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Towards a Synthesis: Tracing the Evolution of Masculinity in the Eighteenth-Century Novel

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TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS: TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF MASCULINITY IN
THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH NOVEL

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TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS: TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF MASCULINITY IN
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ANTHONY NECASTRO

ABSTRACT

Studies of eighteenth-century British novels are typically centered on the alleged “rise” of the novel; that is, the formation of the novel as a genre distinguished from the epics, dramas, romances, and satires of past centuries. These new novels betray the critical trajectory of masculinity throughout the politically turbulent long British eighteenth century (1688-1815). While critics have studied individual constructions of masculinity within particular novels, or masculinity presented by a single author’s corpus, this paper tracks the various constructions of masculinity and demonstrates the relationship between masculinity and political change. The novel’s century-long “rise” presents the reflection of the English male society’s struggle to redefine itself in the face of the economic change, social empowerment, and political turbulence that resulted from the Glorious Revolution (1688-89). The novels of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, and Jane Austen reflect the direct relationship between the English political environment and turbulent trajectory and changing notions of masculinity. Defoe’s Whig masculinity favors economic gain and imperial expansion and becomes apparent in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). In responding to Richardson’s portrayal of the gentry’s abusive masculinity in *Pamela* (1740), Fielding presents what I term “heroic” masculinity in *Joseph Andrews* (1742). Sterne’s 1759 critique of gentry men shows the

complete lack of any traditional masculinity in what has become a totally effeminized, and thus ineffectual, asymmetric society. Finally, the anti-Jacobin, Tory Jane Austen brings a restoration of masculinity that results from a renewed interdependency of the sexes. In the neat conclusions of Austen's novels, women submit to male leadership but excel in supportive and managerial positions; men need to marry women and protect the lower ranks. This mutually rewarding synthesis reinstates the acceptable portions of traditional masculinity (while excluding cudgels and fists) and creates a norm beneficial to men *and* women.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The emerging British novels of the eighteenth century displayed both the norms and ideals of society and highlighted the dynamic, evolving notions of masculinity. Daniel Defoe first depicted a model of masculinity completely devoid of women and driven by the new age of the Whig individual in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Focusing on the more physical masculine ideal in *Joseph Andrews* (1742), Henry Fielding required a virtuous, cudgel-wielding hero to forcibly implement a turn away from Samuel Richardson's portrayal of the rakish and corrupt masculinity of the gentry in *Pamela* (1740). In *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767), written only seventeen years after Fielding's self-described "comic epic of prose," Laurence Sterne critiqued the now vastly changed norms of masculinity: nearly the entire novel is dominated by the nostalgic digressions of ineffectual, incomplete men of the gentry, highlighting the new norm of the period in which it was written. In *Emma* (1815), the overinflated, underwhelming charms of Frank Churchill are juxtaposed with the industrious, intelligent, and charitable nature from the likes of George Knightly: a character who emerges to represent a new, balanced masculinity. Together, *Emma* and

Knightly highlight what can be achieved through a balanced and equally-rewarding codependency, or as I will term it, the fulfillment of male-female synthesis. How then, and why does masculinity reach its apparent equilibrium in the novels of Jane Austen? The novel's century-long "rise" presents the reflection of the English male society's struggle to redefine itself in the face of economic change, social empowerment, and political turbulence. With these three factors in mind, masculinity's trajectory, and its eventually-balanced form will become apparent.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, traditional, muscular masculinity was gradually replaced with economic power: the pen and checkbook steadily overtook the sword and lance. Eventually, by the time Sterne and Mackenzie were writing sentimental novels (1759-67; 1771), the male norm called for politeness, feeling, and sentiment in lieu of dueling and forcefully upholding some inherited status. Adopting these new traits, the now unrecognizable men of the later eighteenth century became heavily effeminized. These men could converse with women but failed to serve as dutiful husbands or landowners. Masculinity's shifting status is an underdeveloped area of criticism. While many works describe the apparent changes in the social construction of masculinity within individual eighteenth-century novels, or within one author's corpus, there has been no assessment of its trajectory between its rebirth after the Glorious Revolution (made apparent in *Robinson Crusoe*), Fielding's restoration of its classical form, Sterne's critique of its dangerous absence, and Austen's implementation of its balanced alignment.

Ian Watt and Rachel Carnell discuss the political and economic conditions contributing to Defoe's development of *Crusoe* and the formation of the modern novel.

While these critics do not focus on the development of masculinity directly, their works can be relied upon to demonstrate the vital influences of the Glorious Revolution, Whig philosophy, and capitalism in the formation of Crusoe's status as a man in the ripe age of new individualism. George Haggerty and Laurenz Volkmann study the construction of masculinity within *Robinson Crusoe*. Haggerty focuses his work on Crusoe's power relationships; Volkmann studies Crusoe's "constant effort of closing oneself off to the Other" (143). Both critics provide a brilliant discussion of Crusoe's masculinity, but neither place *Robinson Crusoe* in conversation with masculinity's turbulent eighteenth-century trajectory. Joseph Weisenfarth and Treadwell Ruml have described Fielding's construction of masculinity in *Joseph Andrews*; specifically, in an extensive assessment of Fielding's stylistic technique, Weisenfarth makes the obvious connection between Joseph's heroic, plebian (cudgel and fist-a-cuffs) masculinity and Fielding's disdain of the landed gentry ranks. Ruml elaborates on these notions when he claims that *Joseph Andrews* performs an educational function and aims to restore virtue from chastity in women and wealth in men to its proper function as the "inward spirit of England's social and political elite" (196). Contrasting Fielding's idea of classical masculinity is Sterne's assessment of masculinity's dilapidated state. In his study of masculinity's reductive reimagining, James Kim astutely attributes the exuberant nature of Sterne's male characters to anxious male melancholia exhibited via "sentimental irony" (9). Kim maintains that it is tempting to read *Tristram Shandy* as rejecting the period's developing gender formations, but such readings do not account for the "complex attitudes and conflicted responses" arising from the sense of loss in Sterne's work (10). For Kim, the nostalgic sense of loss and longing are transformed into exuberant pleasure and sentimental irony.

Michael Kramp provides an extensive study of Austen's male characters and claims that Austen's work presents the opportunity to study masculinity for three reasons: it aligns with "historical changes in Western conceptions of men and maleness;" it presents the "dialectical process of gender formation;" and lastly, Austen's men have become "cultural icons of masculinity" (6).

Critics have not fully developed or explained the relationship between the economically-driven imperial masculinity of *Robinson Crusoe*, the brute-force masculinity within *Joseph Andrews*, and the melancholic manhood of *Tristram Shandy*. In these three very different novels, Defoe presents the opportunity for newly empowered males, Fielding yearns for the ideal, and Sterne critiques the norm, but all three plots offer insight into what I am terming "female dependency," the idea that men depend on female companionship to achieve a balanced and mutually rewarding model of masculinity that results in hegemonic stability. Without this female companionship, Crusoe seems somewhat ridiculous ruling over a parrot and his pets; without Fanny to rescue, Joseph would have no outlet for his heroic beat-downs. Twenty years later, Sterne portrays a world completely lacking this male-female synthesis: marriage requires frequent reference to lengthy legal documents, sex is equated to winding the house clock, and women are, in general, ignored or misunderstood. In contrast to Crusoe's insistence on rigid and stoic manliness, Walter Shandy and company have become "men of feeling," too effeminized to rule their estates and fulfill roles as husbands. Sterne's assessment shows the costly result of a world without male-female balance: masculinity becomes a thing of history; it is reduced to a pathetic state of mourning and loss.

Across the long British eighteenth century, the novels of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Austen reflect the direct relationship between the English political environment and turbulent trajectory and changing notions of masculinity¹. Defoe's masculinity favors economic gain and imperial expansion at the cost of severing emotion, desire, and happy cohabitation with females. In responding to Richardson's portrayal of the gentry's abusive masculinity, Fielding's ideal masculinity is entertaining yet unrealistic and cannot be sustainable. His attempt to return masculinity to its classical, muscular form also reduces women to physical objects in need of protection. Sterne's 1759 critique of gentry men shows the complete lack of any traditional masculinity in what has become a totally effeminized, and thus ineffectual, asymmetric society. Finally, the anti-Jacobin, Tory Jane Austen brings a restoration of masculinity that results from a renewed interdependency of the sexes. In the neat conclusions of Austen's novels, women submit to male leadership but excel in supportive and managerial positions; men need to marry women and protect the lower ranks. This mutually rewarding synthesis reinstates the acceptable portions of traditional masculinity (while excluding cudgels and fists) and creates a norm beneficial to men *and* women.

¹ In his second chapter of *The Rise of the Novel*, Watt provides an extensive overview of the reading public and audiences of eighteenth-century novels. Despite their increased literacy, the lower and working classes could not afford novels (Watt 42). While the novel became more accessible as the century progressed, in my discussion of masculinity's trajectory I am assuming that the audiences targeted by Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Austen were members of the higher economic classes.

CHAPTER II
**GLORIOUS INDIVIDUALISM: THE MAKING OF THE EIGHTEENTH-
CENTURY MAN**

The religious, economic, and political environment of the long eighteenth century (1688-1815) paved a new road to individualism and forced English masculinity to evolve into a polite, sensible form, away from its divinely-inherited, dueling-prone past. Literary critics, historians, and sociologists alike have acknowledged the significant shift in English masculinity during the eighteenth century. In her survey of masculinity's changes throughout the world's history, R.W. Connell writes, "We can speak of a gender order existing by the eighteenth century in which masculinity as a cultural form had been produced and in which we can define a hegemonic form of masculinity. This was the masculinity predominant in the lives of the men of the gentry" (608). Connell provides a widely accepted survey of masculinity's changes from 1600-1815 and makes the following classifications: the "anxious, patriarchal, godly" masculinity of the seventeenth century, the "libertine and foppish" masculinity of the late seventeenth century, the "polite and civil" men of the eighteenth century, and the "sincere and evangelical" men

of the late eighteenth century (French and Rothery 139). For Connell, masculinity's eventual eighteenth-century form was shaped by four factors: the decline in the post-Reformation Church's power; the "growth of European empires as overtly masculine endeavours conducted by men"; the expansion of European cities and the resulting sexual subcultures (the Molly houses of London); and finally, "internal civil strife and dynastic foreign wars" throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that challenged existing social orders and led to the creation of "increasingly centralised 'fiscal-military' state[s], which 'provided a larger-scale institutionalization of men's power [held by the gentry] than had ever been possible before'" (French and Rothery 140). Considering Connell's four religious, economic, and imperial factors that reshaped masculinity, and taking into account the political events of 1688-89, the transfer of power from absolute monarch to individual men becomes clear: English men are colonizing and changing the world and their new king is not an enlightened despot. The void left by the reduction of absolute power is filled by the gentry's rule throughout England and the father's rule at home; the English appetite for colonial expansion and domination can also be attributed to this new desire for power.

The rapidly expanding English economy (driven by the city expansion, wars, and exploration that Connell illuminates) brought about an entirely new service-based industry fulfilled by the new middle and working classes. English society's ladder was gaining rungs. The economic and political changes brought ashore by the installment of the Hanover power exacerbated this new individualism and brought radical change to the conventions of masculinity--both of which are directly reflected by the male characters throughout the century-long birth and development of the novel. Capitalism was the

economic catalyst for work that demanded individual talent. This new emphasis on specialization, “combined with a less rigid and homogeneous social structure, and a less absolutist and more democratic political system, enormously increased the individual's freedom of choice” (Watt 61). Watt explains that the Glorious Revolution provided the “commercial and industrial classes,” the groups who opposed the absolute, personal rule demanded by the Stuarts in favor of the new parliamentary rule of William and Mary, with increased economic and political power (61). Watt connects these political and economic advances with the shift in literary form noting that, “The middle classes of the towns [...] were becoming much more important in the reading public; and at the same time literature began to view trade, commerce and industry with favor. This was a rather new development” (61). Previous English writers (“Spencer, Shakespeare, Donne, Ben Johnson, and Dryden”) supported the strong monarchy (which in turn funded their works) and “had attacked many of the symptoms of emergent individualism” (Watt 61). With new capitalism and the people-empowering results of the Glorious Revolution, English authors, now distanced from and unreliant on the court, would soon contrast the views of Spencer, Shakespeare, and company--as the publications of the early eighteenth century suggested, the age of the individual had begun. Alongside the empowerment of the individual, and most important to this work, are the changing notions of masculinity reflected within these publications.

One such publication was the *Gentleman's Magazine*. First printed in 1731 by the journalist Edward Cave, *Gentleman's Magazine* would achieve an estimated circulation of ten thousand and ‘reach as far as the English language extends, [being] reprinted from several presses in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Plantations’ (Carlson, quoted by Watt

51-52). Watt describes the two functions of *Gentleman's Magazine* that would contribute to the development of the novel (“practical information about domestic life” and the combination of instruction and self-improvement”), but the magazine also contains information vital to the status of masculinity (Watt 52). For Watt, the existence of *Gentleman's Magazine* demonstrates the heightened public demand for reading. Elaborating on this, and considering that reviews of the novels discussed in this work would have appeared in *Gentleman's Magazine*, I maintain that such a publication offers insight on the attributes of new, polite, post-1688 modern men—men who carry conversation about what they have read with one another at the coffee house, men who wish to improve themselves, men who now valued the interests of their wives and children at home.

The existence and success of *Gentleman's Magazine* also points back to the economic conditions that contributed to the rise of the individual. The magazine “was directed by an enterprising but ill-educated journalist and bookseller, and its contributions were mainly provided by hacks and amateurs” (Watt 52). The once-exclusive connection between the court, nobility, and writers had ended when the English installed William: because of the increased demand for publications by a more literate working class, greater economic opportunity and reward for printing, and the new distance between the court and its citizens, writers no longer depended upon obtaining noble patronage (Watt 52). Watt explains, “the decline of literary patronage by the court and nobility had tended to create a vacuum between the author and his readers; and this vacuum had been quickly filled by the middlemen of the literary market-place” (52). As I will demonstrate, the

same economic conditions that allowed for the existence and demand for *Gentleman's Magazine* also reflected polite, modern masculinity within its pages.

Gentleman's Magazine contributed to the hegemonic masculinity that Connell defined as existing in the eighteenth century. Gillian Williamson discusses the publication's close connection with masculinity: "the magazine consistently . . . represented and reinforced the importance of normative, institutional masculinity. Where masculinity was not the overt subject of an article or letter, there was still a subtext: the abiding entitlement to speak and act of educated, gentlemanly men" (6). Williamson claims that masculine values became the "yardstick of a person's worth" and that the magazine was used "as a guide to how men were ranked as gentlemanly or not" (6). The magazine's variety of content highlights the dynamic and panoptic status of masculinity. The poetical essays, obituaries, announcements, and instructions guide men between the "Scylla of relationships with women and the family . . . and the Charybdis of comparison with other men over rank, wealth, effeminacy and courage" (Williamson 7). To be a successful man, a man would need success in his own home while still keeping up with his peers' elevated fiscal and emotional status. Too much focus on either side would stifle the development of the man and yield foppish or disagreeable traits.

The modern man was guided by the ideals of John Locke's "blank slate" and the search for mankind's "place in the universe" (Williamson 8). If "blank" humans truly did form their identity through education and upbringing, "the possibility of attaining gentlemanliness and the power it conferred" was accessible to those men born outside of the landed gentry (Williamson 8). The middle and working-class men of the expanding London found this ability to obtain gentlemanliness particularly appealing. The new

occupations in finance (“stockjobbers, bankers, speculators”), professions (“lawyers, doctors”), and trade thrived on mental ability and conversational dexterity (Williamson 8). In addition to *Gentleman’s Magazine*, widely read publications like Addison and Steele’s *Tatler* and *Spectator* provided guidelines on proper “conversational ease in the company of strangers as well as family and friends” (Williamson 8). Capitalism and the new industry and professions it created promoted a new form of masculinity--a model that favored intellect, conversation, and upward economic and social mobility over dueling and the allegedly God-given right to rule.

Connell’s survey of masculinity and her four pillars of male empowerment are vital to the study of eighteenth-century masculinity, but her broad (yet valid) contribution does not describe in detail the critical connection between the Glorious Revolution and masculinity models of the eighteenth century. The installment of William III brought significant change to the English patriarchy and thrust power into the hands of the landed gentry class. Within the new hegemonic masculinity of the now emboldened gentry, individualism would continue its expansion and allow for masculinity to reach the “polite and civil” stage Connell notes. Having witnessed an absolute ruler dethroned, and seeing how easy it was to expel and replace a king, gentry men quickly learned that inherited status does not enable unchecked power--if James II, a ruler with supposed divine authorization, could be chased away, defeated in Ireland, and forced to flee to France, these men could just as easily lose their own lands and powers if they did not adapt and meet the need of the governed. Erin Mackie describes the manly attributes of the new, post-1688 model of masculinity:

Guided by codes of polite civility and restraint, eschewing personal violence for the arbitration of the law, oriented toward the family in an increasingly

paternalistic role, purchasing his status as much, if not more, through the demonstration of moral virtues as through that of inherited honor, and gendered unequivocally as a male heterosexual, the modern English gentleman has been cited in contemporary masculinity studies as the first type of 'hegemonic masculinity.' (1)

Mackie credits the ideals of the Glorious Revolution for the formation of this new gendered, polite, and paternal masculinity (1). The rejection of the English Stuarts and the installment of Hanover rule brought drastic waves of change through English society. In inviting a foreign ruler to the throne, the English "institutionalize a government authorized outside of, and in some defiance of, aristocratic ideology with its claims of inherited worth and its insistence on patrilineal primogeniture" (Mackie 6). The adoption of a parliamentary monarchy increases the rights of the ruled—a phenomenon that changes both the political and family arenas (Mackie 6). Just as William of Orange denies absolute power and outlines the rights of the individuals he now governs, men are forced to accept that their rule in the household must allow for the "interest of members of the family" to be met (Mackie 6). Mackie outlines how this political shift specifically affected the modern man. Men could no longer rely on "inherited honors to secure worth," there is an increased dependence on the courts and "juridical means to claim and protect authority," and lastly, the rights of the governed (the women and children of the house, and any other men in service to a gentlemen) would need to be articulated and protected (6). After the events of 1688-89, "The significance of one's place in a vertical chain of inherited rank diminishes; relations with one's social equals across a set of recognized commonalities of interests and cultural norms increases in its value as a means of securing personal authority and prestige" (Mackie 6). It is this rise of the individual that drives the development of the novel, and the depictions of masculinity

within the new, evolving genre. As Watt has demonstrated, the novel's foundation is based upon the development of characters who appeal to the reader as individuals--gone are the days of nationalistic epics, Seneca-inspired tragedies, and romanticized stock characters. With new empowerment from the political atmosphere, individual men now equipped with polite civility, men of both the new working class (created by the rise of English capitalism) and the gentry, set out to reestablish the power and control that they witnessed slip away from Charles II and his brother James II.

The age of the individual would inspire and reshape masculinity throughout the eighteenth century. With the end of absolute rule and a capitalistic economy that rewarded specialization, and considering the male-empowering geopolitical atmosphere outlined by Connell, the age of the individual (man) had begun. It should come as no surprise that literary characters who appeal to individuals begin to gain popularity. Now that the traditional patriarch (with the divinely appointed King sitting only slightly below God) had been shattered by the relatively painless removal of a despot and installation of parliamentary monarchy, men were desperate to redefine themselves within the parameters left in the wake of the Glorious Revolution and affirm some sense of order, and more importantly, control in a world with newly accessible social mobility

CHAPTER III

‘HOW LIKE A KING I LOOKED’: WHIG INDIVIDUALISM AND IMPERIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY IN DEFOE’S *ROBINSON CRUSOE*

Defoe’s *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner* spearheaded the development of the novel. As opposed to the immensely popular religious publications and various social instruction works (several of which were also written by Defoe), *Robinson Crusoe* featured a protagonist unbound by the rigid conventions of romance or satire. Gaining almost immediate popularity after its publication in 1719, *Robinson Crusoe* has drawn decades of critical attention. Watt discusses the connection between “individualism in its many forms [throughout *Robinson Crusoe*] and the rise of the novel” (62). For Watt, *Robinson Crusoe* is representative of the “new outlook of individualism in its economic aspect” (63). While Watt sees Crusoe’s actions as demonstrative of the prevalence of the individual contract “as opposed to the unwritten, traditional and collective relationships of previous societies,” his observations can be elaborated upon to highlight the male’s awkward first attempts to thrive as individuals in a now Whigish society. More recently, Rachel Carnell outlines the connections between Crusoe’s actions and Defoe’s attitude toward this prevalent

Whig philosophy *vis-a-vis* individualism. For Carnell, “Defoe uses Crusoe as an intentionally flawed model of Whig behavior in order to warn citizens not to lose sight of the proper functioning of the social contract” (85). As a critique of Whig individualism, *Robinson Crusoe* invites readers to see the flaws of “incorporat[ing] individualism within traditional patterns of social behavior” (Flint, quoted by Carnell 85).

While Watt and Carnell provide contributions to the study of the new age of individualism, they also betray important information about the state of masculinity in the early eighteenth century. Watt writes that “Robinson Crusoe has been very appropriately used by many economic theorists as their illustration of *homo economus*. Just as ‘the body politic’ was the symbol of the communal way of thought typical of previous societies, so ‘economic man’ symbolized the new outlook of individualism in its economic aspect” (63). As my previous chapter established, the shifting economy of the early eighteenth century has an immediate and drastic effect on constructions of masculinity. In further exploring the notions of individualism that Watt and Carnell have outlined, and by considering the changing geopolitical and economic trends outlined by Connell, I will highlight the new model of masculinity driven by the post-1688 empowerment of the individual man.

The economic-obsessed, island-survivor Crusoe presents what becomes the new, baseline masculinity of the eighteenth century—elevated and more realistic than that of the preceding romances, yet (because of the restrictive nature of social contracts) too stoic and solitary to produce anything close to the male-female synthesis of future masculinity models, Crusoe’s masculinity will become the foundation on which eighteenth-century masculinity evolves from. Laurewnz Volkmann studies the

construction of masculinity in *Robinson Crusoe*, a novel that she claims “is one of the rare literary cases that show that one of the basic tenets of recent literary studies appears to be true—that life imitates art, or that literature can be instrumental in shaping cultural concepts and thus impinges on reality and shapes it” (132). Defoe’s novel would reshape masculinity by demonstrating what men could “achieve through self-reliance, perseverance, clear-cut belief systems, and adherence to a religious creed,” but in addition to influencing male society, *Robinson Crusoe* is a reflection of the new, individual male (Volkman 132). As “life imitates art,” art is simultaneously reflective of society (Volkman 132). The model of masculinity demonstrated in *Robinson Crusoe* reflects the initial Whig response and reaction to the age of the individual.

Thrust into an uncivilized and undiscovered new world, Crusoe becomes obsessed with establishing economic order and holding dominion over his island—a location that serves both as a prison and a kingdom for the shipwrecked mariner. Crusoe’s initial confusion between his status as king or captive is noteworthy for several reasons. For Carnell, Crusoe’s dual status enables him “to gloss over the plight of a real captive, his first servant, Xury” (87). Elaborating, Carnell claims that Crusoe’s inability to note the biblical connection to Xury’s sale for “‘60 pieces of eight’ [. . .] underscores the limitations of his own subjective moral and political perspective” (87). Crusoe’s betrayal of the boy he once promised to make “a great man” does indeed highlight the flawed model of Whig individualism, but the nonchalant decision to sell Xury back into slavery also demonstrates Crusoe’s desire to join a model of masculinity that values economic growth, imperialism, the distribution of western values and religion (Defoe 20). For Crusoe, subscription to this imperial masculinity prohibits the formation of emotional

connection with others (especially non-whites); sending Xury back into slavery places Crusoe in company with male slave traders and establishes the imperial identity he so desperately wants.

In order to define himself as a successful man in the age of individualism, Crusoe feels compelled to engage in the imperialistic practices of his time—including the trade of non-white slaves. Crusoe describes the sale of Xury with the same stoic tone that he narrates all of his various material transactions, adding only a brief note of remorse for his actions: “he offer’d me also 60 Pieces of Eight more for my boy *Xury*, which I was loath to take, not that I was not willing to let the Captain have him, but I was very loath to sell the boy’s liberty who had assisted me so faithfully in procuring my own” (Defoe 28-29). Considering the two years Crusoe spent enslaved himself, the decision to sell Xury is especially ironic. Expressing that he is “loath to sell the boy’s liberty” does not make this decision any more forgivable: despite knowing the pain of enslavement himself and the fact that Xury assisted in his escape, Crusoe suppresses any feelings of empathy or compassion (effeminate emotions) in favor of the masculine desire to participate in the new system of English imperialism. Volkman describes Crusoe’s utilitarian, pragmatic behavior: “patriarchal societies impose rigid demands upon the male individual and create a fragile self that depends on various protective shields. The male self is forged in the rejection of ‘feminine’ attributes . . . and simultaneously valorizes toughness in the stern male world” (134). Crusoe’s brief rationalization for his decision affirms his engagement in this imperial arena: “[the Captain] would give the boy an obligation to set him free in ten years, if he turn’d Christian; upon this, and *Xury* saying he was willing to go to him, I let the Captain have him” (Defoe 29). While Crusoe will eventually question

whether he is a king or a captive, in selling Xury he has already crowned himself; his actions throughout the novel will further represent his desire for power and control. Crusoe excuses his betrayal by masking his actions with religious intent. What may deceptively appear like the noble actions of a remorseful Englishman “full of loath” is in reality the desperate attempt to join the masculine world of English exploration and oppression. As Defoe’s characterization of Crusoe during this incident foreshadows, religion was used to mask the imperial, greed-driven, and racist intentions during decades of continuous expansion by the British Empire.

George E. Haggerty studies the various power relations within *Robinson Crusoe* by exploring Crusoe’s interactions with “other cultures and with individuals who can be said to represent the other” (78). Crusoe’s initial intent to seek adventure establishes his entry into individual masculinity: he rejects the advice of his “ancient” father to “rise by enterprize” and sets himself “free from the encumbrances of family and home” (Defoe 5-6; Haggerty 79). Such a decision would not be possible before the new individualism facilitated by the crowning of William III. Crusoe’s adoption of Whig individualism and the stoic, economic-based traits associated with it prevents the formation of emotional bonds: Crusoe’s heroic rescue of Friday only happens because it was “Time to get me a Servant,” not as a result of empathy for a fellow human (Defoe 160). Rejecting the masculinity model of his father in favor of new Whig ideology, there is no time or place for romantic or fraternal relationships in this new age of individuality. In addition to Friday’s rescue, consider Defoe’s exclusion of Crusoe’s sexual desire while spending “thirty and five years” in isolation and the less-than-flattering narration of Crusoe’s decision to take a wife once he was returned to England (Defoe 219). As Connell has

demonstrated, masculinity is reinvented as English men are exploring, trading, and profiting: men are branching away from the previous economic model of simply learning their father's trade in favor of more adventurous pursuits. Crusoe's older brothers are included in this phenomenon, "one of which was Lieutenant Colonel to an *English* regiment of foot in *Flanders*" and another whose fate is unknown (Defoe 5). The death and disappearance of his older brothers serves as ominous foreshadowing for Crusoe's fate, but more importantly affirms the prevalent male engagements in models of both Whig individualism and imperial masculinity. Crusoe's exploits and misadventures will betray the dangers, unsustainability, and non-viable nature of the new constructions of masculinity that emerge from these models.

Xury's non-white status enables Crusoe to adapt the English imperial attitude of racial superiority: Xury takes the role of the helpless, effeminate, and inferior object, graced with and guided by the brave action of the racially superior Crusoe. The profit-driven disposal of Xury places Crusoe firmly within the conventions of individual masculinity and facilitates his continued engagement in the imperial system. Guided by the conventions of masculinity in the age of the individual, Crusoe uses the return from Xury's sale to further align himself with the norms of the imperial system when he purchases a plantation in Brazil: "As a landowner, he has status and position, and his gender identity seems fully established" (Haggerty 80-81). After seeing to the initial stages of his plantation's success, Crusoe seeks to affirm his new masculine identity when he departs Brazil for a trading voyage that would see more slaves imported. Haggerty claims, "Crusoe's position as a trader in slaves makes him a fully recognized member of this planting community. As a slave trader, that is, he thinks he will become a

man” (81). The slave trade was a cornerstone of imperialism; Crusoe’s desired masculinity depends on engaging in this trade and on the resulting economic benefits (plantation labor to produce crops, crops traded for goods or slaves, etc.). Had Crusoe been content with his plantation and left other men to sail to Africa, he never would have found himself stranded. Note the different motivation for Crusoe’s slaving voyage compared to his initial simple desire for adventure: “And they offer’d me that I should have my equal share of the *Negroes* without providing any part of the stock...In a word, I told them I would go with all my heart...” (Defoe 33). Having satisfied his thirst for adventure, Crusoe’s desire is now driven by the prospect of economic gain. After he rejected his father’s advice and left his home, Crusoe took the first Whig step toward individual masculinity. Now, following the example of prosperous men before him, Crusoe seeks full membership in the fraternity of imperial masculinity.

Crusoe’s failed trade endeavor results in his eventual shipwreck; the ambitious, land-owning, aspiring capitalist finds himself abjected to an uninhabited island. Crusoe’s immediate attempts to establish order on “his” island have been well-documented; however, after taking into account Crusoe’s placement within masculinity’s new imperial model (explorative nature and the desire to contribute to the imperial system), and when considering the effects of Whig masculinity (rejection of the father, seeking economic opportunity elsewhere), Crusoe’s self-proclaimed reign and the actions taken in ensuring his survival can be understood to demonstrate the now empowered English males’²

² The trading and working class men were empowered by capitalism and its rewards for individual output; the ranked and ruling class of men were empowered by imperialism (including the slave trade) and by their increased power within the now parliamentary system of rule.

Whigish reaction to a post-1688 world³. Despite the fact that the events in *Robinson Crusoe* were written to have occurred before the instalment of Hanover rule,⁴ the novel was first published in 1719; this date and the strong themes of individualism prevalent throughout the work marks the novel as a vivid reflection of post-1688 society.

With the rejection of the supposedly God-given patriarchy of the Stuarts, men must now look beyond birth status to justify their power: masculinity (and the power it brings) would be reaffirmed through stoic economic power and benevolent rule over an increasingly hegemonic society. There are numerous indications linking Crusoe to the male gentry's attempt to redefine power in a parliamentary monarchy led by a foreign king. Considering Defoe's admiration of England's new monarch, it is not unreasonable to suggest that "Crusoe may in some sense represent William III" (Carnell 87). Just as William of Orange establishes dominion over a new land, Crusoe too claims the throne of a foreign kingdom. In his new position as ruler, Crusoe admires his island kingdom: "I descended a little on the side of that delicious vale, surveying it with a secret kind of pleasure, (tho' mixt with my other afflicting thoughts) to think that this was all my own, that I was king and lord of this country indefeasibly, and had a right of possession" (Defoe 80). In addition to representing William III, Crusoe's actions—his systematic fortification, labor, inventory, farming, hunting, and the eventual subjugation of Friday—are all indications of both Whig and imperial behavior in a world ripe for the taking. Crusoe's implementation of English order in a foreign world mirrors the actions of gentry men who sought to claim their place in the now accessible patriarchy.

³ The previous chapter outlines how the political and economic environments of the late seventeenth century ended masculinity based upon status or birth right; individual men needed to affirm their power through economic gain and with consideration for those they sought to preside over.

⁴ Crusoe's journal indicates that he became shipwrecked on 30 September 1659.

Crusoe's constant insistence upon his dominion and his self-given monarchical status become apparent during even the early stages of his island survival. Crusoe is methodical in ensuring his survival; he builds his "kingdom" by strict adherence to a hierarchy of needs. He makes twelve trips to his grounded ship and collects a vast array of materials, all of which he is careful to catalog through narration. Of course, Crusoe is also the bearer of "the first gun that had been fir'd there since the creation of the world" (Defoe 44). Even after obtaining "the biggest magazine of all kinds now that ever were laid up," Crusoe continues to dismantle the ship and make use of anything that could be sent to shore (Defoe 45). Crusoe tells of his reaction to finding various currencies during his final salvage mission: "O drug! Said I aloud, what art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me, [. . .] I have no manner of use for thee, e'en remain where thou art, and go to the bottom as a creature whose life is not worth saving" (Defoe 47). Crusoe recognizes the worthlessness of the coins before him, but he is helpless to suppress his desire for economic gain; he continues, "However, upon second thoughts, I took it away" (Defoe 47). Subscription to Whig individualism prevents Crusoe from truly believing that the money really is worthless; his decision to save the money is ironic when considering that it was the desire for economic gain that placed him on the doomed ship. Even when under his marooned circumstances, Crusoe cannot escape greed's grip. Reflecting the male-Whig attitude of the early eighteenth century, Crusoe connects money with power and control.

In the early eighteenth century, economic power becomes synonymous with masculinity. This phenomenon becomes apparent in another of Defoe's works, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*. This text is more of an "economic survey"

than a tour guide; the majority of descriptions “focus on urban development and growth of industry, [and] it is most striking how rural areas are perceived through the lens of an observer who is merely interested in economic growth and development” (Volkman 135). Economic means, now more attainable than ever in the age of the individual, become the foundation of masculine power. Returning to *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe equips his masculine protagonist with the necessary economic tools to ensure some form of prolonged survival—the boat could have been written to have been immediately destroyed, making Crusoe’s survival all the less likely. However, Defoe’s decision to provide such an extensive inventory allows Crusoe to assume his role as the new monarch of his uncivilized realm. With his European technology and the military supremacy expected of a white conqueror in a savage world (both of which are extensions of individualism and imperial masculinity), Crusoe can begin to plant the foundations of his kingdom.

Crusoe’s survival contingency depends on the implementation of post-1688 individualism; his relentless insistence upon industry, rule, and fortification of his island is reflective of the economic and [geo]political conditions in post-1688 England. Watt describes early capitalism: “For those fully exposed to the new economic order, the effective entity on which social arrangements were now based was no longer the family, nor the church, nor the guild, nor the township, nor any other collective unit, but the individual: he alone was primarily responsible for determining his own economic, social, [and] political roles” (61). Crusoe personifies this situation. Alone on a strange island, he becomes the archetype individual. Left to his own devices, Crusoe installs the economic and political system that was thriving outside of his island. Like the new capitalism-

driven laborers of England, Crusoe would directly benefit from a well-balanced economy; mirroring William III, Crusoe “invades” a new land and assumes power over his subjects (various pets,); following the conventions of imperialism, the indigenous people were considered to be dangerous savages who needed to be exterminated or subjugated. Crusoe’s “protective shields” come in two forms: the literal fortifications that he creates to live in and the self-created and regulated hierarchy.

As Watt has noted, capitalism’s economic environment increased the demand for skilled labor. Men were no longer foreclosing on accepting their roles as apprentices to their fathers and were learning a variety of new trades. Like the men of the early eighteenth century, Crusoe finds success in his new economic endeavors. Demonstrating the Whig attitude of the early-century man, Crusoe reports, “So I went to work; and here I must needs observe, that as reason is the substance and original of the mathematicks, so by stating and squaring every thing by reason, and by making the most rational judgment of things, every man may be in time master of every mechanick art” (Defoe 55). Crusoe’s optimistic outlook reveals the attitude of the early eighteenth-century working man. Following along with Locke’s idea that men are blank slates, Crusoe credits logic, reason, and judgment as the tools empowering men to master any trade: aptitude is no longer determined by status or inheritance. In the previous century, such a notion would be dismissed as unchecked ambition and presented a dangerous threat to the Church and monarchy. With the ranks of society now more accessible to industrious men, and with aptitude now outweighing inherited rank, the rewards of economic ambition had never been greater. Crusoe mirrors the imperial economic model he knew in Brazil, referring to his crops fields not merely as corn fields, but as plantations. Goats are domesticated and

used for milk and meat. Like the men who read Defoe's *Tour*, nature is "not there to be enjoyed or appreciated, let alone admired or treasured. The natural Other can only be owned, utilized, and put to the use of something" (Volkman 136). The island Crusoe rules becomes a womanly Other for Crusoe to dominate, objectify, and benefit from. For Crusoe, this benefit comes in the form of not just survival, but survival in an environment that is forged into some resemblance of the one Crusoe formerly knew.

Through his industry, and demonstrating that English men indeed possessed the aptitude to master labor, Crusoe builds the foundation of his kingdom. Like any kingdom, and more specifically because he is alone and vulnerable to wild beasts and cannibals, Crusoe spends a good deal of time fortifying his holdings. He works to transform his once-meager tent into a stout and resolute stronghold. "[. . .] and this fence was so strong, that neither man or beast could get into it or over it: This cost me a great deal of labor" (Defoe 49). After listing the final details of his defenses, Crusoe admires the fruit of his labor: "[. . .] and so I was completely fenced in, and fortify'd, as I thought, from all the world, and consequently slept secure in the night . . . Into this fence or fortress, with infinite labor, I carry'd all my riches, all my provisions, ammunition and stores" (Defoe 49). Crusoe's defensive position on the island mimics the first forts established by the Spanish and English in their imperial conquest of the Americas, yet another link between Crusoe and imperial masculinity. Eventually, Crusoe would arm his fortress with muskets "like my cannon" and grow a wooded grove "so monstrous thick and strong, that it was indeed perfectly impassable" (Defoe 128). Coexisting with the economic benefits of individualism, Crusoe's subscription to imperial masculinity demands that a hegemonic order be established. After establishing security, Crusoe seeks out to fulfill this

requirement. In one of the novel's most memorable scenes, the island-monarch admires his new loyal subjects:

It would have made a Stoick smile to have seen me and my little family sit down to dinner; there was my majesty the prince and lord of the whole island; I had the lives of all my subjects at my absolute command. I could hang, draw, give liberty, and take it away, and no rebels among all my subjects. (Defoe 118)

Considering Crusoe's behavior here, it becomes clear that masculinity in the age of the individual cannot be fully enacted without consenting parties to preside over. With economic power as their means, highly-placed eighteenth-century males required the submission of the lower classes; in turn, the monarch and gentry would provide security and economic opportunity for those they ruled⁵. Crusoe's situation is somewhat less complex—his pets cannot hold an open rebellion—yet like the ruling men of the eighteenth century he still is dependent on the hierarchy they create. Without content subjects, rule is not possible and order cannot be achieved.

Crusoe initially resorts to animals to create this order-yielding hierarchy. Carnell claims, "Crusoe apparently recognizes no difference between being head of a household and head of a state: he holds dominion over all of the 'Subjects' in his 'little Family' [...]" (86). In gathering the animals that comprise his "family," Crusoe has essentially coerced a court for himself:

Then to see how like a King I din'd too all alone, attended by my servants, *Poll*, as if he had been my favourite, was the only person permitted to talk to me. My dog who was now grown very old and crazy, and had found no species to multiply his kind upon, sat always at my right hand, and two cats, one on one side of the table, and one on the other, expecting now and then a bit from my hand, as a mark of a special favor. (Defoe 118)

⁵ While some enjoyed this security and economic opportunity, others (non-whites) were enslaved and traded. Xury and Friday's security came at the cost of their liberty.

In addition to Crusoe's creation of hierarchy representing the "fundamental dilemma of the social contract," the male dependence on subjects is also at hand (Carnell 86).

Crusoe's dual position as head of both house and state represents the Whig condition in the early eighteenth century. Male fathers (in both the elevated and working classes) are expected to economically provide for and preside over their families; the exclusively male gentry and ruling class filled the power void created when the English monarch lost absolute and supposedly divine rule. Crusoe's imperial masculinity is dependent on his ability to control his economic success and enforce strict adherence to hierarchical order.

To enforce and ensure his continued rule, Crusoe relies upon his military supremacy: his gun. Specifically, the gun represents imperial power and allows Crusoe to assert his masculinity with the pull of a trigger. In accordance with the norms of imperial masculinity, Crusoe does not hesitate to use the gun to demonstrate his power over Friday. After seeing that Friday was, "surpris'd, trembled, and shook, and look'd so amaz'd" at witnessing him shooting a goat, Crusoe needlessly kills a parrot in an effort to teach Friday the ends a gun could achieve. Haggerty elaborates on Crusoe's assertion of masculinity: "by making the bird a parrot Defoe suggests that Crusoe's violence is arbitrary. Friday's response to the execution of the bird is all that Crusoe could ask for, after all. Crusoe can [now] be certain that his servant will continue to respect him" (85). When the island cats begin to overpopulate, Crusoe is faced with a threat to his order.

"But from these three cats, I afterwards came to be so pester'd with cats, that I was forced to kill them like vermin, or wild beasts, and drive them from my house as much as possible" (Defoe 82). When the hierarchy is threatened, the cats lose their status as "family" and become "vermin" to be exterminated; in this model of masculinity,

adherence to strict order outweighs the moral obligation to provide for the increased population (Haggerty 82). After discovering that his seeds are being eaten by birds, Crusoe shoots three of the culprits. "I fir'd again, and kill'd three of them. This was what I wish'd for; so I took them up, and serv'd them as we serve notorious thieves in *England*, (*viz.*) hang'd them in chains for a terror to others" (Defoe 93). Not only does this action show that Crusoe's "dominion over the island resembles the rule of a monarch over England," it demonstrates male action in the face of economic danger (Volkman 136). Like the feral cats, the birds existed outside of the hierarchy; both sets of animals were beyond Crusoe's control and thus required termination. The same could be said for the criminals of England. Breaking the law represented a direct departure from the power structure maintained by the ruling gentry; public shaming of criminals was thus necessary to ensure restoration of law and order. After turning to his symbolic extension of masculine power, Crusoe "creates a growing sense of being the sole possessor of his surroundings, of being lord and lawgiver," and of his ability to facilitate continued economic success (Volkman 136).

Crusoe is ultimately successful in his rule of the island. His plantations flourish, a pack of cannibals is defeated, Friday is subjugated and Christianized, and an invasion is thwarted. Reflecting on his success, Crusoe's narration lists the idealized results of Whig individualism and imperial masculinity:

My island was now peopled, and I thought my self very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like I king I look'd. First of all, the whole country was my own meer property; so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly, my people were perfectly subjected: I was absolute lord and law-giver; they all ow'd their lives to me, and were ready to lay down their lives, *if there had been occasion of it*, for me. (Defoe 190)

Economic strength, through the mastery of trade and husbandry, provides Crusoe with the means to not merely survive, but rule. The fortification of his camp and his technologically superior weapons prevent and eliminate any threat to the hierarchy; additionally, these advantages provide the means to rescue and enlist Friday. Crusoe's success illuminates the foundations of early eighteenth-century masculinity: economic productivity, adherence to hierarchical order, decisive destruction of any threats to economic or hegemonic order, and European domination in the uncivilized world. With the pacification of Friday, Crusoe represents the complete power of “colonial enterprise” (Haggerty 86). Crusoe’s accomplishments are astonishing: the young man who ignored his father’s advice has become a generalissimo leading men against invaders—the final testament to Crusoe’s unquestioned rule (Haggerty 86). Crusoe achieves complete economic and political success by maintaining subscription to individualism and imperial masculinity.

Defoe’s choice not to provide Crusoe with any effeminate traits has already been partially rationalized by Watt and Volkmann, both of whom point to Crusoe’s obsessive preoccupation with economic gain; but much like his insistence upon maintaining this stoic attitude prevents the formation of any relationships beyond that of master-to-servant or king-to-subject, imperial masculinity in the age of the individual cannot sustain the male-female syntheses that Richardson and Fielding will hint at and that Austen enacts. After failing to mention any feelings of physical or emotional longing for a female companion throughout decades on his island kingdom, Crusoe spends only a brief moment in narration describing his wedding: “I marry’d, and that not either to my disadvantage or dissatisfaction, and had three children” (Defoe 240). In the same breath,

Crusoe tells of his wife's death and of his return to adventure seeking. One explanation for Crusoe's behavior comes in the form of his economic fixation: demonstrating the male attitude during the age of the individual, Crusoe sees women only as means of economic production. He sends supplies and women to his island, a move that commodifies these women who were deemed "found proper for service" (Defoe 240). In *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, women are increasingly reduced to economic roles when the male colonists actually draw lots to decide their wedding order (Volkman 129). Defoe's decision to exclude women from this novel becomes of further interest when considering that several abridgments and chapbooks were made available to the more literate lower classes, who could not afford to buy novels⁶.

Unlike another Defoe character, the female Moll Flanders, Crusoe does not depend on the other sex to achieve his ends. While Moll's attitude presents a threat to society, Crusoe is constantly rewarded from his subscription to individualism⁷. He pays a dear price, though. Crusoe's kingdom and animal court appear somewhat comical when compared to what could be achieved through male-female synthesis. Such synthesis is an anachronism to Crusoe, a man whose stoic insistence on economic gain confines him to create only a master-servant relationship with Friday. While this relationship achieves a partial synthesis, the male-female synthesis achieved in the later years of the century will prove to be morally sound, economically beneficial, and politically stable. Representing the new masculinity ushered by William III's age of individualism, Crusoe seizes his

⁶ See Jordan Howell's extensive study, "Eighteenth-Century Abridgements of *Robinson Crusoe*."

⁷ Carnell notes the "idealized analogy for the Whig social contract" demonstrated through the "symmetrical bond of shared dominion and property" of Moll and her husband (93). Volkman draws attention to Moll's many masculine traits: her "ambition, recklessness, rugged individualism, [and] self-reliance . . . that threatens the order and stability of male-oriented early eighteenth-century society from within" (131).

opportunity to assert his status as man. He uses his unbound aptitude to transform a desert island into a factory of unlimited economic production; he usurps the natural order of his island and demands social order; as a “protagonist of muscular Christianity,” he subjects and pacifies a savage (Volkman 143). Defoe’s masculinity model does not allow for any male-female synthesis, but it does enable an individualized, empowered Whig male to seize control in a world that has never been so accessible.

CHAPTER IV
RICHARDSON AND FIELDING'S BATTLE OF VIRTUE: IDEAL REFORM VS
MORAL FISTICUFFS

The drastic difference between Richardson and Fielding's conflicting models of masculinity demonstrates two competing political philosophies, each of which attempts to improve upon Defoe's picture of the individual Whig man. The politically moderate Richardson uses *Pamela* (the rise of the serving girl and the reform of the rake) to show the benefits of mutual respect and conversation between staunch opponents⁸. Richardson sets out to improve the Whig model of male individualism that made itself apparent in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The eventual union between Pamela and Mr. B represents both Richardson's formation of a male-female synthesis (lacked by the likes of Crusoe and the Whig individuals he represented) and his idealized hope for proper governance in spite of the harsh political divide between Whigs and Tories in the middle of the eighteenth century. While Defoe's Whig model of masculinity emphasized economic expansion, personal aptitude, and social accessibility, Richardson's moderate model depends upon respectful discourse between opponents and an emphasis on compromise.

⁸ Or between tyrannical governments and their citizens.

Born in 1698, much of Richardson's adult life was spent during the years of Walpole's corrupt reign as Prime Minister. Autobiographical information points to Richardson as being "opposed to any abuse of power that verged on tyranny, whether in the hands of the Tories or Whigs" (Carnell 103). While critics have attempted to assign *Pamela's* Mr. B as a symbol of either the Jacobite pretender or Walpole, partisan lines should not be drawn through this novel. Carnell notes that "by the middle of the eighteenth century both [Whig and Tory] parties voiced abstract ideas about liberty" (105). Margaret Anne Doody claims that "Richardson articulates 'a dream of restoration, reconciliation, and wholeness for an England badly divided and given to division'" (quoted in Carnell 103). The many conflicts and eventual resolution in *Pamela* certainly lend themselves to Doody's observation. Just as the model of masculinity in *Robinson Crusoe* was shaped by Defoe's Whig individualism, the masculinity presented in *Pamela* is born from Richardson's push for "conciliatory politics" (Carnell 103). Richardson's call for the end of tyrannical governments and political division should also be read as a demand for reform throughout the landed gentry, a group of men who began to abuse their post-1688 empowerment. Dueling with one another, partaking in rakish promiscuity, and neglecting the citizens who depended on them, the mid-century male gentry was enjoying a life of unimpeded, unrestrained, and improvident power. The disastrous state of the gentry becomes apparent with Richardson's characterization of Mr. B and marks a critical point along the trajectory of eighteenth-century masculinity.

Richardson's vision for political collaboration is demonstrated through the evolving relationship between Mr. B and the ever-virtuous Pamela: from peaceful resistance to the eventual adoption a marital constitution of sorts, Pamela maintains her

virtue and advances her status as the tyrannical Mr. B reshapes himself as a proper husband via moral reform and compromise. Shortly after their marriage, Mr. B presents Pamela with a list of 48 “Rules for [her] future Conduct” (Richardson 448). Pamela accepts these rules, but her role as wife does not require complete submission. In *Pamela*, Part II, Pamela “asserts her right to resist her husband’s authority” after learning of his adulterous intentions (Carnell 107). After a scene that mirrors a criminal trial (which includes Pamela’s suicide bluff), Mr. B is subdued, marking his “transformation from rake to husband to reformed husband” (Carnell 112). While Richardson’s characters enjoy the fruits of compromise, the masculinity at hand in *Pamela* demonstrates the male gentry’s struggle in its first attempts to reassert control in the wake of the Glorious Revolution. While Crusoe was successful in his island dominion, Mr. B’s attempts to physically and economically dominate Pamela are thwarted; it is only when he begins his reform that Mr. B can successfully advance his seduction of his late mother’s serving girl.

A landed member of the gentry, Mr. B neglects and abuses the patriarchal responsibility attached to his rank. Mr. B only reveals little information about his past, but readers learn that he was involved in at least one duel and has a child born out of wedlock. In observing Richardson’s characterization of Mr. B, a new masculinity from that of Crusoe’s island-individual model emerges. In *Pamela*, economic power provides the means for the gentry to dominate and control the serving and working classes. Unlike Crusoe, Mr. B is reluctant to accept his role as dutiful, benevolent male leader; B’s economic power is used to enable his continued corruption, as opposed to the survival-driven economic success on Crusoe’s island. In this hyper-economic system of power,

Mr. B's ends are achieved through his endless means (he literally attempts to pay Pamela to serve as his mistress). Patricia Spacks notes the seemingly absolute power that Mr. B enjoys with his economic superiority: "Mrs. Jewkes . . . believes herself justified in any course of action if ordered by her master to pursue it. Not only his tenants and servants but his social peers take for granted the utter authority of high rank" (95). Jewkes reports to Pamela that "he is my Master, and if he bids me do a Thing that I can do, I think I ought to do it, and let him, who has Power, to command me, look to the Lawfulness of it" (Richardson 144). Jewkes, the "agent and object of power" will eventually be civil to Pamela, but only after Mr. B has won Pamela's desire (Spacks 87). Because of his rank, Mr. B's antics cause no alarm, even among his fellow gentry men. Sir Simon Darnford is unmoved by Mr. Williams's attempt to help Pamela: "And if [Mr. B] takes care [Pamela] wants for nothing, I don't see any great Injury will be done her. He hurts no family by this" (Richardson 134). Rank and wealth enable Mr. B's absolute, unchecked rule.

Richardson's *Pamela* depicts the gentry's status as distant from any sort of physical masculinity; that is, distant from the assertion of manliness via physical attractiveness or brute force. Abusing the Whig model of individualism, gentry males and Walpole's corrupt government would struggle in their efforts to fill the power void left with the end of absolute rule. By the middle of the eighteenth century, capitalism and individualism had grown so strong that economic power replaced physical might; use of physical force is no longer acceptable behavior for a gentleman⁹. As shown in *Pamela*, the gentry's economic success enables them to dominate their subjects. It is through these

⁹ Mackie explains that while a "code of honor obligates a gentleman to accept a [duel], the law of the land forbids it" (18). Because of the gentry's perceived infallibility, the "anti-dueling laws" of the midcentury "had little or no effect" (18).

lower ranks (the likes of Jewkes and Colbrand) where the gentry can coerce others into carrying out physical violence on their behalf. When threatened by Lady Daver's nephew, Pamela offers the harsh and memorable: "Tinsel'd Toy, said I, (for he was lac'd all over) . . . sport with your Footmen, and not me!" (Richardson 389). In Richardson's novel, physical violence is associated with the lower rungs of society, a class that proves helpless to suffer the consequences of a corrupt and totally invulnerable class of greed-driven rulers who hide behind a facade of politeness and sensibility. The gentry have displaced their physical masculinity on those who serve them; Jewkes and Colbrand become extensions of Mr. B's might. Further testament to Richardson's portrayal of 1740s "demilitarization" comes when considering that Pamela achieves success not through physical prowess but through painstaking adherence to the self-preservation of her virtue.

In contrast to the powerful gentry, the socially low male characters of *Pamela* are ineffective and weak. Mr. Williams is unable to escape the domination of the gentry ranks and finds himself mugged and eventually imprisoned. Early in the novel, Pamela's father is easily deceived of her whereabouts, and is powerless to challenge the lying Squire. Mr. B demands, "am I to be doubted? . . . Why, Man, you know not who you talk to!" (96). Mr. B's rank provides assured "authenticity, [and] the well-born liar" is outraged that his word would be doubted by a man of the lower class (Spacks 96). Pamela's father again demonstrates weakness when he too readily accepts Mr. B's marriage suggestion, blinded by the opportunity for economic advancement: "there is so much goodness on your Side, and, blessed be God! so much Prudence of my Daughter's that I must be quite silent" (299). Goodman Andrews immediately submits to the societal

order and, seeing his once imprisoned daughter now happily in love, instantly accepts a situation that stands to bring immense financial gain. Attesting the powerlessness his low birth has brought him, silence is an appropriate and telling response: Pamela's father can have no say in this matter; instead, he is left weeping with what Pamela reports as "tears of joy" (299). In this incident, Richardson has shown that the gentry has stripped the power of speech away from those they rule. Submissive and passive, silent and crying, Richardson presents a lower social rank that is helplessly overpowered and emasculated by the gentry.

In Richardson's empowered gentry model, a physical description of Mr. B is unnecessary. Richardson's exclusion of Mr. B's physical description is appropriate based on his economic distance from the lower ranks, the latter of which accept their roles as extensions of Mr. B's power. By excluding descriptive images of Mr. B, Richardson separates high from low: physicality is reserved for the direct agents of the socially elevated. Physical masculinity is beneath Mr. B's status, and much like his female protagonist, Richardson provides very little physical description of Mr. B. In a complete contrast to Fielding's sexually charged descriptions of Fanny, Pamela's characterization is achieved through her constant epistolary correspondences, not through any direct physical description. Granted, Defoe did not provide a physical description of his protagonist, but Defoe's descriptive omission is fitting for the solitary, utilitarian Crusoe who, unlike Pamela, was not the object of anybody's lust. In omitting Pamela's physical traits, Richardson attempts to demonstrate Pamela's allure via her virtue; just as he severs brute, physical masculinity away from the gentry, Richardson also separates female

virtue from sexual physicality¹⁰. This descriptive void is a complete contrast to the lengthy *blazon* of Mrs. Jewks and the memorable picture of Monsieur Colbrand, both of whom act as agents of power, more means to Mr. B's malicious ends. Pamela describes Jewks in a letter to her parents: "She is a broad, squat, pousy, fat Thing, quite ugly, if any thing God made can be ugly; about forty Years old. She has a huge Hand, and an Arm as thick as my Waist, I believe. Her Nose is flat and crooked, and her Brows grow over her eyes [...]" (114). The femininity of Jewks ends with pronouns; Pamela's description of this "deadly strong" servant forms the most masculine rendition that Richardson makes throughout *Pamela* (114). Since the gentry's power is exercised via manipulation, cunning, and economic domination, there is no need to depict the physical body of the socially elevated.

Like Jewks, Richardson again dedicates a passage to provide physical description of Mr. B's other power enforcer: Monsieur Colbrand. In another letter to her parents, Pamela writes:

[Colbrand] is a Giant of a Man, for Stature; [...] and large-bon'd, and scraggy; and a Hand!—I never saw such an one in my Life. He has great staring Eyes, like the Bull's that frighten'd me so. Vast Jawbones sticking out; Eyebrows hanging over his Eyes; Two great Scars upon his Forehead, and one on his left Cheek; and two huge Whiskers, and a monstrous wide Mouth; blubber Lips; long yellow Teeth, and a hideous Grin (167).

Once more, it is of great interest that Richardson dedicates so much detail to describing one of the story's lesser characters, especially when considering how little physical description there is of Mr. B or Pamela. Masculinity, in its traditional physical sense, is

¹⁰ In another epistolary novel, *Clarissa*, Richardson provides physical description of Clarissa via letters exchanged by Lovelace and Belford. See Gordon Fulton's "Why Look at Clarissa? Physical Description and Richardson's Revision of Libertine Style" within *Styles of Meaning and Meaning of Style in Richardson's Clarissa* (1999).

reserved for these lower characters and kept distant from the gentry. Colbrand and Jewkes are both described to possess traditional masculine traits: both are large, imposing figures; both have large hands and arms, symbolic assurance of their ability to physically dominate. Colbrand is likened to the bull, a beast with obvious connotations of physical masculine power. Jewkes and Colbrand are also depicted as having overgrown, unkempt eyebrows, furthering their ugly rendition as more Neanderthalic beasts than humans.

In *Pamela*, the use of physical force is reserved for the direct agents of the socially elevated. With such separation from the brutish servant ranks, Richardson's exclusion of Mr. B's physical description is appropriate: since his power is exercised via non-physical and economic means, there is no need to depict his physical body. In displacing physical masculinity onto the serving classes Richardson is depicting a society wherein the gentry can dominate the poor without using force, much like how a tyrannical government can control its subjects. Power and rank become the new sword and lance, manipulation and income the fists and the pistol. With these new modern means of exercising power, Mr. B becomes infallible. Like subjects to an absolute despot, Mr. B's servants blindly follow malicious and wicked orders. Pamela resists the physical and economic advances Mr. B makes, driven by her unyielding virtue. Richardson rewards his heroine for this, and after finally gaining freedom from Mr. B, Pamela is convinced to return to and marry the man who once terrorized, imprisoned, and attempted to rape her. The resolution reached in *Pamela* sees each character benefit in some way and speaks volumes about both Richardson's desire for open political discourse and the status of 1740s masculinity. Considering the 48 rule marital constitution and the judiciary scene in *Pamela*, Part II, it becomes evident that Richardson's moderation model allows

men to “rule” women, but it does not allow for unchecked power. Nor does this model call for open rebellion by women: Pamela was rewarded because of her virtue, and for her ability to think for herself--in many cases, Pamela’s superior logic and understanding of biblical texts gives her an advantage in her conflicts with her eventual husband. Richardson is calling for reform throughout the gentry and government via open collaboration, honest conversation, and mutually-beneficial legislation. Once achieved, like the infamous reformed rake of Bedfordshire and his virtuous bride, the English gentry men and the citizens they ruled could thrive together.

Pamela and its sequels enjoyed immense success, but for many readers, Richardson’s naive idealism and insistence upon moderation were seen as foolish fantasies. Fielding was one such reader who took issue with the ever-virtuous, fifteen-year-old serving girl turned Lady. Nancy Armstrong writes:

[Fielding] thought Richardson insulted the intelligence of readers by asking them to believe that a servant could dissuade a man of Mr. B’s position from having his way with her. [He] found it ludicrous to think that a man of such station would so overvalue the virginity of a woman who was not particularly well born. (29)

Fielding takes issue with Richardson’s economic hierarchy and Pamela’s formula for success and counters, creating a complete contrast to the masculinity presented in *Pamela*. Looking beyond the hilarious and cutting antics of *Shamela*, we encounter Fielding’s footman-hero, the young Joseph Andrews. Fielding’s protagonist is guided by moral and (now) manly virtue as he bashes his way through the mock-epic journey that is *Joseph Andrews*. Justified violence regains the glory it enjoyed throughout Homer and Virgil; Fielding pushes masculinity away from Richardson’s economic and class association and returns it in a heroic, idealized form. The young, attractive Joseph and his older, morally sound mentor are the new faces of a return to Homeric, classical

masculinity. The wicked and avaricious ranks that dominated the weak men of *Pamela* are brought to justice at the male hands of reincarnated traditional masculinity. The adventures of Joseph Andrews and his crew of moral misfits come as a direct response to the characters of *Pamela* that Fielding felt were wrongfully rewarded. In responding to *Pamela*, Fielding's restoration of what he views as proper masculinity serves several purposes: Fielding uses his muscle-bound heroes to fight against the corrupt gentry and instruct his readers to accept, and behave properly within, their social rank (Ruml 196). Spacks claims that *Joseph Andrews* is "a life narrative in which the acquisition of knowledge about the world defines the hero's growth" (61). Because *Joseph Andrews* takes the form of a mock-epic, Fielding can use "his large cast of characters and his slapstick sequence of happenings" to highlight what Spacks calls the "exalted sense of importance unjustified by fact and ridiculous in its pretension" that Fielding saw within *Pamela* (61).

Fielding's complex tie to politics prevents one from placing a fixed Whig or Tory label on *Jospeh Andrews*, a novel "published almost simultaneously with Walpole's resignation in February 1742 [and] in an atmosphere of turbulent and shameless politics" (Battestin 41)¹¹. Fielding and Richardson share the same disdain of the corrupt Whig government, but while Richardson reformed and rewarded the gentry, Fielding would use muscular masculinity to punish them. Furthermore, this heroic, muscular masculinity is driven by the idea of female dependency: the notion that, in establishing themselves as

¹¹ "Famously erratic in political posture and allegiance," Fielding was a harsh critic of Walpole's corrupt government and wrote for several Tory publications (Keymer xviii). After Walpole's fall from power, Fielding resumed writing for Whig and liberal publications. His anti-Jacobite writing earned his appointment to Justice of the Peace for Westminster in 1748 (Keymer xviii). Martin Battestin explains the circumstances surrounding Fielding's frequent political shifts in "Fielding's Changing Politics and *Joseph Andrews*."

Men, males need females¹². The resexualized but silent female that Fielding presents refutes the savvy, witty, eloquent model of female success in *Pamela*. Fanny's character functions only as a virtuous catalyst for male action—Fielding's attractive but helpless heroine gives Joseph and Adams many opportunities to beat and fight their way toward the restoration of Fielding's image of a proper England. Fielding's conclusion of *Joseph Andrews* stands in stark contrast to the idealistic resolution achieved in *Pamela*. With Richardson's politically neutral view of the world, the hyper-virtuous Pamela can avoid ruin and ascend from servant to Lady; the rakish Mr. B can achieve reform. Fielding disputes this utopian resolution: Joseph reaches rank through his heroic antics and his hidden lineage, not through peaceful preservation or reform. Fielding's heroes revolt and undermine the corrupt gentry that Richardson idealized and rewarded. Virtue is thus forged into a male trait of action and stripped of its association with virginity.

Fielding's novel can be read as an alternative solution to the problem Richardson sought to solve through respectful discourse. Ruml claims, "Fielding's new species of writing is designed to teach readers, not how to cross status boundaries, but how to behave properly in the status to which providence has assigned them" (196). Joseph's success can be attributed to two key factors: his (hidden) noble birth and his reassertion of Fielding's idea of virtue. Ruml explains:

Joseph is restored to the honorable rank of gentleman only after he has demonstrated his 'Virtue'--a term which Fielding seeks to restore, from its reduction to chastity in women and to birth and wealth in men, to its proper function as the external sign and the inward spirit of England's social and political elite. (196)

Joseph Wiesenfarth suggests that *Joseph Andrews* is shown to be a moral revolution in which "Fielding turns the social ladder upside down and makes his lowest people socially

¹² Consider the limitations of Crusoe's animal and slave-containing hierarchy.

(Abraham, Joseph, and Fanny) his highest people morally” (358). For Weisenfarth, Fielding is able to complete this revolution by likening the social elites to the serving ranks. Lady Booby has the same impulses and lack of self-control as Slipslop and Betty: “By her actions, the Lady shows herself no better than a chambermaid” (Weisenfarth 359). Fielding continues his moral revolution through the use of a style that blurs social distinction by making “low” people truly heroic in stature (Weisenfarth 360). With this in mind, it becomes clear that the heroic elevation of these “low” characters facilitates the implementation of Fielding’s masculine ideal. Adams and Joseph’s memorable encounter with the Squire’s hounds demonstrates Fielding’s idea of perfect heroic masculinity. Fielding’s moral and virtuous heroes defeat the Squire’s agents of violence (male virtue is superior to the primitive aggression of beasts), presenting a return to the gallant, classical masculinity that Richardson’s (gentry and low) men lacked.

Fielding’s use of epic style (which is quite humorous), glorifies and permits the use of force against the amoral upper ranks of society, even if it sometimes results in a parson covered with pig’s blood. Fielding describes one of Joseph’s gallant rises to action: “No sooner did Joseph Andrews perceive the Distress of his Friend, when the quick-scenting Dogs attacked him, than he grasped his Cudgel in his right Hand, a Cudgel which his Father had of his Grandfather” (207). The inheritance of a weapon is common throughout Homer and Virgil, and although this cudgel is a far cry from the weapons of Ajax and Aeneas, Fielding is still connecting the virtuous Joseph, who is described using Achilles’ epithet, “swift of Foot,” to the heroes of Antiquity (208). This is a direct link to classical masculinity, which requires the type of brute force exhibited on the beaches of Troy. Galvanized with epic tone, Fielding’s novel re-associates

masculinity with “might-for-right” morality and virtue, breaking the Richardson-imposed notion that violence is barbarous and imposed only via agents of the socially ranked. Fielding maintains the heroic tone expected of mock-epics as he continues to push his return to classical masculinity throughout the numerous brawling scenes of *Joseph Andrews*. Finding herself carried away and in need of frequent rescue, Fanny comes to function as the driving force for this renewed masculinity. Heroic masculinity would not be possible without a female to serve and protect, but Fielding’s extreme notion of this masculinity reduces Fanny to nothing more than a pretty, helpless, and subordinate damsel in distress.

Fielding’s ideal presents a world completely dominated by virtuous male force. Fanny is given no independence; rather, she is usually left completely dependent on male rescue. Her only real purpose is to enable Fielding’s male heroes to protect, fight, and gawk, all of which are staples of what I have been terming heroic, Homeric, classic masculinity. Fielding’s buxom heroine is hardly even required to speak throughout the novel, unless to ask Joseph a question or shriek for help. Fanny’s character is the antithesis to Richardson’s heroine. Unlike Pamela who is seemingly always writing and conversing, Fielding’s Fanny is illiterate and reserved. While Richardson does not provide a direct physical description of Pamela, textual evidence shows that she is petite and attractive. Fielding, in restoring an ideal in which physical description and attractiveness are essential, provides a vivid picture of Fanny. Even before the narrator gives this detailed blazon, we become aware that Fanny is physically attractive—so stunning that she is literally turning heads. Arriving at an inn, Fanny immediately attracts the gazes of “the Host, his Wife, the Maid of the House, and the young Fellow who was

[Fanny and Adams's] Guide; they all conceived they had never seen any thing half so handsome" (132). Fielding casts Fanny as an objectified target for sexual desire when his narrator continues with the physical details:

Fanny was now in the nineteenth Year of her Age; she was tall and delicately shaped; but not one of those slender young Women . . . On the contrary, she was so plump, that she seemed bursting through her tight Stays, especially in the Part which confined her swelling Breasts. Nor did her Hips want the Assistance of a Hoop to extend them . . . Her hair was a Chestnut Brown, and Nature had been extremely lavish to her of it. (Fielding 132)

Fielding's masculinity demands an innocent, beautiful, and relatively silent woman to defend and rescue: with her hypersexualized physical traits, Fanny meets these requirements. While Richardson's scarce physical description of Pamela severed the connection between femininity and sexuality, Fielding creates a physical femininity that exists only to serve the idealized men who need to demonstrate their virtuous masculinity by rescuing and loving her. With Fielding's specific description of her buxom physique, Fanny becomes physical femininity personified. Fanny's ample bosom and wide hips provide the men of heroic masculinity with subconscious reassurance of her ability to birth and raise children. Notice too that Fanny's description is a seamless fit within the mock-epic genre: she is said to have a nose "just inclining to the Roman," and her body type reflects the norms of earlier classic and renaissance cultures that were attracted to well-fed, and thus full-figured, women rather than the petite, slender female Richardson depicted via Pamela (Fielding 133). Fielding's narrator elevates Fanny's beauty to the heroic level, but unlike Joseph and Adams, she is only meant to be aesthetically admired. "[Fanny] had a natural Gentility, superior to the Acquisition of Art, and which surprised all who beheld her" (133). Again, Fielding's heroic style enforces his notion of a return to

physical masculinity. Fanny remains a thoughtless sex-object to be admired, fought over, and rescued.

Joseph's successful defense of Fanny's honor is a perfect demonstration of Fielding's implementation of heroic masculinity. With a helpless woman to defend and avenge, a lowly footman becomes authorized and justified to enact physical vengeance on the ruling ranks.

[Joseph] went directly to [the Captain], and stripping off his Coat, challenged him to fight; but the Captain refused, saying he did not understand Boxing. He then grasped a Cudgel in one Hand, and catching the Captain by the Collar with the other, gave him a most severe Drubbing, and ended with telling him, he had now had some Revenge for what his dear *Fanny* suffered. (Fielding 235-36)

The virtuous Joseph defends his beloved's honor by inflicting punishment against the Captain, who like the hounds (and Jewkes and Colbrand in *Pamela*), was acting as an extension of the Squire's power. Satisfyingly, social rank does not protect the Captain from Joseph's famous cudgel. In this perfect reversal of power, Fielding's footman elevates himself over the military officer and assumes the societal-imposed responsibility of enacting just punishment for a crime against humanity. Smashing through the shield of rank that Richardson gave to Mr. B, Fielding's hero boldly breaks rank and punishes an elevated member of society. The lowly footman (although his status as gentlemen will later be revealed) is enforcing the patriarchal regulations that the gentry have ignored and abused. Again, this would not be possible without a female to defend. Classic, heroic masculinity is on full display in this incident: the macho footman beats the gentry-agent in retribution for dishonoring his desired sex-object.

With *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding presents a form of female dependence that was absent in *Robinson Crusoe* and, to Fielding, deluded in *Pamela*. Despite her reduced and

objectified status, Joseph displays an intimate and physical affection for his beloved. Sitting in a meadow and noticing that Adams has fallen asleep, the young couple share an affectionate moment together: “[Joseph] turned towards Fanny, and taking her by the Hand, began a Dalliance, which, tho’ consistent with the purest Innocence and Decency, neither he would have attempted, nor she permitted before any Witness” (Fielding 205). While Pamela offers endless details about most of her life’s episodes, she never describes the sweet intimacies two lovers would be expected to share. By including this “harmless and delightful” moment, Fielding establishes the initial stages of male-female synthesis: Joseph and Fanny are physically expressing their virtuous desire for each other. The synthesis is only partially complete, though. In order to reach full synthesis, both parties should mutually benefit and empower one another--a phenomenon that will not be achieved until Jane Austen realigns male-female relationships in her novels.

Fielding’s comedic and entertaining novel may have brought the renaissance of classic masculinity, but this reincarnated manliness is unrealistic, unsustainable, and objectifies women. Fielding’s use of the mock-epic genre re-associates masculinity with the gory glory it enjoyed in Antiquity while also romanticizing the brutal justice brought on by Joseph and Adams. In returning to the classical masculine ideal, Fielding must reduce the model of femininity from its Richardson-ian state of wit and resilience to one of physicality and helplessness. Any model that ignores the abilities of women and encouraging footmen and parsons to smash down the gentry cannot be sustained; but it is important to note that Fielding does begin to lay the foundation of male-female synthesis. Fanny depends on her hero for rescue, which has a two-pronged effect: first, Fielding’s footman assumes the patriarchal role that the amoral gentry have abused; second, Joseph

is able to virtuously pursue and physically love Fanny. This shared dependence and the resulting intimacy is the essence of the male-female synthesis. Fielding closes *Joseph Andrews* by breaking the bloodline between Joseph and Pamela, while still elevating Joseph's social rank: Joseph is rewarded and masculinity is given new life. Fielding is successful in his response to Richardson's moderate model, but the classic masculinity presented in *Joseph Andrews* will never flourish: soon, sentiment and feeling would present the next dangerous challenge to masculinity.

CHAPTER V
MELANCHOLIC MANLINESS: MASCULINITY'S CRISIS IN *TRISTRAM*
SHANDY

While Fielding refutes Richardson's economic masculinity with the clubs and fists of the classical ideal, two decades later Sterne assesses the dilapidated status of masculinity in the increasingly politically discordant atmosphere that accompanied the age of sentiment. Sterne's critique shows the costly damages that result from the lack of female dependence: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* revolves around male-male relationships while (often humorously) ignoring women, who spend the novel in childbirth and governing the household while their husbands smoke and discuss noses, chestnuts, knots, buttons, and almost everything in between. The male-female synthesis felt in *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* has vanished. To Sterne, effeminized and hyper-sentimental men lack a clear political and national identity are left pathetically obsessing with their pasts. Writing from outside the gentry and plagued with a lifetime of illness and financial hardships (but armed with university education), Sterne satirizes the landed English gentry by reducing them to a state of obsessive and ridiculous melancholy, bringing light to the farcical masculinity at hand. In an effort to regain the

stability facilitated by what they once knew as masculine, Walter fixates on the stoic reasoning of political philosophy and Toby becomes equally obsessed with military fortifications. Both of these men's "hobby horses" represent aspects of their former masculinity. Reasoning and logic; war and fortification: these were once acceptable masculine outlets for the Shandy brothers and other high born men of pre-sentimental England. Reduced by the age of feeling though, these obsessions have an anti-masculine effect on the melodramatic, ineffectual, and effeminized men of Sterne's farce of a gentry. This male reduction is exacerbated by the political tensions of George III's rule and by the unresolved national identity crisis that resulted from the rejection of James II¹³. In *Tristram Shandy*, men who should be improving their land and ensuring their family's continued prosperity (duties expected of the male gentry) are left in a poignant state of digressive and nostalgic mourning.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, a cloud of uncertainty looms over an anxious Sterne and his fellow countrymen as he is writing *Tristram Shandy*. The age of sentiment, ushered by the economic conditions outlined in my first chapter, brings a wave of effeminization over English men. Sterne's cock and bull story reflects both the political and social anxieties felt in the second half of the long eighteenth century. Critics have long overlooked the numerous connections between Sterne's digressive novel and the political tensions felt during George III's rule. Studies of the politics of Defoe, Fielding, and Richardson, have shown to be a direct link between popular political philosophy and the status of masculinity. In short, the volatile political atmosphere of the

¹³ According to Havard, "Following the accession of George III in 1760, heated constitutional debates created 'an almost permanent sense of instability and crisis' in England as mounting oppositional activity, together with increasingly palpable distance from the certainties of the past, created a general condition of tumult, dislocation, and confusion" (585).

eighteenth century has a direct relationship with the turbulent trajectory of masculinity. As reflected in *Tristram Shandy*, the crisis facing Whig progress has a destructive effect on the construction of a sound national masculinity.

Much like Fielding and Richardson, Sterne was a self-described “no party man,” and quit writing what he called “dirty work” for anti-Tory papers in the mid 1740s (Havard 590). However, considering the magnitude of *Tristram Shandy* and the fact that the novel takes place over the span of nearly one century, Sterne’s novel is attracting an increased amount of political criticism. John Havard draws numerous connections between *Tristram Shandy* and the political crisis endured throughout the entire eighteenth century. Too often, Sterne’s novel has been excluded from the political arena; critics have described the novel as “confined to the domestic sphere,” or followed Watt’s example and studied the novel’s apparent mockery of realism (Havard 586). For Havard, the “wayward course” of *Tristram Shandy* “enables us to recover the novel’s sharply critical insights into the increasingly bewildering world of politics”; the “gaps and contradictions between existing and emergent models of political understanding” deepen (587-588). Within Havard’s “gaps and contradictions,” the male characters are left searching their pasts as they face an uncertain political and social future. Unable to thrive in such a politically divisive and variable environment, the new men of feeling prove unfit to fulfill their gentry duties. The uncertainty surrounding Whig progress threatens national stability and contributes to the effeminized state of men, contributing to the decline of what should be an effective, responsible gentry class.

Before Sterne assesses the decrepit state of masculinity, his narrator introduces a character who represents the strange gender instability that results from the emasculation

of the gentry. The presence of a character named Yorick in a novel centered on melancholia presents more evidence that Sterne's work is spoofing past literary forms, but Sterne's Yorick has a greater role in *Tristram Shandy* than his namesake in *Hamlet*. Kim notes that Yorick possesses both strong masculine and feminine traits: in Yorick, Sterne joins "learned wit, rational judgment, and fortitude of will" (masculine traits) with "naive emotionality, intuitive perception, and delicacy of feeling" (feminine traits) (4). Sterne's narrator (Tristram) associates Yorick with "masculine valor" when he describes him "[fighting] it out with all imaginable gallantry" (Kim 4). Immediately contrasting this notion, Tristram continues, "[Yorick is] as utterly unpracticed in the world...at the age of twenty-six...as a romping, unsuspecting girl of thirteen," and then moves on to the reduced state of his masculinity "[he] never appeared better, or otherwise mounted, than upon a lean, sorry, jack-ass of a horse" (quoted in Kim 4). Of course, in this confused, conflicting status, Yorick is destined to perish. Tristram cries, "Alas, poor YORICK!" and Sterne presents his famous black page (30)¹⁴. Without a proper political or sexual identity, masculinity, like poor Yorick, is doomed.

Sterne's assessment of gender's volatile status and masculinity's vulnerability makes itself apparent throughout the entire novel, which Kim describes as "a veritable encyclopedia of phallic injury": Toby's groin is crushed during battle, Tristram is circumcised by a crashing window, and Walter's orgasm is interrupted with a question about housework (9). Moving beyond the analysis of phallic loss, Chantel Lavoie

¹⁴ As Watt and numerous critics have noted, Sterne's novel mocks the conventions of realism that began to gain popularity throughout the century. Including black and marbled pages has drawn wide critical attention to Sterne's use of typographic technique.

explores the eighteenth-century responses to breeching: a coming of age that segregates and distinguishes the sexes. Until breeched, boys and girls dressed alike and spent their time together. Society literally imposes gender on these boys, forcing them into masculine identities before they are even sexually developed. For Lavoie, breeching's paradoxical offering of both freedom and restraint becomes evident in *Tristram Shandy*. Lavoie notes that Sterne's novel often deals with "prosaic things that are embarrassing and ridiculous--like noses and buttonholes, and breeches" (86). Breeches cause many problems for Sterne's men: Walter cannot articulate his son's name in time for the baptism because he is struggling to don his breeches; Uncle Toby's wound is hidden by breeches, and he struggles to fit into a pair before courting Widow Wadman; Mrs. Shandy is too preoccupied sewing breeches to attend the grand tour; in one digression, a hot chestnut falls down a pair of breeches and burns a very sensitive male area (Lavoie 86). As Lavoie's observations show, Sterne is drawing attention to breeches to highlight the anxiety associated with forced gendering during a time sentiment and feeling have erased the distinction between what is "male" and "female."

Walter Shandy is conflicted about breeching Tristram and holds a bedside discussion with his wife. Not only does this highlight the reduced state of marital intimacy (as if pillow talk about clocks was not enough), it "also speaks to preoccupations within larger debates about child-rearing" (Lavoie 89). Sterne's portrayal of the Shandy's discussion highlights the anxiety associated with breeching's "irrevocable nature" (Lavoie 89). Lavoie notes that Walter does not even propose the act directly, instead, he suggests, "We should *begin to think*, Mrs. Shandy, of putting this boy into breeches" (89 Lavoie's emphasis). Predictably turning to his "hobby horse," Mr.

Shandy searches philosophy for a description of the perfect pair of breeches, but has no success. By excluding breeches from philosophy, Sterne is commenting on the ridiculousness of their existence in the modern world (Lavoie 90). Such a tradition has no place among the philosophers, men who upheld masculinity via stoic reasoning and logic, not clothes. Walter's turn to philosophy is of great importance. Struggling to define himself in the rapidly changing and complex world, Walter relies upon his "hobby horse" as he unsuccessfully battles his anxiety in a world that has progressed beyond his recognition.

Sterne's novel does far more than highlight the volatile nature of masculinity. The melodramatic and ineffectual men are a product of political confusion in a England now lacking national male identity; by emasculating the Shandy brothers, Sterne's novel also portrays the cost of a society completely lacking male-female synthesis. Relying on clothing to affirm their masculine statues and intimate with one another but removed from their wives, Sterne's gentry men are far too effeminized to achieve the masculine position within male-female synthesis. Throughout *Tristram Shandy*, the men share numerous intimate moments and conversations with each other; despite their effeminate traits and sentiment, Sterne's gentry men do not form balanced relationships with women.

While his mother is upstairs in labor, Tristram describes his father and uncle:

--I wonder what's all that noise, and running backwards and forwards for, above stairs, quoth my father, addressing himself, after an hour and half's silence, to my uncle *Toby*, --who you must know, was sitting on the opposite side of the fire, smoking his social pipe all the time. (Sterne 56)

Joined by Dr. Slop, who does not even arrive with his instruments, the gentlemen discuss the "prodigious armies" of Flanders and later, highly concerned with executing a proper curse on knots, read aloud a lengthy excommunication (Sterne 142). Ashleigh Blackwood

offers an explanation for the frustrating (yet somehow entertaining) behavior of Sterne's men during Mrs. Shandy's labor. Sterne recognizes that the "Anxieties and uncertainties about the social expectations placed on men to participate in childbirth were prevalent within eighteenth-century culture" (114). Dr. Slop, Walter, and Uncle Toby seek safety when they attempt to understand childbirth in their own terms, but "their efforts to convert theory into practice are continually thwarted by a lack of experience and an inability fully to appreciate the female experience of childbearing" (Blackwood 115).

Havard sees the political implication in this lengthy birth scene claiming that "Walter's determination to manage the birth of his son is motivated in part by the desire to uphold established models of power at all levels, including household governance" (599). Months before Tristram's birth, Walter composes an essay outlining the dangerous shift in power that would result if his wife was to give birth in the country. Walter turns to his political and philosophical "hobby horse" not only out of the anxiety Blackwood notes, but his constant political thinking represents his desire to bring order to a world where "so many things . . . were out of joint" and "the political arch was giving way" (Sterne 129). Returning to Tristram's birth, we find the Shandy men asleep, exhausted from their discussions; they awake to Dr. Slop making a bridge to repair Tristram's mutilated nose¹⁵. Having neglected the advice of the female midwife, Slop's forceps have caused physical harm: Slop's intervention furthers Sterne's notion of male ignorance and demonstrates the detrimental cost. If men know nothing about women, how should they know how to deliver children? With his melancholic, digressive, and anxious men, smoking and reading during Tristram's birth and whose unwarranted assistance only

¹⁵ Havard notes the date of Tristram's birth: November 5th. The "untimely child" offsets the idea that William III's new government was a 'child of Time and of Providence'" (Harvard 596).

causes harm, Sterne brutally critiques the decrepit state of masculinity in the middle of the eighteenth century. Feeling and sentiment have replaced male gentry action and leadership; ranked males have assumed a reduced, obviated, and even damaging role at a great distance from their female companions. The numerous chapters of digression that surround Tristram's birth demonstrate the male anxiety surrounding childbirth. The confusion, digressions, and male-incompetence during Tristram's birth point to not just masculinity's reduced state, but to an anxious political confusion that evolved into a national identity crisis.

Walter Shandy's "hobby horse" allows him to survive in a world lacking strong masculinity and male-female synthesis, but reduces him to an ineffective, effeminized shell of a man. In a state of identity confusion, Walter's obsession also interferes with and un-romanticizes his marriage. Tristram describes the difficulty Walter has managing the death of his son, Bobby, and the resulting, predictable turn to philosophy:

My father managed his affliction otherwise; and indeed differently from most men either ancient or modern; for he neither wept it away, as the *Hebrews* and the *Romans*--or slept it off, as the *Lamlanders*--or hang'd it, as the *English*, or drowned it, as the *Germans*--nor did he curse it, or damn it, or excommunicate it, or rhyme it, or lillabullero it-- -- He got rid of it however. (Sterne 317)

Sterne sets Walter apart from other men, all of whom seem to have the masculine ability to cope with the death of a loved one. Even if it is crying, the traditional men that Tristram describes do offer an observable, physical reaction to death. Walter lacks this physical ability, and instead delves into philosophy. Unable to physically express himself like other men, Walter relies on the Magna Charta and Servius Sulpicius to tell him how to think and react to the loss of his son (Sterne 320). After Tristram's birth, Walter is determined to partake in his upbringing, yet spends his time away from his son writing a

Tristra-paedia while women raise his son. For as well-versed in political philosophy as he is, Walter's observations are always absurd and contradictory. Sterne's original audience would undoubtedly detect the "inimitable nonsense" of Walter's political theories, but there is a specific reason Sterne provides Walter with such "conflicted visions for the 'balance of power'" (Havard 600). Walter reminisces about the Tory philosophy that dominated the "patriarchal and authoritarian" past centuries "while registering elements of subsequent opposition, patriot, and 'Country' positions" (Havard 600)¹⁶. For Havard, Sterne's deliberate insertion of "discordant elements into his portrait of Walter... highlights the incoherence and confusion that accrue around attempts to maintain a single 'position' over time" (600). In the middle of the eighteenth century, both the Whigs and Tories faced challenges and would "fragment into myriad new interests" (Havard 603). Walter's "rattlebag of arguments" demonstrates the magnitude of political upheaval at hand (Havard 603). Most importantly, Walter's political inconsistencies reflect the confused state of masculinity: men look back to their history of inherited power and hegemonic authority (Walter's memory of Tory order); they look ahead to a future clouded with uncertainties brought by constant political tension, changing foreign relations, and the increasingly blurred gender distinction in the age of sentiment.

Reflective of masculinity's midcentury status, Sterne demonstrates Walter and Toby's effeminization throughout *Tristram Shandy*. Ironically, even without their traditional masculine attributes, Sterne's gentry men still exclude expressing their intimacies to women: there is no female dependency or resulting synthesis. Unlike the masculine heroes of past romances and other literature, Walter is too pragmatic and

¹⁶ Walter's conservative political views are ironic when considering that he once worked as a merchant in London; Shandy Hall may have been purchased rather than inherited.

utilitarian to physically love his wife. For Walter, sex becomes a chore, and sometimes a forum for discussing family matters; without a passionate husband, Mrs. Shandy only becomes aroused after first hearing the clock being wound, the only form of foreplay she has come to expect. (Sterne 9). Walter is so far removed from any notion of masculine romance that he holds his wife to the terms set in a lengthy marriage settlement: a legal document outlining where exactly Elizabeth is to give birth¹⁷. Distant from traditional masculinity, Sterne's gentry males are oblivious to females. While Fielding's Joseph was constantly verbalizing the love for the beautiful Fanny, Tristram explains that his Uncle Toby "knew not [. . .] so much as the right end of a Woman from the wrong, and was never altogether at his ease near any one of them [...]" (548-49).

Toby's sexual obliviousness shows itself during his comical misunderstanding of Trim's encounter with a nurse. In a highly sexually charged description, Trim describes Beguine rubbing his wounded leg: "The more she rubb'd, and the longer strokes she took--the more the fire kindled in my veins--till at length, by two or three strokes longer than the rest--my passion rose to the highest pitch--I seized her hand--" (Sterne 522). Blind to this type of passion, Toby interrupts his corporal, "And then, thou clapped'st it to thy lips, Trim . . . and madest a speech" (Sterne 522). Never having experienced this type of sexual excitement, Toby cannot recognize the passion "at hand." The non-amorous and emasculated Toby, much like his brother, is so far removed from the masculine that he is blind to the suggestive situation of a nurse rubbing a wounded soldier. A typical construction of masculinity would place the woman in this nursing role: she is subordinate, nurturing, and sexually attractive to the male who injured himself in

¹⁷ Walter's document has also been understood as mockery of conventional romance plots.

heroic battle. Despite the strong sexual tone of Trim's story, Toby remains oblivious. Sterne is effectively demonstrating the gentry's extreme lack of traditional masculinity: Toby assumes that Trim satisfied his desire by giving a speech; all notions of physical satisfaction are completely overlooked. We assume that Sterne's corporal does not address a speech to the female nurse. Like Fielding's (once) lower ranked footman, and unlike the gentleman he serves, Trim is able and willing to fulfill the physical requirements associated with his male identity.

Sterne continues critiquing the lack of traditional masculinity in what has become arguably the most entertaining digression within *Tristram Shandy*: the Widow Wadman plot. Sterne displaces traditional masculinity onto the females of this episode: the widow is concerned with Toby's ability to have sex and Bridget seduces Trim to get information. Toby remains hopelessly oblivious to romance: "he march'd up abreast with her to the sofa, and in three plain words---though not before he was sat down----nor after he was sat down----but as he was sitting down, told her, '*he was in love*'----so that my uncle Toby strained himself more in the declaration than he needed" (Sterne 576). Sterne is certain to describe Toby's approach in military terms: Toby's anxious mind can only associate courting a woman with the straightforward marching on an enemy and offering a volley. Toby applies this mechanical, anti-romantic method as he is sitting down and is met with only an awkward silence, unbroken until Widow Wadman begins the practical discussion of marriage's demands (Sterne 576-77). Toby further removes himself from the masculine when he claims that the reasons he wants to marry "are written [...] in the Common-Prayer Book" (Sterne 577). Hiding behind the anti-romantic notions of religion, Toby offers no passion, physical or emotional, to the woman he supposedly "loves." This

comes as a hard contrast to Fielding's presentation of Joseph and the romance of heroic masculinity that serenades woman with passionate, poetic, and often lustful language (while still objectifying them).

Much like Walter's "hobby horse," Toby's obsession with the military and fortifications betrays a nostalgic yearning of the past. Unable to thrive in the age of sentiment and perplexed by the "constitutional upheaval" associated with George III's government, Toby relies on his military mind to bring him assurance of structure, order, and England's divine providence to rule (Harvard 603). Trim and Toby's military service provides a direct link to the Shandy family and the "events that saw William topple the regime of James II, ostensibly securing a newly stable system of government for the English people" (Harvard 595). Trim's account of his service is telling. He reports that "King William was of an opinion . . . that every thing was predestined for us in this world; insomuch, that he would often say to his soldiers, that 'every ball had its billet'" (Sterne 515). Harvard finds irony in William's philosophy, noting that "he was almost killed by a stray bullet as he prepared for the Battle of Boyne" (595). Trim and Toby's shared "Panglossian outlook" is indicative of the English desire for a "divine plan" (Harvard 595). Having replaced James II with William III, the English are haunted by the fact that they have submitted to foreign rule. In adapting William's notion of predestination, Trim, Toby, and the English men they represent, are provided with self-assurance that their kingdom is still built upon divine providence.

Sterne continues to assess the naive, benign status of masculinity as the Widow Wadman plot continues. Again, it is the female widow who has urgent physical concern *vis-à-vis* her nervous suitor's "fitness for the marriage state" (Sterne 569). Wadman goes

to such lengths as consulting anatomy books and making an inquiry with the useless Dr. Slop. Sterne uses strong sexual undertones in the widow's questions: "Was [the wound] without remission?-- --Was it more tolerable in bed? --Could he lie on both sides alike with it? --Was he able to mount a horse? --Was motion bad for it?" (Sterne 579). Toby remains blind to Widow Widman's practical concerns, and after promising to show her "the very place" of his injury, guides her finger to the gate of St. Nicholas on his map of Namur (Sterne 567, 580). Toby's utter naivety makes for a comical misunderstanding and furthers Sterne's presentation of a farcical gentry. Ironically, as this plot shows, it is the women who are concerned with sex and only the lower ranked men who seem to enjoy it.

Without any relevant information from Toby, Wadman's maid, Bridget, seduces Trim to learn that Toby's wound was not "more in the middle," which would have "left [her] poor mistress undone" (Sterne 581). Despite her frequent inquiry, Toby never reveals the details of his wound to Wadman. While his master toils over the reasons for Widow Wadman's frequent inquiries, Trim has no problem exercising his own sexual fitness with Bridget. Finally, a bit frustrated with the situation, Trim tells his Captain, "The knee is such a distance from the main body--whereas the groin, your honor knows, is upon the very *curtin* of the *place*" (Sterne 585). Hearing this, Toby begins his nervous whistle and suggests that they visit with his brother. A typical masculine identity would see Toby eager to establish his sexual capability. In Sterne's satiric assessment, though, Toby only becomes more anxious and confused, retreating to the safety of his brother's house while the lower ranked likes of Trim enjoy sex. Sterne has figuratively castrated Toby via nervous naivety; the proud war hero is left, like the rest of the Sterne's gentry, useless to a woman.

Sterne has used comedy and digression to savagely assess the sentimental, effeminized, and politically confused gentry of the mid eighteenth century. The incompetent and feeble gentry Sterne portrays highlight the damaging cost of reduced masculinity. *Tristram Shandy* is peppered with phallic loss and melancholic men who rely on their obsessions to defend from feelings of ineffectual decay and identity confusion. Sterne uses Yorick and the motif of breeches to highlight the anxious state of implemented gender: boys are irrevocably told that they are men in a period devoid of maleness. This results in men like Yorick, who is rejected by his peers and left to die in dejected sorrow. Along with the discordant Yorick, Sterne kills any ideas of romance in this period of the unmasculine: Walter and Elizabeth's marriage mocks the court plot; Toby's complete sexual incompetence confirms traditional masculinity's absence within the upper ranks. Without gentry leadership and support, there can be no male-female synthesis: women are left alone while the men smoke and endlessly converse about the past; Elizabeth passively agrees with each of Walter's statements during their mid-sex discussions; Wadman seeks assurance of physical sex ability while Toby cites scripture.

CHAPTER VI
SYNTHESIS AT LAST: JANE AUSTEN AND THE ANTI-JACOBIN
RESTORATION OF THE ENGLISH MAN

Unlike the complete lack of male-female synthesis that Sterne has highlighted, the anti-Jacobin, Tory Jane Austen aims to reassert the interdependence of the sexes and enact a balanced, sustainable masculinity. With scenes like Joseph and Fanny innocently spooning in a field, and with the eventual union of Pamela and Mr. B (albeit unlikely) Fielding and Richardson have already offered some notion of male-female synthesis, but Austen will elevate this beyond the purely physical and towards a state where landed men, even if they are far less wealthy than the likes of Richardson's Mr. B, feel obligated to lead, protect, and love women. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy and Elizabeth simultaneously mature and accept each other's love; *Emma*'s protagonist and Knightly reach an elevated synthesis via frequent meaningful conversation and their shared sense of an obligation to help others. Contrasting with Fielding's amoral and Sterne's weak and ineffectual gentry, Knightly restores the gentry with a masculinity that originates from female dependence and the resulting male-female synthesis. Marilyn Butler studies the political implications and the freedom of individuals within Austen's novels. For Butler,

the writers of the late eighteenth century are divided between Jacobins (pro-French revolution) and anti-Jacobins; Austen's novels come as a response to the anti-establishment messages provided in the former (iv). Butler calls for a reconciliation between the anti-Jacobin Austen she portrays and the Austen beheld by popular feminist critics through her idea of "Tory feminism" (xxxiii). Such a union can be achieved in the exploration of the male-female syntheses that this chapter will illuminate. Edward Neill disputes Butler's work, claiming that Austen's hard label as "anti-Jacobin" has unjustly reduced the author to "a swash-buckling Tory" whose "creative energy goes to keeping kings on thrones, bishops in palaces, and lesser lights in their places" (2-3). To disable this reduction, Neill argues that Austen's novels are not pro-establishment, but are instead "politically destabilized and destabilizing" because of their ability to "raise questions about 'the total social structure'" (9-10). Elaborating on both Butler and Neill's studies, I will demonstrate that Butler's notion of Tory feminism is achieved via male-female synthesis. Neill's claim about Austen's challenge to social structure becomes questionable when considering that he makes the mistake of dismissing the mutually beneficial (for males and females) conclusions in novels like *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* in favor of studying what he calls Austen's "analysis of the social inferno" (50). Austen's novels do indeed draw attention to the tribulations of the aged and outdated gentry, but through masculine characters like Knightly and Darcy, Austen offers a restorative hope aligned with the return of Tory values, not in the usurpation of traditional values. Austen's male characters bring much-needed repair to the gentry; within her anti-Jacobin plots and resolutions, the male-female synthesis will finally flourish.

E.J. Clery reminds us that Austen's novels depict young gentry men beginning to establish themselves in the world. Despite her (perhaps sarcastically) self-described status as being "unlearned and uninformed [of] Man's Conversation," Austen draws on her life experience to accurately portray her novel's males (Clery 332). Evidence of her biography shows that she had a "remarkably wide experience of men's lives and men's work" (Clery 334). Clery goes on to cite that Austen's parents ran a boarding school for boys and that she had six brothers, all of whom she maintained a close relationship with (334). With this in mind, it is only fitting that Austen's novels all portray men faced with choices. In *Emma*, the middle-aged Knightly "becomes jealous when a younger man begins paying attention to the female neighbor he has known all his life" (Clery 334). The female dependency is at hand: without Emma, Knightley cannot exercise the pure masculinity expected of the gentry. *Together*, the two can enhance and ensure the continuation of the gentry's class responsibility of assisting and providing for the lower ranks while improving their own estates. Studying Knightly, one sees the progress men have made since Defoe's economic and imperial model of masculinity in the beginning of the century. Contrasting the endless wealth and the scheming of the amoral Mr. B, Knightly upholds his patriarchal duty even while short-cashed; the differences between Joseph and Knightley are fairly obvious: Knightly is not the type to swing a cudgel; and lastly, Knightley's ability to properly converse with a woman marks an essential evolution away from Sterne's pathetic gentry. In her portrayal of the restoration of men, Austen simultaneously enacts the male-female synthesis that is necessary for sustainable, modernized masculinity to exist in a nation that is now demanding it.

Kramp discusses the social and political environment in which Austen's men could reform, regenerate, and thrive. In recovering from the blow of losing the American Colonies, and from the shock of the French Revolution, English society presents its men with an urgent demand to reform. Gone are the libertine and rakish ways once enjoyed by the likes of Mr. B; likewise, the hyper-sentimental and ineffectual musing of the Shandy brothers and company can no longer be tolerated. These models of masculinity present a threat to the strict order and stability demanded by the new need for a strong national identity. Reflective of the men living in the turbulent end of the long eighteenth century, Austen's males "fashion themselves as sexual and national subjects" who must now "relinquish their identities as lovers and discipline their sexual desire" (Kramp 7). In responding to the French Revolution, England needed "stable subjects who are able to participate in hegemonic heterosexual structures like marriage and family" (Kramp 7). In renouncing their rakish, foppish, or sentimental ways, English men would "mask their complexity and prevent any destabilization" to the fragile structures of power that had been violently undermined in the Americas and France (Kramp 7).

Austen's presentation of George Knightley reflects the new identity of English masculinity. Claudia Johnson has argued that Knightley's "humane model of masculinity 'diminished the authority of male sentimentality and reimmasculated men and women alike with a high sense of national purpose'" (quoted in Kramp 9). As his name implies, Knightly possesses the chivalric traits inherited from England's romanticized, medieval history; but Knightly would simultaneously embody the spirit of the new English gentleman: protective of his neighbors, unimpressed by the gilded gallantry of Frank Churchill, and constantly industrious, Knightley is precisely the male necessary to

redefine masculinity in the face of national crisis and enact the male-female synthesis that has, until now, been lacking or insufficient.

Emma and Knightley's strong bond is established in the very first chapter of *Emma*. Austen's narrator describes George Knightley as "a very old and intimate friend of the family," and the two playfully entertain Mr. Woodhouse together (9). Knightley's identity as a paternal, concerned male also becomes clear when the narrator informs us that he "was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them" (Austin 9). This establishes the foundation of male-female synthesis between the two, and alludes to the open channel of communication necessary for their alignment. John Allen Stevenson studies the multiple "triangles of desire" within *Emma* and claims that, "The three couples who marry at the end of the book are essentially together at the beginning" (110). Even after his sixteen-mile journey from London, Knightley ventures through the night to visit Emma and Mr. Woodhouse at Hartfield; we find Emma and Knightley in conversation and Mr. Woodhouse complaining--a scene much like that which closes the novel (Stevenson 111). Emma betrays her fondness for Knightley throughout the novel, an admiration that will eventually evolve into attraction¹⁸.

In describing Knightley to Harriet, Emma says, "[He] is so fine a man! [...] You might not see one in a hundred, with *gentleman* so plainly written as in Mr. Knightley" (Austen 25). Emma admires Knightley as a masculine figure of the gentry, and the two often engage in conversations concerning the well-being of other characters. For

¹⁸ Stevenson ahistorically studies the sudden attraction between Emma and Knightley by relying on Freudian psychological theory: "Since Knightley is so much like a father, Emma would tend to repress any feeling for him as a violation of taboo" (127). While the novel lends itself to such criticism, Freud's theories have no place in a novel written 41 years before his birth.

Stevenson, the dialectic between Emma and Knightly contains an “inevitable sexual charge” with its “wit and banter we associate with the verbally dueling lovers of the Restoration” (125). Stevenson is correct in his observation that the dialog between these two does often create the sense of tension, but rather than placing the couple’s repartee backwards in history, I maintain that the open discourse (resulting in both meaningful and playful conversations) between man and woman on display illustrates an enhanced male-female synthesis that has not yet existed. Together, Knightley and Emma discuss an array of subjects: Harriet and Robert Martin’s marriage, proper childrearing, Frank Churchill’s personality (much to the annoyance of Knightley), and the welfare of the Bates women.

It is through Knightley that Emma learns how a proper gentleman should behave and what traits he must possess. After Mrs. Weston explains the secret engagement between Frank and Jane, “Emma blasts [Frank] with a portrait of masculine rectitude that we, by this point, recognize as Knightley” (Stevenson 123). “So unlike what a man should be!--None of that upright integrity, that strict adherence to truth and principle, that disdain of trick and littleness, which a man should display in every transaction of his life” (Austen 274). In describing the positive attributes of Knightly, Kramp describes the character’s “flexible masculinity” (13). Knightley’s balance demonstrates the type of man necessary to restore national (male) identity and stability in England. As Austen demonstrates in her (humorous) characterization of Mr. Woodhouse, the English aristocracy is decrepit and left struggling to support their land and estates. Unlike the behavior of the gentry in its prime, Mr. Woodhouse confines himself to Hartfield. Austen’s narrator describes Mr. Woodhouse’s doddering and feeble state: “His spirits required support. He was a nervous man, easily depressed; fond of every body that he

was used to, and hating to part with them; hating change of every kind” (7). Clearly, Austen is expressing the need for revitalization amongst the English gentry, revitalization that Knightley will deliver. Finally, after the amoral behaviors of Richardson and Fielding’s gentry, the neglectful, inadequate gentry of *Tristram Shandy*, and the crumbling gentry of the late century, Austen delivers a male character who, in fulfilling Kramp’s “flexible masculinity,” values agriculture by serving as the “pastoral caretaker” of Highbury, sees through the flamboyant antics of Frank Churchill, and supports the rising trade class, all while maintaining the traditional valor and sensibility that the English expected of the gentleman (Kramp 13).

Emma is initially attracted to the charming Frank Churchill, but her half-formed infatuation subsides when she realizes that his charisma and allure are empty and misleading. Frank depends on his aunt for money, travels to London for a haircut, and besides singing and dancing, displays no real gentry-like ability or leadership. Knightley, out of both jealousy and insight, is not fooled by Frank Churchill’s glamorous facade. Recalling Kramp’s assessment, England is in need of strong and effective men; while popular in the slow-to-reform Highbury, the charms of Frank represent a threat to national identity and a hindrance to progress. In a reply to Emma, Knightley demonstrates his elevated masculinity: “There is one thing, Emma, which a man can always do, if he chuses, and that is, his duty; not by manoeuvring and finessing, but by vigor and resolution” (Austen 103). Knightley’s statement demonstrates his commitment to new, flexible masculinity. His traditional adherence to duty is supported by his tireless work ethic and commitment to others, not by empty promises and witty charm. When asked directly if he “thinks ill” of Frank, Knightley responds to Emma: “Me—not at all . . . I do

not want to think ill of him. I should be as ready to acknowledge his merits as any other man; but I hear of none, except what are merely personal; that he is well grown and good-looking, with smooth, plausible manners” (Austen 105).

In her assertion of reshaped, balanced masculinity and the male-female synthesis, Austen contrasts Frank with Knightley. The cash-strapped Knightley is still diligent in his upkeep of Donwell Abbey and offers counsel and physical assistance in place of the deception, pianoforte, and gorgeous hair offered by Frank. During the Box Hill scene, Knightley’s sharp and memorable critique of Emma’s infamous remark to Ms. Bates furthers his sense of patriarchal duty: “Her situation should secure your compassion. It was badly done indeed!--You, whom she had known from an infant . . . to have you now, in thoughtless spirits, and the pride of the moment, laugh at her. . .” (Austen 259). Rather than use mockery to distance himself from the lower ranks, Knightley offers genuine compassion and empathy for his neighbors, traits far removed from the amoral gentry models presented by Richardson and Fielding. Emma is devastated by Knightley’s reproach on Box Hill. “Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life” (Austen 259). Emma’s sincere emotional reaction further displays the proper masculinity of Knightley and the interdependency of these two characters: Emma relies on Knightley for moral guidance and leadership; Knightley desires a wife to love and support. The respectful relationship between Emma and Knightley and the resulting attraction, dependence, and love that emerge as its products brings forth a complete synthesis of male and female not yet achieved in the novels discussed in this work. Never accepting Pamela as his equal, Mr. B only communicates with his eventual wife via demands and rules; Fanny and Joseph do more cuddling than

conversing; and the Shandy brothers are only in conversation with themselves and other men. In the wake of the French Revolution, Austen presents a masculinity that yields social stability by improving upon the dated models offered by her predecessors. Knightley is equipped with the positive traits from these past models. Like Crusoe, Knightley values economic stability and agriculture. His easy discourse with Emma resembles the call for open conversation made by Richardson. Like Joseph Andrews, Knightley's virtue is undeniable. Through Knightley, Austen finally brings masculinity to an acceptable and fortified position along the trajectory we have been tracing throughout this politically tempestuous century. From here, the new English men have a strong foothold as they look ahead to the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

My work has shown the vital connection between changing politics and the idea of manhood--a connection that is just as prevalent in today's political atmosphere. The long English eighteenth century has emerged as the perfect case study for such a phenomenon because of its coinciding with the development of the novel. The works presented by eighteenth-century authors are usually studied in context to this "rise" of the novel, but the critical fact that these works reflect the society in which they were written must never be overlooked. The events that started on the shores of Devon in 1688 began a series of political changes that would drive the evolution of masculinity. Obsessed with economic and imperial strength, Crusoe follows Defoe's Whig-inspired path to male success in a world that was ripe for the taking. In an effort to correct the amoral gentry that Richardson rewarded, Fielding reasserted classical, heroic masculinity. Joseph's virtuous, heroic embodiment of muscular masculinity was an effective means of bruising the amoral gentry, but this form of masculinity reduced Fanny to a sex-object to be fought over and protected. Despite this, Fielding hints at a male-female synthesis when his narrator described the sweet intimate moments between Joseph and his beloved

Fanny. Twenty years later, Sterne assessed the costly effects of an effeminized gentry class. Paralyzed by political instability and identity confusion, these men lack any sense of the traditional masculine ideal. Walter and company show affection only for each other and their “hobby horses” as they pathetically cope with a world complicated by the gender uncertainty fostered by sentimentality. As these ineffectual and deprived men sulk, smoke, and reminisce, the women they ignore assume traditionally masculine roles and responsibilities: male-female synthesis is absent.

Finally, Austen enacts the male-female synthesis and brings a new, balanced form of masculinity that relies on *both* masculine leadership and female support. Knightley comes to juxtapose both Fielding’s amoral and Sterne’s dilapidated gentries. Requiring a wife to support him and enable his continued role as a patriarchal leader, Knightley is subject to the female dependence. Resulting from this dependence, and as made apparent via their frequent discourses and mutual respect for one another, Emma and Knightley achieve the synthesis necessary to enable a balanced, sustainable, and moral masculinity. Most importantly, Austen’s masculinity equips men to bring stability and order to an England coping with the aftershocks of the French Revolution. Much like the novel of *Tristram Shandy* itself, masculinity’s path to equilibrium was meandering and digressive, but in sympathy with the linear and complete structure of her novels, Austen’s gentry men eventually resume their patriarchal responsibilities and after accepting their dependence upon females, achieve a synthesis necessary to unify the Kingdom and thrive together.

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