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A Self-Reflexive Journey:

Imagining Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Travel Narrative

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements of the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in English

by

Shirley Ferro Tung

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Self-Reflexive Journey:
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Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Felicity A. Nussbaum, Chair

A Self-Reflexive Journey examines real-life, published accounts of popular eighteenth-century travelers as a novel form of creative autobiography in which lived experience is translated as narrative experiment. As a subset of life-writing, the travelogue provides the occasion for authors to self-fashion their identities as traveling subjects and attempt to reconcile their personal and national identities with constant exposure to foreign customs and modes of thought. I argue that figurative and literal landscapes in eighteenth-century travel accounts function as a crucial site for the mediation of narrative identity, enabling the internal contestations of the evolving self to be enacted upon a global stage.

The introduction elaborates upon the critical approach of the dissertation and discusses how Joseph Addison's meditation on Virgilian poetical "landskips" in *Remarks on Italy* (1705)

anticipates his eponymous persona in *The Spectator* (1711-1712) by reconciling the literary past with the literal present. Chapter two examines the letters Lady Mary Wortley Montagu composed during her eighteenth-month sojourn to Turkey beginning in 1716, posthumously published as *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763), and her correspondence relating to her residence in Italy from 1739 to 1762. I interrogate how Montagu's depiction of Turkey as the Elysian Fields in 1717, and her recapitulation of this metaphor to describe her departure for Italy twenty-two years later, serves as a paradigm for leaving behind her former English life and identity. In the third chapter I analyze James Boswell's use of the geographical feature of the isthmus to stand in for his intermediary identity as a post-Union Scot in *An Account of Corsica* (1768) and *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1785). The dissertation concludes by exploring Mary Wollstonecraft's conflation of embosomed arboreal landscapes and the female breast in *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) to politicize her identity as a mother and travel writer within the Radical context of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

The dissertation of Shirley Ferro Tung is approved.

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For Mark and Aurelia

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CHAPTER ONE: A Self-Reflexive Journey

At the end of his “faithful History of... Travels for Sixteen Years and above Seven Months,” Lemuel Gulliver finds himself irrevocably changed and alienated by his experiences abroad.¹ Instead of feeling happiness at returning to his homeland, Gulliver laments his “unfortunate Exile from the *Houyhnhnm* Country” and is barely able to “tolerate the Sight” of the humans, preferring to converse with his horses for “four Hours every Day” (p.271). Jonathan Swift’s fictitious travel narrative, *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), not only critiques the veracity of travel literature and its purported aim “to make Men wiser and better, and to improve their Minds by the bad, as well as good Example of what they deliver concerning foreign places” (p.272), but also parodies the liminal perspective of the travel writer.

Swift indicates that the travel narrative is often an opportunity for reverse ethnography, with Gulliver adopting the language of the “exalted *Houyhnhnms*” to reclassify humans as filthy, uncivilized “*Yahoos*” (p.271). Here, the eponymous narrator underscores the anxiety that, while cultivating the traveler’s mind to new kinds of knowledge, travel possesses the concomitant potential to generate novel, and often subversive, forms of identity. Gulliver defies his “Duty, as a Subject of *England*... to enlarge his Majesty’s Dominions by [his] Discoveries” (pp.274-5) and instead, criticizes the imperialist narrative of “conver[sion] and civiliz[ation] [of] an idolatrous and barbarous People” that sanctions the brutalization of the natives, who are “driven out or destroyed; their Princes tortured to discover their Gold” (p.275). While this anti-colonialist screed initially appears to promote an enlightened worldview, Gulliver’s internalization of the

¹ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, ed. Claude Rawson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.272. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

Houyhnhnms' misanthropy, which similarly advocates the enslavement and "exterminat[ion] [of Yahoos] from the Face of the Earth" (p.253) contradicts this position entirely. In this context, Gulliver's diatribe against colonialism serves as a justification for his antipathy toward humans and Yahoos, who, as he observes earlier in the travelogue, share in common the "same Principle of *Avarice*" (p.242). Accordingly, the scope of Gulliver's self-professed "absurd... Project [to] refor[m] the *Yahoo* race in [his] kingdom" (p.10) significantly narrows by the end of his narrative, focusing solely on the travel writer's rehabilitation into family life and human society "at *Redriff*" (p.276). *Gulliver's Travels* leaves the reader with a grotesque picture of the liminal traveler, who returns as a foreigner to his native homeland, is unable to edify or even relate to his reader, and embodying Swift's definition of satire, "behold[s] [his] Figure often in a glass," only to "habituate [him]self [to] the Sight of a human Creature" (p.276) and thus "discover everybody's face but [his] own."²

I. *Splendide Mendax*

This sardonic portrait of the traveling subject draws attention to the limitations of the role of the travel writer as a cultural mediator for a domestic audience. Implying that Gulliver's struggle to reconcile his newly adopted Houyhnhnm culture with his humanity results in his failure to "improve [the] minds" (p.272) of his alienated Yahoo readership, Swift reveals that the eighteenth-century travel narrative is contingent upon the travel writer's slippery negotiation of national, personal, and narrative identities. The role of the eighteenth-century travel writer bears

² Jonathan Swift, "The Preface to the Author," *A Full and True Account of the BATTEL [sic] Fought last FRIDAY, Between the Antient [sic] and the Modern BOOKS* in St. JAMES'S LIBRARY, in *Major Works including Tale of a Tub and The Battle of the Books*, ed. Angus Ross and David Wooley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.1.

the influence of seventeenth-century philosophy, which saw travel as part of a Humanist education. For example, Francis Bacon's "Of Travel" (1625) presents the traveler as a repository of knowledge gathered from "suck[ing] the experience of many," who, in turn, must disseminate collective knowledge through the verbal and written transmission of that experience, either by "keep[ing] a diary," "maintain[ing] a correspondence," or "let[ting] travel appear... in his discourse."³ Bacon's call for shared discourse anticipates both the eighteenth-century popularization of the Grand Tour, which intended to cultivate a "trans-European class consciousness" among the British elite, and the proliferation of published travel accounts as part of the Enlightenment project to advance human knowledge through social, political, and scientific texts.⁴ Yet, the "exalted objectives" set for Grand Tourists and traveling scientists, explorers, politicians, and social commentators alike were often unmet, sabotaged by the logistical realities of travel, and at times, by the disenchanting travelers themselves.⁵ By the mid-eighteenth century, Grand Tourists were widely criticized for drinking, gambling, and whoring their way through the continent, which, according to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "gained [them] the glorious title of Golden Asses over Italy."⁶ Likewise, the authorized, published

³ Francis Bacon, "Of Travel," in *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986), pp.113-4.

⁴ James Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.41-2. Clifford Siskin and William Warner note that "Bacon [...] recognized print's growing power," anticipating the transformation in forms of mediation that trigger the Enlightenment. See "This Is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of an Argument," *This is Enlightenment*, eds. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp.10, 12-15.

⁵ Buzard, "The Grand Tour," p.42.

⁶ *Ibid.*

accounts of eighteenth-century scientific expeditions and exploratory voyages, which promoted the mythology of British cultural superiority, “progress and empire-building,” reveal themselves to be carefully constructed fictions that elide unauthorized stories of “defeat, humiliation, and vulnerability.”⁷ Consequently, *Gulliver’s Travels* is especially pointed in demonstrating that the travel writer must be “*Splendide Mendax*” to conceal the woeful inadequacies of his or her account with a winking fiction.⁸

Carole Fabricant has shown that so-called “factual travel accounts” share a symbiotic relationship with the rise of novel, with “geographical spaces of an ever-expanding globe becoming part of the very conception of novelistic space, where readers along with characters embarked on journeys at once linear and circular, end-directed but digressive.”⁹ Borrowing Lennard J. Davis’ coinage of “factual fiction” for the eighteenth-century novel, Fabricant argues that the travel narrative is a hybrid genre that similarly stimulates the imaginative faculties of its readership in its combination of “realistic description with exploitation of the exotic and flights

⁷ Carole Fabricant, “Geographical Projects in the Later Eighteenth Century: Imperial Myths and Realities,” in *The Age of Projects*, ed. Maximillian E. Novak (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp.319-20.

⁸ This phrase, translated as “Nobly Untruthful,” is inscribed on the frontispiece portrait of Gulliver from the octavo edition of *Gulliver’s Travels* (1735). The frontispiece is a version of a portrait of Swift dated 1735 with a few alterations to dress, hairstyle, and skin tone. See Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, pp.2 and xlvi, respectively. As Steve Clark asserts, “The travel narrative is addressed to the home culture; by its very nature, however, that to which it refers cannot be verified, hence the ready and habitual equation of traveller and liar.” See introduction to *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. Steve Clark (New York: Zen Books, 1999), p.1.

⁹ Carole Fabricant, “Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature,” in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.742.

of often wild fancy.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, the eighteenth-century travel narrative’s departure from fact as well as its lofty philosophical aims did not affect the genre’s capacity as tool for instruction.

Charles L. Batten’s *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (1978) argues that the principle of *utile dulce* was applied to travel literature, “elevat[ing] the genre to the rank of poesy” and promoting its entertainment value as a way to educate those who previously had “no relish for learning.”¹¹ Batten explains that eighteenth-century readers had no “relatively reliable means of verifying the truthfulness of an unknown author [so they] judged the veracity of a travel book on the basis of its adherence to the recognized conventions of travel literature” (p.59). In lieu of following specific literary conventions, Batten theorizes that eighteenth-century travel literature is categorized by the narrator’s use of four distinct kinds of traveling personae: the “philosophical,” the “splenetic,” the “sentimental,” and the “picturesque” (p.72). The philosophical traveler is typified by the necessity to impart useful information, customs, and art that will benefit other nations, while the accounts from a splenetic traveler serve the literary and impartial function of mere description (pp.73-4). The sentimental traveler, on the other hand, is preoccupied with recounting anecdotes regarding the virtuous and entertaining people encountered during a journey, and the picturesque traveler applies a similar enthusiasm to a country’s nature and art (p.75).

Though these personae merely serve a narratological function for Batten, his heuristic categories demonstrate that eighteenth-century travel narratives hinge upon the subjective

¹⁰ Fabricant, “Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature,” p.742. Also see Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1983).

¹¹ Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), p.25. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

viewpoints of their respective narrators. This opens up the categories of philosophical, splenetic, sentimental, and picturesque to be used self-reflexively in the construction of the traveler's identity. Recent studies on eighteenth-century discursive identity, such as Isabel Karremann and Anja Müller's *Mediating Identities in Eighteenth-Century England: Public Negotiations, Literary Discourses, Topography* (2011), have demonstrated that "Narrative identity is bound up with narrative form."¹² Laurence Sterne's parody of the sentimental traveler in *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) illustrates how this mode of narration can be taken to its extreme as a quest for self-actualization—as the narrator and protagonist, Yorick, puts it, "The Sentimental Traveller [travels] as much out of *Necessity*, and the *besoin de Voyager*, as any one in the class [of travelers]."¹³ Much like the fictional, satiric traveler, Yorick, who participates in sentimental ideology as way to define his own character (or Gulliver, whose departure from the archetypal philosophical traveler mirrors his movement away from his previous British and human identities), the real-life authors of factually fictive travel narratives identify themselves to their readers through their narrative choices.¹⁴

¹² Isabel Karremann, introduction to *Mediating Identities in Eighteenth-Century England: Public Negotiations, Literary Discourses, Topography*, eds. Isabel Karremann and Anja Müller (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), p.6.

¹³ Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, in *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings*, eds. Ian Jack and Tim Parnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.10.

¹⁴ See Judith Frank, "'A Man Who Laughs is Never Dangerous': Character and Class in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*," *English Literary History* 56.1 (1989): pp.97-124.

II. Imagining and Performing Identity in the Eighteenth Century

My dissertation examines the real-life, published travel accounts of popular eighteenth-century authors—Joseph Addison, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, and Mary Wollstonecraft—as a novel form of creative autobiography in which lived experience is translated as narrative experiment.¹⁵ I begin with the premise that the demands of the travel genre on its authors to inform yet “seduce readers [with] entertainment” (Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, p.27) requires a narrative voice that balances authority with charisma, and thus imbues fantasy with the air of authenticity. The term “seduction,” here, is apt, because the travel narrative offers another kind of pleasure in addition to *utile dulce*, that of literary voyeurism. Part of the appeal of the travel account is being able to experience landscapes and cultures as authors distinctly described them, or in other words, traveling through the eyes of the travel writer. The desire of eighteenth-century readers to embark on these voyeuristic voyages is reflected in Johnson’s advice to the Italian travel writer, Giuseppe Baretti to “make [the reader] see what [he] saw, hear what [he] heard, feel what [he] felt, and even think and fancy whatever [he] thought and fancied [him]self.”¹⁶ As a sub-genre of eighteenth-century autobiography, factually fictive travel literature provides readers with the illusion of intimate access to authors’ lives by presenting their narratives through manufactured ephemera, such as fabricated letters based on real correspondence and journal entries that give the impression of extempore writing, but are actually the product of careful revision and editing.

¹⁵ The pun on novel’s dual meanings as new and a genre of fictitious, prose narrative is intentional here.

¹⁶ Giuseppe Baretti, *A Journey from London to Genoa* (London: T. Davies, 1770), p.v.

Studies in autobiography have demonstrated that narration allows the subject to reshape, redefine, and most importantly, reenact his or her narrative identity. As Judith Butler puts it in *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), “the narrative ‘I’ is reconstituted at every moment it is invoked in the narrative itself. That invocation is, paradoxically, a performative and non-narrative act, even as it functions as the fulcrum for narrative itself.”¹⁷ Extending a cultural and historical framework to narrative theory, Felicity A. Nussbaum’s *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (1989) presents the “period from 1660 to 1800... as one crucial period for representing and revisioning the experience of human subjects in formation, subjects constructed in multiple conflicting domains, through which the ideologies of the ‘self’ are made known.”¹⁸ Nussbaum reads “eighteenth-century works of self-biography,” not as an attempt to locate or fix the concept of early modern selfhood, but as the “repetitive serial representations of particular moments held together by the narrative ‘I,’” which are created and re-created through a “series of accumulating acts of writing, revision, and reception.”¹⁹ The episodic nature of eighteenth-century travel accounts similarly brings about moments of narrative (re)presentation, but with the difference that travel provides the fundamentally de-centering experience that calls previous iterations of the narrative “I” into question. Travel narratives provide the occasion for authors to self-fashion themselves as traveling subjects to

¹⁷ Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p.66.

¹⁸ Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. xiii.

¹⁹ Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, p.18.

reconcile their personal and national identities with constant exposure to foreign customs and modes of thought.²⁰

The same Enlightenment philosophy that promotes voyages to the furthest reaches of the earth also underpins the eighteenth-century travel narrative as a genre equipped to navigate the ever-expanding borders of identity. John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) presents the human mind as impressionable, molded by "sensations" from contact with the external environment and internal "reflections" on this experience, rendering identities malleable, if not altogether protean.²¹ I suggest that Locke's theory has implications for travel literature, because this process does not stop within the mind, but is extended to, and complicated by, the *tabula rasa* of the page, which acts as medium for the reflection that occurs in narrativizing an account. Furthermore, David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740) highlights the complexities of narrativization by proposing that imagination supplements the gaps in memory, thereby changing original impressions.²² Following Locke's premise that ideas mold the mind to its furthest conclusion, Hume refutes the idea of a fixed selfhood, and instead, posits: "man is a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual flux and movement."²³ If, as Hume suggests,

²⁰ My use of term "self-fashion" refers to Stephen Greenblatt's paradigm of "self-fashioning" as a literary response to the "perceived threat [of] effacement, undermining, or loss of self." See *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.8.

²¹ See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), pp.33-6.

²² See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.12.

²³ Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p.165

imagination influences our memory of our initial perceptions, and our perceptions define our ersatz “selves,” then identity is, to quote *Gulliver’s Travels*, “meer Fiction out of [our] own Brain[s]” (p.9), and travel presents the material framework to craft that fiction.²⁴

Using Locke and Hume’s definition of the “self” as “an embodied mind on which a sense of personal identity depends,” Jonathan Lamb in *Preserving the Self in the South Seas: 1680-1840* (2001) considers the traveling “self” independently from its construction through “reflection, interpellation, or language.”²⁵ Lamb demonstrates that travel universally “dislodges the [self] from an encompassed social existence... driv[ing] [it] to locate itself in a material and uncustomary world” (p.5). Since the “self suffers a sea change into something odd and strange... not easily transmitted to a polite audience” (p.12) Lamb refers to autobiographical representation in the eighteenth-century travel narrative as a “paradox” that requires conflicting modes of “self-cancellation and self-assertion” (p.24). Although Lamb’s study precludes the performative elements of self-writing, his theory of “self-preservation” reifies the travel account as a site of trauma and catharsis, which paradoxically, lends legitimacy to the *bildungsroman-esque* construction of factually fictive travel narratives.

I explore how the eighteenth-century travel narrative operates as a vehicle for the authorial performance of interiority, where the internal contestations of the evolving self are enacted upon a global stage. The narratives I examine express viewpoints contrary to readily received ones (for instance, Montagu’s oft-quoted and contentious appraisal that veiled Turkish

²⁴ See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p.169: “the identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one, and of a like kind with that which we ascribe to vegetables and animal bodies.”

²⁵ Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas: 1680-1840* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), p.5. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

women are “the only free people in the Empire”). These viewpoints are adopted when travelers reimagine themselves in foreign subject positions at odds with their domestic British identities (e.g., the aristocratic Montagu’s participation within the Turkish bathhouse, which symbolizes the temporary release from “fashionable vestments and cultural in-vestments”).²⁶ In order to entertain, educate, and entice their readers with new ways of thinking, these authors craft relatable, sympathetic, and convincing narratives of cultural conversion, which rely upon dramatic and novelistic constructions of identity, character, and self/subject-hood. As Dror Wahrman’s *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004) has postulated, British identity in its “distinctive eighteenth-century configuration” (referred to as the “*ancien régime of identity*”) was fluid, circumstantial, and focused “outward, toward what one shared with others, rather than inward, at one’s quintessence,” and was dependent upon the masquerade-like social performance that generated endless permutations of selfhood.²⁷ Wahrman defines the “self” as “historically specific” and contingent upon the shifting cultural interpretation of identity, which by its very nature, is a capacious signifier for both the “essence of difference” and its erasure by a “common denominator” (p.xii). According to Wahrman, this protean notion of identity ended in response to the American Revolutionary

²⁶ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Teresa Heffernan and Daniel O’Quinn (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2013), p.116. Jill Campbell, “Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Historical Machinery of Female Identity,” in *History, Gender, and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Beth Fowkes Tobin (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), p.74.

²⁷ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp.xiii and 185. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

war, which triggered a British identity crisis, necessitating a stable and “authentic” identity that was “personal, interiorized, essential [and] synonymous with self” (p.276).

This project suggests that travel literature tells a different story about the evolution of eighteenth-century identity—one that depicts the broadening horizons of narrative and performative selfhood in step with the increasingly global consciousness sparked by the Age of Empire and Revolutions. The representation of the narrative “I” in eighteenth-century travel literature calls into question this rapid transition from an ancien régime of “mutability,” “imaginable fluidity,” and “potential for individual deviation from general identity categories” to a modern regime of “essence,” “fixity,” and “individual identity stamped indelibly on each and every person” (p.128). Indeed, Wahrman compares the ancien régime of identity to “contemporary intellectual-political movements... with the imperative of destabilizing and denaturalizing modern Western notions of identity and self” (p.xvii), but neglects that this “imperative” is also present in the travel narrative *throughout* the eighteenth century. Following in the footsteps of Thomas Gray, whose proclamation, “Travel I must, or cease to exist,” echoes Sterne’s titular sentimental traveler, late eighteenth-century poets, novelists, and essayists turned to the travel narrative as outlet for re-envisioning identity and creativity amid sociopolitical upheavals.²⁸ The beginning of the period scholars refer to as Romantic saw the popularization of the autobiographically inspired travel narrative, wherein the trope of the voyage was “even more insistently used... as a quest for internal as well as external understanding for a psychological journey inward, for experience which provided—as the subtitle of [William] Wordsworth’s 1850

²⁸ This quotation is from James A. Butler, “Travel Writing,” in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. Duncan Wu (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2009), p.365.

Prelude has it—the ‘Growth of a Poet’s Mind.’²⁹ Like Wordsworth’s definition of the poetry in his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* (1802), which “it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility... and does itself actually exist in the mind,” travel accounts call attention to themselves as the product of “re-collection”—Wollstonecraft, for example, refers to writing, “correct[ing],” and design[ing] [her letters] for publication” in *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796)—and thus, an image of the mind that the author gives back to him or herself.³⁰ With literary representation as the objective of these quests for understanding, such self-reflexive journeys do not seek authentic selves through travel, but rather, aim to authenticate the traveling selves they present to the reader.

In contradistinction to the modern idea of a cohesive self, the travel narrative, like the Enlightenment discourse that produced it, serves “as a site for some of postmodernism’s crucial insights and ideals, the most relevant of which is the structure of historical consciousness and the place of the fictive in the production of the real, the true, and the historical.”³¹ This study, which spans the beginning to the end of the eighteenth century, defines the critical apparatus that constitutes identity in the travel narrative according to long eighteenth-century novelistic and

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mary Wollstonecraft, “Advertisement” to *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, eds. Tone Brekke and Jon Mee (New York: OUP, 2009), n.p. William Wordsworth, *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*, in *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800*, eds. Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2008), p.183. See Alexander Pope’s *An Essay on Criticism*: “True wit is nature to advantage dress’d/ What oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d/ Something, whose truth convinc’d at sight we find/ That gives us back the image of our mind” (ii, ll. 297-300). Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, in *Major Works including The Rape of the Lock and The Dunciad*, ed. Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.27.

³¹ See Greg Clingham, *Questioning History: The Postmodern Turn to the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1998), p.14.

theatrical models. I propose that, anticipating the disjointed nature of postmodern identity, identity in the eighteenth-century narrative is composed of constituent parts: a narrator or “narrative ‘I,’” which is sub-divided into two halves (“self/subject” and “character/persona”) that refer to, but are ultimately separate from, the real-life traveler/author. I see the “self” as interchangeable with what other critics have referred to as the “subject”: the manifestation of interiority, or the Humean “bundle... of different perceptions,” that follows a narratively prescribed trajectory of development and change. Conversely, “character” or “persona” is the openly performative aspect of the “narrative ‘I,’” which sociably engages and oftentimes, morally instructs the reader through entertaining anecdotes and meta-textual references. But, the significance and the wider implications of identity, self, and character in the travel narrative are, by no means, limited to these functional categories.

Scholars of eighteenth-century fiction and drama have contributed several influential studies on the intersection of genre and identity. Deidre Shauna Lynch in *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (1998) traces the development of character throughout the eighteenth century from “a principle of coherence or generalizability” to an “articulat[ion] [of] difference,” which reflects the shift in “people’s ways of knowing and buying” from a “consumer culture [to] a psychological” one.³² Demonstrating that the late eighteenth-century movement toward anti-materialism motivates the literary imaginings of the “inner life of the complex character,” Lynch credits the socio-cultural exchange between authors and the reading public with the push toward introducing

³² Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp.46, 48, 182.

psychological realism to the novel.³³ Lisa Freeman's *Character's Theatre: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (2002) also exposes the eighteenth-century concept of character as the product of social exchange, but rather than plumbing the socio-psychological depths of material culture, Freeman focuses on surfaces—namely, the ways the “theatrical medium” of the stage lends distinct “structure for [shaping] identities.”³⁴ Freeman asserts that drama, as a “dynamic paradigm for the representation of identity,” acknowledges the fundamental instability of character by bringing the contestations surrounding its production, categorization, and interpretation to center stage.³⁵ Uniting such studies on eighteenth-century drama and novels, Emily Anderson's *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction* (2009) illustrates how both genres can operate in concert, rather than in opposition, to delineate the permeable boundaries of performative identity. Anderson begins with the premise that the novel is an empathically fictional form, “engaged in a type of performance that could manipulate the same expectations of artifice put forward by the stage,” then centers her analysis on “the figure of the author,” who concomitantly “constructs the text” and *is* a “construction of the text.”³⁶ Highlighting that fiction can also serve as a “potential conduit for other voices” that either mask or channel the sentiments of the author, Anderson gestures toward the possibility of analyzing the surrogate for the author (or, what I will refer to here as “authorial character”)

³³ Lynch, *Economy of Character*, p.118.

³⁴ Lisa Freeman, *Character's Theatre: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p.8.

³⁵ Freeman, *Character's Theatre*, pp.7-8.

³⁶ Emily Hodgson Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction: Novels and the Theater, Haywood to Austen* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p.14

within the existing theatrical frameworks for Restoration and eighteenth-century celebrity culture.³⁷

Both Joseph Roach and Nussbaum have shown how Restoration and eighteenth-century celebrities use theatrical character to simulate intimacy and interiority with their adoring public. In *It* (2007), Roach puts forward a theory of “public intimacy,” which creates the “illusion of proximity” to the “ultimately unavailable icon” through manufactured artifacts and products for public consumption: “spun-off... plays, magazines, or movies.”³⁸ While Roach posits that fans turn to these externally constructed “relics” to palliate the desire to possess their idols, Nussbaum’s *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (2010) argues that “Actors—and especially actresses—created... an ‘interiority effect,’” constructing simulated identities that “blend... putative personalit[ies] with the character[s]’ emotions and thoughts” in order to keep their private selves unknowable.³⁹ Julia H. Fawcett also asserts that actors not only prevented access to their private selves through the performance of interiority, but also through “over-expression”—the performance of an exaggerated character to disguise the actor’s true identity.⁴⁰ Using the example of Colley Cibber, Fawcett extends the theatrical performance of interiority to the genre of autobiography. Fawcett claims that Cibber’s

³⁷ Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship*, p.15. Joseph Roach’s concept of the surrogate in *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) may also be applicable here. I address the issue of surrogacy in chapter three of this dissertation.

³⁸ Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p.44.

³⁹ Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p.20.

⁴⁰ Julia H. Fawcett, “The Overexpressive Celebrity and the Deformed King: Recasting the Spectacle as Subject in Colley Cibber’s *Richard III*,” *PMLA* 126 (2011): p.950.

exaggerated dramatization of the alleged “deformities” of *Richard III*’s titular character finds its way into *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* (1740) in the form of “misspelled words and blotted pages.”⁴¹ This potential to re-inscribe the dramatization of a fictional character as the ersatz authorial voice allows us to reframe identity in the travel narrative as the performance of interiority (i.e., the self/subject) and the false promise of propinquity to the travel writer.

By examining the travel accounts of acclaimed authors, this dissertation considers what happens when factual fictive identity collides with the eighteenth-century cult of celebrity that inspired reader interest in the published correspondence, (auto)biographies, and anecdotes of famous individuals. Since the eighteenth-century travel narrative straddles the genres of autobiography, drama, and the novel, I embrace an intersectional approach that looks at the ways that authors use travel writing to reinvent “themselves” in order to experiment with narrative styles and discourses, pursue novel ideas, advance counter-cultural agendas, and subvert reader expectations. These accounts employ a combination of theatrical and novelistic methods to facilitate an imagined familiarity between the travel writer and the reader, which extend beyond the use of intimate literary forms, such as the epistle and memoir. The travel narratives I examine fetishize objects worn and used by their respective travelers such as Montagu’s sumptuous Turkish clothing or Johnson’s walking stick (Roach); draw upon a backlog of fictional characters (e.g.-Virgil’s Dido and Sterne’s Maria) to perform interiority (Nussbaum and Fawcett) and channel other voices through the author (Anderson); and encourage the social exchange between the author and the reading public by using authorial constructions of “deep” character (Freeman and Lynch), which provide “afterlives” for stock narratives of social displacement and emotional

⁴¹ Ibid.

upheaval. According to David A. Brewer's *The Afterlife of Character, 1728-1825* (2005) the creation of afterlives that transplanted the most celebrated eighteenth-century fictional characters (Gulliver, Macheath, Inkle and Yarico, Falstaff, Pamela, and Tristram Shandy) into other literary and artistic works allowed "readers and viewers" to participate in a collaborative process, which he terms "imaginative expansion."⁴² The characters that Brewer discusses are all introduced to the reader at volatile turning points in their lives, which shape their identities by the climax of their respective narratives, whether they face a voyage, execution, abandonment, repudiation from the king, the threat of rape, or the enormous task of reformatting their life story. Since these are characters in flux, they can be reimagined in endless permutations, facing new journeys and challenges. The same can be said of the authorial character in the real-life travel narrative, which as an entity separated from the community that has defined it, is susceptible to "perpetual redefinition through encounter," or what Steve Clark terms travel's "power of refiguration."⁴³

III. Liminality and Life-writing through Landscape

Irrevocably changed by travel abroad, but attempting to appeal to an audience at home, the travel writer exists in a liminal state between competing modes of self-representation as both a domestic and ostensibly foreign(ized) subject. Recent scholarship on eighteenth-century travelers aims to disrupt the binaries of self and other, occident and orient, and colonized and colonizer. Mary Louise Pratt's postcolonial study on travel writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), enumerates the

⁴² David A. Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1728-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p.8.

⁴³ Clark, introduction to *Travel Writing and Empire*, pp.13, 4.

ways that European writers have represented their experiences in response alterity through the mediums of natural history, sentimental narratives, abolitionist and feminist rhetoric, commercial tracts, and aestheticism.⁴⁴ Although these discourses inevitably serve the ends of imperialism and economic exploitation, Pratt considers the travel narrative as a “contact zone” that “represents an attempt to step outside a European expansionist perspective and to recognize that both colonizers and colonized, or travelers and travelees, are constituted in and by their relations to each other.”⁴⁵ Adrienne Ward interrogates such “self-serving constructions” as the objects of orientalist practice in the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ Responding to Edward Said, Ward contends that when it comes to “Western depictions of Eastern others... accuracy in representation is not the point,” and shifts the critical focus to the European subject’s “engagement with its discrete notion of its Eastern object, whose function is to mediate cultural issues at home.”⁴⁷ By disentangling the eighteenth century—a period during which “the colonial enterprise had only partially developed”—from the “tight lashing of orientalist strategies to imperialist projects,” Ward reassesses the European “cognitive mediation of its perceived others” as a fictional and self-reflexive product of the “potent, productive and liminal space” of page.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.5

⁴⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.7

⁴⁶ Adrienne Ward, “Eastern Others on Western Pages: Eighteenth-Century Literary Orientalism,” *Literature Compass* 1.1 (2004): p.2.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ward, “Eastern Others on Western Pages,” p.2.

Capitalizing upon the genre's liminality and the potential to "ente[r] into discourses otherwise unavailable to them," eighteenth-century women travel writers shape the proverbial landscape of the travel narrative, especially when it comes to self-representation.⁴⁹ As Jana Nittel explains in *Wondrous Magic: Images of the Orient in the 18th and 19th Centuries' British Women Travel Writing* (2001), the interrogation of a woman's need to travel necessitated female travelers to contemplate "their intentions and initial sensations in comparison to, and in reflection of, their male counterparts" leading the woman traveler "to redefine herself as a reflection of her own thoughts and character as opposed to those of society."⁵⁰ Consequently, literary scholars have looked to the travel narratives of eighteenth-century women for models of reconfigured British identity. Nussbaum locates what she terms "hybrid femininity" in the accounts of "eighteenth-century women adventurers, [who] are by definition, defying expectations of the European feminine merely by travelling to North Africa or the East Indies" and posits that the "new availability of travel freed the imagination of these women."⁵¹ Asserting that "colonialism's unfixed aspects play out on women's bodies," Nussbaum looks to "intermarriage, conversion and transculturation" to redefine hybridity as a form of "female subjectivity," rather

⁴⁹ Katherine S.H. Turner, "Women's Travel Writing, 1750-1830," in *The History of British Women's Writing, 1750-1830*, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p.52.

⁵⁰ Jana Nittel, *Wondrous Magic: Images of the Orient in the 18th and 19th Centuries' British Women Travel Writing* (Cambridge, Mass: Galda und Wilch, 2001), p.25.

⁵¹ Felicity A. Nussbaum, "British Women Write the East after 1750: Revisiting a 'Feminine' Orient," in *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship Politics and History*, eds. Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p.123.

than an exclusively racial category.⁵² Similarly, Anne K. Mellor reevaluates cosmopolitanism—defined by Immanuel Kant as “a universal state [and rights] of mankind”—according to the embodied experience of Romantic women writers.⁵³ As opposed to the abstract notion of universal rights, “embodied cosmopolitanism [is] grounded in the demands of the physical body and constructed on the basis of a relational, rather than autonomous, self,” and is thus exemplified by interracial marriage and the “sexual practice that produces hybridized children.”⁵⁴ Both of these studies demonstrate that the construction of hybrid subjectivity is a powerful method for British women travel writers to reassert control over their marginalized bodies and identities.

Considering that the “traditional areas of masculine authority are annulled” during travel, this project examines how eighteenth-century travel narratives challenge monolithic and patriarchal formulations of identity by reconfiguring literal and figurative landscapes.⁵⁵ In the travel accounts that form the basis of my study, landscapes are a crucial site for the mediation of narrative identity, and anticipating the Romantic turn British literature takes at the end of the eighteenth century, provide a vehicle for authors to align themselves with hybridic perspectives. In light of the eighteenth-century philosophical discourse surrounding travel as both the navigation of the literal *terra incognita* and the figurative *terra incognita* of the self, these geographical bodies stand in for the imagined physical bodies of their respective travel writers,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Anne K. Mellor, “Embodied Cosmopolitanism and the British Romantic Woman Writer,” *European Romantic Review* 17.3 (2006): p.291.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Clark, introduction to *Travel Writing and Empire*, p.20.

signifying their transformation in response to alterity.⁵⁶ Symbolizing the traveler's self-reflexive journey from domestic to foreign subject, these landscapes enable "imagination to bod[y] forth" in the form of hybridized authorial characters, who are authenticated by their *bildungsroman-
esque* narrative of transculturation to speak for and as the perceived "others" their respective travel accounts purport to represent.⁵⁷

The earliest form of these self-negotiations through landscape can be seen in Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, in the Years 1701, 1702, 1703* (1705), which not only established a model for the Grand Tourist, but also set a precedent for authoring the eighteenth-century travel narrative.⁵⁸ Reprinted in over a dozen editions by the turn of the century, *Remarks on Italy* attempts to "compare the Natural face of the County with Landskips [sic] that the Poets have given it."⁵⁹ Despite the travel narrative's celebrated status, Addison's reliance on one hundred and forty-one Latin quotations from classical writers to depict his journey has been the subject of ridicule and criticism, best encapsulated by Samuel Johnson's appraisal⁶⁰:

[Addison's] observations are such as might be supplied by a hasty view, and consist chiefly in comparisons of the present face of the country with the descriptions left us by

⁵⁶ See Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, p.48.

⁵⁷ See Act V, scene i, line 14 of William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare* (2nd ed), eds. G. Blakemore Evans, et al. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), p.276.

⁵⁸ See Buzard, "The Grand Tour," p.40.

⁵⁹ Joseph Addison, "Preface," *Remarks on several parts of Italy, &c. in the years 1701, 1702, 1703* (London: 1705), n.p. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

⁶⁰ See Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, p.14.

the Roman poets, from whom he made preparatory collections, though he might have spared the trouble had he known that such collections had been made twice before by Italian authors.⁶¹

Contrasting Addison's "hasty view" with the "trouble" he has taken in his preparatory collections, Johnson suggests that Addison's observations are largely dictated by the literature he has chosen, and as a consequence, are limited to verifying ancient descriptions by Roman poets. Johnson further claims that such preparatory collections have been produced twice before by different authors to criticize Addison's choice of subject matter as overdone, if not derivative. Even contemporary critics have remarked that Addison's role as the "picturesque traveler"—with his special attention to ancient and modern Italian history, culture, and art—makes his descriptions initially appear "entirely lacking in living inhabitants."⁶²

Yet, *Remarks on Italy* challenges the formal conventions of travel literature by blending empirical observation with an "aesthetic agenda that centers around classical poets," promoting imaginative engagement with both real landscapes and the Lockean impressions they leave in the mind.⁶³ I suggest that Addison's imaginative engagement with landscape in *Remarks on Italy* allows him to reconstruct himself as a British subject out of what he depicts as the Italian "Ruins of... ancient Splendor" (p.231). Throughout his account, Addison dwells upon the differences

⁶¹ Samuel Johnson, "The Life of Addison (1672-1719)," in *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on Their Works*, ed. G. B. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), II, p.87.

⁶² See Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, p.75 and Buzard, "The Grand Tour," p.40.

⁶³ Ahmed Malik, *The Bending of Genre: Generic Conventions, Fiction, and Empiricism in the Travel Narratives of Addison, Defoe, and Smollett* (PhD diss., UNC Chapel Hill, 2000), pp.68, 78.

between the vistas described by the Ancients and their modern realities. Addison's descriptions of the "Antiquities and Curiosities near the City of Naples" are laden with regret as he observes "The *Lucrine* lake is but a Puddle in Comparison of what it once was, its Springs having been sunk in an Earthquake, or stopped up by Mountains that have fallen upon them" (p.230). Rather than serving as a reminder of the unyielding passage of time, the transformation of Lucrine Lake is portrayed by Addison as the site of cataclysmic destruction. The remnants of classical structures in the surrounding area receive a similar treatment, depicted by Addison as "Works of Art [that] lye in no less Disorder than those of Nature" (p.231). Addison's emphasis on "disorder" reveals that he expects a certain "order" to be maintained throughout time much like these sites remain permanently fixed in classical literature. Therefore, the act of narrating his voyage following the style of the classical poets enables Addison to re-inscribe these landscapes with their former glory and significance. Accordingly, Addison justifies traveling back to Rome from Naples by sea in order "to trace out the Way *Aeneas* took... because *Virgil* has mark'd it out by Capes, Islands, and other Parts of Nature, which are not so subject to change or decay as are Towns, Cities, and the Works of Art" (p.271). Framing his sea voyage as an opportunity to emulate Aeneas, and by implication, Virgil, Addison portrays himself as a modern embodiment of both the classical traveler and revered ancient Latin poet.

Anticipating his eponymous persona in *The Spectator* (1711-1712), Addison presents his model of spectatorship in the *Remarks on Italy* as a means to reconcile a literary past with the literal present, and hence, the traveler's educationally biased expectations for a culture with the experience of traveling through the country itself. Focusing on Addison's claim to cultural authority as one "who is best qualified to follow in the path of 'Horace's Voyage to Brundisi,'" Fabricant argues that *Remarks on Italy* serves a similar purpose to his essays in *The Spectator*,

which bring “into [the reader’s] reach some of the most remote Parts of the Universe.”⁶⁴ Like the self-professed “Spectator of Mankind,” who Laurence E. Klein terms the consummate “model of British self-perception,” Addison in *Remarks on Italy* relies upon the faculty of sight to understand, (re)define, and master the world around him.⁶⁵ Consequently, as a travel writer Addison also sees himself as the cultural arbiter of British taste, who is able to “Advanc[e]... the Public Weal” by heeding the Augustan age’s call to resurrect the antiquities in neoclassical form.⁶⁶

Addison’s attempts to “English” the Latin tongue and “translate” Italian culture for his British readers in *Remarks on Italy* pave the way for his future representations of hybrid subjectivity as a model for British cultural identity. As Srinivas Aravamudan has shown in *Enlightenment Orientalism* (2012), British domestic fiction was interdependent upon exotic literary forms— “Oriental tales, pseudo-ethnographies, sexual fantasies, and political satires”— complicating the essentialist and nationalistic narrative of the “Rise of the Novel.”⁶⁷ Addison’s literary classicism can be read as an earlier form of this species of Orientalism, functioning as a self-serving construct that promotes British superiority, despite the complex relationship with an essentially foreign Roman culture that fundamentally shapes British discourse and thought. Indeed, Addison’s *Cato, A Tragedy* (1713), which presents Cato of Utica as a model of stoic

⁶⁴ Fabricant, “Eighteenth-century Travel Literature,” pp.711-2.

⁶⁵ Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 1 (Thursday, 1 March 1711). Lawrence E. Klein, “Addisonian Afterlives: Joseph Addison in Eighteenth-Century Culture,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35:1 (2012): p.102.

⁶⁶ Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 1 (Thursday, 1 March 1711).

⁶⁷ Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalisms: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p.4-6.

heroism that comes to inform the British “aristocratic code of honor,” is drawn from an Italian opera that Addison recounts in *Remarks on Italy* as portraying “Caesar and Scipio [as] rivals for Cato's Daughter,” which makes her “preference [for] Caesar... the occasion of Cato’s Death [in his] Library, [among] the titles of Plutarch and Tasso” (p.97).⁶⁸ These details appear, albeit in an altered form, in Addison’s tragedy— from the much criticized love scenes between Cato’s daughter, Marcia, and the Numidian prince, Juba, to the final act, which portrays Cato in his library with Plato in one hand and his sword in another—suggesting that the Italian opera functions as *Cato’s urtext*. Similarly, Ancient Roman identity underlies the origins of Addison’s traveling Spectator.⁶⁹

Since the following dissertation chapters I outline below respond to and reshape the models of “poetical landscapes” and hybrid spectatorship presented in *Remarks on Italy*, Addison can be seen as a figurative specter that haunts the pages of these subsequent travel narratives. In the second chapter of this dissertation I examine the role of the classical landscape of Elysium in the travel narratives of the coterie poet and aristocratic woman of letters, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Tracing Montagu’s depiction the Elysian Fields during her stay in Turkey in 1717 through her recapitulation of Elysium in 1739 and 1756 to bookend her epistolary account of her residence in Italy, I posit that Montagu constructs a distinctly feminine discourse about traveling, reimagining it as a voluntary death that releases her from social roles and national affiliation. I argue that Montagu comes to embody hybrid subjectivity and negotiates the slippery boundaries

⁶⁸ Michael MacDonald and Terence R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.179, 183.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of these love scenes see Lisa Freeman, “What’s Love Got to Do with Addison’s Cato?” *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 39 (Summer 1999): pp.463-82.

of nationality, race, and personal identity by drawing upon the landscapes of the literary imagination. For example, Montagu ventriloquizes the voices of Sappho and Dido— classical women who transgress national and socio-cultural boundaries—to identify with the various ethnic hybrids she encountered, using the topography of contemporary Turkey and Italy as novelistic spaces charged with the memories of ancient Greece and Rome. These slippages of time and place are also evinced by the several themes and incidents in Turkey that reemerge and are re-imagined in Italy. Although Montagu’s reconfiguration of Turkey in Italy may derive from the cross-pollination of ideas as she was revising her *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763) for publication during her twenty-three year stay in Italy, it also gestures toward the atemporal nature of the eighteenth-century travel narrative. Most significantly, Montagu’s model of hybrid subjectivity poses an alternative to the superficial cultural engagement of the Grand Tourist, and implicitly Addison’s *Remarks on Italy*, by celebrating the protean identity of the eighteenth-century woman traveler.

The third chapter argues that James Boswell uses the landscape metaphor of the isthmus to stand in for his intermediary identity as a post-Union Scot and to illustrate the primacy of his role as a biographer in both *An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* (1768) and *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1785). In these accounts, Boswell respectively rallies British support for Corsican sovereignty from the Genoese following Pasquale Paoli’s establishment of Corsican Republic in 1755, and sympathy for a Scotland divested of Highland traditions following the Jacobite Rising of 1745, as well as humanizing and immortalizing his biographical subjects— Paoli and Johnson— for posterity. Although Boswell portrays Corsica and Scotland as pastoral hinterlands with ancient customs and distinct heritages that must be preserved under the

protection of Great Britain, his discourse, which deploys the Rousseauvian concept of the “noble savage,” sanctions the imperialism that endangers such cultural diversity. These contradictory impulses to save marginalized civilizations from annihilation while extolling the praises of the British Empire parallel Boswell’s self-depiction as a Scottish laird of “ancient blood,” who strives to embody English manners, ideas, and ambitions at the risk of erasing all traces of his marginalized Scottishness. This chapter contends that Boswell forcefully reasserts his Scottish identity by depicting Paoli and Johnson through models of Highland masculinity, which are concomitantly challenged and reinforced by the presence of women. Most significantly, Boswell directly contradicts Johnson’s *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), which, like his rejection of *Remarks on Italy* as “plagiarist,” and despite his former “strong dispositions to be a Mr. Addison” in *The London Journal* (1762), signifies the Scotsman’s eventual deconstruction of these embodiments of dignified English *retenu* as protracted performances.⁷⁰

The final chapter of this dissertation argues that Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) aligns arboreal landscapes with the maternal bosom to promote a socio-ecological maternal ethic of care. Reinforcing the connection between the maternal duty of breastfeeding and the education of children in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft in *A Short Residence* reconfigures the female breast as a bastion-like sanctuary that guarantees the survival of the subsequent generations through nutriment and nurturing. I assert that Wollstonecraft’s arboreal landscapes

⁷⁰ See James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, in Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. Peter Levi (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1984), p.350. James Boswell, “Wednesday, 1 December 1762,” *London Journal 1762-1763*, ed. Gordon Turnbull (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2010), p.23.

not only challenge the problematic depictions of nature that align the feminine with disordered sensibility that justify the disenfranchisement of the female sex, but also emphasizes the necessity of women, especially mothers, to lead the way as policymakers and conservationists. As a woman traveler, Wollstonecraft offers her perspective as a corrective to that of her male compatriots; rather than mediate her account through the objectifying faculty of sight like Addison, she subordinates vision to subjective feeling as a mode of perception that is responsive to and interconnected with the landscape she surveys. Wollstonecraft thus concludes her travel account with a critique of commerce, linking unethical commercial trade practices with both the poor husbandry that results in Scandinavian deforestation and the negligent fathers and husbands that erode the family unit, to imply that only women can reframe this masculine narrative of mastery over the natural world as one of cooperation, cohabitation, and regeneration. Consequently, in what she portrays as the comparatively uncultivated wilderness of Scandinavia, Wollstonecraft sees the potential to redefine the corrupted hierarchies of civilized society.

In the above chapters my dissertation returns repeatedly to the ways that this factually fictive method of life-writing through landscape disrupts the ideas of home and national identity for these travel writers and their readers. Recent studies that re-imagine the cosmopolitan subject have shown that eighteenth-century travel narratives do not conform to what Aravamudan identifies as the “clutches of domestic accountability” that “converts novelties back into the persons who created or sustained them and strangers back into the familiars they would be in their own societies.”⁷¹ As an alternative, Aravamudan and other scholars have presented the potential of self-exoticism to “ope[n] up... ‘cosmopolitan possibilities’ for cultural reinvention—

⁷¹ Srinivas Aravamudan, “Response: Exoticism beyond Cosmopolitanism?” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25.1 (Fall 2012): pp.240, 230.

not by extending traditional forms of selfhood to ‘foreigners’ and cultural ‘others,’ but by destabilizing those forms, displacing them as the only way to imagine selfhood.”⁷² Responding to these new iterations of cosmopolitanism, my dissertation proposes that the self-reflexive fictions of the traveling subject in eighteenth-century travel narratives allow their respective authors to keep their putative identities in perpetual global circulation. Indeed, while other critics theorize that “if there was not the touristic urge to return home... Gulliver might happily get lost in the South Seas, rather than return as the insane British Yahoo in the fourth voyage [or] Montagu might stay on forever in Istanbul as she clearly ought to have done,” this study shows that such British travelers may return to their country of origin, but never come back as the selves they left behind.⁷³

⁷² Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, “Introduction: Exoticism, Cosmopolitanism, and Fiction's Aesthetics of Diversity,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25.1 (Fall 2012): p.5.

⁷³ Aravamudan, “Response: Exoticism beyond Cosmopolitanism,” p.241.

CHAPTER TWO: The Landscape of Elysium in
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Letters from Turkey and Italy

In a letter dated June 17, 1717 to Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu describes her retreat from the “heats of Constantinople” to Belgrade Village as a journey to a “place, which perfectly answers to the description of the Elysian Fields.”¹ Responding to Pope’s letter from February 3, 1717, in which he “suppose[s] [her] dead and buried,” Montagu confesses that she feels so distant from her social circle in London that her “circumstances [are] exactly the same with those of departed spirits” (p.146). Montagu reconfigures Pope’s conceit to construct an exterior landscape that “perfectly answers” (p.146) to her physical and emotional detachment from her former life. The suitability of Belgrade Village as an earthly Elysium is problematized, however, by Montagu’s description of a manicured shady grove: “I am in the middle of a wood... watered by a number of fountains... divided into many shady walks upon the short grass, that seems to me artificial but I am assured it is the pure work of nature” (p.146). Concomitantly delighted by, and distrustful of, Belgrade Village’s seemingly contrived perfection, Montagu uses Elysium to represent herself as suspended between withdrawing from the known world and occupying the otherworldly place that surrounds her. From Montagu’s rendering of Constantinople as a gateway between the Occident and the Orient, to her role as a mediating outsider with privileged insight into Turkish culture, the theme of liminality pervades

¹ Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, p.146. The village is located along the shores of the Bosphorous, fourteen miles away from Constantinople and is not to be mistaken for the city of Belgrade, which is now part of modern-day Serbia. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number. See Wharnccliffe, *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, Vol. 1 (London: 1837), p.xx.

The Turkish Embassy Letters (1763), a posthumously published collection of Montagu's select correspondence written in Turkey during 1716-1718.

As the first British woman traveler to write “on life in a non-Christian, non-European culture,” Montagu uses Elysium in *Turkish Embassy Letters* to construct a feminine discourse about travel, reimagining it as a voluntary death that releases a woman from prescribed social roles and national affiliation.² References to Elysium also bookend Montagu's epistolary account of her twenty-three year residence in Italy, characterizing her departure for Italy in 1739 as a “leap for another world,” and her final move to Venice and Padua in 1756 as representing the promise of an Elysian reunion with friends both estranged and expired.³ In this chapter I will examine how Montagu's evolving discussion of Elysium is indicative of a larger project to represent the woman travel writer and her capacity for what Nussbaum has termed “hybrid... female subjectivity,” which provides an alternative narrative to masculine fetishized depictions of the Levant and the superficial cultural engagement of male Grand Tourists.⁴ By mediating her depiction of Turkey and Italy through the imaginary landscapes of classical antiquity—a mode of travel writing popularized by Addison's *Remarks on Italy*—Montagu concomitantly critiques and deploys this limiting, patriarchal, and Westernizing discourse to unsettle national identity and open up the possibility of personal transculturation.

² Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xvii.

³ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Selected Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1970): p.165. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

⁴ Nussbaum, “British Women Write the East,” p.122.

The invocation of Elysian space in Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* initially appears to be part of what other scholars have recognized as her problematic conflation of classical Greece with eighteenth-century Turkey. As Efterpi Mitsi argues, Montagu's inability to visit Greece during her July 1718 voyage back to England from Constantinople results in her idealizing the Greek "imaginary landscape of classical antiquity" and "effacing the present" reality of the country, which Montagu bitterly complains is "overrun by robbers" instead of "demi-gods and heroes."⁵ Maria Koundoura further asserts that Montagu's rejection of contemporary Greece in favor of an "ambivalent representation of Greece as timeless and exotic" demonstrates that her "philhellenism is an orientalism in the most profound sense," because both standpoints "engage in the like activity of representing the other culture... replacing it with the self-generated images of otherness."⁶ This representation of a timeless, ancient Greece also appears in Montagu's earlier letters that discuss the Ottoman Empire preserving native Greek customs rather than taking the "pains to introduce their own manners" (Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, p.119). In a letter to Pope on April 1, 1717, Montagu implies that the cultural fluidity of the Turkish overlords and the space of Turkey itself, conserves "more remains... of an age so distant than is to be found in any other country" (p.119). Consequently, it is within Turkey that she finds passages from Homer brought to life in the "present customs" of its people, rather than on her journey past several famed Grecian shores like Trinacria, which she pointedly describes as absent of the "Syrens that Homer describes" (p.190).

⁵ Efterpi Mitsi, "'Roving Englishwomen': Greece in women's travel writing," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* (June 2002): p.129.

⁶ Maria Koundoura, "Between Orientalism and Philhellenism: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's 'Real' Greeks," *The Eighteenth Century* 45.3 (Fall 2004): pp.257, 259.

Although Montagu portrays Turkey as a place that keeps the literary ancient world in stasis—or as Jill Campbell puts it, a place “outside history... where past and present, the literary and the natural, coexist”—I am hesitant to read Montagu’s synthesis of the imaginary and real and the ancient and modern as her primitivizing Turkish culture into a part of a Eurocentric “prehistory.”⁷ Scholars like Katherine S.H. Turner remind us that Montagu’s “classical, tolerant and largely ahistorical stance” facilitates the construction of an “observing self [that] becomes quite literally, an embodiment of Enlightenment pluralism.”⁸ In this context, Montagu’s inclination to view Turkey through the lens of ancient Greek literature reveals more about how Montagu’s narrative as a traveler is shaped by her firsthand experience of Turkey, rather than how she shapes Turkey to fit an Orientalist or Hellenistic narrative. The imaginary landscape of Elysium functions as an extension of this self-reflexive narrative, providing a metaphorical setting for Montagu’s self-fashioning of a culturally hybridic identity—an identity that challenges the prescribed binaries of East and West and the masculine and feminine spheres of influence.⁹

⁷ Campbell, “Historical Machinery of Female Identity,” pp.74-75.

⁸ Katherine S.H. Turner. “From Classical to Imperial: Changing Visions of Turkey in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. Steve Clark (New York: Zen Books, 1999), pp.115,124. Montagu’s mode of self-narrativization also reflects the Enlightenment philosophical debate about character. For example, James A. Harris analyzes the debate between Thomas Reid and David Hume over changing character as a matter over individual agency over the passions. While Reid argues that “character is a matter of resolution and consistency of having a fixed purpose over an extended period of time, and of acting so as to realize that purpose” by controlling passions through reason, Hume believed that sociability—“how one is regarded and ‘characterized’ by other people”—provided a means of regulation the passions. See “Reid and Hume on the Possibility of Character,” in *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, eds. Thomas Ahnert and Susan Manning (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.34, 39.

Eighteenth-century women travelers, as Nussbaum has shown, challenged the binaries of “identification and differentiation” by cultural intermixture.¹⁰ In the case of Montagu, however, her privileged social status as an aristocratic Englishwoman undermines her claim to hybrid subjectivity. Previous scholars, in their discussions of Montagu’s travels, have debated the extent of her cultural immersion. Mary Jo Kietzman asserts that Montagu’s encounter with the Orient was a “radically decentering experience that effected a productive loss and subsequent reconstitution of her subject position through social and discursive interactions with other women” and that Montagu uses the metaphor of a cultural hybrid to “construct herself as an English-Turkish subject since she has been determined by her location and participations in both cultures.”¹¹ Kader Konuk, on the other hand, questions the authenticity of her English-Turkish subjecthood and provides Montagu’s “ethnomasquerade” in Turkish dress as an example of her superficial and performative engagement with Turkish identity.¹² Konuk sees Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters* as an extension of this “masquerade,” which serves as a strategic bid for narrative authority through “the short-lived fantasy of embodying the Other,” rather than representing a “stage in the process of cultural conversion.”¹³ Yet, Konuk, and to some extent, Kietzman emphasize a clear division between performative identity and interiorized selfhood, which, for Montagu, existed on a continuum.

¹⁰ Nussbaum, “British Women Write the East after 1750,” p.123.

¹¹ Mary Jo Kietzman, “Montagu’s Turkish Embassy Letters and Cultural Dislocation,” *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 38 (Summer 1998): pp.537, 547.

¹² Kader Konuk, “Ethnomasquerade in Ottoman-European Encounters: Reenacting Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,” *Literary Criticism* 46:3 (Summer 2004): p.394.

¹³ Konuk, “Ethnomasquerade,” pp.394-5.

Montagu's lifelong correspondence reveals an evolving conception of selfhood, which, according to Cynthia Lowenthal, draws upon a theatrical model of representation whereby "performance—the visible, gestural, mannered behavior presented to others—shapes and fashions a fluid identity."¹⁴ In other words, Montagu becomes the character that she performs intertextually, weaving truisms about her "self" within the fabric of fiction.¹⁵ Considering the genre of the travel narrative as factual fiction, Montagu's method of self-genesis is all the more apparent in her letters from Turkey and Italy. If, as Janet Gurkin Altman observes, the aim of writing a letter "is to map one's coordinates—temporal, spatial, emotional, intellectual—in order to tell someone else where one is located at a particular time and how far one has traveled since the last writing," then Montagu's travel correspondence doubly inscribes the distance between her former self and the self she has become.¹⁶ Furthermore, the metaphorical landscape of Elysium operates in these letters as a means to narrativize this transformation.

I will show in this chapter that Montagu's Elysium is steeped in the narrative potential of the East, concomitantly playing upon the western world's perception of the Orient as a fantastical place and coupling it with Montagu's own fetishization of Turkey's proximity to the

¹⁴ Cynthia Lowenthal, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1994), p.10. Lowenthal also notes that "Lady Mary tells competing stories of herself as spectator and actor, one who defines her own identity through performance and one who must suffer and respond to others' definitions of the meaning of those performances" (p.189).

¹⁵ According to Françoise Lionnet this weaving or braiding together of the strands of identity (i.e., *métissage*) enables writers to depict liminal embodied experience by "us[ing] linguistic and rhetorical structures that allow for their plural selves to speak from within the straightjackets of borrowed discourses." See *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p.19.

¹⁶ Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), p.119.

Classical past. Setting her transformation as traveler in this *de facto* cradle of civilization, Montagu's Elysium functions as the backdrop for an origin story that chronicles the death of a former self, grounded both physically and psychologically in the terms of domestic identity, and her subsequent rebirth as a wanderer with itinerant notions of selfhood and physicality. Montagu's construction of this psychic landscape has implications for recent scholarship on Orientalism and Exoticism. Not only does Elysium literalize the "postclassical synthesis" that Srinivas Aravamudan gestures to in his study, *Tropicopolitans*, it also demonstrates how Enlightenment Orientalism as "a fictional mode for dreaming with the Orient" can be applied beyond the genre of fiction to the fictive discourses surrounding the self in life-writing.¹⁷ Indeed, dreaming with the Orient generates ideas about new formulations of Western identity as much as fictions of the East—the "cosmopolitan subjectivity [that] comes from the othering of one's self" is generated from what Victor Segalen has theorized as exoticism's "ability to conceive otherwise."¹⁸ This is why I also trace Montagu's transportation of this fiction from the East to the West, where in Italy she draws upon the country's Ancient Roman and Roman Catholic roots to sustain and develop her Elysian metaphor.

Montagu's travel correspondence, as Isobel Grundy has observed, "prais[es] the Other in order to expose—in her case from a female and even a feminist angle—the faults of home," and

¹⁷ See Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalisms*, p.6. Aravamudan notes that "In a previous study titled *Tropicopolitans*, I named the ambivalent Orientalisms that circulated under the sign of empire levantalizations, or forms of tropological representation that used the East with the gorals of xenophilia as well as xenophobia. For writers such as Mary Wortley Montagu, a postclassical synthesis was at stake. Montagu wanted full passage from Europe to the Orient, not just physically but in terms of cultural identity, even as others such as Edmund Burke, Samuel Johnson, and William Beckford ascribed various negative attributes such as despotism, terror, and surveillance to this Orient" (*Enlightenment Orientalisms*, p.8).

¹⁸ Jenkins, "Fiction's Aesthetics of Diversity," pp.7, 1.

the landscape of Elysium functions as an extension of this critique, revealing the prescribed gendered spaces to which Montagu had been confined prior to her liberation through travel.¹⁹ Accordingly, Montagu's letters from Turkey and Italy are preoccupied with dissolving the divisions of gender, nationality, age, temporality, and more problematically, race and class, through reconfiguring the spaces where these categories are most delineated. As I will discuss in the sections that follow, Montagu's Elysium enables her to appropriate and re-imagine the patriarchal discourses she encounters both in the East and West. In Turkey, Montagu rejects the Orientalist fantasy of hypersexualized femininity by championing, instead, the female ability to inspire, create, and control the manufacture and circulation of fiction. Prior to her departure for Italy, Montagu rewrites the tragic suicides of Classical literature to provide figures like Sappho and Dido with agency over their afterlives. Lastly, during her twenty-three year Italian residence, and especially in six years leading up to her return to England and death in 1762, Montagu re-conceptualizes Shaftesburian retirement to envision the afterlife as a philosophical *otium* that transcends both the physical body and the body politic. All in all, these letters demonstrate how Montagu's "rebirth" as a traveler empowers her with the agency to dictate the course of her personal narrative.

I. Turkey and the Liminal Woman Traveler

In her June 1717 letter to Pope, Montagu asserts her narrative authority by addressing the limitations of prior depictions of Elysium and the Orient in her re-envisioning of Belgrade

Village as the Elysian Fields:

¹⁹ Isobel Grundy, "'The barbarous character we give them': White Women Travellers Report on Other Races." *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 22 (1993): p.74.

The village is wholly inhabited by the richest amongst the Christians, who meet every night at the fountain forty paces from my house to sing and dance, the beauty of dress of the women exactly resembling the ideas of the ancient nymphs as they are given us by the representations of the poets and painters. But what persuades me more fully of my decrease is the situation of my own mind, the profound ignorance I am in of what passes amongst the living, which only comes to me by chance, and the great calmness with which I receive it.

(Turkish Embassy Letters, p.146)

Montagu's depiction subverts expectations about Turkey— not only is the Turkish village completely depopulated of Muslims, but the description also further emphasizes that it is Christians, and by implication, Europeans, that partake in the lavish display and hedonistic activities stereotypically ascribed to the Orient.²⁰ Like Montagu, the Christians she describes are temporally and geographically displaced as willing participants living out a neoclassical fantasy. Here, the Elysian Fields departs from its origins in Roman mythology as the final resting place for heroic and virtuous souls, and instead, is characterized as a pleasure garden for the wealthy. Despite being part of the privileged class able to reside in the resort town of Belgrade Village, Montagu does not include herself among the Christians. Rather, she describes them from a detached vantage point, using vague and derivative terms that undermine her claim that the beautifully dressed women “exactly resembl[e]” artistic representations of “ancient nymphs.”

²⁰ Grundy infers from Montagu's emphasis upon the women's clothing that the Christians are Greek, but I think that the nationality of the villagers remains ambiguous in this passage. Cf. Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.154.

This lack of description highlights Montagu's transition from depicting Elysium as a physical location in favor of portraying it as a state of mind characterized by her feelings of detachment.

For Montagu, the eternal bliss promised by the Elysian Fields stems from a "profound ignorance" to everything outside of Elysium. Although this "insensibility" can be pleasurable like "the refreshment of cool breezes [off the Black Sea] that make [Belgrade Village] insensible of the heat of the summer" (p.146) it comes at the price of relinquishing ties to her former life. Despite the proverbial paradise that surrounds her, Montagu admits that she has "still a hankering after... friends and acquaintances left in the world" (p.146), and compares her feelings to "remains of human passions" (p.147) as depicted by Virgil's underworld in *The Aeneid*. Montagu concludes that "'tis very necessary to make a perfect Elysium that there should be a river Lethe, which I am not so happy to find" (p.147). By predicating eternal happiness on the forgetfulness caused by drinking from the waters of Lethe, Montagu suggests that in order to participate fully in Elysium she must forget her worldly life and therefore sacrifice that part of her identity. Montagu, however, admits that she has been unable to locate the River Lethe, thereby implying the difficulty of relinquishing the social circle and the self she left behind in England. Instead, Montagu resigns herself to living between worlds, partially converted to the Stoic calm of the departed spirits ("I can neither be sensibly touched with joy or grief when I consider that possibly the cause of either is removed before the letter comes to my hands"), yet "warmly sensible" of her intimate friendships and desirous for her previous existence in "the smoke and impertinencies in which [Pope] toils" (p.147).

Just as Montagu disrupts her depiction of Belgrade Village as a paradise populated by beautiful "ancient nymphs" with a reflection upon Virgil, she wryly rejects the sensual role ascribed to her gender—i.e., the singing and dancing—in favor of intellectual pursuits to stave

off “[mental] decrease.” Montagu’s vision of the afterlife responds to an earlier letter from Pope, dated November 10, 1716, in which he imagines Montagu “ha[ving] a Vision of Mahomet’s Paradise and happily awaken[ing] without a Soul [leaving] that blessed instant the beautiful Body... at full liberty to perform all the agreeable functions it was made for.”²¹ Pope plays on the apocryphal Islamic belief that women do not have souls in order to picture a “Mahomettan” afterlife where a feminine soulless existence allows for bodily liberation. Whereas Pope’s model operates upon the Oriental stereotype of excessive sexuality, Montagu’s description of Elysium is disinterested in carnal pleasure. Montagu sardonically remarks that physical pursuits grow tiresome (“To say truth I am sometimes very weary of this singing and dancing”) while scholarly endeavors, such as the study of Turkish and “classical authors,” prove “more agreeable” (p.147). Turner notes that Montagu “resolutely denies Pope the almost erotic satisfaction which her letters to women friends offer”; instead, her letters to him highlight the philosophical value of this opulence as “embodying both classical (specifically, Elysian) tranquility, and the possibility of a modern Epicureanism.”²² Lowenthal similarly reads Montagu’s correspondence to Pope as an outright denial of “intimate discourse” and his request that she “talk of [her]self,” interpreting her emphasis on her scholarly endeavors and privileged insight into Turkish culture as a bid for artistic and intellectual parity with Pope.²³ Montagu’s discussion of Elysium offers a way for her

²¹ Cited in Mary Hossain, “Women and Paradise.” *Journal of European Studies* 19 (1989): p.302.

²² Katherine S.H. Turner, “From Classical to Imperial: Changing Visions of Turkey in the Eighteenth Century,” in Steve Clark, *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit* (New York: Zen Books, 1999), pp.124-26.

²³ Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.58.

to speak about herself as well as re-envision a philosophical “Paradise” that rivals Pope’s artistry and intellectually challenges his preconceptions.

The initial description of Belgrade Village in Montagu’s letter to Pope mirrors Addison’s essay recounting an allegorical dream vision of a garden in the *Tatler*, which later became the basis for the landscape gardens at Stowe.²⁴ Whereas Montagu describes being in “middle of a wood... divided into many shady walks upon the short grass, that seems... artificial” (p.146), Addison finds himself in “the centre of [a] wood” among “covered walks” leading to edifices “so contrived.”²⁵ Montagu echoes Addison’s initial description, except for the gender of its inhabitants, replacing the “men of retired virtue” with beautiful women.²⁶ Perhaps appealing to Pope’s interest in the allegorical significance of gardens (his own garden at his Twickenham home featured a tunnel-grotto, a shell-covered temple, and an obelisk memorial to his mother), Montagu subverts Pope’s sexist and Orientalist “Vision of Mahomet’s Paradise” with a vision of her own of paradise as a feminotopia.²⁷ Montagu corrects this popular misassumption about

²⁴ Christopher McIntosh, *Gardens of the Gods: Myth, Magic and Meaning* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.87. Cited in *National Trust, Stowe Landscape Gardens* (London, National Trust, 1997), p.5: “The origin of the new garden was almost certainly an essay by Joseph Addison in the *Tatler* (No. 123, 21 January 1710), describing an allegorical dream. After falling asleep, Addison relates that he found himself in a huge wood, which had many paths and was full of people. He joined a group of middle-aged men marching ‘behind the standard of ambition’, and describes the route he took and the building he saw. The essential feature of the Elysian Fields are all there: a long straight path (the Great Cross Walk at Stowe) was terminated by a temple of virtue (Ancient Virtue), beyond which (over the river) lay a temple of honor (British Worthies).”

²⁵ Joseph Addison, *The Tatler*, No.123, Saturday, 21 January 1710.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ McIntosh, *Garden of the Gods*, p.85. For the concept of feminotopia, see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp.155-71.

Islam in a letter to the Abbé Conti—“Our Vulgar Notion that they do not own Women to have any Souls is a mistake”—and informs him that Muslims believed in a separate paradise for women.²⁸ Furthermore, Montagu’s Elysium functions as an intellectual space that offers more “agreeable variety” (p.147) to the scholarly female:

Monday setting of partridges, Tuesday reading English, Wednesday studying in the Turkish language (in which, by the way, I am already very learned), Thursday classical authors; Friday spent in writing; Saturday at my needle, and Sunday admitting of visits and hearing music, is a better way of disposing the week, than, Monday at the drawing room, Tuesday Lady Mohun’s, Wednesday the opera; Thursday the play; Friday Mrs. Chetwynd’s, etc., a perpetual round of hearing the same scandal and seeing the same follies acted over and over.

(p.147)

The endeavors that occupy Montagu’s week in Belgrade Village are primarily solitary, self-directed, and scholarly activities within a domestic space under her full control. This schedule differs dramatically from her time in London, which is dominated by domestic and public spaces that demand the sociability of its occupants. While Montagu can choose to “admit” visitors into her Elysian retreat on Sunday, she lacks this agency as a guest at Lady Mohun’s or as a theatergoer, and is thus subjected to the Sisyphean repetition of societal scandals and “follies.” Montagu seems to suggest that her paradise frees her from Pope and the rest of her social sphere’s circumscription, allowing her to develop a self that is independent of relational identity and reinvigorates her literary creativity. In this context, the “ancient nymphs” of Belgrade

²⁸ Hossain, “Women and Paradise,” p.302.

Village's Elysian Fields sing and dance for no one's aesthetic enjoyment but their own, and quite possibility, lead similar lives of intellectual and social agency.

This turn away from sexualized representations of exotic femininity, in order to shift the focus from female physicality to feminine narrative agency, is anticipated by a letter dated April 1, 1717 to an unspecified female correspondent, which details Montagu's experience in the Turkish bathhouse. In this account Montagu also begins by establishing the bathhouse as a feminotopic space containing "two hundred women" who received her with "all the obliging civility possible" (p.101). Like her depiction of Elysium, Montagu's description of what terms the "*bagnio*" subverts expectations by conflating quotidian Turkish spaces with imaginary landscapes and mythic inhabitants. Montagu's linguistic substitution of the Turkish *hammam* with an "Englishing" of *bagnio* implicitly contextualizes the bathhouse within Ancient Roman tradition and parallels her description of its female bathers, which relies heavily upon the artistry of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian painters and English writers in one of the best-known passage from *Turkish Embassy Letters*²⁹:

the ladies [were all] in a state of nature, that is, stark naked, without least wanton smile or immodest gesture among them... They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian...

(p.102)

²⁹ Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, p.101-2. See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "bagnio, n," Oxford University Press, June 2015 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/14647?redirectedFrom=bagnio>> (accessed July 15, 2015).

Much has been said about Montagu's use of these allusions to characterize her female subjects. While Konuk emphasizes the necessity of Montagu "invok[ing] the male gaze as a model for perception" to give her account credibility, Lisa Lowe points out that though Montagu "frames the praise of Turkish women... as an intervention and a challenge to the male voyage writers," her account succumbs to the "female objectification and subordination" inherent in these "male literary and rhetorical models."³⁰ Nussbaum goes further to suggest that Montagu's impersonation of a "male voyeur" can be interpreted as "transvestite gazing" indicative of her "sapphic desire" for the sexual freedoms that she attributes to the Turkish women, which ultimately "relocate[s] female eroticism onto the Other" and "constrain[s] the desire for sexual freedom to the exotic."³¹ Yet, Montagu's attention to the Turkish women's perfection of movement and "proportion" de-eroticizes her appraisal of their nudity by transfiguring their potentially sensual physicality into incorporeal, aesthetic ideals.³² These male-generated fictitious representations not only neutralize what Lowenthal sees as the "implicit threat" of violence and vulnerability to the uncovered female body, but also serve to elevate Montagu's female subjects.³³ Rather than simply asserting the modesty of the naked Turkish women, Montagu embellishes her account with these fictions to sublimate ordinary individuals into

³⁰ Konuk, "Ethnomasquerade," p.395. Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.48.

³¹ Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp.140-1.

³² Isobel Grundy reminds us, however, that Montagu's description removes "visible racial markers" and risks "denying them their ethnicity and corporeality." Grundy, "White Women Travellers Report on Other Races," pp. 83, 73.

³³ Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.112.

powerful, revered, and ultimately, desexualized, female archetypes: the goddess and the prelapsarian Eve.³⁴

Montagu's construction of the bagnio as a site for artistic inspiration embodies what Charles Batten has identified as "the application *utile dulce* to travel literature during the eighteenth century [which] elevated the genre to the rank of poesy, an artistic category that traditionally had included, among others such genres as epic, tragedy, and comedy."³⁵ The comparison of her nude female Turkish subjects to the art of Guido Reni and Titian and the epic poetry of John Milton, aligns Montagu's account, and her artistry as a travel writer, to artists and writers who represented the apex of the "hierarchy of genres"—the Renaissance model for classifying the arts, best articulated by seventeenth-century *amateur honoraire*, André Félibien.³⁶ Addressing the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, Félibien claims that in order to achieve the most elevated art form

an artist must know how to conceal the virtues of great men and the most elevated mysteries beneath the veil of legendary tales and allegorical compositions... [and be] an ingenious and learned author, in the invention and creation of ideas which are entirely

³⁴ Alexander Pope seizes on Montagu's Eve motif, casting Montagu as a "Second Eve" in his "Verses, to the Lady Mary Wortley Montague [sic]" appended to the octavo-format, 1799 Berlin edition of *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M---y W---y M---e; written during her Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, to Persons of Distinction, Men of Letters, & c. in different parts of Europe*: "Then bravely, fair dame/ Renew the old claim/ Which to your whole sex does belong/ And let men receive/ From a Second bright Eve/ The knowledge of right and of wrong/ But if the first Eve/ Hard doom did receive/ When only one apple had she/ What a punishment new/ Shall be found out for you/ Who tasting have robb'd the whole tree?" (pp.380-1).

³⁵ Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, p.25.

³⁶ Steve Edwards, *Art and its Histories: A Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.34.

original. Thus he has the advantage of being able to represent all that is in nature and all that has happened in the world, while at the same time revealing new things of which he is a kind of creator.³⁷

According to the hierarchy of genres, a theory that continued to influence art and literature in the eighteenth century, the most skillful artistic representations do not merely reproduce the natural, but reanimate nature in new forms dictated by the authorial imagination. Along these lines Titian “aspired to a state comparable to that of the great poets,” Reni sought to “rise above imitation of sensory perceptions or appearances into the realm of metaphysical and spiritual beauty, into the world of Ideas and potential perfection,” and Milton, following Quintilian’s motto, “*Imitatio per se ipsa non sufficit*” (“Imitation by itself is just not enough”), both followed and reinvented the classical epic tradition.³⁸ Following this model, Montagu, through the genre of travel literature, re-imagines masculine, fantastical depictions of women and the allegorical spaces they inhabit in proto-feminist terms.

Montagu’s deployment of female figures from biblical and classical religious traditions desexualizes female nudity and legitimizes the bathhouse as a place of female sociability. A far cry from the “unnatural and filthy lust... committed daily in the remote closets of darksome Bannaia” described by in George Sandys’ 1652 account of his travels and other male travel writers’ accounts of the Ottoman Empire, Montagu’s bagnio is a liminal space that promotes an

³⁷ Edwards, *Art and its Histories*, p.35-36.

³⁸ Thomas Puttfarcken, *Titian and Tragic Painting: Aristotle’s Poetics and the Rise of the Modern Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p.73. Richard E. Spear, *The Divine Guido: Religion, Sex, Money, and Art in the World of Guido Reni* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p.112; Mandy Green, *Milton’s Ovidian Eve* (Burlington, VA: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), pp.3-4.

idealized, trans-historical, transnational femininity by physically stripping away the historical and cultural constructions of womanhood inherent in clothing.³⁹ As Campbell argues, Montagu imagines an ahistorical and atemporal Turkey to seek a temporary release from her female body's entanglement "within the wide and entangling historical machine of fashionable vestments and cultural in-vestments."⁴⁰ Montagu's reference to her clothing as an indication of foreignness ("I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them" [p.101]) and the Turkish bathers' interpretation of her unwillingness to undress as a patriarchal limitation on her freedom ("I saw they believed I was so locked up in that machine that was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband" [p.103]), suggests not only the constraints of English culture on Montagu's bodily agency, but also, the limitations of the privileged position of the male viewer that several scholars claim that Montagu occupies by proxy.⁴¹

Although Montagu's "wicked wish" that eighteenth-century portrait painter, Charles Jervas, "could have been there invisible," has been read as her facilitation of male voyeurism, it is an implicit critique of his artistic skill as she sardonically quips, "I fancy it would have very much *improved his art* to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in

³⁹ Sandys' account is quoted in Susan Bassnett, "Travel Writing and Gender," edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.229.

⁴⁰ Campbell, "Historical Machinery of Female Identity," p.74.

⁴¹ In addition to being trapped in garments that required an assistant to help dress and undress her, Montagu was restrained by her husband's political position as envoy and an English society that deemed such nudity inappropriate. Grundy reminds the reader that Montagu was unable to undress herself fully, because such an action would have "gravely compromised both her personal reputation and her husband's political mission" (*Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.139).

conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions” (p.102, emphasis mine). Montagu does not necessarily wish for Jervas’ presence so he can merely witness the Turkish women’s nudity (Montagu has already established in her previous references to Milton, Guido, and Titian that male artistic representations perfectly capture the proportion and graceful movements of the female form); she is interested in his representation of their natural “postures” and actions, which are obfuscated by the limited and limiting male gaze. The masculine fascination and anxiety surrounding the “darksome Bannia” stems from both the inability to penetrate, codify, or control this female-only space and the deficiencies of a male imagination that ascribes unbridled sexuality to female bodies free from its surveillance. As a woman observer, whose clothed body serves as reminder of her culture’s policing of the female form, Montagu’s mediates the male gaze in order to critique it through the interrogation of “her positionality... to assume the relatively limited role of participant in the creation of culture rather than that of a detached cultural analyst.”⁴² Instead of focusing solely on the sexual implications of the bathhouse, Montagu pays special attention to its untapped, narrative potential, and as Kietzman has noted, “transforms the potential ‘objects’ of her gaze into speaking subjects who see as well as are seen, who initiate conversation, work, persuade, probe, and surprise.”⁴³ Ultimately, Montagu emphasizes the bathhouse is, above all, a place whereby female visitors can partake in intellectual camaraderie, and become storytellers— rather than remaining the passive object of fantastical accounts— through the dissemination of their knowledge and the creative reimagining of current events: “In short, ‘tis the woman’s

⁴² Kietzman, “Cultural Dislocation,” p.540

⁴³ Ibid.

coffeehouse, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented etc.” (p.102). Here, as in her letter to Pope, Montagu revises masculine depictions of exotic women as mythical beings in order to accord females the subjecthood to participate in such mythmaking.

Montagu faces challenges to her own subjecthood by Pope’s entreaties for her to bring him a “beautiful, sexually accomplished ‘Circassian’ slave-concubine.” As Ros Ballaster argues, Pope equates this “‘figure’ of an oriental woman who can mirror [Montagu] because of her ‘whiteness’” with access to Montagu’s “feminine self.”⁴⁴ Montagu’s refusal to acknowledge Pope’s repeated requests for a “fair Circassian” indicates her rejection of this objectified model of female hybridity.⁴⁵ In her letter recounting her visit to Pera to Abbé Conti, Montagu offers an alternative conception of hybrid when she remarks upon the intermarriages that form “several races of people the oddest imaginable” (p.111) confounding national stereotypes and complicating the notion of selfhood (“In the same animal is not seldom remarked the Greek perfidiousness, the Italian diffidence, the Spanish arrogance, [and] the French loquacity” [p.111]). Contrasted against Pope’s model of hybridity, which “others” Montagu in order sexually dominate her, Montagu’s model consolidates the disparate aspects of her personal

⁴⁴ Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orientals: Fictions of the East in England: 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.73, 71.

⁴⁵ Ballaster, *Fabulous Orientals*, p.73. Ballaster provides the details of this correspondence: “In Autumn 1717 [Pope] renewed the request to bring over ‘the fair Circassian we us’d to talk of’, again asking Lady Mary to ‘look oftener than you use to do, in your Glass in order to chuse me one I may like.’ On 1 September 1718, he returns to the issue, but this time openly equates the imaginary slave-concubine with Lady Mary herself. Pope plays with a number of European prejudices about Muslim women to express his desire for access to her feminine self: that Islam does not accord women souls, that seraglio women are both more ‘simple’ and more sexual than their European counterparts...If Lady Mary responded to Pope’s repeated request, she did not choose to include any response in the preparation of her *Turkish Embassy Letters* for publication” (*Fabulous Orientals*, pp.71-2).

identity and provides a framework within which to understand her process of reimagining herself as a traveler and travel writer.⁴⁶ Montagu's refusal to be defined by Pope's attempt to map the eroticized Orient onto her body is particularly pointed here, because while she rejects his comparison to the Circassian, Montagu embraces, and even internalizes, Pope's comparison of her to Sappho, a Hellenistic female who mirrors her literary ability. Unlike the "Circassian" slave, who despite her appearance of racial hybridity, occupies a fixed position in the eighteenth-century "myth" of oriental absolutism over women's bodies, Sappho occupies the literary imagination as a figure that is both historical and mythological, transgressing the boundaries of stable gender, sexual, and national identities. Sappho, the famed "tenth muse," infamous seducer of women, and inhabitant of Greece—the so-called "threshold between the East and West"—becomes for Montagu an example of how hybridity can also be a form of female agency.⁴⁷ The importance of Sappho and Elysium in the construction of Montagu's identity as a woman travel writer is highlighted by the reemergence of both these concepts over twenty years later in Montagu's letters to her lover, Francesco Algarotti.

⁴⁶ Kietzman argues that Montagu uses this racial and cultural hybridity as a paradigm "to represent the contradictions she perceives [in] herself—mother, thinker, correspondent, and writer—without letting biology or culture reduce her perception of personal possibility" ("Cultural Dislocation," p.549).

⁴⁷ Mitsi, "Roving Englishwomen," p.129. Ballaster, *Fabulous Orientals*, p.73.

II. Reimagining Sappho and Dido

In March 1736, less than two weeks following her introduction to Francesco Algarotti, Montagu fell “wildly in love” with the young Italian Newtonian scholar.⁴⁸ Robert Halsband remarks that Algarotti inspired Montagu to write letters that “span the widest arc of expression in all her correspondence—from fulsome adoration through icy scorn and debonair affection.”⁴⁹ These letters were also written with a conscious literariness as evidenced by her careful selection of French as the *lingua franca* to refine her prose and the use of frequent classical allusions.⁵⁰ Montagu’s 1736-9 correspondence with Algarotti, in which she tries her pen at providing a voice for the abandoned epistolary heroine, exemplifies such shifts in tone as well as participates in her lifelong proto-feminist revision of the masculine literary tradition. Montagu’s juvenilia evince the influence of the Latin education she “stole” from her father’s library, from her poem, “Julia to Ovid,” composed “at 12 years of Age,” to her imitations of Virgil, which invert the gender roles of the injured man and fickle woman.⁵¹ Similarly playing upon gender in her

⁴⁸ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, pp.356-7. Robert Halsband remarks that “slight information is all that Algarotti’s biographer knew of his relationship with ‘la spirituelle Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.’” See Halsband, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p.154.

⁴⁹ Robert Halsband, “Algarotti as Apollo: His Influence on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,” in *Friendship's Garland: Essays Presented to Mario Praz on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Vittorio Gabrieli (Rome: Storia et Letteratura, 1966), p.227-9. Halsband asserts although that no letters from Algarotti to Montagu have been found, she is mentioned in a letter from Algarotti to his brother dated 1741: “*Milady Montagu è qui da qualche settimana; questa non è une delle men curiose epoche della vita mia, assai per altro singolare*” (“Lady Montagu is here in a few weeks; this is not one of the less curious periods of my life, if not the most unusual,” my translation). See “Algarotti as Apollo,” p.224.

⁵⁰ Halsband, “Algarotti as Apollo,” p.227-9.

⁵¹ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, pp.15, 19. Isobel Grundy, “Ovid and Eighteenth-Century Divorce: An Unpublished Poem by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,” *Review of English*

correspondence with Algarotti, Montagu inhabits an androgynous literary space, like Sappho, writing as a traditionally masculine unrequited lover-poet to her muse, while also providing “the faithful picture of a woman’s Heart without evasion or disguises” as a corrective to the limited female discourse on frustrated desire.⁵²

In her letters following Algarotti’s departure to Italy in September 1736, Montagu aligns herself with Sappho from Ovid’s *Heroides*, drawing upon their similarities to reclaim an authorial and sexual identity from public disrepute. Although Pope originally christened Montagu with the name Sappho to reflect the genius of her verses, the moniker ultimately served as a vehicle to satirize Montagu’s appearance and sexual appetite, which Pope insinuates is like Sappho’s— lasciviously indiscriminate in regard to gender and age.⁵³ Once again, Pope attempts to claim access to Montagu’s sexuality, referring to her in his *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* (1733) as the “furious Sappho... Pox’d by her love, or libell’d by her hate” (ll.85-86).⁵⁴ Pope’s poem not only attributes Montagu’s smallpox-scarred face to venereal disease, but also characterizes it as a physical manifestation of her monstrous sexuality that threatens to infect her future lovers. Alluding to the eighteenth-century belief that over time the face is cumulatively marked by inner feelings and thoughts, Pope suggests that the aging and

Studies 23 (1972): p.420. Note that Grundy later published this poem in an edited volume of Montagu’s poetry. See Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy*, ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp.176-7.

⁵² From a letter to Algarotti dated September 20, 1736 in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: vol. II, 1727–1751*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp.106-7. All further citations will be cited in the text by volume and page number.

⁵³ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.199.

⁵⁴ Cited in Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.334.

lascivious Montagu is deformed by passions unbecoming a woman that has outlived her sexual desirability.⁵⁵ By initiating a love affair with Algarotti, a man twenty-three years her junior, Montagu eschews Pope's satire, and identifies with Madeleine de Scudéry's Sappho who lives "happily ever after with Phaon—without marrying him," rather than Ovid's Sappho who rushes to her death after being abandoned by her lover.⁵⁶ When Montagu writes to Algarotti, "You, lovely youth, shall my Apollo prove/ Adorn my verse, and tune my soul to love," she revises Sappho's injunction to Phaon in the *Heroides*, "Take up a lyre and quiver; you are Apollo embodied and alive/ Let horns appear above your brow, and Bacchus appears: he is you" (ll.23-4) by reinstating the poetic agency that Ovid strips from his heroine.⁵⁷ Whereas Ovid's Sappho surrenders her lyre to Phaon, whom she elevates as Apollo, Montagu is inspired by her Apollo (Algarotti) to "tune" her lyre to produce more verse. Unlike Ovid's depiction of Sappho, who in response to her "waning... poetic powers... seeks release... in death," Montagu's poetry and prose is revitalized by Algarotti's departure.⁵⁸ Montagu's version, like Scudéry's, presents her Phaon (Algarotti) as incidental to Sappho's (Montagu's) happiness and literary work, thus hinting at her potential to attract future lovers who would inspire more verses. By substituting

⁵⁵ Jill Campbell, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the 'Glass Revers'd' of Female Old Age," in "*Defects*": *Engendering the Modern Body*, eds. Helen E. Deutsch and Felicity A. Nussbaum (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp.226, 229.

⁵⁶ Helen E. Deutsch, "'This once was me': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Ecstatic Poetics," *The Eighteenth Century* 53.3 (Fall 2012), p.333. Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.18

⁵⁷ Cited in Robert Halsband, *The Life of Montagu*, p.170. "Sume fidem et pharetram—fies manifestus Apollo/ accedant capiti cornua—Bacchus eris!" Text and translation from Florence Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp.124-5.

⁵⁸ This is a description of Sappho from Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop*, p.136.

Sappho's self-obliteration with cathartic literary proliferation, Montagu presents new narrative possibilities for classical tragic heroines and women writers alike.

On September 10, 1736, Montagu's letter to Algarotti turns its attention to the tragic heroine of Dido to further criticize the inadequate depictions of women by male authors. Although Montagu likens herself to Dido to illustrate the extent of her grief, she refuses to pursue the comparison to its self-destructive conclusion and voices her dissatisfaction with Virgil's depiction:

I am a thousand times more to be pitied than the sad Dido, and I have a thousand more reasons to kill myself. But since until now I have not imitated her conduct, I believe that I shall live either by cowardice or strength of character. I have thrown myself at the head of a foreigner just as she did, but instead of crying perjurer and villain when my little Aenas [*sic*] shows that he wants to leave me, I consent to it through a feeling of Generosity which Virgil did not think women capable of.

(Complete Letters, ii, p.104)

As with Ovid's Sappho, the initial parallels between Montagu and Dido's respective situations encourage a comparative interpretation: they are both married (in Dido's case widowed), powerful noblewomen who are abandoned by faithless, Italy-bound lovers and left to suffer as martyrs for their unrequited devotion. Montagu's claim that imitating Dido runs counter to her own character indicates that the Phoenician queen serves as an inadequate model for female abandonment. Before killing herself, Dido curses Aeneas, "Go, follow Italy down the winds... Though far away, I will chase thee with murky brands and, when chill death has severed soul and

body, everywhere my shade shall haunt thee” (bk. 4, ll.381-6).⁵⁹ In deliberate contrast, Montagu lives “by cowardice or strength of character” and generously contributes to financing Algarotti’s travels.⁶⁰ Montagu not only elevates herself above Virgil’s ill-configured heroine by exceeding her both in suffering and benevolence, she also mocks Algarotti as an ungrateful “little Aeneas,” trivializing the reasons for his departure and insinuating that Algarotti does not live up to his literary predecessor.⁶¹

In addition to her reimagining of Virgil’s Dido and Ovid’s Sappho in letters to Algarotti, Montagu conceptualizes alternative endings to their tragic tales when she departs for Italy. On 16 July 1739, Montagu announces to Algarotti, “I am leaving to seek you. It is not necessary to accompany such a proof of an eternal attachment with an embroidery of words” (*Selected Letters*, p.165). Concluding that her words are insufficient to bring Algarotti back and deciding to pursue him on her own in Italy, Montagu defies contemporary restrictions on female travelers.

⁶² Montagu also goes further than her literary models of Sappho and Dido, to subvert the

⁵⁹ “I, sequere Italiam ventis [...] sequar atris ignibus absens/ et, cum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus/ omnibus umbra locis adero.” Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil), *Aeneid in Virgil in Two Volumes, vol. I, Eclogues, Georgics, and Aeneid I-VI*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p.421-2.

⁶⁰ Halsband, *The Life of Montagu*, p.175.

⁶¹ Cf. Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.70: “Such sentiments more importantly provide her with an illusion of control: her most extravagant turn, the claim that her female strength of generosity takes the form of granting ‘little Aeneas’ his freedom, is intended to function as a means of domesticating her ‘foreigner,’ but it is clear that he, like Dido’s Aeneas, is beyond the power of her rhetoric.”

⁶² Nittel asserts that, “When a man chose to venture into the ‘Unknown’ it was a sufficient case in itself. His travels were not restricted to exploration but also to what could today be termed as ‘business or culture trips.’ In contrast a woman required a practical reason, usually respective of her health [and] to support the exploration[al] and profession[al] quests of [her] husband” (*Wondrous Magic*, pp.23, 25).

conventions of the epistolary genre.⁶³ As Gillian Beer has demonstrated, the heroine of the heroic epistle entreats her lover to “come,” while she remains physically fixed, but Montagu resists this passive approach by reversing the traditional gender roles and resolving to go.⁶⁴ By exercising a feminine agency unavailable in the heroic epistle, Montagu implicitly criticizes a literary genre that robs otherwise subversive female characters of their narrative potential. Indeed, Sappho and Dido’s unceremonious suicides cut short their respective, gender-bending careers as the famed poet of Lesbos and the founder, ruler, and defender of Carthage. Consequently, the afterlife that Montagu envisages for herself in Italy is also a literary afterlife for the figures of Sappho and Dido, in which Montagu re-imagines Sappho’s “leap [off] the cliff of high Leucas” as a “leap for another world” and Dido’s reunion with Aeneas in the Elysian Fields in her letter to Algarotti on 24 July 1739⁶⁵:

At last I depart tomorrow with the resolution of a man well persuaded of his religion and happy in his conscience, filled with faith and hope. I leave my friends weeping for my loss and bravely take the leap for another world. If I find you such as you have sworn to

⁶³ Gillian Beer argues that the “Heroic epistle takes, as its occasion, pain, and seeks to represent the most deeply intimate and private knowledge in a highly conscious and achieved rhetoric [...] The poems are attempts at action in that they are attempts to move, to bring the lover back.” See Beer, “‘Our Unnatural No-voice’: The Heroic Epistle, Pope, and Women’s Gothic,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 12 (1982): p.134.

⁶⁴ Beer notes that “‘Come’ is the most important word (even, finally, the only important word) in heroic epistle. The entire rhetoric seeks to realize its meaning” (“‘Our Unnatural No-voice,’” p.131).

⁶⁵ See lines 171-2 of *Heroides* 15: “*pete protinus altam/ Leucada nec saxo desiluisse time!*” (“Go now, find the cliff/ of high Leucas, and do not be afraid to leap”). Text and translation in Verducci, *Ovid’s Toyshop of the Heart*, pp.132-3.

me, I find the Elysian fields and happiness beyond imagining.

(p.165)

Once again configuring her discourse as a lament for distant friends, Montagu presents her departure for Italy—her first extended journey away from England since Turkey—as a voluntary death. While Elysium symbolized the liminality experienced by Montagu as a traveler in Turkey, it serves here as a paradigm for happily relinquishing, rather than resisting the loss of her English life and identity. Montagu also follows in the footsteps of Sappho and Dido, who transgress national and cultural boundaries—as Ancient Greece and the Orient stand in for each other, and Carthage is at once North African, oriental, and Hellenistic—to provide a mythological model for transculturation.⁶⁶

III. Italy and the “Leap for Another World”

While Montagu’s plans for Elysian happiness with Algarotti were never fully realized, her brave “leap for another world” enabled Montagu to pen an exhaustive epistolary account of her twenty-three year residence in Italy, which recounts the transition from her life as an English socialite to a philosophical afterlife of Italian solitude. A possible sequel to her *Turkish Embassy Letters*, Montagu’s Italian letters present her account as a corrective to the “antiquated [and] trite observations [of] statues and edifices” from Grand Tourists that “think themselves qualified to

⁶⁶ Nussbaum highlights that the eighteenth-century divisions between “East” and “West” are fundamentally unclear: “The directional axes commonly applied are often skewed: the ‘East’ turns out to be, frequently the North (as in the North of Africa) or, if one takes Europe as the compass, the South; and West Africa is at once black and Islamic, south of Europe and North Africa.” See “Between ‘Oriental’ and ‘Blacks So Called,’ 1688-1788,” in *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory*, eds. Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.140.

give exact accounts... when a very long stay... [is] requisite even to a moderate degree of knowing a foreign country” (p.255-6). Montagu implicitly criticizes Addison’s *Remarks on Italy*, which was “[so] focused... upon traces of classical times that the ‘Italy’ of its title can sometimes appear to be a land entirely lacking in living inhabitants of post-classical edifices,” while also commenting upon her own classicizing tendencies in *Turkish Embassy Letters*.⁶⁷ Donatella Abbate Badin posits that Montagu’s travel letters portray a “feminized way of travelling quite distinct from the Grand Tour [in its] experiential approach,” which can be read as “an act of self-fashioning and deflected autobiography.”⁶⁸ Montagu’s “multiple self-fashionings,” however, do not only act as a “veil to hide the reasons for her stay abroad and the vicissitudes that tormented her,” as Badin suggests, but also, operate in concert as revisionary performances of the traveling self against the evolving figurative landscape of Elysium.⁶⁹

Several themes and incidents in Turkey reemerge and are re-imagined in Italy to represent Montagu’s narrative transformation from a detached observer and limited participant to her internalization and adoption of foreign culture. Although Montagu’s reconfiguration of Turkey in Italy may derive from the cross-pollination of ideas as she was revising *Turkish*

⁶⁷ Buzard, “The Grand Tour,” p.40. This is not the first time Montagu has commented on the work of Joseph Addison. In early 1713 Montagu wrote a critique on Addison’s *Cato* at the request of her husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, who was a close friend of his. See Robert Halsband, “Addison’s *Cato* and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,” *PMLA* 65.6 (Dec. 1950): p.1122-9. I argue that Montagu’s “Verses on Self-Murder” is a lyric reimagination of *Cato*’s final soliloquy in “Self-murder, Female Agency, and Manuscripts ‘Mangle’d and falsify’d’: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s ‘1736. Address’d To –’ and *The London Magazine*,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38.1 (March 2015).

⁶⁸ Donatella Abbate Badin, “Self-Fashioning through Travel Writing: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Letters from Italy,” *Textus: English Studies in Italy*, 25:2 (2012): p.95.

⁶⁹ Abbate Badin, “Self-Fashioning through Travel Writing,” pp.91, 95.

Embassy Letters simultaneously, it also gestures toward a conscious reexamination of her subject position as traveler and travel writer in light of her Italian nativization.⁷⁰ Montagu's conception of Elysian space changes as a response to the restrictions that hegemonic forces, both institutionalized and internalized, pose to women's intellectual and bodily agency. The subtexts underlying Montagu's re-conception of Elysium are the respective limitations that her desire for proximity to Algarotti, decade-long extortion by Count Ugolino Palazzi, and aging body presented to her circumnavigation of Italy.

In her letter to Lady Pomfret on November 11, 1740 Montagu conflates Elysium with Eden to portray her residence in Italy as a post-lapsarian paradise:

I go to bed every night at ten, run about all the morning among the antiquities, and walk every evening in a different beautiful villa; where if amongst the fountains I could find the waters of Lethe, I should be completely happy.

Like a deer that is wounded I bleed and run on,
And fain I my torment would hide.
But alas! 'tis in vain, for wherever I run
The bloody dart sticks in my side,

⁷⁰ Lowenthal argues that the *Turkish Embassy Letters* were written with the intent of publication: "Halsband calls the collection 'pseudo-letters, dated and addressed to people either named or nameless.' As such, the embassy correspondence is Lady Mary's most polished and self-conscious epistolary performance—a document deliberately shaped, edited, and fine-tuned for nuance and subtlety. That she always intended the letters to be published is clear: she carried the albums with her throughout her twenty-two year, self-imposed exile on the Continent; upon her return to England after Wortley's death, she stopped in Rotterdam and presented the manuscripts to the Reverend Benjamin Sowden, telling him that they were 'to be dispos'd of as he [thought] proper'" (*Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.82).

and I carry the serpent that poisons the paradise I am in.

(Complete Letters, ii, p.210)

Echoing her description of Belgrade Village and her desire to locate the River Lethe, the Elysium that Montagu seeks in Italy is blighted by her memory of Algarotti's broken promise to settle near her, as she writes to Algarotti on March 12th of the same year: "I still have one of your letters in which you assure me that whatever town I establish myself in you will not fail to go there yourself, and I chose Venice as that which suited you the most" (ii, p.175). Since her "leap" into the figurative afterlife was predicated on her reunion with Algarotti, Montagu's Elysium reflects the failure of her self-mythologization as a figure of feminine agency.

Montagu's four-line poem, in which she likens herself to a deer wounded by a dart, refers to Virgil's characterization of Dido when she is consumed by her love for Aeneas and neglects her duties as Carthage's queen:

Unlucky Dido is consumed,
And through all the city, raving, she wanders,
just as a deer when an arrow having been hurled,
a shepherd hunting with weapons fixed,
it unaware among the Cretan grove at a distance,
and released the volatile iron;
she traverses the forest and brush of Dictaen in flight;

the lethal shaft clings to her side.⁷¹

(Virgil, *Aeneid*, bk. 4, ll.65, 68-73)

Unlike her reference to Dido in her 1736 letter to Algarotti, Montagu does not critique the limitations of her classical avatar, nor does she offer an alternative ending to her foreshadowed demise. Montagu does, however, deviate from the import of Virgil's epic simile, which, in its reference to the unseen shepherd waiting to fire a fatal arrow at the startled deer, implies that the love-struck Dido is unaware that she is doomed to die from the moment she meets Aeneas. Though Montagu also refers to an unseen observer, from whom she hides her "torment," she is conscious of her lethal wound, and as her reference to the serpent from the Garden of Eden suggests, precipitates her own injury. While mixing the metaphors of a bloody dart with a poisonous serpent, Montagu jarringly shifts from poetry to prose, and from a classical to a biblical protagonist to subvert expectations about the poem's denouement. Montagu also denigrates a figure from her earlier letters: the "general mother" that the Turkish women embody in her account of the bagnio. Milton's Eve reappears to symbolize Montagu's fall from innocence to experience when she pursues Algarotti to Italy, only to find him unwilling to "live [with her] in tranquility" (ii, p.175). Nonetheless, Montagu's insistence that she "carri[es] the serpent" implies that she is not a hapless victim beguiled into eating from the Tree of the

⁷¹ "Uritur infelix Dido, totaque vagatur/ urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta/ quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit/ pastor agens telis, liquitque volatile ferrum/ nescius; illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat/ Dictaeos; haeret later, letalis harundo." See pp.417-18.

Knowledge of Good and Evil like Eve, but rather, seduced by her own fallacious rhetoric to tempt her fate.⁷²

Reflecting Montagu's preoccupation with the visibility of her secret "torment," her other letters to Pomfret from 1739-40 reassess the freedom accorded to women by venturing out in public concealed and disguised. When Montagu writes to Pomfret on November 6, 1739, she initially describes Venetian society in glowing terms:

It is the fashion for the greatest ladies to walk the streets, which are admirably paved; and a mask, price sixpence, with a little cloak, and the head of a domino, the genteel dress to carry you everywhere... And it is so much the established fashion for every body to live their own way, that nothing is more ridiculous than censuring the actions of another.

(ii, p.159)

For Montagu, the fashionable dress of the Venetians, which is designed to disguise one's identity, is inversely related to the social fashion of living openly without fear of public censure. Consequently, Montagu conflates paying for a sixpence mask and other accoutrements with purchasing a *carte blanche* that gives her access to all facets of the public sphere ("the genteel dress to carry you everywhere") and sanctions the public performance of otherwise private passions. Writing only four months after her arrival in Italy, Montagu possibly views Venice with its mixture of "spectacular self-presentation with masked anonymity" as the ideal setting to

⁷² Cf. "the force of that fallacious Fruit" (bk.10, l.1046) in John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1957), p.402.

enact her clandestine love affair with Algarotti.⁷³ Not only does Montagu's praise of "the secrecy of masks and dominoes" present Italy as a "permissive, easy-going country of relaxed mores," as Abbate Badin has noted, it harkens back to Montagu's description of the veil in *Turkish Embassy Letters*.⁷⁴

In Montagu's letter to Lady Mar on April 1, 1717, she claims to correct the widely held misapprehension regarding the oppression of Turkish women by portraying the veil as an instrument of social and sexual liberation, rather than subjugation:

Tis very easy to see, they have more liberty than we have, no woman of rank soever being permitted to go in the streets without two muslins, one that covers her face all but her eyes, and another that hides the whole dress of her head... You may guess how effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave, and 'tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street. This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery.

(*Turkish Embassy Letters*, pp.114-5)

Here, as in Montagu's letter written twenty-two years later, a woman's concealment of her identity is taken as a sign of her gentility; however, this assumption that every veiled woman is one of "rank" is immediately called into question by Montagu's claim that "there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave." Montagu's observation that the veil makes women

⁷³ Jurgen Schlaeger, "Elective Affinities; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in Venice," in *Venetian Views, Venetian Blinds: English Fantasies about Venice*, eds. Manfred Pfister and Barbara Schaff (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999), p.67-9.

⁷⁴ Abbate Badin, "Self-fashioning through Travel Writing," p.101.

indistinguishable from one another characterizes the veil as a democratizing force that unites all women in their subversion of patriarchal control. As Ludmilla Kostova has noted, Montagu claims that the veil “gives Turkish women the freedom of anonymity, which enables them to move from place to place undetected,” rather than restricting their access to the public sphere.⁷⁵ In addition, Montagu does not view the veil as restricting, but rather, as granting women agency over their sexuality by prohibiting husbands from keeping their wives under surveillance. This semblance of parity among Turkish women of all classes is quickly dissolved, however, by Montagu’s comparison of the veil to a masquerade, which as Lowe argues, transfers onto the Turkish society the “ideologically charged English classification” of masquerade, whereby an “aristocratic lady might disguise herself as a servant girl to take a young lover from a more common class.”⁷⁶ Montagu’s reference to the veil as masquerade indicates that the physical mobility of going *incognito* pertains only to the upper classes. This view is reinforced by her 1739 description of Venetian masquerade dress as allowing one to go “everywhere,” provided that one has already has access to “genteel dress.” By projecting onto the veil her aristocratic fantasy of masquerading as a commoner, Montagu also fails to acknowledge the fundamental difference between masquerade and the veil: while the former depends upon lavish display to highlight the visibility of its wearer, the latter operates by making its wearer homogenous, and thus, invisible. Montagu’s confusion over the visibility of the female body and its relationship to

⁷⁵ Ludmilla Kostova, “Constructing Oriental Interiors: Two Eighteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Easts,” in *Travel Writing and the Female Imaginary*, eds. Vita Fortunati, et al. (Bologna: Patron Editore, 2001): p.23.

⁷⁶ Lowe, *French and British Orientalisms*, pp.44-5.

a woman's agency in the public sphere also leads to her misreading of Italian manners during her residence.

Montagu's February 1740 letter to Pomfret reveals Italian social mores to be more restrictive than she had assumed in her previous letter:

I am surprized [sic] at the way of acting I find in Italy, where, though the sun gives more warmth to the passions, they are all managed with a sort of discretion that there is never any public éclat, though there are ten thousand publick engagements; which is so different from what I had always heard and read, that I am convinced either the manners of the country are wonderfully changed, or travellers have always related what they have imagined, and not what they saw; as I found at Constantinople, where, instead of the imprisonment in which I fancied all the ladies languished, I saw them running about in veils from morning to night.

(Complete Letters, ii, p.173)

Dispelling the popular misassumption that Italians express their passions openly, Montagu marvels at their emotional reserve despite the multiple opportunities for public outbursts. While she sets out to correct previous travel accounts of Italy, Montagu also inadvertently contradicts her earlier claim that the disguise offered by Venetian fashionable dress allowed for the genteel to "live their own way." In place of the socially liberated and self-indulgent masqueraders, the Italians she characterizes here are wary of public censure and regulate their behavior accordingly. Though the "surprize" Montagu expresses regarding Italian manners may initially be taken as a compliment, her comment follows a disparaging remark about the Duchess of Manchester's callousness. Possibly expressing her frustration with keeping her own emotional turmoil over Algarotti private, Montagu responds to the recent suicide of Manchester's fiancé,

the Earl of Scarborough by retorting, “I could pity the Duchess of Manchester, though I believe ‘tis a sensation she is incapable of feeling for any body” (ii, p.173).⁷⁷ In this context, Montagu’s discussion of “the way of acting... in Italy” follows not as a *non sequitur*, but instead, an extension of her critique of the Duchess of Manchester’s inability to display emotion, despite the tragic death of her husband-to-be. Taken together these observations are examples of restrained female sociability that Montagu sets in opposition to what she perceives of as the comparative freedom of Turkish women “running about in veils from morning to night.” Montagu’s misreading of the liberties of the Venetian masquerade retrospectively undermines her assessment that Turkish women are not “imprison[ed]” by the veil. In both Turkish and Italian contexts, the concealment of women’s faces, bodies, and identities does not preclude them from the social restrictions on their behavior, but rather reinforces the patriarchal regulation of when, where, how, and to whom women are physically and emotionally exposed. Montagu, like the travelers before her, imagines liberated women’s trysts with secret lovers, but only witnesses the circumscription of naked female bodies to women-only spaces like the Turkish bathhouse, as well as experiences the social pressure to disguise passions unfit for public consumption. As a response, Montagu’s later Italian letters address and attempt to resolve the issues that the body poses for female agency.

Only five years after Montagu breaks off contact with Algarotti in May 1741, she is troubled by another Italian male figure.⁷⁸ From 1746-56, while living in a self-proclaimed state

⁷⁷ See fn. 1, p.173.

⁷⁸ After frustrated attempts to convince Algarotti to settle near her, Montagu breaks off communication with him in May 1741 concluding, “I see so clearly the nature of your soul that I am as much in despair of touching it as Mr. Newton was of enlarging his discoveries by means

of “rural retreat” in the remote northern Italian province of Brescia, Montagu is secretly exploited by Count Ugolino Palazzi.⁷⁹ Though this decade of being intimidated, manipulated, and swindled by Palazzi and his influential family is largely absent from her travel correspondence, Montagu records it in a memoir written in Italian for the expressed purpose of bringing “Count Palazzi to account” for his refusal to “release the deeds of several properties for which she had paid money into his hands” (Grundy, “Italian Memoir,” pp.322-3). According to Grundy, this “‘Italian Memoir’ presents a shadow, a downside, and unadmitted subtext” (pp.321-2) to Montagu’s epistolary self-construction as a sage, moralist, and intellectual residing in relative tranquility, and reveals both the extent to which Montagu downplays Palazzi’s wrongdoings to avoid “constructing herself as dupe” (p.341) and “her readiness to sacrifice her interests for the sake of keeping up appearances” (p.344). One of the biggest sacrifices that Montagu makes during this period is her relinquishing of physical mobility. As Grundy notes, not only is Montagu blackmailed into postponing her journey back to Venice until late 1756, she is prevented from traveling due to recurrent bouts of illness (pp.332-9). Grundy argues that Montagu’s failing health and substantial loss of wealth “forced” her “to assume the role of stoic philosopher” (p.340) in her letters in order to deflect attention away from these underlying troubles. Yet, it is through Montagu’s exercise of Stoic precepts that the trauma of her *de facto* imprisonment by Palazzi finds its way into her travel narrative.

of telescopes, which by their own powers dissipate and change the light rays” (*Selected Letters*, p.186).

⁷⁹ Isobel Grundy, “Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Italian Memoir.” *Age of Johnson* 6 (1994): p.321-2. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

Nearly three years after the end of decade-long ordeal with Palazzi, Montagu refers to her body as a machine in two letters: the first dating from January 13, 1759 in which she signs her name, “the machine called M.W. Montagu,” and the second on May 4, 1759 within which she refers to the body as “the frail machine in which we inhabit.”⁸⁰ As Lowenthal has argued, Montagu uses the metaphor of a “machine in the process of disintegration” to portray herself as imprisoned within an aging body. Within the context of Montagu’s struggles with Palazzi, this metaphor could also express her frustration with her loss of narrative agency to a *deus ex machina*-like reversal of fortune in Brescia. Montagu echoes her description of her “travelling habit” in *Turkish Embassy Letters* as being “locked up in that machine” (*Turkish Embassy Letters*, pp.102-3), but rather than viewing “English female dress [as] part of the larger historical machinery of patriarchy” as Campbell has noted, Montagu now sees the female body itself as subjected to this “historical machinery.”⁸¹ Consequently, Montagu is no longer able to promote female bodily agency by imbuing naked forms with the myth-making power of Eve or classical goddesses when her own narrative is curtailed by Palazzi and her physical inability to travel. By conceptualizing her body as a damaged machine that she is forced to inhabit, Montagu draws upon Cartesian mind-body dualism, or what philosopher Gilbert Ryle calls “the ghost in the machine,” to illustrate the Stoic precept regarding the uncontrollable and impermanent nature of the human body: “Our bodies... are not in our power.”⁸² Here, Montagu, who translated *The*

⁸⁰ Quoted in Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.206.

⁸¹ Campbell, “Historical Machinery of Female Identity,” p.81.

⁸² Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2002), p.11. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (trans.), “The Enchiridion of Epictetus,” in *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Vol. 3), 3 vols. ed. Lord Wharncliffe (London, 1837), p.297.

Enchiridion of Epictetus from Latin at the age of twenty, relinquishes her control over her body in order to practice the Stoic mastery of the self in the face of hardship, illness, and loss through “constant vigilance and presence of mind.”⁸³ Reconfiguring her body as a machine, Montagu attempts to depersonalize it as an object that, according to Stoicism, “serve[s] either to use, or pleasure,” and much like the example in Montagu’s translation that equates a broken vase to the death of a loved one (“Remember to consider of what nature [all things] are... If you love a vase, love it as a vase, and if it is broke, do not disturb yourself; if a little son or a wife, love it as a human thing, for then if it dies you will not be troubled”), she copes with the malfunction of her body-machine through embracing its fragile nature.⁸⁴ Montagu’s Stoic detachment compels her to re-conceptualize feminine agency in terms of intellectual rather than bodily liberation as well as re-envision female spaces governed not by outward display, but introspection.

This paradigm shift appears in Montagu’s travel narrative as early as 1748 in her comparison of her ascetic existence in the Northern Italian village of Gottolengo to the aesthetically lavish lifestyle of her daughter Lady Bute in London:

We are both plac’d properly in regard to our Different times of Life: you amidst the Fair, the Gallant, and the Gay, I in retreat where I enjoy every amusement that Solitude can afford. I confess I sometimes wish for a little conversation, but I reflect that the

⁸³ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase (Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), p.84.

⁸⁴ Montagu, *The Enchiridion of Epictetus*, p.299.

commerce of the World gives more uneasiness than pleasure, and Quiet is all the Hope that can reasonably be indulg'd at my Age.⁸⁵

(*Complete Letters*, ii, p.405)

Montagu's use of financial terminology like "worth," "afford," and "commerce," suggests that the comparison not only demonstrates that they are in "Different times of Life," but operate according to different economies. Surrounded by ostentatious displays of wealth ("the Gay"), attractive women ("the Fair"), and the men who court them ("the Gallant"), Lady Bute's value and currency in high society is dictated by her beauty, which Milton refers to as "nature's coin."⁸⁶ Conversely, Montagu removes herself from circulation to participate in literal commerce through the agricultural production of her garden, which she describes in the same letter:

I never saw a more agreable [sic] Garden, abounding with all sort of Fruit, and produces a variety of Wines. I would send you a piece if I did not fear that custom would make you pay too dear for it... I have at present 200 chicken [sic], besides Turkeys [sic], Geese, Ducks, and Peacocks. All things have hitherto prosper'd under my Care. My Bees and silk worms are double'd, and I am told that, without accidents, my Capital will be so in two years time.

(ii, p.404.)

⁸⁵ A similar sentiment is voiced in Montagu's letter to Lady Oxford on April 27, 1748, which echoes the social detachment she expresses in her letter to Pope: "I have a pleasure in all your improvements at Welbeck, when I hear them commended, tho I shall never see them. 'Tis almost the only attachment I have in this World, being every day (as it is fit I should) more and more wean'd from it" (*Complete Letters*, ii, p.385).

⁸⁶ See line 739 of John Milton, *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle (Comus)*, in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, p.107.

In place of the Elysian Fields populated by dancing nymphs or a post-lapsarian paradise poisoned by a talking serpent, Montagu describes a garden characterized by its Edenic fruitfulness. Montagu not only inhabits the role of Milton's Eve in the virtuous and meditative practice of husbandry, which she describes as part of a "manner of life... as regular as that of any Monastery" (ii, p.404), but also presents herself as a financially savvy entrepreneur. This mixture of the traditionally domestic, feminine sphere of "Care" and the traditionally corporate, masculine sphere of "Capital" suggests that Montagu reasserts her agency by subverting the gender economy.

Montagu's subversion of the traditional gender economy is furthered by her discussion of her silk worms in another letter to Lady Bute on March 6, 1749: "I am now employ'd with the care of my silk worm's eggs. The silk is gennerally [sic] spun the latter end of May. I wish you would tell me the price it bears in London." (ii, p.421). Like her previous letter to her daughter, Montagu conflates care (the nurturing of her silk worm's eggs) with capital (her endeavors as a source of employment and financial return), as well as notably shuns the figurative "commerce of the World" in favor of the literal, shifting her interest in hearing news from London to hearing about its marketplace. Grundy, however, questions Montagu's emphasis on her "delight of ownership with lavish use of possessives—*my* castle, *my* silk-worms, *my* vineyard," citing that her "ownership of these places is in every case virtually forced on her by Palazzi" and thus "signif[ies] her exploitation" (Grundy, "Italian Memoir," p.326). Although Montagu's agricultural venture results from her forced prolonged residence in Northern Italy, her discussion of ownership engages in the rhetoric of sovereignty, not oppression. Montagu's use of possessives to designate her ownership corresponds to her discussion of Turkish dress in her April 1, 1717 letter to Lady Mar: "The first piece of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full, that

reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats... Over this hangs my smock of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery” (Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, p.113). Lowe posits that “Montagu’s use of possessives—‘my shoes,’ ‘my Smock’—rhetorically identifies her position with that of Turkish women,” while “phrases punctuated by the comparative possessive *your* refer to English women’s customs: ‘*your* side of the Globe,’ ‘more modestly than *your* Petticoats,’ rhetorically reinforce Montagu’s Turkish context and her distance from English culture.”⁸⁷ Here, Montagu’s letters to Lady Bute regarding commerce participates in a similar discourse of identification with a foreign culture and her differentiation from Englishness. Whereas Montagu’s comparison of drawers to petticoats denotes Turkish and English conflicting views of femininity and modesty, her discussion of her garden and silk worms suggests differing Italian and English views on traditional female roles. Montagu’s transformation from caring about silk clothing to caring *for* silk worms signifies her change of status in the Empire from the typically English female conspicuous consumer to the foreign creator of such goods. Similarly, Montagu’s claim that Turkish accoutrements like the veil signify that Turkish women are “the only free people in the Empire” (p.116) resurfaces in her assessment about the greater cultural currency afforded to women in Italy: “The character of a learned woman is far from being ridiculous in this country... To say truth, there is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England” (*Complete Letters*, iii, pp.39-40). Consequently, Montagu’s monastic lifestyle, which provides her with a means to participate in “commerce with the World” on her own terms, prompts her to reassess her view of the female-only space of the convent.

⁸⁷ Lowe, *French and British Orientalisms*, pp.41-2.

Writing to an unspecified lady on October 1, 1716, Montagu provides her account of a nunnery she encounters in Vienna. Initially, Montagu describes St. Lawrence as less restrictive than other orders in terms of dress and behavior:

Nothing can be more becoming than the dress of these nuns. It is fine white camlet, the sleeves turned up with white fine calico, and their head dress... only a small veil of black crape that falls behind... The grate is not the most rigid... I don't doubt but a man a little more slender than ordinary might squeeze in his whole person. The young Count of Salmes came to the grate while I was there, and the Abbess gave him her hand to kiss.

(Turkish Embassy Letters, pp.69-70)

Montagu then shifts her attention to a beautiful young nun who “had been the admiration of the town,” but is forced into “retirement” for mysterious reasons (p.70). Feeling “melancholy to see so agreeable a young creature buried alive,” Montagu ends by condemning Roman Catholic religion for “the misery it occasions so many poor unhappy women” (p.70). Denys Van Renen has argued that Montagu describes the convent in deliberate contrast to the hammam to demonstrate that the latter of these female-only spaces “offers the possibility for intersubjective bonding that transgresses boundaries and stimulates cross-cultural awareness while the other forecloses that possibility [by] restrict[ing] women’s ability to influence society” and concomitantly “punishes women for sexual promiscuity and enables the sexual exploitation of them.”⁸⁸ While Van Renen concludes that Montagu’s criticizes the convent’s policing of the

⁸⁸ Denys Van Renen, “Montagu’s Letters from the Levant: Contesting the Borders of European Selfhood.” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11.2 (Fall 2011): pp.11-12.

“boundaries of female subjectivity,” it appears that Montagu’s denunciation is based primarily upon its limitation of female sexual agency.⁸⁹

Montagu’s praise of St. Lawrence centers on the attractiveness of the nun’s habit and the implied opportunities for illicit sexual encounters. The nun’s “becoming” habit is described in a similar fashion to sumptuous Turkey dress, with Montagu emphasizing that coarser, inexpensive, and supposedly utilitarian fabrics like calico and crepe are used for decorative flourish in upturned sleeves and to frame, instead of cover, a nun’s face. In addition, Montagu equates that lack of rigidity of the grate with nunnery’s lax restrictions on conversing with the male visitors through it, implying that the grate facilitates rather than prevents social and sexual intercourse. Montagu follows her insinuation that a nun can sneak a “more slender than ordinary” lover through the bars with the example of a young, and by implication, svelte, Count who kisses the Abbess’s hand through the grate. Conversely, Montagu’s lament that the “only beautiful young woman [she has] seen at Vienna” is “buried alive” in the convent focuses on the nun’s refusal to admit guests from her “former life,” thus becoming dead to the world in her sexual prime.

Montagu expresses similar views when she later recounts the rape of a Spanish “Christian woman of quality” (p.173) by a Turkish admiral and concludes by praising the woman’s decision to marry “her ravisher,” rather than acquiescing to the will of her “Catholic relations [who] would certainly confine her to a nunnery” (p.174). This certainly could be read as a “female triumph” over violence and potential tragedy or a commentary on how “women [who] transgress the patriarchal codes restricting female behavior... are removed from European society,” but

⁸⁹ Van Renen, “Letters from Levant,” p.12.

Montagu's sardonic tone denies a completely straightforward reading of this tale.⁹⁰ While Montagu claims that the Spaniard "acted on principles of honor" and playfully denies that she "fell in love with her ravisher" (p.173) Montagu does not preclude her from enacting sexual agency through marriage to the Turkish admiral. Montagu presents the Turkish ravisher as a worthy object of feminine desire: "Her infidel lover was very handsome, very tender, fond of her, and lavished at her feet all the Turkish magnificence" (p.174). By depicting the Turkish admiral as being able to gratify the tripartite desire for sex, admiration, and wealth, Montagu insinuates that the Christian woman makes a pragmatic decision that satisfies the need to reclaim her virtue publically, but ultimately, promotes her personal satisfaction above all. This tale is in line with Montagu's polemic and satiric questioning of female sexual desire at St. Lawrence, suggesting that she views the institution of the nunnery through a similar sexualizing gaze with which previous male travelers have viewed the hammam.

Montagu's first letter to Algarotti in April 1736 reinforces her sexualized reading of the nunnery. Playfully chastising Algarotti for his failure to keep his first appointment with her, Montagu borrows the language of the Roman Catholic Church:

My Lady Stafford and myself waited for you for three hours. Three hours of expectation is no small trial of patience, and I believe some of your martyrs have been canonized for suffering less. If you have repentance enough to be inclined to ask pardon you may obtain it by coming here tomorrow at seven o'clock.

(Selected Letters, p.154)

Montagu flirtatiously intimates that her martyrdom (suffering through three hours of waiting on his arrival) serves as proof of her singular adoration. Then, by masquerading as a priest who can

⁹⁰ Ibid.

grant Algarotti “pardon” provided that he reschedule their rendezvous, Montagu reverses the power dynamic and requests that Algarotti repay her devotion with his. Lowenthal asserts that Montagu substitutes Pope’s “Eastern religious wit” with the “language and iconography of Catholicism” to characterize her love affair with Algarotti as “transcendent” and “to ameliorate some of the guilt stemming from her most transgressive violation: the seeming promise to break her wedding vows.”⁹¹ This use of ecclesiastical metaphors suggests that, for Montagu, religious fervor is an outlet for repressed transgressive passions. Thus, Montagu interprets the young nun’s rejection of her former life for “retirement” at St. Lawrence through the lens of cloistered sexuality—possibly seeing her as the living embodiment of Pope’s Eloisa, who “when, warm in youth, [bids] the world farewell” due to a clandestine love affair with her Abelard.⁹²

In a February 1749 letter to Lady Bute from Gottolengo, Montagu provides a description of a nunnery “12 mile [sic] hence” (*Complete Letters*, ii, p.419) in Mantua. Montagu makes similar observations to her letter regarding St. Lawrence, but the sexual undertones of the nunnery, as well as her negative assessment of Catholicism, are notably absent:

They are dress’d in black, and wear a thin cypress veil at the back of their heads, excepting which they have no mark of religious habit... They have no grates, and make what visits they will, always two together, and receive those of Men as well as Ladys [sic]... But what I think is the most remarkable privilege is a Country House which belongs to them... where they pass every vintage, and at any time any four of them may take their pleasure there for as many days as they choose. They seem to differ from the

⁹¹ Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, pp.73-4.

⁹² See line 110 of Alexander Pope, “Eloisa to Abelard,” in *Major Works*, p.141.

Channonesses of Flanders only in their vow of celibacy... Upon the whole I think it the most agreeable community I have seen.

(ii, p.419-20)

Though the Mantuan nuns wear similar crepe-like veils to the nuns from St. Lawrence, Montagu provides no commentary on the appearance of their dress, nor does she make any remarks regarding their ability to go abroad without a full habit. The relative freedom of the Mantuan nuns is also reflected by the absence of a grate and their ability to receive both female and male visitors. Despite these liberties, Montagu does not insinuate that the nuns violate their vows, but rather highlights their celibacy by comparing them to “the Channonesses of Flanders,” a secular convent that permits its occupants to leave and marry.⁹³ Furthermore, Montagu depicts the nuns indulging only in the “pleasure” of sociability, both during their public visits and within the contracted public of their country house. Montagu’s reconfiguration of the nunnery as a place of retirement among an “agreeable community” (ii, p.420) allows her to envision an intellectually fulfilling lifestyle, despite her physical constraints and ascetic and sexless existence as a self-described “Lay Nun” in Brescia.⁹⁴

Montagu depicts her stay at Gottolengo, in a dilapidated country house she is defrauded into renting from Palazzi, as a rural retreat, borrowing her rhetoric from both the traditionally masculine and Classical roots of Horatian retirement and the traditionally feminine and Roman Catholic roots of the convent.⁹⁵ Not only does Montagu create a portrait of Italian life

⁹³Montagu, *Complete Letters*, ii, p.420, fn.2

⁹⁴ See Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.189.

⁹⁵ See Grundy, “Italian Memoir,” p.333: “The house turns out so dilapidated that if she had suspected its condition she would have refused it; but, prevented from leaving by renewed

harmoniously enmeshed both in the traditions of the past and present; she also synthesizes the feminitopian sociability of the women at the Turkish bathhouse and the Mantuan nuns with the ownership, agency, and influence of the retired country squire.⁹⁶ Retreating from the wider social sphere into the Shaftesburian “contracted public” of her Italian neighbors, Montagu takes on the role of patroness, “erecting a Theatre in [her] Saloon” to provide “Entertainment (which lasted the 3 last Days at Carnival)” (ii, p.401), and introducing “custards, cheese-cakes and minced pies, which were entirely unknown” to the villagers (ii, p.447), who are so “highly honoured and obliged to her residence” that they propose to set up a statue of Montagu “in the most conspicuous place” (ii, p.485).⁹⁷ Montagu’s civic participation in lives of the Gottolengo villagers allows her to move beyond the loss of her bodily agency to affect change in a lesser “society and enjoy [their] common good and interest” in preparation for her re-integration into the “body politic at large” (Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, p.52).

Upon her release from Palazzi and her return to the *beau monde* in 1756, Montagu internalizes the Shaftesburian model— along with its capacities to unite what Lawrence Klein identifies as an individualized Stoic, “moral feeling and practice” with an Epicurean

illness, she makes the outlay necessary to render it habitable for a single winter.” See Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.201: “Lady Mary constructs an image of herself that implicitly rejects contemporary English culture as it harks back to an even more powerful and aristocratic precedent: the conventions of Horatian retirement.”

⁹⁶ See Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter*, p.189: “Playing the country squire, Lady Mary seeks to control her daughter’s image of female retirement by assuming a role that suggests such retreat generates a satisfying and even powerful influence for a woman equipped to face its challenges.”

⁹⁷ Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.52. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

“connectedness to others”— and characterizes her final residence in the cities of Venice and Padua as a “philosophic retirement.”⁹⁸ Renewing her acquaintance with Algarotti in letter dated 1756, Montagu writes, “If we ever meet, the memory of Lord Hervey shall be celebrated; his gentle shade will be pleased in Elysium with our gratitude. I am insensible to everything but the remembrance of those few friends that have been dear to me” (Montagu, *Selected Letters*, p.227). Montagu’s use of Elysium to call up the memory of their mutual friend, and one time rival for Algarotti’s affections, Lord Hervey, signals the change of Montagu and Algarotti’s relationship from romance to, as Robert Halsband puts it, “intellectual camaraderie, sustained by ardent esprit instead of emotion.”⁹⁹ Deploying her familiar rhetoric of departed friends, Montagu decisively rejects the idea of a sensual paradise—citing, in particular, Hervey’s letter that expresses his wish that, in Italy with Algarotti, Montagu might “enjoy [Mahomet’s] Paradise upon earth”— in favor of a transcendental reunion with the dear members of her social circle.¹⁰⁰ This transformation also signifies the fulfillment of Montagu’s long unconsummated desire for Algarotti to extend to her the genuine affection and friendship that he shared with Hervey. Montagu’s letter dated September 10, 1736 laments the restrictions of her gender upon their relationship: “You possess in me the most perfect friend and the most passionate lover. I should have been delighted if nature permitted me to limit myself to the first title; I am enraged at having to be formed [sic] to wear skirts” (*Complete Letters*, ii, p.106). In the afterlife that

⁹⁸ Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.57. See Robert Halsband, “Algarotti as Apollo,” p.224.

⁹⁹ Halsband, “Algarotti as Apollo,” p.224

¹⁰⁰ This from a letter dated August 17, 1739 quoted in Halsband, *The Life of Montagu*, pp.181-2.

Montagu constructs, however, her gender is no longer a hindrance, but rather, the impetus for her to reinitiate a relationship with Algarotti according to the Epicurean model of “ethical friendship.”¹⁰¹

Montagu’s final transfiguration of the Elysian Fields draws upon Epicureanism, otherwise known as the “garden philosophy,” and its promotion of pleasure, not as “mere sensual gratification,” but rather, the “intellectual pleasure derived from contemplating nature, the thought of pleasure past and present, and lastly the pleasure of friendship.”¹⁰² Accordingly, the garden that Montagu visualizes is neither the pleasure garden of Belgrade Village, nor the Garden of Eden, but the garden of Epicurus in Athens where a small community of individuals who valued each other as “another self,” called an “otium” (Latin for “peace”), would gather in paradisaal harmony.¹⁰³ By asking to Algarotti to join her in remembrance of Lord Hervey, Montagu re-members and repopulates her philosophical *otium* in the metaphorical landscape of Elysium. Like her previous re-envisionings of female agency and feminotopias in her letters from Turkey and Italy, Montagu seeks to erase the boundaries delineated by history, national borders, and the physical body, but rather than reimagining the places she visits to her to facilitate this change, she creates her own virtual space within the epistle. If the Augustan verse epistle can summon a “moral community... into existence,” as William Dowling suggests, then the letter could also summon a self-selected, virtual *otium* of reader-writers.¹⁰⁴ Montagu’s

¹⁰¹ See William Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment: The Poetics of the Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p.37.

¹⁰² Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p.88.

¹⁰³ Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment*, p.46.

¹⁰⁴ Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment*, p.45.

exhortation to Algarotti to participate in their mutual recollection of Hervey can also be read an exhortation to the reader (both the addressee and the implied reader of her collected and edited volume of letters) to join her “imagined community” where hybrid subjectivity is achieved through the convergence of the multiple voices and experiences of her correspondents.¹⁰⁵

In a letter to Madame Chiara Michiel dated April 1762, within months of Montagu’s return to London after a two-decade absence, Montagu gestures at reverse-culture shock and her acquired foreignness, “Alas, I have the gibberish of the Tower of Babel in my poor head, and I speak with as little clarity as an antediluvian” (*Selected Letters*, p.300).¹⁰⁶ Montagu recapitulates the imagery that she uses in a letter dated March 16, 1718, which details the almost fantastical confluence of cultures in the suburbs of Constantinople, “I live in a place that very well represents the Tower of Babel; in Pera they speak Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Slavonian, Walachian, German, Dutch, French, English, Italian, Hungarian; and, what is worse, there is ten of these languages spoke in my own family” (*Turkish Embassy Letters*, p.122). Evoking the biblical reference to the Tower of Babel as a place where all these voices can be housed simultaneously, Montagu conceives language as a means to conceptualize racial and cultural hybridity. When she uses the Tower of Babel metaphor in *Turkish Embassy*

¹⁰⁵ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Books, 1991), p.5: “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community— and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”

¹⁰⁶ Grundy notes Montagu’s “oddity of dress was of course an issue again. As she had made herself conspicuous in the Turkish style in the 1720s and 1730s, so now she clung to Venetian manners which were too relaxed for London” (*Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.617).

Letters, however, Montagu limits hybridity to the realm of fiction, rendering it a cultural curiosity to amuse and instruct her reader. In contrast, when Montagu deploys this metaphor forty-four years later, she casts herself as both the biblical edifice and an antediluvian, suggesting that her mind has become a storehouse for the cultural traces of her travels. Although Montagu playfully dismisses these linguistic echoes as the babblings of an old woman, it nevertheless serves as evidence of her hybrid subjectivity— a subjectivity, which like the landscape of Elysium, eludes the tangible classification of borders and boundaries.

CHAPTER THREE: The Biographer as “Isthmus” in James Boswell’s
An Account of Corsica and The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides

In *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D* (1791), James Boswell recounts the occasion on which he introduced the Corsican General Pascal Paoli to Johnson on October 10, 1769:

I had greatly wished that two men, for whom I had the highest esteem, should meet. They met with a manly ease, mutually conscious of their own abilities, and of the abilities of each other. The General spoke Italian, and Dr. Johnson English, and understood one another very well, with a little aid of interpretation from me, in which I compared myself to an isthmus which joins two great continents.¹

Boswell’s geographical metaphor not only highlights his role in joining Paoli and Johnson by bridging their gap in linguistic understanding, but also links the two esteemed men as Boswell’s past and future biographical subjects. Departing from Johnson’s definition of isthmus in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) as “a neck of land joining the peninsula to the continent,” Boswell describes an isthmus as connecting two continents, and thus joining landmasses of equal size, rather than linking a larger to a smaller one.² Notwithstanding the fact that neither Great Britain, nor Corsica is a continent, Boswell’s redefinition of isthmus intimates that both islands and their respective cultural icons share equally in greatness, and are thus equally worthy of his pen.

¹ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934–64), ii, p.86. All further citations will be cited in the text by volume and page number.

² Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London, 1755), s.v. *isthmus*.

Boswell's depiction of his mediational ability as landscape provides insight into his choice of the travel literature genre to craft his early biographies of Paoli and Johnson. *An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* (1768)—a tripartite travel narrative offering a historical study of Corsica and a journal account of Boswell's experiences on the island and his time with Paoli—has been read as a literary predecessor to both *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1785) and the *Life*, which introduce Johnson as the main object of study.³ Previous critics have discussed how the *Tour* was conceived and marketed as a “Prelude to the *Life*,” positioning it as a text that would rival Johnson's own acclaimed retelling of their three-and-a-half month sojourn to the Hebrides in the summer and autumn of 1773, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), in addition to representing Johnson with a “minute accuracy” and authenticity made possible by Boswell's “intimate friendship” with him.⁴ Yet, *An Account of Corsica* and *A Tour to Hebrides* have not been examined together to consider how the *Life* is patterned after the recurring themes and conventions established by Boswell's two very different travel narratives. In this chapter I propose that the *Account* and *Tour* operate as complementary texts that chronicle not only the peregrinations of Boswell and his biographical subjects, but also, Boswell's development as a biographer.

³ James T. Boulton, introduction to *An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli*, by James Boswell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. xxxiii. See also, Thomas M. Curley, “Boswell's Liberty-Loving *Account of Corsica* and the Art of Travel Literature,” in *New Light on Boswell: Critical and Historical Essays on the Occasion of the Bicentenary of The Life of Johnson*, ed. Greg Clingham (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), p.89.

⁴ Matthew E. Goyette, “Boswell's Changing Conceptions of his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*.” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 73:3 (1979): p.312.

In the first section I demonstrate how *An Account of Corsica* functions as a testing ground for Boswell's biographical mode of representation. *A Tour to the Hebrides* offers a "composite portrait of both Boswell and Johnson as they lived and reacted to shared experience and each other," and presents itself as "literature as process" in deliberate contrast to Johnson's more conventional and impersonal travel narrative.⁵ Whereas Ann E. Schalit characterizes as the *Tour* as "literature as product," the *Account* can be read as a figurative *urtext* dedicated to the *process* of Boswellian biography.⁶ As Stanley Brodwin has argued, Boswell's *Account* draws heavily upon conventions of Plutarchan biography, exalting Paoli as the embodiment of the Corsican people's inherent virtue and liberty.⁷ The *Account* also lacks the structural homogeneity of Boswell's later works, suggesting an evolution in the biographer's style.⁸ Fusing together outside sources with his private notes serves Boswell's purpose in acting as a connective isthmus. By capturing Paoli's great "versatility of mind" in selected sayings over the course of a week, Boswell operates as a conduit through which he distills Paoli's "exalted character" for a British audience relatively familiar with the Corsican struggle for independence from Genoese rule but lacking firsthand insight into the people of the island and its leader.⁹ As Jonathan Lamb has demonstrated, the travel writer's representation of the inhabitants of uncharted lands depends

⁵ Ann E. Schalit, "Literature as Product and Process: Two Differing Account of the Same Trip." *Serif* 4 (1967): p.17.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Stanley Brodwin, "'Old Plutarch at Auchinleck': Boswell's Muse of Corsica," *Philological Quarterly* 62.1 (Winter 1983): p.80.

⁸ Boulton, introduction, p.xxxiii.

⁹ James Boswell, *An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli*, ed. James T. Boulton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.179, 174.

on “the coordinates of the observer’s internal geography.”¹⁰ If so, Boswell’s geographical metaphor gives added depth to his conceptualization of the biographical function of the travel writer early in his literary career.

In the *Life* Boswell notes that as a biographer he is at liberty to dramatize chronological events in Johnson’s life, adding the “narrative...necessary to explain, connect, and supply” (*Life*, i, p.29) meaning for its readers. Anticipating this explanation of the biographer’s role, Boswell in *An Account of Corsica* inserts himself as a figurative isthmus, or a “mere intermediary between Corsica and the reader” as Timothy McLoughin aptly puts it, not to diminish his role as travel writer to reportage, but rather, to make his narrative intervention integral to the text.¹¹ As a precursor to the Boswellian biographer, Boswell as travel writer in the *Account* serves a similar purpose by providing narrative continuity to the text as well as revealing the hazards of taking too many liberties with narrativization. As a metaphorical isthmus that links the reader to Paoli, Boswell becomes the focus of the *Account*, both by drawing attention to his writing process and conforming his biographical subject to a preconceived notion of heroism. This becomes especially problematic in the *Account* when Boswell, focused on performing the character of the learned and cosmopolitan travel writer equipped to vindicate the Corsican cause through parallels within British history, is unable to portray Paoli and the citizens of Corsica as hitherto unsung heroes without displacing them geographically and temporally as the denizens of an ersatz medieval Scotland.

¹⁰ Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, p.48.

¹¹ Timothy McLoughin, “Boswell and Corsica: The Art of Puffing,” *Bulletin de la Societe d’etudes anglo-americaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siecles* 55 (Nov. 2002): p.165.

Conversely, over seventeen years later, references to Corsica appear prominently throughout *A Tour to the Hebrides*. Boswell begins the *Tour* with a dedicatory letter to his friend and editor, Edmond Malone, which asserts its authenticity through a comparison to “a former work to that person who was the best judge of its truth.”¹² To ensure that the reader understands that this former work refers to *An Account of Corsica*, Boswell clarifies, “I need not tell you I mean General Paoli; who, after his great, though unsuccessful, efforts to preserve the liberties of his country, has found an honourable asylum in Britain, where he has now lived many years the object of Royal regard and private respect” (*Tour*, p.155). This discussion of Paoli underscores the importance of his connection to the Corsican general in Boswell’s bid for legitimacy as a biographer of Johnson. In addition to drawing upon Paoli’s high approbation of the *Account*, Boswell implicitly credits the popularity of the travel narrative with publicizing Paoli’s role in the Corsican cause to British populace, which in turn, garnered him “Royal regard” and secured his asylum in Britain. Boswell emphasizes that the influence of *An Account of Corsica* spans the remote regions of the Hebrides when he mentions a “letter of introduction to Mr Ferne, master of stores at Fort George” (p.223) which recommended “two celebrated gentlemen; no less than Dr Johnson, AUTHOR OF HIS/ DICTIONARY, and Mr Boswell, known at Edinburgh by the name of Paoli” (p.224). Boswell’s inclusion of the letter of introduction in the *Tour* further authenticates both his eminence as a writer and the literary significance of the *Account* through the comparison to Johnson and his *Dictionary*.

Consequently, the second section of this chapter asserts that Boswell portrays his dual subjects of Johnson and the Hebrides in the *Tour* as inextricably linked to Paoli and Corsica.

¹² Boswell, *Tour*, p.155. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

Indeed, in September 1771, two years prior to his Hebridean trip with Johnson, Boswell spent two weeks touring Edinburgh, Glasgow, Auchinleck, Loch Lomond, and Dumbarton with Paoli in order to perfect the “techniques he would use when he managed to persuade Johnson to step on Scottish soil.”¹³ Likewise, Boswell cannot describe “the Cuillin, a prodigious range of mountains, capped with rocky pinnacles in a strange variety of shapes” without a comparison to “the mountains of Corte” (p.301), nor can he help seeing a Scotland slowly divested of Highland traditions following the doomed Jacobite Rising of 1745 as an extension of the failed Corsican struggle for sovereignty in 1769, when the island was conquered by France. Possibly in response to Johnson’s depiction of the Hebrides as an ancient culture in ruins and his lament that they “came thither too late to see what we expected, a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life” in the *Journey*, Boswell presents Highlanders such as Malcolm Macleod and Flora MacDonald, who aided the escape of Prince Charles Edward, as the embodiments of a vibrant living history.¹⁴ This sense of Jacobite past is tenuously preserved and passed on to future generations through the Erse language, music, dance, and storytelling. Much as in *An Account of Corsica*, Boswell’s aim in *A Tour to the Hebrides* is to rally the sympathy, support, and protection of Britain to save what he characterizes as the Rousseauvian noble race from cultural extinction; yet, his discourse sanctions the imperialism that endangers such diversity. These contradictory impulses to save marginalized civilizations from annihilation, while

¹³ Pat Rogers, “‘The Transit of the Caledonian Hemisphere’: Johnson, Boswell, and the Context of Exploration,” *Fresh Reflections on Samuel Johnson: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Prem Nath (Troy, NY: Whitston Publishing Company, 1987), pp.330-1.

¹⁴ Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, in Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, p.73 All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

extolling the praises of the British Empire, parallel Boswell's self-characterization as a Scottish laird of "ancient blood" (Boswell, *Tour*, p.183) who strives to assimilate English manners, ideas, and ambitions at the risk of erasing all traces of his Scottishness.¹⁵

As a post-Union Scot, seeking to unify the contradictions of nationality within his psyche, Boswell's isthmus metaphor also stands in for his identity as a hybrid of two worlds. Just as Boswell's identification as Scotsman can be interpreted as secondary to his nationality as a Briton, Boswell as a biographer is typically considered as playing a secondary role to his biographical subject, who is the centerpiece of the text. Boswell is often discussed, not as the progenitor of his biographical travel accounts, but as a "midwife" who merely facilitates his subjects' passage into the world and the minds of the reading public.¹⁶ While this vocational metaphor supposes that Paoli and Johnson spring fully formed from the pages of the *Account* and *Tour* without any labor on Boswell's part, the suggestive comparison of biography to women's work is also illustrative that for Boswell "'woman' is figured as a danger to masculine autonomy, and at the same time, establishing this sexual difference is crucial to the formation of manly character."¹⁷

¹⁵ Evan Gottlieb, *Feeling British: Sympathy and National Identity in Scottish and English Writing, 1707-1832* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2007), p.100.

¹⁶ See Boulton, introduction, p.xlv: "While Paoli is the worthy champion of the Corsican struggle for liberty, Boswell, like the *midwife*, brings him to life for the English-speaking world" (emphasis mine). Also see Ian McGowan, "Boswell at Work: The Revision and Publication of *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*," in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*. eds. Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): p.128: "Having fathered the tour itself, he became *midwife* to Johnson's account" (emphasis mine).

¹⁷ Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, p.124.

Both the *Account* and *Tour* are preoccupied with patriarchal systems based on filial loyalty and attempt respectively to transfigure Paoli and Johnson according to outmoded models of masculine authority such as the feudal chieftain. Nonetheless, these portrayals of manliness are both challenged and reinforced by the presence of women. *An Account of Corsica*, which is almost entirely bereft of female figures, paints a convincing Plutarchan portrait of Paoli until Boswell's reference to Genoese "Rival Queens" (*Account*, p.218) in the final pages of the travel narrative disrupts this sober character sketch. On the other hand, *A Tour to the Hebrides*, which explicitly discusses the threat that unfaithful women pose to patrilineal lairdship and recounts female interventions in Scottish history (*Tour*, p.256), provides depictions of Johnson in unlikely roles, such as the "Young Buck" (p.267) and Scottish bard, that, while verging on the burlesque, solidifies his connection to the Highlanders (p.359-60).

The final section examines how these feminine challenges to patriarchy, and by implication, the dominating narrative, function as an analogy for Boswell's subversive control over his biographical subjects. While Boswell in the *Account* is happy to play "libertine" to Paoli, whom he regards as "so illustrious a Preceptour [sic]" (*Account*, p.161) in the *Tour* he is determined to "claim some merit in leading [Johnson's] conversation" (*Tour*, p.320) and is especially cavalier in admitting that he, "at some moments, found [himself] obliged to treat even Dr Johnson [as a child]" (p.166). I am arguing that Boswell's metaphorical isthmus asserts the primacy of his role as a biographer, and furthermore, highlights that his power stems from the assumed secondary nature, and thus innocuousness, of his mediational ability. As we shall see, Boswell capitalizes upon the travel account's potential for narrative reconstitution in which

“traditional areas of masculine authority are annulled” to craft his biographical subjects according to his own conceptions of nationality, masculinity, and cultural memory.¹⁸

I. Paoli’s Corsica, Robert Bruce’s Scotland, and the *ambasciatore inglese*

An Account of Corsica, as Thomas Curley has demonstrated, unites the historiographical rigor of Addison’s *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* with the call for liberty in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Social Contract* (1762), typifying Boswell’s journey as the coming of age for a brave Corsican nation on the brink of independence, and for him as writer and “receptive citizen of the world.”¹⁹ Curley’s interpretation attends to Boswell’s development as an author as one of the driving forces behind his travel narrative. Much like a piece of land that provides the only thoroughfare between two continents, Corsica and Paoli are mediated via Boswell’s experience to his British audience, imitating the tenor and style of his personal Grand Tour journals composed from 1764 to 1766. During this period, which Brian Evenson denominates Boswell’s “Grand Tour of Selves,” Boswell’s journals reflect a shift in self-portrayal.²⁰ Instead of chronicling experiments with *being* “whatever character [he] choose[s],” as in the *London Journal*, Boswell focuses on being the best version of himself by drawing upon the characters of others to construct and show “himself in as many lights as possible.”²¹ In the *Account* Boswell

¹⁸ Clark, introduction to *Travel Writing and Empire*, p.20.

¹⁹ Curley, “Liberty-Loving *Account*,” pp.89-90, 92-93, 99.

²⁰ See Brian Evenson, “Boswell’s Grand Tour of Selves,” in *James Boswell: Psychological Interpretations*, ed. Donald J. Newman (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), pp.71-85.

²¹ Boswell, *London Journal*, p.9. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number. Evenson, “Grand Tour of Selves,” p. 77

modifies this technique and his idealized concepts of character to shed the best light on Paoli and the Corsican populace.

Johnson's commentary on the *Account*, however, gestures to the limits of Boswell's narrative as political commentary. Upon hearing in early 1766 of Boswell's intention to write a travel narrative on Corsica, Johnson cautions him to keep his project manageable: "You cannot go to the bottom of the subject; but all that you tell us will be new to us. Give us as many anecdotes as you can" (*Life*, ii, p.7). Responding to Boswell's detailed plans for publication in November of the same year, Johnson admonishes him for lacking originality in his perambulatory historical overview of Corsica and the "warm[th] [of his] imagination," while advising him to "mind [his] own affairs and leave the Corsicans to theirs" (ii, p.215). Though Sanford Radner interprets Johnson's harsh critique as a sign of professional jealousy, more probably, Johnson chastises Boswell for his fixation on liberty, stigmatizing it as a "single idea [that] has obtained an unreasonable and irregular possession" (ii, p.215) over his travelogue.²² As Morgan W. Strawn has demonstrated, Boswell's account promotes Corsican patriotism, which, like the Catholic devotion of Paoli's countrymen, "stems not from a rational principle, but from an emotional [one]."²³ In contrast to the pragmatic travel writer persona that Boswell initially presents in the heavily researched historiographical overview of Corsica, his warmth and passion for Corsican liberty in the latter parts of the *Account* appear inconsistent with such a character. This posture as a knowledgeable and impartial travel writer serves a propagandistic purpose by

²² Sanford Radner, "James Boswell's Silence," in *James Boswell: Psychological Interpretations*, ed. Donald J. Newman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p.157.

²³ Morgan W. Strawn, "'A Species of Despotism': Catholicism and Benevolent Authoritarianism in Boswell's *Account of Corsica*." *Age of Johnson* 22 (2012): p.107.

demonstrating that the Corsican struggle for freedom can rouse the sympathies of the dispassionate observer to champion the rebellion against Corsica's Genoese overlords.²⁴ Perhaps, Johnson was aware that much of Boswell's Corsican historiography was researched and composed in Scotland nearly a year after his journey, and would be presented strategically to bolster Boswell's credibility.²⁵

Despite Johnson's explicit and implicit criticisms, his praise for the *Account* in 1769 focuses on Boswell's ability to deliver a moving, personal narrative:

There is between the History and the Journal that difference which there will always be found between notions borrowed from without, and notions generated within. Your History was copied from books; your Journal rose out of your own experience and observation. You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers. I know not whether I could name any narrative by which curiosity is better excited, or better gratified.

(ii, p.44)

Whereas three years earlier Johnson had criticized Boswell for his "warm[th] of imagination," he now commends Boswell for entralling the fancy of his readers. Consequently, Johnson implies that the travel writer cannot serve as both a conduit for the reader's experience *and* play the role of political activist. Brodwin and others have indicated that whilst Boswell "appeal[ed] to British sympathies," his travel narrative was ineffectual politically, because it was never within

²⁴ Curley notes that "There was a conscious artistic shaping of his experiences abroad around the theme of liberty in the life of the narrator, the nation, and its leader, Paoli, for the propagandistic purpose of uniting England to Corsica's struggle for freedom" ("Liberty-Loving Account," p. 89).

²⁵ Boulton, introduction, p.xxxv.

Boswell's power to convince "statesmen (like [William] Pitt)... of the possibility that Paoli, as an innovative legislator, might exert real power in a Mediterranean world of shifting spheres of influence."²⁶ Nevertheless, in terms of literary influence, the *Account* was an unparalleled commercial success with the first edition in 1768 selling out within six weeks, followed by equally successful second and third editions and translations into numerous languages.²⁷ In addition to grossly overestimating the ability of his travel narrative to inspire a change in British policy regarding Corsica, Boswell's characterization of the Corsican people and Paoli as sympathetic figures seizes on emotional rhetoric, confounding any solid political aims of the project.

Boswell's problematic portrayal of the Corsicans glorifies them using the Rousseauvian concept of the "noble savage." For example, Boswell uses the Corsican disapproval of the gallows as a form of execution to demonstrate how their "moral" primitivism is superior to "so-called 'civilized' Europe," which frequently practiced hanging.²⁸ Furthermore, as Jean Vivies has noted, Boswell draws explicit "parallel[s] between Paoli's insurgent Corsica and Robert Bruce's medieval Scotland" by comparing their landscape and livestock, social and physical similarities, and patriotic courage to unite the two countries by shared pastoral heritage.²⁹ Although Boswell aims to convince his readers that Corsica's "spirit of liberty... can be found in the annals" of British history, he configures this spirit in particularly Scottish terms, even resorting to dozens of

²⁶ Brodwin, "Muse of Corsica," p.78.

²⁷ Evenson, "Grand Tour of Selves," p.157.

²⁸ Brodwin, "Muse of Corsica," p.82.

²⁹ Jean Vivies, "James Boswell and Scotland in *An Account of Corsica*," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 305 (1992): pp.1651-2.

Scotticisms that were edited out in the third edition of the *Account* in 1769.³⁰ Boswell's account, which is, as Vives claims, "beneath the surface a text about Scotland" highlights the underlying tensions between British and Scottish national identity.³¹ By evoking a medieval Scotland entrenched in the Wars of Independence, the *Account* reveals that, for Boswell, fighting for Corsican liberty fulfills the nationalistic fantasy of preserving a pastoral and independent Scotland. This superimposition of medieval Scotland onto Corsica, however, complicates and ultimately undermines Boswell's argument for Corsican sovereignty.

Throughout the journal portion of *An Account of Corsica*, Boswell depicts his identity as subject to interpretation by the Corsicans. He is suspected of being a spy (*Account*, p.162), mistaken for a recruiter for the Scottish regiment (p.171), treated as a foreign dignitary (p.157), and is addressed by the honorary title, *ambasciatore inglese* (p.186). As Timothy McLoughin has observed, Boswell exploits this confusion by cultivating the belief that he represented British interests in order to elevate himself as a "man of consequence."³² Similarly, it appears that Boswell refers to himself as English—used in the *Account* as shorthand for British—and Scottish, interchangeably, to satisfy Corsican expectations. Upon arriving to Corsica, Boswell identifies himself as "English" to the captain of the guard, who retorts, "The English—they were once our friends, but they are so no more" (p.169). In response to this negative reaction, Boswell is prompted by his "feel[ings] for [his] country" to use his reputation among Corsicans to "do everything in [his] power to make them fond of the British" (p.169). This performance of dual

³⁰ Vives, "Boswell and Scotland," pp.1652-3.

³¹ Vives, "Boswell and Scotland," p.1651.

³² McLoughin, "Art of Puffing," p.161.

English and Scottish identities is evident when Boswell recounts entertaining Corsican peasants and soldiers by playing the German flute:

I gave them one or two Italian airs, and then some of our beautiful old Scots tunes:

Gilderoy, The Lass of Patie's Mill, "Corn rigs are bonny." The pathetic simplicity and the pastoral gaiety of the Scots music will always please those who have the genuine feeling of nature... My good friends insisted also to have an English song from me. I sung them "Hearts of oak are our ships, Hearts of oak our men." ...I fancied myself to be a recruiting sea officer. I fancied all my chorus of Corsicans aboard the British fleet.

(p.188)

Boswell here transitions between national affiliations in response to his Corsican audience—first appealing to their "genuine feeling[s] [for] nature" by using "beautiful old Scots tunes" to highlight the pastoral aspects of Britain; he then shifts to "an English song" to celebrate the martial prowess of the Royal Navy during the Seven Years' War. For the Corsicans, Boswell's nationality is also doubly inscribed. Their demand for a specifically "English song" demonstrates that the Corsicans view the "old Scots tune" as foreign to both the English language and England itself, while still recognizing Boswell's ability to comply with such a request.

Boswell's performance of national identity in Corsica is also analogous to his theory of character in his Grand Tour journals, which as Nussbaum posits, represents character as a "state of consciousness which can be conjured up" through the ideas associated with identity.³³ This is unlike Boswell's concept of "double feeling" in "Remarks on the Profession of a Player" (1770), which disguises opposing states of being by allowing "the character which he represents... [to]

³³ Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, p.108.

take full possession... while his own character remains in the innermost recess.”³⁴ Because Boswell possesses both English and Scottish ideas, his performance of the character of the travel writer in the *Account* does not reconcile the doubleness of claiming both English and Scottish identities, but heightens it.

Boswell’s wrestling with dual identity first takes place in the *London Journal* where he alternates between feeling contempt and pride for his fellow Scots in London. In response to seeing the Kellie family, Boswell resolves:

I ought not to keep too much company with Scotch people, because I am kept from acquiring propriety of English speaking and because they prevent my mind from being filled with London images, so that I might as well be in Scotland.

(*London Journal*, p.128)

Boswell fears that his association with other Scots would prevent him from taking on English manners of speech, attitudes, and ideas, and thus, forming a post-Union British identity.³⁵ This post-Union identity is brought into conflict by Boswell’s Scottish patriotism, which is rooted in medieval Scotland’s sovereignty and the military challenge it posed to English rule. In an entry dated December 8, 1762, only a two months prior to Boswell’s resolution to avoid the company of “Scotch people,” he recalls his fury at English theater patrons for heckling members of the Highland regiment at Covent Garden: “I hated the English; I wished from my soul that the Union was broke and that we might give them another battle of Bannockburn” (p.32). Evan Gottlieb argues that Boswell’s “Scottish loyalties and... English ambitions” facilitate his assimilation into

³⁴ James Boswell, “Remarks on the Profession of a Player,” *The London Magazine, Or, Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer* (Sept. 1770): p.469.

³⁵ Gottlieb, *Feeling British*, p.100.

mid-century London through the practice and understanding of the “performative nature of national identity.”³⁶ Gottlieb further asserts that Boswell’s experimentations with contradictory aspects of British national identity in the *London Journal* later grants him “mediational fluidity” in the *Tour to the Hebrides* to shape Johnson’s image from “unreconstructedly Scottophobic” to a sympathizer with “Scots in Enlightenment terms.”³⁷

The *Account* provides Boswell with another opportunity to test the permeable boundaries of national identity and develop his narrative prowess. Like the *Tour to the Hebrides*, Boswell’s *Account* is intended for a post-Union British audience; however, in the former he behaves as a culturally appropriate mediator for the quintessentially English Johnson’s experience in Boswell’s native Scotland, while in the latter Boswell’s sympathetic portrait of Corsica’s political conflict is hindered by its mediation through the eyes of its Anglo-Scottish author. Boswell thus aligns the Corsican cause with the contradictory fantasies of a pre-Union Scotland and a military alliance with post-Union Britain when he shares Scottish and English tunes with his Corsican audience. The “beautiful old Scots tunes” evoke a Scotland and Corsica united by idyllic “simplicity and pastoral gaiety” (*Account*, p.188) and emphasize the importance of the preservation of tradition and cultural autonomy. In contrast, the English song, “Heart of Oak,” facilitates solidarity between Boswell and the Corsicans, but the tune situates their unity within the rhetoric of British maritime dominance. Boswell, by imagining himself as a recruiting officer and the Corsicans as members aboard the British fleet, romanticizes the same type of imperial power that endangers Corsican independence from Genoa and France. Boswell’s juxtaposition of

³⁶ Gottlieb, *Feeling British*, p.100.

³⁷ Gottlieb, *Feeling British*, p.101.

Bruce's medieval kingdom of Scotland against eighteenth-century Britain at the height of its colonial expansion highlights the tensions of a Scotland under British rule, evoking an anachronistic parallel between the 1729 Corsican rebellion and the relatively recent Scottish and English military conflicts during the Jacobite Risings between 1688 and 1746. In this context, Boswell's call for Corsican independence is undermined by his complicity with the Union between Scotland and England and his adoption of a post-Union British identity.

Boswell's treatment of the biographical hero of his account, Paoli, is similarly complicated by his displacement of pre-Union Scottish ideals within a post-Union British model and disrupts the political tenor of the *Account*. The memoir's preoccupation with, as Brodwin puts it, "that Plutarchan aim of communicating to [Boswell's] reader 'what sort of man' Paoli was" takes precedence over showcasing Paoli as a suitable political ally for Great Britain.³⁸ Once again, Boswell concomitantly deploys and corrects Rousseau's model of the "noble savage," admitting that he had expected Paoli to be a "rude character, an Attila King of the Goths" (*Account*, p.179). Though Paoli defies these expectations, Boswell still delineates him in Rousseauvian terms, attributing Paoli's "mark of a real great character" (p.199) to a natural nobility found only in "ancient noblemen" (p.200). By defining Paoli's "rule" as one based on an antiquated system of loyalties that mimic filial attachment, Boswell implicitly renders Paoli a Corsican Robert Bruce, unfit for the demands of modern leadership.³⁹ In spite of his claim that Paoli's authentic nobility far exceeds "modern nobility [who] are so anxious to preserve an *appearance* of dignity" (p.200) Boswell's memoir does not discuss Paoli's political significance,

³⁸ Brodwin, "Muse of Corsica," p.75.

³⁹ Strawn argues that the filial model of Paoli's leadership facilitates a "species of despotism" ("Benevolent Authoritarianism," p.111).

but instead, “paint[s] [the General’s] manner” to “charm” (p.179) readers into admiring Paoli for his character. Attempting to promote in his genteel readership an affection for Paoli similar to the one expressed by the Corsican populace, Boswell couches his description of Paoli in the terms of polite society. Boswell blurs the distinction between authenticity and affectation, praising his subject for possessing classical learning, a quickness of mind, and a knack for “agreeable conversation,” which exceeds that of “professed wits” (p.193). This attempt to translate the natural marks of Paoli’s ancient nobility into the affected attributes of a refined gentleman results in the puzzling *non sequitur* that concludes Boswell’s memoirs of Paoli and *An Account of Corsica*.

Before closing the travel narrative with William Pitt’s comparison of Paoli to “those men who are no longer to be found but in the *Lives* of Plutarch” (p.218) Boswell reproduces a letter from Paoli with a brief commentary valorizing his subject’s wit, specifically in comparing the Genoese government to highwaymen. Boswell’s commentary concludes:

Can anything be more condescending and at the same time show more firmness of an heroic mind than this letter? With what a gallant pleasantry does the Corsican chief talk of his enemies! One would think that the queens of Genoa should become Rival Queens for Paoli. If they saw him, I am sure they would.

(p.218)

This final appraisal raises a different, and arguably, antithetical idea of manliness to the one that Pitt evokes with the comparison to Plutarch’s *Lives*. Boswell’s reference to Nathaniel Lee’s Restoration tragedy *Rival Queens* (1677) aligns Paoli with Alexander the Great, not in terms of his military ambition as in Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander*, but as a love object at the center of two women’s violent affections. This representation of Paoli as a dashing gallant capable of seducing

Genoese royalty is based on a performative idea of masculinity influenced by Boswell's perception of himself as caught between states of *retenu* and *étourdi*, as well as his preoccupation with sexual conquest.⁴⁰ Indeed, the comment comes at the end of Boswell's only recorded period of abstinence during his Grand Tour (Boswell heeds the warning that if he "attempted to debauch any [Corsican] women, [he] might expect instant death") and may be the result of Boswell's projection of sexual frustration onto Paoli, whom Boswell notes is similarly abstemious.⁴¹ Hence, the interjection plays upon the two contradictory meanings of gallant: one that upholds Boswell's earlier character sketch of Paoli as a "calm...master of himself" (p.193)—"Fine; noble; spacious"—and the other belies a lack of sexual control and social propriety ("A whoremaster, who caresses women to debauch them").⁴² Boswell mischievously insinuates that Paoli's "heroic mind" and wit grant him access not just to women's hearts, but also their boudoirs, albeit such debauched behavior would compromise the manly character that makes Paoli a subject worthy of Plutarchan biography.

⁴⁰ Nussbaum argues that Boswell attempts to fashion a "consistent public character" from two selves: "the *retenu* or constrained, and a more disoriented interior being, the *étourdi*, or uncontrolled." See *Autobiographical Subject*, pp. 110-11.

⁴¹ Boulton, introduction, p.xxx. See Richard De Ritter, "'This Changeableness in Character': Exploring Masculinity and Nationhood on James Boswell's Grand Tour," *Scottish Literary Review* 2.1 (Spring/Summer2010): p.32: "This resolute frame of mind also extends from the political to the personal. Another memorandum finds Boswell abandoning his gallant tendencies: 'Swear no women for a week. Labour hard' (B, p.69). In opting to subdue his libidinous appetite, Boswell gestures towards the conjunction of heroic masculinity and self-regulation that he later finds in the Corsican General. According to Boswell, Paoli's patriotism ensured that 'his passions were employed in more noble pursuits than those of licentious pleasure' (B, p.177). This sublimation of sexual desire thus appears to be a necessary precursor to the performance of public virtue."

⁴² Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. *gallant* (adj.), *gallant* (n.s.).

This construal of Paoli's letter sanctions Boswell's lasciviousness and foreshadows his masquerade as "an armed Corsican chief" at the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769.⁴³ Rather than acting as a politicized and sober reminder of Corsica, which through the *Treaty of Paris* in 1768 had succumbed to French rule, Boswell distinguishes himself as an object of spectacle.⁴⁴ In September 1769 issue of *The London Magazine*, Boswell, posing an anonymous contributor, provides a detailed description of his Corsican dress and his "performance":

He wore a short dark-coloured coat of coarse cloth, scarlet waistcoat and breeches, and black spatterdashes & his cap or bonnet was of black cloth; in the front of it was embroidered in gold letters, VIVA LA LIBERTA... On the breast of his coat was a sewed a Moor's head, the crest of Corsica, surrounded with branches of laurel... [He] wore no powder in his hair, but had it plaited at its full length, with a knot of blue ribbands at the end of it... He wore no mask; saying that it was not proper for a *gallant* Corsican... Mr. Boswell danced both a minuet and country dance with a very pretty Irish lady, Mrs. Sheldon, wife to Captain Sheldon of the 38th regiment of foot (Lord Blaney's): she was dressed in a genteel domino; and before she danced, threw off *her mask*.⁴⁵

Boswell's masquerade in Corsican dress operates as form of wish fulfillment by allowing him to impersonate Paoli, and by extension, participate in the "gallant pleantry" that Boswell's *non sequitur* envisions. As with Paoli's Genoese "Rival Queens," Boswell's effectiveness as a gallant

⁴³ James Boswell, "The Shakespeare Jubilee," *The London Magazine, Or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* (September 1769): p.455.

⁴⁴ Moray McLaren, *Corsica Boswell: Paoli, Johnson and Freedom* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), pp.159-60.

⁴⁵ Boswell, *London Magazine*, p.455 (emphasis mine).

Corsican general is measured by his ersatz paramour, Mrs. Sheldon, who, inspired by Boswell's unmasked face, violates the conventions of the masquerade and exposes her own. This "double exposure" highlights that Boswell's unmasked face is not part of his Corsican disguise, but rather, an attempt to draw attention to his identity as "Corsica Boswell."⁴⁶ Boswell's masquerade in Corsican dress may also be read as a physical manifestation of his subject position as travel writer in the *Account*. Keeping in mind that *An Account of Corsica* was as much a "monument to himself as a writer as [it was] to liberty," Boswell appears not unlike Abraham Cowley's characterization of fame as a "Vain weak-built Isthmus, which dost proudly rise/ Up betwixt two Eternities."⁴⁷ Certainly, Boswell's figurative role as an isthmus in the *Account* illustrates the double nature of the travel writer in both faithfully capturing and distorting its subject through asserting the primacy of the traveler's experience—a strategy that he perfects in his subsequent travel narrative, *A Tour to the Hebrides*.

II. Reimagining *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*

Upon accepting Charles Dilly's commission to publish *A Tour to the Hebrides* following the death of Johnson on December 13, 1784, Boswell remarks, "I wished I could write now as

⁴⁶ McLaren, Moray. *Corsica Boswell: Paoli, Johnson and Freedom*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1966: 162. As Christian Deelman has noted, "This immodest underlining of his own significance prompted a correspondent of *The London Chronicle* (which duly reprinted his full account of himself) to verse: 'But tell us, Boswell, why that crest/ That Moorish head upon thy breast/ So much expos'd to view?! Is it, that those thy face who see/ May have a hot dispute, Which be/ The blackest of the two?'" See Deelman, *The Great Shakespeare Jubilee* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p.248.

⁴⁷ McLoughin, "Art of Puffing," p.169. See lines 10-11 of Abraham Cowley, "Life and Fame," from *Pindarique Odes X*, in *Poems* (London, 1656), n.p. Johnson's *Dictionary* cites this as an example for the usage of "isthmus." See Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. *isthmus*.

when I wrote my *Account of Corsica*.”⁴⁸ Boswell’s lament draws attention to the heightened demands of his new project. Whereas the *Account* focuses on a relatively unknown figure, Boswell in the *Tour* contends with the pressure of portraying a celebrated author, as Paul Korshin illustrates: “Paoli was an interesting apostle of liberty, but Johnson was the leading literary figure of the later eighteenth century, dead little less than one year, about whose personality and table talk a large audience was curious.”⁴⁹ In addition to the public scrutiny Boswell faced as Johnson’s biographer, he also was met with the challenge of writing a travel narrative that would not only live up to the expectations set by his acclaimed *Account of Corsica*, but also, complement Johnson’s travelogue of their Hebridean tour, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, published ten years prior.

The precedent set by both of these travelogues affected Boswell’s process of compiling, revising, and writing his 1773 journal entries and memoranda as a cohesive travel narrative. Matthew Goyette notes that Boswell’s first attempt at revision tried to emulate the format of Johnson’s *Journey*, “placing the dates within the paragraphs, condensing his material, and organizing it topographically,” but was later discarded “in favor of the superior chronological arrangement that made possible the inclusion of so much of Johnson’s conversation.”⁵⁰ Instead of modeling his travel account after Johnson, Boswell gives the impression of writing to the moment—a technique honed by Boswell while writing his Grand Tour journals and the memoir

⁴⁸ McGowan, “Boswell at Work,” p.139.

⁴⁹ Paul J. Korshin, “‘Extensive View’: Johnson and Boswell as Travelers and Observers,” in *All Before Them: Attitudes to Abroad in English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John McVeagh. (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Ashfield Press, 1990): p.235.

⁵⁰ Goyette, “Boswell’s Changing Conceptions,” p.306.

of Paoli in the *Account*. Written at a remove of twelve years since Boswell's journey with Johnson and within the contracted period of ten months, *A Tour to the Hebrides* is not a text based on the chronological record of time, as Boswell's use of dates would suggest.⁵¹ Rather, Boswell's reconstitution of memory and impressions to create a seamless day-to-day format is similar to his reorganization of material in *An Account of Corsica*—"contracting parts, enlarging others, suppressing conversations, or introducing new material"—to convey the "sense that he spent much longer than the bare week he had with Paoli."⁵² Boswell's manipulation of the conventions of time in the *Tour*, which Gottlieb identifies as "the sense of 'meanwhile,'" allows the *Account*, and its characterizations of Paoli and the Corsican populace, to serve as a touchstone for his portrayal of Johnson and the Highlanders.⁵³ Consequently, while Boswell cannot write as he did when he wrote the *Account*, the *Tour* serves as a literary afterlife for his earlier travel narrative. Boswell seizes upon the *Account's* meditation on nationality and patriarchal authority to legitimize his *Tour* and his role as a post-Union Scot recording the quintessentially English Johnson touring the far-flung reaches of Caledonia.

As a veteran travel writer, Boswell embraces his distinctive journalistic style in *Tour to the Hebrides*. Here, Boswell appears to heed the advice that Johnson gave him in 1766 regarding *An Account of Corsica* by providing "as many anecdotes as [he] can" (*Life*, ii, p.7) and prioritizing the journal account, which "rose out of [Boswell's] own experience and observation" (ii, p.44). Instead of using the comprehensive tripartite structure of the *Account*, which claims to

⁵¹ *A Tour to the Hebrides* was published on September 20, 1785, a little over ten months after Johnson's death.

⁵² Boulton, introduction, p.xlviii.

⁵³ Gottlieb, *Feeling British*, p.127.

include a historiography of Corsica, a journal of Boswell's "tour to that island" and a biographical sketch of Paoli, Boswell opts in the *Tour* to focus on portraying Johnson's experience of the Hebrides. Boswell goes as far to declare Johnson the "capital object" (*Tour*, p.165) of the *Tour* and render the Hebrides incidental to "the portrait of [Johnson he] exhibit[s] to the world" (p.155). The *Tour's* departure from the conventions of the traditional travel narrative is reflected by Johnson's request that Boswell

write a description of our discovering Inch Keith, in the *usual style of travellers*, describing fully every particular; stating the grounds on which [they] concluded that it must have once been inhabited, and introducing many sage reflections; and [they] should see how a thing might be covered in words, so as to induce people to come and survey it. All that was told might be true, and yet in reality there might be nothing to see.

(p.186, emphasis mine)

This playful literary challenge underscores the stylistic and philosophical differences between Boswell and "usual travellers." As Johnson implies via his request, the usual traveler is dedicated to minute descriptions and historical postulations about landmarks visited, and writes for the purpose of attracting future visitors. Boswell, however, intimates that the exercise is futile, because even the most thorough account is unable to make some places worth visiting.

Boswell's commentary on the "usual" travel account operates metatextually to justify his lackluster depiction of Inch Keith earlier in the paragraph: "We clambered up a very steep ascent, on which was very good grass, but rather a profusion of thistles. There were sixteen head of black cattle grazing upon the island... The fort with an inscription on it, MARIA RE 1564, is strongly built" (p.185). Nevertheless, even in Boswell's attempt at a traditional travel narrative, Johnson, who "stalked like a giant among the luxuriant thistles and nettles" (pp.185-6),

encroaches upon the scene. This suggests that, for Boswell, Johnson is the only thing worth observing, and the landscape is merely a backdrop to delineate his colossal presence. Aside from his description of Johnson, Boswell's account of Inch Keith closely echoes Johnson's in *A Journey to the Western Islands*, which similarly recounts grass that is "very fertile of thistles" and the "small herd of cows" grazing upon it, as well as "the ruins of a small fort" with "this inscription: MARIA REG [sic], 1564" (Johnson, *Journey*, p.35). Though Johnson ends his survey of Inch Keith with the reflection upon "the different appearance that it would have been made, if it had been placed at the same distance from London," this alternative future only serves to emphasize the barrenness of island, which, as Johnson evaluates, "is nothing more than a rock covered with a thin layer of earth" (p.35). Taken together, Johnson and Boswell's respective accounts of Inch Keith not only forcefully illustrate Boswell's primary reservation about using the "usual style of travellers," but also demonstrate that topographical and historiographical description in the *Tour* would be merely derivative of Johnson's *Journey*.

Boswell's instructions for the reader to refer to Johnson's account for descriptions of other Scottish islands such as Inchkenneth ("Every particular concerning this island having been so well described by Dr Johnson, it would be superfluous in me to present the publick with the observations that I made upon it, in my Journal" [Boswell, *Tour*, p.359]) reinforce the impression that *Journey to the Western Islands* and *Tour to the Hebrides* are complementary, rather than competing, narratives. By delegating the role of the traditional travel account to the *Journey*, Boswell is able to present his *Tour* as providing the intimate perspective that Johnson's text lacks. Boswell repeatedly refers to Johnson's praise of the journal's quality ("He read to-night... a great deal of my Journal, and said to me, 'The more I read of this, I think the more highly of you'" [p.318]) and authenticity (He read this day a good deal of my Journal... and was pleased...

he corrected any mistakes that I had made” [p.348]) to depict the *Tour* as the collaborative and authoritative narratological counterpart of the *Journey*. Although Boswell gives the impression that Johnson authorizes, and even co-authors, the journal that would become the *Tour*, Johnson’s commentary on the journal is misconstrued as endorsing Boswell’s “controlling version of Boswell, Johnson, and of their relationship.”⁵⁴ As John Radner has shown, “Johnson actively resisted the confining powers of Boswell’s narrative... consciously writing apart from Boswell,” advising Boswell upon hearing of his desire to publish his version of their journey “not to show [the] journal to anybody, but... draw out of it what... might be published” and have him “look it over.”⁵⁵ In this context, it appears that the *Tour*, which Boswell affectionately terms “our narrative,” is not Johnson and Boswell’s shared vision after all, but Boswell’s strategic bid for narrative authority following Johnson’s death.⁵⁶

By marketing *A Tour to the Hebrides* as “a Prelude to a Large Work for which *Mr. Boswell* has been collecting materials for upwards of twenty years,” Boswell’s travel narrative is presented as undergoing the similar process of rigorous editing and careful compilation, thus producing the definitive account of Johnson and Boswell’s trip.⁵⁷ Boswell also asserts the primacy of his travel narrative by claiming credit for inspiring Johnson’s *Journey*:

⁵⁴ John B. Radner, “Constructing an Adventure and Negotiating for Narrative Control: Johnson and Boswell in the Hebrides,” in *Literary Couplings: Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, eds. Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p.66.

⁵⁵ Radner, “Constructing an Adventure,” pp.70, 75-6.

⁵⁶ Radner, “Constructing an Adventure,” p.76.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Goyette, “Boswell’s Changing Conceptions,” p.312.

Had it not been for me, I am persuaded Dr Johnson never would have undertaken such a journey; and I must be allowed to assume some merit from having been the cause that our language has been enriched with such a book as that which he published on his return; a book which I never read but with the utmost admiration, as I had such opportunities of knowing from what very meagre materials it was composed.

(p.410)

As the *de facto* progenitor of Johnson's travel account, like in his role as Johnson's dutiful memoirist, Boswell emphasizes his comprehensive knowledge of the materials integral to the text's composition, sanctioning the *Tour's* corrections of Johnson's observations in the *Journey*. For example, Boswell asserts his narrative authority over Johnson by portraying Johnson's assessment of Scotch windows as misinformed and xenophobic. Upon staying the night in a house in "ancient town" of Bamff, Johnson notes that the fenestrae "do not move upon hinges, but are pushed up and drawn down in grooves, yet they are seldom accommodated with weights and pullies. He that would have his window open must hold it with his hand" (Johnson, *Journey*, p.47). Johnson concludes his commentary with the assumption that "the necessity of ventilating human habitations has not yet been found by our northern neighbours" (p.47) and excuses his lengthy meditation on windows by implying that such "diminutive observations" are indicative of the Scottish national character: "The true state of every nation is the state of common life. The manners of a people are not to be found... where the national character is obscured or obliterated by travel or instruction, by philosophy or vanity" (p.48). In the *Tour*, however, Boswell contradicts Johnson's appraisal of Scotch windows and criticizes the national stereotypes stemming from his account:

Here, unluckily the windows had no pullies; and Dr Johnson, who was constantly eager for fresh air, had much struggling to get one of them kept open. Thus he had a notion impressed upon him, that this wretched defect was general in Scotland; in consequence of which he has erroneously enlarged upon it in his Journey. I regretted that he did not allow me to read over his book before it was printed.

(Boswell, *Tour*, p.217)

Boswell begins by claiming that Johnson's generalizations are based only on one unrepresentative example of a defective window, and furthermore, originate from Johnson's frustration with opening it, rather than on an objective survey of Scottish fenestrations. Rebutting Johnson's implication that Scottish "habitations" are primitive and thereby reflect an uncultivated nation, Boswell pathologizes Johnson's need to "set open a window in the coldest day or night, and stand before it," which is characterized elsewhere in *Tour* as one of Johnson's "particularities which [are] impossible to explain" (p.347). These inconsistencies erode Johnson's persona as a reputable ethnographer, calling into question his other cultural observations as similar products of ignorance and prejudice. Consequently, Boswell positions his travel account as a necessary narrative invention that remedies Johnson's misassumptions in the *Journey*, in addition to presenting himself in the *Tour* as a cultural interpreter between Johnson and the Scottish.

As Gottlieb has argued, Boswell in the *Tour* "position[s] himself, not as Johnson's dependant, but rather as his helper, guide, and even his superior," using Johnson as a "foil to [to] reestablish his Scottishness on new, more muscular terms" and highlight his ability to "negotiate between and participate in the cultures of both the English and the Highlanders, in a way that

Johnson cannot.”⁵⁸ Boswell, however, cannot completely elide the differences between his identity as a Lowlander and the Highlanders his travel account professes to understand, in part due to Johnson’s record of the antagonistic relationship between these Scottish “neighbours”:

[The Highlanders] have long considered [the Lowlanders] as a mean and degenerate race. These prejudices are wearing fast away; but so much of them still remains, that when I asked a very learned minister in the islands, which they considered as their most savage clans: ‘Those,’ said he, ‘that live next the Lowlands.’”

(Johnson, *Journey*, p.57)

Considering how Johnson has hitherto portrayed the Highlanders in the *Journey* as part of a culture in decline (as illustrated by the observation that “the clans retain little now of their original character” [p.73]), his insertion of this anecdote appears to attribute fault to the intermixture between the Lowlanders and the Highlanders. Whereas, for Johnson, the wearing away of prejudice between these long segregated “clans” seems to coincide with the erosion of Highland traditions and values, contact with the English is portrayed as enriching the Highlanders linguistically without detriment to their native Erse: “Those Highlanders that can speak English, commonly speak it well, with few of the words, and little of the tone by which a Scotchman is distinguished” (p.73). Unlike the Lowlanders who speak accented English punctuated with Scotticisms and are unable to understand more than a few words of Gaelic, the Highlanders can speak both languages with fluency. Johnson’s discussion of the Highlanders’ mastery of the English language is an analogue for his “imagined Britain [that] involves positive representations of Highland culture and of the English culture which has asserted its hegemonic

⁵⁸ Gottlieb, *Feeling British*, pp.123, 129-30.

force over the region [while] disparaging... the Lowlanders for belonging to neither one nor the other of these nations with distinct cultures.”⁵⁹ This works in conjunction with the “learned minister’s” commentary on the “savage” Lowlanders to invert the Occidental view of civilized and primitive cultures. More specifically, the *Journey’s* negative portrayal of Lowlanders challenges the notion that Scottish civilization is associated with the Lowland cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, which the hubs of Enlightenment thought, while savagery, as laid out by stadial historicists such as Adam Smith, is identified with the pastoral Highlands and rudimentary forms of government like the clan chiefs.⁶⁰

Johnson asserts the comparable civility of the Highlanders not to elevate their culture, but rather, to claim that they share a greater affinity with the English than their Lowland counterparts: “Civility seems part of the national character of Highlanders. Every chieftain is a monarch, and politeness, the national product of royal government, is diffused from the laird through the whole clan” (p.52). Attributing the civility of the Highlanders to their subjection to monarchical rule within the microcosms represented by individual clans and their chieftains,

⁵⁹ Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.99.

⁶⁰ Conjectural or stadial history describes the “process of historical change in terms of four major stages universally experienced by all societies, measured according to their economic way of life (or ‘mode of subsistence,’ as it was called). Societies that rely on hunting and gathering as their mode of subsistence belong to the first stage; those based on a nomadic life herding and tending livestock belong to the second, pastoral stage; settled, agricultural societies are at the third stage; and modern, commercial societies represent the fourth, most advanced stage [...] The first major public appearance of conjectural history occurred in Smith’s lectures on jurisprudence, which were delivered at Glasgow University in the 1750s and early 1760s, and are known today through two surviving sets of students’ notes.” Karen O’Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.86, 89. For an overview of Adam Smith’s lectures on the role of government and conjectural/stadial history, see: Ernest Metzger, “Adam Smith’s Historical Jurisprudence and the ‘Method of the Civilians,’” *Loyola Law Review* 56 (Spring 2010): pp.1-31.

Johnson suggests that they are ideal British subjects, even under Hanoverian rule, and thus palliates the divisions between the Highlanders and the English resulting from the Jacobite Rising of 1745. For Johnson, the Highland clans and their governing chieftains are antiquities indicative of what Juliet Shields characterizes as “Jacobitism’s transformation from an active political threat into a conservative nostalgia for the feudal ideas associated with the Stuart monarchs.”⁶¹ Because the defeated Highlanders neither pose a threat to the integrity of the Union, nor England’s dominance over Scotland, Johnson is able to elegize a way of life that no longer exists:

That dignity which they derived from an opinion of their military importance, the law, which disarmed them, has abated... The Chief has lost his formidable retinue; and the Highlander walks his heath unarmed and defenceless, with the peaceable submission of a French peasant or English cottager.

(p.97)

Though Johnson mourns the loss of the Highlanders’ dignity, kinship, and social status, he indicates that these sacrifices are necessary for peaceful unified Britain. Johnson asserts that such vestiges of “insular subordination” (p.97), including the Highland plaid that signifies clan affiliation, must be stripped to abolish “dissimilitude... between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of Britain [and] facilitat[e] their coalition with their fellow-subjects” (p.69).

In response to this characterization of Highlanders in the *Journey*, Boswell emphasizes that the patriarchal authority and filial attachment represented by the chieftains and their clans are still integral to Highlander masculinity. Although Boswell acknowledges that the Battle of

⁶¹ Juliet Shields, *Sentimental Literature and Anglo-Scottish Identity, 1745-1820* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.59.

Culloden, and the 1745 uprising as a whole, was an “ill-advised, but brave attempt” based on an “unfortunate and superstitious regard for antiquity, and thoughtless inclination for war,” he is moved to tears by the heroism of the men (“The very Highland names”) and their fidelity to Highland traditions (“the sound of a bagpipe”) and each other (Boswell, *Tour*, p.236). Unable to justify his outpour of emotion with “sober rationality,” Boswell attributes the “crowd of sensations” to his “stir[red] blood” (p.236), indicating that he, as a Scotsman, experiences an instinctual kinship to the Highlanders that transcends political loyalties and the Lowland/Highland divide. Accordingly, Boswell patterns his representation of Highland figures such as Malcolm Macleod “of the Rasay family” (p.250) and “Mr. Macdonald” of Kingsburgh (p.263) after his portrayal of Paoli as a “father of a nation” (*Account*, p.168) in *Account of Corsica*.⁶² Boswell’s portraits of Macleod and Macdonald cast them as exemplary figures of Scottish masculinity— respectively, the “perfect representation of a Highland Gentleman” (*Tour*, p.250) and “completely the figure of a gallant highlander” (p.263)—who participate in a similar system to the Corsican benevolent authoritarianism valorized by the *Account*.⁶³ Mirroring the language he uses while describing Paoli and his relationship with the Corsican populace, Boswell praises Macleod for leading “a hundred fighting men” in 1745 and only losing fourteen, exclaiming that, “Rasay has the true spirit of a chief. He is, without exaggeration, a father to his people” (p.257). While Macleod is directly compared to the Corsican general, Macdonald, who houses and aids the escape of Charles Edward Stuart as well as “provide[s] him with a new pair

⁶² Note that in the tradition of distinguishing Scottish gentry, Boswell uses the surnames Macleod and Macdonald interchangeably with their respective family estates, Rasay and Kingsburgh.

⁶³ For an overview of benevolent authoritarianism in *An Account of Corsica*, see Strawn, “Benevolent Authoritarianism,” pp.97-122.

[of shoes]” (p.268) is illustrative of an almost religious fervor for leaders like Paoli. Just as “the [Corsican] islanders’ ‘superstitious’ Catholic faith nourishes a fidelity to their chief [i.e.-Paoli],” the Highlanders’ devotion to and reverence for Prince Charles Edward elevates him to sainthood.⁶⁴ Boswell’s depiction implies that the Macdonalds treat Prince Charles’ old shoes and used sheets as religious relics—“Kingsburgh kept the shoes as long as he lived” in an attempt to fulfill his promise “faithfully keep them till [Prince Charles Edward is] safely settled at St James’s,” and his wife requested that “when she died, her body should be wrapped in [the unwashed sheets in which Prince Charles had lain in] as a winding sheet” (p.268)—thus sublimating the fall of the House of Stuart as martyrdom. Both Macleod and Macdonald’s respective stories demonstrate, not the loss of Highland dignity following the failure of the 1745 Rising as Johnson has characterized, but rather, the transfiguration of the Highland narrative of defeat into one that celebrates the Highlanders’ solidarity and moral triumph.

For Boswell, Macleod and Macdonald also represent the perseverance of Highland culture in the face of laws such as the act passed by Parliament in 1746, prohibiting the wearing of traditional “Highland Clothes (that is to say) the plaid, the philebeg, or little kilt, trowse, [and] tartan, or party-coloured plaid [for] great coats, or for upper coats.”⁶⁵ Both figures are described as wearing full Highland dress: Macleod is dressed in “a pair of brogues, tartan hose... a purple camblet kilt, a black waistcoat, a short green cloth coat bound with gold cord... a large blue bonnet with a gold thread button” (p.250) while Macdonald wears his “tartan plaid thrown about him, a large blue bonnet... a brown short coat of a kind of duffil [sic], a tartan waistcoat with

⁶⁴ Strawn, “Benevolent Authoritarianism,” p.98.

⁶⁵ See Jeff Strabone, “Samuel Johnson: Standardizer of English. Preserver of Gaelic,” *English Literary History* 77 (2010): p.252.

gold buttons and gold button-holes, a bluish philibeg, and tartan hose” (p.263). Boswell is careful to provide minute sartorial details, demonstrating that Malcolm and Macleod flagrantly disobey the law to the proverbial letter by wearing each prohibited item outlined by the act of Parliament. This contradicts Johnson’s claim that, aside from “only one gentleman completely clothed in the ancient habit” and the common practice of wearing only the “fillibeg” and bonnet, “The law by which the Highlanders have been obliged to change the form of their dress, has... been universally obeyed” (Johnson, *Journey*, p.69). Boswell contests Johnson’s vision of the Highlanders’ “peaceable” submission to the Hanoverian monarchy and assimilation as ideal British subjects, asserting instead that wearing “the plaid” is not only requisite to Highlander masculinity, but also, a defiant reassertion of cultural difference.⁶⁶

As in his depiction of the Corsican in the *Account*, Boswell’s portrait of the Highlanders rejects the Enlightenment “teleology of civility” in favor of “the older discourse of... patriot valour.”⁶⁷ Consequently, Boswell does not necessarily “redeem[m] the Lowland Scots from their degraded position in Johnson’s *Journey* [in order to bring] them into focus as privileged middlemen between the English and Highland cultures” as previous critics have argued, but rather, asserts his role as a culturally appropriate mediator by claiming the Lowlanders and Highlanders share an ancient bloodline.⁶⁸ Like the isthmus in Alexander Pope’s *An Essay on Man*, Boswell justifies the prominence of his “middle state” by claiming to be “darkly wise, and

⁶⁶ The law forbidding the tartan would not be repealed until 1782—nearly a decade after Boswell and Johnson’s travels. See Juliet Feibel, “Highland Histories: Jacobitism and Second Sight,” *CLIO* 30:1 (2000): p.75.

⁶⁷ Roger Craik, *James Boswell (1740-1795): The Scottish Perspective* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1994), p.82.

⁶⁸ Davis, *Acts of Union*, p.100.

rudely great.”⁶⁹ Boswell promotes his knowledge of and affinity with the Highlanders by depicting himself as a “gentleman of ancient blood, the pride of which was his predominant passion” (Boswell, *Tour*, p.183). Though Boswell here refers to his lairdship of the Lowland estate of Auchinleck, located thirty-five miles away (and a day’s journey by post-chaise) from Glasgow, his deliberately ambiguous description aligns him more with the rugged masculinity of the Highland gentry than the Lowland Scots who are “tamed into insignificance [by] an English education” (p.241).

While in *An Account of Corsica*, Boswell embraces the role of *ambasciatore inglese* to balance his English loyalties with his Scottish heritage, in *A Tour to the Hebrides*, Boswell exploits his English ambassador (i.e.-Johnson) to boast his own superior subject position as a Scotsman. Claiming to “subscribe to what [his] late truly learned and philosophical friend Mr Crosbie said, that the English are better animals than the Scots; they are nearer the sun; their blood is richer, and more mellow” (p.166), Boswell again draws upon the metaphor of blood ties, but this time to classify the English as a species differentiated from the Scots by their refinement. Boswell, however, does not characterize refinement as a positive trait, but rather, one that renders the quintessentially English Johnson such a reluctant traveler that Boswell begins recounting their Hebridean tour with the admission: “I doubted that it would not be possible to prevail on Dr Johnson to relinquish, for some time, the felicity of a London life... I doubted that he would not be willing to come down from his elevated state of philosophical dignity” (p.161). Throughout the travel narrative Boswell portrays Johnson as too delicate to handle the

⁶⁹ See Epistle II, lines 3-4 of Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, in *Major Works*, p.281. Johnson’s *Dictionary* cites this as an example for the usage of “isthmus.” See Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. *isthmus*.

inconveniences of travel, noting that Johnson requires “assiduous attention” to ensure that “he shall be easy wherever he goes, that he shall not be asked twice to eat or drink any thing (which always disgusts him), that he shall be provided with water at his meals, and many such little things, which, if not attended to would fret him” (p.320). Boswell infers that Johnson’s fastidious dietary requirements are a manifestation of his cultural intolerance, which stems from an English sense of national supremacy: “The truth is, like the ancient Greeks and Romans he allowed himself to look upon all nations but his own as barbarians... If he was particularly prejudiced against the Scots, it was because they were more in his way” (p.165). Boswell urges here that Johnson partakes in an imperial rhetoric of dominance over less advanced nations, with the Scottish bearing the brunt of Johnson’s xenophobic remarks due to their proximity to England. As a member of a country subjugated to British rule, Boswell portrays himself, in deliberate contrast to Johnson, as a consummate “citizen of the world,” who espouses a universal love for “every kindred and tongue and people and nation” (p.166), rather than universal prejudice. As Boswell implies, his ability to embrace all cultures during his “travels through Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Corsica, [and] France” is due to the displacement he feels as a post-Union Scot (“I have never felt myself from home”) (p.166). Hence, the virtue of being Scottish and thus “rather hard-favoured” (*Account*, p.135)—or, inverting Crosbie’s assessment of the English, nearer to the ground— enables Boswell to adapt to the changing world around him.⁷⁰ Travel not only provides Boswell with “the opportunity to reinvigorate [his] Scottish masculinity,” as Richard De Ritter has posited, but also enables him to reconstitute his self and

⁷⁰ This is quotation is taken from Boswell’s assessment of the Corsicans and the Scottish Highlanders in the *Account*.

homeland in a way that is unnecessary for Johnson as an Englishman whose national identity has not undergone drastic redefinition under the exile of the Stuart monarchy.⁷¹

Yet, Boswell's depiction of Johnson also highlights his capacity for change given the so-called "pleasurable instruction" (Batten, p.25) that travel offers. Boswell observes that beneath the veneer of refinement, Johnson is "at bottom much of a John Bull; much of a blunt 'true born Englishman'" (Boswell, *Tour*, p.166). Although this statement initially appears derogatory, in the context of Boswell's criticism of English priggishness, Boswell refers to the "stratum of common clay under the rock of marble" (p.166) to gesture at Johnson's ability to set aside the pretence of philosophical elevation to find proverbial common ground with the Scots that he encounters. This potential for cultural immersion is connected with Boswell's subsequent commentary on Johnson's appetite ("He was voraciously fond of good eating" [p.166]), suggesting that Boswell's attempt to "scottif[y] [Johnson's] palate" (p.185) is part of a larger effort to reform Johnson as a traveler and Briton. As I shall explore in my next section, this process of "Scottification" not only involves the subversion of Johnson's and England's ascendancy, but the re-envisioning of Britishness according to Scottish models of kinship and authority.

III. The Hebrides and the "Scottification" of Johnson

Reading *An Account of Corsica* and *A Tour to the Hebrides* as companion texts reveals Boswell's search for an ideal form of masculinity. This masculine ideal combines the "rugged, uncultured independence" (*Tour*, p.161) he praises in both the Corsicans and Highlanders with erudition, wit and "intellectual relish" he characterizes as requisite of "London life" and his

⁷¹ De Ritter, "This Changeableness in Character," p.32.

Literary Club.⁷² In a similar manner to the way Boswell facilitates the 1769 meeting of Paoli, the “father of [the Corsican] nation” (*Account*, p.163) and Johnson, the “Monarch of English Letters,” Boswell in his travel narratives acts an isthmus joining both figures and the nations they represent through the comparison to Scotland.⁷³ As I have shown, Paoli is a “Plutarchan hero of action and contemplation,” embodying Boswell’s romanticization of ancient Scottish patriarchal authority, like Robert the Bruce and the clan chieftains.⁷⁴ For Boswell, Paoli represents an older masculine ideal that, as Gordon Turnbull has noted, marks Boswell’s shift away from “political and military fantasies of heroism” to an interest in “greatness of a moral and literary kind,” which anticipates his treatment of Johnson as a biographical subject.⁷⁵ The young and idealistic Boswell, who lacks the nuance of his later biographical style, portrays Paoli through the lens of fantasy in *An Account of Corsica*. Boswell claims that he sees “[his] highest idea realized” (p.179) in the Corsican general, whose “perfect ease of behavior,” befits an ancient, noble “m[a]n of power [who] could bring hundreds of followers into the field” (p.186). As a result, Paoli may not be “every moment of his life a hero” (p.179) as Boswell purports, but the *Account* certainly portrays its biographical subject as a hero in the all the moments Boswell shares with him. Boswell appears to achieve this effect by compiling Paoli’s best traits and sayings, thereby

⁷² De Ritter, “This Changeableness in Character,” p.31. The Literary Club was a London dining club founded in January 1764 by Samuel Johnson and Joshua Reynolds that regularly met at the Turk’s Head Tavern located on Gerrard Street in Soho.

⁷³ Gordon Turnbull, “James Boswell: Biography and the Union,” in *The History of Scottish Literature: Volume II, 1660-1800*, ed. Andrew Hook (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p.168.

⁷⁴ Turnbull, “Biography and the Union,” p.164.

⁷⁵ Turnbull, “Biography and the Union,” p.163.

flattening Paoli's character. Rather than providing a detailed insight into the daily life, thoughts, and behavior of the Corsican patriot, Boswell's "memoirs of Pascal Paoli" reads like an extended, glorified and glorifying character sketch, consisting of vague descriptions of Paoli coupled with the general's pithy "philosophical speculations" ("I know the arguments for fate and free-will, for the materiality and immateriality of the soul [but] I always hold firm one object" [p.180]) and observations on the "affairs of state" ("I am desirous that the Corsicans be taught to walk of themselves. Therefore when they... ask whom they shall chuse for their... Magistrate, I tell them, You know better than I do" [p.187]). For example, though Boswell is "struck with [Paoli's] appearance" he does not detail his distinctive features, but rather, characterizes the Corsican patriot using imprecise terms: "He is tall, strong, and well made; of a fair complexion, a sensible, free, and open countenance, and a manly and noble carriage" (p.180). Similarly, Boswell labels Paoli a "fine classical scholar [with a] mind... enriched with a variety of knowledge" (p.162) and while he provides an assortment of Paoli's sayings, Boswell never presents the date, precise context, or "a single conversational exchange between himself and the Corsican."⁷⁶

In contrast, Boswell in *A Tour to the Hebrides* does not paint an idealistic picture of Johnson, but offers what Nussbaum has identified in the *Life of Johnson* as an "authentic pattern of balances," tempering Johnson's negative qualities such as his impetuosity, with positive attributes like benevolence.⁷⁷ Anticipating this style of biography in the *Life*, Boswell's introductory character sketch of Johnson in the *Tour* presents him as a man whose natural

⁷⁶ Korshin, p.244.

⁷⁷ Felicity A. Nussbaum, "Boswell's Treatment of Johnson's Temper: 'A Warm West-Indian Climate,'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 14.3 (Summer 1974): pp.433, 423-4.

faculties would be enhanced and faults would be improved by their journey. Travel offers Johnson the opportunity to add to his mental storehouse of a “vast and various collection of learning and knowledge” and “indulge” his “most logical head [and] most fertile imagination” (*Tour*, p.163) in conversation with the Highlanders (“satisfy[ing] his curiosity [about the islands] by asking questions” [p.164]), which as Boswell emphasizes, plays a large role in correcting Johnson’s unsociable behavior. Johnson is “hard to please, and easily offended,” but his capacity for empathy (his “most humane and benevolent heart”) ameliorates misunderstandings, just as his “constitutional melancholy” is excised through “indulg[ing] himself in pleasantries and sportive sallies” (p.164). Most of all, Boswell seeks to correct Johnson’s “outrageous contempt of Scotland” during their trip and admits that he is inclined to “treat [prejudiced Englishmen, like Johnson] as children” (p.166). Casting Johnson as a figurative ward whom he is responsible for educating, Boswell aligns their tour to the Hebrides with the moral purpose of the Grand Tour, which afforded “insular young Englishmen” the opportunity to cultivate a sense of “common responsibility for the welfare of Europe as a whole.”⁷⁸ Indeed, Boswell concludes his prefatory sketch of Johnson with the proleptic observation that “he returned from [Scotland] in great humour, with his prejudices much lessened, and with very grateful feelings of the hospitality with which he was treated” (p.166). By beginning the *Tour* with a claim about Johnson’s reformed character, Boswell insinuates that his biographical travel narrative is also a record of Johnson’s transformation from bigoted Englishman to cosmopolitan Briton. This transformation not only consists of Boswell’s cultivation of Johnson’s sympathy for and solidarity with his

⁷⁸ Buzard, “The Grand Tour,” p.41.

Northern neighbors during their travels, but also, the narrative refashioning of Johnson to conform of an inclusive idea of Britishness.

The *Tour* has been described as the “fruit of the Union,” and while the text can be seen as a “collaborative production of Johnsonian utterance and Boswellian reportage,” such a reading deemphasizes the extent of Boswell’s narrative control over his biographical subject.⁷⁹ Boswell’s travel narrative participates in the imaginative rewriting of Johnson’s character by reframing him within the context of Scottish language, history, and culture. In an attempt to overwrite Johnson’s criticism of Scots English in the *Journey*, Boswell uses a number of Scotticisms in the *Tour*— many of which had to be revised prior to publication, such as “muir” for “moor,” “box bed” for “press-bed,” and “worthy-like,” which has no standardized English equivalent.⁸⁰ As in *An Account of Corsica*, which was criticized by reviewers for its “expressions peculiar to the author’s dialect as a North Briton,” Boswell uses Scotticisms in the *Tour* to unite the respective subjects of his travel narratives (i.e.-Corsica, Paoli, and Johnson) with Scotland.⁸¹ Whereas in the *Account*, this linguistic link signifies that struggle for sovereignty faced by Paoli’s Corsica is analogous to that of Robert the Bruce’s Scotland, in the *Tour* Boswell aligns Johnson’s English *Dictionary* with his own unpublished, partially completed Scots dictionary (c.1764), which aimed to preserve, rather than correct, Scottish terms and idioms.⁸² Here Boswell retrospectively

⁷⁹ Turnbull, “Biography and the Union,” p.166.

⁸⁰ McGowan, Ian. “Boswell at Work: The Revision and Publication of The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,” *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*. Eds. Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: OUP, 1996): p.133.

⁸¹ Cited in Boulton, introduction, p.xxxviii.

⁸² For more information on Boswell’s Scottish dictionary, rediscovered in 2011, see James J. Caudle, “James Boswell (1740-1795) and His Design for *A Dictionary of the Scot[t]ish*

renders Johnson complicit with his project, thereby contradicting Johnson's prior criticisms of the Scottish language.

Boswell also controls Johnson linguistically by prompting and mediating his speech throughout the *Tour*. Anxious to have his skill as a biographer recognized, Boswell divulges his technique for "leading [Johnson in] conversation":

I do not mean leading, as in an orchestra, by playing the first fiddle; but leading as one does in examining a witness—starting topics, and making him pursue them. He appears to me like a great mill, into which a subject is thrown to be ground. It requires, indeed, fertile minds to furnish materials for this mill. I regret whenever I see it unemployed; but sometimes I feel myself quite barren, and having nothing to throw in.

(p.320)

Initially, Boswell denies the primacy of his role by explicitly stating Johnson does not play "second fiddle" as conversationalist, but Boswell's mixed metaphors implicitly reassert his power over "Johnsonian utterance." Attempting to redefine the term "leading" to emphasize their conversational parity, Boswell compares his introduction of topics to Johnson to a lawyer questioning a witness. The legal definition of "leading a witness," however, suggests the lawyer's willful manipulation of the witness' testimony: "asking a question during a trial or deposition which *puts words in the mouth* of the witness or suggests the answer."⁸³ Boswell's subsequent metaphor reinforces this portrayal of Johnson's lack of verbal agency by likening

Language, 1764-1825," and Susan Rennie, "Boswell's Scottish Dictionary Rediscovered," *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 32 (2011): pp.1-32, 94-110.

⁸³ Gerrard N. Hill and Kathleen Thompson Hill, *The People's Law Dictionary* (New York: MJF, 2002), p.273 (emphasis mine).

him to a mill that is “furnish[ed]” with “subjects... to be ground.” This example depicts conversation as a mechanical process for Johnson, who is figuratively force-fed topics by Boswell. Additionally, Boswell does not only put words into Johnson’s mouth, but also contributes his own “fertile mind,” without which Johnson’s speech would remain “barren.” These metaphors reveal that Johnson is not an equal participant in Boswellian dialogue; instead, he is provoked into giving edifying, entertaining, and at times, predictable responses. Boswell depicts Johnson as being so easily “led” into discussion that the Highlanders are able to mimic Boswell’s technique by staging scenarios for Johnson to comment upon: “It was curious to hear the Hebrideans, when any dispute happened while he was out of the room, saying, ‘Stay till Dr Johnson comes: say that to HIM!’” (p.328).

By distilling Johnson’s commentary in both direct quotation and paraphrase, Boswell is able to reconstruct a version of Johnson that is closer to Boswell’s masculine ideal. Boswell’s mediation of Johnson’s speech in the *Tour* is similar to his biographical treatment of his condemned client, the Scottish sheepstealer John Reid in 1774.⁸⁴ As I have argued elsewhere, Boswell subverts the generic conventions of the “dying speech” to ameliorate the inconsistencies of Reid’s character, configuring the otherwise morally questionable and “unfeeling” character as

⁸⁴ Boswell’s inclusion of Johnson’s commentary on the law—in particular, aspects that correspond with the Reid trial such as Johnson’s remark that “The justice or/ injustice of the cause is to be decided by the judge” (*Tour*, pp.168-9), which directly echoes Boswell’s concern over the justice of Reid’s sentence (“the people were divided, some crying, ‘He says his sentence is *just*.’ Some: ‘No, He says unjust’” [Boswell, *Boswell for the Defence Boswell for the Defence, 1769–1774*, eds. William K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Frederick A. Pottle (New York: McGraw, 1959), p.335]—suggests that the case was on Boswell’s mind as he wrote, compiled, and edited the materials that would be published as the *Tour*.

an idealized and sympathetic biographical subject.⁸⁵ Although Boswell does not go as far as “tak[ing] a speech from [Johnson’s] mouth” and supplanting it with his own version, like he does in his fictitious and unauthorized publication of *The Mournful Case of Poor Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid* (1774), Boswell does exploit the deceased Johnson’s inability to speak for himself and contradicts his posthumous portrait.⁸⁶ Just as Boswell attempts to align Reid with Macheath, the roguish, yet irreproachable hero of John Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera* to remake him into a client worthy of a royal pardon, Boswell affiliates Johnson with Jacobean royalty to transform him into a suitable ambassador for a post-Union England.⁸⁷

The *Tour* begins with an epigraph, which makes a subtle comparison between James I and Johnson:

He was of an admirable pregnancy of wit, and that pregnancy much improved by continual study from his childhood; by which he had gotten such a promptness in expressing his mind, that his extemporal speeches were little inferior to his premeditated writings. Many, no doubt, had read as much and perhaps more than he; but scarce ever any concocted his reading into judgement [sic] as he did.

(p.159)

The epigraph bears no reference to James I, aside from an attribution to the “Baker’s Chronicle,” which refers to Sir Richard Baker’s *Chronicle of the Kings of England from the Time of the Romans’ Government unto the Death of King James* (1643), published in eleven editions by the

⁸⁵ See Shirley F. Tung, “Dead Man Talking: James Boswell, Ghostwriting, and the Dying Speech of John Reid,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77.1 (Spring 2014): pp.59-78.

⁸⁶ Tung, “Dead Man Talking,” p.71.

⁸⁷ See Tung, “Dead Man Talking,” p.75.

mid-eighteenth century.⁸⁸ Although extratextual notes reveal that Boswell discovered the quotation at Corrichatachin on September 23, 1773 during the Hebridean tour, Boswell's decision to omit this context makes the epigraph appear to refer solely to Johnson.⁸⁹ Indeed, Boswell's character sketch of Johnson emphasizes his "pregnancy of wit" ("He united a most logical head with a most *fertile* imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing" [p.163]), his "continual study," and the quality of his "extemporal speec[h]" ("[He had] a mind stored with vast and various collection of learning and knowledge, which he communicated with peculiar perspicuity and force, in rich and choice expression" [p.164]). Demonstrating that Johnson and James I share the same admirable qualities, Boswell draws an audacious parallel between the first Stuart king, whose reign prompted the 1603 personal dynastic Union of Crowns between England and Scotland (which predated and anticipated the creation of imperial throne of Great Britain, following the Acts of Union in 1707) and the "Monarch of English Letters," whose trip to the Hebrides and his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* brought Scottish heritage and history to the English populace.⁹⁰ Boswell insinuates here that Johnson, like the biographical subject of Baker's *Chronicle*, participates in the noble project of uniting England and Scotland.

Following the leitmotif established by the epigraph, Boswell converts Johnson into the role of Scottish patriarch through a series of vignettes. As Bertrand Bronson observes, Johnson's

⁸⁸ Martine Watson Brownley, "Sir Richard Baker's 'Chronicle' and Later Seventeenth-Century English Historiography," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 52.4 (Autumn 1989): p.481.

⁸⁹ Boswell, *Tour*, p.420, fn.6.

⁹⁰ Jenny Wormald, "The Union of 1603," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger A. Mason. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.19-20.

“fancy” of owing his own Scottish island and becoming a Highland chief recur in Boswell’s account of their visits to Inch Keith (“I’d build a house, make a good landing-place, have a garden, and vines, and all sorts of trees”), Island Isa (“He talked a great deal of this island; — how he would build a house there, —how he would fortify it, —how he would plant”), and Inchkenneth (“I should build me a fortification, if I came to live here”), where Johnson “shewed so much of the spirit of a Highlander, that he won, [the owner of island], Sir Allan [M’Lean’s] heart.”⁹¹ Furthermore, Scotland inspires Johnson not just to imagine himself in the role of chieftain, but also, to enact this fantasy. For example, Boswell recounts that after giving a “[party of soldiers] two shilling to drink” they

went and paid them a visit, Dr Johnson saying, “Come, let’s go and give ‘em another shilling a-piece.” We did so; and he was saluted “My Lord” by all of them. He is really generous, loves influence, and has the way of gaining it. He said, “I am quite feudal, sir.”

(p.233)

Johnson is so transported by the “Highland spirit” that he uncharacteristically funds the soldiers’ inebriation, though elsewhere in the *Tour* he criticizes the practice of drinking for “mak[ing] a man different from what he is before he has drunk” (p.360). Thus, Boswell demonstrates that Johnson’s performance of Highland masculinity, which incites his natural inclination toward merriment, magnanimity and command, has the potential to be transformative.

Much like Boswell in the *Account*, who is prompted by his experience with the Corsicans to perform the conflicted identities of the Scottish nationalist and *ambasciatore*

⁹¹ Bertrand H. Bronson, “Johnson, Travelling Companion, in Fancy and Fact,” in *Johnson and His Age*, ed. James Engell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984): pp.179, 173-4, 180.

inglese, Johnson in the *Tour* is caught between contradictory impulses to live out his Highland fantasies or return to the “felicity[ies] of London life.” This tension manifests itself when Boswell and Johnson are ferried by Malcolm Macleod and his men to the island of Rasay:

The wind had now risen pretty high, and was against us; but we had four stout rowers, particularly a Macleod, a robust, black-haired fellow, half naked, and bear-headed, something between a wild Indian and an English tar. Dr Johnson sat high on the stern, like a magnificent Triton. Malcolm sung an Erse song, the chorus of which was *Hatyin foam'eri*, with words of his own. The tune resembled *Owr the muir amang the heather*, the boatmen and Mr M'Queen chorused, and all went well.

(p.251)

The scene pastiches the *Account's* depiction of Boswell singing “Heart of Oak” with the Corsicans while imagining that he is recruiting officer aboard the British fleet. Whereas Boswell in the *Account* leads the group in song and imagines an inclusive idea of Britishness, Johnson, who merely watches as Malcolm, M'Queen and the boatmen sing, is excluded from participation. The song (translated in English as “He was man yesterday”) is sung in Erse and to the tune of a folksong that Johnson, as an outsider, would not have recognized.⁹² In addition, the song mourns the death of “the famous Captain of Clanranald,” who died in battle at Sherrifmuir during the Jacobite Rising of 1715, and thus bears an anti-English sentiment.⁹³ Boswell,

⁹² See Boswell, *Tour*, p.424, fn.148. “Comin' thro' the craigs of o'Kyle” was recorded in print by Robert Burns in 1792 (p.424, fn.149).

⁹³ Boswell recounts the backstory of the “Hatyin foam foam eri” later in the *Tour*: “I could now sing a verse of the song *Hatyin foam'eri*, made in honour of Allan, the famous Captain of Clanranald, who fell at Sherrif-muir; whose servant, who lay on the field watching his master's dead body, being asked next day who that was, answered, ‘He was a man yesterday’” (*Tour*, p.336).

however, momentarily transfigures Johnson's exclusion as one based not on nationality, but race and class. While the rowers are presented as embodying corporeal forms of masculinity, Johnson represents a sublimated model of manliness. Macleod, who is racialized as a savage (i.e., "wild Indian"), uses his brute strength to "contend with the sea." Therefore, his body bears the marks of his profession—he is "stout" and robust" from "row[ing] vigorously," his clothing disarranged and torn by his effort, his complexion darkened by the heat of the sun like the sailors (i.e., tarpaulins) he is compared to, and his demeanor made fierce with determination (i.e., "bear-headed").⁹⁴ Conversely, Johnson does partake in the exertion of rowing; rather, he occupies a raised seated position on the stern above the rowers, which symbolizes his elevated status. Instead of "contend[ing] with the seas" physically like Macleod, Johnson is engaged in the mental struggle to contain his fear, and is likened to the Greek god of the sea for his composure while facing rough waves that "lash[ed] considerably upon" them (p.251).

Johnson's fantasy of being a Highland chieftain is exposed as a domesticated version of the material reality of life as a Highlander when Johnson, once again, fancies owning a "rugged [Hebridean] island":

We sailed along the coast of Scalpa... Dr Johnson proposed that he and I should be found... After we were out of the shelter of Scalpa, and in the sound between it and Rasay... the wind made the sea very rough. I did not like it. JOHNSON. "This now is the Atlantick. If I should tell at a tea table in London, that I have crossed the Atlantick in an

⁹⁴ "A familiar appellation for a sailor: perh. abbreviation of tarpaulin." See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "tar, n.1," Oxford University Press, June 2015 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/197754?rskey=eoGQK9&result=1&isAdvanced=false>> (accessed July 15, 2015).

open boat, how they'd shudder, and what a fool they'd think me to expose myself to such danger.”

(p.251)

Here, Johnson's wish to preserve and reproduce Erse in the static form of print is antithetical to the fluidity of Highlanders' use of the language, which is exemplified by Malcolm Macleod extemporizing and recombining the lyrics and music of Erse folksongs to unify the rowers in the reaffirmation and re-creation of cultural tradition. As Deidre Lynch notes, “the volatility of a language that ‘merely float[ed] in the breath of the people’ menaced Johnson's ontology... In Johnson's physics, sight is firmly rooted in the material world, while hearing is not.”⁹⁵ Therefore, Johnson's dream to own a piece of the Highlands is based on his inclination to cultivate its ruggedness, much like he wishes to fix the Erse tongue on the page and within history. This desire to tame the wildness of the Highlands is also evident when Johnson preemptively envisions regaling his London social circle with an account of “cross[ing] the Atlantick in an open boat.” Juxtaposing the treachery of the turbulent ocean with the domesticated space of the tea table, Johnson reconfigures, and thereby trivializes, their present danger as the future subject of polite and amusing table talk.

Johnson's unflappable manner aboard the vessel to Rasay demonstrates the kind of masculinity that Boswell praises in Paoli at the end of the *Account*. In a similar fashion to Paoli, who reduces the threat of the Genoese invasion to highway robbery, Johnson “show[s] firmness of an heroic mind” by making “gallant pleasantries” of his potentially perilous situation.⁹⁶ In a

⁹⁵ Deidre Shauna Lynch, “‘Beating the Track of the Alphabet’: Samuel Johnson, Tourism, and the ABCs of Modern Authority,” *English Literary History* 57.2 (Summer 1990): p.387.

⁹⁶ Boswell, *Account*, p.218.

similar fashion to the end of the *Account*, which equates Corsica's war with Genoa with Paoli's attempt to conquer Genoese "rival queens," Boswell qualifies Johnson's manliness based on his appeal to women in the *Tour to the Hebrides*. During their stay in the Isle of Skye, Boswell portrays Flora Macdonald, who is famed for aiding the escape of Prince Charles by disguising him as an Irishwoman named Betty Bourke, as Johnson's first admirer (p.267). Macdonald's appellation for Johnson, "young English buck" (p.265) is a humorous reversal of Johnson's age (he turned sixty-four during the Hebridean trip) and his amorous disposition (he is described by Boswell's character sketch as "steady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of piety and virtue" [p.163]), and ultimately, facilitates Johnson's identification with Scottish masculinity.⁹⁷ Johnson is aligned with Prince Charles, not just through the "Lockean associationism" that Boswell experiences when he sees Johnson lying in "the very bed in which the grandson of the unfortunate King James the Second lay" (p.265), but also through Boswell's playful suggestion that the Rambler is a romantic successor to the Wanderer.⁹⁸ Commenting upon Johnson's complaint that he "would have given a good deal rather than not have lain [Prince Charles']

⁹⁷ "A gay, dashing fellow; a dandy, fop, 'fast' man. Used also as a form of familiar address. In the 18th c. the word indicated rather the assumption of 'spirit' or gaiety of conduct than elegance of dress; the latter notion comes forward early in the 19th century, and still remains, though the word is now arch." See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v., "buck, n.1," Oxford University Press, June 2015
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/24123?rskey=vjMPao&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>
(accessed July 15, 2015).

⁹⁸ Pierre Carboni, "Boswell and the extraordinary adventures of Prince Charles Edward Stuart in the Hebrides," in *Adventure: An Eighteenth-Century Idiom: Essays on the Daring the Bold as a Pre-Modern Medium*, eds. Serge Soupel et al. (New York: AMS Press, 2009), p.120. According to Davis, "Boswell makes the romanticization of his account [of Bonnie Prince Charlie] clear [by] referring to Charles Edward with the mythic epithet 'the Wanderer'" (*Acts of Union*, p.101). Boswell's epithet bears an intentional similarity to Johnson's eponymous persona in his periodical *The Rambler*.

bed,” Boswell jests that the sleeping arrangement “had been contrived between Mrs Macdonald and him” and notes that Macdonald “seemed to acquiesce; adding, ‘You know young BUCKS are always favourites of the ladies’” (p.267). Here Macdonald intimates that the two unlikely bedfellows (i.e., Johnson and Prince Charles) are alike in their virility and sexual appeal to Scottish women, thus destabilizing Johnson’s Englishness by subscribing his masculinity to a Scottish, and more specifically, Jacobitic, paradigm.

Boswell’s portrayal of Highlander women capitalizes upon Johnson’s anxieties regarding the subversion of masculine authority. Influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment debates regarding the role of women as “social agents” in the advancement of civilization, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* chronicles the feminine influence on the course of Scottish history from elevating the Macrae clan to prominence (Scythian ladies married their servants, the Macraes, when their husbands, Maclellans, were killed in “war of Charles the First” [Johnson, *Journey*, p.62]), to inspiring a centuries-long feud between the Macdonalds and Macleods (Macdonald’s dismissal of his infertile Macleod wife sparked a battle [p.81]), and creating an alliance between the Maclonichs and Macleans (Lady Maclonich and Lady Maclean exchanged their children to prevent Maclonich’s boy from being murdered) in addition to initiating the Highlander practice of fosterage (p.130).⁹⁹ As Johnson demonstrates, the success and failure of the Highland clans is based on the feminine domain of reproduction and the masculine inability to police it. Accordingly, Boswell highlights in the *Tour* that Johnson is particularly preoccupied with the economic, social and genealogical ramifications of female infidelity, due to his belief

⁹⁹ O’Brien notes, “The Scottish Enlightenment effectively created a sociological and economic vocabulary with which to describe women, not as unchanging natural or moral entities, but as social agents” (See, *Women and Enlightenment*, p.70).

that upon “the chastity of women is... all the property in the world depends” (Boswell, *Tour*, p.282).

In response to Johnson’s uneasiness with ungoverned female sexuality, Boswell represents Johnson’s flirtatious interactions with married Scottish women in the *Tour* as the basis for defining his kinship with the Highlanders:

This evening one of our married ladies, a lively pretty little woman, good-humouredly sat down upon Dr Johnson's knee, and, being encouraged by some of the company, put her hands round his neck, and kissed him. ‘Do it again,’ said he, ‘and let us see who will tire first.’ He kept her on his knee some time, while he and she drank tea. He was now like a BUCK indeed. All the company were much entertained to find him so easy and pleasant. To me it was highly comick, to see the grave philosopher—the Rambler—toying with a Highland beauty! But what could he do? He must have been surly, and weak too, had he not behaved as he did. He would have been laughed at, and not more respected, though less loved.

(pp.317-8)

Here, the threat of infidelity is negated by its transformation into a farce—Johnson’s mock-seduction of the married lady becomes an act that connects him with the Highlanders through the performance of Scottish virility. As Boswell emphasizes, Johnson’s dalliance with “one of *our* married ladies” signifies his matrilineal alliance with the Scotsmen. Additionally, Boswell’s repetition of Macdonald’s epithet of “buck” suggests that Johnson’s transformation into a youthful and dashing Highland gallant is complete, though incongruous with his former persona as the Rambler. Boswell stresses that in order for Johnson to be loved and respected by the Highlanders, he must relinquish the “grave philosoph[y]” that earned him acclaim in England.

Johnson echoes Boswell in his Latin verses written in Inchkenneth, prior to the return to the British mainland: “Quo *vagor* ulterius? quod ubique requiritur hic est/ Hic segura quies, hic et honestus amor” (“Whither must I *ramble* further? All that is needed is here/ Here is peaceful calm and an honest love” [p.361, emphasis mine]). Voicing his hesitance to leave both the tranquility and amorous sociability of the western islands of Scotland, Johnson expresses a wish to “ramble” no further, which connects the end of his Scottish peregrination with the end of his literary identity as the sage English moralist.

Literalizing Johnson’s wish to be a Rambler no longer, Boswell refashions Johnson as a figure of ancient patriarchal authority deeply rooted in Scottish history and mythology:

I took the liberty to put a large blue bonnet on his head. His age, his size, and his bushy grey wig, with this covering on it, presented the image of a venerable senachi: and, however unfavourable to the Lowland Scots, he seemed much pleased to assume the appearance of an ancient Caledonian.

(pp.359-60)

Although the role of senachi—an ancient Scottish oral historian and literary retainer—may appear antithetical to Johnson’s literary practice, Boswell interprets Johnson’s pleasure at his likeness to an ancient Caledonian as his identification with this new persona.¹⁰⁰ Boswell’s transformation of Johnson into a notably silent image of Scottishness also retrospectively authorizes the narrative “libert[ies]” Boswell takes in the *Tour*. By representing Johnson as a Scottish bard, Boswell suppresses Johnson’s criticisms of oral tradition in the *Journey*, regarding the ephemerality of language (“In nations, where there is hardly the use of letters, what is once

¹⁰⁰ Boswell, *Tour*, p.428, fn.284.

out of sight is lost for ever” [p.79]) and the defects of human memory (“There is yet another cause of error not always easily surmounted, though more dangerous to the veracity of itinerary narratives, than imperfect mensuration” [p.139]). Boswell thereby defends his biographical technique, which relies upon the recollection of their journey “at the distance of almost twelve years” (p.410) with the assertion that his “wonderful memory [which,] with the leave of [an] elegant historian... can preserve facts or sayings with such fidelity as may be done by writing them down when they are recent” (p.404). Indeed, it is Boswell’s ability to reassemble those “preserve[d] facts or sayings” into an authenticated, if not authentic, narrative that enables him to portray their Hebridean journey as the Rambler’s progress from the prejudices of a “true-born Englishman” (p.166) to the “spirit of a Highlander” (p.359).

Following Gottlieb’s assertion that Boswell “integrates the temporality of Scotland with the rest of Britain [and] effectively establishes the sense of ‘meanwhile’ that [Benedict] Anderson argues is an essential component of instituting the modern nation as imagined community,” I argue that Boswell’s capacious memory in the *Account* and *Tour* also allows for the creation of a modern and inclusive idea of Britishness. In this context, Johnson’s dress as a senachi serves a similar purpose to Boswell’s Corsican costume at the Shakespeare Jubilee, signifying what Joseph Roach has articulated as “the process of surrogation”—the “three-sided relationship of memory, performance, and substitution”—that “continues as actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations that constitutes the social fabric” of a community.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): pp.2-3.

Therefore, when Boswell dresses as a Corsican chief during the Shakespeare Jubilee, he presents himself a surrogate for the double losses of Highlander and Corsican culture and autonomy following their respective defeats in 1746 and 1769. Here, Boswell “rise[s] up betwixt two Eternities” (Cowley, “Life and Fame,” ll.10-11) to resurrect the defeated nations in the image of the British Empire by using the English literary figures of Shakespeare and Johnson. Boswell’s Jubilee poem dedicated to Corsica paraphrases the final words of Prospero in *The Tempest* (“With generous ardour make us also free/And give to Corsica a noble jubilee!”) and stresses a shared lineage between the “sister islands” of England and Corsica by ventriloquizing the voice of the sweet swan of Avon for Boswell’s Corsican swan song.¹⁰² In doing so, Boswell associates the burgeoning “sceptred isle” of Shakespearean England with present-day Corsica, suggesting a future Corsican Empire that anticipates the imperial rule of another famed Corsican, Napoleon Bonaparte, over three decades later.¹⁰³ Similarly, Boswell’s depiction of Johnson as a senachi signals the substitution of travel accounts such as Johnson’s *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, and the observations on history, landscape, and culture contained therein, for the lost ancient Caledonian practice of oral storytelling. Jeff Strabone notes that Johnson’s ambition to preserve the integrity of the Erse language ran counter to his standardization of the English language in order to homogenize the “diverse speakers of English across Great Britain”— thus indicating Johnson’s desire to integrate Highland culture into the Union, rather than supplant

¹⁰² Boswell, “Shakespeare Jubilee,” p.456. “Let your indulgence set me free” (See line 20 of the epilogue to William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *Riverside Shakespeare*, p.1686).

¹⁰³ Ibid. See Act II, scene i, line 40 of William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, in *Riverside Shakespeare*, p.855.

it.¹⁰⁴ In addition, Boswell asserts that orality *and* aurality is integral to the practice of reading Johnson's *bons mots*— which “would not appear so extraordinary, were it not for his *bow-wow* way [as] the *Messiah*, played upon the Canterbury organ, is more sublime than when played upon an inferior instrument”— by his insistence that when “*Doctor Johnson's sayings are read, let his manner be taken with them*” (Boswell, *Tour*, p.164). These characterizations of Johnson suggest that his lexicographical and literary works also have the potential to retain the traces of oral tradition, even through the medium of print.

Since Boswell's conception of his own Britishness is mediated through his experience as a post-Union Scot, his selected community of Britons is similarly re-imagined in terms of Scottish lineage through Boswell's biographies. Accordingly, Boswell promotes *An Account of Corsica* in January 1766 with a fictional article in the *London Chronicle* regarding his “motive in visiting Paoli... to work out a scheme to have the Chevalier Charles Stuart (the Young Pretender) crowned king of Corsica,” just as Boswell implies that his *Tour to the Hebrides*, as a prelude to the monumental *Life of Johnson*, fulfills his “intention to erect a monument” to Johnson on Scottish soil (i.e. “the groves of Auchinleck”) (p.396).¹⁰⁵ These plans reveal Boswell's surrogation of his biographical subjects as Scottish nationals, who are tied to their new homeland through the ceremonies of burial and royal succession. Despite these intentions and schemes being relegated to the realm of fantasy (though, Paoli did become a British subject upon his exile from Corsica), this process enables Boswell to create an imaginary post-Union clan that resides upon the isthmus of his memory.

¹⁰⁴ Strabone, “Johnson: Standardizer of English,” pp.237, 261.

¹⁰⁵ This account is taken from Dorothy Carrington, “Boswell's Corsica,” *Essays by divers hands: being the transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom* 44 (1986): p.59.

CHAPTER FOUR: Scandinavian Arboreal Landscapes and the Maternal Bosom
in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in
Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*

En route to the falls of Tonsberg, Mary Wollstonecraft stumbles upon the remains of a Norwegian “forest [that] had been burnt [by a] wild fire... some years ago.”¹ Inspired by “emotions that sterility had never produced” and mourning the “country, despoiled of beauty and riches” (p.88), Wollstonecraft reflects upon the “noble forests,” which function as both the Romantic backdrop and the subtext of her *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796):

I feel myself unequal to the task of conveying an idea of the beauty and elegance of the scene when the spiry tops of the pines are loaded with ripening seed... The profusion with which Nature has decked them with pendant honours, prevents all surprise at seeing in every crevice some sapling struggling for existence. Vast masses of stone are thus encircled, and roots torn up by the storms become a shelter for a young generation.

(p.88)

For Wollstonecraft, the trees represent an “idea of beauty” that unites form with function—the pines are “decked... with pendant honours” not for ornamentation, but for the purpose of propagating the species. Wollstonecraft’s arboreal description also advances an active and empowered femininity that puts the onus of the trees’ survival on fertility and maternal protection. In addition to being tasked with bearing “ripening seed,” the pines heroically “shelter” their progeny—the “sapling[s] struggling for existence”—at the risk of being brutally

¹ Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.88. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

uprooted themselves. This meditation on the beauty of Scandinavian forests thus becomes a celebration of the mother-child dyad and their shared resilience in the face of the proverbial “storms” that threaten to tear them asunder. Yet, this sympathetic portrait of horticultural “gynoculture,” which facilitates what Wollstonecraft later characterizes as the cyclical process of life and death “left entirely to Nature,” is undermined by the destruction of the forest due to the mishaps that occur when agriculture attempts to quicken this cycle: “Fires of this kind are occasioned by the wind suddenly rising when the farmers are burning roots of trees, stalks of beans, &c. with which they manure the ground” (p.88).² Wollstonecraft implies that such methods of husbandry, which attempt to expedite natural processes to yield further crops, jeopardizes, rather than promotes, the “young generation” that maternalized nature seeks to preserve.

This passage demonstrates Wollstonecraft’s use of arboreal landscapes in *A Short Residence* to construct a discourse around ecological motherhood. As Anka Ryall and Sylvia Bowerbank have argued, Wollstonecraft “endows her northern landscapes and organisms with an almost emancipatory potential that is analogous to her feminist vision of social change and personal empowerment,” anticipating the eco-feminist belief in the fundamental connection between the oppression of women and that of nature, both of which “must be overcome in order

² Alan Bewell demonstrates that Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* disputes existing horticultural discourse on “gynoculture,” which aligns women with “luxuriants,” plants cultivated for their beauty with the consequence of sterility and susceptibility to disease. See “‘Jacobin Plants’: Botany and Social Theory in the 1790s,” *The Wordsworth Circle* 20 (Summer 1989): pp.132-39. Here, Wollstonecraft appears to pose a revised and empowered model, aligning women with resilient trees.

to ensure the survival of the earth.”³ Barbara Taylor notes that Wollstonecraft’s journey to Scandinavia offered her an opportunity to “refine her views on human progress by comparing life in Europe’s ‘most polished’ nations to conditions in its ‘half-civilised’ hinterland,” as evidenced by her observations on the treatment of Scandinavian women both within and beyond the domestic sphere.⁴ Like Helen Maria Williams’ *Letters Written in France* (1790), which provided readers with immediate access to what Mary A. Favret terms the “dizzying spectacle” of a drastically changing nation in the wake of the French Revolution, Wollstonecraft’s *A Short Residence* follows the convention of using travel literature as a vehicle for sociopolitical commentary.⁵ Wollstonecraft draws upon her experience witnessing and commenting upon the moral advancement of revolutionary France in *Historical and Moral View of the Origins of the French Revolution* (1794) to “measure and evaluate Scandinavian society” using human interaction with and cultivation of the forest functions as a litmus test, and revealing the social inequity underlying the contemporaneous masculine discourse surrounding femininity and nature.⁶ In this chapter, I trace the evolution of arboreal landscapes as a metaphor for the maternal ethic of care in *Letters Written During a Short Residence*, from Wollstonecraft’s

³ Anka Ryall, “A Vindication of Struggling Nature: Mary Wollstonecraft’s Scandinavia,” in *Mary Wollstonecraft’s Journey to Scandinavia: Essays*, eds. Anka Ryall and Catherine Sandbach-Dahlstrom (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell Intl., 2003), p.118. Sylvia Bowerbank, “The Bastille of Nature: Mary Wollstonecraft and Ecological Feminism,” in *Wollstonecraft’s Journey to Scandinavia*, pp.165-6.

⁴ Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (CUP, 2003), p.162.

⁵ Mary A. Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.59.

⁶ Yael Schlik, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel After the Enlightenment* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), pp.38-9.

interrogation of her role as a single mother to the child of her estranged lover, Gilbert Imlay, to her depiction of commerce as a metaphorical blight on the tree of life.⁷ I argue that by promoting her personal, political, and rhetorical standpoints as a woman, mother, Jacobin polemicist, British-traveler-*cum*-citizen-of-the-world, Wollstonecraft valorizes motherhood as a vital form of ecological conservation.

The first section of this chapter focuses on how Wollstonecraft's re-envisioning of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) contests the patriarchal Romantic constructions of selfhood, femininity, and nature. Anne Mellor has argued that Romantic women writers rejected the sublime's association with masculine empowerment, equating it with "patriarchal tyranny... the sexual division of labor; and the domestic ideology of patriarchal capitalism."⁸ Instead, they depicted a distinctly feminine experience of the sublime as an intimate cooperation with nature in the role of female friend or sister.⁹ Scholars like Jeanne Moskal and Christine Chaney demonstrate that Wollstonecraft engages with the feminized sublime in *A Short Residence* by grounding her authority as a female observer using the "property of fertility that she shares with nature" and supplanting a "Wordsworthian model" of "inward, solitary, self-sufficient and solipsistic" selfhood in favor of a dialogic intimacy with the reader that mimics her relationship with

⁷ Anne K. Mellor demonstrates that "Romantic-era women literary critics," like Wollstonecraft, promoted a more rational form of ethics "that takes as its highest value the ensuring that, in any conflict, no one should be hurt" (i.e., an ethic of care), rather than an ethic of justice, which "demands that all persons, regardless of their physical and psychological needs and material assets, should be treated the same under the law." See *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp.86-7.

⁸ Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p.91.

⁹ Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p.97.

nature.¹⁰ Building on this criticism, I claim that Wollstonecraft applies an earlier Enlightenment model of sympathetic identification to her depiction of nature in order to propose a new schema of ethical and political maternalism.

My second section explores how Wollstonecraft's transfiguration of what has been termed the "maternal sublime" complicates Burke's depiction of the beautiful as "the mother's fondness and indulgence," which as Mellor has noted, is embodied by the female breast and its production of breast milk, "the first support of our childhood."¹¹ Wollstonecraft makes an explicit parallel between nature's bosom and her own from which her weaning one-year-old daughter, Fanny Imlay, is separated during the Norwegian leg of Wollstonecraft's journey. Furthering Wollstonecraft's depiction of the breastfeeding in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) as a political act that, as Corinne Field articulates, "reveal[s] nature's intention that women be active and independent," the female breast appears in *A Short Residence* to signify its continued importance even after it concludes "discharging the tenderest maternal office."¹² Employing the sublime imagery of "a lake embosomed in pine-clad rocks" (*A Short Residence*, p.21) and using her relationship with her daughter as a prime example, Wollstonecraft

¹⁰ Jeanne Moskal, "The Picturesque and the Affectionate in Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Norway*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 52.3 (September 1991): p.278. Christine Chaney, "The Rhetorical Strategies of 'Tumultuous Emotions': Wollstonecraft's Letters Written in Sweden," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 34.3 (Fall 2004): p.295.

¹¹ See Karen Hurst, "Facing the Maternal Sublime: Mary Wollstonecraft in Sweden," in *Wollstonecraft's Journey to Scandinavia*, pp.139-63. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p.108.

¹² Corrine Field, "Breast-feeding, Sexual Pleasure, and Women's Rights: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*." *Critical Matrix* 9.2 (1995): p.25. Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, eds. Anne K. Mellor and Noelle Chao (San Francisco: Longman, 2007), p.249. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

reconfigures the maternal bosom as a bastion-like sanctuary that fosters sensibility. Here, Wollstonecraft more forcefully asserts the connection she makes in *Rights of Woman* between the “suckl[ing] and educat[ion] [of] children,” and not only emphasizes that physical nutriment and psychological nurturing arise from the same source (i.e., the human breast), but also stresses the necessity of this maternal contribution to an offspring’s growth as an individual and member of society.¹³

Wollstonecraft’s references to her daughter and her role as mother in *A Short Residence* embody the intersection of the personal and political spheres that characterizes the Romantic travel narrative, while highlighting the complications of maintaining this mixture of individual subjectivity and objective authority. Much of the scholarly work on *Letters Written During a Short Residence* is focused on determining whether or not Wollstonecraft’s travel narrative, which is based on letters she wrote to Imlay while acting as his representative in 1795 in a legal case over a missing silver ship, can be read biographically.¹⁴ Favret contests the inclination to interpret *A Short Residence* as an exact copy or an extension of Wollstonecraft’s private letters to Imlay, demonstrating that Wollstonecraft heavily revised these letters to remove any mention of the love affair or the business that brought her to Scandinavia to construct an “imaginative correspondence.”¹⁵ Wollstonecraft, as Favret posits, uses the implied intimacy of the epistolary form to supplant Imlay as the addressee of her letters with an unnamed “you” that is directed at

¹³ Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in *Rights and Wrongs of Woman*, p.178. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number. Since I refer to both vindications throughout this chapter, I will be using the shortened title of *The Rights of Woman* to refer specifically to this work.

¹⁴ Tone Brekke and Jon Mee, introduction to *A Short Residence*, pp.xiii-xv.

¹⁵ Favret, *Romantic Correspondence*, p.98.

the reader.¹⁶ Other scholars have indicated that Wollstonecraft refrained from completely eliding personal detail from her travel narrative, and furthermore, chose to retain the emotional outbursts and flights of fancy that distinguish her private letters to Imlay, rendering *A Short Residence* a species of “creative nonfiction,” or as Mitzi Myers puts it, a “generic hybrid, a kind of subjective autobiography superimposed on a travelogue.”¹⁷

Drawing on Favret and these other critics, the final section asserts that the construction of this factually fictive epistolary “I” contributes to Wollstonecraft’s diatribe against the corrupting effects of economic speculation and commerce. As D.L. Macdonald has demonstrated, Wollstonecraft, in her previous political writings, such as *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, uses the “I” to refer to both her persona “as the writer of the vindications” and her private person.¹⁸ While in the *Vindications* these “textual constructions” can be distinguished by “‘the present instance of the discourse’—that is, the moment of writing—and its historical context,” *A Short Residence* plays upon epistolary conventions, blending person with persona, to provide Wollstonecraft’s readers with a firsthand account of the personal, political, and ecological consequences of negligent fathers and husbands, greedy speculators, and irresponsible agricultural practices.¹⁹ When Wollstonecraft

¹⁶ Favret, *Romantic Correspondence*, pp.112-30.

¹⁷ Mary Heng, “Tell Them No Lies: Reconstructed Truth in Wollstonecraft’s *A Short Residence in Sweden*,” *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 28.3 (Fall 1998): p.371. Mitzi Myers, “Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written ...in Sweden*: Toward Romantic Autobiography,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 8 (1979): p.167.

¹⁸ D.L. Macdonald, “The Personal Pronoun as Political: Stylistics of Self-Reference in the *Vindications*,” in *Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley: Writing Lives*, eds. Helen M. Buss et al (Ontario, Canada: Wilirid Laurier University Press, 2001), p.32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

admits in her advertisement, “In writing these letters, I found I could not avoid being continually the first person ‘the little hero of each tale.’ I tried to correct this fault, if it be one, for they were designed for publication: but in proportion as I arranged my thoughts, my letter, I found became stiff and affected” (*A Short Residence*, p.3) she not only identifies that the first-person account as a more natural mode of narration, but also, as an integral organizational device. Wollstonecraft, therefore, offers herself as a heroine, whose journey through “new scenes” (p.5) is self-consciously bookended by literary conventions— beginning in *medias res* and ending with the acknowledgement that the muse-like “spirit of observation” that has invisibly guided her tale has “fled” (p.131)—in order to distinguish the travel narrative as the carefully crafted product of her authorial control.

Wollstonecraft uses the epistolary “I” as a literary device to provide intimate access to the biographically inspired heroine of her tale, whose “struggles... have been occasioned by the oppressed state of [her] sex,” and enables her to speak for and represent the character of the Everywoman: “We reason deeply when we forcibly feel” (p.107). This transformation from singular to collective voice at end of *A Short Residence* mirrors Wollstonecraft’s reminder to the reader of the cosmopolitan and humanitarian scope of her travel account (“I do not pretend to sketch a national character, but merely to note the present state of morals and manners as I trace the progress of the world’s improvement” [p.108]), which illuminates the inequities ascribed to feminine physiology and psychology by a dominant male narrative. Wollstonecraft’s meditation on nature in her travel narrative becomes a means to combat these inequities by aligning herself with “certain male and metropolitan natural histories both to undercut their complacent

assertions and to co-opt them for her own purposes.”²⁰ In this context, Wollstonecraft’s arboreal landscapes challenge the problematic depictions of nature that align the feminine with disordered sensibility, and justify the disenfranchisement of the female sex.²¹ As part of her aim to “convince readers to understand social progress in *her* terms, rather than either those of hereditary aristocracy or mercantile profit motive,” Wollstonecraft gestures to the necessity of a program of equitable social justice and sustainable land management that puts the feminist, Romantic aesthetic theory of “right feeling” into practice.²²

I. Scandinavia and the Sympathetic Wollstonecraftian Sublime

A Short Residence challenges the masculine models for describing a subjective encounter with the natural world used by other Romantic travel accounts. As Mellor has indicated, Burke’s aesthetic theory precludes the female experience of the sublime by associating it “with an experience of masculine empowerment,” while the feminine is classified as “its contrasting term, the beautiful.”²³ In response, Wollstonecraft seeks to redefine the sublime as a mode of perception in her descriptions of the awe-inspiring Scandinavian wilderness. Anthony Pollock

²⁰ Ryall, “Vindication of Struggling Nature,” p.118.

²¹ Sylvia Bowerbank outlines how “claims such as “woman is nature” or “woman speaks for nature” are intellectually problematic” in “Bastille of Nature,” p.171.

²² Miriam L. Wallace, “Discovering the Political Traveler in Wollstonecraft’s Letters (1796) and Holcroft’s Travels (1804),” *Journeys* 12.1 (Summer 2011): p.6. Mellor argues that Romantic-era women literary critics, in appropriating the Enlightenment trope of literature as a “balance or scale that weighs equally the demands of the head and the heart, of reason and emotion,” redefines it as female Justice, who “as a woman can most wisely judge the competing claims of thought and emotion, [because] what she seeks, in literature as in life, is ‘right feeling’” (*Mothers of the Nation*, p.86).

²³ Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p.85.

argues that, “for Wollstonecraft, Burkean sublimity undermines ethical sociability by idealizing... a spectatorial subject-position outside or above the field of danger.”²⁴ Rather than ascribe to this model of spectatorship that emphasizes one’s “immunity from danger,” and thereby, the “recognition of one’s difference” from those who suffer, Wollstonecraft’s reformulation of the sublime appears to draw upon the Enlightenment model of Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), which asserts that passionate feelings arise from an observer’s imagined danger due to sympathetic identification with those in misery.²⁵ This re-envisioning of the sublime is best encapsulated by Wollstonecraft’s trip to the Tonsberg “cascade.”

In Letter XV Wollstonecraft prefaces her depiction of the famed waterfalls of Tonsberg by representing herself as “altered by disappointment” and particularly attuned to “griefs [sic]” (p.87). Despite Wollstonecraft’s attempt to “talk of something else” and divert the reader with an invitation to “go with her to the cascade” (p.87), her anguish at discovering the charred remains

²⁴ Anthony Pollock, “Aesthetic Economies of Immasculation [sic]: Capitalism and Gender in Wollstonecraft,” *The Eighteenth Century* 52.2 (Summer 2011): p.199.

²⁵ Pollock, “Immasculation,” p.199. Adam Smith identifies that the “source of our fellow-feeling for the misery of others [is] changing places in fancy with the sufferer.” See *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in *The Essential Adam Smith*, ed. Robert L. Heilbroner (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1987), p.66. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number. Cf. Edmund Burke’s descriptions of “Of Sympathy” and “The Effects of Sympathy in the Distress of Others”: “It is a common observation, that objects which in the reality would shock, are [...] the source of a very high species of pleasure [...] The satisfaction has been commonly attributed, first, to the comfort we receive in considering that so melancholy a story is no more than a fiction; and, next, to the contemplation of our own freedom from the evils which we see represented” and “there is no spectacle we so eagerly pursue, as that of some uncommon and grievous calamity; so that whether the misfortune is before our eyes, or whether they are turned back to it in history, it always touches with delight.” See *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol. 1: The Early Writings*, ed. T.O. McLoughlin and James T. Boulton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.221-2.

of a forest further suspends the anticipated account. Identifying with the landscape, which is also altered by a profound loss, Wollstonecraft extends her sympathy beyond Smith's "fellow-feeling for the misery of others [i.e., human beings]" (Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, p.66) to nature itself. Wollstonecraft "look[s] with pain on the ridge of rocks... formerly crowned with the most beautiful verdure" (Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.88), because the sight reminds her of the barrenness of her mind, which used to "dip her brush in the rainbow of fancy and sketch futurity in glowing colors" (p.87). Yet, it is Wollstonecraft's "fellow-feeling" for the "trees... swept away by the destructive torrent" that inspires her to repopulate the forest with colors lent by her reignited imagination ("the sun gives a glow to [the pines'] light green tinge, which is changing into purple, one tree more or less advanced, contrasting with another") (p.88). In the "pine and fir woods fluttering between life and death," Wollstonecraft sees nature's promise of regeneration in these "finer image[s] of decay," both in the "young generation" that springs up among their roots, and in the freedom "to expand [in] an element" (p.88) that Wollstonecraft characterizes as the "unfettered... wings of thought" (p.89). This rumination on suffering—both her own and that which she imbibes through sympathy—not only enables Wollstonecraft to "transfor[m] complaint into a realization of her own power," as Favret has observed, but also primes her to reconfigure the sublime's threat of self-annihilation into a source of feminine empowerment.²⁶

Wollstonecraft's description of the cascade emulates the language of the Burkean sublime in order to undermine the tenets of *A Philosophical Enquiry*. In contrast to Burke, who defines "the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature [as] astonishment... that state of

²⁶ Favret, p.104.

the soul in which all motions are suspended, with some degree of horror,” Wollstonecraft recounts the waterfall stirring her soul and thoughts into perpetual movement²⁷:

Reaching the cascade, or rather cataract, the roaring of which had a long time announced its vicinity, my soul was hurried by the falls into a new train of reflections. The impetuous dashing of the rebounding torrent from the dark cavities which mocked the exploring eye produced an equal activity in my mind.

(p.89)

Although Wollstonecraft implies that the tremendousness of the cascade overwhelms her senses (she reclassifies the waterfall as a “cataract” to reflect its “considerable size” as opposed to the diminutive cascade, her ears identify the “roaring” of the “rebounding torrent” before her eyes witness the sight, and the “impetuous dashing” reminds her of deadly force of the rushing water), she refrains from the horror-struck stasis of Burke’s observer.²⁸ On the contrary, Wollstonecraft emulates the motion of the water with her thoughts engaged in “equal activity,” demonstrating that unlike the masculine apprehension of the sublime, which operates on the literal and figurative distance between the sublime object and its observer, Wollstonecraft’s sublime relies upon a mode of perception that is responsive to and interconnected with the landscape. Playing on two definitions of cataract, Wollstonecraft not only matches her stream of consciousness to the swell of water “falling headlong over a precipice,” but also accentuates the partial obstruction

²⁷ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p.230. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

²⁸ “A waterfall; properly one of considerable size, and falling headlong over a precipice; thus distinguished from a *cascade*, n.” See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “cataract, n. 2a,” Oxford University Press, June 2015
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28766?rskey=FB8H2T&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>
(accessed July 15, 2015).

of her vision.²⁹ Wollstonecraft's remark that she can only hear "the dark cavities which mocked the exploring eye" denotes the limitation of her role as an observer. This is a reversal of the "hierarchical relationship between the observer and the observed that puts the former firmly in control," which is promoted by male travel writers like Addison, and exemplifies the "imperial eyes" of the European male traveler, which "passively look out and possess."³⁰ By acknowledging that there are recesses of nature that neither sight, nor the traveler herself can penetrate, Wollstonecraft subordinates the objectifying faculty of vision to that of subjective feeling, reframing the masculine mastery over nature as the feminine mastery of the self.

The Wollstonecraftian sublime focuses on a cathartic communion with nature that transforms personal crisis into spiritual apotheosis. While Wollstonecraft's contemplation of her own mortality and misery echoes Burke's "ideas of pain and danger" excited by "terrible objects" (Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, pp.216-7), the pleasure she subsequently experiences does not result from triumphing over the sublime and "the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or danger" (p.211), but rather, the sublimation of her suffering:

My thoughts darted from earth to heaven, and I asked myself why I was chained to life and its misery. Still the tumultuous emotions this sublime object excited were pleasurable; and, viewing it, my soul rose with renewed dignity above its cares—

²⁹ "An opacity of the crystalline lens of the eye, or of the capsule of the lens, or of both, 'producing more or less impairment of sight, but never complete blindness' (*New Sydenham Soc. Lexicon*)." See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "cataract, n. 4," Oxford University Press, June 2015.
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28766?rskey=GSb5uh&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>
(accessed July 15, 2015).

³⁰ Cf. Ingrid Kuczynski, "'Only by the Eye'—Visual Perception in Women's Travel Writing in the 1790s," in *Wollstonecraft's Journey to Scandinavia*, pp.26, 45. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.7.

grasping at immortality—it seemed as impossible to stop the current of my thoughts, as of the always varying, still the same, torrent before me; I stretched out my hand to eternity, bounding over the dark speck of life to come.

(Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.89)

Angela Jones posits that Wollstonecraft “revises the logic of [the] opposition” between the sublime and beautiful by associating “the pain of the sublime with self-forgetfulness,” which facilitates this quick transformation of despair into pleasure.³¹ As Wollstonecraft later reveals, the viewpoint from the top of the cascade commands a magnificent prospect of the river and valley below, offering her a glimpse of “eternity” that diminishes the scale of her worries to a “dark speck” (p.89). Wollstonecraft inverts Burke’s paradigm for perceiving the “delightful horror” of infinity “as the falls of waters [that] roar in imagination long after the first sounds have ceased to affect it [before] they die away at last by gradations which are scarcely perceptible” (Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p.243) by making the “current of her thoughts” (Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.89) the terrifying object that ceases to endanger her as it recedes from her imagination. Rather than incite fear, Tonsberg falls concomitantly serves as an embodiment of immortality and a reminder of the ephemerality of human life, empowering Wollstonecraft to extend her attention beyond herself and “above [her] cares” to “a number of saw-mills crowded together close to the cataracts” (p.89).

Concluding her account of the cascade with a description of the sawmills, which not only “destro[ys] the harmony of the prospect” (p.89), but also the land and cottagers that depend upon it, Wollstonecraft undercuts Burke’s depiction of the sublime as a perceived threat to the self

³¹ Angela D. Jones, “Romantic Women Travel Writers and the Representation of Everyday Experience.” *Women’s Studies* 26 (1997): p.502.

with the representation of actual destruction.³² Like the burnt wasteland that prefaces her experience of the falls, Wollstonecraft gestures to future generations that depend upon the forest by condemning “two noble estates... the proprietors of which seem to have caught more than their portion of the enterprising spirit” (p.89) for depriving the “peasantry” of the wood and farmland that they require for subsistence (“Many agricultural experiments have been made; and the country appears better enclosed and cultivated; yet the cottages had not the comfortable aspect of those I observed near Moss” [pp.89-90]). Here, Wollstonecraft espouses that the cultivation of a country (both in manners and agriculture) should be commensurate with the comfort of its cottagers, and proposes a model of resource management that is based on the symbiosis seen in nature. Though she decries the sawmills as blights on the landscape and cottage industry, Wollstonecraft sees the “harmony of the prospect” restored by the “sight of a bridge erected across a deep valley” (p.89). The bridge, which is formed by “Mast-like trunks, just stript of their branches,” preserves the integrity of the trees’ natural form while incorporating functionality with aesthetics by “taking from the magnitude of the supporting trees [to] give them a slender graceful look” (p.89). Within this context, the trees fulfill their natural function of supporting life; albeit, by contributing to the livelihoods of Tonsberg’s residents through the safe and easy passage of people and goods across the valley, rather than sheltering a young generation of saplings.

Wollstonecraft’s commentary upon landscape aesthetics reflects her ethics for participating within nature. In *A Short Residence* the internalization of the sublime, the

³² Jones has also noted an instance where Wollstonecraft subverts “Burke’s experience of the sublime as threatening self-preservation” with pain of losing her dear friend, Fanny Blood (“Romantic Women Travel Writers,” p.503).

externalized landscape, and landscape of the self, which Jones has termed an “inscape,” function cooperatively as extensions of one another.³³ As a result, Wollstonecraft ascribes to a model of stewardship that accentuates the mutual dependence of the natural world and humankind.

According to Karen Hurst, Wollstonecraft “takes the ancient supposition that humanity is related to nature like a child to its parent and reframes it utterly” by disarming the “overwhelming ‘hideous’ potential of feminine nature’s maternal aspect... which can kill or save her” with the assertion of her role as a fellow mother able to recognize the “human responsibility to the natural world.”³⁴ When Wollstonecraft questions “why [she is] chained to life and its misery,” the sublimity of the landscape reminds her of the larger scale of existence to which she is intimately connected, converting her fatalism into an affirmation of the “life to come” (p.89).

Wollstonecraft’s resulting depiction of the bridge composed of “supporting trees” reflects this shift in the reconfiguration of the destruction represented by the sawmills as facilitating a new life for the felled trees in their altered, but equally majestic form.

In a letter written to Imlay on July 3, 1795, a week and a half before her departure to Tonsberg, Wollstonecraft echoes similar sentiments while stressing that her interdependent relationship with her infant daughter keeps her tethered to life:

On ship-board, how often as I gazed at the sea, have I longed to bury my troubled bosom in the less troubled deep... and nothing but the sight of [my little girl]—her playful smiles, which seemed to cling and twine round my heart—could have stopped me.³⁵

³³ See Jones, “Romantic Women Travel Writers,” p.503.

³⁴ Hurst, “Maternal Sublime,” pp.156, 160.

³⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd (New York: Penguin, 2003), p.309. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number.

Once again, Wollstonecraft identifies with nature, seeing her own troubles reflected in and palliated by the “less troubled” waves. Consequently, Wollstonecraft surrenders herself to suicide as much as she searches for emotional comfort, longing both to bury herself at sea and unburden her bosom upon the sympathetic landscape. But as the object of her gaze shifts from the seascape to her daughter, Wollstonecraft’s desire for death is quickly replaced with a renewed dedication to life. Wollstonecraft literalizes what Hurst has described as the “physical bond with her child [that] bridges the distance between the observer and her environment” by becoming the mother she seeks in nature and transfiguring her troubled bosom as the supportive heart upon which Fanny can rely.³⁶ The elements of nature that Wollstonecraft praises in *A Short Residence*—resilience, protection, and interconnectivity—are integral to her relationship with her daughter. While Wollstonecraft plays the part of the “supporting tree” that continues to foster life after it has been uprooted or cut down, Fanny metaphorically winds herself tightly around Wollstonecraft’s heart to supplant the “chain[s] [of] life and its misery” with the affectionate and joyful attachment between mother and daughter that makes life worth living.

Wollstonecraft’s characterization of ivy in her letter to Imlay departs from *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, which associates the plant with destructive and sexually exploitative “gothic notions of beauty”: “the ivy is beautiful, but, when it insidiously destroys the trunk from which it receives support, who would not grub it up?”³⁷ In the *Rights of Men* Wollstonecraft uses ivy to attack Burke’s sexual politics via his landscape aesthetics, criticizing him for upholding an

³⁶ Hurst, “Maternal Sublime,” p.165.

³⁷ Quoted in Moskal, “The Picturesque and the Affectionate,” p.276.

idea of feminine beauty that is parasitic and inherently powerless.³⁸ Responding to this misrepresentation of women as incapable of autonomy and authority, Wollstonecraft diverges from the typical portrayal of ivy as a helpless female love object in her earlier letters to Imlay. Cynthia D. Richards observes that Wollstonecraft's love letters to Imlay invoke the language of his *Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* (1792), implicitly comparing their relationship to the "less structured and ultimately more accommodating terrain" of the new world.³⁹ According to Richards, Wollstonecraft initially appears to conform to Burke's gendered dichotomies by likening her affection to "tendrils cling[ing] to his elm, [but] Imlay assumes this status of the elm only after he has first functioned as a tendril around her heart: 'You have, by your tenderness and worth, twisted yourself more artfully round my heart, that I supposed possible.'"⁴⁰ In this fashion, Wollstonecraft uses these horticultural terms of endearment to specify her terms for an egalitarian relationship that allows both partners to alternate between the parts of ivy and tree, and the corresponding positions of emotional vulnerability and strength. When this metaphor is transplanted from her failed romance with Imlay to Wollstonecraft's attachment to their daughter, however, it comes to represent both the mother-daughter relationship and the femininopic space that solidifies this bond as thriving in the absence of male influence and interference.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Cynthia D. Richards, "Romancing the Sublime: Why Mary Wollstonecraft Fell in Love with that Cad, Gilbert Imlay," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 25.1 (Spring 2006): p.85.

⁴⁰ Richards, "Romancing the Sublime," pp.84-5.

II. Remapping the Maternal Bosom

While Wollstonecraft's private letters grapple with her abandonment by Imlay, *A Short Residence* combats the masculine misassumptions that lead to the mistreatment of nature and women on the systemic level. One such example is Imlay's *Topographical Description*—a textual manifestation of Imlay's negligence as both common-in-law husband and father—that encourages the neglect of livestock and land by assuring prospective emigrants that the natural fecundity of North America will compensate for their minimal agricultural efforts (“This *extraordinary* fertility enables the farmer, who has but a small capital, to increase his wealth in the most rapid manner... His cattle and hogs will find sufficient food in the woods, not only for them to subsist upon, but to fatten them”).⁴¹ Wollstonecraft's travel narrative thus responds to Imlay by offering a feminist standpoint on the comparatively fertile wilderness. Written from the perspective of a woman traveling alone with her effectually fatherless infant daughter and her nursemaid, *A Short Residence* is particularly invested in nature's “possibilit[ies] [for] life, growth, culture and progress—even under adverse circumstances,” which embody Wollstonecraft's hopes for her journey and the personal and professional future that hinges upon its success.⁴² Accordingly, Wollstonecraft counters the masculine gaze that either views the natural landscape as a sublime threat or a beautiful possession (or, as Burke puts it, what “we submit to” versus “what submits to us” [*A Philosophical Inquiry*, p.273]) by assigning aesthetic

⁴¹ Richards, “Romancing the Sublime,” p.78.

⁴² Ryall, “Vindication of Struggling Nature,” p.131. Wollstonecraft had agreed to represent Imlay's business interests in Scandinavia in hopes that it would lead to their reconciliation (see Brekke and Mee, introduction, p.xii-xiii). At the same time, Wollstonecraft was drafting *A Short Residence* for publication to “discharge all [her] obligations of a pecuniary kind” (Wollstonecraft, *Collected Letters*, p.314) and thus gain financial independence from Imlay.

value to the Scandinavian terrain according to its ability to support life, and in particular, the livelihoods of women.

In Letter III Wollstonecraft compares two picturesque vistas transformed by human attempts to inhabit and domesticate the land:

I visited, near Gothenburg, a house with improved land about it... It was close to a lake embosomed in pine-clad rocks... One recess, particularly grand and solemn amongst the towering cliffs, had a rude stone table and seat placed in it... whilst a placid stream below enlivened the flowers on its margin... Here the hand of taste was conspicuous though not obtrusive, and formed a contrast with another abode in the same neighbourhood... where Italian colonnades were placed to excite the wonder of the rude crags, and a stone staircase, to threaten with destruction a wooden house. Venuses and Apollos... seemed equally displaced, and called the attention off from the surrounding sublimity... Yet even these abortions of vanity have been useful. Numberless workmen have been employed...

(Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, pp.20-1)

Wollstonecraft assesses both of these landscapes through the lens of motherhood, likening the first to the “lake embosomed in pine-clad rocks” to a child in the protective and nurturing embrace of a mother and the second to an abortion.⁴³ Hence, the first dwelling is praised for complementing the wilderness that surrounds it, with each embellishment placed by “the hand of taste” to mirror nature both in form and function. The unobtrusive “rude stone table and seat” is aptly situated, like the lake, to benefit from the shade and shelter provided by the recess in the “towering cliffs.” Blending into the rocky crevice, the chair and table also facilitates the bodily

⁴³ Moskal, “The Picturesque and the Affectionate,” p.279.

and intellectual sustenance of its inhabitants by providing both an area for dining and a vantage point to contemplate the sublime scenery. Likewise, the decorative border of planted flowers works in harmony with the existing landscape, beautifying the stream that sustains it. In contrast, the artifice of the second “abode” is discordant with the natural processes conducive to life. The grand prospect is marred by human vanity, which strives to outdo nature with architecture and sculpture that serves no purpose but to boast its owner’s wealth, classical education, and neoclassical taste. Distracting “Italian colonnades” and “Venuses and Apollos” clash aesthetically with the “rude” form of the crags, and are rendered useless by the climate of Sweden, which “condemn[s] [the statues] to lie hid in the snow three parts of the year” (p.21). In addition to being impractical, these displays endanger the domestic space signified by the wooden house precariously overshadowed by the “stone staircase” leading to colonnades. While the house is literally threatened by being crushed under the weight of the stone, Wollstonecraft also insinuates that the owner’s lavish taste may lead to the financial ruin of the household.

These two sceneries typify Wollstonecraft’s landscape aesthetics, which not only challenge Burke’s conception of the sublime, but also defies his association of the beautiful with the passive female body, which in *A Philosophical Inquiry* is robbed of its agency, intellect, strength and biological purpose.⁴⁴ According to Burke, “An air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty. An appearance of delicacy, and even of fragility, is almost essential to it” (Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p.275)⁴⁵ To illustrate this point, Burke aligns trees with

⁴⁴ Mellor aptly describes the relationship between the sublime and the beautiful as sadomasochistic one, with Burke’s “ideal woman [...] willing obeying the dictates of her sublime master.” See *Romanticism and Gender*, p.108.

⁴⁵ Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry*, Part 3, Section XVI: “Delicacy,” p.196.

strength and ornamental plants with beauty (“It is not the oak, the ash, or the elm, or any of the robust trees of the forest which we consider as beautiful... It is the flowery species, so remarkable for its weakness and momentary duration, that gives us the liveliest idea of beauty and elegance”) and deigns the “Arabian horse... much more amiable than the strength and stability of some horses of war or carriage” (p.275). Burke concludes his survey of flora and fauna with a brief exposition on the “fair sex,” which unlike the previous two examples, is a “point... easily allowed” without further elaboration: “The beauty of women is considerably owing to their weakness or delicacy, and is even enhanced by their timidity, a quality of mind analogous to it” (p.275). Dehumanizing women by reducing them to the status of a domesticated animal or plant bred solely for appearance, Burke further denigrates the female sex by assuming that the association between women and physical and mental weakness is too obvious to warrant discussion.

The likening of women to aesthetic objects is reinforced by Burke’s comparison of women’s breasts to smooth and undulating terrain colonized by the male gaze:

Observe that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness, the softness, the easy and insensible swell; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix, or whither it is carried.

(p.274)

Wollstonecraft’s depiction of arboreal landscapes thereby debunks Burke’s assumptions about the female body and intellect by employing a similar tactic— implicitly comparing the forest scenery to bosoms— to redefine the beautiful as resilient and functional. Furthermore,

Wollstonecraft stresses that these landscapes are only rendered feeble and ostentatious through mistreatment; thus, implicating men for cultivating weakness due their desire to control the procreative power aligned with the feminine in nature.

The prominence of the feminine bosom in *A Short Residence* advances the Wollstonecraft's promotion of maternal breastfeeding in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft's feminist polemic also takes issue with Burke's portrayal of the breast, which deemphasizes its social and biological importance by dismissing the nurturing act of breastfeeding as the manifestation of "mother's fondness and indulgence" (p.272), and minimizing the nutritional value of breast milk as a combination of "water, oil, and... sugar" noted only for its "great smoothness to the taste, and... relaxing quality to the skin" (p.303). The social devaluation of maternal breastfeeding is evident in practice of hiring wet-nurses, which in turn, as Wollstonecraft argues, weakens "parental affections" between mother and child: "affections grow out of the habitual exercise of mutual sympathy; and what sympathy does a mother exercise who sends her babe to a nurse, and only takes from a nurse to send it to school?" (Wollstonecraft, *The Rights of Woman*, p.185). Anticipating her use of Smith's *Moral Sentiments* as the model through which she experiences the natural world in *A Short Residence*, Wollstonecraft argues that the interdependent relationship between mother and child is the origin of human sympathy. Wollstonecraft possibly responds to Smith's example of the sympathetic "pangs of a mother, when she hears the moaning of her infant" in contrast to an insensible "infant [who] feels only the uneasiness of the present instant" (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p.68) by asserting that sympathy is learnt behavior first modeled by a mother while nursing her baby, and reinforced through the education she provides her growing child.

The Rights of Woman upholds that the fates of the mother and child are socially and biologically intertwined, not just during pregnancy, but also well past the early postpartum period and into her offspring's adolescence. Wollstonecraft stresses that the well-being, health, and intellect of the child are contingent upon the mother's "constitution [which is] strengthened by exercise," "body [which is allowed] to acquire its full vigour," and "mind [which can] comprehend the moral duties of life" (Wollstonecraft, *The Rights of Woman*, p.70). In turn, motherhood and lactation do not limit woman's position in society, but rather, expands it by enabling her to "fulfil[l] the duties of a mother" while "improv[ing] her mind" (p.288). Touting the benefit of decreased fertility during nursing, Wollstonecraft argues that breastfeeding mothers have control over their reproductive futures, and are thereby open to opportunities that extend beyond the domestic sphere: "nature has so wisely ordered things, that did women suckle their children... there would be such an interval between the birth of each child [and] the management of their household and children need not shut them out from literature, or prevent their attaching themselves to a science... or practising the fine arts" (p.288).⁴⁶ Hence, women's citizenship rights are not just "inextricably linked to their natural capacity to mother," as Field has noted, motherhood *becomes* the impetus for women to participate actively both as the educators of their children and as independent sociopolitical entities.⁴⁷

When Wollstonecraft composes *A Short Residence* nearly three years later in 1795, her travel narrative and the circumstances prompting her journey to Scandinavia allude to her momentary loss of agency, despite putting the principles of *The Rights of Woman* to practice in

⁴⁶ Cf. Field, "Breast-feeding and *Vindication*," p.25.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

her own life.⁴⁸ Wollstonecraft's correspondence with her friend, Ruth Barlow, dated July 8, 1794 boasts her ability to nurse and nurture Fanny during early infancy:

My little Girl [is] not only uncommonly healthy, but already, as sagacious as a child of five or six months old, which I rather attribute to my good, that is natural, manner of nursing her, than to any extraordinary strength of faculties. She has not tasted any thing, but my milk, of which I have abundance, since her birth.⁴⁹

Abiding by her claims in *The Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft interprets the abundance of milk as indicating her natural fitness to be a mother, which in turn, enables to her to nourish her daughter's body and mind. This sentiment echoes Wollstonecraft's postscript in another letter to Barlow on May 20, 1794, which playfully suggests that she is able to transmit her interest in "men's questions" as well as her Jacobin and feminist ideals to Fanny through her breast milk: "My little Girl begins to suck so *Manfully* that her father reckons saucily on her writing the second part of the *Rights of Woman*."⁵⁰ Construing Imlay's facetious commentary on Fanny's "mannish" appetite into a confirmation of her theory that educated and politically active mothers will raise like-minded children, Wollstonecraft infers that she has come to embody the consummate woman that her tract envisions. Letter VIII from *A Short Residence*, however, disrupts this constructed image of empowered motherhood when Wollstonecraft admits the

⁴⁸ *A Short Residence* was published in January 1796.

⁴⁹ Quotation from Janet Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000), p.259.

⁵⁰ Quotation from Todd, *Wollstonecraft*, p.258. In *A Short Residence* Wollstonecraft writes that one that her Swedish host finds her interest in political, social, and economic issues a curiosity: "At supper my host told me bluntly that I was a woman of observation, for I asked him *men's questions*" (p.11).

connection between her loss of strength and the cessation of nursing: “My imprudence last winter, and some untoward accidents just at the time I was weaning my child, had reduced me to a state of weakness which I never before experienced” (*A Short Residence*, p.50). Wollstonecraft refers here to her suicide attempt in April 1795 due to her deteriorating relationship with Imlay and her ordeal with what is now recognized as late onset postpartum depression.⁵¹ As Wollstonecraft’s contemporaneous personal letters to Imlay reveal, she discovers that “fulfull[ing] the duties of her station” does not preclude her from abandonment by Imlay, nor does her dedication to their infant daughter inspire “the dictates of affection” in his unreceptive heart (*Collected Letters*, p.320), which like the “cold” and “unnatural” heart of the libertine in *The Rights of Woman* is unmoved by “seeing his child suckled by its mother” (*The Rights of Woman*, p.174). Implicitly wrestling with her disillusionment with the domestic ideal promoted by *The Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft’s travelogue re-conceptualizes maternal duty within the context of single motherhood.

Whereas *The Rights of Woman* sees lactation as evidence that nature intended mothers to be fully formed individuals capable of educating their children, *A Short Residence* looks to nature as an edifying model for the continued role of the maternal bosom as the mother-child relationship evolves beyond nursing and infancy. Elizabeth A. Bohls observes that “Nature embraces and nurtures [Wollstonecraft] like a child,” urging her to participate within the landscape as an “empathically embodied perceiver.”⁵² The aesthetic pleasure that Wollstonecraft

⁵¹ Brekke and Mee, introduction, p.xii.

⁵² Elizabeth A. Bohls, “Mary Wollstonecraft’s Anti-Aesthetics,” in *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818*, ed. Bohls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.162.

experiences within nature translates into “new-found comfort” with her corporeal self as a mother, which “her earlier writing had treated with suspicion.”⁵³ More specifically, nature revitalizes and allows Wollstonecraft to come to terms with her post-weaning body. In the same letter from *A Short Residence*, which associates her physical and emotional weakness with weaning Fanny, Wollstonecraft notes that her “constitution has been renovated [in Scandinavia], and that [she has] recovered [her] activity even whilst attaining a little embonpoint” (*A Short Residence*, p.50). Though Wollstonecraft indicates the return of her physical strength, her recovery relies primarily upon her spiritual rebirth, signified by the theological undertones of the term “renovation,” and the return of her embonpoint or “attractive plumpness.”⁵⁴

Detached from the biological function of breastfeeding, Wollstonecraft’s bosom takes on new significance as an organ of sensuality and sensibility. Thus, it is by feeling her way through nature that Wollstonecraft gestures at her readiness to begin anew with her daughter:

The huge shadows of the rocks, fringed with firs, concentrating the views without darkening them, excited that tender melancholy which, sublimating the imagination, exalts rather than depresses the mind... A vague pleasurable sentiment absorbed me, as I opened my bosom to the embraces of nature; and my soul rose to its Author, with the chirping of the solitary birds, which began to feel, rather than see, advancing day.

(p.34)

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “renovation, n,” Oxford University Press, June 2015 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/162505?redirectedFrom=renovation>> (accessed July 15, 2015); s.v. “embonpoint, n. and adj,” <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/60936?redirectedFrom=embonpoint>> (accessed July 15, 2015).

According to Elizabeth A. Dolan, the ““huge shadows of the rocks, fringed with fir’ provide the frame, a necessary element in the picturesque aesthetic,” which allows Wollstonecraft to gain creative control over the scene as well as her senses and reframe “her painful melancholy into a tender melancholy.”⁵⁵ The encircling fir-fringed rocks also visually signify the protective embrace of nature, which inspires Wollstonecraft to “open her bosom” to “pleasurable sentiment.” As the objectifying faculty of sight gives way to feeling, the distance between Wollstonecraft as an observer and the landscape around her diminishes. Instead of the god-like visual perspective offered by the sublime, Wollstonecraft attains access to the divine through the bond of sympathy, demonstrated by her lonely soul accompanying the “solitary birds” in flight. Nature becomes a surrogate for the supportive community that Wollstonecraft lacks as a foreigner, solitary traveler and single mother, which encourages her to be receptive to the new future represented by the “advancing day.”⁵⁶

The comforting embrace of nature becomes both a salve for heartache and a template for Wollstonecraft’s post-weaning relationship with Fanny when journeying through the rugged parts of Sweden and Norway necessitates leaving her daughter behind in Gothenburg.⁵⁷ Prior to

⁵⁵ Elizabeth A. Dolan, *Seeing Suffering in Women’s Literature of the Romantic Era* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), pp.93-4.

⁵⁶ This scene echoes Wollstonecraft’s realization in Letter I that despite her hardship and her wish to “sna[p] the thread of existence,” she is drawn back into the “grand mass of mankind” and life itself: “I was alone, till some involuntary sympathetic emotion, like the attraction of adhesion, made me feel that I was still a part of a mighty whole, from which I could not sever myself [...] Futurity, what hast thou not to give to those who know that there is such a thing as happiness!” (*A Short Residence*, p.12).

⁵⁷ Wollstonecraft notes in Letter V that while traveling in Sweden it is necessary make “proper arrangements”: “it is necessary to have your own carriage, and to have a servant who can speak the language” (*A Short Residence*, p.25). To facilitate fast travel alone roads “not much frequented” (p.26), Wollstonecraft travels only with “two gentlemen, one of whom had a

“parting with [her] daughter for the first time” (p.36) and entrusting Fanny’s care to her French nursemaid, Marguerite, Wollstonecraft’s commentary on Gothenburg lingers on the “women of fortune [who] have nurses to suckle their children [though] the total want of chastity in the lower class of women frequently renders them very unfit for the trust” (p.23). Although Marguerite is neither a wet-nurse, nor unchaste, this allusion to one of the primary objections to the practice of wet-nursing in *The Rights of Woman* centers on “discharging the indispensable duty of a mother” (*The Rights of Woman*, p.173) on unfit, hired women and sending “babes... to nestle in a strange bosom, having never found a home in their mother’s” (p.182). This preoccupation with the reputability of maids reflects Wollstonecraft’s anxiety regarding her month-long separation from Fanny, who, in the interim, will have to be nurtured by a “strange bosom.” Itinerant since Fanny’s birth in the French city of Le Havre, Wollstonecraft connects strongly to the idea that home is not a physical location, but a feeling of contentment found in the bosoms of mothers and their children. Indeed, Wollstonecraft observes that Fanny and she are “at home” in nature during their first night in Sweden:

I contemplated all Nature at rest; the rocks, even grown darker in their appearance, looked as if they partook of the general repose, and reclined more heavily on their foundation, ‘What,’ I exclaimed, ‘is this active principle which keeps me still awake? Why fly my thoughts abroad, when everything around me appears at home?’ My child was sleeping with equal calmness—innocent and sweet as the closing flowers.

(*A Short Residence*, p.11)

German servant who drove very well. This was all the party; for not intending to make a long stay, I left my little girl behind me” (p.25).

Upbraiding herself for her restlessness while her daughter and nature are deep in slumber, Wollstonecraft inverts the concepts of being “at home” and “abroad.” Though Wollstonecraft, as an English woman, is technically “abroad” in Sweden, the ease she feels convinces her she is “at home”; still, she is prevented from settling down both physically and mentally, spurred on by her worries “abroad” in England, where Imlay (the cause of her distress and the reason why she is traveling) currently resides. Conversely, for Fanny there is no confusion over where she belongs. Lacking the experience of sorrow, which keeps her mother distrustful and vigilant even during peaceful moments, Fanny is “innocent” and able to find herself at home anywhere in nature as long as she is under Wollstonecraft’s watchful gaze.

Wollstonecraft tempers the pain of her separation from Fanny by transfiguring the embosomed landscape as a proxy for her maternal bosom.⁵⁸ Seeing nature as an extension of her motherly embrace, Wollstonecraft is able to carry Fanny with her on her journey. On the first evening following her departure, Wollstonecraft dreams of a reunion with her daughter, which Hurst indicates is also a “re-imagined union with the natural world”⁵⁹:

Light slumbers produced dreams, where Paradise was before me. My little cherub was again hiding her face in my bosom. I heard her sweet cooing beat on my heart from the

⁵⁸ Sara Mills theorizes that in *A Short Residence* landscape is a “relational zone where [...] relation[ships] to other humans are seen to be an integral part of [its] apprehension.” See “Written on the Landscape: Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*,” *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000): p.28.

⁵⁹ Hurst, “Maternal Sublime,” p.155.

cliffs, and saw her tiny footsteps on the sands. New-born hopes seemed, like the rainbow, to appear in the clouds of sorrow, faint, yet sufficient to amuse away despair.⁶⁰

(p.66)

Wollstonecraft's dream vision alludes to Christian mythology, re-envisioning a Paradise regained "without the sacrifice of woman or nature."⁶¹ In this version of Eden, Fanny is restored to a prelapsarian state of early infancy, "again hiding her face in [her mother's] bosom" to seek shelter and sustenance. Yet, Wollstonecraft avoids repeating Adam's infantilization and subordination of Eve by recognizing Fanny's growing independence and acknowledging that though she and her child "are the same flesh," they are "still separate" entities.⁶² Fanny's separateness from her mother's body is reflected by her departure from Wollstonecraft's bosom into the wider world, signified by her echoing coos along the cliffs and her retreating steps, which leave "tiny footsteps on the sand." Though Fanny disappears from her sight, Wollstonecraft continues to feel her daughter's presence, which is impressed upon the sands as well as her heart. The corporeal absence of Fanny signifies the transcendence of the mother-daughter relationship from a tactile bond established through breastfeeding to an abiding emotional attachment based upon sentiment. Likewise, in place of the newborn she once held,

⁶⁰ This dream mirrors Letter VI, within which she associates the "tremendous cliffs" with both her daughter's eyes and those of her namesake, Wollstonecraft's beloved friend, Fanny Blood ("The grave has closed over a dear friend, the friend of my youth [...] Fate has separated me from another, the fire of whose eyes, tempered by infantine tenderness, still warms my breast; even when gazing on these tremendous cliffs sublime emotions absorb my soul"). Here, Wollstonecraft also depicts herself literally and figurative sheltering her daughter in her bosom ("Her sweet blushes I may yet hide in my bosom, and she is still too young to ask why starts the tear so near akin to pleasure and pain"). See Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.39.

⁶¹ Hurst, "Maternal Sublime," p.156. Emphasis mine.

⁶² Ibid.

Wollstonecraft holds “newborn hopes” for her daughter’s future, which palliates past “sorrow” and despair” like a rainbow rising out of the storm.⁶³

Wollstonecraft’s dream vision serves in part as a response to her concern over Fanny’s sentimental education:

You know that as a female I am particularly attached to her—I feel more than a mother’s fondness and anxiety, when I reflect on the dependent and oppressed state of her sex. I dread lest she should be forced to sacrifice her heart to her principles, or principles to her heart. With trembling hand I shall cultivate sensibility, and cherish delicacy of sentiment, lest, whilst I lend fresh blushes to the rose, I sharpen the thorns that will wound the breast I would fain guard—I dread to unfold her mind, lest it should render her unfit for the world she is to inhabit—Hapless woman! what a fate is thine!”

(p.36)

Establishing that her attachment to her daughter is based in “a female solidarity that exceeds maternal, biological solicitude,” Wollstonecraft provides a wider scope for her dilemma by contextualizing it within the systematic oppression of women.⁶⁴ Wollstonecraft refers to her ongoing “conflict between principles and heart in the relationship with Imlay” as one of the manifestations of “women’s oppressed state,” but she neither “fail[s] to recognize [her] daughter’s separateness,” nor proleptically projects her fate onto her daughter’s future.⁶⁵ Rather,

⁶³ This metaphor also alludes to *Genesis*, referring to the rainbow that follows the apocalyptic Flood to signal the “covenant between [God] and the earth” (*King James Bible, Genesis 9:13*).

⁶⁴ Thomas H. Ford, “Mary Wollstonecraft and the Motherhood of Feminism,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 37.3&4 (Fall/Winter 2009): p.203

⁶⁵ Cf. Moskal, “The Picturesque and the Affectionate,” pp.270-1.

Wollstonecraft's experience leads her to openly criticize her impulse to "cultivate" Fanny and thereby participate in a discourse of sensibility that perpetuates the cycle of female victimization. Referring to her daughter as a rose, Wollstonecraft employs "the language of men" that she condemns in *The Rights of Woman* for "rob[bing] the whole sex of dignity [by] class[ing] the brown and fair with the smiling flowers that only adorn the land" (*Rights of Woman*, p.74). Though Wollstonecraft is aware that nurturing Fanny's sensibility will make her daughter appealing to the opposite sex and susceptible to heartache, she acknowledges that cultivating her daughter's mind will not spare her from being "wounded." Not only does "sharpen[ing] [Fanny's] thorns," carry the risk of rendering her "insufficiently feminine to find a place in society," as other scholars have argued, this intervention still ascribes to the idea that women are subject to predation by men, because the necessity of thorns only serves to underscore the vulnerability of the flower itself.⁶⁶ This is reinforced by Wollstonecraft's lament about woman's "hapless... fate," which initially implies that she is "the incidental victim of chance circumstances beyond her control."⁶⁷ Deborah Weiss contends, however, that Wollstonecraft adopts this "stock sentimental moment of maternal anguish" to scrutinize "the stultifying experience of female victimization caused by society's desire for women to be sexually passive and intellectually vacant."⁶⁸ Such social analysis emboldens Wollstonecraft to rework the

⁶⁶ Deborah Weiss, *Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization: Pain and Politics in Mary Wollstonecraft's Short Residence*, *Studies in Romanticism* 45.2 (Summer 2006): p.208.

⁶⁷ Weiss, "Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization," p.218.

⁶⁸ Weiss, "Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization," p.208.

sentimental narrative of female suffering “by chance” into one that provides women with the agency of “suffering through necessity.”⁶⁹

Drawing on this criticism, I propose that Wollstonecraft’s travel narrative becomes the method to educate Fanny about sensibility. Instead of guarding her daughter’s breast with thorns, Wollstonecraft “open[s] [her own] bosom to... nature” (*A Short Residence*, p.34) and by extension to the reader, literally rewriting personal turmoil, as expressed in her private correspondence with Imlay, into a literary triumph. Much like *The Rights of Woman* presents the education of children as an extension of the maternal duty of breastfeeding, *A Short Residence* sublimates the role of the maternal bosom from providing bodily nutriment to nourishing both “delicacy of sentiment” and intellect. Wollstonecraft’s dream vision represents this as a transition from mothering through nursing to relying upon Mother Nature, who is, as Wollstonecraft reminds us, “the nurse of sentiment, the true source of taste” (p.39).⁷⁰ Additionally, Wollstonecraft teaches by example with her own reflections inspired by nature, which evince the balance of tender emotion and discerning judgment that she wishes to instill in her daughter. Depicting herself as a self-professed “woman of observation” (p.11) and feeling, Wollstonecraft espouses a “renegotiated poetics of sensibility [that is] liminal, intermediate, and transitional, a poetics of evening or dawn... reason and passion... conscious volition and unconscious association, poetry and prose.”⁷¹ These interconnected meditations on nature and motherhood navigate the “passage through [the] night” that Hélène Cixous ascribes to the

⁶⁹ Weiss, “Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization,” p.218.

⁷⁰ See Moskal, “The Picturesque and the Affectionate,” pp.270-1.

⁷¹ Lawrence R. Kennard, “Reveries of Reality: Mary Wollstonecraft’s Poetics of Sensibility,” in *Writing Lives*, p.64.

distinctly feminine and embodied process of narrative writing, which likens the “production of the text” to that of breast milk “pass[ing] through the feminine body.”⁷² Wollstonecraft not only writes in “white and black, in ‘milk’ and ‘night,’” but also, offers her narrative—one that defies the social pressure for a woman to choose between her principles or her heart—as one of the greatest resources a mother’s body can produce.⁷³

III. Reimagining Maria

As a form of creative autobiography, *A Short Residence* provides insight into Wollstonecraft’s process of “constitut[ing] [her] subjectivity” as a woman, mother, and radical thinker.⁷⁴ What Wollstonecraft offers the reader is an “I” as capacious as the travel genre itself, at odds with the traditional, masculine “ideological underpinnings of identity,” which construct the illusion of a coherent and consistent self.⁷⁵ Janet Todd has shown that Wollstonecraft’s private correspondence “sought to dramatize feelings, tease out the meaning from sensations, enacting moods on paper rather than simply describing them... begin[ning] in one state and end[ing] in another.”⁷⁶ *A Short Residence* extends this dramatization further, portraying an

⁷² Hélène Cixous, *White Ink: Interviews on Sex, Text, and Politics*, ed. Susan Sellers (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2008), p.75.

⁷³ Cixous, *White Ink*, p.76.

⁷⁴ Eleanor Ty, “‘The History of My Own Heart’: Inscribing Self, Inscribing Desire in Wollstonecraft’s *Letters from Norway*,” in *Writing Lives*, p.74.

⁷⁵ Jacques Khalip, “A Disappearance in the World: Wollstonecraft and Melancholy Skepticism,” *Criticism* 47.1 (Winter 2005): p.87.

⁷⁶ Janet Todd, “Mary Wollstonecraft’s Letters,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.10.

extemporizing and revisionary selfhood that authors (and re-authors) itself to the moment. These opportunities for revision present themselves as an almost cyclical “reiteration of spectacular verbal pictures of a landscape” and what Nancy Yousef interprets as the “unmistakable voice of a bitterly disappointed lover, oscillating from remonstrance to self-pity and back again.”⁷⁷ While Yousef reads these melancholic meditations on abandoned love, which intrude upon Wollstonecraft’s reflections on nature, as a loss of agency, I assert that these thematic repetitions signal Wollstonecraft’s attempts to “[re]gain strength [of mind] by solitary musing” (*A Short Residence*, p.70). Inspired by nature’s resilience and regeneration, Wollstonecraft revisits her past in order to rewrite and reclaim her sentimental narrative.

Negotiating “between an ‘authentic history’ of herself in a particular temporal landscape and her hard-wrought identity as a ‘public self’ [and] respected if radical author,” Wollstonecraft employs a “rhetorical strategy of ‘witnessing’ with the story of her own life as to the persuasiveness of the ideology she wishes to advance.”⁷⁸ For example, Wollstonecraft offers “‘herself as proof’ of her political and feminist theories,” when she depicts herself as a sentimental heroine, who, rather than falling prey to continued victimization, “regulate[s] her sensibility and... restore[s] order to her mind” through journeying.⁷⁹ Justifying her passionate

⁷⁷ Nancy Yousef, “Wollstonecraft, Rousseau and the Revision of Romantic Subjectivity,” *Studies in Romanticism* 38 (Winter 1999): p.544.

⁷⁸ Chaney, “Rhetorical Strategies of ‘Tumultuous Emotions,’” p.295. Mary Heng makes a similar argument: “Wollstonecraft makes ideology personal [by] project[ing] her previously rejected philosophies about women’s rights onto an entire generation of European readers and their daughters” (“Tell Them No Lies,” p.378).

⁷⁹ Chaney, “Rhetorical Strategies of ‘Tumultuous Emotions,’” p.296. Beth Dolan Kautz, “Mary Wollstonecraft’s Salutary Picturesque: Curing Melancholia in the Landscape.” *European Romantic Review* 13.1 (2002): p.36.

nature with an allusion to *A Sentimental Journey*, she initially invites the comparison to her namesake, Maria, who, like Wollstonecraft, travels alone following heartbreak, but never regains her sanity:

You have sometimes wondered, my dear friend, at the extreme affection of my nature. But such is the temperature of my soul. It is not the vivacity of youth, the heyday of existence. For years have I endeavoured to calm an impetuous tide, labouring to make my feelings take an orderly course... My bosom still glows. Do not saucily ask, repeating Sterne's question, 'Maria, is it still so warm?' Sufficiently, O my God! Has it been chilled by sorrow and unkindness; still nature will prevail; and if I blush at recollecting past enjoyment, it is the rosy hue of pleasure heightened by modesty...

(*A Short Residence*, p.50)

Letter VIII refers to the scene when Sterne's protagonist, Yorick is reunited with Maria, a young woman who is driven mad when a corrupt clergyman forbids her marriage banns in *Tristram Shandy* (1761-65). Yorick, wracked with emotion upon hearing about Maria's lonesome trek across Italy without money or shoes, reaches for his tear-soaked handkerchief. Seeing that it is "steep'd too much already to be of use," Maria innocently offers to dry his handkerchief in her bosom, to which Yorick responds with the sentimental-sexual *double entendre*: "And is your heart still so warm, Maria?"⁸⁰ By commanding her male addressee "not [to] ask" Yorick's question, Wollstonecraft refuses to participate as the "quintessential sexual victim" for the "imagined [masculine] leer."⁸¹ Instead, Wollstonecraft aligns her addressee with Yorick to

⁸⁰ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, p.96. All further citations will be cited in the text by page number. See Bohls, "Wollstonecraft's Anti-Aesthetics, p.163.

⁸¹ Bohls, "Wollstonecraft's Anti-Aesthetics," pp.163-4.

rebuke all so-called “men of feeling” for perpetuating the victimization of sentimental heroines through their voyeuristic arousal at women’s injured sensibility.⁸² Unlike Sterne’s Maria who is silenced into a “wistful disorder” (Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, p.96) by Yorick’s desire, Wollstonecraft rebuffs the presumptions of her Yorick (i.e.-Imlay) and speaks for Maria, giving voice to the sexual passion that sentimental culture denies her.⁸³ By unapologetically laying claim to her own “extreme affection” and sensuality, Wollstonecraft corrects Yorick’s misreading of Maria’s bosom, attributing its warmth and glowing blush to “neither ignorance nor guilt, but rather a ‘rosy hue of pleasure’ to which woman is entitled.”⁸⁴

Wollstonecraft exposes the inner workings of her own bosom to counter the sentimental narrative’s fetishization of female anguish and to transform tales of helplessness into ones of heroism. The allusion to the “sorrow and unkindness” that has chilled Wollstonecraft’s bosom is not meant to move her Yorick to pity, but to demonstrate the resilience and strength of her impassioned heart, which is testament to the dictum, “nature will prevail.” Elaborating on these hardships in a letter to Imlay dated July 14, 1795, Wollstonecraft refers again to *A Sentimental Journey* while professing her anxieties about “leaving her [daughter] helpless” (Wollstonecraft, *Collected Letters*, p.312) upon her departure to Norway:

Poor lamb! It may run very well in a tale, that ‘God will temper the winds/ to the shorn lamb! But how can I expect that she will be shielded, when my naked bosom has had to

⁸² Weiss, “Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization,” p.210.

⁸³ Weiss, “Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization,” p.210.

⁸⁴ Bohls, “Wollstonecraft’s Anti-Aesthetics,” p.163.

brave continually the pitiless storm?”

(p.312-3)

In an earlier moment in the same chapter, Yorick asks Maria “how she had borne” her desolate trip from Rome, “across the Apennines... over all of Lombardy... and through the flinty roads of Savoy,” to which she replies with the proverb, “God tempers the wind... to the shorn lamb” (Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, p.96). Here, as in *A Short Residence*, Wollstonecraft’s figuratively bared bosom serves as a corrective to Maria’s tale, transforming her passive and pitiful suffering into an opportunity for an act of heroism and compassion. Based on her past experience of sorrow, Wollstonecraft finds Maria’s aphorism to be untrue, and furthermore, deeply problematic due to its reliance on divine providence to protect her against the cruel vicissitudes of life. Relying only on her own fortitude to weather what she depicts as a “continua[l] pitiless storm,” Wollstonecraft highlights that she, unlike Maria, neither has the luxury of pity, nor attempts to elicit it. Rather, Wollstonecraft’s distress stems from her sympathetic imagination, which visualizes the potential threat that wounded sensibility poses to her daughter.⁸⁵ Although Wollstonecraft, like the trees whose “roots [are] torn up by the storms [to] become a shelter for a young generation” (Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.88), is able to use her weatherworn breast to “shield” Fanny from the unkind world, she is aware that this embosomed refuge is only temporary. Consequently, Wollstonecraft’s travel narrative aims to

⁸⁵ “Sympathy, therefore, does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it. We sometimes feel for another, a passion of which he himself seems to be altogether incapable; because, when we put ourselves in his case, that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality” (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p.67-8).

educate Fanny to interrogate the language and purpose of sensibility by redefining the role of the sentimental heroine.

A Short Residence's rewriting of Sterne's Maria anticipates Wollstonecraft's treatment of the eponymous heroine in her final, unfinished novel, *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria* (1797). Wrongly imprisoned in a madhouse by her dissolute husband, and cut off from the "maternal protection of nature" as well as her four-month-old infant, who requires her "tenderest maternal office" (Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, p.253), Maria is initially presented as a victim of unfortunate circumstance.⁸⁶ Maria, however, regains her agency through the act of authoring her memoirs, transfiguring her "burning bosom," which "burst[s] with nutriment" (p.249), into a fount of knowledge at which her daughter may one day drink:

[Maria] resolved circumstantially to relate [her past life], with the sentiments that experience, and more matured reason, would naturally suggest. They might perhaps instruct her daughter, and shield her from misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid. This thought gave life to her diction, her soul *flowed* into it...

(p.255, emphasis mine)

Maria's narrative, like Wollstonecraft's travelogue, is not only an extension of her motherly duty to nourish and educate her child, but also participates in a wider feminist discourse. Serving a complementary purpose to *A Short Residence*, which "notes the present state of morals and manners" of Scandinavian women through the sympathetic lens of the traveling "hero of [the] tale" (*A Short Residence*, p.3), *Maria* "rather endeavour[s] to pourtray [sic] passions than manners," presenting the tale as the "history... of woman, than of an individual" (*Maria*, p.247).

⁸⁶ Moskal, "The Picturesque and the Affectionate," p.291.

Read alongside each other, these didactic tales politicize the act of storytelling by subverting the patriarchal narrative that keeps women systematically oppressed. Wollstonecraft's *Maria* critiques the masculine fantasy of heroines who "are to be born immaculate; and to act like goddesses of wisdom, just come forth highly finished Minervas from the head of Jove," in contrast to their male counterparts, who are "allowed to be mortal and to become wise and virtuous as well as happy, by a train of events and circumstances" (p.247). Accordingly, *Maria* follows the *bildungsroman* tradition, but with a vital alteration: Maria takes on the role of the Everywoman, with her "pilgrim's progress" taking part in a collective process that remains incomplete until her story is shared with and for the benefit of others, who are inspired, in turn, to divulge their own narratives. Though Maria is part of the upper-middle class, her autobiographical fiction operates as a frame for other tales of abuse and heartache told by women across *all* socioeconomic classes—many of whom, like the former slave, Jemima, are not at liberty to write their own accounts.⁸⁷

Similarly, *A Short Residence* writes to and for those unable to speak for themselves, like Fanny, who is "still too young to ask why starts the tear so near akin to pleasure and pain" (*A Short Residence*, p.39) and the Scandinavian women "bastilled by nature—shut out from all that opens the understanding, or enlarges the heart" (p.69). Despite Wollstonecraft's assertion in *The Rights of Woman* that all women are subject to "ignoble desire [that] like the servility in absolute monarchies, destroys all strength of character" (*The Rights of Woman*, p.56), her travel narrative calls attention to those who are especially vulnerable to this form of oppression. Wollstonecraft is aware that as a traveler she possesses physical, social, and economic mobility, which enables

⁸⁷ Anne K. Mellor, introduction to *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, in *Rights and Wrongs of Woman*, p.237.

her to “bury [herself] in the woods, but... emerge again, [so] that [she] may not lose Sight of the wisdom and virtue which exalts [her] nature” (*A Short Residence*, p.61). From this vantage point, Wollstonecraft is not only able to reconstitute her selfhood by “infusing new ways of thinking into her being” through this oscillation between the “wilderness [and] polished circles of the world” (p.61), she also evaluates nature as a “powerful social construction,” which can be revolutionized.⁸⁸

Wollstonecraft’s arboreal metaphor thus bridges nature with the economies of desire and commercial trade to critique these systems from both within and without.⁸⁹ By recounting her own susceptibility to the exploitive language of sentiment and love, Wollstonecraft illustrates how women are manipulated into becoming agents in their own commodification. Wollstonecraft anticipates the “devastating wrongs that women do to themselves [by] indulg[ing] in the wrong kind of sensibility” in *Maria*, when she paraphrases a scene depicting Maria being “lapt... in Elysium” by “Love, the grand enchanter” (*Maria*, p.273) to elucidate the warmth of her own passion: “Tokens of love which I have received have rapt me in Elysium—purifying the heart they enchanted” (*A Short Residence*, p.50).⁹⁰ Alluding to the enchanter Comus’ attempted seduction of a chaste lady lost in the forest in John Milton’s *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634), Wollstonecraft draws attention to the “decadent sexual economy” that assigns

⁸⁸ Bowerbank, “Bastille of Nature,” p.180.

⁸⁹ Weiss notes that “Despite its use of sentimental structures, *Short Residence* is as much about politics and economics as it is about suffering femininity” (“Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization,” p.202).

⁹⁰ Mellor, introduction, p.239.

market value to women's bodies.⁹¹ While Comus reminds the Lady that "Beauty is nature's coin," his libertine logic urging her to spend her currency ("be not coy, and be not cozen'd/ with the same vaunted named Virginitie... [it] must not be hoarded/ But must be current, and the good thereof") reinforces that contradictory and misogynistic ideology of chastity that diminishes the worth of female sexuality once a woman puts herself in circulation.⁹² Recasting "Love" in the role of Comus, Wollstonecraft implies that unlike the Lady, she falls for the enchantment and engages in unfair trade, exchanging in her priceless "coin" for mere trifles ("tokens of love"). Yet, Wollstonecraft's claim that these tokens have "rapt" and "purified" her heart suggests her refusal to be assessed according to the male-dictated economies of desire. Whereas the Lady's rejection of Comus' magical charms enables her to overpower him with the aid of nature ("this *pure* cause would kindle my *rapt* spirits... And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake/ Till all they magic structures reared so high,/Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head" [Milton, *Comus*, ll.792-3, 796-7, p.108, emphasis mine]), Wollstonecraft eschews her objectification all together, and instead, looks to embodied nature as a measure of her intrinsic value as a female. Therefore, Wollstonecraft suggests that virtue is *not* the only "means by which

⁹¹ "I have oft heard/ My mother *Circe* with Sirens three [...] Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul/ And lap it in *Elysium*" (Milton, *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle [Comus]*, ll. 253, 256-7, in *Complete Poems*, p.96). In particular, these lines refer to Comus' mother Circe, from whom he inherits his power. The female protagonist of *Comus* does not have a name, but rather, is only referred to as "The Lady." I am using Anna Neill terminology, though my argument reaches a conclusion that is contrary to hers. Cf. "Civilization and the Rights of Woman: Liberty and Captivity in the Work of Mary Wollstonecraft," *Women's Writing* 8.1 (2001): p.101.

⁹² Milton, *Comus*, ll. 737-41, p.107 (emphasis mine). All further citations will be cited in the text by line and page number.

a woman can reclaim her body from the... economy where it has been circulating,” but rather, she can advance the condition of society by subverting this system all together.⁹³

Wollstonecraft’s concluding diatribe against commerce in *A Short Residence* undermines the commercial purpose of her journey to Scandinavia as Imlay’s emissary. As Todd explains, Imlay was engaged in a trading scheme, which exploited the Scandinavia’s neutrality toward the new republic of France to profit off of British and Russian embargoes.⁹⁴ Purchasing a French cargo ship called *La Liberte*, which he renamed *Maria and Margaretha* and certified as Norwegian, Imlay had planned to exchange French silver in payment for Scandinavian grain to feed the new republic, but the ship and its silver went missing before it could arrive in Gothenberg.⁹⁵ Despite completing her commission to seek litigation on behalf of Imlay, Wollstonecraft’s travel narrative roundly rejects her literal and figurative reduction as a vessel for Imlay, who “trade[s] upon her fairness” (both in the aesthetic and judicious sense) as a representative of his cause and appropriates her name to re-christen the missing silver ship.⁹⁶ Thus, Wollstonecraft characterizes commerce as the wrongs of man to reassert her narrative identity and voice her “lou[d] demands [for] JUSTICE for one half of the human race” (*Rights of Woman*, p.19).

Wollstonecraft’s arboreal metaphor provides a tangible way of understanding the detrimental effects of masculine, commerce-driven social and ecological practices. Referring

⁹³ Cf. Neill, “Civilization and the Rights of Woman,” p.101.

⁹⁴ Todd, *Wollstonecraft*, pp.258-9.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Cynthia D. Richards, “Fair Trade: The Language of Love and Commerce in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters*,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 30 (2001): p.79.

explicitly to Imlay's failed trading scheme, Wollstonecraft condemns "commercial frauds practised during the present war [as] the root of all evil" (*A Short Residence*, p.106). Furthering this metaphor, Wollstonecraft associates speculators and their "mushroom fortunes" with a "species of fungus" that thrives upon the decay of society, exploiting the "distresses of many of the [French] emigrants" (p.125). As Wollstonecraft reveals in her admittedly "bitter [and] personal" direct address to Imlay, men of this "mould" soon begin to rot away themselves, "strangely altered" and obscured by the "vile dust" (p.126) of their decomposing minds, passions, and talents. Wollstonecraft's imperative to Imlay, "You will rouse yourself," attempts to reanimate the "aesthetic faculties necessary to ethical observation," which have been deadened by mercantile culture, but she, at last, relents that he has "go[ne] [too] fa[r] afield" to redeem (p.126).⁹⁷

Shifting her critique of commerce from the wrongs man does to others to the injustices he inflicts upon himself, Wollstonecraft focuses upon the merchant's body as a "charged site of meaning": "you will not meet with a man who has any calf to his leg; body and soul, muscles and heart, are equally shrivelled up by a thirst of gain" (p.127).⁹⁸ Here, Wollstonecraft aligns the bodies of businessmen with the mummified corpses of Danish royalty to suggest that their "thirst of gain" results in a living death:

A desire of preserving the body seems to have prevailed in most countries of the world, futile as it is to term it a preservation, when the noblest parts are immediately sacrificed

⁹⁷ Pollock, "Immasculation," p.206.

⁹⁸ John Whale, "Death in the Face of Nature: Self, Society, and Body in Wollstonecraft's *Letters*," in *Wollstonecraft's Journey to Scandinavia*, p.194.

merely to save the muscles, skin, and bone from rotteness... If this be not dissolution, it is something worse than natural decay—it is treason against humanity.⁹⁹

(p.48)

This comparison highlights that both the selfish preservation of the personal wealth and the unnatural preservation of the body are driven by selfish ideas of grandeur and immortality, which only result in psychic and physical monstrosity. Like the mummy, which mocks the human body by lacking its defining, “noblest parts,” the trader is a traitor to human race, bereft of his own humanity. Both these processes prioritize the individual at the expense of successive generations. Mummification impedes the process of death, decay and dematerialization, which, as Wollstonecraft’s description of the desiccated Norwegian “pine and fir woods” illustrates, is necessary for “getting free to expand in [another] element” (p.88), or ecologically speaking, preparing to germinate new life among the remains of the old. Similarly, commerce, particularly in Norway, leads to the “mindless... clear-cutting” of the forest, which deprives successive generations of the resources necessary for life¹⁰⁰:

The women and children were cutting off branches from the beech, birch, oak, &c, and leaving them to dry. This way of helping out their fodder injures the trees. But the winters are so long that the poor cannot afford to lay in a sufficient stock of hay. By such means they just keep life in the poor cows, for little *milk* can be expected when they are so miserably fed.

(p.94, emphasis mine)

⁹⁹ Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence*, p.48.

¹⁰⁰ Bowerbank, “Bastille of Nature,” p.179.

Wollstonecraft emphasizes that commercial industry engages in a double violation of the natural world, through the exploitation of the poor, who are robbed of their subsistence on timber and have no choice but to resort to the environmentally unsound practice of cutting branches to survive. Hence, the “thirst of gain” literally takes milk from the mouth of babes as well as depletes the “milk of human kindness.”¹⁰¹

In place of the sentimental narratives that preach virtue, vigilance, and victimhood to young ladies, Wollstonecraft concludes *A Short Residence* with a cautionary tale for the men of commerce that warns against their unnatural succession. Arriving in the Danish town of Altona, Wollstonecraft laments the intrusion of commerce upon the landscape:

The views of the Elbe in the vicinity of the town are pleasant, particularly as the prospects here afford so little variety. I attempted to descend, and walk close to the water’s edge; but there was no path; and the smell of glue, hanging to dry, an extensive manufactory of which is carried on close to the beach, I found extremely disagreeable. But to commerce everything must give way; profit and profit are the only speculations—“double—double, toil and trouble.” I have seldom entered a shady walk without being soon obliged to turn aside to make room for the rope-makers; and the only tree I have seen, that appeared to be planted by the hand of taste, is in the churchyard, to shade the tomb of the poet Klopstock’s wife.

(p.128)

¹⁰¹ See Act I, scene v, line 17 of William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *Riverside Shakespeare*, p.1364.

Industry appears to prevent Wollstonecraft's apprehension of nature at every turn—the air is polluted by the smell of glue, the sight of the river is blocked by a factory, and the forests and “shady walks” have been reduced to bark for rope-making. Quoting the three witches from *Macbeth* (“double—double, toil and trouble”), who prophesize the mercenary Macbeth's blood-soaked ascension to the throne and his equally grisly overthrow, Wollstonecraft portends a similar hubristic fall for the agents of commerce.¹⁰² As Robert Pogue Harrison has argued, Malcolm's army, which marches against Dunsinane Castle disguised the Great Birnam Wood, comes to “symbolize the forces of natural law mobilizing its justice against the moral wasteland of Macbeth's nature.”¹⁰³ Wollstonecraft, however, poses a benevolent alternative to this menacing and violent reassertion of the forest when she contemplates the solitary tree planted by the grave of Margaret Klopstock. The devoted first wife, biographer, and critic of the eighteenth-century German poet, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Margaret was widely recognized as the consummate helpmeet and described by William Hayley, a celebrated poet and patron to William Blake, as the “purest image of Conjugal affection [he] ever saw on paper.”¹⁰⁴ For Wollstonecraft, the relationship between Friedrich and Margaret Klopstock embodies the marital bond based on “true affection” and “rational fellowship” that she associates in *Rights of Woman* with creation of “better [world] citizens” (*Rights of Woman*, p.182). In this context, the sole tree in Altona stands watch over Margaret Klopstock's grave as reminder of woman's potential to restore “all the endearing charities of citizen, husband, father [and] brother” (*A Short Residence*, p.128) to man

¹⁰² See Act IV, scene i, line 10 of Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, p.1377.

¹⁰³ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.104.

¹⁰⁴ Mark Crosby and Robert N. Essick, “‘the fiends of Commerce’: Blake's Letter to William Hayley, 7 August 1804,” *Blake/ An Illustrated Quarterly* 71 (Fall 2010): p.271.

as well as balance to nature, even in society overrun by corruption. Indeed, Wollstonecraft champions a method of husbandry for Scandinavia that promotes the interconnectivity of humans with each other and the natural world. The “patient labour of men, who are only seeking for a subsistence,” is not only equated with the idyllic family unit, “equally content with their lot,” but also, the advancement of “agricultural knowledge” and “the cultivation of the arts and sciences that lift man so far above his first state” (p.85). In other words, *A Short Residence* counters the potentially destructive and exploitive, frenetic pace of capitalism with an ecological and ethical model that rightly distinguishes the proverbial forest from the trees.

Coda: Loco-descriptive Liminality

The letter that concludes *A Short Residence* concerns Wollstonecraft's encounter with the white cliffs of Dover—the iconic topography associated with southeastern shores of Great Britain (Albion). Unlike her prior depictions of the Scandinavian wilderness, Wollstonecraft refrains from describing and engaging with this quintessentially British landscape, commenting only on her disappointed expectations: “I have only to tell you, that, at the sight of Dover cliffs, I wondered how any body could term them grand; they appear so insignificant to me, after those I had seen in Sweden and Norway” (p.130). By describing the Dover cliffs as “insignificant to [her],” Wollstonecraft's complaint conveys both her status as a world-weary traveler, unimpressed by the comparatively parochial sights of her native land, and her inability to be stirred emotionally by the nationalistic rhetoric underpinning such ancient sites of British history. For Wollstonecraft, the scenery she surveys is as barren as the prospects that await her in London, rendering her journey not a return home, but rather, a return to the oppressive mindset and “thoughts [that she] would fain fly from” (p.131). Indeed, this final letter is the only one to which Wollstonecraft signs her name—“Mary”—which fixes her narrative identity to a specific personage and body, restricting the play of embodied fictions surrounding the pseudonym “Maria.”¹ Yet, Wollstonecraft significantly allows her “spirit of observation [to] fle[e]” (p.131) at the end of her account, suggesting that, as a traveling subject, she can never be reincorporated fully into the life and the “Mary” she left behind in England.

¹ Cf. Jacqueline Labbe, “A family romance: Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Godwin, and travel,” *Genre* 25.2/3 (Summer/Fall 1992): p.216.

Much like *A Short Residence*, Montagu and Boswell's respective travel narratives conclude with the refusal to occupy positions of fixed national and personal identities by creating literary afterlives for themselves as traveling subjects. Montagu's return to England as a figurative Tower of Babel enables her to reinvent herself as a linguistic hybrid, whose babblings reveal a mind changed irrevocably by a confluence of cultures. Similarly, Boswell reinforces his liminal identity as a post-Union Scot by reimagining his traveling companions through the lens of Scottish historical legends, drawing audacious comparisons between Paoli and Robert the Bruce, and Johnson and Bonnie Prince Charlie. In these travel narratives what Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* terms "*besoin de Voyager*" is dictated, not by the necessity of pursuing foreign "knowledge and improvements" or even "knowing [one]self" (Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, p.10), but by the need to expand the otherwise circumscribed borders of identity through the process of defamiliarizing the domestic.

These case studies anticipate the construction of Romantic subjectivity in the loco-descriptive poem, in which the traveling subject revisits a seemingly unaltered (and usually, domestic) landscape to meditate upon the passage of time and the changing self. Written only two years after Wollstonecraft's *A Short Residence*, Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798" depicts his return to an idealized, idyllic vista after "Five years have past."² In a similar fashion to the eighteenth-century creative autobiographical travel accounts that precede his poem, Wordsworth uses the topography of Wye Valley to mediate his narrative identity, but instead of

² Line 1 of William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798" in *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800*, eds. Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2008), p.142. All further citations will be cited in the text by line and page number.

aligning himself with a hybridic perspective that blurs the binary of the self and the other, Wordsworth bridges the distance between his present and past selves by projecting his perspective onto his sister, Dorothy.

Wordsworth begins by charting his evolving relationship with the physical landscape before him, supplanting the youthful “appetite” (l.80, p.145) governed by “the eye” (l.82, p.145) with an “I [that has] learned/ To look on nature” (ll.89-90, p.145) and “fe[el]... the joy/ Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply infused” (ll.94-7, p.145). Here, Wordsworth’s development as a traveling subject is reflected in this movement from the superficial sensation of sight to the depth of feeling evoked by apprehending the sublimity of nature. Although this initially seems analogous to Wollstonecraft’s subordination of the objectifying faculty of sight to subjective feeling, Wordsworth’s imaginative vision, which John Keats has called the “egotistical sublime,” dominates his narrative as well as that of his traveling companion.³ When Wordsworth turns to Dorothy, his egotistical “I” appropriates her viewpoint, enabling him to see his “former pleasures in the shooting lights/ Of [her] wild eyes” (ll.118-9, p.146) and “behold in [her] what [he] was once” (l.120, p.146). Dorothy is transformed concomitantly into a proxy for Wordsworth’s former self and an “other,” who embodies the native innocence and “wild[ness]” that Rousseau attributes to his conception of the “noble savage.”

Furthermore, nature itself is co-opted into Wordsworth’s totalizing solipsistic vision through the faculty of memory. Ending with a “prayer” (l.121, p.146) that his sister undergoes the same edifying process that has transformed his “wild ecstasies... into a Sober pleasure”

³ Jane Moore and John Strachan, *Key Concepts in Romantic Literature* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p.34.

(ll.138-9, p.146), Wordsworth emphasizes nature's role in crafting the "memory... as a dwelling-place/ For all sweet sounds and harmony" (ll.141-2, p.146). Wordsworth, however, inserts his poetic voice as one of these sweet sounds, urging Dorothy to "remember [him]/And [his] exhortations" (ll.145-6, p.146). Proleptically imagining a future where his sister returns to Tintern Abbey without him, Wordsworth's fixation on the longevity of his memory—encapsulated by the refrain, "wilt thou then forget" (ll.149, 155, p.146)—takes precedence over how Dorothy's mediates *her* transformative journey through the self-same "green pastoral landscape" (l.158, p.147). Within the context of the self-reflexive eighteenth-century travel narrative, Wordsworth's poem signals a shift from the colonizing "imperial eye" to the all encompassing egotistical "I." Rather than incorporating the subjectivity of perceived "others" into the construction of the author as a liminal subject, this model of loco-descriptive liminality subsumes and overrides all other constructions of subjectivity. Thus, it is through this minor shift in perspective, from constructing to *viewing* the world through the self-created fictions that "actually exist in the [author's] mind" (*Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, p.273), that the mythology of the modern cohesive self is born.

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