms the male subject/female object dichotomy as inevitable.
13. Norman Bryson argues that neither Sartre nor Lacan fully succeed

in "decentering the subject." "Although that centralized subject is progressively dismantled by Sartre and Lacan -- and the direction of their thought is unmistakably towards a radical decentering of the subject -- there seem to me to be areas in which the standpoint of the subject as center is actually retained; the result of that residual centering upon the standpoint of the subject is that vision is portrayed as menaced at that vestigial center, threatened from without, and in some sense persecuted, in the visual domain, by the regard of Gaze". See *The Gaze in the Expanded Field* 87-108).

14. Schwartz further remarks: "We must take care that when we assert that men own the gaze, we are not, with that utterance, abdicating our power. To rethink patriarchy with what we have learned about the process of specularity and the instability of victimization is not to "cop out" of real political work in favor of theorizing: What could be more empowering than acknowledging that victimization is inherently unstable, that the foundations of patriarchy are everywhere not only cracked but ruptured?" (86).
15. Drawing on Dante's two categories of sin in the *Inferno*, violence (forza) and fraud (froda), Northrop Frye discusses the gendered division in the exercise of power. While men may use either violence or fraud to achieve their objectives, "the physical weakness of woman makes craft and guile her chief weapons." See *The Secular Scripture* 6-18.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN EXCESS OF SPECTACLE:

#### *ALOVISA IN LOVE IN EXCESS; OR, THE FATAL ENQUIRY*

James Sterling credits Haywood as an authority on the vicissitudes of desire: "Great Arbitress of Passion" he hails her in a complimentary poem first published with the 1732 edition of her *Secret Histories, Novels and Poems*. He is also responsible for what has become a lasting connection with Aphra Behn and Delariviere Manley; Haywood is the third female writer who completes the "Fair Triumvirate of Wit." Often discussed together, the members of this trio are considered the main practitioners of eighteenth-century amatory fiction.<sup>1</sup> Haywood is best known for her stories of seduction and betrayal, her "stock in trade" (Whicher 27) of the 1720s. Margaret Anne Doody considers Haywood an expert in this genre: "Of the minor novelists of the eighteenth century, nobody understood the importance and interest of ... [the seduction] process as a theme for prose fiction better than did Mrs. Haywood" (137-8). Current critical interest maintains this focus as Haywood becomes increasingly important to the analysis of a feminine discourse of

desire in the eighteenth century. For Haywood, love is a universal concern, a theme about which even the uneducated are knowledgeable: "Love" she writes, is a "Topick which I believe few are ignorant of; there requires no Aids of Learning, no general Conversation; no Application; a shady Grove and purling Stream are all Things that's necessary to give us an Idea of the tender Passion."<sup>2</sup> This may be a knowledge gained by default, a result of the limitations imposed on women by patriarchal culture, but Haywood's insights into the emotions that attend sexual desire enabled her to dominate the market for romance writing in the 1720s.

If one of Haywood's innovations was to express women's sexual realities, she nonetheless represents desire in familiar, if intense, terms. "Passions are involuntary," asserts the narrator of *The Force of Nature* (13): in all of Haywood's amatory fiction, desire, to be considered sincere, must be spontaneous, irresistible, ungovernable and irrational. Desire is also governed by a specular economy; employing many of the romance conventions that embody the relationship between visibility and passion, the importance of sight to erotic experience is a constant feature of Haywood's amatory discourse. As we might expect, love at first sight figures prominently. Inspired by a beautiful object, lovers of both sexes

are immediately and uncontrollably "plung'd in a wild Sea of Passion" (*British Recluse* 19) following a visual moment which is transforming in its effects. Desire is initially a purely visual experience, and ecstatic descriptions of the desirable object are common. Sincere lovers, especially male, derive exquisite (and transcendent) pleasure from merely looking at the object of their desire. In *Love in Excess*, Frankville's response to the sight of Camilla is typical. Looking onto the garden from a window, he sees "a Woman, or rather an Angel, coming down a Walk." The description he gives to his friend D'Elmont recalls the Spectator's interest in the match between inner character and outer appearance: "Never did any Woman wear so much of her Soul in her Eyes, as did this Charmer," Frankville claims. "I saw that Moment in her Looks, all I have since experienc'd of her Genius, and her Humour: Wit, Judgment, good Nature and Generosity are in her Countenance, conspicuous as in her Actions" (183). Scenes of such a "fatal view" are repeated over and over again in Haywood. In Frankville's case, because his desire is aimed at more than mere sexual gratification, this experience takes on a metaphysical dimension:

The Surprise--the Love--the Adoration which this fatal View involv'd me in...I was, methought, all Spirit,--I beheld her with Raptures, such as we imagine Souls



enjoy, when freed from Earth, they meet each other in  
the Realms of Glory; 'twas Heaven to gaze upon her.  
(183)

Later, when he enjoys a "second View," his pleasure, more than anything else, arises from looking: "What Joy, what a Mixture of Extacy and Wonder, then fill'd my raptur'd Soul at this second View; I could not presently trust my Eyes, or think, my Happiness was real: I gaz'd, and gaz'd again, in silent Transport" (188).

Neither are the pleasures of sight restricted to men. Female desire, too, is awakened in a single ocular moment. In *The British Recluse*, Cleomira's gaze is captivated by Lysander, later known by his real name, Lord Bellamy. A charismatic young nobleman to whom all eyes turn when he enters a room, he is exemplary for his ability to attract attention. Following the gaze of her companion, Cleomira

saw a Form which appear'd more than Man, and  
nothing inferior to those Idea's [sic] we conceive of  
*Angels*: His Air! his Shape! his Face! were more than  
human!--Myriads of light'ning Glories darted from his  
Eyes, as he cast them round the Room, yet temper'd  
with such a streaming Sweetness, such a descending  
Softness, as seem'd to entreat the Admiration he  
*commanded*! (19)

For Cleomira, the position of spectator itself does not guarantee the full privileges of the active subject -- modesty requires that she remain

passive and await Lysander's notice. And even though Lysander is clearly the object of sight, it is his gaze that embodies social power. Count D'Elmont is another beautiful male object. He is the central character of *Love in Excess* around whom Haywood creates a constellation of desiring women whose different circumstances make up an assortment of sexual realities. Returning to the French court after serving in the War of the Spanish Succession, D'Elmont, like Lysander, quickly attracts the notice of all:

The Beauty of his Person, the Gaiety of his Air, and the unequalled Charms of his Conversation, made him the Admiration of both Sexes; and whilst those of his *own* strove which should gain the largest Share in his Friendship; the *other* vented fruitless Wishes, and in secret cursed that Custom which forbids Women to make a Declaration of their Thoughts. (2)

Lysander and D'Elmont's social and sexual power is bound up with the impact of their visual appearance. That they are objects on display does not disempower them; on the contrary, their capacity to attract a universal admiring gaze is a source of power -- at the centre of the social scene, their charisma is an important component of their influence. D'Elmont is further described as "not an Object to be safely gazed at": Richardson may have had this kind of male figure in mind when he created Lovelace, whose rakish sexual power is dangerously compelling.

Once desire has been kindled, to be deprived of the sight of the beloved is torturous. Seeing not only precedes desire, it is often a substitution for consummation. If nothing else, lovers must be able to behold one another:<sup>3</sup> "Tis hard for the severest Virtue to deny themselves the Sight of the Person belov'd" (*Love in Excess* 81). Haywood gives this compulsive need to see a comic treatment in *The History of Betsy Thoughtless* (1751). Mr. Saving, one of several male characters smitten by Betsy, has been forbidden to see her. His letter of complaint to Betsy focuses on the pain of losing sight of her:

Dreadful is the loss of sight, yet what is sight to me, when it presents not you! Though I saw you regardless of my ardent passion, yet still I saw you - and while I did so, could not be wholly wretched! What have I not endured since deprived of that only joy for which I wish to live!...I should have dwelt for ever in your street, in hope of sometimes getting a glimpse of you from one or other of the windows: this I thought would be taken notice of, and might offend you; but darkness freed me from these apprehensions, and gave me the consolation of breathing in the same air with you. Soon as I thought all watchful eyes were closed, I flew to the place which, wherever my body is, contains my heart and all it's faculties. I pleased myself with looking on the roof that covers you, and invoked every star to present me to you in your sleep, in a form more agreeable than I can hope I ever appeared in your waking fancy...O Miss Betsy! I cannot live, if longer denied the sight of you! (27)

Here Haywood parodies both the intensity of romance rhetoric and the

convention which demands desperation from the lover who cannot behold the object of his desire. It is also interesting to note that *Saving* ends with the hope that Betsy might see him, enhanced, if only in her dreams, indicating that his need to be seen is equal to his desire to see. In Haywood's amatory fiction, however, the need to see is represented without irony. In *The British Recluse*, for example, Haywood employs a convention used by Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde* where the woman, at a prearranged time, gazes from a window as her lover rides by. Lysander requests that Cleomira be at her window so that he may "feast" his "longing Eyes with a transient View." Yet when he parades before her accompanied by four richly liveried servants, it is Lysander who is the object on display:

At length he came, and with a Mien and Air, so soft, so sweet, so graceful, that Painters might have copy'd an Adonis from him, fit, indeed, to charm the Queen of Beauty. He was dress'd in a strait Jockey-Coat of Green Velvet richly embroider'd at the Seams with Silver; the Buttons were Brilliants, neatly set in the Fashion of Roses; his Hair, which is as black as Jet, was ty'd with a green Ribband, but not so straitly but that a thousand little Ringlets stray'd over his lovely Cheeks, and wanton'd in the Air; a crimson Feather in his Hat, set off to vast advantage the dazzling Whiteness of his Skin. (29)

The intensity of colour and the descriptive details of his dress and hair,

creates a strong visual impact; what "Painters" might produce Haywood accomplishes in language. The formality of the presentation conveys a sense of spectacle; it is an event designed to dramatize Lysander's power and sexual appeal, an event to which Cleomira is a witness.

Significantly, he is on horseback so that his masculinity, status, and dignity are set off to great advantage. Again, Lysander masters the specular moment, even though he is the eroticized object. Haywood shows that the advantage does not necessarily reside with the one who sees -- even as an object, Lysander's sex and social status guarantee that his power is enhanced rather than diminished.

Sight may be the primary vehicle of desire for both men and women, but there are clear gender differences in how the power of the look is deployed. Lysander and D'Elmont may be objects of desire, even a spectacle in the case of the former, but their objectification does not signify passivity and powerlessness. Men can occupy the place of object without becoming objectified, and class rather than sex is often the determining factor. Their power is determined by their access to the material, social and political sources of power, and a public display of status, as in spectacles of power such as a royal levee, only reaffirms their superior place in the social hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> Although Cleomira can

occupy the position of subject, gazing out of the window at the object of her desire, this reversal of roles does not bring with it a transfer of power to the one who sees - Lysander still controls the scopic scenario, and the evocation of sexual and social power that it represents. Although women may possess a desiring gaze, this in no way indicates that they are subjects as men are. And when women are objects, as they frequently are in Haywood, they are most often fetishized, dominated and shaped by the male gaze.

There are many scenes in Haywood where women are viewed voyeuristically by men. In contrast to the public spaces men occupy when on display, women are often placed in private settings such as a garden, enjoying a moment of solitude or reverie. They may be in a languid or reclining posture, or framed by a window, and are frequently in *deshabille*. In *Love in Excess*, Melliora's private space is repeatedly invaded by D'Elmont's gaze and presence. Looking out from a window he happens to see her in the garden, "in a melancholy, but a charming Posture." D'Elmont has the "Opportunity thus unseen by her, to gaze upon" her beauty (73). When Cleomira gazes from the window at Lysander, her look does not carry a sense of agency - that she could act upon her desire. In this similar scene, however, D'Elmont is not satisfied

with merely looking; he quickly rushes down to the garden because, according to the narrator "Love has small Dominion in a Heart, that can content itself with a distant Prospect" (73). D'Elmont, as a seducer, knows he must traverse this distance that separates him from Melliora. For women, however, the distance or separation provided by a window is sometimes a useful barrier. The point may seem obvious, but Haywood pays close attention to the importance of the spatial aspects of seduction.

In one of Haywood's famous 'warm scenes', the garden is the setting for the exhibition of the eroticized female body:<sup>5</sup> Amena, although determined to forbid Count D'Elmont any further "dangerous Interviews," cannot bring herself to retire from the window when she sees him coming down the walk. Correctly, "he took this for no ill Omen" (23). D'Elmont reads Amena's inability to forego the sight of him as a consequence of her desire. Neither can she resist being lured out the window and into the garden when he "look'd on her...with Eyes so piercing, so sparkling with Desire, accompany'd with so bewitching Softness, as might have thaw'd the most frozen Reservedness, and on the melting Soul stamp'd Love's Impression" (24). Amena may feed her desire through gazing on the beautiful Count, but he can dominate her with his "piercing" gaze. Once in the garden, away from the safety of her home, Amena's desire is fully

awakened. The following seduction scene, with its steamy eroticism, is one of the most quoted passages in Haywood and demonstrates that objectification itself is gendered:

All nature seem'd to favour [D'Elmont's] Design, the Pleasantness of the Place, the Silence of the Night, the Sweetness of the Air, perfum'd with a thousand various Odours, wafted by gentle Breezes from adjacent Gardens, compleated the most delightful Scene that ever was, to offer up a Sacrifice to Love; not a Breath but flew wing'd with Desire, and sent soft thrilling Wishes to the Soul; Cynthia herself, cold as she is reported, assisted in the Inspiration, and sometimes shone with all her Brightness, as it were to feast their ravish'd Eyes with gazing on each other's Beauty; then veil'd her Beams in Clouds to give the Lover Boldness, and hide the Virgin's Blushes. What now could poor Amena do, surrounded with so many Powers, attack'd by such a charming Force without, betray'd by Tenderness within...The Heat of the Weather, and her Confinement having hindered her from dressing that Day, she had only a thin silk Night-Gown on, which flying open as he caught her in his Arms, he found her panting Heart beat Measures of Consent, her heaving Breast swell to be press'd by his, and every Pulse confess a Wish to yield; her Spirits all dissolv'd, sunk in a Lethargy of Love. (25-26)

With its pastoral and Edenic associations, the garden is a frequent setting for amorous encounters in Haywood. In this particular scene, erotic tension is built by gradually focusing on the visual elements of desire. A transition is made from the description of a complicit nature to the more dramatically visual -- the moon both shields and uncovers



Amena's body which is gradually exposed to D'Elmont's and the reader's view. Nature, gendered feminine, has been appropriated to further the Count's intent, and Amena is represented as defenseless against nummerable forces, "betray'd" from without and within. The sound of a footstep coming down the walk saves Amena from "ruin" but the scene has the marks of a Haywoodian seduction, including the dominating power of the male gaze and a remarkable focalization upon the exposed and vulnerable female body.

In the preceding discussion of the conventions of vision and desire, I have focused upon the act of beholding: Frankville's spellbound eyes, Saving's desperate need to see, D'Elmont's voyeuristic look, and the uncovering of Amena's body, all foreground the spectator's position. In the case of Mr. Saving, we are also alerted to the lover's need to be seen by the beloved. Both of these positions, spectator and spectacle, are united in the figure of Alovisa of *Love in Excess*, Amena's rival for the affection of D'Elmont.

The novel begins with Alovisa's attempt to direct the desiring gaze of the beautiful Count, precisely because he does not see her as she wishes to be seen. She is piqued that D'Elmont addresses her without any "Mark of a distinguishing Affection." To her annoyance, he

possesses a "natural Complaisance" that prompts him to address everyone with an "Equality in his Behaviour" (3). "Wherefore," she asks, "has the agreeing World join'd with my deceitful Glass to flatter me into a vain Belief I had invincible Attractions? D'Elmont sees `em not; D'Elmont is insensible!" (2). To be desired, one must first be seen.<sup>6</sup> As always, modesty dictates that Alovisa must await D'Elmont's notice and she, like all the other women who gaze lovingly upon him, "curs'd that Custom which forbids Women to make a Declaration of their Thoughts" (2). Her first task, therefore, is to correct D'Elmont's insensibility by directing his vision. Thus, she writes to him anonymously, assuring him the God of Love "will appear...To-morrow Night at the Ball, in the Eyes of the most passionate of all his Votresses; search therefore for him in Her, in whom (amongst that bright Assembly) you would most desire to find him" (4). D'Elmont need only read the desire written in her eyes; certain of his "Penetration," Alovisa expects that he will discover her as the true object of his search unless his desiring gaze has already been fixed "by a former Inclination" (4).

Alovisa intends to use an ocular language, what Steele calls the "Language of Looks and Glances," to solve the problem of her anonymity and D'Elmont's insensibility. As she dresses for the ball they are both to

attend, she also "dresses" her eyes:

she consulted her Glass after what Manner she should dress her Eyes; the gay, the languishing, the sedate, the commanding, the beseeching Air, were put on a thousand times, and as often rejected. (5)

For Alovisa, her deportment, including an appropriate 'look' in her eyes, is as much a part of her toilette as her clothes and jewels. She is preparing to stage herself, to speak a language of the eyes which she hopes will draw D'Elmont's look. In Haywood's *Force of Nature*, "intelligible Eyes" effect a pre-verbal communication between lovers. Alovisa intends to employ this visual exchange to overcome D'Elmont's indifference to her "invincible Attractions." Although she is willing to directly manipulate the scopic system of which she is a part, she operates on the object side of the look and so behaves in ways appropriate to her sex; as an object she has the room to manoeuvre granted to women -- she can fashion and ornament herself in preparation to be seen. She will not attempt to appropriate a more direct subject position -- a subject who uses the gaze to acquire power and knowledge -- until later.

D'Elmont's powers of discernment, however, cannot be relied upon; he has more difficulty in discovering the author of the letter than

Alovisa imagines:

who to fix it on, he was at a Loss as much as ever;  
then he began to reflect on all the Discourse and little  
Raileries that had pass'd between him and the Ladies  
whom he had convers'd with since his Arrival, but  
could find nothing in any of 'em of Consequence  
enough to make him guess at the Person. (5)

D'Elmont cannot fix his gaze correctly because "having never experienc'd the Force of Love," he doesn't know in whose eyes he should wish to find "the little God," making his selection a matter of chance and opportunity. But although indifferent to love, he is sexually opportunistic and considers a mistress "an agreeable as well as fashionable Amusement, and resolv'd not to be cruel" (5).

Alovisa, "arm'd with all her Lightnings," anxiously awaits D'Elmont's entrance with "her Eyes fixed toward the door" (6). But to her dismay and shock, he enters with Amena and "[Alovisa] saw, or fancy'd she saw, an unusual Joy in her Eyes, and dying Love in his" (6). Moments before, helping Amena from her coach, D'Elmont had noticed her trembling hand and a "Languishment in her Eyes" (7). Immediately he assumes her to be the anonymous writer. Although correctly discerning Amena's desire, D'Elmont misdirects his gaze and fixes upon the first woman he sees. Amena has unknowingly intercepted the Count

before Alovisa can communicate, through her eyes, her desire.

Alovisa, however, is an astute reader and can interpret the look of desire in the eyes of others. The face, especially the eyes, are signs to be read, and there are scenes of such readings throughout Haywood's writing. The eyes are the locus of subjectivity (the proverbial 'window to the soul'); desire, or its lack, can be read in them. Invariably lovers are incapable of concealing desire; if passion cannot be fully articulated within language, either because of the limitations of linguistic expression or the constraints modesty places on women, desire inevitably speaks through its effects on the body:

What Strength of boasted Reasons? What Force of Resolution? What modest Fears, or cunning Artifice, can correct the Fierceness of its fiery Flashes in the eyes, keep down the struggling Sighs, command the Pulse, and bid trembling cease? Honour and Virtue may distance Bodies, but there is no Power in either of those Names, to stop the Spring, that, with a rapid Whirl, transports us from ourselves, and darts our Souls into the bosom of the darling Object. (*Love in Excess* 100-101)

It is this inescapable fact of desire that Alovisa can so easily decipher in the looks of D'Elmont and Amena. Although an unlucky accident robs Alovisa of the opportunity she has so carefully prepared for, her body still communicates her response to this unfortunate turn of events. Seeing

that D'Elmont has missed his mark she is completely discomposed; falling into a swoon she must be taken home. Alovisa's disorder is not that 'sweet confusion' requisite in the modest heroine. The loss of her composure, a spectacle of which she is ashamed, is produced by an excess of various emotions: "Disdain, Despair, and Jealousy at once crowded into her Heart, and swell'd hers almost to bursting" (6). Later, when D'Elmont learns that Alovisa is the anonymous writer, he will remember her swoon and interpret it correctly as a forceful expression of frustrated passion. But for now, he is as mystified by Alovisa's collapse as everyone else. The company crowd around Alovisa's body; she is now seen, but not as she had hoped.

This setback does not, however, deter Alovisa from further attempts to "direct [D'Elmont's] erring Search" (8). A second letter is composed, then destroyed, because she struggles between "a full Discovery of her Heart" (9) and the shock such a revelation would give her pride. In terms suitably melodramatic for a woman of her tempestuous and arrogant nature, she repudiates any expression of desire that would compromise her dignity: "let me rather die...than be guilty of a Meanness which wou'd render me unworthy of Life: Oh Heavens! to offer Love, and poorly sue for Pity! 'tis insupportable!" (9). To

resolve this conflict between desire and pride, she composes a third letter "to this undiscerning Man," now appealing to D'Elmont's ambition.

"Heaven...design'd you not for vulgar Conquests," she writes, "aim at a more exalted Flight, and you will find it no Difficulty to discover who she is that languishes" (11). Again, she must write anonymously and D'Elmont's "penetration" is as faulty as ever -- only by chance does he finally discover the author of the letters. Alovisa is never successful in directing his "erring Search." It is her curse that, despite her efforts, an effective use of the "Language of Looks and Glances" eludes her.

Haywood shows that visual signification is a complex and unpredictable social system impossible to dominate. Alovisa's attempt to impress her will upon it fails because in Haywood's discourse of desire, genuine passion is spontaneous, outside the rational control of any individual, and, thus, cannot be bound by such self-conscious efforts to master the specular dynamics that serve it. However, if D'Elmont and Alovisa cannot connect through the loving gaze, they can through ambition. It is not Alovisa's beauty that captivates D'Elmont; to him, one woman is much like another. That Alovisa finally secures D'Elmont for her husband is due to her wealth and his ambition, "the reigning Passion in his Soul." One "invincible Attaction" Alovisa possesses -- her money --

accomplishes all.

That Alovisa chooses her husband and exercises whatever means necessary to secure him is a consequence of her autonomy. Possessing more freedom than is usually granted to women, she is not merely an object to be disposed of by a father, brother or male guardian. Yet Alovisa finds that in marriage, such advantages do not enhance her power in dealing with the infidelity of her husband. While she ultimately achieves her ends, she has no power to hold D'Elmont's desire, and it is not long before she discovers that she has a rival. According to Haywood's thinking, Alovisa and D'Elmont's marriage is doomed to fail because it is founded on ambition and greed rather than love.

Alovisa's happiness ends abruptly when D'Elmont gazes upon Melliora, his new ward and the true object of his desire. "Scarce a Month," she laments, "was I bless'd with those Looks of Joy" (123). "Quicksighted" enough to immediately discern the alteration in her husband's behaviour, Alovisa goes to him in his closet. Finding the door locked,

her Curiosity made her look thro' the Key-hole, and  
she saw him sometimes very earnestly reading a letter,  
and sometimes writing, as tho' it were an answer to it.  
(66)



At the moment that Alovisa puts her eye to the keyhole she becomes a threat to her husband's autonomy and authority. She penetrates into his private space and acquires the covert power of the spy. Bribing his servant to obtain the letter, she discovers his dissatisfaction with his marriage but as yet does not suspect she has a rival. She intends, however, to put a "diligent Watch" on all his "Words and Actions" (69). Alovisa's curiosity will be a driving force in the narrative, indeed, her search into the identity of D'Elmont's beloved is the "fatal Enquiry" of the novel's title. Her desire to see, characterized by "that Devil Curiosity which too much haunts the Minds of Women," (141) is identified by Haywood as a transgressive feminine attribute. It threatens masculine possession of the subject position and places Alovisa outside her proper role as an object. Her desire to see is a bid for subjectivity and access to the knowledge it provides.<sup>7</sup> Given that women are traditionally denied the subject position, female curiosity overrides gender boundaries and becomes a usurpation of masculine privilege. Behind this belief lie Eve and Pandora, women who possess an irresistible and fatal hunger for knowledge, and who provide female models for an improper and dangerous desire to know.<sup>8</sup>

That Alovisa's curiosity is subversive and threatening to

D'Elmont is clear in his anger when he discovers she has tampered with his correspondence:

You have done well, Madam...by your impertinent Curiosity and Imprudence, to rouze me from my Dream of Happiness, and remind me, that I am that wretched Thing a Husband! 'Tis well indeed (answer'd Alovisa...)that any thing can make you remember, both what you are, and what I am. You (resum'd he, hastily interrupting her) have taken an effectual Method to prove yourself a Wife!--a very Wife!--insolent--jealous--and censorious--But Madam...since you are pleas'd to assert your Privilege, be assured, I too shall take my turn, and will exert the--Husband! (73)

For D'Elmont, Alovisa's "impertinent Curiosity" is threatening because it signals her ability to invade his privacy, to make him the object of her invasive looking. Alovisa's spying undermines his autonomy, especially his assumption that marriage need not interfere with his sexual career.

This scene of marital conflict is also interesting for its focus on the interplay between privilege and obligation. While D'Elmont feels threatened, Alovisa reminds him that there are obligations which accompany their relationship as husband and wife.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Alovisa complains of D'Elmont's ingratitude. He is an "ungrateful Monster" whose "well-nigh wasted Stream of Wealth had dry'd but for [her] kind Supply" (108). D'Elmont clearly feels no obligation to Alovisa and in his

present cynical view of marriage, she is fulfilling her role as a wife according to his expectations. Yet it seems to the reader that D'Elmont, in the pursuit of his sexual interests outside marriage, has already exerted one of his privileges as a husband. Alovisa may be an obstacle to the gratification of his desire for Melliora, but she is not an insurmountable one.

Following the argument with D'Elmont, she is desperate to heal the widening breach between them and swallows her pride in order to do so. The following exchange between Alovisa and D'Elmont affirms both her plight and her disadvantaged position in the marital politics that have come to dominate their relationship. First, she must force herself upon him in order to speak, as he shuts "the Door hastily upon her" (78). He "suffer'd her Entrance" only to avoid hurting her. Although at first she cannot speak, "the silent Grief which appear'd in her Face, pleaded more with the good Nature of the Count, than any thing she could have said" (78). D'Elmont pities her, but he is not about to lose the advantage her pain gives him:

He began to pity the Unhappiness of her too violent Affection, and to wish himself in a Capacity of returning it; however, he (like other Husbands) thought it best to keep up his Resentments, and take this Opportunity of quelling all the Woman in her

Soul, and humbling all the Remains of Pride that Love  
had left her. (78-9)

He remains "imperious" in his manner, and Alovisa, still silenced by grief, let "fall a Shower of Tears, and throwing herself on the Ground, imbraced his Knees with so passionate a Tenderness, as sufficiently express'd her Repentance for having been guilty of any thing to disoblige him" (79). For a woman who earlier could not "poorly sue for Pity," Alovisa's willingness to humiliate herself to appease her husband signals a significant alteration in the balance of power between them. Once married, Alovisa loses ground; her loss becomes D'Elmont's gain, and he does not hesitate to take advantage of it despite his feelings of pity. It is, indeed, a painful scene, and eloquently expresses Alovisa's misery and the futility of her attempt to regain D'Elmont's affection. D'Elmont pardons her, but this gives Alovisa the false impression that he loves her. "Your kind Forgiveness of my Folly, assures me that you are mine, not more by Duty than by Love: a Tie far more valuable than that of Marriage" (79). Alovisa is mistaken and ultimately D'Elmont cannot dissemble. Because she truly loves, she is later able to read her husband correctly. She laments to Melliora, "I know he hates me, I read it in his Eyes, and feel it on his Lips; all Day he shuns my Converse, and at Night, colder than Ice,

receives my warm Embraces" (107). Indeed, D'Elmont now regards his wife as his "ill-Genius" and the "Bar" between him and Melliora. Alovisa turns her attention away from healing her marriage to an obsessive enquiry into the identity of the woman who has replaced her. Alovisa seeks vengeance; knowledge of her rival's identity, the "curst Adultress," will give her the power to threaten public exposure. Curiosity may be Alovisa's presiding spirit, but she is motivated primarily by the need to exert some influence over her destiny. Like her foiled attempts at directing D'Elmont's "erring Search," however, her own search is repeatedly frustrated and misdirected.

Racked by feelings of jealousy, rage and abandonment, Alovisa is unable passively to accept the loss of D'Elmont's affection and submit to his authority. To accept her fate as a rejected wife is, for her, a kind of enslavement.

this Tyrant Husband thinks to awe me into Calmness.  
 But if I endure it--No...I'll be no longer the tame easy  
 Wretch I have been--all France shall echo with my  
 Wrongs--the ungrateful Monster...shall he enslave me!  
 (108)

The alternative is, once again, to enter the visual field. When Baron D'Espernay, who possesses the secret Alovisa covets, promises to arrange a witnessing of the adulterous couple, in return for sexual

favours, Alovisa is ecstatic, believing she will gain the certainty of visual verification. She seeks "a friendly Clue to guide [her] from [a] Labyrinth of Doubt, to a full day of Certainty" (116). The Baron assures her, "Madam...you shall have greater Proofs than Words can give you -- Ocular Demonstration shall strike Denial dumb" (117).<sup>10</sup> D'Espernay promises to circumvent the deception language can perpetrate; "Denial" will be silenced and Alovisa's doubts will end. Given Alovisa's preoccupation with seeing and being seen, it is not surprising that she is enticed by the prospect of being an eyewitness. The promised "ocular Demonstration" is to come from a plot laid by D'Elmont and the Baron to rape Melliora, euphemistically conceived as a "Sacrifice to Love."

However, D'Espernay's sister Melantha, also enamoured of the Count and a more willing sacrifice, discovers the plan and places herself in Melliora's bed to await D'Elmont. Alovisa is to break in upon the lovers but the bedtrick foils both her and D'Elmont's purpose. In the darkened room Melantha secretly receives the Count (he cannot tell the difference,) and hides beneath the covers when Alovisa bursts upon the scene. In a rage she tries to strip away the bedclothes but is prevented by D'Elmont. He attempts to "stop her mouth...[but] cannot prevent her from shrieking out Murder! Help! or the barbarous Man will kill me!" (126). Alovisa's

words will prove to be prophetic.

Governed as she is by curiosity's 'appetite', Alovisa appears to occupy the masculine position of the one who sees. Yet she cannot achieve the "Penetration in Seeing" she is after. "Ocular Demonstration" is proven unreliable, and its promise of certain knowledge remains unfulfilled. This is not only due to Melantha's firm grip on the bedclothes; even if she had been uncovered, the knowledge Alovisa seeks would still elude her and such an eyewitnessing would only create yet another misimpression. The privileges of spectatorship are not within Alovisa's grasp. There are at least two reasons for this. First, on the level of narrative structure, *Love in Excess*, with its elaborate but integrated plot, is a novel concerned with misdirection and confusion. Truth is shrouded and obfuscated by the plots and counterplots of the various characters. Melantha, in particular, interferes with both D'Elmont's efforts to seduce Melliora and with her brother Espernay's plot to assist Alovisa. All of the characters have their own singular motives and objectives which collide with and frustrate each other's efforts. "Is evrry [sic] thing I see and hear, Illusion?" (127) asks D'Elmont when he learns it is not Melliora he has enjoyed. The second, and less obvious, cause of Alovisa's frustrated efforts, is her own commitment to

spectacle. She wants, apparently, to be a witness, and responds breathlessly to D'Esparnay's proposal, yet she inevitably remains on the object side of the look. In this crucial scene of "ocular Demonstration," Alovisa almost immediately transforms herself from hopeful spectator to discomposed spectacle. As in her earlier response to D'Elmont's entrance with Amena at the Ball, Alovisa's prostrate and hysterical body becomes the centre of attention.<sup>11</sup> "The violence of so many contrary Passions warring in her Breast at once, had thrown her into a Swoon, and she fell back...motionless, and, in all Appearance, dead" (126-7). Indeed, in terms of the visual focus of this scene, what we see is not D'Elmont and his mistress caught in flagrante [delicto], but the spectacle of Alovisa overcome by her rage and disappointment. D'Elmont, who now looks upon her "with Rage and Hate, for that Jealous Curiosity which he suppos'd had led her to watch his Actions that Night," believes his wife to be in possession of the look, and that he has caught her watching. But this is not accurate; Alovisa's capacity to see is repeatedly undermined in the novel by her inability or unwillingness to transcend her propensity to specularize herself.

Her failure to become an effective eyewitness does not prevent Alovisa from making another effort to gratify her curiosity, but this time



Alovisa does not even make the attempt to become a spectator; instead, she concedes this role as properly belonging to another. Negotiating yet again with the Baron, she agrees to a meeting where, in return for the coveted name, she will fulfill her bargain. However, she has planned against this eventuality by secretly placing D'Elmont's brother, Chevalier Brillian, in a closet. In the position of spy, he now owns the look and deploys it to greater effect. Once Alovisa has the name, he is to rush out and defend her honour before she must submit to D'Espernay's extortion. The strategy is partly successful; the Baron is challenged and killed by Brillian, saving Alovisa from her agreement. However, her enquiry suddenly becomes fatal to herself as well. Coming to "alarm the Family," Alovisa runs accidentally upon D'Elmont's sword in the darkened gallery. In a rather macabre and ironic collapsing of the spectator/spectacle structure, here Alovisa neither sees nor is seen. However, when D'Elmont calls for lights to illuminate the scene, we witness, yet again, Alovisa's specularized body, a "dreadful View," impaled on her husband's sword. Each time Alovisa attempts to see, her position as object in the field of vision is reaffirmed.

The price Alovisa pays for satisfying her curiosity is death. It seems that the Count inadvertently silences her, yet Alovisa's death

resonates symbolically; she is killed by her husband's sword, the symbol of his phallic power, a power invested in him by his sex and his aristocratic status. The manner of Alovisa's death suggests that a woman's "impertinent Curiosity" is both dangerous and improper.

Although we can sympathize with Alovisa's feelings of injustice and betrayal, Haywood's treatment of her is ambivalent. Demonized in the novel, she is seduced by "that devil Curiosity" and occupies the dubious position of spy and voyeur. To D'Elmont, she becomes an "ill-Genius," a kind of evil presiding spirit. In an ironic comment on her own bid for a "Penetration in Seeing," she is stabbed in the dark. This may be, perhaps, a metaphor for her own darkness; while her desire for revenge may be understandable, it is not a noble objective, and Alovisa, like many of the novel's characters, does not see beyond her own self-interest. Yet, although she is a flawed character, she is no more flawed than D'Elmont. Alovisa's story is a tragic one and she, more than any other, is the novel's "Sacrifice to Love." It is typical of Haywood to condemn intemperate and immoderate emotions, especially the twin passions of rage and jealousy.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the sincerity and degree of Alovisa's suffering guarantees that she has a claim on the reader's sympathy. As David Oakleaf states, in Haywood "all lovers, and only

lovers, are subjects. That is why Haywood's narrator promiscuously confers her narrative favours on all of them" (16). Yet Alovisa is not content to be a rejected and suffering lover. She wants knowledge and power.

Whether Alovisa learns the name she seeks is not revealed; silenced by D'Elmont's sword, "Alovisa spoke no more" (145). For her, the crucial links between spectatorship, knowledge and agency never come together. Alovisa's failure to achieve the position of "Looker-on" can be attributed, in part, to her forthright methods. As in her desire to openly witness the sexual scene of D'Elmont and his mistress, she fails to conceal her specular activities. Her fate is akin to that of Milton's Eve, whose desire for knowledge is represented as a scopic desire, a bid to know through the dynamics of sight. Eve eats to achieve an authoritative vision; the result, however, is to confirm her place in spectacle. Immediately she wonders whether her disobedience has been noticed:

And I perhaps am secret: Heaven is high--  
 High, and remote to see from thence distinct  
 Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps  
 May have diverted from continual watch  
 Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies  
 About him. (IX:811-16)

Eve now becomes acutely aware of the possible gaze of heaven.<sup>13</sup> To be an object of sight is also Alovisa's destiny; like the Starer on the Hassock, she cannot transcend her exhibitionism. As a woman in love, however, Alovisa cannot be understood outside of the context of the bond between desire and vision. Her most ardent wish, one which exceeds all others, is to be seen and desired by D'Elmont. And this requires a sustained effort. From her first attempts to direct his desiring gaze, her later struggle to be admitted to his presence, to her despair over being shunned by him, Alovisa at every opportunity fights to place herself squarely within D'Elmont's sight.

Alovisa's death not only facilitates the novel's plot to bring about the marriage of D'Elmont and Melliora, it also points to questions regarding effective ways for women to exercise power. Haywood's feminism, as noted above, emphasizes discernment, prudent self-awareness and the necessity for women to manage their visibility. Alovisa demonstrates none of these essential attributes. The possibilities for female agency offered by women's appropriation of the position of spectator are, in Alovisa's case, shown to be severely limited. This is not Haywood's final word on the matter, however.

As we have learned, spectator and spectacle are not discrete

categories. Sartre's watcher in the park, who feels observed even as he looks, and Mr. Spectator, who is careful to evade a returning stare, both demonstrate the necessary interdependence of spectator and spectacle.

In another early novel, *Fantomina*, or *Love in a Maze* (1724), Haywood more effectively demonstrates the possibility that the subject/object structure might be transcended. Eschewing the "Complaints, Tears, [and] Swoonings" of the rejected woman, the heroine, in order to influence her sexual destiny, exploits her capacity for disguise and performance to manoeuvre within the scopic field she inhabits. Although she, too, is a woman in love, Fantomina's attempts to satisfy her desire are not confounded as Alovisa's are. Successfully manipulating both the dynamics of vision and desire and, like the Pict, the constructed nature of female identity, she achieves what Alovisa could not -- the epistemic privilege of the one who looks.

### NOTES

1. The amatory fiction of Behn, Manley and Haywood is the subject of Ros Ballaster's *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740*.
2. Dedication to William Yonge, *The Fatal Secret; or Constancy in Distress*, 1724.
3. "To a lover, the sight of the beloved has a completeness which no words and no embrace can match: a completeness which only the act of making love can temporarily accommodate" (Berger, *Ways of Seeing* 8).
4. In *The Invisible Spy* (1755), a much later work of Haywood's, the Spy disapproves of those who set aside all business in order "to be spectators of the royal pomp" of the king's passage. Individuals who blindly defer to authority (of various forms) "may be call'd real passives in human life" (I: 40).
5. For a discussion of the garden as erotic setting see April London's article "Placing the Female: The Metonymic Garden in Amatory and Pious Narrative, 1700-1740."
6. Beth Newman makes this point: "In a critical climate that frequently represents the gaze as something sinister, as a sign of power and a means of control, it is easy to forget that being the object of someone's look can in some circumstances be pleasureable -- even sustaining and necessary." See "Getting Fixed: Feminine Identity and Scopic Crisis in *The Turn of the Screw*," 43-63.
7. For a discussion of the ambivalence with which this impulse was met in the eighteenth century, see Barbara M. Benedict, "The 'Curious Attitude' in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Observing and Owning."
8. The role the dynamics of the gaze plays in Milton's story of Eve's

temptation and fall are discussed by Regina Schwartz in her article "Rethinking Voyeurism and Patriarchy: The Case of *Paradise Lost*."

9. In *The Wife* (1756) and its companion piece *The Husband in Answer to the Wife* (1756), Haywood outlines what these obligations and expectations are.
10. Haywood's 'scientific' language is noteworthy here. The importance of witnessing, an "ocular Demonstration," to scientific experimentation in the seventeenth century is discussed in Steven Shapin's and Simon Schaffer's *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*: "If knowledge was to be empirically based, as Boyle and other English experimentalists insisted it should, then its experimental foundations had to be witnessed. Experimental performances and their products had to be attested by the testimony of eyewitnesses" (55-6). In the bedtrick scene, however, Haywood shows the unreliability of witnessing. While Haywood's choice of language does not necessarily signal a critique of scientific method, it does point to Haywood's abiding interest in scientific matters. As I have noted in Chapter One, the Female Spectator recommends the use of the telescope and the microscope to women for the study of nature. She regarded the observation of plants and animals as an especially suitable activity: "A woman who is endow'd with such an activity of thought as not to be confin'd within the narrow bounds of her own particular affairs, has no occasion to dive into those of other people; -- nature spreads an ample field before her, where she is at liberty to pick out objects to satisfy her curiosity...let her follow the laborious ant to its little grainery, there behold with what indefatigable pains it bears and hoards its winter store, and from this insect learn industry and oeconomy; -- let her admire the charms of constant faithful love in the ever-cooing turtle" (*The Wife* 197-8). Given the function of the marriage manual, the knowledge acquired from the amateur study of nature is here applied to a wife's domestic role.
11. It is probable that the inspiration for the voyeuristic display of women in Haywood can be found in Restoration theatre. In *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700*, Elizabeth

Howe explores how the introduction of women players on the stage altered the dramatic representation of women. With the advent of the actress came the propensity to specularize the female body: "the heroine's important quality was her beauty. Actresses were frequently required to do no more than pose, like pictures, or statues, to be gazed upon and desired by male characters in the play and, presumably, by male spectators." Howe goes on to describe what she calls the 'couch scene,' a frequent Haywoodian scenario: "Here female characters were directed to lie at a distance, asleep on a couch, bed or grassy bank where, attractively defenceless and probably enticingly *deshabillee*, their beauty unwittingly aroused burning passion in the hero or villain who stumbled upon it" (39-40). Restoration tragic drama also presented "salacious spectacles of blood and violence involving women" and popularized representations of rape.

12. Haywood makes her view on jealousy clear in *Love in Excess*. Alovisa initially understands the negative consequences of a jealous disposition. Immediately following the discovery of D'Elmont's letter to Amena, "when the Transports of her Rage were so far over, as to give her Liberty of Reflection," Alovisa considers "that in Spite of the Injustice she thought him guilty of to her, she could not persuade herself to do any thing that might give him a Pretence to quarrel with her...and resolv'd to omit nothing of her former Endearments, or make a Shew of being in the least disoblig'd; this Sort of Carriage, she imagin'd, would not only lay him more open and unguarded to the diligent Watch she design'd to make on all his Words and Action, but likewise awaken him to a just Sense of her Goodness, and his own Ingratitude. -- She rightly judg'd, that when People are marry'd, Jealousy was not a proper Method to revive a decay'd Passion, and that after Possession it must be only Tenderness, and constant Assiduity to please, that can keep up Desire fresh and gay: Man is too Arbitrary a Creature to bear the least Contradiction, where he pretends an absolute Authority; and that Wife who thinks by ill Humour and perpetual Taunts, to make him weary of what she would reclaim him from, only renders herself more hateful, and makes that justifiable, which before was blameable in him" (69). Haywood argues in a similar vein in *The Wife*: "To reproach [a husband's] inconstancy,



and accuse him of having entertain'd a passion for some new object, without any other proof of it than barely his coldness to herself, must, in all probability, produce these three bad effects: -- first, it would expose her to his contempt; -- secondly, it would give him a pretence for absenting himself from home more than ever; -- and thirdly, it would make her rival, who perhaps always receives him with a smile, still dearer to him" (262-3). In these matters, Haywood advocated a "patient Griselda" policy, such as that employed by Lady -- in *The Careless Husband*, a play she appears to have admired; reference is made to it in *Betsy Thoughtless*, and she recommends it in *The Wife*.

13. Their visibility is confirmed in the knowledge that they are naked; they have become a spectacle in the eyes of the other. The consequences for the sin of curiosity in this postlapsarian fable is objectification. If a paradisal, transcendental unity of subject and object ever existed, it is now lost: Adam "on Eve/Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him/As wontonly repaid" (IX: 1013-15).

### CHAPTER 3

#### PERFORMANCES OF FEMININITY: MASKING IN *FANTOMINA*;

#### OR, *LOVE IN A MAZE*

Haywood's *Fantomina* has attracted considerable interest from feminist critics because it offers a surprisingly contemporary model of female agency. With its deployment of masquerade and disguise, and the connection it makes between female sexuality and performance, *Fantomina* represents the protean aspects of female subjectivity. The heroine of the novel, an unidentified aristocratic woman, adopts a series of disguises -- prostitute, maid, widow and a masked Incognita -- as a way, in the first instance, to acquire sexual knowledge, and then as a strategy to retain the sexual attention of her inconstant lover, Beauplaisir, who remains unaware that he repeatedly enjoys the same woman. Two consequences follow from this which relate to female knowledge and agency. First, Haywood shows how masquerade enables women to acquire the position of "Looker -on" while simultaneously evading the male look. *Fantomina* plays with her specular role,

intensifies it in a kind of Irigarayan mimicry; in doing so, she transcends the subject/object structure itself, and succeeds where Alovisa fails. And second, masculine desire itself becomes an object of enquiry, subject to Fantomina's and the reader's scrutinizing gaze.

Theories of masquerade frequently emphasize its capacity to challenge gender, political and social hierarchies. Women, apparently, have a special relationship to masquerade; in *Fantomina*, the most interesting of Haywood's masquerade texts, the heroine demonstrates how masquerade can be used to enhance female subjectivity, knowledge and agency. In her influential study *Masquerade and Civilization*, Terry Castle makes large claims for masquerade's subversive potential, especially for women:

With the anonymity of the mask...the eighteenth-century woman made an abrupt exit from the system of sexual domination...In the exquisite round of the assembly room, a woman was free to circulate -- not as a commodity placed in circulation by men, but according to her own pleasure...the masquerade was indeed a microcosm in which the external forms of sexual subordination had ceased to exist. The masquerade symbolized a realm of women unmarked by patriarchy, unmarked by the signs of exchange and domination, and independent of the prevailing sexual economy of eighteenth-century culture. (255)

Castle's argument, important as it is, is not accepted by all critics, or is

accepted only with some qualifications. The concern is that masquerade may not liberate women from their role as objects on display, or that it merely facilitates a reversal of roles that leaves restrictive dichotomies -- masculine/feminine, viewer/viewed -- intact. If, as Castle emphasizes, masquerade has "undeniably provocative visual elements" and creates the conditions for "voyeurism and self-display," (Castle 38), then Catherine Craft-Fairchild quite rightly calls our attention to important questions implied by Castle's analysis:

Who is displayed? For whom is the display/image/spectacle created? Who is the subject who obtains pleasure from looking? Who or what is the object of that gaze?...If it is the woman who becomes a spectacle or fetish for the man's pleasure, masquerade does not alter women's status--it leaves them inscribed in the dominant economy as objects of male vision and masculine desire.<sup>1</sup> (53)

The debate hinges, then, on the status of masquerade's potential to empower women by "dismantling female roles" (Craft-Fairchild 53), without producing mere "transvestism," or simple role-reversal.<sup>2</sup> Mary Anne Doane, who attempts to theorise female spectatorship through its connection with masquerade, addresses this problematic in two essays. In the first, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," Doane considers the possibility that masquerade might provide the

solution to woman's lack of "distance" from herself. Woman is conceived as a hieroglyphic, an image

theorised in terms of a certain closeness, the lack of a distance or gap between sign and referent...And it is the absence of this crucial distance or gap which also, simultaneously, specifies both the hieroglyphic and the female. This is precisely why Freud evicted the woman from his lecture on femininity. Too close to herself, entangled in her own enigma, she could not step back, could not achieve the necessary distance of a second look. (75-6)<sup>3</sup>

Doane adapts this conception of woman as "presence-to-itself" to discuss cinematic representation, wherein the voyeuristic scenario is the precondition for the pleasure in looking cinema creates. Doane states:

the early silent cinema, through its insistent inscription of scenarios of voyeurism, conceives of its spectator's viewing pleasure in terms of that of the Peeping Tom, behind the screen, reduplicating the spectator's position in relation to the woman as screen. (76)

To accommodate voyeuristic pleasure, the "opposition between proximity and distance in relation to the image...must be maintained" (77). Given that "the cinephile needs the gap which represents for him the very distance between desire and its object," (78) woman's "claustrophobic closeness" to herself, ("she is the image"), signifies a certain "deficiency in relation to structures of seeing and the visible" (80). This, Doane

concludes, "must clearly have consequences for attempts to theorise female spectatorship. And, in fact, the result is a tendency to view the female spectator as the site of an oscillation between a feminine position and a masculine position, invoking the metaphor of the transvestite" (80).<sup>4</sup> For Doane, in this first essay, masquerade possibly may provide this crucial distance necessary to create a position for the female spectator. Drawing on Joan Riviere's analysis (referred to above in relation to the Pict), Doane argues that the masquerade

in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance. Womanliness is a mask which can be worn or removed. The masquerade's resistance to patriarchal positioning would therefore lie in its denial of the production of femininity as closeness, as presence-to-itself as, precisely, imagistic. The transvestite adopts the sexuality of the other -- the woman becomes a man in order to attain the necessary distance from the image. Masquerade, on the other hand, involves a realignment of femininity, the recovery, or more accurately, simulation, of the missing gap or distance. To masquerade is to manufacture a lack in the form of a certain distance between oneself and one's image. (81-2)

In a later essay, "Masquerade Reconsidered: Further Thoughts on the Female Spectator," Mary Ann Doane struggles both with the psychoanalytic ground upon which the theory of woman's "claustrophobic closeness" to herself is based, and the mapping of the

necessary distance or gap which defines linguistic signification onto sexual difference:

Sexual differentiation becomes a way of dramatizing the entry into language. But it is a drama whose effects for female subjectivity are extremely disadvantageous, if not disastrous and which point, perhaps, to the limits of the usefulness of psychoanalytic theory for feminism. For, if linguistic difference and sexual difference are merged in a way which allows them no relative autonomy, the theory indeed becomes totalizing, leaving no room for feminist strategy [emphasis added]. (46)<sup>5</sup>

Not until the end of her essay does Doane begin to suggest that "the concept of subjectivity must be more broadly understood" (52). To this end, Doane follows Gertrud Koch who states, "The aesthetically most advanced films...anticipate an expanded and radicalized notion of subjectivity...a type of subjectivity that transcends any abstract subject-object dichotomy; what is at stake is no longer the redemption of woman as subject over against the male conception of woman as object" (151). This is the path I too wish to follow. As I outlined in my earlier discussion of *The Spectator* and Lacanian theory, the categories of subject/object or spectator/spectacle are always unstable, never fixed. For Irigaray, "the issue is not one of elaborating a new theory of which woman would be the *subject* or the *object*, but of jamming the theoretical

machinery itself, of suspending its pretension to the production of a truth and of a meaning that are excessively univocal" (*This Sex* 78).

While we may concede that men and women realize their subjectivity to varying degrees and in different ways, to conceive of femininity as wholly lacking in the "necessary distance" which is the precondition for subjectivity is simply an untenable proposition. To be human is to be inevitably split between self and other; masking has the potential to further divide the self, and introduces the possibility of a certain plenitude into the construction of identity.

Fantomina has prompted analyses based on theories of masquerade and the claims made for its subversive potential. Craft-Fairchild evaluates Haywood's masquerade texts according to whether they "deconstruct ideologies of female identity" or simply engage in an unsatisfactory "transvestism" whereby the categories of masculinity and femininity are merely reversed rather than undermined. I will argue (as does Craft-Fairchild) that the heroine of *Fantomina*, even though she exploits her allure as a sexual object to excite Beauplaisir, troubles the conventional voyeuristic scenario in her use of disguise. Through disguise she not only acquires the position of spectator, she dramatizes "the sexual mobility [which] would seem to be a distinguishing feature of



femininity in its cultural construction" (Doane, *Film* 81).

In *Fantomina*, female identity is a performance, and the theatrical motif is evoked quite explicitly. The heroine dupes Beauplaisir because she is supremely adept at the "Art of Feigning." The narrator wonders at her abilities as an actress:

she had the Power of putting on almost what Face she pleas'd, and knew so exactly how to form her Behaviour to the Character she represented, that all the Comedians at both Play-houses are infinitely short of her Performances: She could vary her very Glances, tune her Voice to Accents the most different imaginable from those in which she spoke when she appear'd herself. (276)

The story begins, appropriately, at the theatre, where spectatorship takes place on two levels -- the theatrical performance itself and the social imperative of seeing and being seen which the theatre fulfills. The actual play itself is irrelevant in this instance, and no textual reference is given. The protagonist, known at this point simply as Lady --, watches another, more intriguing performance. Observing a number of gentlemen engaged with a woman who "by her Air and Manner" is easily recognized as a prostitute, she wonders at men's unaccountable fascination with them: "the longer she reflected on it, the greater was her Wonder, that Men, some of whom she knew were accounted to have Wit, should have Tastes

so very depraved" (2-3). Surely men's fascination is not all that inexplicable, and there is another, more plausible reason for her interest in sexually experienced women. To learn how prostitutes are addressed, the heroine becomes Fantomina, a "Town-Mistress," in order to indulge "a little Whim...having at that Time no other Aim, than the Gratification of an innocent Curiosity" (259-260). In Haywood, however, curiosity is rarely "innocent." Fantomina's interest, as the text will bear out, is sexual. Her disguise, we suspect, is an unconscious attempt to acquire sexual knowledge, in particular, to acquaint herself with male desire. Haywood, most often read as a writer whose major themes focus primarily on issues related to women, regards male sexual behaviour as fundamental to female concerns. As a result, male sexuality is a consistent object of inquiry in her work.<sup>6</sup> By subjecting her male characters to scrutiny, Haywood also effectively objectifies them, creating for her female readers a critical subject position to occupy.

Fantomina's first foray into her exploration of masculine desire brings a surprising revelation -- she discovers the freedom from social constraint her new identity brings. Returning to the theatre, she is addressed by Beauplaisir, someone "she had often seen...in the Drawing-Room, [and] had talk'd with." Their conversation then, however,

had been restrained and polite because "her Quality and reputed Virtue kept him from using her with that Freedom she now expected he wou'd do." As a prostitute, Fantomina is liberated from the restraint modesty places on female expression. In her new character she finds a greater scope for her wit and "found a vast deal of Pleasure in conversing with [Beauplaisir] in [a] free and unrestrain'd Manner" (260-1). In throwing off "her sex's Modesty," she also dispenses with the need to govern her speech. Here, Haywood makes the conventional link between women's speech and their sexuality. Sexual and verbal looseness are linked because the body and access to discourse are the two main sites of women's oppression.

Richard Allestree's treatise on female virtue, *The Ladies Calling* (1673), begins with a discourse on modesty, a quality essential to women because it "guides and regulates the whole behaviour, checks and controls all rude exorbitances, and is the great civilizer of conversations." Modesty governs comportment, demeanor, dress and expression. Opposed to all forms of boldness or forwardness, modesty, in particular, governs female speech by refining language, tuning and modulating the voice, and excluding "unhandsome earnestness or loudness of Discourse." Because women have a tendency for "loquacity," it restrains

"excessive talkativeness" (5-7). Modesty, then, ensures self-censorship in significant areas of female behaviour: sexuality, comportment and speech. Fantomina, however, can dispense with modesty, it being a liability for a prostitute, and is relieved from the need for strict self-government.

Although she enjoys this new-found freedom of expression, Fantomina's adventure inevitably places her in a compromising situation. Fully convinced she is a prostitute, Beauplaisir expects to make his purchase, his only concern being that she may be "one of a superior Rank" (as indeed she is), and he might not have "Money enough to reach her Price, about him" (264). Fantomina manages to postpone temporarily the loss of her chastity; torn between her attraction to Beauplaisir and concern for her honour, she desires, more than anything else, the social and linguistic freedom she experiences in her character as a "Town-Mistress." This desire proves irresistible and "not all the Admonitions of her Discretion were effectual to oblige her to deny laying hold of that which offer'd itself the next Night." Her inexperience leads her to believe that the principle of virtue itself is sufficient protection against both Beauplaisir's demands and her own desire. Further, she has rather fanciful notions of the strength of her position. She imagines

"a world of Satisfaction...in observing the surprise he would be in to find himself refused by a Woman, who he supposed granted her Favours without Exception" (258-9).<sup>7</sup> This interesting but unlikely fantasy raises questions regarding the nature of Fantomina's desire: is it sexual experience she seeks? does she hope to dominate Beauplaisir or explore the potential of her power? is the exercise of power a vital element of her sexuality? At present, the exact nature of her desire remains ill-defined:

Strange and unaccountable were the Whimsies she  
was possess'd of,--wild and incoherent her  
Desires,--unfix'd and undetermin'd her Resolutions,  
but in that of seeing Beauplaisir in the Manner she  
had lately done. (259)<sup>8</sup>

Only the object of her desire is fixed; unable to resist the sight of Beauplaisir, she gives little thought to the consequences of this risky adventure.

When Beauplaisir insists on satisfaction, the description of the sexual encounter is conventional, remaining entirely within the economy of male dominance and female submission: "*He* was bold;--he was resolute: *She* fearful,--confus'd, altogether unprepar'd to resist in such Encounters, and rendered more so, by the extreme Liking she had to him" (264). Fantomina contemplates revealing her identity to save herself but fears "being expos'd, and the whole Affair made a Theme for

publick Ridicule" (264). Fantomina's fear of becoming the subject of "Town-Talk" is in keeping with Haywood's attention to the necessary boundary between public and private life. The fear of public exposure, of one's private transgressions coming to the light of the public eye, is an important theme in *Fantomina* and in Haywood's scandal chronicles especially. Fantomina succumbs to Beauplaisir (not without a secret desire to do so) rather than risk being exposed to public scrutiny, and by keeping her identity concealed, creates the means of securing her reputation. Taking separate lodgings which will be the place of their meetings, she orders everything "at this Home for the Security of her Reputation" (263).<sup>9</sup> Her strategy combines secrecy and disguise: "she preserved an Oeconomy in the Management of this Intrigue, beyond what almost any Woman but herself ever did: In the first place, by making no Person in the World a Confident in it; and in the next, in concealing from Beauplaisir himself the Knowledge who she was" (268).

Disguise, secrecy, private and public identities, all are involved in Fantomina's manipulation of the scopic world. By creating an alternate self, and, specifically, one whose sexual role is visibly clear, Fantomina satisfies the impulses of private (sexual) life and the demands of public reputation. The prostitute's appearance is coded in order that

she be seen and her profession immediately recognized. Thus, she employs a range of visual signs (sartorial, "Air and Manner" etc.) in order to communicate her role as a purveyor of sex. With her use of disguise and role-playing, Fantomina exploits the hierarchy of the sexual gaze, creating in her role as a prostitute *the* female sexual object to attract the male look. In constructing an alternate and explicitly sexual identity, she has created the means by which she can exist as a sexual woman without compromising her public self.

Fantomina's disguise also protects her from the likely outcome of this affair: should Beauplaisir become "satiated, like other Men...the Intrigue being a secret, [her] Disgrace will be so too" (268). She hopes to avoid the shame of being sexually used and thrown off, a concern which arises when a woman's primary value is her ability to create and sustain male desire. "I shall hear no Whispers as I pass,--She is forsaken:--The odious word *forsaken* will never wound my Ears" (268). It is understandable that considerable anxiety attends the fate of becoming a cast-off mistress - an outcome which incurs contempt and the malicious talk that Fantomina fears. Determined not to be yet another seduced and abandoned woman, and clearly conscious of the power politics involved in sexual relations, Fantomina hopes to best Beauplaisir:

It will not be even in the Power of my Undoer himself  
to triumph over me; and while he laughs at, and  
perhaps despises the fond, the yielding Fantomina, he  
will revere and esteem the virtuous, the reserv'd Lady.  
(268)

Her desire for power cannot be separated from her desire for sex.

Fantomina articulates most explicitly Haywood's awareness of the relationship between sex and power, and promotes the mutability of female identity as the most effective means for women to achieve a dominant position in sexual/specular relations.

The narrator commends Fantomina for the intelligence and foresight she demonstrates in protecting her public self, but speaks of a blindness regarding her private worth, a worth based on virtue.

She had Discernment to foresee, and avoid all those  
ills which might attend the Loss of her *Reputation*, but  
was wholly blind to those of the Ruin of her *Virtue*.  
(263)<sup>10</sup>

The narrator's remarks draw on the tropes of vision associated with rational powers -- discernment, foresight, or blindness. However, in this instance, Fantomina's mental abilities are regarded ambivalently because while her powers of sight indicate she has appropriated a subject position, the narrator also considers her to be blind to her true interest and self-worth. That the narrator does not consistently condemn



Fantomina's actions makes it difficult to know how seriously we are to consider this criticism; the defense of virtue may be an imperative that must be fulfilled, but it is not a preoccupation in Haywood.

Furthermore, Fantomina's skillful management of her specular role continues to be valorized in the text as she successfully exploits her facility with disguise and performance to manipulate Beauplaisir.

Inevitably, he tires of Fantomina: Beauplaisir "varied not so much from his Sex as to be able to prolong Desire, to any great Length after Possession: The rifled Charms of *Fantomina* soon lost their Poinancy, and grew tasteless and insipid" (269). Fantomina's "charms" are "rifled" or used up, even spoiled. To rifle is to "despoil, plunder, or rob (a person) in a thorough fashion," "to ransack or search," or "to despoil or strip bare of something." To be rifled is to be "disordered, disarranged, ruffled" (OED). The term "rifled" is a telling one in a sexual context. Conveying the sense of being gone through, penetrated, used up and then dispensed with, it exactly conveys Haywood's view of the acquisition and consumption pattern of masculine desire, and the resulting de-composition of the female body. Beauplaisir found what he was looking for, consumed it and ended with repletion and boredom. Here, sexuality is an appetite akin to hunger: Fantomina's "charms"

have not only been thoroughly "ransacked," they are now "tastless" and "insipid." What once had "poinancy" (like a sauce) has become bland to Beauplaisir's appetite. And one doesn't rifle through something endlessly - the search complete, one moves on. To sustain male desire, a new object must take the place of an old. Female desire, Haywood argues, can be sustained by the "Impatiences" and "Longings" of a single lover. Fantomina wants to be desired and possessed over and over again, but only by Beauplaisir. According to Haywood's model, variety and multiplicity cannot figure in feminine desire if it is to receive a sympathetic treatment. If women do embrace sexual variety, it is a sign of an unacceptable sexual depravity that mimics male sexual behaviour. Promiscuous women such as Gloatitia or Flirtillaria in Hayood's *Memoirs of a Certain Island*, are condemned. Fantomina does not belong in this category, despite being attracted to the prostitute's sexual and linguistic freedom, because she loves and is faithful to Beauplaisir. She is not motivated purely by a sexual appetite: "With her Sex's Modesty, she had not also thrown off another Virtue equally valuable, tho' generally unfortunate, *Constancy*: She loved *Beauplaisir*, it was only he whose Solicitations could give her Pleasure" (270). Women embrace sameness, men difference. It is a description whose boundaries are, indeed, rigid,

but to distinguish Fantomina from an actual prostitute, Haywood must retain at least one feminine virtue associated with sexuality - if not modesty, then the "equally valuable" constancy. A less fortunate virtue, however, because it is unlikely to be reciprocated.

Beauplaisir, as his name suggests, belongs to that category of male character (like D'Elmont) who considers love an amorous amusement. In keeping with his pleasure-seeking character, he goes off to enjoy the season at Bath, and Fantomina, instead of repining, follows him and constructs a new disguise in order that she may be again 'seduced'.

Her Design was once more to engage him, to hear him sigh, to see him languish, to feel the strenuous Pressures of his eager Arms, to be compelled, to be sweetly forced to what she wished with equal Ardour, was what she wanted. (270)

Modern critics may find Fantomina's sexuality alarming in its perpetuation of dominance/submission patterns of desire. For Bowers, the women of amatory fiction

consistently define and act out their desire according to the force-oriented ethic of the Augustan rake. Within such a framework, representations of female sexuality fail to exemplify a positively or uniquely female form of sexual desire, though they do succeed in creating a space for such representation. Even the most transgressive scenes, then, function in

contradictory ways, at once revolutionary and conventional: they show women exercising sexual desire, and at the same time bolster phallogentric patterns of sexual dominance. The co-optation of female sexuality by established sex-as-force systems points to the pervasive masculinist orientation at work in these texts written by and for women. (57)

Technically Bowers is correct, but her disappointment in amatory fiction's representations of sexuality is somewhat misplaced, and there are a number of qualifications that must be made in response to her criticism. As Nancy K. Miller notes, a writer's feminism is a product of her age (*Subject to Change* 127). But beyond that, Bowers' criticism suggests that to be considered feminist or progressive, women's texts must explore new models of feminine desire that are not based on "sex-as-force." Moreover, implicit in her criticism is the assumption that this phallogentric model is no longer relevant. While conceptions of heterosexual desire may now be more varied, the continued popularity of romance texts that include the "sex-as-force" model in female fantasy demonstrates that dominance and submission patterns of desire continue to hold erotic appeal for women readers. In terms of representation, women are, more than ever before, objectified in the visible world. Modern visual technologies of the entertainment and advertising industries ensure that mass-produced, sexually provocative

images of women proliferate in the culture of consumer capitalism. It is ever more difficult to liberate women from the seductive hold these images have over them, in their promise of creating desirability. Given this, Bowers at the very least expects too much of eighteenth-century amatory fiction's ability to imagine new and liberating sexual realities for women. Furthermore, Bowers' response does not take into account the difficulty of discovering what a female sexuality, divorced from a masculine sexual economy, might actually look like. Catherine MacKinnon underscores this problem when she defines woman as

a being who identifies and is identified as one whose sexuality exists for someone else, who is socially male. Women's sexuality is the capacity to arouse desire in that someone. If what is sexual about woman is what the male point of view requires for excitement, have male requirements so usurped its terms as to have become them? Considering women's sexuality in this way forces confrontation with whether there is any such thing. Is women's sexuality its absence? (245)

The answer we get from *Fantomina* is that female sexuality is performance, which does not necessarily imply "absence." A simple reversal of the "sex-as-force" model, putting women "on top," was not acceptable to Haywood.<sup>11</sup> Female characters who imitate the acquisition and consumption pattern of male desire are castigated. She insisted on women's moral superiority in sexual relations -- their constancy, first of

all, and their disavowal of male forms of sexual aggression. In the case of Fantomina, she describes the potentially complex and ambiguous nature of female desire, a vision of female sexuality that both contains and undermines the male economy of desire.

It is inadequate to conclude, therefore, that Fantomina merely wants to be "sweetly forced." That almost oxymoronic phrase hints at the possibility that her sexuality is expressed through charade itself. Her pretended submission to Beauplaisir's urgent demands conceals from him an active desire that must remain undefined and unarticulated in order for her to retain control over his desire.

At Bath, Fantomina poses as the maid Celia and enters service where Beauplaisir lodges. Her use of disguise satisfies both her desire for the *same* object and Beauplaisir's desire for a *new* one. As Celia she dresses in

a round-ear'd Cap, a short red Petticoat, and a little Jacket of grey Stuff, all the rest of her Accoutrements were answerable to these, and join'd with a broad Country Dialect, a rude unpolished Air, which she, having been bred in these Parts, knew very well how to imitate, with her Hair and Eye-brows black'd, made it impossible for her to be known, or taken for any other than what she seem'd. (270)

Not only her appearance (a model for Pamela, perhaps) deceives

Beauplaisir; she can also readily adopt the behaviour expected of a servant. Beauplaisir alters his approach as well, and suits his sexual advances to her status as a maid. "Fir'd with the first Sight of her" he "catch'd her by the pretty Leg" (271). Then "pulling her gently to him," asks her

how long she had been at Service? -- How many  
Sweethearts she had? If she had ever been in Love?  
and many other such Questions, befitting one of the  
Degree she appeared to be. (271)

Condescending to one he believes naive and simple, Beauplaisir also assumes that Celia, because she is a servant, is sexually available for him. Indeed, she counts upon this assumption. As a maid, Celia knows she will be accosted by the men of the house, and is pleased when she learns that other than Beauplaisir, only a rheumatic old gentleman lives there. Thus, "she was in no Apprehensions of any amorous Violence, but where she wish'd to find it" (271).<sup>12</sup> To describe the 'seduction' scene itself Haywood slips into the rhetoric of romance:

he call'd her Angel, cherubim, swore he must enjoy  
her, though Death were to be the Consequence,  
devour'd her Lips, her Breasts with greedy Kisses, held  
to his burning Bosom her half-yielding, half-reluctant  
Body, nor suffer'd her to get loose till he had ravaged  
all, and glutted each rapacious Sense. (271-272)

In keeping with Celia's position as a servant, he gives her "a handsome

Sum of Gold." Ironically, as a prostitute she had refused Beauplaisir's money, but as Celia she cannot without arousing suspicion. In taking it she "cry'd, O Law, Sir! what must I do for all this?" (272). Completely fooled, Beauplaisir laughs at her "simplicity": he, Celia and the reader know what she must do. The question is, in which role is she a prostitute -- Celia or Fantomina? Or, is there a significant difference? The manner in which Lady --- plays with identity not only draws upon sexual roles, but also underlines the relationship between sex, money, and power in all sexual relationships.

Wearied of Celia and Bath, Beauplaisir returns to London, and once again he is followed. To create a new sexual object for Beauplaisir, our unnamed heroine becomes the grieving Widow Bloomer:

The dress she had order'd to be made, was such as Widows wear in their first Mourning, which, together with the most afflicted and penitential Countenance that ever was seen, was no small Alteration to her who us'd to seem all Gaiety.--To add to this, her Hair, which she was accustom'd to wear very loose, both when Fantomina and Celia, was now ty'd back so strait, and her Pinnars coming so very forward, that there was none of it to be seen. (272)

Putting herself in Beauplaisir's path as he returns to London, she seeks assistance from him. She chooses a role not only with clear sexual associations, but one with a specific literary connection: Beauplaisir



wonders whether "the celebrated Story of the Ephesian Matron" might be applicable in this case.<sup>13</sup> This episode highlights not only our heroine's talents as an actress but also confirms Beauplaisir as an able performer, as he capably adapts his address to suit the object. The vulnerable Widow Bloomer presents a tale of financial distress: she seeks a place in Beauplaisir's carriage in order to prevent her brother-in-law from absconding to Holland with the little fortune her husband has left her. Gallant in his offers of assistance, he is also intent upon discovering whether "she who seem'd equally susceptible of *Sorrow*, might not also be so too of *Love*" (274). Approaching her with "Modesty and Respect" and "as though without Design," he introduces into the conversation "that Joy-giving Passion and soon discover'd that was indeed the Subject she was best pleas'd to be entertained with" (275). Rather than "urge his Passion directly," as he had with Fantomina and Celia, he tries a more oblique method: "by a thousand little softning Artifices, which he well knew how to use, gave her leave to guess he was enamour'd" (275). His strategy is to insinuate himself gradually, to watch her responses carefully, and gauge how far he may encroach. Arriving at the Inn he

declared himself somewhat more freely, and perceiving she did not resent it past Forgiveness, grew more encroaching still:--He now took the Liberty of kissing

away her Tears, and catching the Sighs as they issued from her Lips; telling her if Grief was infectious, he was resolv'd to have his Share; protesting he would gladly exchange Passions with her, and be content to bear her Load of *Sorrow*, if she would willingly ease the Burden of his *Love*. (275)

Beauplaisir's sympathetic language, less aggressive and erotically charged, is more acceptable to the sensibilities of a grieving widow. Representing himself as a fellow-sufferer, he seeks a mutual assistance, an exchange of sorrow and love. Haywood clearly has an ear for a wide range of seductive rhetoric.<sup>13</sup> Widow Bloomer is not, of course, beguiled by his persuasions -- like Celia, she awaits them. Believing he seduces and masters yet another woman, Beauplaisir cannot know the transparency of his strategy, and that it is he who has been seduced by an artful performance. The Widow Bloomer is careful to behave according to the "Character she had assumed." To avoid the impropriety of a hasty submission, she "counterfeited a Fainting," giving Beauplaisir the opportunity to carry her off to bed. In gratitude to her "kind Physician" she makes no attempt "to remove from the Posture he had put her in, without his Leave" (276). In this case the sexual scene is elided -- everything about the engagement is oblique, the language euphemistic. Beauplaisir is not a seducer but a physician, she not a victim but a

patient. The roles of doctor/patient are substituted for the more sexually explicit seducer/victim relationship in order to de-emphasize the sexual impropriety of the widow. However, it is noteworthy that what began, ostensibly, as a relationship of mutual assistance has quickly become hierarchical. As a widow, she cannot be seen to be sexually aggressive; to create the pretence of powerlessness she places Beauplaisir in the role of doctor, and, as his patient, passively submits to his ministrations. All of her transformations involve creating characters which have distinct sexual identities, and which are socially inferior to Beauplaisir. The characters the heroine adopts are from the lower social echelons -- prostitute, servant maid, and bourgeois widow. As a result, the role power plays in seduction is emphasized. For Beauplaisir, the seduction of women whom he believes are below his station is an affirmation of his greater social as well as sexual power. It is true, as Bowers argues, that, at least in terms of the seduction plot, sexual relationships are not conceived outside a dominant male/passive female structure.

Fantomina and Celia's language confirm it - they wish to be "sweetly forced," look for "amorous violence," and their bodies are "half-reluctant, half yielding." Yet what also emerges from our heroine's transformations is a potential ambiguity in the "sex-as-force" system. Can we still call it

force if it is a pretence? What Haywood creates in *Fantomina* might be more accurately described as a theatre of force where both sex and sexual identity are staged performances with all the ambiguity such play-acting suggests.

The link Haywood makes between theatrical performance and identity is similar to the Lacanian concept of the "screen." In Lacan's view, the human subject is split, broken up "in an extraordinary way, between its being and its semblance, between itself and that paper tiger it shows to the other" (107). The source of the semblance -- a "mask, a double, an envelope, a thrown-off skin" -- is the "screen," defined by Kaja Silverman as "the image or group of images through which identity is constituted" (75). The screen is that upon which are superimposed those cultural representations from which we draw our subjectivity; for Lacan, it is the subject in representation. Human agency involves the subject's capacity to manipulate this "semblance" or "mask":

Only the subject -- the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man -- is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it. How? Insofar as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. The screen is here the locus of mediation. (107)

Such a possibility of agency, states Silverman, "is clearly predicated upon a prior understanding of what it means to be imbricated within the field of vision" (75). The subject

who knows his or her necessary specularity [may] put "quotes" around the screen through an Irigayan mimicry, or even to hold out before him or herself a different screen, one which does not so much abolish as challenge what, taking a necessary license with Lacan's formulation by insisting upon its ideological grounding, I will call the dominant cultural screens. (75)

Fantomina engages in just this kind of play or manipulation of the "screen" as she assumes the various (though culturally limited) roles or masks available to her.<sup>14</sup> For Silverman, the *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*

provides one of those rare junctures within the Lacanian oeuvre where it becomes possible to impute to the subject some kind of agency, albeit one hedged about with all kinds of qualifications and limitations, not the least of which is the impossibility of that subject ever achieving either self-presence or "authenticity" (75).

What Beauplaisir and our protean heroine share is a facility for role-playing. Beauplaisir relies primarily upon his facility with language, selecting among various rhetorical styles to suit his present objectives (men's ability to make such a selection will be discussed in the following

chapter). Lady --'s talents lie not so much in discourse (although she can "tune her Voice to Accents the most different imaginable") as in the realm of vision, in her taking charge of her own image. Their sexual encounters are scripted, theatrical performances, consciously constructed. Their artfulness as actors is essential to the theatricality that pervades the text.<sup>15</sup> Dramatic irony is sustained throughout the story by the continued use of disguise and role-playing, and Haywood pays particular attention to the details of the heroine's costumes. Haywood makes clear connections between femininity, visuality and performance, and the variety of social and sexual roles that are available to women through performance.

Every feminine role the heroine of *Fantomina* chooses ensures she remains a sexual object that appeals to male erotic fantasy; indeed, she adopts sexual stereotypes specifically for this purpose. Each new identity may represent a new possibility for female subjectivity, but they are all variations on a single theme. Her strategy preserves the semblance of dominance and submission in sexual relations -- as an object (even a shifting, unstable one) she must maintain this structure. In *Fantomina*, female sexual desire, at least the 'performance' of it, resides in the role of object -- the one pursued, pressured and who

submits to urgent male desire. Furthermore, the various women she becomes all have much less social power than she possesses as an aristocratic woman. That Fantomina, Celia and Widow Bloomer are Beauplaisir's social inferiors appeals, no doubt, to his desire for power as well as sexual pleasure, if, indeed, they are distinct at all.<sup>16</sup> And yet, it is the heroine's aristocratic position which provides her with the autonomy and the means to indulge her penchant for masquerade. The specific roles she adopts cannot be the source of her power or her pleasure; her achievement lies in the effects of transformation itself. Theatricality is the most substantial and elemental feature of the heroine's sexuality: aroused not simply by the prospect of sexual surrender, the brilliance of her performances is also fundamental to her pleasure. And her genius in metamorphosis, even though designed to appeal to male fantasy, is thrilling because it is a sign of her *power* to transcend her role as spectacle and achieve the position of the one who sees. Fully aware that she is "imbricated within the field of vision," she protects the integrity of her own identity, appropriates the position of "Looker-on," and at the same time conceals her power to see behind her masks.<sup>17</sup> The limitations imposed by a "repertoire of images" which are historically determined may keep her within a restrictive sexual economy, but her

strategy is not without its compensations -- she, Lady --, secretly watches from without and controls its operation. As a result, she is able to bridge the divide between subject and object, to become both at once in a compelling and interesting way. Any objectification which takes place occurs upon the substitute identity; a form of displacement, it leaves the central identity intact and *observant*. As Craft-Fairchild argues, "Fantomina satisfies her own wishes at the same time as she destabilizes the gaze of her lover, refocusing his look upon her four intentionally manufactured selves" (61).

Lady --'s subjectivity embodies a paradox: she becomes a subject by embracing and intensifying her position and allure as a sexual object. The result of female masquerade is the collapse of the boundary between subject and object; by "jamming the theoretical machinery itself" as Irigaray recommends, the dichotomy cannot hold (78). And once Lady -- achieves the position of "Looker-on," who or what is the object of her sight? Who does she observe, we must say voyeuristically because her looking is concealed, at the end of her lens? And what, ultimately, is the objective of her looking - power, knowledge or pleasure?

That she seeks control over her sexual fate *and* dominance over Beauplaisir is made absolutely clear in the text. Arriving in London after



her escapade as the Widow Bloomer, she invites Beauplaisir to visit in two letters - one from her character as the Widow, the other from Fantomina, this last a "long letter of Complaint" charging him with cruelty for not writing to her during his absence. She receives two very different responses. He writes rapturously to the Widow: *"Never was Woman form'd to charm like you: Never did any look like you, -- write like you, -- bless like you; -- nor did ever Man adore as I do"* (277). Fantomina receives a more restrained answer: *"It was my Misfortune, not my Fault, that you were not persecuted every Post with a Declaration of my unchanging Passion; but I had unluckily forgot the name of the Woman at whose House you are..."* (278). The reader knows that an eager, assiduous lover would never have such a lapse in memory, and understands also that his excuse to postpone their meeting -- he is detained by "business" -- is a code for his lack of interest. Lady -- knows, however, that his "business" happens to be the Widow Bloomer.

Traitor! (*cry'd she*) as soon as she had read them, 'tis thus our silly, fond, believing Sex are serv'd when they put Faith in Man: So had I been deceiv'd and cheated had I like the rest believ'd, and sat down mourning in Absence, and vainly waiting recover'd Tendernesses.--How do some Women (*continued she*) make their Life a Hell, burning in fruitless Expectations, and dreaming out their Days in Hopes and Fears, then wake at last to all the Horror of

Despair? --But I have out-witted even the most subtle of the deceiving Kind, and while he thinks to fool me, is himself the only beguiled Person. (279)

Lady -- can now use her position as observer to become a theorist of masculinity. Beauplaisir stands exposed before her, his duplicity fully revealed by his own writing. Like the spy or satirist, she is aligned with the mechanisms of exposure. She has successfully, at least up to now, avoided it herself, and in the revelation of Beauplaisir's character, advanced her and the reader's education in male desire. A comparison of the differences between his behaviour to *Fantomina* and to the Widow Bloomer

led her again into Reflection on the Unaccountableness of Men's Fancies, who still prefer the last Conquest, only because it is the last.--Here was an evident Proof of it; for there could not be a Difference in Merit, because they were the same Person; but the Widow *Bloomer* was a more new Acquaintance than *Fantomina*, and therefore esteem'd more valuable. (279)

Not that she can avoid the charge of duplicity herself, but Haywood clearly commends her heroine's intelligence and rational self-control in this love affair. Unlike the usual abandoned heroine, she is not a victim who must love regardless of the consequence: "Knowledge of his Inconstancy and Levity of Nature kept her from having that real

Tenderness for him she would else have had" (279). The knowledge she acquires by penetrating Beauplaisir's deception is, given the difficult and contested terrain of sexual politics, significant. Armed with this knowledge she can make rational choices; she is not destined to love where she receives only ill treatment. She derives her position of dominance over Beauplaisir from her more complete knowledge; he is "beguiled" while she is enlightened. Her self-awareness, including an awareness of her "necessary specularity," arises from the detachment which comes from her double position as both a sexual object and a voyeur who watches from beyond the scene. The conscious manipulation of her specular image -- as a subject in and of representation -- produces her extreme self-consciousness. Consequently, she lacks the marks of sexual passion we usually find in Haywood. Unlike Amena, whose "spirits all dissolved, sunk in a lethargy of love" in D'Elmont's arms, Lady -- does not express the raptures of desire. In fact, her spirits are quite intact, her cognitive, discerning powers fully alert precisely because she is involved in a performance:

She could not forbear laughing heartily to think of the Tricks she had play'd him, and applauding her own Strength of Genius, and force of Resolution, which by such unthought of Ways could triumph over her Lover's Inconstancy, and render that very Temper,

which to other Women is the greatest Curse, a Means  
to make herself more bless'd. (285)

"Possession...abates the Vigour of Desire": this theory of desire, repeated so frequently in Haywood, applies normally to male patterns of consumption and satiation. Our heroine, who does not want "a cold, insipid, husband-like Lover," claims to have discovered a method of overcoming this inevitable consequence, ensuring she receives the proper marks of male desire: "by these Arts of passing on him as a new Mistress whenever the Ardour, which alone makes Love a Blessing, begins to diminish...I have him always raving, wild, impatient, longing, dying" (285). In *Fantomina*, all sex is theatre. And if the heroine's divided subjectivity precludes her from that moment, so dangerously achieved, of freedom from rational constraint and self-regard, there are compensations: neither does she suffer the usual consequences of female desire - rejection and despair. Instead, she has, among other pleasures, her laughter.

Not only does Lady -- avoid abandonment; in her next and final metamorphosis she evades the dominating male gaze entirely, while subjecting Beauplaisir to the discomforts of being the object of someone's unhindered and unobstructed looking. In doing so she becomes a

threatening and anxiety-producing figure. In her final transformation as Incognita she wears an actual mask rather than a disguise. In keeping with the conventions of the role, she writes anonymously to confess her passion and, under a certain condition, invites him to meet her: "There is but one Thing in my Power to refuse you, which is the Knowledge of my Name, which believing the Sight of my Face will render no Secret, you must not take it ill that I conceal from you." Although reluctant to "raise" his "Curiosity" by revealing too much, she assures him that he need have "no Apprehensions of being impos'd on by a woman unworthy of [his] Regard" (283). Inevitably, Beauplaisir's curiosity is aroused, and his questions to her messenger are the "Testimonies of Curiosity" she has forbidden. Curiosity and its satisfaction are the central issues of this final metamorphosis. Initially, Beauplaisir is confident he will uncover the mystery, "not imagining this Incognita varied so much from the Generality of her Sex, as to be able to refuse the Knowledge of anything to the Man she lov'd with that Transcendency of Passion she profess'd" (284). His knowledge of femininity is incomplete, however: although "wild with Impatience for the Sight of a Face which belong'd to so exquisite a Body...not in the Height of all their mutual Raptures, could he prevail on her to satisfy his Curiosity with the Sight of her Face"

(285-286). For Lady --, to reveal her identity "would have been the ruin of her Passion," and she refuses to "gratify an Inquisitiveness which, in her Opinion, had no business with his Love" (286). What she does not realize is that the compulsion to see is the "Business" of Beauplaisir's love. Faced with this masked woman, the object or focus of Beauplaisir's desire shifts -- the satisfaction of his curiosity is now "what he so ardently desir'd" (287). Her failure to satisfy the overt specular aspects of his desire disconcerts and irritates him: "out of Humour at the Disappointment of his Curiosity...he resolv'd never to make a second Visit" (288). Female masquerade, is once again, a means of exposure: Incognita's mask reveals the voyeuristic impulse which lies at the heart of male sexuality.

Until now, women's capacity for disguise and performance have been effectively concealed from Beauplaisir. Now threatened, put "out of humour" by female masquerade, his reaction to this confrontation with an unknown aspect of femininity is not unlike Will's response to the Pict. In evading Beauplaisir's sight, Incognita dismantles the entire apparatus of specular relations which accord power to a dominant male look, and prescribe for women a proper role -- to exist fully revealed in the "field of the visible." But a frustration of his need for unobstructed vision does

not entirely explain Beauplaisir's discomfort and anger. This episode, more so than any other, challenges a masculine sexual economy based on acquisition, possession and consumption. In her previous disguises, Lady -- fulfilled this requirement for possession because she created fully realized sexual objects for her lover's satisfaction. That it is a fiction -- Beauplaisir possesses a prostitute, a servant and a widow but not the woman behind the disguise -- is immaterial. He can only enjoy Incognita in fragments, however, and has access only to her body; her mask produces a gap where the body is split off from a self which is embodied in the face, the eyes in particular. Incognita's presence as a subject can only be affirmed through the "Sight" of her face. His "wild" desire to see it is due to his need to possess her, but a woman so obviously disembodied, split between mind and body, cannot be easily consumed. As Craft-Fairchild puts it, "she maintains the psychic distance necessary to avoid objectification by repeatedly denying Beauplaisir 'the Sight of her Face' -- the phrase is repeated over and over" (66). The split that Lady -- has been creating all along between her subjectivity (her identity) and her body as merely a fetishized object is here made complete. The consequence of possession is, as Incognita well knows, satiation, which is why she cannot risk revealing herself; to do so may satisfy

Beauplaisir's "inquisitiveness" but would be the "ruin" of her passion.

The threat that Lady -- poses is perhaps more than her power to evade Beauplaisir's sight and dismantle the masculine sexual gaze. In becoming invisible, she becomes nothing, says nothing of herself. This, according to Michele Montrelay, is the point: "what we must see is that the objective of...masquerade is to say nothing. Absolutely nothing" (239). The consequence of this "absolutely nothing" is that the heroine of *Fantomina* achieves the power of the look - a unidirectional seeing - that puts Beauplaisir at the focal point of her gaze. Although it is not clearly articulated in the text, he perhaps becomes vaguely aware that he alone is fully seen, and this, above all, produces his discomfort. The reader knows that he has been under scrutiny all along; Lady -- has always been watching him, distantly observing his 'impatiences,' 'longings,' and 'dyings,' recording for the female reader the essentials of masculine desire. It is this scrutiny that Beauplaisir may come to feel as an inevitable consequence of her invisibility.

Throughout the text, the narrator frequently looks ahead to the time when the heroine will regret these "whimsical Adventures." To a certain extent, *Fantomina* has been indulging in a fantasy of her own. Ultimately, she too is exposed and "undone" by that predictable



consequence of female sexuality, pregnancy, a sight and outcome which can not be hidden from her mother:

though she would easily have found Means to have skreen'd even this from the Knowledge of the World, had she been at liberty to have acted with the same unquestionable Authority over herself, as she did before the coming of her Mother, yet now all her Invention was at a Loss for a Strategem to impose on a Woman of her Penetration. (289)

Exposure visits Lady -- in the end because there is someone else watching; her mother has heard disturbing reports of her daughter's conduct. It seems she has not avoided public scrutiny after all, but it is not the pregnancy itself that undoes our heroine. Left to the "liberty" and "Authority over herself" to which she has grown accustomed, she could have dealt effectively with even this contingency; she might have removed to the country, and secretly given birth. But an accident she could not have foreseen unmasks her -- she goes into labour prematurely while attending a ball. It is, however, that fact of womanhood, pregnancy and childbirth, the "Consequences of her amorous Follies," which brings about her exposure, both to her mother and Beauplaisir, for her mother insists on knowing "whose Insinuations had drawn her to this Dishonour" (290).

Like many of Haywood's texts, *Fantomina* ends abruptly; the

heroine comes under the care of an Abbess, a friend of her mother's, and the women close ranks to deal with the "distracted Folly" of the wayward heroine. The narrator then concludes "thus ended an Intrigue, which, considering the time it lasted, was as full of Variety as any, perhaps, that many Ages has produced." Has this story, with its "Variety," been merely entertaining? The novel is not a cautionary tale, and there is a conspicuous lack of any moral discourse. The narrator's criticisms are usually confined to the heroine's propensity for hasty self-congratulation, which bespeaks a lack of prudence and foresight with regard to the likely outcome of her "whimsical Adventures." *Fantomina* is a critique of sexual relations, however, especially of "unaccountable" (irrational?) male desire. A connection is also made between a woman's effective manipulation of her "necessary specularity" and rationality, expressed through Lady --'s inability to love fully an unworthy object. More problematically, the novel is also prescriptive. Lady -- recommends her strategy to other women: "O that all neglected Wives, and fond abandon'd Nymphs would take this Method! -- Men would be caught in their own Snare, and have no Cause to scorn our easy, weeping, wailing Sex!" (285). This may be yet another element of whimsy; it can hardly be expected that all women would possess such extraordinary control over

their own images. The heroine's conviction, however, does push us to assess masquerade's capacity to enhance female agency. For Irigaray, mimicry involves the creation of another space, a psychic space that is an alternate location of female consciousness. "If women are such good mimics," she writes, "it is because they are not simply resorbed in this function. They also remain elsewhere" (*This Sex* 76). The construction of a place/space other than that which is culturally assigned to woman, other than the place of their objectification, is a strategy which in theoretical terms can provide a place for the female subject, a place from which to see. Its lack of any concrete and reliable material basis, however, raises doubts as to whether it is a source of significant, measurable power for women.

We must not forget that Lady --'s transformations are not solely the result of her talents as an actress, but of her wealth and autonomy. The psychic place she is able to create has its material parallel in the various places she rents for her amorous encounters with Beauplaisir; only a woman of means could unite the psychic and the material in this way.<sup>18</sup> Hence, certain qualifications attend the heroine's agency. What is clear in *Fantomina*, however, is the rejection of women's recourse to language as a means of dealing with a sexual economy which favours

male interests: "Complaints, Tears, Swoonings, and all the Extravagancies which Women make use of in such Cases, have little Prevailance over a Heart inclin'd to rove" (269).

Haywood's view that female language is inadequate, even useless in the face of male power is the subject of the following chapter on *The British Recluse; or, The Secret History of Cleomira, Supposed Dead* (1722). To a certain extent, I depart from the strict focus on specularly that has organized my discussion up until now to include issues of language and story-telling. I do so because the rejected woman, at least in the case of Cleomira, no longer sees or is seen by her lover. Unlike Alovisa, who, because she is married, can persistently struggle to place herself within D'Elmont's vision, Cleomira, believed dead by her lover, opts for invisibility. Initially, Cleomira comes to know herself as a desirable woman through her seducer's gaze; but the question of female identity is explored more fully through various tropes of the romance text, including those which apply to the romance heroine. More specifically, however, the rejected woman's "complaint" -- a narrative of the joy of sexual awakening and the betrayal and despair which follow abandonment -- this story and its telling come to figure the construction of the female subject.

### NOTES

1. Craft-Fairchild observes that "While Castle does not explicitly answer these questions, she implicitly does so by means of a quotation from Wycherly that immediately follows the second passage cited above: "A woman mask'd...is like a cover'd Dish, giv[ing] a Man curiosity, and appetite" (Castle 39 quoted in Craft-Fairchild ).
2. See Kathleen Woodward, "Youthfulness as a Masquerade," *Discourse* 11 (Fall-Winter 1988-89): 125, for an outline of the debate on the two theories of masquerade.
3. Doane begins her essay with a critique of Freud's introductory remarks to his lecture on "Femininity." Because women are the object of enquiry, they are excluded from the investigation: "to those of you who are women this will not apply-you are yourselves the problem" (22: 113). Doane also refers to Michele Montrelay's argument that the cultural designation of object to woman arises because unlike the man, she cannot displace her first object of desire, the mother, she must become it. See "Film and the Masquerade" 79.
4. Doane also considers the problem of the female look: "The difficulties in thinking female spectatorship demand consideration. After all, even if it is admitted that the woman is frequently the object of the voyeuristic or fetishistic gaze in the cinema, what is there to prevent her from reversing the relation and appropriating the gaze for her own pleasure? Precisely the fact that the reversal itself remains locked within the same logic. The male striptease, the gigolo -- both inevitably signify the mechanism of reversal itself, constituting themselves as aberrations whose acknowledgement simply reinforces the dominant system of aligning sexual difference with a subject/object dichotomy. And an essential attribute of that dominant system is the matching of male subjectivity with the agency of the look" ("Film and the Masquerade" 77).
5. Doane continues to valorize masquerade in that it is a "glitch"

in the psychoanalytic system. "What I was searching for, in the 1982 essay, was a contradiction internal to the psychoanalytic account of femininity. Masquerade seems to provide that contradiction insofar as it attributes to the women the distance, the alienation, and divisiveness of self (which is constitutive of subjectivity in psychoanalysis) rather than the closeness and excessive presence which are the logical outcome of the psychoanalytic drama of sexualized linguistic difference...Femininity is fundamentally, for Riviere, the play of masks. Yet, there is no censure involved in claiming that the woman hides behind the mask when the mask is all there is -- it conceals only an absence of "pure" or "real" femininity. Indeed, the assumption of a mask conveys more of the "truth" of sexuality, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, than any recourse to "being" or "essence" ("Masquerade Reconsidered" 46-7).

6. An inquiry that, as Toni O'Shaughnessy Bowers points out in her essay "Sex Lies and Invisibility: Amatory Fiction from the Restoration to Mid-Century," educates women in the dangerous ways of men (52).
7. Mispagination; correct page numbers are 262-3.
8. Mispagination; correct page number is 263.
9. Mispagination; correct page number is 267.
10. Mispagination; correct page number is 267
11. Haywood describes an egalitarian model where neither partner is dominant in the relationship of Camilla and Frankville in *Love in Excess*.
12. The assumed sexual availability of the female servant underpins *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Pamela*. With regard to the latter, see Margaret Ann Doody's remarks on the sexual privileges of upper class men in *A Natural Passion* 73.
13. Haywood pays close attention to the language of seduction.

Beauplaisir is a particularly good example of the rake who can adjust his language to suit various types of women. When approaching Fantomina he had begun his address with the "usual Salutations of her...Profession, as, *Are you engag'd, Madam? – Will you permit me to wait on you home after the Play? – By Heaven you are a fine Girl! – How long have you us'd this House?*". However, when he discovers that she "had a Turn of Wit and a genteel Manner in her Raillery," he "chang'd the Form of his Conversation, and shew'd her it was not because he understood no better, that he had made use of Expressions so little polite" (261). Beauplaisir's abilities are a sign not only of his sexual objectives, but also of his class, education, and sophistication.

14. Lacan's thought is similar to the 'world as a stage' metaphor, hardly a new idea. For a more literary and historical (less theoretical) treatment of this idea, see David Marshall's *The Figure of Theatre*.
15. Haywood began her career in 1715 as an actress at Smock Alley in Dublin. She remained there for two years before returning to London where she began to write. Following her phenomenally successful debut as an author with *Love in Excess*, she published a play, *The Fair Captive*, in 1721. Two other plays followed: *A Wife to be Lett* in 1723, in which she acted the part of Mrs. Graspall, and *Frederick Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburg* in 1729. The 1730's were a busy time for her in the theatre as an actress and a writer. She acted the part of Briseis in *The Rival Father*, a play by William Hatchett, a man assumed by some critics to be her lover. In 1732 she acted the part of Lady Flame in *The Blazing Comet*, and in 1733 she and William Hatchett collaborated on *The Opera of Operas* or *Tom Thumb the Great*, a musical adaption of Fielding's *The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*. The music was by Thomas Arne. In 1736 she played the part of Mrs. Arden in *Arden of Feversham*. In 1737 she was First Queen Incog. in *A Rehearsal of Kings*, a play by William Hatchett. In the same year she performed in two plays by Henry Fielding: she was Mrs. Screen in *The Historical Register*, and was the Muse in *Eurydice Hiss'd*. Marcia Heinemann

reviews Haywood's theatre career, including her professional relationship with Henry Fielding, in "Eliza Haywood's Career in the Theatre." For Haywood's supposed relationship with William Hatchett see Thomas Lockwood's "William Hatchett, *A Rehearsal of Kings* (1737), and the Panton Street Puppet Show (1748)," and his "Eliza Haywood in 1749: *Dalinda*, and her Pamphlet on the Pretender." The evidence for this relationship comes primarily from Erskine Baker's statement that Hatchett and Haywood lived together "upon terms of friendship." Such a conclusion, I think, is doubtful.

16. For Craft-Fairchild, the lower social status of the prostitute, maid and widow "serve to mask Fantomina's ultimate control in order to make her an acceptable object for Beauplaisir's desire" (62).
17. Fantomina "eludes the male gaze while retaining her own "Power of seeing"...By not letting the man into the secret of what her costume will be, the woman acquires the ability to see rather than be seen" (Craft-Fairchild 65).
18. Like Alovisa, Lady -- enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy. She is wealthy and "having no body in Town, at that Time, to whom she was oblig'd to be accountable for her Actions, did in every thing as her Inclinations or Humours render'd most agreeable to her" (260).



## CHAPTER 4

### **FROM IMAGE TO TEXT: *THE BRITISH RECLUSE*; OR, *THE SECRET HISTORY OF CLEOMIRA, SUPPOSED DEAD***

The relationship between romance texts and female subjectivity is first explored by Haywood in *Love in Excess*. D'Elmont works assiduously to satisfy his desire to possess Melliora. This involves, first of all, ensuring that Melliora fulfills her function as a romance heroine. When he sees her from the window and rushes down to the garden, the Count is surprised to find Melliora reading the works of Fontenelle -- "Philosophy, Madam, at your age" he says quizzically -- he is certain that if the author had ever seen Melliora, he would "write of nothing else but Love and Her" (74). Melliora ought to be the romantic subject (and object) of any author's text, as she is for D'Elmont. Melliora, however, is of another mind. She would be "little beholden to Nature" for her "Charms" if they deprived her of the improvements of reading. Melliora resists the role of romance heroine, preferring to be another kind of subject, one who reads to educate herself, who has other than sexual

aims. Yet she does love D'Elmont, and her resistance to his attempts to define her is also motivated by the need to inhibit his sexual advances. Melliora's identity -- what kind of heroine she is to be -- is a central question of the novel, as is whether the romance text can shape female subjectivity. At issue is Melliora's sexual identity: was she "born only to create Desire, [and] not be susceptible of it herself?" (82). This is what D'Elmont must know, yet Melliora's serious reading interferes with his attempt to define her solely as an object of desire. Romantic discourse, on the other hand, or, more specifically, Melliora's response to it, is another means of discovery.

One evening, some verses on love are read aloud to entertain the company gathered together. Melliora uses the opportunity to communicate a private message to D'Elmont. To his dismay, she argues "against the giving way to Love, and the Danger of all softening Amusements." Melliora's strategy is to conceal her own desire and to discourage the Count's; recognizing the signal she is sending, he is "alarm'd to see her appear so much in earnest" (82). Melliora has succeeded in persuading the group that, although she may look like a romance heroine, "born to create Desire," sexual desire in her has been effectively suppressed. Prevented from confuting her on this occasion by

the presence of his wife, he soon has another opportunity when he once again interrupts Melliora's reading and her solitude. Entering her bedroom:

He found her lying on a Couch in a most charming Dishabille; she had but newly come from bathing, and her Hair unbraided, hung down about her shoulders with a Negligence more beautiful than all the Aids of Art could form in the most exact Decorum of Dress; part of it fell upon her Neck and Breast, and with its lovely Shadiness, being of a delicate dark Brown, set off to vast Advantage the matchless Whiteness of her Skin: Her Gown and the rest of her Garments were white, and all ungirt, and loosely flowing, discover'd a thousand Beauties, which modish Formalities conceal. A Book lay open by her, on which she had reclin'd her Head. (83)

This time D'Elmont is happier with her choice, Ovid's *Epistles*, believing a discourse of love more conducive to his sexual aims. The description of Melliora, complete in communicating her erotic appeal and availability, affirms her as, indeed, "born to create Desire." That she is "newly come from bathing" signals her sexual readiness,<sup>1</sup> and, in *deshabille*, her body's allure is revealed and made accessible. He chides her for indulging in "so dangerous an Amusement" as writings which she had condemned earlier. Melliora is "disorder'd" but retorts that she sees no danger for herself: her retired way of living has secured her "from any Pre-possession, without which, Ovid's Art is vain" (83). But D'Elmont

catches her in a contradiction - she had previously argued that amorous texts are "Preparatives to Love, and by their softening Influence, melted the Soul, and made it fit for amorous Impressions" (84). The argument turns on the power of amorous discourse to create desiring subjects -- to make lovers out of readers.<sup>2</sup> Melliora is disordered by this confrontation with D'Elmont, but she is not without assistance from the same text he regards as a sign of her susceptibility to desire. "Endeavouring to compose herself," Melliora rejoins that she will "retain in Memory more of the misfortunes that attended the Passion of Sappho, than the tender, tho' never so elegant, Expressions it produced" (84). For Melliora, Ovid's popular epistles serve as cautionary tales. Created as an eroticized image, her desirability coded as passive and sexually accessible, she qualifies as a romance heroine. Yet in remembering Sappho, Melliora shows her awareness of the dangers of this role. Any power the romance heroine has lies in her ability to incite desire in men. Such images are dangerous models with which to identify; certain romance texts, such as the Ovidian epistle, may offer a means of resistance to these images in that they demystify such a view of female sexual power -- the abandoned woman knows only too well her powerlessness.

For some critics, the eroticism of Haywood's writing has

provided cause to dismiss her didactic purpose -- to warn of "how dangerous it is to give way to Passion" (*Lasselia iv*). Her texts are, as Whicher so neatly summed them up, "less successful illustrations of fiction made didactic, than of didacticism dissolved and quite forgot in fictions" (18). Any cautionary force of her work is, apparently, overwhelmed by its pornographic effects. Yet in the debate between D'Elmont and Melliora as to whether romances are "Preparatives to Love" or awful warnings, Haywood shows that she was already ahead of her critics. Although in typical Haywoodian fashion, the question is never clearly settled, Haywood experiments with amatory discourse, explores the various female subject positions which are embedded in the romance text, and encourages us to consider whether the abandoned woman's lament is a discourse that can be appropriated by women, as writers and readers, to create a different female subject. At the heart of the matter is the rhetorical power of language itself, a power that Haywood knew to be gendered and unequal.

In the end, it is not through literature that Melliora's passion is confirmed -- her own unconscious reveals it fully in yet another erotic spectacle. When D'Elmont secretly enters her room at night and secretly watches her sleeping, with the bed clothes "thrust down...so far that all

the Beauties of her Neck and Breast appear'd to View," her "resistless Posture...rous'd all that was honourable in him" (93). His awareness of Melliora's vulnerability makes D'Elmont reluctant to pursue his advantage, but in her sleeping state Melliora's unconscious speaks: "Desire, with watchful Diligence repell'd, returns with greater violence in unguarded Sleep, and overthrows the vain Efforts of day" (93-4). And when Melliora cries out in her dream, "O! D'Elmont, cease, cease to charm, to such a Height! -- Life cannot bear these Raptures!...O! too, too lovely Count -- Extatick Ruiner!", D'Elmont learns all he needs to know to justify proceeding with her rape (94). Fortunately, he is interrupted by a knock on the door, but not before Melliora's private thoughts are revealed to him, a revelation made possible by D'Elmont's persistent voyeurism.

Although Melliora's story is not one of seduction and betrayal, her trials as a romance heroine are not over: D'Elmont will again attempt to rape her, she is kidnapped by another desperate would-be lover, and orchestrates the novel's resolution -- including her own marriage to D'Elmont who has been made fit to be her husband through a process of suffering and self-restraint. But the abandoned and despairing woman is a familiar figure in Haywood; like many other

eighteenth-century writers, she was attracted to Ovid's tales of abandoned women and their lament.<sup>3</sup> The literature of abandonment, although begun by Ovid, was given more contemporary expression by the *Lettres Portugaises* (1669). These letters were believed to be from a Portuguese nun, seduced and then abandoned by her lover.<sup>4</sup> In 1678 they were translated by Roger L'Estrange as *Five Love Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier* and became extremely popular: "generations of readers came to adore the nun, wept over her distress, and revered her letters as the most basic textbook of love" (Lipking, "Donna Abbandonata" 37). The other important text in the literature of thwarted female passion is, of course, the letters of Heloise and Abelard, translated into English in 1713 by John Hughes, and given poetic form by Pope in 1717 in his heroic epistle *Eloisa to Abelard*. It is within this tradition that we can situate Haywood's tales of seduction and betrayal. In *The British Recluse*, Haywood crafts her own discourse of abandonment through two separate forms: through letters from Cleomira to the "perfidious" Lysander, the man who has seduced and abandoned her, and through the telling of her story to Belinda, her fellow-sufferer in the pains of disappointed love.

Haywood opens the story, as she often does, with a general

truism which points to the basic didactic aim of the story. "Of all the *Foibles* Youth and Inexperience is liable to fall into," the narrator begins, "there is none, I think of more dangerous Consequence, than too easily giving Credit to what we hear." Language is suspect from the outset, having no definite, intrinsic connection with truth. "If we cou'd bring our selves to depend on nothing but what we had Proof for, what a world of Discontent shou'd we avoid!" (5). Yet for the desiring subject, linguistic ambiguity is not the primary problem. As *Melliora* states, "Pre-possession" is the indispensable factor, "without which, Ovid's Art is vain" (83). In Haywood, genuine passion cannot be created solely out of language; as I have argued above, desire is initially a visual experience which exists prior to the effects of language. But "Pre-possession" and language are both necessary to seduction:

The good Opinion which [love] naturally inspires, of the darling Object, makes it almost an Impossibility to suspect his Honour and Sincerity; and the Pleasure which arises from a Self-Assurance of the Truth of what we so eagerly desire, is too great for a young Heart, unaccustom'd to such struggles, to repel. (6)

If Haywood begins her story with a word to the (un)wise about a lover's rhetoric, she does not instill the same suspicion with regard to other forms of discourse in the novel. Although the reader is alerted to the



potentially dangerous effects of language, the language of the abandoned woman may be regarded as sincere. Indeed, the relationship between language and female subjectivity is one of the most significant and interesting elements of *The British Recluse*. Several themes converge in the story: the relationship between discourse and identity, especially how the female subject is created out of discourse, but also the effects of gender on language itself. Fundamental to the story is the heroine's struggle with her wish to be an object of desire, and the effort to re-create herself, through discourse, as a subject who renounces desire in order to reclaim her dignity.

From its inception *The British Recluse* self-consciously displays how a female subject is created out of the narrative act -- Cleomira is the subject of the story, she tells her own story, thus authorizing it, and the novel begins with Belinda's intense desire to know her story. At the boarding house where Belinda stays, she notices that a plate is taken away at every meal to some mysterious boarder who, never appearing in company, is known only as the "Recluse," and is the object of curiosity and enquiry to some gentlemen visitors. No one has yet been able to discover the reason for her solitude, but several speculations are offered to explain her retirement: one gentleman asserts "a very probable

Conjecture" -- "ill-requited Love" is the only possible explanation for "such an obstinate and peevish Resignation of all the Pleasure of Life"; a woman suggests that it is the "Effects of Grief" caused by the death of some dear relation; and another gentleman thinks the recluse hides herself because she is no longer a suitable object of desire: "I dare swear [she] is some withered Hag, past the Use of Pleasures, and keeps herself in private, lest her Countenance should terrify" (6-7). This list of possible identities are all partly true, even the last. For although Cleomira's face would not "terrify," her removal from the eye of the world signifies the renunciation of her identity as a desirable woman. Compelled by curiosity and an attraction for the recluse's style of living, Belinda seeks an introduction through the landlady. Although certain after their first meeting that "*Love* had been the sole Cause of [Cleomira's] Retirement...[Belinda] wou'd have given almost one of her Eyes, to have been let into the Secret of the whole Affair" (13-14). Belinda's desire to know is not disappointed: the remainder of the novel is taken up by the exchange of their stories. Cleomira tells of how she saw, fell in love with, and was seduced by Lysander. He rejected her by degrees; first through neglect, then affairs with other women, and finally by marrying a rich woman. Belinda, as it turns out, has been betrayed by the same man

under the pseudonym Sir Courtal. More fortunate than Cleomira, she was saved from the actual seduction when Worthy, the man who wished to marry her, interferes on her behalf. The two women commiserate together, decide to abandon society, and retire to the country.

Cleomira's sexual identity - her belief in herself as an attractive, desirable woman - is created out of Lysander's sexual gaze. The pleasure women derive from being the object of a lover's desiring look is one of the most pervasive themes in Haywood. Sometimes this concern is explored through the figure of the coquette who, with her "killing eyes," seeks to attract as many men as possible without returning a desiring look herself. In Cleomira, Haywood explores how female desire and sexual identity is constructed by the male gaze. Women are lured by the lover's desiring look because it sets their own desire in motion (this is not true of the coquette who is, paradoxically, asexual). Cleomira's subjectivity will develop and change throughout the narrative according to her status as the object of Lysander's desire. At their first meeting, he describes and evaluates her beauty:

how fortunate am I, who after having been in many  
Courts where I have seen Ladies who justly may be  
call'd beautiful, and since my Return home have met

with nothing that could bring me into good humour  
 with my Native Country, have now the Blessing of  
 beholding a Face, which not only sums up all the  
 different Lovelinesses of other Charmers, but has also  
 an immensely divine Treasure of its own!--Others may  
 move the Heart by slow degrees, and with some one  
 perfection captivate the Sense; but you have Graces  
 which strike the very Soul, and at first sight subdue  
 each Faculty! (20)

The seduction begins when he singles Cleomira out for his particular attention; she feels selected and flattered. But his real power lies in his capacity to fashion her as a sexual subject by affirming her beauty. In setting out her attractions before her, he acts like a mirror wherein she first sees herself as desirable. He presents himself as a person accustomed to foreign courts, and his ability to anatomize different kinds of desirable women marks him as a man of the world. Cleomira stands out in her native environment because she can be favourably compared to fashionable women on the continent; she sums up all others, yet is unique. Flattery in itself is an essential feature of the rhetoric of seduction, but his comparison of her to other women is especially insidious because it appeals to female competition for male attention - the reader already knows that Lysander could choose anyone.

Although the power of choice is clearly his, Lysander also uses another strategy to seduce Cleomira - his own country is tiresome and

dull compared to foreign courts. The portrait Haywood constructs is that of a bored, sophisticated, sexually experienced young nobleman who, in returning to his native country, seeks something (an amour perhaps) with which to amuse himself. The force of Cleomira's instant attraction to him appears irrational but it is typical of Haywood to write covertly of women's unconscious desire for sexual experience, and Lysander's worldliness is a trope for the sexual knowledge to which Cleomira finds herself drawn. Lysander quickly moves to a declaration of his passion in greatly heightened rhetoric. Cleomira is the "most Angelick," "most adorable" of her sex. His is not a "vulgar Passion" and she not a "vulgar Object." He, therefore, cannot wait on "the dull Formalities of Decorum" to express a feeling which "bursts out and blazes too fierce to be conceal'd" (21). Cleomira does not resist either his rhetoric or his tender pressing of her hand, but her willingness to allow a total stranger to make such a declaration of love to her is later felt as a "shock" to her modesty. She ought to have been offended by Lysander's aggression and the "complaisance" she had shown him causes her some anxiety. She has not acted in a forward manner, but understands that she is in danger of becoming sexually compromised through the force of her own desire.

When the lovers exchange letters, Lysander's is extravagant in its praise of the "Divine" Cleomira, and is consistent with the language of romance in its fusion of the religious and the sexual. He claims his "Zeal" is his only merit, and for the "Sin of his Temerity" he will purchase a pardon through years of faithful service. Cleomira's reply, restrained and self-effacing, obliquely invites further correspondence. She writes:

If Cleomira were half so worthy Adoration as Lysander truly is, she might, without any Difficulty, be brought to believe all you say to her: but, as I am sensible I have no other Graces than those your Fancy is pleased to bestow on me, you cannot blame me, if I am a little diffident of the Continuance of a Passion so weakly grounded. -- I shall not, however, desire you to desist giving me any farther Testimonies of it; because, as you say, while you are possess'd of it, Entreaties of that kind would be altogether unavailing. I think myself extremely obliged to you for the Caution with which your Letter was delivered; and if you favour me with any more, hope you will make use of the same.  
(25)

Clearly, she wishes to hear more. To be a product of Lysander's imagination is a source of pleasure for her because it satisfies the need to have her identity confirmed. Her diffidence, an acknowledgment that she is the mirror upon which he projects his own desire, would be a significant demystification of the libertine's rhetoric if it were real. Instead it is a moment where Cleomira desires her objectification. To

read her own desirability in his rhetoric, even if the image is merely a result of a lover's fertile imagination, is a temptation few of Haywood's female characters can resist.

Cleomira's ambiguous response also arises from her regard for modesty, which, as we know, prohibits any explicit expression of her own desire. Her language is moderate compared to Lysanders profuse rhetoric; his language is designed to be an outlet for his passion. When he exclaims "O give my impetuous Transports leave to vent themselves!," the verbal release he seeks prefigures the ultimate sexual release his seduction aims for. Cleomira's emotions do not really find expression in language until her sexual initiation is accomplished. Along with the release of her desire comes a verbal release which is quite the opposite of Lysander's. His language of seduction is a formal, scripted rhetoric which draws upon the stylistic conventions of courtly love for entirely mercenary purposes. Once he possesses Cleomira, his language becomes more moderate, and this restraint reaches a cool, aloof distance as he slowly rejects her. Cleomira will inevitably learn that Lysander's passion is insincere and self-seeking. When she does, her language acquires rhetorical strength as feelings of rage, despair, desire and loss overcome her. In the mean time, she fluctuates between anxiety and

excitement: she worries that her modesty has been compromised by her lack of self-control, yet relishes the thrill of being the object of Lysander's desire. Although, as she confesses to Belinda, engaging in such a correspondence made her uneasy, "the Glory...of appearing amiable in his Eyes, was more Happiness than all the World besides could give" (25). She has fully become Lysander's creation.

The consequence of Cleomira's seduction is, as we might expect, pregnancy. She removes to the country because she has become unacceptably conspicuous, no longer fit for the eyes of the world. This is a common result -- affairs consummated in the city often end in the country. Lysander has promised to wait on her, but, of course, he does not come, nor does he write. Cleomira has long suspected that his passion for her has ended, but now, with her pregnancy, she is desperate. In the letter she writes to "extort" an answer from him, she expresses the compelling mixture of desire and pathos that is a trademark of Haywood's own rhetoric. Cleomira uses a series of rhetorical questions to express both her disbelief that Lysander can be so cruel, and to construct him as he did her -- she represents his behaviour to him in a way that she hopes will shock him into an awareness of his obligations. Lysander is compared to Satan, the prototype of the



seducer, as he too has fallen from angel to fiend. She asks:

Have you with your Love thrown off all Pity too and  
Complaisance, that you vouchsafe not to condole, at  
least, the Ruins you have made?...Is it because I have  
forsook the Ties of Duty, Interest, Honour,--given up  
my Innocence,--my Peace, and everlasting Hopes, that  
you despise me?--Monster, for whom have I done this?  
(53)

Not only has Lysander been transformed from angel to monster, Cleomira also recreates herself as the 'I' of her subjectivity becomes more insistent. But now she is defined by all she has lost. The visibility she enjoyed under Lysander's desiring gaze is exchanged for the invisibility that is enjoined upon her following his rejection. The lament of the abandoned women makes possible a transition from spectacle to writing subject, a move from image to text, but the success of Cleomira's bid for verbal agency through a newly acquired discursive mode is uncertain at best. She will go on to threaten suicide, appeal to the remorse he will inevitably feel, remind him of the vengeance of heaven, and invoke the regard she assumes he must have for their unborn child. The mix of complex and simple sentences, the liberal use of dashes to create the sense of disruption, and the struggle to express rising emotions is in sharp contrast to Cleomira's former restrained and modulated prose where her meanings are suppressed under a veil of formality. Here her

anxiety and despair explode in language, and when she pleads "O ease me, - pity me, - write to me, - see me" she reaches an intensity of emotion that Haywood has made convincing. For a letter which represents a state of mind in emotional and psychic chaos, it is highly structured and persuasive, at least to the reader, if not to Lysander. He proves impervious to her constructions, and his response, which denies the image she creates, carries more weight with her than her own discourse.

Critics do not always regard this verbal and emotional intensity sympathetically, or take the lament of the abandoned woman seriously. Haywood's linguistic excesses have, in fact, frequently been met with contempt. For example, when discussing the amatory novella in his *Popular Fiction Before Richardson*, John Richetti selects *Lindamira* by ... as the best the genre had to offer. Here, Richetti claims, its (anonymous) author shows an admirable restraint in adapting the seventeenth-century heroic romance for an eighteenth-century audience, thus avoiding the extravagances associated with the romance. "The style is clear, agreeably unpretentious, and free of...heroic fustian." The heroine, a "rationalist" remarkable for her moderation, "bears up under amorous affliction without resorting to the extravagant and meretricious

rhetoric of the despairing maiden" (170). Clearly, an ideology of restraint is at work in the evaluation of this text. To value moderation over excess seems understandable enough -- the 'less is more' dictum has always had its proponents in matters of style and taste -- yet moderation, as a stylistic virtue, has little place in a discourse of abandonment. Certainly it could have limited appeal for Haywood: interested in many kinds of excess, she aimed for a pitch of emotional intensity for rhetorical and political purposes.<sup>5</sup> In her letter, Cleomira rages and despairs but, finally, becomes a suppliant. That a woman loses power once she grants the 'last favour' is not new, but Haywood's stylistic and rhetorical practices convey the sense that language, gender, and power are connected. Haywood's language of excess, and the discourse of abandonment in general, is in direct relation to women's lack of social power. Although Cleomira has found her voice, she has no real power to make Lysander behave with honour. Her language, now released, cannot have the effect she desires because she has no access to the material bases of power that would make good her language. The expression of emotion in such terms in the sign that she has lost the battle with Lysander.

Lysander himself articulates this most clearly. In his reponse to

another of Cleomira's pleading letters, he blames Cleomira's "Extravagance" for the change in his affections. Admitting that Cleomira's passionate discourse is ineffectual and cannot move him, he claims that it is, instead, the source of his estrangement: "Had your Passion, at least the Shew of it, been less violent, mine might have had a longer Continuance." Her letters are a "troublesome Importunity" that force explanations from him. These explanations are cruel; now that he is finished with her, he does not shrink from providing a cynical but accurate summary of the libertine's view of desire:

Believe me Cleomira! whatever in our Days of Courtship we profess, the Excess of any Passion is ridiculous to a Man of Sense; and Love, of all others, more excites our Mirth, than our Pity.--That foolish Fondness, with which your Sex so much abounds, is before Enjoyment charming, because it gives us an Assurance of obtaining all we ask; but afterwards 'tis cloying, tiresome, and in time grows odious. (66)

To indicate his distance from Cleomira, he impersonalizes his language; Lyander's 'I' becomes the generic 'we'. This is in sharp contrast to the intimacy of his rhetoric of seduction. His overall strategy is to situate himself within the discourse of reason - if he was once a 'Man of Passion', he is now a 'Man of Sense'. He goes so far as to make the calculated insincerity of his former passion appear reasonable. Critical

of Cleomira's "Mismanagement," he enjoins her to "confine [her] Passion within the Bounds of Prudence" (67). Lysander's appeal to tropes of rationality -- moderation, management, prudence -- demonstrates his freedom to select among discourses in order to represent himself; by a simple alteration he can readily evolve from a transported lover to a "Man of Sense." Through language he reinvents himself according to whichever identity will best serve his objectives.

Cleomira does not display the same discursive freedom; she is confined to one discourse, the lament of the abandoned woman. It is Lysander who identifies the source of her language: "The little storms of Fury which appear in your Letter, are too frequently met with in Stories, to be wonder'd at, and are of...little consequence to move me to either Fear or Pity" (67). The kind of "stories" to which Lysander alludes is a matter for speculation. Perhaps he means romance in general, but given his reference to Cleomira's "storms of Fury," they probably belong to the tradition of the female complaint begun by Ovid. It is within the literature of abandonment that women's feelings of loss and rejection are forcefully expressed. That Lysander relates such "stories" to Cleomira's extravagant emotions indicates that Haywood was aware of the connection between discourse and subjectivity. Lysander dismisses

Cleomira's language, and by implication her new identity as a "despairing maiden," precisely because both find their source in romance discourse. If the texts are dismissable, then so is the subject constructed out of them. If Cleomira's identity formerly relied on Lysander's desiring gaze, she now must resort to a discourse which, although it provides a language to fashion and support her lament, also constructs her as an abandoned woman, bereft of power. No matter how eloquent her speech, Lysander has greater control over signification, and Cleomira's pleas can be dismissed as the ravings of a woman out of a control. Samuel Richardson will later borrow this astute perception of gendered differences in the deployment of language. Clarissa's eloquence is no sign of real power. Her linguistic facility is recognized -- her family refuse to see her because "there is no standing against [her] looks and language" -- but they defer to the father's power to construe the meaning of her discourse.

That Lysander can base his refusal to take Cleomira's despair seriously on the emotional excesses associated with abandonment literature is an interesting comment on Haywood's view of the value of such fiction. We might be tempted to think Haywood shares Lysander's contempt for these "stories" until we remember that this criticism,

coming as it does from the "perfidious" Lysander, serves as a defense of Haywood's own work. These "stories" expose the self-seeking rake and condemn Lysander's corrupt cynicism. Belinda, more suspicious of a lover's rhetoric than Cleomira, admits that "I could not be assur'd he lov'd me, because he told me so...I had heard and read too much of Men's Inconstancy, their Flatteries, their thousand Arts, to lure weak Woman to Belief and Ruin" (91-2). Toni O'Shaughnessey Bowers considers the cautionary value of amorous fiction to be significant. The sexually inexperienced eighteenth-century woman "had very little means of discovering mysterious and dangerous male ways. But she could read amatory fiction and learn to avoid the fate of the women it depicted" (52).<sup>6</sup> Reiterating another of desire's truisms -- "the greatest Symptom of a true Passion, is to be depriv'd of Utterance, and Incoherence in Expression" -- Belinda also doubts the sincerity of Lysander's rhetoric because he is never at a loss for words (94).

Cleomira feels the effects of Lysander's mastery of different discourses, and the stories that Belinda has read caution her against the discursive power of men. Yet Belinda's failure to truly attend to their meaning is an admission that the cautionary power of abandonment literature is questionable. In her novels, Haywood insists on the power

of desire, that it admits of no control, and her novels exist as testimonials of women's erotic longings. Yet if she refuses to exclude women from the realm of the erotic, she also demonstrates that the fulfillment of female desire is rarely possible in a world where women are oppressed. On the one hand, abandonment literature is the ally of women in its capacity to expose the power and deceitful ways of the libertine, yet if desire cannot be controlled, what, we might ask, is the point? There is more than a hint of masochism in how female desire operates in Haywood. Belinda's skepticism is short-lived; she all too readily believes Lysander because she wants to; to do otherwise would mean suppressing a desire which, if we believe Haywood, "admits of no Control." Yet Haywood is ambivalent on this point as well; in *Love in Excess* Camilla is able to behave rationally while in the grip of her passion for Frankville.<sup>7</sup> Cautionary tales are, in fact, profoundly ambiguous, simultaneously awful warnings and "Preparatives to Love," a hybrid of the didactic and the erotic whose discursive function remains to be discovered and evaluated.

A current trend is to analyze the female lament purely for its value as self-expression. As critics theorize the relationship between discourse and subjectivity, the self-assertion of the abandoned heroine,



articulating the full range of her emotions, can be regarded as a process of creating the female subject in discourse. In an article on Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, Susan Manning affirms the self-creating capacity of Eloisa's speech:

Eloisa's emotional tumult is not chaos, but a mode of feeling with its own internal logic, in which the formlessness of passion without reciprocity is supplied by the consciousness of self-creation. Her melancholy and pain, that is, are expressed, sung: they do not simply exist as raw emotion, or as matter for psychological speculation. (Manning, 233)<sup>8</sup>

Manning considers this not only an achievement of voice, but also the freedom to reject moderation and self-control. Though Eloisa's "matter be melancholy, her epistle is the joy of speech after enforced silence. She, the forsaken, the unvisited, wards off the finality of abandonment by a fine obduracy of passion which will not calm itself to insensibility" (237). Lawrence Lipking stresses that Donna Elvira of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* does not

consider any emotion too strong or shameful to express. Hysteria, carnality, self-loathing, infatuation, fury, abasement, longing - these are her daily bread. No wonder that the genteel guests at a party would rather close their ears and go on dancing. But Donna Elvira's voice cannot be stilled; it threatens to bring down the house. (Lipking, "Donna Abbandonata", 40)

Lipking is more equivocal than either Manning or Kamuf, pointing out

that the abandoned heroine is often met with at best an ambivalent response: "The abandoned woman seems always to feel too much. Nor do we always know whether to laugh or cry" (39). Ovid's *Heroides*, he argues, "may be interpreted in contrary ways, as celebrating or satirizing the eternal feminine....Over the shoulder of the scribbling woman, perhaps the poet smiles" (40). Lipking accounts for this duality with reference to the double meaning of the word 'abandoned' itself: "the woman's 'abandon' suggests a basic ambiguity: She may be either forsaken or shameless, abandoned *by* or abandoned *to*" (39).<sup>9</sup> Satire or celebration, it is important to consider whether the tradition of female complaint conforms more to "male myths of feminine abandon" than to an authentic female discourse (Verdier 57). It has been observed that literary expressions of female passion are frequently male authored: "In French literature, the passionate cries of women in love have come from men" (Suellerot 1). Lipking, who accepts Guilleragues as the author of *Lettres Portugaises*, notes that

The nun is a heroine after a man's heart. Her whose being depends on the man who has left her, the cause and only remedy of her anguish...The words that flow from the mouth of Mariana or Donna Elvira are just what a man might imagine a woman would say when deprived of his presence. (37)

*The Heroides*, *Eloisa to Abelard*, *Don Giovanni*, perhaps *Lettres Portugaises* itself -- all are authored by men. It should not surprise us that male authors would be attracted to this genre; feelings of loss and rejection are gendered feminine in our culture because they are the feelings of powerlessness. Readers cannot identify with a Lysander's or a Don Juan's seeming unlimited potential for self-fulfillment, their unstoppable will to power. It is a Cleomira or a Donna Elvira who comes closer to expressing the more common experience:

Most of us know little about being heroes, about exercising power without conscience, debauching multitudes, and forcing the devil himself to take an interest in our doings. But most of us do know something about feeling lost and lonely. Donna Elvira speaks for those feelings. (Lipking, "Donna Abandonata", 44)<sup>10</sup>

Susan Manning and Lawrence Lipking both speak of the abandoned heroine as having "nothing left to lose"; this, they argue, is a precondition of her liberation. For Manning "Abandonment is absolute powerlessness, and absolute freedom. Neither Sappho, Eloisa, Arianna nor Donna Elvira has anything left to lose in life...in the territory of absolute pain they find a voice which cannot be silenced by the social, religious or sexual constraints which grip them" (240-1). Donna Elvira "acknowledges no authority but her own passion...Quite capable of

sacrificing herself for her lover or hounding him to his death, abandoned both by and to, she lives in a world of her own. And there she makes her own laws" (Lipking, "Donna Abandonata" 40). While it is true that abandoned heroines achieve an almost uncensored speech, their sad story is nevertheless a testament to male power. The position of authority they command as writers or story tellers does not entirely mitigate the hopelessness of their position.<sup>11</sup>

In her 'O Ease Me' letter, Cleomira speaks for all she has lost: "I have cast away all that could make me truly valuable, and now am justly subjected to your Scorn" (53). The social value of a woman's chastity, according to Northrop Frye, is that it is like a man's honour, the sign that she is not a slave (*The Secular Scripture* 73). Chastity signifies a woman's *autonomy* and her dignity; it is this that Cleomira tries to reclaim in renouncing her desire for an unworthy man. She struggles to achieve a state of "just Resentment," and to learn whether or not she is "meanly soul'd" (67). Cleomira's response to Lysander's 'Man of Sense' letter is pivotal. As she tells Belinda,

one would think that such an *Eclaircissement* [sic] was enough to have cured me of all Passions, but Disdain and hate. -- Nothing sure was ever so insulting, so impudent, so barbarous; yet was my Soul, and all its Faculties, so truly his, that tho' at the first Reading I

resolv'd not to think of him but with Detestation, I relaps'd immediately, and instead of wishing I had never seen him, found a secret Pleasure, even in the midst of Agony, in the Reflection that he had lov'd me once...began *indeed* to lay the blame of my Misfortune on my own Want of Merit to engage the Continuance of his Affection, rather than on any Vice in him...O God! the bare Remembrance of it makes me condemn myself, and acknowledge, that a Creature so meanly soul'd deserv'd no better Fate. (67)

How quickly Cleomira concurs with Lysander's perspective, regarding herself with his eyes rather than her own. Clearly, Cleomira does not feel the self-creating potential of her own language. Lysander's rhetoric still has dominion over her. Indeed, Cleomira admits to the insufficiencies of language to express her situation:

If...I cou'd have found Words of force sufficient to have vented any of those various Passions which tormented me, my afflicted Soul, perhaps, might have receiv'd some little Intervals of Ease; but there were none to express a Condition such as mine! -- To *love* to the highest degree of Tenderness, what I ought to have *abhor'd*; -- to adore what I knew deserv'd my utmost *Scorn*; -- to have bury'd *Hope*, and *wild Desire* survive; -- to have Shame, Remorse, and all the Vulturs of conscious Guilt gnaw on my aking Thought; -- to wish for Madness, and yet Sense remain, was Misery! (68)

Faced with Lysander's cold disdain, Cleomira cannot understand her own unwillingness or inability to exercise some degree of rational self-control which would save her from a passion that has become

demeaning. Catherine Lutz has argued that women are aware of a rhetoric of control that guards against emotional excess. "When women speak of control" states Lutz, "they identify their emotions and themselves as undisciplined...The construction of a feminine self...includes a process by which women come to control themselves and so obviate the necessity for more coercive outside control" (74). Cleomira demonstrates that she is aware of a rhetoric of control and feels compelled to manage her emotions to reclaim her dignity. That she must love Lysander would traditionally be regarded as a sign of femininity itself, born of an inability to exercise reason. We may think that Haywood has consigned her heroine to the domain of emotion, locked out of the male world of reason, unable to act in a social world. Cleomira's retirement would then be seen as a means of self-protection because her destiny is to be a creature of emotion. But Cleomira's persistence in holding on to love can also be accounted for by the distinctions Haywood makes between male and female forms of desire. Throughout her work, and as we have already seen in *Fantomina*, Haywood juxtaposes male sexual incontinence with the virtue of female constancy. In *The City Jilt*; or, *The Alderman Turned Beau*, Melladore expresses the conventional view of male desire in a letter to Glicera, the woman he has seduced and

then tired of:

'Tis not in Reason, 'tis not in Nature to retain  
perpetual Ardours for the same Object.--The very word  
*Desire* implies an Impossibility of continuing after the  
Enjoyment of that which first caused its being:--Those  
Longings, those Impatiences so pleasing to your Sex,  
cannot but be lost in Possession, for who can wish for  
what he has already? (76)

Melladore speaks for male sexual experience - the dynamic of desire, possession and satiation that comprises masculine sexuality. In this view, it is in the very nature of desire to wish only for what one does not have. For men, the satisfaction of desire inevitably involves a subsequent loss. That Cleomira continues to love Lysander is the sign of a moral superiority which makes female sexual desire permissible in the first place.<sup>12</sup> Yet if Haywood validates female desire and creates a language for women's emotions, she also recognizes that the world is a dangerous and unwelcoming place for them. Cleomira's words, like Clarissa's, cannot give her the power over her destiny that she seeks, but the problem lies not with her emotions or the extravagant expression of them -- language, devoid of the social power needed to back it up, is the problem for Haywood and her heroines.<sup>13</sup> It is not enough for women to have access to discourse, Haywood seems to conclude. Cleomira and Belinda's retirement, although it has been applauded as a real

alternative to the usual fate of the sexually experienced heroine -- death or confinement in a convent -- is also an admission by Haywood that female language, liberated from the restraints of moderation, is, in some measure, lost to the world.

While women's participation in public discourse is essential, language is not the site of power for women as it is for men. For Haywood, social agency does not necessarily follow from achieving a "voice." Lysander's language has concrete effects; it facilitates directly his sexual aims. Cleomira's language can neither satisfy her need for self-expression nor influence Lysander. His character makes him impossible to persuade, and Cleomira's words are dismissable as the rantings of a woman who lacks prudence and self-control. Some other alternative must be sought that represents a vision of female agency. While male authors of abandonment literature seem quite willing to limit their heroines to the complaint of the forsaken woman, Haywood does not appear ready to do so. She, I believe, seeks new, empowering subject positions for women. In *The British Recluse*, Haywood tentatively provides alternatives which offer autonomy and dignity for women. Cleomira claims to have finally achieved the "Resentment" proper to a woman so mistreated. Enlightenment comes when she learns of



Lysander's total indifference to her (supposed) death. "It was now," she states, "that I began to feel that Resentment, which by a thousand Barbarities he had long before deserved...Reason, at last, has gain'd a Conquest over all the Softness which has hitherto betray'd me to Contempt" (77). Cleomira makes no attempt to disabuse Lysander or society in general of her death, and in retiring to the country she leaves her former identity behind. This is her act of re-creation. It also signifies the abandonment of the visible field and thus precludes the possibility of forging an alternative public role. Given Haywood's commitment to visual agency, it is difficult to regard female retirement as anything but a defeat. In *Belinda*, however, Haywood asserts, at least temporarily, the agency associated with sight.

When Worthy interrupts Lysander's (now Sir Courtal's) seduction of *Belinda*, the two men must face each other in the inevitable duel. The result of this meeting is nearly fatal to Worthy, and Lysander is forced to flee to London. The besotted *Belinda* follows but, ignorant of his true identity, she cannot discover his whereabouts. Blaming her "want of Intelligence" on the ineptitude of servants, she "resolved to become [her] own Spy." She then goes to the theatre, "believing no Place more probable to give [her] a sight of him." Dressed informally, she and

her friends sit in the Gallery which gives her the "Opportunity to observe his Manner of Behaviour, unseen by him" (104). In becoming a spy, Belinda appropriates the position of subject, the one who looks, and by this means Sir Courtal's real identity -- Lord Bellamy -- is revealed. In this case, an "ocular Demonstration" succeeds. Initially Belinda does not believe, despite the certainty of her friends, that he is Lord Bellamy, and that the two women with whom he is seated are his wife and his mistress. Proof must be sought, an outside authority engaged -- an appeal is made to a woman sure to know every theatregoer, a fruit-seller, and Belinda is forced to concede that not everyone can be wrong. She also listens to 'stories' of his sexual exploits, and becomes fully informed of his depravity. Although Belinda admits that she cannot "forget nor remember him as a Woman govern'd by Reason would do," (116) her enlightenment is achieved by her own means, by an active usurpation of the masculine subject position. The theatre scene where Lysander is watched "unseen" by Belinda, recalls D'Elmont's covert looking at Melliora in the garden. Unlike Lysander's mastery of his own image as he rides by Cleomira's window, Belinda's secretive looking gives her the advantage in this scopic scenario. Earlier in the story Belinda had already revealed an inclination for the role of subject rather than object

when she displays an intense curiosity to know the recluse's 'secret history', willing indeed, to give up "one of her Eyes" to attain it. Women's eyes embody their dual position in the specular economy, signifying both their desirability as objects and, as in Belinda's covert spying, their capacity to become subjects of knowledge as well as desire. This basic ambiguity, dramatized so well in *Fantomina*, underlies Haywood's attempt to explore the problem of female agency. To regard woman as simultaneously fetishized object and desiring subject is to realign her position in a scopic regime which, according to convention, heretofore confines her to the disempowered status of object. Despite Alovisa's unfortunate end, Haywood's preoccupation with scenarios of seeing and being seen, and her awareness of the connection between agency and sight, bespeaks her view, so prevalent in the eighteenth-century, that acquiring the position of "Looker-on" is fundamental to the exercise of power. In the preceding discussion, my focus has been how this orientation relates to epistemological and sexual forms of female desire. In the following chapter, I revisit the issue of language and discourse, but leave behind the female desiring subject, and examine another of Haywood's concerns -- the construction of discursive authority for women. In the relationship between spectatorship and authorship,

demonstrated so wittily by Addison and Steele, Haywood saw an opportunity for the female author.

## NOTES

1. In Mary Hearne's *The Lover's Week*, bathing is specifically a sign of preparation for sex.
2. Haywood was satirized by Richard Savage on precisely this point. In *An Author to be Lett* he charges Haywood with teaching "young Heiresses the Art of running away with Fortune-hunters" (A3r).
3. The importance of the *Heroides* to the Augustans is the subject of Rachel Trickett's essay, "The Heroides and the English Augustans."
4. They are now believed to be written by a man, Gabriel de Lavergne de Guilleragues. For a discussion of the debate over their authorship see Gabrielle Verdier's "Gender and Rhetoric in Some Seventeenth-Century Love Letters," and Peggy Kamuf's "Writing Like a Woman," in *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, ed. Sally McConnell Ginnet, Ruth Borker, and Nelly Furman (New York: Praeger, 1980).
5. In his article "Voice and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Haywood to Burney," *Studies in the Novel* 19 (1987): 263-72, Richetti describes Haywood's language as "expressive noise." Haywood's contemporaries, however, valued her precisely for her language. Richard Savage's complimentary poem is quite explicit on this point:  
 "Thy Prose in sweeter Harymony refines,  
 Than Numbers flowing thro' the Muse's Lines;  
 What Beauty ne'er cou'd melt, thy Touches fire,  
 And raise a Musick that can Love inspire;  
 Soul-thrilling Accents all our Senses wound,  
 And strike with Softness, whilst they charm with Sound!  
 When thy Count pleads, what Fair his Suit can fly?  
 Or when thy Nymph laments, what Eyes are dry?  
 Ev'n Nature's self in Sympathy appears,  
 Yields Sigh for Sigh, and melts in equal Tears;

For such Description thus at once can prove  
The Force of Language, and the Sweets of Love." (*Secret  
Histories Novels and Poems*, 1732, 5-6)

6. In *The Princess of Cleves*, the heroine's mother, Mme de Chartres, tells her daughter about love, "showing her all its attractions, the more easily to persuade her of its dangers; she told her of men's lack of sincerity, their deceit and their unfaithfulness" (29).
7. Camilla and Frankville of *Love in Excess* are an exception. They experience the desiring gaze quite differently. While Frankville is overwhelmed, she admits only that "her Heart felt something at those Views, very prejudicial to her Repose." Pragmatic rather than romantic, Camilla is not susceptible to the irrationality associated with passion, which is not to say that she does not sincerely love Frankville, only that she is, at least initially, careful and moderate. This temperament later determines her outraged and indignant response when Frankville mistakenly accuses her of infidelity. Camilla, unlike many of Haywood's heroines, has the presence of mind to regard Frankville "as she ought," and spurns him for his lack of faith.
8. See also Peggy Kamuf's reading of the *Portuguese Letters* in *Fictions of Feminine Desire* where Mariana's letters come to represent the "birth of the writing subject" (59).
9. Judging by the title of Haywood's novel *Lasselia; or, the Self-Abandoned*, this ambiguity was not lost on Haywood. The heroine is not abandoned by her married lover but "self-abandoned" to passion, she agrees to become his mistress. When she is publicly exposed, she is persuaded to remove to a convent, forfeiting her place in society.
10. Elizabeth Harvey does not take such a generous view -- see her feminist article on Ovid and Donne's "appropriation" of Sappho's voice, "Ventriloquizing Sappho: Ovid, Donne, and the Erotics of the Feminine Voice."

11. In another article on abandonment literature, "Aristotle's Sister: A Poetics of Abandonment," Lipking suggests that this discourse might form the basis of a feminist poetics. Admittedly, he is tentative on this point but it is, I think, a poor model. For his most extensive and more recent discussion of this theme see *Abandoned Women and the Poetic Tradition*.
12. There is no doubt that Haywood maintains a double standard in her treatment of female sexuality. While she is critical of 'loose' women, sexual opportunism in men is regarded, if not sympathetically, then as understandable -- men will invariably take advantage of the power their culture bestows on them. Haywood would not see women mimic men's exploitive sexual behaviour, even should they have the social power to do so.
13. Emmanuela of *The Rash Resolve*; or, *The Untimely Discovery* (1724) is, in a different context, a very good example of this. She argues her (legal) case before the King but despite the fact that the validity of her arguments and the force of her language are convincing, she is not successful and her fortune is stolen by a corrupt nobleman.

## CHAPTER 5

### SPYING, WRITING AND HAYWOOD'S BID FOR DISCURSIVE AUTHORITY:

#### THE CASE OF *BATH INTRIGUES*

Cleomira is a romance writer, inspired by "Stories" that are the familiar theme of the woman writer. Haywood's romance texts may urge prudence and self-restraint, but it is Cleomira's lack of self-control that energizes her language. Her discourse -- her letters to Lysander and her lament to a sympathetic friend -- may lack agency in the social world, but her expressions are true to human feelings of loss and desperation and cannot be summarily dismissed. The rhetorical value of Cleomira's language lies not in its power to affect Lysander, but in its ability to convince the reader of the authenticity of female emotional life, even if the truth of that life is a statement of powerlessness. Of the many tensions in Haywood's work, this conflict between self-restraint and various modes of freedom (erotic, linguistic, discursive) evokes one aspect of Haywood's feminism. She is a pragmatist who also understands the rebellious urge of oppressed women to throw off sexual and discursive restraints, to transgress social boundaries in spite of the costs.



In the focus on language in *The British Recluse*, Haywood establishes early in her career an interest in women's relationship to discourse. Cleomira's is a private speech, belonging to an intimate world of feeling and companionship, and suitable to a romance text. But Haywood, every bit the Augustan writer, is also engaged in the more public aspects of female authorship.

The question of how women, specifically, occupy the authorial position is currently being addressed by feminist theorists. At issue are not only the obstacles women might face in establishing discursive authority, but also the gender-specific rhetorical strategies they successfully employ in order to enter public discourse. The focus of Susan Lanser's *Fictions of Authority* is, as the author states, a writer's

project of self-authorization [which is] implicit in the very act of authorship...[R]egardless of any woman writer's ambivalence toward authoritative institutions and ideologies, the act of writing a novel and seeking to publish it...is implicitly a quest for discursive authority: a quest to be heard, respected, and believed, a hope of influence. (7)

Lanser's project is in keeping with attempts by some feminist literary critics to move away from textual analyses that seek to identify an 'authentic' female voice which can be equated with a woman writer's personal identity and personal struggle with patriarchal oppression. The

attempt to locate the woman writer in her text is being met with increasing dissatisfaction by critics who argue that such a practice, born out of a feminist theory based on readings of nineteenth-century texts is inadequate to the study of early modern women writers. Ann Messenger in *His and Hers* points out that "nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature...is the 'norm,' the base of operations from which critical principles derive and to which they most directly apply." As a result, the Romantic (and post-Romantic) idea that "the mind of the individual artist is of central interest in the work of art [is] the source...of the feminist dictum that women always encode autobiographical meaning in their writing." "Obviously," Messenger goes on to say, "all writers exist in their writing to some extent, but the Augustans were not usually confessional or self-absorbed. Although one can find some concealed and encoded autobiography in their work, their voices, male and female, were more often public than private" (6).<sup>1</sup>

Instead of locating "women's 'private' or 'authentic' selves revealed in their writings," the purpose of the essays in *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1769* is to "explore ways in which women's writings generate and negotiate speaking positions in discourse" (3). Increasingly, feminist critics are concentrating on how women, to borrow Lanser's

phrase, advance their "project of self-authorization." In *Oppositional Voices*, Tina Krontiris reviews some of the strategies English Renaissance women writers used to justify their bid for authorship. Given the restrictions on public speech for women, Krontiris seeks to answer the question, "How is it that the same culture which produced a prohibitive ideology also produced the possibility of even a few women writing, publishing, and sometimes voicing criticism of their oppressors?" (1).<sup>2</sup> I agree that a critical analysis which attempts to understand the rhetorical aspects of authorship is more suited to the rhetorical self-consciousness of Haywood's generation, a generation that participated in a very public literary culture.<sup>3</sup> The deterministic "separate spheres" thesis we have come to expect from American feminist theory is of little use to our understanding of women's participation in eighteenth-century literary discourse. A public life was accessible to women: Haywood put herself in the public eye quite explicitly as an actress, especially when she appears in her own play. Author and spectacle converge in her appearance in *A Wife to be Lett* (1724/5) where she plays the role of Mrs. Graspall, whose husband tries to sell her for 2000 pounds.<sup>4</sup> Any subculture, such as Grub Street, whose constituency is large and vocal enough, can resist dominant structures and ideology; women writers could belong to a

literary community which sustained them despite the attacks which were frequently levelled against them. John Wilson Bowyer in his biography of Susannah Centlivre, suggests that Haywood belonged to a literary club which included Centlivre and Defoe.<sup>5</sup> Although much of Haywood's life remains a mystery, she did make alliances with other literary figures; we know most about her work in the theatre with William Hatchett and Henry Fielding in the 1730s. In the following section of this study I will examine the rhetorical strategies Eliza Haywood used to construct herself as an author, strategies that varied according to genre. As she was extraordinarily versatile, experimenting in scandal fiction or key novels, romance, drama, conduct manual, periodical and the domestic novel, it is not surprising to find that she employed different methods for achieving a "voice." Whether launching an outright defence of her writing practice or creating a specific persona appropriate to her discursive aims, Haywood consciously focuses on the rhetoric of "self-authorization." A strategy common to many of her works, however, is to deliberately foreground her gender in her bid to enter public discourse. Gender is not the only factor which impinges on individual writing practice, but it is the one with which I am most concerned with in regard to Haywood because the criticism she encountered as a writer (she speaks of

"enemies") manifested itself as an attack on her as a woman, including attacks on her body and her sexuality.<sup>6</sup>

The problems that beset the woman writer become part of Haywood's rhetorical self-consciousness. For example, in the many dedications and prefaces which accompany her texts, while careful to fulfill formal conventions, she also seizes the opportunity to address issues of concern to female authors. In the dedication to *The Fatal Secret* (1724) she simultaneously attacks male prerogatives in education, reassures her reader that she does not encroach on male terrain, yet maintains (not without irony) the humility required by an author seeking favour with a patron and the public. Haywood writes:

*as I am a Woman, and consequently depriv'd of those Advantages of Education which the other Sex enjoy, I cannot so far flatter my Desires, as to imagine it in my Power to soar to any Subject higher than that which Nature is not negligent to teach us. LOVE it [sic] a Topick which I believe few are ignorant of; there requires no Aids of Learning, no general Conversation; no Application; a shady Grove and purling Stream are all Things that's necessary to give us an Idea of the tender Passion. This is a Theme, therefore, which, while I make choice to write of, frees me from the Imputation of vain or self-sufficient:—None can tax me with having too great an Opinion of my own Genius, when I aim at nothing but what the meanest may perform. I have nothing to value myself on, but a tolerable Share of Discernment. (204)*

Haywood trades on the difficulties she faces as a woman writer to gain a sympathetic ear from her readership and to make a plea for patronage. Although limited by what would be regarded as an appropriate subject matter for a woman -- love -- this limitation becomes the means of avoiding the charge of self-aggrandizement, of having "too great an Opinion" of her own talent -- in other words, of lacking the humility and self-effacement appropriate to womanhood and to the conventions of the dedication. In her romances, Haywood was careful to maintain this principle. A novel might be described as a 'Trifle' or her works regarded as "little Performances." *Lasselia* is described as "this little Novel," a description which diminishes any sense of pride. In her dedications she will often plead her inability to praise as she ought, yet her linguistic facility belies this claim. This assertion, too, is a pose -- she employs the humility topos because to display arrogance or self-conceit, even confidence, would be off-putting to her audience and ill-fitting the character of a woman writer. The choice of appropriate, legitimate subject matter and the modesty topos are two of the strategies discussed by Tina Krontiris. According to Krontiris, women writers who use the modesty topos, a gesture of self-effacement, do so as an "indirect way of self-assertion in the literary field" (21).<sup>7</sup> In sixteenth-century England

women were limited to religious and domestic subjects: "Religion was a woman's prerogative which did not jeopardize her chastity (the graveness of the subject guaranteed sexual modesty), while the domestic scene (anything pertaining to children and the house) was her granted dominion" (17). By Haywood's time, love (including sexual passion) also belonged to a woman writer's purview.<sup>8</sup> Haywood, therefore, enters public discourse by the same strategy as earlier writers -- she chooses a form and subject matter appropriate to her sex.<sup>9</sup> Haywood may understand the formal characteristics of the dedication but she also uses it as a vehicle to address more personal issues pertinent to her role as a woman writer. It provides an opportunity to attack sexual discrimination, especially in the area of education: women's deficiencies - poetic, intellectual, or otherwise - are due to custom not nature; the social restriction against female education is responsible for any difficulty they have in using language. In a dedication to Lady Price which fronts *The Masqueraders* (1725), Haywood points out that the "prevalence of Custom has allow'd Millions of Advantages" to men while denying them to women. Lady Price herself, who surpasses all men despite their "Millions of Advantages," is proof that it is custom and not nature which is to blame for the image the world has of women.

Although convention may demand the humility topos, inevitably a tension exists between this rhetorical stance and the desire for a public voice. Haywood, a professional writer like Manley and Behn, may have written primarily to earn a living, but this does not preclude another, quite different agenda -- to enter into public discourse and participate in the circulation of ideas in her society -- especially those related to change, progress, and protest -- and to gain fame or even notoriety. To speak and have an impact on one's society was of enormous importance to Augustan writers. Throughout the 1720s, Haywood becomes increasingly defiant, and adopts the position of embattled woman writer. The prologue of *A Wife to be Lett* (1724) (spoken by Theophilus Cibber) is a dramatic self-assertion of her talent and fame, and is a forthright challenge to her detractors:

Criticks! be dumb to-night -- no Skill display;  
 A dangerous Woman-Poet wrote the Play:  
 One, who not fears your Fury, tho prevailing,  
 More than your Match, in every thing, but Railing.  
 Give her fair Quarter, and when'er she tries ye,  
 Safe in Superior Spirit, she defies ye:  
 Measure her Force, by her known Novels, writ  
 With manly Vigour, and with Woman's Wit.  
 Then tremble, and depend, if ye beset her,  
 She, who can talk so well, may act yet better.

There is little sign of self-effacement here -- on the offensive, she defends



her writing and defies critics. Given "fair Quarter," she can survive the contentious literary milieu of Augustan London.

Perhaps it is in her dedication to the Earl of Scarsdale in the *Memoirs of the Baron de Brosse* (1725) that Haywood makes her most direct and critical statement regarding the problems which "beset" her, problems which go beyond an inadequate education to include the unrelenting prejudice that a women writer must endure:

*It would be impossible to recount the numerous Difficulties a Woman has to struggle through in her Approach to Fame: If her Writings are considerable enough to make any figure in the World, Envy pursues her with unweary'd Diligence; and if, on the contrary, she only writes what is forgot, as soon as read, Contempt is all the Reward, her Wish to please, excites; and the cold Breath of Scorn chills the little Genius she has, and which, perhaps, cherished by Encouragement, might in Time, grow to a Praise-worthy Height. (v)*

Education is not the main issue here. Rather, it is the psychic cost of sexual discrimination, the constant undermining of a woman's self-confidence. That Haywood continued to write until her death in 1756 attests to her resilience, but her awareness of the rhetorical self-consciousness of the literary environment also contributed to her ability to persist. Embattled and weary, evoking the world's scorn to solicit public sympathy, Haywood shows her capacity to establish yet

another speaking position. Neither defiant nor self-effacing (she refers explicitly to her "approach to Fame"), she solicits commiseration and encouragement from an increasingly politicized female reading public.

In a later preface, the one to her play *Frederick, Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburgh* (1729), she reiterates some of the same themes -- the inevitable limitations of an inadequate education and her enforced reliance on natural ability -- yet a change in tone is registered; by now, sarcasm marks Haywood's response to her critics:

*As to the Merit of the Piece, I have little to say, but that Nature, the only Instructress of my unlearned Pen, has, I hope, furnish'd me with Expressions not altogether incongruous to the different Passions by which my Characters are agitated; and tho' I know myself beneath the Censure of the Gyant-Criticks of this Age, yet have I taken all imaginable Care not to offend the Rules they have prescrib'd for Theatrical Entertainments... Since then my chief Faults consist in the Diction, I depend the candid Reader will forgive the Want of those Embellishments of Poetry, which the little Improvements my Sex receives from Education, allow'd me not the Power to adorn it with. (X)*

Regardless of rhetorical stance -- defensive, defiant, or sarcastic -- the discursive positions Haywood adopts place the tensions which attend her role as a woman writer at the forefront of her challenge to male cultural prerogatives, and reveal a ready willingness to spar with the "Gyant-Criticks." Clearly, she does not back away from her intention to

participate in the disputatious field of public critical discourse.

Frequently, her voice is an oppositional one. With an analytical and critical mind joined with a linguistic facility, Haywood resists and manipulates patriarchal discourse often in a defiant manner.

If Mr. Spectator confidently boasts of his "Penetration in Seeing," Haywood claims for herself only a "tolerable Share of Discernment." This more modest profession, designed to diminish any vain 'self-sufficiency' is, however, somewhat misleading. As one of the leading tropes of rationality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'discernment' was an essential component of judgement and reason. For Haywood to value herself on possessing such an attribute (even a "tolerable share") is an assertion of her intellectual abilities. Discernment is also a visual trope of perception and observation; to invoke it underlines the hegemony of the visual which persists in her writing.

In *The Female Spectator* (1744-46), Haywood deploys the role of the discerning spectator directly as a means of "self-authorization." A specular regime not only governs social and sexual relations in Haywood, it is also the basis upon which a discursive role can be established. The focus of the following discussion of *The Female Spectator* (1744-46), *Bath*

*Intrigues* (1725) and *The Invisible Spy* (1755), will be to show how Haywood, in her capacity as an author, appropriates the masculine role of the "Looker-on." In doing so, I argue, Haywood exposes both the ethical uncertainty this role entails and the fundamental ambiguity of subject/object relations. In *Bath Intrigues*, the voyeuristic aspects of spectatorship are emphasized, including the voyeur's tendency for exhibitionism. In *The Invisible Spy*, the spectator's invisibility does not permit the same deconstruction of the spectator/spectacle dichotomy; instead, Haywood concentrates more explicitly on issues of authorship, power and authority.

For her popular periodical *The Female Spectator* Haywood consciously takes *The Spectator* as her model.<sup>10</sup> Following her "learned brother of ever precious memory,"<sup>11</sup> she creates a persona from which she derives her discursive authority. However, to occupy the spectator's position is somewhat more problematic for a woman writer; as she cannot simply assume the privilege of this masculine position outright, she requires, once again, a rhetorical gesture upon which she can justify this appropriation and establish her worthiness for the role. Rightly eschewing the eccentricity and irony of her male counterpart as unsuitable to a woman writer, she overturns the modesty topos to create

her persona out of an easily recognized (and much-criticized) female type -- the reformed coquette. With the need to be taken seriously as a reformer and arbiter of "manners and morals," *The Female Spectator* builds her credibility on her own reformation:

I...acknowledge that I have run through as many Scenes of Vanity and Folly as the greatest Coquet of them all. -- Dress, equipage, and flattery were the Idols of my Heart. I should have thought that Day lost which did not present me with some new opportunity of shewing myself. -- My life, for some years, was a continued round of what I then called pleasure, and my whole time engrossed by a hurry of promiscuous diversions. But whatever inconveniences such a manner of conduct has brought upon myself, I have this consolation; to think that the publick may reap some benefit from it. (2)

As a coquette, *The Female Spectator* had deliberately inserted herself into the specular field, seeking opportunities for "shewing" herself. Ingeniously, her experience as an object, a position assumed to have epistemological limits, now forms the basis of the knowledge she has gained precisely as an object. In her new guise as a mature, sober and reflective woman, her earlier worldly experience serves as an argument for her suitability as an educator.

The Company I kept was not, indeed, always so well chosen as it ought to have been, for the sake of my own Interest or Reputation; but then it was general, and by Consequence furnished me, not only with a

Knowledge of many Occurrences, which otherwise I had been ignorant of, but also enabled me, when the too great Vivacity of my nature became tempered with Reflection, to see into the secret Springs which gave rise to the Actions I had either heard or been Witness of -- to judge of the various Passions of the human Mind and distinguish those imperceptible degrees by which they become Masters of the Heart, and attain the Dominion over Reason. (2)

The Female Spectator promises to uncover the mysteries of human motivation through her capacity for reflection, judgement and discernment, all faculties of a rational intelligence. What she has learned regarding the human heart, the "secret springs" she speaks of (traditional epistemological territory for women), is the announced subject of her writing. This clever rehabilitation of the coquette not only gives her female readers a social and specular position with which to identify, but also demonstrates the possibility of transcending the subject/object structure once a woman exchanges the desire to be seen for the desire to see. It also demonstrates that contrary to her assertion, The Female Spectator has never been a mere "Coquet," fixed irrevocably in the object position: no woman ever is. Women do look, but the Female Spectator now embarks upon making this look public by wedding it to a respectable, legitimate periodical discourse.

*The Invisible Spy* is another example of how Haywood uses the

figure of the spectator/spy to acquire a position from which to enter public discourse. It draws upon the popular interest in the Oriental tale: in return for a good deed, a friend "descended from the ancient Magi of the Chaldeans" rewards the author with any selection from a "Cabinet of Curiosities" (I: 2-4). Unable to choose between the "Belt of Invisibility" which when "fasten'd round the body, next the skin, no sooner becomes warm than it renders the party invisible to all human eyes," and "The Wonderful Tablet" which "in whatever Place it is spread open, receives the Impression of every Word that is spoken, in as distinct a manner as if engrav'd" (I: 10), the author explains the equal appeal of the two objects:

I was very much divided between these two;--the Belt of Invisibility put a thousand rambles into my head, which promised discoveries highly flattering to the inquisitiveness of my humour; but then the Tablet, recording every thing I should hear spoken, which I confess my memory is too defective to retain, fill'd me with the most ardent desire of becoming master of so inestimable a treasure:--in fine,--I wanted both;--so encroaching is the temper of mankind, that the grant of one favour generally paves the way for soliciting a second. (I: 11-12)

Happily, the friend offers both: "nor do I wonder you should desire to unite them" he admits, "they are, in a manner, concomitant; and the satisfaction that either of them would be able to procure, would be incomplete without the assistance of the other" (I: 13). Here, in the

concomitancy of Belt and Tablet, Haywood's awareness of the discursive potential of the connection between seeing and writing is made explicit. A privileged vantage point is created from which the author (whose sex is deliberately concealed) can employ the critical gaze of the spectator. This authorial positioning, invisible and on the margins, is currently regarded as a primary site of female discourse. The Invisible Spy, who can see without being seen, and has no fear of having his/her gaze met and challenged, understands its power.

The Female Spectator's scopic abilities are one aspect of her bid for discursive authority. She also wants to be "as universally read as possible" and so must find common ground upon which to appeal to a broad readership. Like Addison and Steele's Spectator, she

found that curiosity had, more or less a share in every breast; and my business, therefore, was to hit this reigning humour in such a manner, as that the gratification it should receive from being made acquainted with other people's affairs, might at the same time teach every one to regulate their own. (I: 3)

Although Alovisa's curiosity is regarded as transgressive, here Haywood uses curiosity for a rather ambitious discursive purpose -- to reach and unite a large and diverse audience. It is only vaguely suggested that the Female Spectator's eyes will be where they don't belong -- spying on



"other People's Affairs" -- and the more dubious aspects of spectatorship, such as voyeurism, are de-emphasized. She does, however, alert her reader to the network of spies which will bring back intelligence to the Female Spectator; together they will become the 'eyes' for a female readership. Curiosity is not (at least not forthrightly so) a source of personal pleasure for the Female Spectator as it is for Addison and Steele's Spectator. In creating the Female Spectator's persona, Haywood avoids any explicit appeal to the pleasures of voyeurism; instead, curiosity, it is argued, is a route to self-regulation.

In employing curiosity for her own discursive ends, the Female Spectator makes no gender distinctions; the reader assumes that as a universal appetite, curiosity resides equally with men and women. In her ability to see into the "secret springs" of human behaviour, she also challenges Mr. Spectator's belief that women have no "Penetration." Furthermore, she makes the transition from object to subject, spectacle to spectator, appear unproblematic; she simply writes herself into existence. In an act of self-creation, she evolves from one who was once an object of the look to one who has acquired a critical eye.

She also avoids reflecting on the negative aspects commonly associated with curiosity in the period. While Samuel Johnson

considered curiosity to be "one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect," he also regarded it with an ambivalence typical of his time (IV: 184). Curiosity is regarded with suspicion, first, because of its link with prurience. The sexual curiosity of the voyeur and the prying curiosity of the spy are understandably met with distaste and distrust. Second, the desire to know can too easily exceed the proper limits of knowledge. Definitions of curiosity include the benign "desire to know or learn" and the more blameable "disposition to inquire too minutely into anything; undue or inquisitive desire to know or learn" (OED). Johnson also understood that curiosity is subjected to an economy of desire and is, therefore, unsatisfiable: "the gratification of one desire encourages another, and after all our labours, studies, and enquiries, we are continually at the same distance from the completion of our schemes, have still some wish importunate to be satisfied, and some faculty restless and turbulent for want of employment" (IV: 184-5).

Because satisfaction is endlessly deferred, curiosity produces restlessness; the gratification of our intellectual impulses does not so much bring the pleasure of satisfaction as ease the pain of ignorance (IV: 186). But if the gratification of curiosity resists closure in Johnson, it is also aligned with the pure pleasure of exercising the mind, of learning for

its own sake.

Curiosity's association with excess is the subject of the exemplary story of Nugaculas in Rambler 103. A man of imagination and sagacity, Nugaculas applies his natural inquisitiveness to the seemingly worthy endeavour of discovering the "various motives of human actions" (the "secret Springs" Haywood writes of) (IV: 188). Although his friends "could not deny that the study of human nature to be worthy of a wise man," the unfortunate result of Nugaculas' project is that he unwittingly becomes a scandal chronicler:

He is, by continual application, become a general master of secret history, and can give an account of the intrigues, private marriages, competitions, and stratagems of half a century. (IV: 188)

His success entails that he be a "perpetual spy upon the doors of his neighbours." Thus, although not "ill-natured" himself, he is hated and feared because "he is considered by great numbers as one that has their fame and their happiness in his power, and no man can much love him of whom he lives in fear" (IV: 189).

If the story of Nugaculas is about the making of a scandal chronicler, we can see how Haywood takes a certain risk in appealing to curiosity as a "universal appetite" to establish a readership. Haywood, as

I hope to show in the following discussion of two of her scandal chronicles, *The Invisible Spy* and *Bath Intrigues*, was fully aware of curiosity's more questionable applications. *Bath Intrigues* foregrounds a specular system of spying and gossip. A short pamphlet, it consists only of four letters from J.B. visiting at Bath to his friend Will in London. Although "Pedigree" is the main topic of conversation at Bath, "Intrigue" is Will's "darling Theme," so J.B. promises to act as an "Intelligence" and relate the illicit sexual intrigues of the fashionable people at Bath. Sexual secrets and their discovery are the driving force behind the text. For Will's pleasure, J.B. is to enquire "into the Behaviour of the Ladies," their sexual misbehaviour, in particular. In the process, J.B. becomes a sexual voyeur who, in order to "obey the dictates of a present Curiosity," will hide himself to witness the seduction of Lady Bellair, or pretend to be drunk in order to overhear the lovemaking of a woman and her lover. Women are the primary object of J.B.'s curious scrutiny because, due to the sexual double standard, they most directly transgress against sexual regulations and thus furnish the most scandalous material. In Simon Varey's estimation, *Bath Intrigues* is "a good, if unedifying, example of popular English scandalous fiction of the period" (viii).<sup>12</sup> Scandal narratives often evoke this kind of ethical criticism, but to regard *Bath*

*Intrigues* as "unedifying" is, to some degree, understandable, as the reader is unavoidably implicated in J.B.'s voyeurism, and we may feel discomfort at our own position at the keyhole. This very discomfort, however, alerts us to the possibility that the genre is more complex than is generally considered. *Bath Intrigues* is highly self-reflexive, critical not only of the voyeurism out of which its satiric discourse is created, but also self-conscious that the relationship between spectatorship and discursive authority is a contentious one.

We are alerted to its meta-critical impulse initially through J.B.'s own misgivings about his role as a purveyor of sexual gossip:

I find it is but giving a willing Ear to Scandal, and a thousand Tongues are ready to oblige you, especially in such a place as this. If a Person has a mind to have his Character, Humour, Circumstances, nay, those of his great Grandfather, repeated, let him come to the Bath. (16)

J.B. denounces gossip in the usual manner: scandal-mongering (including his own we must assume) is the activity of idle tongues who inquire into the private life of individuals and their families in order to focus on the failings of human beings. It is very often cruel and self-interested. J.B. provides the example of the virtuous Amanda who tolerates her marriage to an unloving, debauched man "with the most

exemplary Patience and Resignation" (18). When she eventually 'falls,' the "pityless World" is censorious of her "late Mismanagement," verifying "what the late inimitable Doctor Garth says in his Dispensary on that Occasion: On Eagles Wings immortal Scandals fly,/While virtuous Actions are but born and die." (18) Gossips are quick to indulge their appetite for evidence of the social and personal failings of others, perhaps because to diminish another's reputation enhances one's own. The appetite for sexual scandal is not as distinct from the preoccupation with "Pedigree" as J.B. believes; both result from the competition for status and the continual jostling for position and privilege within the social and political hierarchy.

J.B. rationalizes his willing participation in a practice he condemns by appealing to a higher ideal -- the obligations of friendship. "I assure you," he writes,

there is nothing affords me less Satisfaction, than the finding out Failings of this kind; and the exposing them, is yet more ungrateful: I know no Person in the World but yourself, whom I would oblige this way at the expence of my Good-nature. But since I have promis'd it, and have already begun to execute your Commands, will not now pretend to make any Arguments how far it may or may not be agreeable to my own Inclinations; 'tis sufficient I do you a pleasure, which, my dear *Will*, you must give me leave to assure you, shall always be the first thing in view. (34)

Beyond the attempt to obfuscate the dubious aspects of his spying, J.B. purports to define and limit the extent of his own pleasure; if his desire has a scopic aspect at all, it is merely that he has his 'eye' on Will's specular pleasure. A chain of seeing defines this relationship between writer and reader. Just how ironic J.B.'s attempts at justification are will become more clear as we observe J.B. develop in his role and discover the true nature of his "Inclinations."

Not only does J.B. disavow any personal benefit or pleasure (indeed, admits that he is harmed through the fulfillment of his obligation) he makes an argument for his essential asexuality:

You expect, perhaps, I should entertain you with some Amours of my own, but I can tell you, Example has no effect on me; and I can be told my Friends are employ'd in their several Intrigues, without envying their Happiness, or wishing to partake it.--If ever I knew what an amorous Inclination was, since my coming to the Bath, it was for the Wife of a *French* Merchant, and I believe should have made a tryal how far Fortune would have befriended me, if I had not discovered, an intimate Friend had been before-hand with me, and took off all the stock of Love that Lady had on her hands. (28)

J.B.'s disingenuity and the pattern of contradiction that governs his statements expresses the ambiguity inherent in Haywood's "project of self-authorization" through the connection of spying and writing. He is

not amorous himself (an impartiality suited to his role as a sexual spy) yet he is -- for the wife of a French merchant. Contrary to his claim that he is impervious to "Example," he is aroused by what he sees, and cannot remain a mere disinterested spy. Since the letter is a personal document, being largely about the one who writes it, it is not surprising that J.B. writes himself into this scandal narrative. As he inextricably becomes more deeply implicated in his activity as a spy, he crosses over from detached observer to an actual participant in "Intrigue." This participation he also relates for Will's pleasure, becoming, as a result, an object of his own scandalous discourse.

While on an excursion to gain "Intelligence" for Will, J.B. falls into a "Debauch" where, under the cover of drunkenness, he has "the opportunity of observing every thing, without being suspected to be capable of observing any thing" (34). Drunkenness is a means of invisibility, of hiding out in the open. When the company had "grown in all appearance *Non Compos Mentis*" he observes, or more accurately overhears, "the Wife of a certain Friend" and her lover:

they withdrew into a little Chamber within the Parlour, where they could immediately hear if any of the Servants came in, as I could, who sat pretty near the Door, all that pass'd between them--You know, dear Will, I am not very amorous, but the luscious



Conversation I listen'd to, the Beauty of the Woman,  
 who is certainly one of the finest Creatures in the  
 World, and the great quantity of Wine I had drank,  
 altogether inflamed by Blood, and I began to wish  
 myself in my Friend's place (35)

It is a wish he must fulfill. To do so he blackmails the woman,  
 threatening to expose her unless she grants the "same Favour." The  
 success of this extortion he relates for Will's pleasure:

She led me into the Garden, and in a little Arbour  
 compleated my Desires in as riotous and full a manner  
 as I could wish, and far beyond my hope.--Thus ended  
 my Affair at that time, but she has promis'd by all  
 that's holy, to renew my Happiness when we come to  
*London.* (37)

J.B. reveals himself to be opportunistic and unscrupulous, ready to  
 extort sexual favours to satisfy a desire created by the lure of sexual  
 voyeurism. That J.B. overhears rather than actually sees the two lovers  
 is significant. Although Haywood explores the connection between the  
 seeing and sex, to avoid the more explicit pornography of a pictorial  
 description, only certain aspects of the visual can be represented. It is  
 more accurate to say, therefore, that J.B. is aroused by what he hears, a  
 "luscious Conversation," rather than by what he sees. To recognize this  
 is also to focus our attention on the relationship between language and  
 desire. Are Haywood's scandal chronicles as well as her romances

"Preparatives to Love?"

Although the couple take care to place themselves to see and hear without being perceived themselves, the invasive gaze of the spy can usually be accommodated. What Haywood frequently demonstrates in her writing is the impossibility for women to escape this penetrating male gaze -- there is no real private space for women where they can hide from eyes that are intent upon scrutinizing them. For Melliora, the garden cannot be a place for contemplation and reflection; it is, instead, a setting where women are eroticized and vulnerable. Seductions are frequently accomplished in a garden -- *Bath Intrigues* is no exception.

As a voyeur and then as a participant, J.B.'s sexuality is inextricable from the sexual activity of others. He desires women whom he knows are desired by or have been possessed by other men. J.B. requires a mediator or conduit -- another man -- in order for his desire to be aroused. This is consistent with his role as a writer/spy because he mediates between the reader and the private world he reveals to the reader's gaze. He is both the witness at the centre of information and the messenger, yet he is not a disinterested, passive observer. The leap J.B. makes from spectator of amorous intrigues to a scandalous figure himself dissolves the subject/object distinction which, according to

convention, structures the scopic regime. In becoming an object of the reader's (and Will's) voyeuristic gaze, he loses any privilege his position as a disinterested spectator may give him. Although Haywood insists on tarring J.B. with his own brush, neither can the reader of scandal sheets avoid the taint of voyeurism. We are an important link in the chain of seeing, and we are invited to participate in the pleasures of sexual voyeurism along with Will and J.B. It is this point Haywood insists on making -- producer and consumer are complicit, and neither can claim an authoritative or even neutral position.

So where does this leave Haywood's "project of self-authorization" which is based upon the link between spectating and writing? In erasing the distinction between spectator and object, and completely discrediting the spectator himself, Haywood throws questions of authority -- where it resides, how one possesses it -- into debate. If spectatorship is the means of achieving discursive authority, as it is in *The Female Spectator*, what are we to make of this ironic undermining of its terms of authority? Clearly, Haywood's objective cannot be to gain the privileges of authorship from an ethical or even neutral posture. As a satirist, she appears prepared to cultivate an antagonistic stance against the political and social elites who are her targets without the benefit of a

position of moral superiority that satire conventionally constructs for the satirist. In *Bath Intrigues*, the satirist is as much under attack as anyone else.<sup>13</sup>

Such a Scriblerian impulse is made absolutely clear in *The Invisible Spy* where no attempt is made to mitigate the spy's voyeurism. On the contrary, the text contains, in the form of letters to the Invisible Spy, a critique of the spy's function. The inclusion of these letters bespeaks a playful yet questioning attitude towards discursive authority itself. In Volume II, a letter from Scriblerius expresses astonishment at the Spy's undertaking:

I am shock'd and scandalized beyond measure at your title...What but the very Devil incarnate can have tempted you to assume one so ungracious to all degrees of people?--An Invisible Spy!--why, it is a character more to be dreaded than an Excise, a Custom-house or a Sheriff's Messenger: -- human prudence has taught us to elude the scrutiny of all known examiners; but who can guard against what they do not see? -- You may be at our very elbows without our knowing you are; -- you may explore all the necessary arts and mysteries of our several avocations, without our having it in our power to bribe you to secrecy. (II: 8-9)

The power of the Invisible Spy, as Scriblerius sees it, lies in the possession of a scrutiny which is unknowable and unavoidable, where the object of sight is powerless to return a challenging glance, or offer a

bribe. Unlike Steele's Starer on the Hassock, the Invisible Spy cannot be made a spectacle.

The question of the Spy's authority or right to criticize arises in another letter, this time from a woman. She writes to ask, "who set you up for a Censor of your Neighbours actions? -- By what Rule do you pretend to judge what is deserving Reproof, and what is not so?" (IV: 4-5). The Invisible Spy does not respond to the woman's challenge; it is enough, apparently, that the issue of authority is stated and left open for the reader to ponder. The source of the Spy's power is clear -- an unhindered, scrutinizing gaze -- but the issue of moral authority, the "Rule" normally required of one who presumes to be critical of others, is sidestepped.

If *The Invisible Spy* and *Bath Intrigues* ironically undermine any clear position of discursive authority, certain questions regarding the efficacy of Haywood's satiric agenda may be raised. Underlying Scriblerius' amazement at the Spy's boldness are certain common assumptions regarding the figure of the spy: he or she is always untrustworthy; we cannot, with any confidence, be certain that a spy has a firm allegiance to any ideological or political authority. Spies, therefore, have the potential to be extraordinarily subversive (the figure

of the 'double agent' comes to mind). They are marginal figures yet, as witnesses, central to the production of discourse. It is more accurate to say that the Spy has power rather than authority, because the latter term suggests a moral or political legitimacy. Haywood's spies make no such claim. The distinction Haywood makes between power and authority, however, points to a route left open for those on the margins of discourse: women may be excluded from the institutions of authority, but they do exercise forms of power. For a writer like Haywood, whose lurking iconoclasm is never far from the surface of her texts, the disruptive spy is a logical figure to deploy in her bid for authorship.

In discrediting J.B., however, is Haywood's own project of reform discredited as well? Not necessarily, if we fully understand J.B.'s function. To argue that Haywood avoided stable, hegemonic forms of authority, is not to say she did not have a feminist point to make. Despite the pervasive irony of her work, the agenda of Haywood's discourse can be found in the necessity for women to make the crucial distinction between self-display and self-regard.

J.B. may discredit himself as a moral authority of the kind we normally associate with satire, but he is an effective vehicle for Haywood's critique of female "mismanagement." Haywood's interests, as

we know, are not moral, they are pragmatic; to this end, J.B.'s role is to demonstrate how vulnerable women are to a gaze that perpetually seeks them out. It is Haywood's intention, I believe, to alert women to the presence of this gaze and its social effects. In making women the predominant focus of sight in her work, especially as objects and providers of voyeuristic pleasure, Haywood may be an agent of a scopic regime thoroughly oppressive to women, but I would argue that in her representation of specular events, a dominating male look is embodied in order to teach women the necessity of evading it. Furthermore, the hegemonic power of the male gaze is also challenged and demystified by making, for example, J.B.'s "Inclinations" the focus of our sight. His credibility may be destroyed, but not his utility -- he is an "awful warning" indeed.

Of the many sexual vignettes revealed to us by J.B., the seduction of Lady Bellair serves to demonstrate the importance Haywood attaches to sexual privacy for women. While indulging a contemplative mood in the quiet of a garden, a "murmuring of Voices" prompts J.B. to "delay Reflection, and obey the dictates of a present Curiosity" (13). He overhears Lady Bellair in conversation with her lover, "a Gentleman of the long Robe, whose Pleadings were more successful here, than ever he

can hope they will be at the Bar" (13). Again, J.B. is not a visual witness to their lovemaking, but infers their activity from their amorous conversation:

After a little more Discourse, his Arguments growing more forcible, hers less reluctant, all Coherence in their Converation was at an end; and all that I could hear for some time, were gentle Sighs and the Sound of some few Words, which tho' too intelligible to be repeated, made me give any easy guess at the meaning, which a while after the Lady confirm's by saying, -- Ah! my dear Counsellor! what would become of me, if you should now be false? (13-4)

As we know from Alovisa's story, blindness as well as sight is a crucial element in the scopic regime Haywood explores. Lady Bellair's lover, to assure her of his constancy, dramatically exclaims, "May I be at that moment stricken blind...whenever I cease to adore these charms" (13). In the ocular world of seduction, blindness would quickly put an end to a lover's career: sight is the crucial sense. Women are to be viewed -- openly and covertly -- in a visual culture which regards them as sexual objects. Yet this very act of sight, of women on display, is also the focus of Haywood's criticism, for it is also essential that women avoid public scrutiny, especially in sexual matters. As the lovers leave the garden, J.B. scrambles up a tree; what he sees from this perspective provokes his condemnation:



it not being very dark, [I] saw them go into the House, stopping every two or three Paces, to renew their Vows, and seal them with a Kiss. -- This Indiscretion in a Woman of that Lady's Character, surpriz'd me no less than her Fall from Virtue had done; because as there were several Lodgers both in the House I was in, and that she went into, she could not be certain but that someone, agitated by the same Curiosity I was, might observe their Behaviour -- But when that little Devil, *Cupid*, has once taken possession of the Senses, there is seldom any room for Prudence. (14-5)

The twin themes of prudence and indiscretion are fundamental to Haywood's exploration of sexual and social politics. She does not (or rarely) condemn women's sexual behaviour on moral grounds. For Haywood, it is a matter of how a woman conducts herself in public in order to protect her reputation. Lady Bellair neglects to perceive her behaviour as the censoring public will see it. Blind to her own self-interest, she exposes herself to J.B.'s scrutiny and criticism.

J.B. reiterates his "Wonder" at indiscrete conduct in the case of Lady R--'s unfortunate "amorous League with a young Fop, who makes it his business to boast of the Favours he receives from her" (26). In addition to his bragging, he has shown her letters in public, documentary evidence of her sexual activity,<sup>14</sup> and she is complicit in her own self-exposure:

she toys with him, is jealous of him, falls in Fits if she

sees him but barely civil to any other Woman, and all this without regard who observes her Behaviour, or what may be conjectur'd by it. -- The truth is, I believe, some Women glory in their Amours, and think it a greater Honour to be thought amiable than virtuous; if it were not so, we should not have half the Subject for that just Satire which we now abound in. (26-7)

Their indiscretion is further compounded by his railing wife "so that between the Husband's Vanity, and the Wife's Jealousy, nothing that passes between them is a Secret" (27). A woman's propensity to flaunt her sexual indiscretions rather than conceal them is, in Haywood, a problem of female mismanagement. In the manner of Fantomina, women must manage their visibility, and make the distinction between self-display and self-regard. As Scriblerius, the writer to the Invisible Spy reminds us thirty years after *Bath Intrigues*, "human prudence has taught us to elude the scrutiny of all known examiners" (II: 8). It is this Haywood would have women understand -- the need for a pragmatic management of their "necessary specularity." She uses scandal fiction to criticize indiscretion -- making public what ought to be kept private -- yet it must be admitted that in the figures of J.B. and the Invisible Spy, Haywood also sees the difficulty of keeping prying eyes out of private places.

If Lady Bellair and Lady R provide subject matter for "just

Satire," Lady Leer does not. As her name suggests, she embodies a distinct application of the female look:

her eyes invite almost as many as look on her, her  
Tongue refuses Encouragement to none: but I believe  
the Man is yet unborn who can boast of any more than  
these Superficial Favours; -- yet she has a way  
peculiar to herself, of keeping them all in hopes, and  
cheats them so handsomely, that when they find  
themselves impos'd upon, they have not the power of  
complaining. (39)

Lady Leer is an unsuitable subject for scandalous discourse because she manages her conduct with admirable skill. If she avoids "Intrigues," there is no suggestion that she does so on the grounds of virtue; rather, like Fantomina, she prudently manipulates specular relations to her advantage. She maintains her role as sexual object, inviting the male look, but does not become subjected to it. On the contrary, her name tells us that she is an agent of the look, and the most sexual of looks at that. Lady Leer is a complex figure and J.B.'s observations reveal that he does not fully comprehend her. For her, even more so than for Fantomina, sexuality is pure performance, an act that literally never takes place. She is, in fact, compared to a famous actress, the "once celebrated Mrs. Bracegirdle:"

Always easy, never kind,  
When you think you have her sure;

Such a Temper you will find,  
Quick to wound, slow to cure. (40)

Ultimately her power is accounted for by her superior intellect: "she has certainly an Understanding superior to what most of her Sex can pretend to, or her Designs could never be carried on with...Smoothness and Success" (40). But included in her "Designs" is "the Management of her Sister's Fortunes, who tho' they have Husbands, still permit her to be their Trustee" (40). Lady Leer may, in the form of role-playing, pretend to fulfill her sexual function, yet her real focus is money, the material basis of power.

### NOTES

1. Messenger comments further on the historical differences which separate eighteenth and nineteenth century literary culture: "It is probably...true that women lived apart from men in a "homosocial" world in the nineteenth century more than they did in the seventeenth and eighteenth. Such a community makes more valid the idea of a culture, including a literary culture, exclusive to women, and justifies the study of women's literature in isolation from men's. But in earlier periods, life was different. As the massively documented (if sometimes debatable) studies by Lawrence Stone, Keith Thomas, and others show, much that we take for granted about our sensibilities only gradually came into being in the eighteenth century. Life -- thinking, feeling, behaving, relating to other human beings and oneself -- was different. For instance, it was not necessary to kill the angel in the house, because she wasn't quite there -- yet. Feminist criticism, with its norms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often fails to take these differences into account. A case in point is the important and influential *The Madwoman in the Attic*, by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, which has been rightly said to exclude history. However valuable it may be in its chapters on nineteenth-century writers, it distorts the picture of eighteenth-century writers badly by pushing them under the same critical umbrella" (7).
2. Kroutiris' work is especially important in that she begins to address the discrepancy between the rules prescribed for female behaviour and how women actually behave. The assumption underlying her discussion, explicitly stated, is that "what happens at the level of social practice is often at variance with specific theories or rules about what should happen." Women, though circumscribed by ideological, social and political forces, "are not for that reason to be thought of as passive and obedient performers of rules dictated from above. The process of internalization may account for the actions of many women, but not of all women" (4).

3. The rhetoric of authorship is also the subject of Catherine Gallagher's *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820*. She examines the "author-selves" of women writers, "not as pretenses or mystification, but as the partly disembodied entities required by the specific exchanges that constituted their careers" (xix).
4. That Haywood would appear in her own play was advertised. It has been suggested that by this time Haywood was famous and a curiosity to see the author of *Love of Excess* was a selling point. See Whicher, 7.
5. The names of such a group are listed in a passage, cited by Bowyer, from Defoe's Secret Memoirs of the late *Mr. Duncan Campbell, The Famous Deaf and Dumb Gentleman*. The group includes Haywood, Centlivre and Martha Fowke. See Bowyer, 229-30.
6. It is now commonplace to mention that for early women writers, authorship and sexual looseness were typically conflated. This is especially true of Haywood, as the famous attack on her in the *Dunciad* attests. Ros Ballaster states in *Seductive Forms* that "it is Haywood whose textual production was most consistently identified with sexual promiscuity...the equation of text and body so repeatedly made with respect to women writers takes on a new and grotesque configuration in these representations" (158). For a discussion of Pope's image of Haywood see *Seductive Forms* 160-3.
7. Such a seeming contradiction would be an example of, in Lanser's view, "a site of ideological tension made visible in textual practices" (*Fictions of Authority* 6).
8. Sir Charles Lovemore, the narrator of Delarivier Manley's autobiographical fiction *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714), urges Rivella to turn from writing of politics to writing of love, the more appropriate theme for women. "She now agrees with me, that "Politicks is not the Business of a Woman, especially of one that can so well delight and entertain her Readers with more

gentle pleasing Theams" (117).

9. Pope considered women's scandal writing inappropriate precisely because of their sex. They are of "that sex which ought least to be capable of such malice or impudence" (*Dunciad*, II, 157n). Yet as Pope also notes, scandal fiction is primarily a woman's genre. For a discussion of the connection between women and gossip see Patricia Meyer Spacks' book *Gossip*, 38-46. In "Manl(e)y Forms: Sex and the Female Satirist," Ros Ballaster argues that Manley makes the scandal chronicle a specific form of female satire.
10. There were other earlier examples of the observer/writer in the period as well, including Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698) and Alain Rene Le Sage's *Le Diable Boiteux* or *The Devil Upon Two Sticks* (1707). The desire to discover the "secret springs" behind human behaviour is expressed in the latter. Le Sage's tale is an example of the scopic impulse tied to narrative ends. For Cleomas' benefit, Asmodeo "will lift off the Roofs of the Houses, and notwithstanding the Darkness of the Night, clearly expose to [Cleomas'] view whatever is now under them." It is not merely an issue of voyeuristic pleasure; spying facilitates a particular kind of knowledge: "in order to furnish you with a perfect Knowledge of Human Life, it is necessary to explain to you what all those People, which you see, are doing. I will disclose to you the Springs of their Actions, and their most secret Thoughts" (16-17). The figure of the invisible spy or observer is common to scandal fiction. Haywood used an invisible observer in *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* (1725), a roman a clef modeled on Manley's *New Atalantis*, and in *The Invisible Spy* (1755). Because "Fate...had made choice of him to be the Discoverer of Secrets, to which the greater part of the world were wholly Strangers," (3) the narrator of *Memoirs of a Certain Island* is taken up by Cupid in a cloud where he can observe but cannot be seen; together they observe the often sexual activities of humankind. In this Haywood followed most directly Delarivier Manley's *The New Atalantis* (1709) wherein Astrea (goddess of Justice), Virtue and Intelligence visit the earth and "pass unknown and

unregarded among the crowd of mortals" (13).

11. *The Female Spectator*, 7th ed. 1771. All further references from the text are to this edition.
12. Simon Varey's introduction to the Augustan Reprint Society's 1986 reprint of *Bath Intrigues* remains the most extensive discussion of this text.
13. Dustin Griffin's view of satire supports my argument here. His stated purpose is to reintegrate the Menippean tradition into theories of satire and to argue that "satire is problematic, open-ended, essayistic, ambiguous in its relationship to history, uncertain in its political effect, resistant to formal closure, more inclined to ask questions than to provide answers, and ambivalent about the pleasure it offers" (5). Not surprisingly, Swift holds a prominent place in Griffin's discussion.
14. See Haywood's "A Discourse on Writings of this Nature" appended to *Letters From a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier* (1724), wherein she urges caution to women when expressing themselves on paper. Letters, ostensibly private forms of discourse, are potentially public acts and, therefore, hold certain dangers for women. Haywood warns, "Letters often live longer than the Person who wrote them -- they may by some Accident be lost! -- may miscarry -- somebody must be trusted to convey 'em, and the Fidelity of such sort of People is not much to be depended on". And furthermore, "Paper cannot blush, and our Thoughts, in spite of us, will often take a greater Libery in expressing themselves that way, than the natural Bashfulness of Virtue will permit 'em to do any other" (5-6). Currently, female self-expression of various forms is enthusiastically applauded, but in this very interesting text women's participation in certain written forms of discourse is regarded ambivalently. As always, Haywood recognizes the risks of public speech for those disconnected from power.



## CONCLUSION

Lady Leer successfully manages her "necessary specularity" as do Fantomina and the Female Spectator. These figures have strategies that enable them to live and participate in the world. Writers such as Mary Astell or Sarah Scott advocated a different option; they saw retirement communities for women as an antidote for, among other things, female vanity -- women's too great attachment to their specular role. The separate space they envisioned would give women the opportunity to develop their capacity for rational conversation, and to lead useful and meaningful lives rather than exist as mere "Cyphers in the World" (Serious Proposal 6). Haywood, by contrast, did see value in a well-managed public life for women. As the Female Spectator's new career as a "reformed coquette" shows, her worldly experience is the foundation of her knowledge and authority as a writer and comprises the very value of her discourse. When we consider how thoroughly the coquette was condemned in the literature of the period, we can begin to appreciate how innovative a strategy Haywood's rehabilitation of the coquette truly is. Essentially, the coquette insists on a central place in

the visual field; she demands to be at the focal point of everyone's gaze, yet refuses the proper woman's role in this interplay of gazes which is to facilitate courtship and marriage. The coquette will not cast her desiring look upon any one man. Instead, she sets into motion a multiplicity of gazes and glances (which would include the often envious looks of other women), confusing the strict binary exchange between one man and one woman. The coquette, in her desire to be seen, is an object, but she is not an object to be possessed, one who will submit to the economy of marriage. To successfully recast a figure who provokes anxiety and outrage, to press her into the service of a bid for visual and discursive authority, is certainly a venturesome move on Haywood's part.

Clearly for Haywood, it was not necessary or desirable for women to entirely abandon the field. Female retirement is represented in Haywood's texts primarily as a punitive measure, enforced upon women for their sexual misconduct. The retirement community created by Sarah Scott in *Millenium Hall*, which arguably presents a serious and legitimate form of female agency, is not an attractive alternative for Haywood. That the visible field is complex and difficult to navigate Haywood makes clear, but that women must attempt to master it is also clear, and they must do so despite the double bind a voyeuristic male

sexual economy creates for them. Women are enjoined to be objects on display, yet they are chastised for their vanity and exhibitionism. But to inhabit the position of "Looker on" is potentially an even greater transgression, as Alovisa's tragic fate shows us.

The meaning of her tragedy and the dissolution of her marriage can be interpreted through Haywood's preoccupation with visual scenarios in this early text. Alovisa struggles to place herself within D'Elmont's sight, and he, just as persistently, eludes her searching eye. Frequently "abroad," he slips in and out of back doors, and in marriage as in courtship, Alovisa's task is always to direct his "erring Search." In Alovisa, Haywood creates a figure who is confused as to which position she should occupy; fundamentally an exhibitionist, proud of her beauty, she also wishes to see in order to know. Her attempt to exist as both subject and object fails because she operates without the benefit of Fantomina's masking. From first to last, she is desperate to be seen, revealed, acknowledged in the full light of D'Elmont's desiring look, but not until the call for lights at the scene of her death is she fully seen, the intensity of her passion finally recognized by D'Elmont. His look, like Betsy Thoughtless', then becomes one of sympathy and forms part of his education on the power of love.

Cleomira also fights against her consignment to invisibility, first, when she objects to her mother's decision to embrace a country life after having been raised in the very public life of the Court. Cleomira will later attribute her easy fall to this initial enforced retirement: "the sudden Change" she explains to Belinda, "from all the Liberties in the World, to the most strict Confinement, is all the Excuse I can make for my ill Conduct" (17). Second, after a brief but transforming sojourn at the focal point of Lysander's gaze, her written discourse is an attempt to assert a presence he no longer cares to acknowledge. Cleomira's rhetorical register is integral to her story; Haywood introduces, in this case, an uneasy relationship between a linguistic and a visual order. Cleomira's identity as a desirable woman, because it is forged through Lysander's gaze, remains dependent upon his look. The meaning and consequences of her abandonment become more clear when the full significance of the interplay between female subjectivity and the male gaze is considered. Cleomira attempts to overcome rejection and reinvent herself through narrative, but Haywood demonstrates that access to a language which would accomplish this is no guarantee of agency, the text of the abandoned woman being too much a testament to her powerlessness.

Fantomina eschews any recourse to language, believing "Complaints, Tears and Swoonings" to be ineffectual, especially when measured against her impressive ability to manipulate her own image. The source of our belief in her shifting subjectivity is our acceptance of the theatrical aspects of human personality. With theatre's emphasis on performance and spectacle, we learn how the visual order, and woman's place in it, is negotiable.

In a figure like Fantomina we see how the boundaries which mark the positions of subject/object, viewer/viewed can be crossed, provided that women conceal their attempt. However, Haywood also seeks a more direct, uncompromised access to visual authority, to colonize what is conventionally regarded as masculine territory, even if that attempt is mediated through a persona which confers invisibility, such as the Female Spectator or the Invisible Spy. Through such figures Haywood integrates visual and verbal agency. Yet neither was she reticent to foreground her own body as spectacle. I have alluded above to this issue with regard to Haywood's appearance in her own play, an event that was used apparently to attract an audience desirous of seeing the famous author. But the Elisha Kirkall engraving, which accompanied the 1724 edition of her works, also reaffirms her visible

presence, a point Pope, in his satiric redrawing of this portrait in *The Dunciad*, did not miss.

At one time it was believed that Pope's attack on Eliza Haywood drove her out of the literary marketplace (an idea fostered by Whicher), and that if she wrote at all after *The Dunciad*, she did so anonymously. We now know that Haywood became more visible than ever through a return to the stage in the 1730s as an actress and playwright. Pope's decision to use the engraving as his point of departure, however, is fitting in that it signifies his recognition of her visible presence within the Augustan literary world. His view that she "stands before her works confessed" -- her "works" now considered to be her books not her children (Ballaster, *Seductive Forms* 160-1) -- can be read alternatively as a sign not of her shame but of an unabashed claiming of her writing, to which she attaches a name and an image which had clear commercial value. Her strategy is not unlike the use of portraiture in Behn's *The Rover* where the courtesan Angellica uses three portraits to advertise her body. Haywood was also willing to exploit her image and person to keep herself in the public eye, deliberately confusing the line between her texts and her body. We can only regard her final wish to become invisible to posterity, at least with respect to her private life, with some irony.

Apparently fearing that "improper liberties [might be] taken with her character after death, by the intermixture of truth and falsehood with her history," the injunction not to reveal "to anyone the least circumstance relating to her" (Baker 216) indicates that she ultimately made a distinction between her public and private life; in the dearth of information regarding her personal life, we realize that Haywood managed her own visibility with some finesse.

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