WRECKED: WOMEN'S BODIES AS IMPERIAL RUIN

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

WRECKED: WOMEN'S BODIES AS IMPERIAL RUIN

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This dissertation uses the lens of ruin and ruination to interrogate the workings of empire, broadly defined. Ruination, the ongoing creation of ruin, continues across historical time and exists in physical and remembered forms, as well as textually constructed memorials like novels and life writing. This dissertation argues women are ruin and detritus of empire while constituting imperialism as constructive actors. They both perpetuate empire and become the wreckage, reflecting imperialism back onto itself. This dissertation searches for and examines the moments where ruination is experienced or prevented, where regulatory standards regarding women's bodies are troubled, or where violence is imposed. Chapter One argues that sexual transgression in early eighteenth-century novels requires explicit association between women characters and the colonial economy. The second chapter moves from London and prose fiction to the southeastern coast of India and life writing, arguing that ruin and ruination in fact define imperialism in India in the mid-eighteenth century. The work of imperialism occurs in small, personal interactions, holding up its more visible edifices of occupation and exploitation. The third chapter places two different accounts of the Haitian Revolution next to one another,

juxtaposing narrative form, the causes of revolutions, and the effects. Chapter Three argues Black ecofeminism, the tying of liberation of bodies to liberation of nature, counters white imperialism. The epilogue looks forward to nineteenth-century iterations of the "ruined" woman, finding inescapable reminders of the violence of settler colonialism and violent reactions to disability. This dissertation extends and complicates historical arguments regarding the ruins of imperialism to argue people are also left with the debris of bodies—physical, narrative, metaphorical. Ruin and ruination can be and have been written on both actual and literary bodies.

INTRODUCTION

Ruins and ruin exist in multiple temporalities, moving across time and space in both noun and verb forms. The word *ruin* suggests a progressive verb, always-already committing ruination; an unavoidable noun, an object or material one cannot but encounter in its space; and an epistemological noun, a site of historical alteration and embedded historical knowledge. Ruin, in other words, does not stay put. We "cannot contemplate without horror" the ruins left in the wake of political action (Benjamin *Illuminations* 256). Ruin spreads its roots through space, props up historical knowledge of the victor,[1] imposes ongoing hardship in the internalized narratives of (in this case) imperial violence. *Wrecked: Women's Bodies as Imperial Ruin* follows ruin and ruination as it changes, confuses, remembers, memorializes, and moves. Ruination both creates trauma and serves as a reminder of the trauma, and in this sense, ruination is a political project. Ann Laura Stoler speaks of the "accumulation" of people, relationships, and material things, and "waste" as part of the political project of ruin (Stoler 11).[2] David Alff suggests that projects are usually composed of "a written plan for action and the possibility of action itself" (Alff 5). Combining Stoler's "political project" and Alff's eighteenth-century definition of "project," I suggest the act of ruination is an aggressive, visceral, and violent project of imperialism. Walter Benjamin argues that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism," even to its transmission (Benjamin *Illuminations* 256).

[1] Walter Benjamin describes an image of a procession of cultural treasures that "owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (Benjamin *Illuminations* 256).

[2] Ann Laura Stoler effectively traces a genealogy of post-colonial study of ruin from Benjamin through Achille Mbembe, Terry Eagleton, and Fredrick Cooper, among others, to suggest that "one task of a renewed colonial studies would be to sharpen our senses and sense of how to track the tangibilities of empire as effective histories of the present." We do not need to "settle scores of the past," but "focus a finer historical lens on distinctions between what is residual and tenacious, what is dominant but hard to see, and not least what is emergent in today's imperial formations and critically resurgent in responses to them" (Stoler 29).

I use the lens of ruin/ation to interrogate the ruin(s) that document barbarism, the inner workings of the British Empire: the novels, the letters, the petty arguments, the sense of determination, the small moments shared across time and space within the context of the amorphous and overwhelming imperial political project. The ruin committed by the conceptual empire is planned and expected as a part of its political project. It is unavoidable as part of the imperial project in its construction and formulation: buildings crumble, letters document, novels remember, people fade.

Empire contains the possibility of ruin and a plan to do so, as well as its resulting detritus and debris. Ruination, the ongoing creation of ruin, continues across historical time and exists in physical and remembered forms, as well as textually constructed memorials like novels and life writing. To illustrate my argument, I move across time and space, through fiction and nonfiction, around and with the bodies of empire that constitute both power and resistance. In examining bodies, I analyze their ruin and ruination, their constant ruination and consistent ruin. I step through the long eighteenth century, stopping to examine the bodily ruins left in the wake of British imperialism. The ruinous project of empire is not only memorialized in the accumulations of people and their things but in bodies, whether physical or narrative. **In this dissertation, I argue women are ruin and detritus of empire while constituting imperialism as constructive actors. They both perpetuate empire and become the wreckage, reflecting imperialism back onto itself. Said another way, women, as subjects of and subject to empire, both ruin and become ruin.**

In examining wreckage and ruin, I do not mean to focus only on the physical objects or landmarks left behind by colonizers. Stoler suggests we examine "what people are *left with*," or "what remains blocking livelihoods and health…the aftershocks of imperial assault…the social

afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things" (Stoler 9). While this is, of course, meaningful and important work, I extend and complicate Stoler's notion of "what people are left with" by arguing people are also left with the debris of bodies – physical, narrative, metaphorical. Ruin and ruination can be and have been written on both actual and literary bodies. Bodies are injured, damaged, wrecked,[3] sexualized, taken advantage of, assaulted, sent away, and sometimes killed. These bodies, holding the possibility of ruin/ation, are my focus here, while holding the myriad contexts and associated physical ruins in tension. Ruins, overlapping with Stoler's definition, include, I argue, human bodies. Bodies do not exist forever; they are not overgrown railway tracks or wood eaten by termites. Bodies are preserved through text, stories, histories, headstones, the memory of the space.

When we think of "ruined" women, we often equate the term with sexual impurity and the nineteenth-century idea of the "fallen" woman. To suggest a woman has "fallen" is to suggest she has tripped, slipped, or somehow mistakenly found herself in a sexualized situation. The mistake is mysteriously hers: she has allowed her body to be used in a sexualized manner. To become a ruin or wreckage, however, implies there is a possibility the fault is not the woman's. Ruination is not a single-handed venture; she perhaps was "ruined" by another. Perhaps she was the victim of ruination. When a ship wrecks, for example, the fault lies with the weather, with coincidental circumstances. The fault does not lie with the passengers and likely not with a captain and crew fighting against weather and losing. In the same way, becoming a ruin or wreckage leaves space for a woman to be more than the sole agent of her downfall on her way to ruination. She may not have steered the metaphorical boat, and yet she has been wrecked. She may not have sought ruination and she may have fought against the weather, but she is a ruin.

[3] Pun intended.

Instead of using the language of a "fall," I use the language of wreckage and ruin to separate the idea of transgressive behavior from its attendant social shame. Sexualized bodies are not at fault in the language of wreckage. Or, at least, the possibility exists of pointing the finger of blame elsewhere.

The terms "ruin" and "ruination" are frequently investigated in postcolonial scholarship regarding physical ruins; the term implies broader social and circumstantial participation worth investigation. Critics and those personally invested in the legacies and experiences of ruin often struggle with the conceptual specter of ruin and its amorphous, non-linear, unexpected form. To revision this issue, Gaston Gordillo uses "rubble as a conceptual figure" to "understand the ruptured multiplicity that is constitutive of all geographies as they are produced, destroyed, and remade" (Gordillo 2). While Ann Laura Stoler traces the genealogy of ruin through historical scholarship and post-colonial work, Gordillo suggests we can push Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin further "to critically interrogate the very concept of the ruin and turn it to rubble" to avoid the "fetish" of "elite common sense" to treat a ruin as a "unified object" (Gordillo 6). I suggest we do not necessarily require the move to rubble to examine our conceptual notions of ruin. Though Gordillo's reframing is useful, I propose to move in another direction, considering ruin specifically in its function as a specter, a reflection, a reminder of what Benjamin calls the "barbarism" of political projects. Ruin is, in the vocabulary of Gilles Deleuze, the present fact of ongoing ruination, especially within archival texts, fictionalized accounts of historical events, narrative hypothesizing outcomes and reactions.[4] Ruin, too, is a verb in process, as well as a

[4] Gordillo uses Deleuze's *Difference & Repetition* to discuss rubble in relation to Deleuze's concept of a present wound evident in a scar. Before disintegrating ruin into rubble, I argue we can apply this idea of scarring and time to ruin/ation.

noun. My use of "ruin/ation" broadens the meanings to cover the always-already process of both ruin and ruination, implying myriad, layered definitions and experiences.

The ruinous work of empire is not centralized, moving outward from its center or state governance structure; ruins become and remain sites of negotiation of identity. Caroline Elkins reminds us that "the history of Britain's empire is not just about the decision making in London," but rather "colonial subjects and their resistance shaped power just as much as British power shaped their resistance" (Elkins 356). In formulating and codifying what became the British Empire, ruins and ruination are an integral conclusion and consequence of Empire's plans and possibilities; resistance to imperial power negotiates the codification of imperial boundaries and its conceptual hold over future scholarship. In *Out of Place: Englishness Empire, and the Locations of Identity*, Ian Baucom argues "Englishness has consistently defined [itself] through appeals to the identity-endowing properties of place" (Baucom *Out of Place* 4). I suggest ruins, as nouns, facilitate identity formation with respect to their cultural import and consequences. Ruin, as a verb, points to the precarity of meaning inherent in such work as identity construction while connoting the violence required to create a ruin.

One example of ruination, and one scholars often envisage when speaking of women and ruin, is sexual impurity, as I mentioned above. We associate the idea of a ruined woman with one who has broken her hymen or had it broken for her against her will. But to envisage another woman, the woman ruined by imperialism and committing the ruin of imperialism, imagines a different kind of precarity. It is a delicate balance a woman plays in the creation and maintenance of imperial society. A woman "ruined" by society often remains as a sort of monument to that ruin. She exists, whether physically or textually, reminding people, readers, and characters of the potentialities for women. They could be sent to geographically distant colonies, as Lady Mellasin

is in Eliza Haywood's *The History of Betsy Thoughtless*, but their transgression leaves reminders. Lady Mellasin's second husband, for example, cannot handle the strain of her financial infidelities and dies before his divorce is finalized. Bertha Mason Rochester, of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, too, is ruined not by her sexual proclivities but by the imperial work of delineating exactly which people are included in the boundaries of subjectivity. The coquette, the "ruined" woman, the financially lucrative woman, the flirt, all point toward possibilities for women both in their narratives and in history. Will she be set up as a positive memorial of reformation or decried as a sort of horrific reminder one passes quickly when spotted in public?

My dissertation uses the frame of imperial ruin to make connections between works not collected together or visited often. The connections between the texts I have chosen to examine in my dissertation are sometimes more established in literary scholarship, as in Chapter One, where I treat Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, and Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Various combinations of these texts have been treated by scholars such as Paula Backscheider, Kathleen Lubey, and Kristina Straub, among others. Other texts I utilize are somewhat unknown, as are the letters of Eliza Fowke that I examine in Chapter Two. Fowke was part of an important family structure in the Madras (now Chennai) region of India, but her letters remain seldom discussed. Some connections previously more tenuous or contradictory, I bring together anew to make my arguments, as in Chapter Three, where I discuss Sansay's *Secret History* and a short story entitled "Theresa: A Haytien Tale." The two narratives within the historical context of the Haitian Revolution are written twenty-six years apart and in two different geographical regions (newly American Philadelphia and antebellum Wisconsin). My attempt here is to connect two disciplines, literature and history,

through my use of various modes of writing and recording. I have used novels, personal life writing, epistolary narratives, and a serialized short story. I necessarily lean toward a mode of literary criticism, as this is my primary area of training. But what is a story without its human connections? Its historical contexts? Its meaning being made and remade? To that end, I have incorporated a significant amount of historical research and context, making this dissertation interdisciplinary.

As I consider historical context and authorial impacts on bodies, it is necessarily important to understand my own positionality as scholar and writer. I am a white woman with a family history of settler colonialism, though likely inflicting more violence on people indigenous to Texas and their resources than within a Southern plantation structure. My family is Western European in origin, as far as we have traced, and migrated to Texas in the nineteenth century. Tarrant County, wherein I wrote much of this dissertation, was founded in 1849 after Edward Tarrant and a band of about seventy men decimated and razed at least three villages of indigenous people (Frazier). Their policy of burning and razing villages inflicted such complete violence that there is no definitive record of the people living here; the Texas State Historical Association suggests Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita people groups populated the area of Tarrant County and White Settlement (Hightower). In September 1843, Native peoples were removed to a reservation (Frazier). Texas Christian University acknowledges the history of the land, and "especially acknowledges and pays respect to the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes" (Native American Land Acknowledgement). My aim in writing this dissertation is to avoid the elision and erasure often practiced by white scholars, even as I bring to light the ruin/ation wrought by empire. My own historical context influences how I approach texts and study them, but I hope it serves as a beginning point, rather than an ending limit.

Women and Empire

Britain's deployment of empire depended quite significantly upon women, both colonized and colonizer, and their regulation. In her book, *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock argues that "the bounds of empire could be secured and upheld only by proper domestic discipline and decorum, sexual probity and moral sanitation," at least for policymakers and administrators (McClintock 47). Imposing imperialism and settler colonialism on another geographical and national space, then, requires women. And it requires women to enforce rules and boundaries on their domestic spaces, wherever they may be, to set sexual limits to be upheld by their respective communities, and to negotiate a standard of moral behavior to act as the community conscience. Recasting a view of women that begins with the lens of ruin/ation sees ruin as a failing of these boundaries and regulations. A woman might become a ruin if she cannot maintain a domestic space free of any questionable ideas that do not meet the strictures of her colonial community. Or she might experience ruination because of her community, specifically the men in her community, not upholding her sexual purity to a required standard.

In this dissertation, I search for and examine these moments where ruination is experienced or prevented, where standards slip, or violence is imposed. Chapter One envisions these standards as they are narratively applied to young women on the marriage market in the early- to mid-eighteenth century. Though imperial trouble most often characterizes peripheral imperial spaces like colonies, women in the metropole experience the effects, too. Chapter Two examines the minutiae of regulatory standards for British women on the southeastern coast of India within the context of the uncodified rule of the British East India Company. Chapter Three follows the consequences of settler colonial ideals and community guidelines as they are applied to fictional representations of possible and probably non-fictional women. Centering ruin/ation, then, brings women and their small, essential work of imperialism into focus. Women's bodies

and their attendant sexuality "were widely perceived as the paramount means for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body politic, so that, by the turn of the century, sexual purity emerged as a controlling metaphor for racial, economic and political power" (McClintock 47). To regulate and control women's bodies, therefore, was the everyday work of the imperial project. In *At Home with Empire*, Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose ask, "how empire was lived across everyday practices" (Hall & Rose 3). These "everyday practices," as lived experiences and propagations of empire, are expressions and adaptations of controls on women's bodies. To regulate an empire is to regulate women's bodies.

Regulation of women's bodies takes place physically, by controlling access to space and information or instituting visitation rules for example, narratively, by telling stories exploring the consequences of any number of decisions; or historically, in telling the story of a past woman and reflecting on her actions and their outcomes. These types of regulations are excavated and analyzed in my dissertation. My first chapter discusses ways authors, particularly women writers like Eliza Haywood in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, used their ideological and moral beliefs in their writing to hypothesize the way such beliefs might lead a woman character to a better life, or perhaps sometimes see the dire consequences of her actions (Bannet 10). A fictional woman could experience many consequences that would be anathema to a woman reader trying to make her way in the world. A living woman's body might also be manipulated and controlled as an exertion of imperial authority. Chapter Two begins with a young woman arguing with her guardian aunts and seizing the only other viable option for herself: travelling with her brother to India as he begins his service in the East India Company. Two historical tales of the Haitian Revolution are the focus of Chapter Three; both historical narratives rely on real events. However, one tells the story of white women's bodies being regulated and controlled in

the colonial society to the point of violent chafing against institutional structure, while the other creates a fictional heroine of fairy-tale quality that works in harmony with the land to bring liberation to future Haitians.

Women's bodies of all sorts become ruin and detritus under imperialism. Physical and textually constructed women are misplaced and displaced as they encounter regulations imposed by institutions of society. A study of Isabel Hofmeyr's *hydrocolonialism*, "a commitment to understanding a world indelibly shaped by imperial uses of water," suggests an "accelerated processes of waste making… where certain people were rendered as waste, whether through the slave trade, indenture, or penal transportation" (Hofmeyr 13). Thinking of physical waste, Sophie Gee writes that waste "consists of leftovers that contain the memory or echo of the matter they used to be. Waste, even if it does not putrefy, is abject because it is characterized by misplaced, animating excess, inflecting it with the physiological reminiscence of decay" (Gee 8). Women are often "misplaced" through their relationship with settler colonialism, hydrocolonial spaces, or locations with deep ties to hydrocolonialism—the primary conduit of Empire. We become "excess" in some places, unneeded in public settings of commerce or courtrooms. Women experience ruination and become ruin as they move through systems of imperialism and its troubling forces. As women become a sort of waste in all their narrative and physical forms, "they are reminiscent of life and death at the same time" (Gee 8), holding ruin/ation within their form and construction.

If the British Empire is constituted by systemic regulations on women's bodies and its extant ruin/ation, then this definition must apply to other conceptualizations of the Empire. Broadly speaking, the ideology of the eighteenth-century empire inhabited by the women I examine here is, as historian David Armitage notes, "Protestant, commercial, maritime and free"

(Armitage 8). At least, that was how the empire imagined itself. Exactly who experienced which freedoms is always under investigation and "an intractable dilemma" between "the competing demands of two overwhelmingly desirable but ultimately irreconcilable goals, liberty and empire" (Armitage 125). Though the idea of parliamentary government dates to at least the Middle Ages, Britain considered their own parliament the "mother of parliaments," an ideal in direct contrast to imperial activity that granted no voice to colonized peoples.[5] Women are the creators and doers of empire even while decaying as excess and ruin, reminding observers of the realities of life and death and the consequences of choices. With my earlier suggestion of empire being regulations on women's bodies, then, the areas of trouble become the place where regulations are the most expected, enforced, and constituted. Keeping women enclosed requires an imperial fence.

The formation of an empire, as well as its ideological footing, lies not in parliaments and sweeping schemes, not in its decrees but in its construction of the metaphorical fencing. Alison Games imagines the seventeenth-century origins of the Second British Empire as a web of commercial networks that slowly wove together before codification of state-sanctioned authority (Games). Ian Baucom traces letters and commissioners' records in the eighteenth century, finding, as I do, that the more impactful work of imperialism is in the "minutiae of imperial management, the trivial daily business of global rule, the submemorable chatter of sovereignty by committee" (Baucom *Specters* 5). Antoinette Burton acknowledges we "must account for the ordinary actors, everyday practices, and low-level movements that made uncertainty the standard experience, rather than the exception that made the rule" (Burton 5). Burton carries her investigation into the small workings of imperialism to argue that empire, both as a conceptual

[5] The phrase "mother of parliaments" was coined by John Bright in a speech given in Birmingham in 1865 to his constituents (Bright).

mode and in chaotic personal condition, is constituted by "the very trouble its efforts and practices provoked" (Burton 11). The efforts of individuals to perpetuate imperialism, then, constituted empire itself. The empire is what its subjects imagine they could do. The margins, blurry networks, and areas of conflict, within the context of the mythical power of British Parliament and the harsh reality of imperial expansion through interpersonal interactions, become both the soft boundaries of the empire and the location of constitutive imperial and settler colonial work.

Part of the work of this dissertation is to turn this imperial context gradually with each chapter, laying before myself new contexts, connections, lenses; the constitutions of ruin/ation and their contexts are the way I connect the texts I have chosen in my dissertation. I see a temporally and geographically long connection between Lady Mellasin's journey to Jamaica as a place of financial recklessness and France's similar, condemning view of St. Domingue. While Lady Mellasin of Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless* travelled to the "wild" Caribbean, Clara and Mary of Leonora Sansay's *Secret History* escape with their whiteness intact. As Eliza Fowke and her letters are somewhat lost to a family folio in the British Library, Sansay is later lost in the throng of Early America as she disappears to new cities under different names. The anonymous author of "Theresa: A Haytien Tale" writes of Black ecofeminism and revolutionary action, while Eliza Fowke imposes a British, Christian cultural imagination of sacred Hindu sites she visits. All the texts included in my dissertation "are positively re-ordering [their] environment, making it conform to an idea" of what it means to participate and be bound by the influence and measure of the British Empire (Douglas 3). Rather than participate in the scandal of "the erasure of empire from the history of Europe," I aim to use ruin/ation as a lens to find connections and perspectives I would not have seen otherwise (Dirks 29).

I begin in London, where the coquettes and ambitious men vie for advantageous marriages and financial security in the metaphorical center of the British Empire. In the mid-eighteenth century, companionate marriage is gaining in popularity but hardly the norm amongst the upper classes. Part of the value of a wife lay not in her physical chemistry with her future husband but in her sexual limitations and the negotiated limits on her actions within the ever-changing structure of imperialism. More succinctly, her hymenal purity as a function of Britishness. However, in narrative accounts of the period, I argue in chapter one that the idea of sexual transgression requires explicit association between women characters and the colonial economy. Their fictional bodies did not need to be associated with the imperial economy; once sexually transgressive, however, women were a financial risk and went the way of many financial risks: to the colonial economy where risk was an accepted part of the financial system.

Chapter One demonstrates this phenomenon using two texts written by men, *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe and *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* by John Cleland, and one text by a woman author, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* by Eliza Haywood. All three main characters of these novels are women, and all have an ongoing relationship with the always-already process of ruination. *Moll Flanders* is a thief and sexually transgressive woman, amongst all her exploits. Fanny Hill of Cleland's *Memoirs* is a sex worker who manages to attain some sort of moral purity even while selling and giving away her intimacy and intercourse. Moll Flanders travels between England and the American colonies, capitalizing on her body and skills; Fanny Hill never leaves England, associating herself with domestic sanctity, though her eventual husband does depart to and return from India. Moll and Fanny are sexually "impure," they retrieve themselves from the brink of ruin/ation. They are not detritus and wreckage. Betsy Thoughtless comes in close contact with sexual and financial transgression and manages to

escape relatively unscathed. Her guardian's wife, Lady Mellasin, however, made a financially ridiculous agreement with her former lover before wedding her now husband. When the former lover calls in the debt, Lady Mellasin is revealed as unfaithful, especially financially. She is sent to Jamaica where other financially questionable people might exist apart from London. Moll Flanders and Fanny Hill are ruined sexually, but flourish morally, financially, and matrimonially. Betsy Thoughtless maintains her position within imperial ideas of purity, but only just. Lady Mellasin and her daughter, in stark contrast, become cast-off detritus of the family, left to float away to Jamaica where they might live without being regularly noticed.

The second chapter moves from London to the southeastern coast of India to argue that ruin and ruination in fact define imperialism in India in the mid-eighteenth century. As a secondary part of my argument, white women are both perpetuating ruin and becoming detritus in their everyday operations, such as writing letters, visiting sacred sites, and establishing social practices. I base Chapter Two primarily on the letters of Eliza Fowke. Born Elizabeth Walsh, she began life in Madras (now Chennai), moved to London, attended school in Liverpool, and moved back to Madras with her brother as a teenager. There, she married Joseph Fowke, an officer in the East India Company, and participated in local society and politics. Some of her letters have been preserved in family folios in the India Archives of the British Library. These letters contain descriptions of daily activities, notes about popular governors, information about goods and purchases, and good gossip. On a smaller scale, Madras (Chennai) and its surrounding villages and forts mirrored English hierarchies and social constructions and established ruination as a dual process. White, British women created ruin and refuse in their wake along the Coromandel Coast while colonizing the area and became a sort of ruin and refuse themselves. Eliza Fowke was part of this micro-political culture and as a white, colonial, British woman, she becomes a

synecdoche of the formation of imperialist societies, constituted by the process of ruination and the ensuing wreckage left in their wake.

I argue Eliza Fowke practices and experiences the double-work of imperialism: erasing and being erased in the personal interactions that constitute the nascent imperial work of Britain in India. Eliza becomes a ruin of imperialism as she comes back to England, is no longer involved in the day-to-day work of imperialism, is in some sense cast off by her former society and experiences a chronic illness severe enough for her to die at age 29. In her letters, too, Eliza elides and erases people on the brunt end of settler colonialism, purposely reimagining sacred spaces, leaving out names and connections of important people around her, and propagating British gossip, especially surrounding the governorship of Madras. Felicity Nussbaum has noted in *Torrid Zones* that "western women of a certain status were both implicated in empire and victimized by" the expansion of imperialism and colonialism (Nussbaum 3). Unlike Nussbaum, though, I am not concerned with detailing the violence of patriarchy in imperial contact zones. I focus on the blurry ways women's bodies experienced empire and reflected its violence back to itself. All these small interactions, practically forgotten letters, and missives about fabrics and spoons create the troubling, muddy field of empire.

The work of imperialism occurs in small, personal interactions, holding up its more visible edifices of occupation and exploitation, and nowhere is that more visible than in the bodies of women of color and the weaponization of white femininity. The third chapter places two different accounts of the Haitian Revolution next to one another, juxtaposing narrative form, the causes of revolutions, and the effects. I argue Black ecofeminism, the tying of liberation of bodies to liberation of nature, counters white imperialism. White women extricate themselves from the violence of imperialism to maintain their pristine whiteness. Black women,

contrastingly, find revolutionary power through connection with surrounding nature. Haiti's slave rebellion revisions the Caribbean without the bloodshed of colonizers, which forces whiteness out.

The two texts I use are Leonora Sansay's *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingue* and "Theresa: a Haytien Tale," written by an author signing themself as "S." Both texts tell the story of the Haitian Revolution. Sansay writes of the effects of revolution through the story of two sisters, Clara and Mary. The sisters' story is thought to be a bifurcated version of Sansay's own experience in now-Haiti in 1801 and the epistolary novel is addressed to Aaron Burr. Clara, the main subject of her sister Mary's letters, engages in expected behaviors of a colonial officer's wife, going to parties and describing intricacies of social interactions to her sister. Clara's marriage is abusive, and as the three of them (Mary, Clara, Clara's husband) escape revolutionary violence, Clara takes the opportunity to leave her violent husband and travel through the mountainous countryside of Cuba. Clara's escape from her husband and eventual reunification with her sister include a strategic distancing of herself from the colonial land. All five senses are engaged, surprised, disgusted, and otherwise disconnected from colonial violence as a form of dissociating denial of white involvement. Clara and Mary leave for Philadelphia after Clara has disconnected her relationship with the Caribbean and pulled upon herself the mantle of whiteness once more.

The other text is "Theresa: a Haytien Tale," which describes a small part of the revolution through the experience of a family of three Black women: a mother and two daughters. The French are upon their small town and a family member has died in the action. Madame Paulina and her two daughters, Theresa and Amanda, run away toward a cabin Madame Paulina remembers. On the way, they stop in a grove of pimento trees. The three women happen upon

some French soldiers, pass military intelligence to Toussaint Louverture, nearly lose one another, and survive a skirmish. Originally published in four installments in *Freedom's Journal* in 1827, "Theresa" is a story of heroism and courage, of determination and cleverness. The military intelligence gathered by all three women and taken to Toussaint by Theresa changes the tide of the revolution. Its publication in antebellum United States adds yet another layer. In the story, African diasporic and Black American readers can find possibilities for rebellion and revolution in the story of three powerful and creative women. The women are the catalyst for action, a beautiful demonstration of rest and care, and a picture of African diasporic revolutionary possibility.

The conclusion looks ahead another few years to Bertha Mason, her story told within Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, published in 1847. Bertha is characterized as drunken, "mad," and potentially unfaithful to her husband, Mr. Rochester. She is kept on the third floor in the servants' wing, though she is the lady of the house. Bertha is a white, Creole, Jamaican, who has been brought to England to be shut up in the top story of a grand manor. She is allowed no household management duties, no parties or outings, only one servant for company and one small suite of rooms. Through her madness and her husband's limitations to her subjectivity, Bertha Mason is disabled, and her disability is her ruin/ation. I use scholarship regarding Bertha's "madness" to conduct a short interrogation of the continuation of the ruin/ation of imperialism into the nineteenth century. Bertha is from a British imperial geography and brought to England where she fails to thrive, and her husband enacts violence based on her disability. Mr. Rochester creates ruin and Jane continues the moral work of imperialism by casting Bertha as unnaturally "purple" and violent. Bertha Mason is a ruin of the British Empire that has returned to England to reflect sordid pasts back onto their perpetrators.

Together, these chapters excavate and interrogate the process of ruin/ation of the British Empire. While ruin/ation is large in scale and wide in its wake, smaller moments and minute points of contact characterize the negotiations of imperial trouble. The women that feature in *Wrecked* are sent away, killed, or rewarded according to the regulations imposed on them by the troubling work of imperialism. The lens of ruin/ation may be useful for further discussions of imperial work and its consequences in the long eighteenth century as we continue to investigate historical contexts and their literary formations.

CHAPTER ONE: SEXUAL AND ECONOMIC RUINATION AND THE SPACES OF EMPIRE

In 1742, a mysterious younger brother of an unknown socialite published a list of young women with large fortunes. The list included the rumored amount of their fortunes, the status of their parental protection (some were illegitimate daughters), and their street addresses. Ostensibly, this list could be used by an enterprising young gentleman to find a young woman whom he could marry for her money. Widowers and young bachelors alike are instructed to engage on this "fair Field of Action" that contains "a fine Choice; and a fine Collection of Ladies" with whom to "Open the Campaign" (M------n 4). The militaristic language suggests marriage and courtship are at once a battle, potentially fatal in their engagements, fought on multiple fronts, and based in commerce. The two largest categories of "Widows" and "Spinsters" are saved for the end, and the entire document reads like a banking account book. Men may "Open the Campaign" upon the women, using the financial records someone took the time and trouble to publish by subscription. The document suggests men may go into battle about or with a woman, choose their prize, purchase their woman, and the whole transaction will be entered into the books in the next edition.[6] This text encapsulates the British social attitudes surrounding love and marriage, telling readers marriage is commercial and militaristic, based on tactical moves and monetary inducements. The uneasy juxtaposition of commercial and militaristic endeavors, in this text related to marriage, reflected the attitudes pervasive in the relationship between colonial commerce and domestic economy.

In the same period, the early- to mid-eighteenth century, an era of entrepreneurship, given early capitalism's foundations on the backs of the enslaved and marginalized, prose fiction posited women who could possibly "fall" through class ranks, in social status, and in public

[6] Though the opening hints at subsequent editions, I have not found any.

position. Though often characterized using sexual transgression, the precarity of women's societal position was couched within this same hierarchy of new commerce and economic power. When we think of the term "fallen woman," we envision a woman who has been sexually wronged or abandoned, usually experiencing poverty or violence as a result. The term "fallen" suggests an action – a trip or a mistake, perhaps – on the part of the woman; somehow, it is mysteriously her fault she experiences sex or a tainted reputation. To be sexualized within novels, women's bodies did not need to be associated with the proto-capitalism or British imperial colonization in making their sexual choices or suffering the choices of men on their bodies. Beyond being sexualized in prose fiction, though, **I argue that sexual transgression requires explicit association between women characters and the colonial economy**. To address transgressive sexuality in women, I propose, as I argue in my introduction, to use the language of ruin and wreckage, instead of the vocabulary of the nineteenth century (i.e., the "fallen woman.") Ruin is always-already committing ruination, given the progressive and ongoing nature of the action of ruin. Fiction names the moments of ruination for us, showing the constancy of ruin and the violence of ruination.

British women of the eighteenth century oscillated between commodity and consumer. The rise of companionate marriage was not strong enough to end the commodification of women's bodies, not as sex workers nor "chaste" upper classes. Miles Ogborn writes of pleasure gardens like Vauxhall as "key sites" for questioning new experiences available in the eighteenth century "brought about by consuming pleasures within the novel circuits of commodities" (Ogborn qtd. in Finn 26). Pleasure, material goods, especially novel colonial goods, and women's bodies were consumed, even as women purchased and experienced commodities as consumers. Being part of the British imperial economy as a woman meant consuming and being

consumed, using and being used, wrecking and being wrecked. Antoinette Burton writes that these sites of trouble are not the exception to the rule (Burton 11). This troubling oscillation in fact constitutes the British empire. The trouble with regulating women's bodies, as I argued in the introduction, forms the British imperial project.

After their "Ruin," as Moll Flanders repeatedly calls her early sexual exploits and later financial risks, women's bodies become quickly associated with imperial spaces in the early- to mid-eighteenth century. Once women have made a choice out of alignment with British moral arguments regarding steadfast purity of sexuality and capitalist earning potential, I argue that in fiction narratives such women frequently need to be moved out of Britain either by physical removal or moral ostracization. The texts, early novels in the case of this chapter, grapple with their response to divergent sexuality, frequently resulting in sending questionable women outside national boundaries of Britain to similarly peripheral and transgressive spaces. With this argument in mind, I also propose that male writers of the mid-eighteenth century find sexualized women to be entertaining but they question what to do with such characters. By this, I mean male authors depict female characters who make sexually explicit choices, but these authors struggle to create endings for such women characters that in any way approximate reality or inflict consequences. In contrast, female authors such as Eliza Haywood envisage future lives for their fictional, socially transgressive women characters, anticipating the realist novel of the nineteenth century. In simpler terms, Haywood deals in consequences and outcomes for her female characters that more closely echo reality, albeit in her (Haywood's) own cheeky fashion.

Both sexual activity and the possibility of sexualization happen, within prose fiction of the early eighteenth century, without the narrative insisting women's bodies be eroticized with the added pleasures of colonialism. The sexuality of a female character can be commodified

under British capitalism without becoming completely complicit with British imperialism. Harriet Guest notes the same separation between domestic and imperial dangers, writing that "in the early century, virtuous femininity is often identified in privacy, and in freedom from all but pious desires and ambitions, but by the end of the century virtue is identified more closely with industriousness, which can involve the demand that middle-class women should participate in or at least mimic the forms of productive labour" (Guest 47). The strictest measure of a woman's sexualization and potential to become a ruin or wreckage is class, because of her potential to "fall" through it or down it. A woman might experience ruination and become a monument, a memorial, a ruin. In the mid-eighteenth century, class, as a mode of sexuality, is still independent from colonialism. Class is determined by one's social and economic place in Britain and fiction does not mandate a character's classed sexuality be tied to imperialism and its practices. Sexualizing women characters ties them to their class position, in other words, and this link can still be separated from the idea of colonialism, as long as her sexuality remains socially acceptable. Female sexuality is always tied to economic power, and it is the nature of this link that interests me. Sexuality as economic power can change, echoing its "morally suspect" nature (Straub 36). In this chapter, I argue that when women transgress the known categories of feminine or female behavior, they must be associated with other transgressive spaces: colonies.

To demonstrate my argument, I plan to briefly look at the picture of capitalism herself, Moll Flanders; a later example of a sexually explicit woman who did not need imperial commerce, Fanny Hill; and end by showing the tensions between colonial capitalism and transgressive female sexuality at play in the work of Eliza Haywood through her novel, *The History of Betsy Thoughtless*. In examining my three texts, I choose deliberately to take a wide view of the term "novel" and include the generic flexibility of *Moll Flanders*, the surprisingly

explicit sex of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, and the easy movement between the genres of conduct novel and manners novel seen in *Betsy Thoughtless.* These novels put women's behavior at the center to interrogate sexual choice, the consequences of these choices, economic power, educational influences, and social pressures. From courtship to prostitution, from pet squirrels to incest, the women characters I analyze in this chapter travel the markets to make new ways of being a woman. The "cult of trade"[7] crossed political and social striations, and these women cross the same dividing lines to trade themselves (Colley *Britons* 60).

Amatory fiction, a favorite early genre of Haywood, or other romances addressing women's desire, have a different conclusive trajectory than the texts I focus on in this chapter. In those texts, female characters are rewarded for desire, even if they make mistakes or are sexually promiscuous. Miranda, in Aphra Behn's *The Fair Jilt*, for example, lives on with her husband and a fortune, though she swindled her sister out of the majority of their shared fortune and had two men sentenced to executions after a series of illicit affairs with men about town (Behn *Fair Jilt*). Amatory fiction remains a separate genre with differing conventions. While *Moll Flanders* falls in a sort of genre gray area, I here treat it as a novel, seeing in it several novelistic strategies and conventions that overlap in use and meaning with *Fanny Hill* and *Betsy Thoughtless*.

I also choose in this chapter to examine women as characters written by men and women authors, rather than limiting my discussion to women writers. Eve Tavor Bannet notes in *Domestic Revolution* that women writers make complicated arguments, work out hypothetical outcomes, and reformulate political positions through their writing. Part of the work of women's writing of the eighteenth century must also be in response to men authors. I juxtapose male and

[7] In using the term "cult of trade," Colley refers to the sense of Britain's identity being bound up with trade. Without trade, Britons weren't British. She writes: "Abundant trade was not just materially desirable: for Britons in this period it was also proof positive of their status as the most free and most distinctively Protestant of nations" (Colley *Britons* 60).

female authors using women characters to make arguments about the idea of woman-ness. Defoe and Cleland both use protagonists to discuss what it means to be a woman, what economic power might look like, and how sexual choice could be both dangerous and exciting. Women as authors and characters face vulnerability men do not;[8] here I choose to focus on the precarity of the woman characters in the center of the argument.

This chapter stays in and around London, considering the marriage and sex markets and the women characters traversing them. There are romances and tales of seduction and love happening all over the world and being written by British authors and other authors under imperial influence. However, as the "center" of the Empire and the hub of trade for Britain, I focus on women's bodies, their commercial significance, and their narrative location in London's scene of hyper-sexualized coquetry. Linda Colley described London in the mid-eighteenth century as "the hub of British commerce," drawing as much as one-sixth of Britons as visitors and at least one-twelfth of all Britons as residents (Colley *Britons* 64). London was "Britain's chief port, financial centre and trading metropolis," as well as the home for both court and Parliament (Colley *Britons* 64). Women, as wives, friends, independent young people, daughters, and mistresses came to London in droves. Unmarried upper-class women sought husbands and enjoyment of the city's offerings like balls and plays, much like one of the heroines I here examine, Betsy Thoughtless. Women of lower classes came to London too, to seek their way in the world, as do the two other fictional young women I examine: Fanny Hill and Moll Flanders.

The first two texts I examine, Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (*Fanny Hill*) and Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, contain women making explicit, questionable, and unusual sexual

[8] Defoe and Moll note the uniqueness of women in the context of her very first affair: "He smil'd when he heard all this, and I ask'd him, how he could make so light of it, when he must needs know, that if there was any Discovery, I was Undone for ever? And that even it would hurt him, tho' not Ruin him, as it would me…" (Defoe 28)

decisions when considered within their historical context. Moll embodies capitalism and shows an affinity for money that leads, in her terms, to her Ruin. Defoe is so mystified how to treat her generically that he "rewards" her with a fortune, a loving husband, and a pleasant life in the English countryside. Fanny, though at first coerced into a life of "pleasure," chooses her partners of her own will. Cleland's solution to end the story is, similar to Defoe's solution, to give Fanny a fortune and marry her off to a man who loves her. Both women receive unconventional educations, and both make explicit sexual decisions. In straying from the romanticized coquet of amorous fiction and the virtuous-and-naïve heroine of epistolary and enlightenment novels, the woman who decides her own "Ruin" is rendered transgressive and generically unknown. Defoe and Cleland decide to reward such sexually explicit and devious women with educations, fortunes, and companionate marriages, in contrast with the more complicated depiction of coquetry and financial mismanagement in Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless*.

The Sexual Precarity of Moll Flanders

Moll Flanders is one of Daniel Defoe's unconventional narrators who, according to John Richetti, "exist as responses" to reality of the early eighteenth century and are "recurring testimony to a larger, repressive reality" (Richetti 55). Earlier critics, like G.A. Starr, saw in Moll a contradiction of binaries: good and evil, self and other, etc. Later critics such as Richetti[9] and Max Novak see in Moll more than just a binary—they see multitudes and syntheses. Paula Backscheider[10] and Mona Scheuermann,[11] among others, pick up the baton and read *Moll*

[9] Richetti suggests Moll is a dialectic demonstration in her moves between self and other. She "will repeatedly perform her dialectic with the world and emerge with a self intact or, rather, fortified and expanded" (Richetti *Defoe's Narratives* 104).

[10] In her book specifically on *Moll Flanders*, Backscheider gives a thorough review of scholarship previous to her own 1990 publication date and engages in a dynamic reading of the novel itself, discussing episodic interpretation, characterization, and novelistic patterns. (Backscheider *Moll Flanders*)

[11] In her monograph, *Her Bread to Earn*, Mona Scheuermann argues that Moll "becomes so attractive to the reader as the novel goes on because she is not perceived as evil but rather as wonderfully capable—her 'vicious' acts are necessitated by circumstances and, in fact, often illegal but never abhorrent" (Scheuermann 12).

Flanders for the story, the popular contexts, and the strange draw of an entertaining character making so many unconventional choices. Moll is a realist portrayal of what may happen to a woman caught between the service class and the gentle class, between stability and instability, between legality and illegality. I argue Moll is ruined several times because her definition of ruination changes as her ideas of precarity alter. First, Moll is ruined by a loss of chastity and virginity within the context of financial renumeration, then by the end of a sexual relationship, and finally when she fails to produce financial capital. She is rescued by Defoe in the end, however.

I would like to begin by focusing on Moll's first sexual experience and her inability to manage her own ruination as she hurries towards a pile of money and her burgeoning entrepreneurship. Moll's first sexual experience occurs with the eldest brother of the family for whom she works and with whom she lives. Moll's position within the family is clearly precarious. As a dependent woman, previously of the service class and always in danger of returning to it, stuck in a middling position with no guides, Moll occupies the mysteriously dangerous sexual position of domestic laborers. Kristina Straub writes that domestic service workers "are held to the strictest standard of chastity, while simultaneously occupying an intensely sexualized position in the cultural imagination," a description that fits Moll's sexual precarity. She is repeatedly described as beautiful, posing a threat to the two sisters in the house, who are neither as good looking nor as well educated. Moll makes much of her personal advantages, telling readers she is "Handsomer" than her companions, "better shap'd," and she has more natural musical talent, however untrained she may be (Defoe 16-17). Moll manages to praise her own beauty and education, place herself above the young women of the gentlefamily she lives with, and attempts a twisted form of humility. Moll recognizes the uncomfortable

position she is in within the household but is unafraid to acknowledge its benefits to herself. Moll highlights innate abilities and talents instead of learned skills or educational benefits. She mentions that she learned what her fellow young ladies learned, but when speaking of her superiority, Moll focuses the reader's attention to the quality of her voice instead of her high taste in music, her beauty instead of her affectation or manners, her physique instead of her address and mien. Moll does not display her ability to move between classes, but rather her qualities that transcend beyond, or perhaps through, class striations.

From these advantages, simpering speeches, and false humility, Moll says her ruination is inevitable. She suggests "that which I was too vain of, was my Ruin, or rather my vanity was the Cause of it" (Defoe 17). Moll's physical beauty and her associated vanity are, according to Moll, the source of her ruination. I am not convinced Moll is entirely at fault in her becoming a ruin, but she believes it to be so. Joshua Gass notes that "Moll represents the most primary generic division of character: hero/villain, or in this case, heroine/villainess." The oscillation and balance of such a division of character "hinges on the meaning of social transgression, and villains are constituted—in part— by their exclusion from social norms" (Gass 112-13). By transgressing beyond class differences in her innate talents discussed above, Moll continues her character position as a "partial villain," as Gass calls Moll's narrative precarity.

However, Moll's transgression goes beyond class differences in education: she wishes to move between classes economically by using her physical attributes independent of class. By this, I mean Moll uses her pretty face, physical beauty, and personal talents which exist outside of Moll's low birth and current social status to affect her financial potential and colonizing potential. In fact, Moll contextualizes her sexuality entirely within class and economics available to her in England and the American colonies. Richetti notes that Moll "ruthlessly renders" her

relationships "in economic terms," and this is precisely what I wish to track (Richetti 57). Scheuermann suggests that part of the reason for Moll's ruthless economics is because "Defoe's view of woman centers on her as an economically capable being" (Scheuermann 13). As Moll's sexuality is delineated by class and economic position, so is her potential fall. But her ideas of class and finance change throughout the novel, informing her evaluation of her ruin/ation.

Moll's ambitions for money did not begin with her adolescent beauty, however. As a young child, Moll tells visitors and friends that she wishes to be a gentlewoman. This proves so entertaining to woman visitors that they begin to give her a few pennies and shillings when they visit, just for the pleasure of hearing her say she wants to move upward in class (Defoe 12). Perhaps this sentiment might have appeared frightening at first, but Moll's childhood innocence softened the unusual declaration. Moll wished to be like a local woman "that mended Lace, and wash's the Ladies Lac'd-heads," a woman who, according to Moll's instructor is "a Person of ill Fame, and has had two or three Bastards" (Defoe 12). But, for all the class precarity of this other woman of "ill Fame," Moll admires her because "she does not go to Service, nor do House-Work," which make up the qualities of the class position Moll desires to attain (Defoe 13). This decrease in Moll's ambitions, from actual gentlewoman to a woman making her living from doing sewing and mending work, reduces also Moll's movement upward between class positions. She would only move up to the class position of a mending woman, not a Duchess or Lady. However, this does nothing to diminish the enjoyment of the ladies who visit Moll, who now find humor in not only Moll's ambitions, but also her naïveté. Moll's declaration of a wish to move up in class position is so unbelievable that people begin to visit Moll just to hear her say it—they pay money to be entertained by the unusual sight of a girl wishing to increase her class

position and her inability to read the class position of women around her.[12] It is unthinkable to Defoe's depictions of the upper classes that anyone would attempt to move so far up the class divisions. Moll's outlandish dream is incomprehensible enough to become entertainment for which her audience pays. Moll's ambitions are, quite literally, laughable.

Returning, though, to Moll's adolescence and her future "Ruin," Moll transfers her class ambitions from wishing to do steady sewing work to equating money with sex and sex work. This association was made *for* Moll by the former teacher, mentioned above in the moniker of "Person of ill Fame," but upon embarking on an affair with the elder brother of the family with whom she lives, Moll associates money and sex herself after she is tempted to ruination via the older brother of the family. The older brother quickly notices Moll's beauty and begins finding opportunities to complement her and then to kiss her. The first kisses bring only surprise. The second time the brother kisses her and professes his affection, he "put five Guineas into my Hand and went away down Stairs." Moll, in narrative demure, tells readers she "was more confounded with the Money than I was before with the Love; and began to be so elevated, that I scarse knew the Ground I stood on" (Defoe 20-21). Moll is "confounded" by both love and monetary gifts, but the money makes her feel more elated. Moll is, as Ann Louise Kibbie notes, "seduced not so much by the man as by the coins he gives her" (Kibbie 1026). When receiving kisses, Moll describes her feelings as a "Head full of Pride," but the money makes her feel as though she floats on clouds (Defoe 20). From kisses, Moll and the brother proceed to sex, but not without the same monetary frame. The brother says he will eventually marry Moll, a nod toward the

[12] Scheuermann suggests we should take Defoe at his word and see he is suggesting "people need to be able to support themselves, and to support themselves with dignity and without the requirement of subservience to others." (Scheuermann 14). While I agree Defoe insists on individual liberty in one's own financial power, I must insist we see the humor the narrative gives to Moll's ambitions. Defoe does not see them as negative, but the women around Moll do.

perceived association all the other women in his family have between money and marriage. But as they reach an agreement, "he pulls out a silk Purse, with an Hundred Guineas in it" and attempted to give it to her. The appearance of money seals the deal, as they say:

> My Colour came, and went, at the Sight of the Purse, and with the fire of his Proposal together; so that I could not say a Word, and he easily perceiv'd it; so putting the Purse into my Bosom, I made no more Resistance to him, but let him do just what he pleas'd; and as often as he pleas'd; and thus I finish's my own Destruction at once, for from this Day, being forsaken of my Vertue, and my Modesty, I had nothing of Value left to recommend me, either to God's Blessing, or Man's Assistance. (Defoe 25)

Certainly, this picture of sex is an emotional rollercoaster. The money is put directly into her clothing and against her breasts, everyone seems "pleas'd," but then Moll begins to describe her experience as "Destruction." The vocabulary at the end of the paragraph moves back toward financial verbiage, though, as Moll says she is perhaps beyond "Man's Assistance" and has nothing left of "Value." Moll values her virginity now at, apparently, an income of one hundred pounds a year, but says that beyond the current stable value she is stripped of some portion of financial gain. She has no claim to other monetary assistance with this devaluation of her body.

The rest of the family associates women's money with marriage, instead of sexual activity. Just before the elder brother begins the affair with Moll, the siblings take part in a debate about fortunes and marriage. One sister declares that "nothing but Money now recommends a Woman," to which the brother returns that he might marry without the incentive of fortune. The sister is brought to an astute assessment of the marriage market: that while most of the marriage market wants to meet beauty with money, having money is more worthwhile in the long run because beauty fades and money may not (Defoe 13). The conversation continues,

but the sister's observations on marriage and money show the two are inextricable from one another in the eyes of the upper-class women, and the direction of the transaction – a woman's dowry moving to become her husband's fortune – follows a familiar and knowable pattern. The brothers debate and battle with themselves and each other on a few occasions while Moll still lives with them, but for the sisters and mother, marriage remains a monetary transaction moving from female dowry to male possession.

When Moll is cornered into her first marriage, conveniently to the younger brother of the same family, she must work to reassociate money and marriage and weaken her ideas of pleasure and sex as her financial metrics. Sex must be brought back within the purview of marriage, and therefore so must financial gain. To accomplish this, Moll begins by being "ruined" once again, this time by ending a sexual relationship. After having been the mistress of the older brother, the younger brother makes a declaration of his affection to Moll. Moll says she "saw [her] Ruin" in her "being oblig'd" to deny a marriage proposal from the younger brother (Defoe 31). Certainly, a denial has the potential to out Moll and the older brother in their affair. But, for Moll, the ruination is in the ending of the sexual affair. She declares her affection for the older brother and says she does not want him to put an end to their sexual relationship. Moll expects the brother to tell the family and end their relationship publicly, which she says she "expected to hear no more of this Gentleman, after all his solemn Vows, and Protestations, but to be Ruin'd and abandon'd" (Defoe 43). Moll and the older brother have been having regular sex for many months now, and Moll at first described that relationship as leading to ruin. But, after a while, Moll begins to change her tune. She now sees the end of their relationship to be her ruin. It would be her financial ruin, of course, in the withdrawal of the man's annual support, and Moll leads to a discussion of her feelings of attachment and her own physical sickness that was a result of the

withdrawal of sex. Moll loves the elder brother, loves the regular sex with him, loves the steady income based on their relationship, and feels her greatest ruin until now to be the withdrawal of their understanding. In bringing sex back into her ideas of marriage, Moll is in one sense ruined, and in another sense has gained a new financial marketplace: the marriage bed.

Moll's marriage to the younger brother is short, acceptable, and, according to Moll, relatively uneventful. Moll married him to "alleviate her fear of being 'left alone in the world to shift for [her]self'," according to Melissa Mowry; the poor husband gets only a handful of sentences to describe five years of marriage (Mowry 48). They have two children and a comfortable life. When he dies, Moll sends the two children back to his parents, never to be seen or heard from by the reader again and begins to find other means of financial/sexual support. Marriage, for Moll, is temporarily the picture of domestic contentment and stable finances, but only for the few sentences the narrative devotes to their marriage. There is financial and social safety in being married to a man from a wealthy family, but there is also no financial *gain*. Moll moves to a new class temporarily, but when her husband dies, she needs financial growth. She needs capitalism and, eventually, colonialism.

Moll's story from here catalogues her intertwined sexual and financial escapades, from marriage to marriage, intrigue to intrigue, theft to theft, and all these escapades require subjectivity and the potential for her ruin. Moll needs to be capable of consenting to marriage, of perpetrating an intrigue, and planning theft if the reader is to believe she accomplishes all these things. Sona Novakova[13] points out that seduction narratives require that women "be included in conceptions of subjectivity" to perform some sort of consent within the sexual engagement

[13] Novakova's article, "Em/bedded narratives," examines the hermeneutic links between tales about married or courting women and the embedded stories of unmarried or promiscuous women contained therein.

(Novakova 10). Moll's ability to seduce and organize her own financial gain within capitalistic sex requires subjectivity for her as a character, the same subjectivity that makes Moll an unlikely heroine and a questionable example for readers. Gass discusses Moll's precarious place within social consciousness, as well. He suggests that "the same urge that condemns Moll" simultaneously suppresses criticism of other women in her life, such as the Governess figure, which "places Moll as the object of society's definition and determination as a criminal, sinner, fallen woman, etc." (Gass 120). Moll is the heroine of the story and is rewarded as such, which I discuss below, but in making Moll a subjective heroine, Defoe asks the reader not to condemn socially transgressive women, including Moll and those around her. In doing so, the narrative uses Moll's own subjectivity to label Moll as transgressive, putting her squarely within the category of "fallen" woman. She has used her subjectivity to choose her sexual and financial activity. However, Moll has her own assessment of her subjectivity and evaluation of her sexual activities that does not fit within a larger social code. In other words, Moll fails to perform as both a socially successful woman with virginal purity and as a transgressive woman unapologetic for those around her and thus she "falls" from legible categories of British woman delineated by the laughing women from Moll's childhood. In creating a subjective and sexually transgressive heroine engaging openly in capitalist sex work in keeping with the emerging ideology of early capitalism at the time, Defoe removes the moral charge to "punish" a fallen woman.

Moll's illegible status, of course, must then be written on her socially visible body. Moll takes to cross-dressing as a man to perform as a thief after she has been a femme thief for several years. Moll's "Governess" decides Moll has not been making enough money as a thief:

> … my Governess was something impatient of my leading such a useless unprofitable Life, as she call'd it; and she laid a new Contrivance for my going Abroad, and this was

> to Dress me up in Mens Cloths, and so put me into a new kind of Practise. I was Tall and Personable, but a little too smooth Fac'd for a Man; however as I seldom went Abroad but in the Night, it did well enough; but it was a long time before I could behave in my new Cloths: I mean, as to my Craft; it was impossible to be so Nimble, so Ready, So Dexterous at these things, in a Dress so contrary to Nature; and as I did everything Clumsily, so I had neither the success, or the easiness of Escape that I had before, and I resolv'd to leave it off; but that Resolution was confirm'd soon after by the following Accident." (Defoe 179)

Moll calls her cross-dressing "contrary to Nature," and yet admits within the next few sentences that she was proficient both in performing maleness and in thievery as a man. For a while, Moll and her male partner are successful. When they are caught, Moll runs back to the Governess, tosses off her masculine clothes, "and there sat I at work with a great litter of things about me, as if I had been at Work all Day" (Defoe 181). Moll has been so convincing as a man, even while living with her male partner, that no one suspects her to be the thief upon searching the Governess's home. Not one officer or constable entertains the idea that she could have been dressed as a man when the man they saw was so convincing in masculinity and she was so convincing in her in-home dishabille. Ula Klein describes women who cross-dress as "deeply attracted to non-normative gender performances" (Klein 2). While Moll may not explicitly evince the same-sex desire Klein argues accompanies female crossdressers in the eighteenth century, Moll enjoys the spectacle and excitement of traversing gender performance. Moll has transgressed far enough outside the known performances of womanhood that she has convinced even the man she shared a bed with that she was masculine.

With these many transgressions, Moll must be dealt the consequences of her socio-historical position and her narrative position. But, it is not Moll's fluid gender performance which ultimately renders her "ruined;" it is her lack of financial production. Moll is, finally, caught in the act of stealing, brought to Newgate Prison, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. Her Governess comes to visit her in prison, bewailing Moll's fate. Moll describes the scene, along with her Governess's sense of ruin.

> But she cry'd and took on, like a distracted Body, wringing her Hands, and crying out that she was undone, that she believ'd there was a Curse from Heaven upon her, that she should be damn'd, that she had been the Destruction of all her Friends, that she had brought such a one, and such a one, and such a one to the Gallows; and there she reckon'd up ten or eleven People, some of which I have given an Account of that came to untimely Ends, and that now she was the occasion of my Ruin, for she had persuaded me to go on, when I would have left off: I interrupted her there; no Mother, no, *said I*, don't speak of that…it is I only have ruin'd myself, I have brought myself to this Misery, and thus we spent many hours together. (Defoe 236-7)

The "ruin" here is a lack of financial power that will possibly lead to her execution. The Governess apologizes for pushing Moll to earn more and more money, for now Moll has no way of earning money at all from prison. Moll suggests she has ruined herself in persisting in thievery. Her downfall may also have been prevented or altered with "the female academies, bankruptcy protections, and provisions for widows that Defoe proposed in his *Essay upon Projects*;" the emphasis here is that those protections are all available within capitalist economic systems, framed by and limited by a subjectivity ascribed to women in early British imperialism (Alff 143). The limits in which we find Moll, in other words, are economic and capitalist, not

social sex shaming. Moll needed *economic* protections instead of vaginal preventatives. Moll is not ruined by her lack of virginal purity, but rather her ruin is reframed in his scene in terms of financial viability. Moll and her friend of course mourn Moll's projected death, but Moll's "ruin" is framed by capital and earning potential. Moll cannot earn money either respectably or shamefully and that has brought on her ruin.

Moll's recovery from ruin occurs in three parts: moral correction, earning potential, and sexual reconciliation. First, to address Moll's morals, she is sent a priest. Instead of the confessional minister sent to extort and exhort prisoners, Moll's Governess sends her an outside man who presses her hard with moral arguments and convictions. Moll said the minister's instruction and her subsequent reflections made "lively impressions" on her "Soul at that time; indeed those Impressions are not to be explain'd by words" (Defoe 240). In her repentance and reconciliation, the minister first manages to postpone her execution, then to allay it for transportation to the colonies. She describes herself as a true "Penitent," complete with "Shame and Tears" (Defoe 241). Defoe here realizes he has veered off the narrative path with moral instruction. Moll suggests "This may be thought inconsistent in itself, and wide from the Business of this Book," and that "many of those who may be pleas'd and diverted with the Relation of the wild and wicked part of my story" will not like this morality and penitent Christianity (Defoe 242). However, this penitent spirit and willingness to bring herself back into British, Christian moral alignment brings her freedom on her ship. One critic notes that "from the perspective of legal history, convicted criminals punished with exile in America did indeed receive an "offer of Heaven," an offer granted on the basis of convict supplication, demonstrations of spiritual conversion, and jurisdictional negotiations enabled by the loop-hole of clerical privilege" (Cervantes 316). Moll's confession, personal connection, and sense of

penitence with the minister fit within the picture of clerical power in her story. The minister's help bringing Moll back to the Christian "light" aligns with the economic promises of the American colonies. In her transportation, the boatswain and captain later agree to let Moll and her husband, with whom she has reconciled, stay in private quarters instead of the prisoners' hold, as well as go ashore and dine and drink with the officers of the boat. Moll's moral correction has direct, positive, capitalist, class consequences before she has left the British Isles.

As for her financial viability, Moll first makes a claim for her capital earning scheme, convinces someone to help her, then follows through. Moll had previously, when married to her Lancashire Husband the first time, attempted (and failed) to convince him to go to the Virginia colony where her family was and explained to him the ways of planting and economic gain (Defoe 132). But, now that they are both in prison, Moll makes another attempt. She suggests that it would be the "easiest thing in the World" to have the captain of their transport ship arrange for them to buy their freedom upon landing in the colonies. She claims financial independence for herself and his own financial gain by associating with her: "I should easily Instruct him how to manage himself, so as never to go a Servant at all" (Defoe 252). When she has finally convinced him, Moll agrees to transportation, boards the boat, and the very next day demonstrates her economic power for her own gain. Moll asks an officer if she might contact a friend and have her things sent with her, and this officer is fortunately a friendly Boatswain. While handing over a letter to the Governess, Moll pays for the delivery with a shilling and makes a strategic display of capital, flashing her heavy purse to garner better treatment (Defoe 257). The superior treatment results in the ability to order in advance the tools necessary to farm a plantation, clothes and money, personal furniture and goods, and the permission to dine ashore with the Captain on more than one occasion, when all the other prisoners remain in their hold.

Moll both displays and demonstrates her capital by her generous tipping and her well-timed flash of her full pocket. In securing her economic stability, Moll gains a social position on the boat and the promise of future earning potential by the purchase of everything necessary to begin a new, profitable life in Virginia. Moll, who was previously ruined by her lack of earning potential, now has potential coming out of her linens.

After being in Virginia for a while, Moll's former husband and half-brother passes away. Moll has already reconciled with her incestuous son, bought a plantation with her Lancashire Husband, and established herself on the Maryland side of a bay, just a few miles from family. Upon the death of her ex-husband and half-brother, who are one and the same, the entire novel wraps up in exactly three paragraphs. Moll confesses her accidental incest to her current husband, notifies her son she has remarried, and the whole story ends pleasantly. Moll uses the "best and most reliable means of admission to power:" land ownership (Colley *Britons* 61). Moll has bought a plantation, inherited another, and uses her privilege to make her life legible once more by bringing it into the profitable capitalist ideal. Moll says that once "all these little Difficulties were made easy," she and her Lancashire Husband "liv'd together with the greatest Kindness and Comfort imaginable; we are now grown Old:" and both have returned to England (Defoe 285). In leaving the settler colonial space, Moll is left with the proto-capitalist colonial markets of the early eighteenth century. Moll reconciles with all the men in her life, tells her husband of previous sins, and suddenly they are wealthy planters who return to England with regularly supplemented fortunes and a happy marriage. This return to some form of sexual purity, found in the confessing of her sins, her husband's absolving her of them, and the death of her ex-husband/half-brother, is the final step to Moll's un-ruin, along with her acquisition of land and participation in the colonial and imperial economies as landed upper classes. Moll and her

Lancashire Husband leave the colonial space but live on their income from colonial efforts. Their participation is distanced, yet distinctly settler colonialist. While she engages in the colonial economy, in keeping with her earlier financial exploitations and frolicks, Moll does not experience her happy ending there. She trades on her "un-ruin" to return to England, no longer maintaining her presence in colonial America.

Moll is a few times ruined, as I have discussed here, and she frames her story from its beginnings as one of a ruin, a wreckage. Moll declares she "gave up myself to a readiness of being ruined," and calls herself a "fair *Momento* to all young Women, whose Vanity prevails over their Vertue" (Defoe 22). Moll sees she has become a wreckage other women may look upon and learn from. She lives on in her status as a "momento," a ruin, an example character experiencing trauma. But, Moll frames her own ruin through an economic lens. Moll becomes both sexually and economically transgressive simultaneously: for "as Poverty bought me into it, so fear to Poverty kept me in it" (Defoe 101). The result is for her to be sent to another place of danger and mystery: the American colonies. It is only when she becomes set-to-rights once more, or un-ruined as I have called it, that the narrative may end, Moll may age, and she may return to England with her planter's money and non-incestuous marriage.

Fanny's Hills and the Shamlessness of Discretion

Fanny Hill, of John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, pushes the boundaries of commodification in ways Moll Flanders did not. Moll never ventures into outright prostitution and never describes her sexual intercourse in much detail. Fanny, on the other hand, does all of those things. Fanny is explicit and clear about her exact complicity in sex work. Laura Rosenthal suggests Cleland uses Fanny to speak back to contemporary prostitution narratives, but Fanny has a subjectivity and a pleasure in sex that other such narratives lack (Rosenthal). *Memoirs* becomes an exemplary work for my study here for precisely the reasons given by Hal Gladfelder,

namely that Cleland uses the "still-emerging genre" of the novel to act as "both practitioner and critic" (Gladfelder *Fanny Hill* 86). Felicity Nussbaum addresses Fanny's precarious position as a sex worker and her relationship with commerce, focusing on the "imagined sexualities" of sex workers to argue that sex workers, "paradoxically, manage to incorporate all imagine sexualities and to exceed their allotted geopolitical space" (Nussbaum "One Part").[14] Others, like Kathleen Lubey and Sara Read,[15] examine "imagined sexuality" with the explicit bodily activities, finding that the descriptions of sexual acts—or their conspicuous stoppage—fundamentally change the reader's self-conscious engagement.[16]

While Moll Flanders mixes sex with outright commerce, Fanny Hill, of John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, has sex for material items. Fanny arrives in London ready to work, is taken in by a bawd, and upon arriving at the house and being assessed for her sexual potential, is handed new clothes and accessories. Fanny declares the women around her are "tricking [her] out for the market" and helping her on her way to her first sexual experience (Cleland 14). The narrative points to Fanny's association between sex and material items by putting them close together when speaking of her sexual experiences. Her first sexual encounter, violent as it is, is no exception. Fanny receives "a white lute-string, flower'd with silver, scoured indeed," along with a *Brussel*-lace cap, braided shoes," and other "second-hand finery" (Cleland 13). She is paraded in front of people in the house, and says she spent a good deal of time staring

[14] Nussbaum extends this argument to conclude that Fanny Hill's body is a representation of the British Empire. In contrast to this, I suggest by the end of this section that Fanny does not transgress enough to be associated with the transgressive spaces of colonization.
[15] Read examines the discourse regarding blood and defloration to consider menstruation and forbidden sexual acts.
[16] Lubey argues in her fourth chapter of *Excitable Imaginations* that Cleland uses breadcrumbs and clues in the text, not his explicitness, "that yields not only heightened degrees of sexual knowledge but, more centrally, a refined, self-conscious engagement with texts and an increased sensitivity to the pleasures to be found in novelistic prose" (Lubey 138).

at her own reflection in the mirror, admiring her new get-up (Cleland 15). Fanny's bawd explicitly connects the clothing with sex:

> I was sent for down to the parlour, where the old lady saluted me, and wished me joy of my new cloaths, which, she was not asham'd to say, fitted me as if I had worn nothing but the finest all my life time; but what was it she could not see me silly enough to swallow? at the same time she presented me to another cousin of her own creation, an elderly gentleman, who got up at my entry into the room, and on my dropping a curtsy to him, saluted me, and seemed a little affronted that I had only presented my cheek to him; a mistake, which, if one, he immediately corrected, by glewing his lips to mine with an ardour which his figure had not at all disposed me to thank him for… (Cleland 15)

Fanny, untrained in any sexual pursuits, even kissing, is rushed through her new dress, presented to a man, and kissed aggressively. Her bawd makes sure all this happens in quick succession, of course, to trap Fanny with her. Whatever the motivations, though, Fanny puts together the idea of clothing and material concerns with sexual experience. In this case, aggressive male repugnance.

Fanny delights in the false finery of the dresses and lace offered to her by her first bawd but turns down sex when she discovers what is happening. When the same aggressive kisser tries to rape her and take her virginity, though she cried, she "obstinately kept close[d]" her thighs so that "though he attempted with his knee to force them open, effect it so as to stand fair for being master of the main avenue." She is successful in keeping the man's penis out of her vagina and he ejaculates on her linens after she calls him "ugly" and "old" (Cleland 19). Sex and clothing are again tied together, this time by the clothing's ability to block and receive male ejaculate. The man never penetrates her, and the clothing and her strong knees keep him at bay.

Fanny's obsession with clothing continues through all her sexual escapades. As another example, Fanny's affair with Charles, her first lover and presumably her last, is riddled with descriptions of clothes and where they go during sex. She says her "petty-coats and shift were soon taken up," before Charles begins to attempt penetration, and in response to the pain of losing her virginity, Fanny "cram'd [her] petticoat (which was turn'd up over [her] face) into [her]mouth, and bit it through in the agony" (Cleland 39-21). The clothing this time does not block a man's entrance to her, but instead facilitates it, even as her fabric prevents Fanny's physical reaction in the form of screams. Both Fanny's hymen and her petticoats are rent asunder simultaneously. The following re-attempt at sex begins with a question of permission, and Charles "accordingly falls to undressing; which I could not see the progress of, without strange emotions of fear and pleasure" (Cleland 42). Clothing is inextricably linked to her sublime experience of sex, both in facility of sex and obstruction of penetration.

Clothing is important to Fanny's sense of social position and her sexual position reflects her class; clothing informs Fanny's subjectivity as a sex worker. In her discussion of prostitution and sex work, Laura Rosenthal notes "writers represented prostitutes as, on the one hand, radical self-owning individuals; on the other hand, the scandal of their commodity tested the boundaries of commodification itself" (Rosenthal 2). Cleland creates in Fanny a sex worker who takes pleasure in sex, has a distinct sense of her individual subjectivity, and finds her possessions reflect a commodification of her labor. Upon receiving the "finery" from her first bawd, Fanny's "little coquet-heart flutter'd with joy" (Cleland 13), and she meets Mrs. Cole, a later bawd after a series of keepers, when Mrs. Cole "had made errands to sell me some millinary ware" and "she had by degrees insinuated herself so far into [Fanny's] confidence," that Fanny trusts Mrs. Cole explicitly with her well-being and future industry (Cleland 92). Upon arriving at Mrs. Cole's

house, Fanny "found every thing breath an air of decency, modesty, and order [sic]" (Cleland 93). Fanny is concerned with appearances, both in terms of clothing and classed styles of housing and decorating. Because of Fanny's association of sex and clothing, then, Fanny links her sexuality with a certain aesthetic presentation of class, rather than explicitly to colonial commerce. Kristina Straub writes that "cross-class dressing" is "another variation on the allegedly dangerous mobility of the female domestic. Changing her clothes, like changing her place, gives her a suspect autonomy" from "her subordinate identity" within her family situation (Straub 39).[17] Though Straub writes of female domestics, the same sentiment rings true with Fanny Hill. Fanny's clothing and her sexual activity give her a "suspect autonomy" from her ever-changing "family," as it were. In the case of Mrs. Cole's house, Fanny is concerned with the appearance of relative respectability and the assurance of being around young women who fell into prostitution by accident and injury, like herself. Fanny may circumvent many of the harmful structures surrounding sex work in the mid-eighteenth century by changing her clothing. She may move between working in a bawd house and being maintained by a keeper and back to a more exclusive bawd house. Straub writes that a woman using her "sexuality to her own advantage" subsequently "dooms as her 'ruins,'" especially in instructional literature (Straub 39). So it is with Fanny Hill, the reader initially believes. Fanny uses her sexuality for financial gain, for clothing, for social position, and she should become, in narrative logic, a ruin. Her more realist end with social consequences is ending her days in a hospital, work-house, or alone in the cold streets.

However, Fanny does not become cast-off wreckage. In making a sexual choice to continue in prostitution, Fanny fails to become a didactic example for her male author as a

[17] This same phenomenon of dressing above one's class also became true of newly wealthy families returning from India and later from plantation economies of the Caribbean.

classed sex worker and she is reinscribed with purity and virtue through her clothing, of course. After a series of keepers and two bawd houses, Fanny declares:

> Now most certainly I was not at all out of figure to pass for a modest girl. I had neither the feathers, nor *fumet* of a tawdry town-miss; a straw hat, a white gown, clean linnen, and above all, a certain natural and easy air of modesty (which the appearances of never forsook me, even on those occasions that I most broke in upon it, in practice) were all signs that gave him no opening to conjecture my condition. (Cleland 127)

Fanny's air and her clothing rewrite her story and bring to her another keeper, with whom she falsifies her virginity. The usual narrative, according to Straub, "tends to associate the prostitute's bitter end with the woman servant's more prosaic options, in particular that of dress" (Struab 38). But Fanny is no regularly narrativized woman. Fanny maintains a distinction from the common sex worker, or "town-miss" by way of her clothing. After all her many escapades, Fanny's clothing and "easy air of modesty" attract a man who finds her modest and unassuming and wishes to buy her virgin sexual experience. Mrs. Cole contrives a secret compartment with a blood-soaked sponge, by which Fanny successfully pretends, for the third time, and many other times afterward, to lose the tact of her hymen (Cleland 135-6). Fanny's white gown and straw hat confer upon her an air of innocence and a renewal of her virtue and virginity, constituting a reconstructed hymen through the public presentation of chastity through clothing.

In becoming narratively unusual and fantastical as a projection of realist womanhood within Britain, Fanny must needs have some sort of ending befitting her strange 'purity' of mind and dress. The first fortunate occurrence is in meeting with a kind older man who takes her home with him, teaches her "the pleasures of the mind were superior to those of the body," and leaves her, "by an authentick will, his sole heiress, and executrix" (Cleland 175). Fanny now has an

education perpetrated through the man's books and guidance (when they were not engaging in intercourse), a fortune left to her and her alone, and her freedom from keepers and bawd houses. Such narrative luck for a prostitute!

But it is not luck. These occurrences return me to my larger argument for this chapter. In being rendered narratively surprising and outside the usual manner of consequences and outcomes, Fanny must be now associated with another transgressive space. Hal Gladfelder suggests fictional autobiographies like that of Moll Flanders "scrupulously [avoid] their penitential moral structure" (Gladfelder 89). [18] Similarly, Fanny Hill is not made to repent while retelling her scandalous adventures, as Moll was penitent. Published twenty years later, Fanny surprises readers with her explicit sexual activity that facilitates her move through class structures and her lack of penitence. Just as Moll was sent to the American Colonies, Fanny's divergent sexuality needs its own imperial association. In this case, Fanny becomes associated with the margins of imperial British conquests through her beloved Charles. Upon fortuitously meeting Charles in an inn, Fanny and Charles are reunited in happiness. Charles had been sent to the "*South-Seas*, where finding [his father's] estate he was sent to recover, dwindled to a trifle, by the loss of two ships," and had spent over two years trying to return to England (Cleland 176). On his way back, however, the ship he was on had been "wreck'd on the *Irish* coast, for which he had prematurely embark', and lost the little all he had brought with him from the *South-Seas*" (Cleland 180, italics in original). Charles had gone to recover what he could of a fortune, failed in rectifying it, attempted to return, and been caught in another imperial space: Ireland. Charles's association with British imperialism brings to Fanny a tangential connection with imperialism befitting her sexual history, albeit through association with a man. Moll Flanders, a thief and

[18] "But while the narrative thus has the retrospective form of such fictional autobiographies as Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack* (both 1722), it scrupulously avoids their penitential moral structure" (Gladfelder 89).

serial wife, travels herself to colonial space; Fanny has maintained her public presentation of chastity and "purity" and is associated with colonial space through her final lover and husband. Fanny can be understood once again by the reader because her illegibility as a divergent and explicitly sexual subject becomes related to the margins of empire. Both imperial space and Fanny's strange virginity of character retain their mystery and sublimity. Each brings the other into focus by their association. The unknowability of each renders the other comprehensible within a newly and only gradually knowable episteme of colonialism.

Haywood and Nonheteronormativity

In contrast to Cleland and Defoe, discussed above, Eliza Haywood prefigured the realist novel that appears in the nineteenth century. Several critics would not ascribe to my use of the word "contrast" here, including Paula Backscheider, who calls Defoe and Haywood "soul mates" (Backscheider "Novel's Gendered Space" 24).[19] However, I see a clear distinction in how women characters are treated in Haywood's fiction. Toni Bowers suggests women writing seduction fiction, a category that certainly includes Haywood, often "recycled familiar plots and rubrics" because they "were doing something urgent for their time: struggling to find satisfactory ways to demarcate possible agencies available to unequally empowered persons" (Bowers 142). Haywood herself began with amatory fiction and later pivoted her career, turning to the domestic novel and the manners novel (aside from her other pursuits in drama and poetry.) Perhaps this turn in the types of novels and novellas Haywood produced appears to be a complete change in response to political pressure, but Aleksondra Hultquist has argued for the importance of Haywood's later novel, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, in demonstrating how Haywood "re-appropriates the resourcefulness of the amatory heroine that Richardson used as a negative

[19] Backschneider sees Haywood and Defoe both processing and writing and creating women characters, just as I have highlighted here. But I am arguing that Haywood and Defoe do not write with the same realism.

example of female behavior and incorporates it into her supposedly 'reformed' rhetoric that had come to exemplify her prose style" in the mid-eighteenth century (Hultquist "Haywood's Re-appropriation" 141-2). In this section, I use *Fantomina*[20] and the longer *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* because of the contrast in form across Haywood's career, her treatment of women some might consider "ruined," and the texts' outward-facing endings for women characters that link them to European and colonial spaces. I will use these two works to demonstrate Haywood's use of sexual and financial transgressions and Haywood's imperially situated outcomes for women who do not or cannot conform to heteronormativity when compared to male writers like Defoe and Cleland. *Fantomina* is an example of Haywood's earlier amatory fiction in which the heroine finds an ambivalent ending to her intrigues. *Betsy Thoughtless* is a domestic manners novel wherein Haywood's earlier amatory heroine must grapple with the social upheaval of the mid-eighteenth century and deal with the transgressive spaces now highly visible to consumers. I argue Haywood brings women back into London's social graces by extensive moralizing, especially in her later domestic and manners novels, or the women characters risk being forcibly removed from London while still being required to participate in the colonial economy through the colonies' dependence on England's consumerism. To be deemed transgressive enough for deportation to the colonies, however, does not depend on sexual misconduct (for English women.) Instead, removal to colonial spaces and dependent colonial economies depends on financial mismanagement.

[20] John Richetti would include *Fantomina* in the "compost heap out of which "Richardson's *Pamela* later sprang. Though "it is a forbidding if fertilizing pile, full of the monstrous and the ludicrous," I believe this "justly neglected" work deserves to be treated for the salacious and apropos work it is (Richetti "Mrs. Haywood and the Novella" 169).

Haywood makes careful study of her female characters and their lives. Female and woman[21] authors make arguments for the discourse of the novel as "peculiarly appropriate to women as writers, its heteroglossia, its multiplicity of voices, providing a kind of insurance against their own act of self-assertion in putting their work on public display" (Ballaster 202). Women use the "vast network of women printers and publishers" to "shape literary tastes, culture habits, structures of feeling, and public opinion" (McDowell 135) Bannet reminds us that "by allowing women's writings to direct and organize our reading" we can "see how women who wrote novels, conduct books, and tracts challenged and revised public thinking about the family, as well as the traditional patriarchal constructions" of society around them (Bannet 3). Women helped women; women wrote to women; women used women. In this case, Haywood writes to and for women, using women as her inspiration and audience to consider what happens when women make nonheteronormative, but patriarchal choices.

The most obvious choice of texts for examining Haywood's treatment of sexual activity is *Fantomina*. I will spend some time with the novel's unnamed heroine, but because I wish to examine later tales of transgressive behavior, I will move quickly on to Betsy Thoughtless and her friends. To examine *Fantomina* is to do as McDowell suggests: "to contextualise creative and imaginative genres and, sometimes, to recognise class biases in literary critical traditions of intelligibility and value" (McDowell 137) And, as I have noted above, Haywood's turn to domestic and manners novels in the mid-eighteenth century is always-already tied to her earlier career and authorial choices in her amatory fiction. Fantomina begins as a woman of high class and ends her story, for now, in France. She travels to a European country instead of British

[21] In using both "female" and "woman" as terms to describe authors, I am attempting to denote both biologically female authors and socially woman authors. I have used these descriptors nearly interchangeably in other places, but wish to note both, as separate identity markers, in at least one place in this chapter.

imperial space. While interesting and important, in this chapter I am focusing on marginalized bodies and marginalized spaces. Fantomina is important to my analysis because of the choices she makes regarding sex and subjectivity, but her conclusion is in France, not an imperial or settler colonial space. In that spirit, a smaller discussion of *Fantomina* will suffice here as a foundation for a precursor to *Betsy Thoughtless*.

Fantomina's error, suggested by the narrative, is her enjoyment of cross-class performance. As Fantomina chooses to dress as a sex worker in a gallery box in London, "changing her clothes, like changing her place, gives her a suspect autonomy" and a conduct novel would have doomed her as a ruin (Straub 39). Fantomina plays a frolick in dressing as another class, which is not an error itself in this comedic amatory tale. In fact, she "dispatch'd as soon as she cou'd all that had hitherto attack'd her" to solicit her with a deft hand. Fantomina spots Beauplaisir and decides to put aside the "Quality and reputed Virtue" that ostensibly "kept him from using her with that Freedom she now expected he would do" if he might "abate some Part of his Reserve" (Haywood *Fantomina* 42). She throws aside her class position for too long while talking with Beauplaisir and watching the play; in the end she finds herself unable to throw him off. In not claiming her "Quality," Fantomina has erred and been doomed to whatever fate awaits her.

Fantomina is "doomed" regardless of her sexual choices; she suffers because of her cross-class feelings and clothing. "The feeling heart guarantees misery," and Fantomina falls desperately in love with Beauplaisir (Spacks 43). Fantomina's heart and feelings become a "euphemism for sexual passion" that often "cannot be regulated or contained" by her class constraints (Spacks 36). Her own mother declares "the Blame is wholly her's" and the story has been a "distracted Folly" (Haywood *Fantomina* 71). Fantomina's frolick becomes a folly and a

comedic tale of "Crime" with "Proceedings" and "Terms." Her unregulated emotional and sexual activity becomes her "Crime,"[22] and she has been taking on disguises and clothing across multiple cities to display a transgressive femininity outside her initial class boundaries. However, Fantomina never fully inhabits the roles she plays. When becoming pregnant, Fantomina remains herself and has her mother by her side. She never truly crosses class lines. In consequence, Fantomina is "punished" by being sent to a nunnery in France for her sexual and emotional expressiveness, though still heteronormative and somewhat socially mandated, therefore not transgressive enough to send her to colonial space, manifested through cross-class clothing. Her supposed punishment might still allow for her transgressive sexual behavior to continue, based on the euphemism of a "nunnery" here. Fantomina has not earned the more serious and open punishment of banishment to colonial space without possibility of return.

Unlike Fantomina and her mother that comes sweeping in to clean up the ruinous mess, Miss Betsy Thoughtless has no parents left and no one who will advocate for her. Perry claims "many novels by women register [a] sense of protagonists being unfairly de-legitimated; rightful inheritors having to make their way in the world without being recognized as such," and Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* is no exception (Perry 114). Betsy is without parents to save her; she has two male guardians and many interested women in her life, but when she is truly in need of a parent, Betsy must make do with the options around her. Haywood uses Betsy, as Kirsten Saxton notes, to continue "to explore the themes of gender, party politics, and power in formally innovative prose that responded to shifts in narrative style and structure afoot in the Augustan literary arena" (Saxton 9). Betsy pushes and changes the limits of heroines from

[22] Aleksondra Hultquist has argued that, for amatory fiction like *Fantomina*, "the protagonist's sexual activity and her negotiation of the consequences of those activities are the site for female novelistic subjectivity" (Hultquist 19). This is in contrast with other analyses of *Moll Flanders*, not quite amatory fiction, that require subjectivity to interrogate consent of female characters.

Haywood's earlier amatory fiction, like *Fantomina*, but several themes and motives remain. Haywood altered her authorial tone in later fiction, but Fantomina and a few female characters in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* receive similar endings for sexual transgressions.

From early on in her "education" as a young woman, Betsy explicitly possesses the potential to "fall," in large part because of her relationship with Miss Forward. Betsy associates with Miss Forward while at boarding school and is, through Miss Forward, sexualized. Miss Forward, first, "had a great deal of the coquette in her nature:—she knew how to play at fast-and-loose with her lover." From Miss Forward's example, "Miss Betsy was a witness" to all Miss Forward's strategies and methodologies for securing a lover for herself and "thus early intimated into the mystery of courtship, it is not to be wondered at, that when she came to the practice, she was so little at a loss" (Haywood *Betsy* 29-30). Betsy learns from her observation of Miss Forward how to play the coquette and keep young men on a proverbial string. Along with her sexualization and closeness to Miss Forward, Betsy is repeatedly characterized by the narrator in a vocabulary and nature associated with a coquette. Our narrator tells us that "ladies of this cast, regard all the professions of love made to them (as indeed many of them are) only as words of course" and are apt not to credit every suitor with the best of intentions. In effect, "they value themselves on the number and quality of their lovers…because it makes them of consideration in the world" (Haywood *Betsy* 142). Betsy is associated with all the qualities of the shallowest coquette, and her prowess is her ability to attract men of a certain class and vivacity. Betsy's sexuality and physical appeal continue to be associated explicitly with class striations.

Betsy's dealings with Gayland first make known her sexual potential in an aggressive manner. Betsy had been flirting with Gayland for a while, and he with her, but Gayland did not know Betsy only flirted to make another suitor, Mr. Saving, jealous. Gayland put a secret note

into Betsy's hand, which she hides in her pocket, in which he asks her for a clandestine meeting. The pocket is a suggestive term itself, referring as a pun both to female sex organs and to its close proximity to Betsy's under-petticoats as a container of capitalism (holder of money.) But, unlike Fanny Hill, Betsy is not wooed with clothing and its uses. Gayland tells her she "must invent some excuse for going out alone" so he can "whirl" her to "a pretty snug place" to "pass a delicious hour or two, without a soul to interrupt our pleasures" (Haywood *Betsy* 42). Upon reading this inappropriate note, the narrator tells us Betsy "could have tore out her very eyes, for having affected to look kindly on a wretch, who durst presume so far on her supposed affection." While anxiously thinking about the affront all night, Betsy reflected "that it was chiefly the folly of her own conduct, which had brought it on her" (Haywood *Betsy* 43). The potential to be sexually compromised is not mainly Gayland's fault, for his temperament is somewhat known or hinted at throughout his visits to the house. Instead, the narrator lets Betsy believe his forwardness is her own responsibility for not governing her conduct more closely, much as Moll believes she brings her own ruination. Betsy's relatively innocent flirting, her thoughtlessness, has led to her own possible ruin. She has fulfilled the title given to her in her allegorical last name and played through an affront to her domestic license. Betsy granted Gayland access inside her domestic space, and he has overstepped her boundaries. Even so, the blame in this rapidly changing relationship does not, according to the narrative, lie with him, though Gayland was the person to suggest the secret encounter.

When she is taken from boarding school, Betsy shares a home with her guardian's daughter, Miss Flora, and considers the tragic story of her school friend, Miss Forward. Both women contribute to Betsy's association with ruinous potential. Miss Forward, in fact, claims her own status as a ruin and finds the occasion momentous enough to quote poetry to Betsy

(Haywood *Betsy* 109). But Miss Flora's exploits are much more dangerous to Betsy. Betsy is no longer at boarding school, older now, and shares a bed with a treacherous young lady. When Miss Betsy and Miss Flora go walking while visiting Francis Thoughtless in Oxford, though they also have a footman with them, they put themselves in the way of sexual danger. Two young men, whom they have met several times through Betsy's brother, walk with the young ladies, then convince them to go to a garden they know has shade to protect their skin, ostensibly. When they arrive, Betsy partially reads the situation:

> They went on laughing till they came to the place he mentioned, where the gentlemen having shewed their fair companions into the gardens, in which were, indeed, several recesses, no less dark than had been described: on entering one of them Miss Betsy cried, "Bless me! This is fit for nothing but for people to do what they are ashamed of in the light." "The fitter then, madam," replied the gentleman-commoner, "to encourage a lover, who, perhaps, has suffered more through his own timidity, than the cruelty of the object he adores. (Haywood *Betsy* 70)

Betsy identifies the dark places in the garden as sexually dangerous by declaring they are for clandestine activities. But she fails to associate her own body with the danger she spots in the dark places of the garden. The sexual precarity pertains to others, not to her. She identifies the danger but her failure to understand her own risk becomes the point of her own precarity.

Betsy is not out of danger after leaving the dark recesses of the garden. The young men then convince Betsy and Flora to come inside to rest, send the footman away to say they will be dining out, and order dinner for the ladies. They eat, flirt, dance, and make merry. The "young student" convinces Flora to leave the room, while the "gentleman-commoner" exerts himself in an attempt to compliment Betsy into compliance. Eventually, he makes his desires known. Betsy

pushes away from him once and heads toward the door. At the door, he kisses her again, pushes her onto a chair, "where, holding her fast, her ruin had certainly been compleated, if a loud knocking at the door had not prevented him from prosecuting his design" (Haywood *Betsy* 73). The language turns here to "ruin" and prosecution. Betsy is held on a chair and imprisoned, in a manner of speaking, kissed aggressively, and the gentleman is only prevented "from prosecuting his designs" by Betsy's brother, Frank (Haywood *Betsy* 73). The gentleman-commoner deems her dangerous enough to capture and assault her, but cannot complete the "ruin," the next step. Frank tells Betsy he "may put [her] to the trial; but this is not the time or place." When they return home to discuss the matter, the narrative uses words like "perpetration," "villain," "disturbance in his mind," and Frank suggests he will "oblige him to ask [her] pardon" (Haywood *Betsy* 74). Ruin here is tied to capture and being held for a man to exercise vaguely legal authority on Betsy's body. She is "saved" only by an interruption from another man, her brother no less.

Betsy's flirting and coquetting are constantly under observation from Mr. Goodman, one of the two men serving as her guardians. Mr. Goodman is frequently "extremely uneasy" and described as "apprehending some fatal consequence would, one time or other, attend the levity of Miss Betsy's behaviour and conduct, in regard to her admirers" (Haywood *Betsy* 173). Betsy's flirting is at first the non-threatening behavior of a fourteen-year-old girl just from boarding school, but becomes, according to Mr. Goodman, possibly life-threatening. Haywood uses the word "fatal consequence" in association with Betsy's penchant for assembling young men around her, as if Betsy's displays of affection or disaffection hold the power of life and death.

Betsy is on the edge of destruction many times. In one instance, while attending a new play with Miss Forward, Mr. Trueworth tells Miss Betsy not to "think of going to the play with a

woman of her class," meaning Miss Forward and her status now as a sex worker (Haywood *Betsy* 234). Betsy risks her own class position by associating with Miss Forward and her prostitution. Her libertine gentleman for the evening calls the proposed sex "the appetites of nature," but declares he "honour[s] and revere[s] the truly virtuous, and it is a maxim with [him] never to attempt the violation of innocence" (Haywood *Betsy* 241). Betsy's class position and her admittedly precarious status as a virtuous young woman saves her from the aggressions awaiting Miss Forward. Betsy is also nearly taken in by a false Sir Frederick Fineer and Miss Flora suggests to Mr. Trueworth, Betsy's final and best love, that Betsy has previously had a child. Betsy is repeatedly in situations where her reputation and chastity are questioned or compromised—this is her plight in the novel. *Betsy Thoughtless* is a domestic manners novel, but even as such the main character finds herself frequently in questionably domestic spaces on the receiving end of some very ill manners. Betsy is repeatedly pushed to the edge of sexual danger.

Betsy's marriage to Mr. Munden appears to save her from the possibility of becoming wreckage of the marriage market, but her new husband instead makes her debris. When choosing a spouse, Astell writes women should be warned that even the nicest beaux have the authority in marriage and will seldom give it up:

> She must be a fool with a witness who can believe a man, proud and vain as he is, will lay his boasted authority, the dignity and prerogative of his sex, one moment at her feet but in prospect of taking it up again to more advantage; he may call himself her slave a few days, but it is only in order to make her his all the rest of his life… (Astell 69)

Additionally, "she puts herself entirely into her husband's power, and if the matrimonial yoke be grievous, neither law nor custom afford her that redress which a man obtains" (Astell 71). Betsy's "matrimonial yoke" is hard and heavy. She has fallen "prey to the first bona fide

Astellian suitor to arrive on the scene" and he does not live up to the kindness and generosity Astell might expect him to show Betsy (Thompson 110). Betsy does not heed Astell's warning above about matrimonial power, either. Instead, Betsy finds the "tyrannical devolution of Lockean authority" forcing her to reduce her expenses, dismiss her servants, avoid parties, and be content with his philandering ways (Thompson 111). Munden discards Betsy repeatedly through their multiple separations and half-hearted reconciliations. She becomes his detritus, cast off and left to flounder with whatever resources she can gather. After he dies, Betsy is a monument to the perils of abusive marriage.

Though trapped in a loveless, violent marriage as a failed version of a virtuous young woman, Betsy's coquetry and sexuality remain contained in England and she gains the subjectivity of an amatory heroine of the mid-eighteenth century. Kirsten Saxton points to this change in literary taste, calling the middle of the eighteenth century "a milieu in which female subjectivity was increasingly configured in terms of privacy and domesticity and the passionate romance was increasingly viewed as suspect" (Saxton 5). Betsy coquets and flirts with several men, but her amatory adventures are confined to England and English consumer products. Her terrible taste in men is met with a loveless marriage, rather than the sudden money and mysterious escape to a foreign country of an earlier sort of heroine. For example, when Mr. Munden is approved in his courtship by Betsy's brothers, Betsy dances around a direct answer – she has encouraged Munden in a light, flirtatious way and did not mean to marry him. As Betsy's brother detects her hesitancy, he reminds her explicitly of "the capriciousness of her humour and behaviour; -- he conjured her to reflect on her late adventure with the imposter, Sir Frederick Fineer" (Haywood *Betsy* 458). Betsy's awful first marriage becomes a direct result of her questionable, flirtatious relationships with men. Many coquets are surrounded by foreign pets or

exotic animals, but Trueworth makes present of a squirrel to Miss Betsy, with which "Miss Betsy herself was charmed to an excess" (Haywood *Betsy* 137-8). Betsy never travels outside of England. Betsy's furniture is not noted for its origin outside the British Isles. In short, Betsy remains firmly ensconced in the domestic economy, never venturing outside England either by association or physical displacement. Correspondingly, and in contrast with my next subject, Betsy uses her sexual struggles and "remakes her public reputation and clarifies her private longings and desires, but can only do so through her forays into sexual indiscretion and her need to survive after that affair disintegrates" (Hultquist "Absent Children" 20). Betsy converts her indiscretion to a growth in her personal subjectivity, an opposite construction to that of Moll Flanders, who needs subjectivity to engage in her profligacy. For example, near the end of Betsy's marriage trials, she receives a letter from a high-ranking visitor containing a secret profession of love. Instead of flying to acquaint her abusive husband or laying herself down on a chaise, Betsy takes the time for "more mature deliberation" (Haywood *Betsy* 541). Betsy recovers herself, clarifies her desires through her horrible first marriage, and avoids close association with colonial spaces.

Two characters, however, do venture outside England, and rather by force.[23] One of Betsy's female friends and the wife of Mr. Goodman, Lady Mellasin, is introduced as a sort of ruin from the very beginning, and her status as such is related to class:

> The person he [Mr. Goodman] made choice of was called Lady Mellasin, relict of a baronet, who having little or no estate, had accepted of a small employment about the

[23] Another character travels from India to England. He is the nephew of Mr. Goodman, Betsy's co-guardian. Mr. Edward Goodman comes to England after the death of Mr. Goodman to settle the affairs of the estate. Despite his education in England and relationship with Mr. Goodman, Mr. Edward Goodman is called a "young Indian" with "a great deal of the honest simplicity of his uncle, both in his countenance and behaviour." He is not addressed in detail here. (Haywood *Betsy* 455-56)

> court, in which post he died, leaving her ladyship and one daughter, named Flora, in a very destitute condition. (Haywood *Betsy* 33)

Lady Mellasin is a "relict" leftover from a former marriage to a man of high class but relatively low finances. Lady Mellasin's status is defined by her financial class position. Her former husband maintained the social standing of his title through his court position, but Lady Mellasin is left "very destitute" and as such confirms her status as a "relict." She remains, balancing on the edge of financial and social ruin already a "relic" herself.

In her marriage with Mr. Goodman, Lady Mellasin's great error is a debt to a man, bonded to her "some few days previous to her marriage" with Mr. Goodman. Upon going to the Exchange one day, Mr. Goodman is arrested, kept in an officer's house, and forced to pay bail when the bond documents prove valid (Haywood *Betsy* 254-55). Mr. Goodman tells Lady Mellasin that the debt is an "affront" and an encumbrance and withholds sex and his presence from her, saying, "Madam, perhaps, we never more may meet between a pair of sheets" (Haywood *Betsy* 256-57). Mr. Goodman hears the story of Mrs. Marplus, the wife of the man to whom he is surprisingly in debt, calls his attorney, decides to divorce Lady Mellasin, and turns her out of doors that very day.

Interestingly, Lady Mellasin's crimes are framed around money. She had engaged in sex with Mr. Marplus and been caught, by Mr. Marplus's own trap, and as a result agreed to "give a bond for a large sum of money to Mr. Marplus" in exchange for his secrecy (Haywood *Betsy* 261). Lady Mellasin gives the bond just before her marriage to Mr. Goodwin. The narrative avoids suggesting Lady Mellasin slept with Mr. Marplus again after becoming engaged to Mr. Goodwin, relieving her of explicit adultery, though the reader is left wondering. However, I suggest sexual purity is not the measuring stick Haywood uses to evaluate the "good-ness" of

female characters. Lady Mellasin is condemned because of her awful money management and how easily she is blackmailed for money. She is overjoyed "at the expectation of getting off from the imaginary prosecution to think of breaking her word," but paid with Mr. Goodman's name. The blackmail bank draft promissory note had "no fixed sum, or sums, stipulated for the support [Mr. and Mrs. Marplus] were to receive" from Lady Mellasin (Haywood *Betsy* 261). Lady Mellasin is reckless with her money and her husband's money and this is the greater sin by which Mr. Goodwin condemns her. The narrative never again mentions Lady Mellasin's sex life or her premarital affair with Mr. Marplus. Instead, Lady Mellasin regrets "leaving her large and richly furnished house, -- her fine side-board of plate, -- her coach, -- her equipage, and all those other ensigns of opulence and state she now enjoyed" (Haywood *Betsy* 269). Lady Mellasin is neither condemned by nor regretful of her sexual past. She is banished to Jamaica in consequence of her monetary failings and marital strife, and she most regrets leaving the magnificence of money. She is not sad to leave England or her husband or the court; she is sorry to leave her finery. In leaving her finery, Lady Mellasin agrees she has transgressed the financial and sexual lines of her marriage—in this case the lines are one and the same. In one document, she has forfeited her narrative prerogative to stay in London.

Lady Mellasin's secrets of sexual intrigue, financial perfidy, and pretended affection are known to everyone in the home except Betsy, and it is here that the narrative first associates Lady Mellasin with imperialism and colonialism. Betsy goes to visit Lady Mellasin in her rooms, finds a scene of grief, and, in pity, "she stayed and drank coffee with them" (Haywood *Betsy* 267). When *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* was published in 1752, the major supplier of coffee to London was from factories and farms in East India, through the East India Trading Company (Smith 185). Haywood's timing of breakfast coffee is telling. The ladies all enjoy

coffee produced in colonized lands, similar lands in which Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora will soon settle. The coffee, then drunk often in coffeehouses around Britain, is associated with men's public lives, as well. Coffeehouses are not domestic spaces associated with upper-class women. The word *domestic*, then, takes on multiple meanings. The women drink a beverage that links them to men's spaces outside the home and ingredients grown in colonial spaces as part of the imperial economy. They have transgressed, Lady Mellasin in particular, and their unbelievable behavior puts them in conversation with, indeed in the same sentence and tea table as, other distanced and peripheral spaces.

After the dust has settled and Lady Mellasin can no longer exist in England, the narrative graciously offers her a solution to her geographic problem: Jamaica.

> …she had heard much talk of Jamaica,-- that it was a rich and opulent place, --that the inhabitants thought of little else, but how to divert themselves in the best manner the country afforded; and that they were not too strict in their notions, either as to honour or religion; -- that reputation was a thing little regarded among them; -- so that in case the occasion that had brought her thither should happen to be discovered, she would not find herself in the less estimation. (Haywood *Betsy* 522-23)

Through the emerging colonies, the troubling edges of empire have room for coquettes who push back too hard against the restraints placed on them. They cannot stay in London, the "center" of the empire and the place usually associated with coquetry, courtship, intrigues, and extravagance. Coquettes who fail to reform are troubling, and they belong, according to fiction, in the troubling margins that constitute the British Empire. Once Lady Mellasin has exceeded her limits and used her body in a transgressive manner through explicit sexual and financial mismanagement, the narrative instructively sends her to Jamaica to continue her behavior in a marginalized space.

She must live in the outer peripheries of the Empire, because her behavior cannot be tolerated in the hub.

Sharon Harrow, in her monograph, *Adventures in Domesticity*, shows "eighteenth-century British literature figured colonial otherness as a force that would underwrite financial stability as it undermined social hierarchy and infected or adulterated a feminized English virtue" (Harrow 2). Harrow's argument applies here to Lady Mellasin, but the consequence is to leave England, rather than reform. Lady Mellasin's sins have "othered" her and made her the infecting and adulterating force. A woman who supposedly exemplifies the upper classes of English society becomes a colonial Other, threatening to interfere with English virtue, sexual or, as I have argued here, financial. She remains British, if now colonial, limited by her colonial relationship with England. Now that she has crossed the metaphorical line of excessive and questionable financial extravagance, in addition to her sexual intrigues and adultery, Lady Mellasin must join the other threats to English virtue and move outward, literally and figuratively, in the empire. Lady Mellasin disrupted the "business of empire," to use Antoinette Burton's vocabulary (Burton 88). Burton believes "ordinary colonial subjects routinely disrupted" that business: "some withheld their labor power via sabotage, desertion, or the strike" (Burton 88). Most importantly for my study here, citizens could sabotage or desert their stations prescribed to them by fictional narratives created to represent arguments made about nonfictional women. Lady Mellasin failed to maintain a companionate marriage and financial relationship with her husband, failed to properly educate her daughter, and deserted her station as wife; the repercussions are not light.

Sexual virtue and financial management are tied to one another, as I demonstrate here with regard to Lady Mellasin. She is excluded from the rights of citizenship in the sense of living in England, and "women's exclusion from citizenship," as Skinner argues, is "intimately liked to

their relationship with property" (Skinner 103). Lady Mellasin must depart for colonial margins because she cannot belong within London society and has never been associated with the countryside. She fits nowhere but the unknown and brutal, violent and peripheral. Lady Mellasin's removal to the colonial economy reflects the "dependency in the psycho-social realm" of island Caribbean colonial outposts (Leech & Leech 229). Writing of nineteenth-century sex workers, Anne McClintock argues "prostitutes visibly transgressed the middle-class boundary between private and public, paid work and unpaid work," and Lady Mellasin blurs the same boundaries (McClintock 56). Lady Mellasin, though an upper-class woman and not a sex worker, made obvious the small threshold between public and private, paid and unpaid labor. She brought her sexuality and her husband's money into the public sphere. While she, I suggest, would not have suffered so extremely by bringing only her individual sexuality to the public sphere, mixing the commerce of public debt with her lack of decorum in managing her household expenditures widens the threshold too much for her husband. Mr. Goodwin must send Lady Mellasin out to mismanage her domestic space somewhere further away from himself. Lady Mellasin cannot be trusted to behave herself financially and sexually in a morally gray, coquettish London way. She has explicitly overstepped her social boundaries and led to her husband's arrest and daughter's shaming, and for that she must be forced into dependency upon England's economy through Jamaica as a colonial outpost.

Betsy Thoughtless was brought to the edge of sexual and financial ruin many times but escaped with relatively few bruises. Betsy had a temporarily damaged reputation, one big scandal in Oxford, a deception by a lower-class man, and a horrific first marriage. Through it all, Betsy remained virtuous enough to stay in England. Even in her disagreements with Mr. Munden, almost always regarding money, Betsy sought counsel from family and guardians:

Lady Trusty and her two brothers. Betsy's financial troubles are discussed and advised so that she remains in good social standing. Like Fanny Hill, Betsy Thoughtless maintained enough outer, social purity to continue her Englishness. Lady Mellasin, however, did not contrive the same effect. Lady Mellasin crossed into transgressive marriage territory in her financial indiscretions, and she must then be transported to transgressive colonial spaces.

While making important arguments about Lady Mellasin, the dangers of financial management, and Betsy's lack of class awareness, Haywood cannot resist a happy ending, but it comes at the expense of three lives. Mr. Goodman dies under the weight of his distress, before he is fully divorced from Lady Mellasin. Mr. Trueworth's first wife dies of illness. Mr. Munden dies of "the force of the agitation he had of late sustained" in his strained marriage with Betsy, "joined to his repeated debauches" and "over-heated" blood (Haywood *Betsy* 613). Betsy becomes quiet and relatively compliant. Instead of Fantomina's protestations to Beauplaisir and banishment to a French nunnery, Betsy "resolved to retire" into the country for the first year of widowhood (Haywood *Betsy* 620). After a year, Betsy and Trueworth are married and go to live in the country, securing her innocence "by keeping [her] cooped up" (Thompson 114). Betsy is safe in the containment of marriage, a bit broken in spirit by her first husband, and saved from overstepping the bounds of acceptable coquetry. Haywood manages the moral ending beautifully, saying Betsy's virtues are "at last rewarded with a happiness, retarded only till she had render'd herself wholly worthy of receiving it" (Haywood *Betsy* 634).

The women I have treated here are seduced, mismanaged, punished, and rewarded. These narrative bodies serve an important historical critical function in how they associate transgressive sexuality with colonial underpinnings of eighteenth-century commerce. Linda Colley frames

colonial spaces as a “means of escape” from the “domestic smallness and a lack of self-sufficiency” in the British Isles (Colley *Captives* 10). If colonized lands are an economic means of escape and regeneration for British capitalism, then so, too, are they a means of escape for those who transgress the various expectations of classed, feminine behavior. Moll Flanders moves back and forth between Britain and the American colonies; Fanny Hill only finds love when Charles returns from a colonial and financial loss; Betsy Thoughtless teeters on the edge of banishment, and Lady Mellasin is sent away to Jamaica with others who regularly step outside the proverbial lines. The economic precarity of colonialization lends itself to the sexual and financial precarity of women, particularly transgressive women.

CHAPTER TWO: QUOTIDIAN IMPERIALISM IN INDIA IN THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It is impossible to extricate sexualized bodies from colonization and the British imperial project, as I demonstrated in Chapter One. John Cleland, author of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, discussed in the first chapter, authored, or co-authored, one of the first erotic novels, one that focused on internal, emotional purity and let go of vaginal purity when it came to Fanny Hill's final redemption. The novel was originally laid out by Charles Carmichael, a friend of Cleland's, according to Cleland himself.[24] The two men contributed to the text while they were serving in India as part of the British East India Company (EIC). Cleland certainly made an authorial name for himself by publishing the novel many years later in England; his reputation lay on the shoulders of Fanny Hill, a heroine devised in and influenced by British colonial India. Cleland is also supposed by some to have assisted in writing or transcribing *A Voyage to the East Indies, with Observations on Various Parts There*,[25] a project describing the time period and geographical area I wish to focus on here: the 1740s and 50s.

Leaving London behind, this chapter moves to the southeastern coast of India; I move from London, the 'center' of the British Empire, to India, a nation inflicted with British settler colonialism. Many historical discussions of British India begin with either Lord Robert Clive, his success in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and his subsequent experience of wealth and power and military prowess, or the rapid solidification of the British company-state in India in the 1770s. Rather than beginning there, this chapter ends in the early 1750s, before Lord Clive's famous battles and Lady Margaret Clive's colonial collecting is truly underway. These broad strokes of

[24] For more on the questions of authorship, Hal Gladfelder details the history of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, along with two stories of legal battles concerning the novel's contentious public life. *Fanny Hill in Bombay: The Making and Unmaking of John Cleland*.

[25] "Although it is impossible to know exactly how much of *A Voyage* is Cleland's work, he was certainly a key collaborator—perhaps the text's ghostwriter" (Gladfelder 34).

historical experiences of Indian colonial life and British military operations are important, but my concern is the individual human experience of imperialism during the uncodified British India—a time when the EIC's occupation was more precarious, and perhaps more explicitly engaged in morally and socially situating the work of imperialism in and through its operation in the colonies. In focusing so closely on only a few years and one geographical area, I pose similar questions to Betty Joseph: how do we situate our literary histories to keep the individual in view? How do we think both widely about the British imperial trajectory and deeply to focus on the ruination experienced by bodyminds? [26] These questions contain an imperative to consider how "subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other," balancing the constitutive effects of colonizers on the colonized and the colonized on the colonizer "in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt 6-7). If the previous chapter focuses on European and, particularly, English experience of empire through fictional and sexually transgressive women, this chapter narrows down to the somewhat ordinary individual, the pieces, the subject, the quotidian bodymind[27] while taking on India as a primary geographical focus. Imperial histories often focus on extraordinary battles or exceptional individuals, but the work of empire comes down to individual contribution and participation. Without a fictional narrative and grand gestures to play

[26] Betty Joseph asks: "How do literary texts, historical records, and political, economic, and philosophical treatises of this era—ones that very often reveal European projections of cultural superiority, economic appropriation, and political control over alien cultures and their worlds—change their orientation if they are read as part of a stage within a larger history of globalization? […] Finally, we have to ask if it is possible to do literary history at a considerably expanded scale while still keeping in view the figure of the human that has been central to anticolonial and postcolonial criticism as the rights-bearing individual and as 'the subject under erasure'" (Joseph 28).
[27] The term *bodymind* was brought to literary and disability studies by Margaret Price. She gathered the term from trauma studies. "According to this approach, because mental and physical processes not only affect each other but also give rise to each other—that is, because they tend to act as one, even though they are conventionally understood as two—it makes more sense to refer to them together, in a single term" (Price 269).

out hypothetical scenarios and scandalously sexualized moments, what happens in the transgressive spaces of the British Empire?

The woman I narratively follow is Elizabeth Fowke, née Walsh. As a child, her nickname was Betty, but she is usually known as Eliza Fowke, wife of Joseph Fowke. Eliza was born in Madras in 1731, schooled in Britain, and returned to India with her brother to find a husband and move up in the world. She returned to England with her husband to bear and raise children. She is, compared to powerful military families like the Clives, an ordinary young woman of the lower strata of the upper class, though four influential families were all connected through marriage and children: the Kelsalls, the Maskelynes, the Walshes, and Benns. Her cousin, Margaret Maskelyne, later became Lady Margaret Clive; Eliza received significantly less public attention than her cousin, though she was involved in the family gossip and information chains. Eliza gained in India a husband with a fortune, the benefits of her brother's rise in fortune and fame, and the experience of a skilled colonizer. She returned to Britain in her later years to have children and she attempted to give them all the benefits she could muster. I will use Eliza's letters to investigate a colonial subject's individual, gendered experience during her years on the southeastern coast of India in the mid-eighteenth century. Because they are an incomplete collection of letters, my approach will be fluid as I tell a story contextualized within broader historical research.

As one might imagine, in following an individual, others are found, too. Most people and experiences remain archivally fragmented, seen largely through their occasional mention and presence in the texts of others. Within Eliza's letters are people she erases, ignores, or criticizes harshly. I replicate the feminist reading practices of Maria Fuentes to "stretch archival fragments by reading *along the bias grain* to eke out extinguished and invisible but no less historically

important lives" (Fuentes 7, italics in original). Eliza's letters contain multitudes, and those multitudes are included as much as possible in my study here.[28] This chapter reads Eliza Fowke's letters to imagine and historically place her experience as a colonizer and a colonial subject, while stretching the fabric of her letters to study closely the fragments and wreckage of bodyminds experiencing the erasure and elision of imperialism. These two historicized readings of the text as Eliza's personal writing and the fragmented others buried in her writing are the two threads of this chapter. In pulling on these two strands, I find two distinguishable types of ruination occurring simultaneously and as mutually constitutive experiences. With her husband's fortune of £18,000, which is later gambled away, Eliza becomes a less violent wreckage of imperialism as she returns to England and dies of a long illness after experiencing precarity in the British community outside Fort St. David and Fort St. George. Her narrative of her own precarity and eventual ruin/ation, though, is constituted by the erasure she perpetrates on the Indian people hidden in her letters and her experience. Yet non-British subjects need to be erased or limited by the settler colonial subjects if the story of the ruination of a white, colonial woman is to emerge fully. The people living on the colonized coast experience ruination perpetrated by the imperialist activities of Eliza and her white community.

I argue that the dual process of ruin in fact defines British imperialism in India in the mid-eighteenth century. Kathleen Wilson argues in *The Sense of the People* that urban areas in England created a culture that "was an instrument of cultural and political struggle that both mirrored new social hierarchies and refashioned the parameters of political debate" (Wilson 7). The Madras region was not an urban area with a population of 2,500, the size Wilson uses for her sample. But, on its own smaller scale, the culture of Madras and its surrounding villages and

[28] I am limited by a number of factors, most particularly access to non-digitized archival materials during the Covid-19 pandemic and a lack of historical and critical attention to this particular time in India (1749-1753).

forts mirrored the social hierarchies of English society's construction and refashioned political culture to include ruin/ation, particularly of people living in the Coromandel Coast while the British actively colonized the area. To perpetrate imperialism is to commit a ruination that reaches far and wide, leaving human monuments in its wake. Phillip Stern suggested "the pre-Plassey East India Company" was not so much "a commercial body or an arm of the Anglo-British state" but rather "an independent form of polity and political community" (Sterne 257). As a political community, those living in the Madras region formed a political culture. And that political culture, because of its looser connection with governmental forms—it was, after all, formed as an outpost of the EIC's trade rather than explicit, state-sponsored colonization—attempted to reform British social hierarchies and include ruination in its very nature. Being part of this micro-political culture and as a white, colonial British woman, Eliza Fowke both becomes a ruin and leaves others behind her as wreckage. She and others like her are synedoches of the formation of imperialist societies, especially British, constituted by the process of ruination and the ensuing wreckage left in its wake.

Felicity Nussbaum has noted in *Torrid Zones* that "western women of a certain status were both implicated in empire and victimized by" the expansion of imperialism and colonialism (Nussbaum 3). Acknowledging the complicated position of women like Eliza Fowke, my project, unlike Nussbaum's, is not concerned with detailing the violence of patriarchy in and of itself. Rather, I am concerned with the blurry parts of contact, the ways women's bodies experienced empire, the ways bodies reflect society back to itself, and how all these things create space for one another in the muck and mire of colonialism. As Sunil Agnani writes of Diderot and Burke, my aim is "precisely *not* to erase, cover over, or resolve the contradictory and ambiguous moments that arise while examining the work" of, in my case, Eliza Fowke (Agnani xxii). Using

the letters of a white, British woman, I attempt, like Fuentes, to do the work of "questioning the archives' veracity and filling out miniscule fragmentary mentions or the absence of evidence with spatial and historical context" (Fuentes 4). I want to document the smaller teleology of one woman's relationships with those she encounters as a settler colonizer. These relationships leave traces, traces that return to unsettle our current political, social, and cultural structures (Lowe 6-7).[29] Eliza's letters contain both fragments and distinct absence of others, and those parts of her letters are included in my focus as much as possible.

This chapter is also not meant to be a "white recovery project" focusing on the experience of whites in Asia. The goal of my chapter is to use the letters of one woman as an example of the ways in which whiteness constituted itself in relationship with and in opposition to Indian identity and geography in the mid-eighteenth century. Soile Ylivuouri describes whiteness in the eighteenth century as an "ethnic identity" and a "racial marker in British thought" (Ylivuouri 670). To be properly British, in their imagination, was also to be white. And being white British was a negative identity: formed in opposition to identities, ethnicities, and nationalities it was not. "Fair" is constructed as opposite to dark complexions beginning in the sixteenth century, and Eliza uses this negative construction of white British identity to consider her own.[30] Eliza Fowke used people and places around her to foster and facilitate her own whiteness and Britishness, redressing her precarity as a colonial Briton born and living in India. In using primarily the letters of one woman, written from two military outposts along the Coromandel Coast, to two women living together in a small house in London, this history is one of "translocal regionalism." The term, coined by James Mulholland in *Before the Raj*, combines "postcolonial

[29] Lisa Lowe's *Intimacies of Four Continents* engages in a discussion of these blurry and complicated relationships, focusing on the archive's continued violence and tracing a genealogy of modern liberalism.
[30] For a fuller discussion of whiteness and Blackness and their construction, see *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* by Kim Hall.

theory's notion of culture as a contest over power together with the circulation of people, goods, and ideas found in histories of science and the geopolitics and trade apparent among commonwealth and empire histories" (Mulholland 9). The story I tell here is one of movement from one localized region to another, rather than an effort to see the workings of the British Empire as a whole, the Indian subcontinent's experience with imperialism in the eighteenth century, or the inner workings of the British EIC, as many have already done. Instead of looking at the rhetoric and ideas of a larger imperialist moment, a task that scholarship still needs to delineate, I focus on the experiences and colonizing activities of one woman, Eliza Fowke, and how their transmission back to a small house in England practiced the kind of imperial ruin I highlight in my dissertation.

Mulholland suggests translocal regionalism "functions best through analysis that is middling in scale;" middle reading, as a practice, "identifies unique cultural groups, such as Anglo-Indian reading publics, while at the same time theorizing their entanglement with larger phenomena, such as British literature or European colonialism" (Mulholland 16-17). While Mulholland analyzes the literary societies, poets, publishing practices, and reading publics in Anglo-India in the eighteenth century, I find it useful to apply his conceptualization of translocal regionalism and its associated middle reading to discuss the relationship between individual experiences recorded in personal writing and the efforts of the British East India Company (EIC) to gain all of India as imperial territory and repel the French. Eliza's letters, read at a middling distance balancing her individual experience and her entanglement in British imperialism through the EIC, participate in what Nicholas Dirks describes and "erasing the enormity of the influence of imperialism" on British life and "suppressing the effects of [colonizers'] actions abroad" (Dirks 28). Fowke minimizes her participation in the EIC's efforts to conquer the Eastern coast of India

while treating the goods and information she sends back to England as being of little consequence and playing polite wife and niece.

The EIC established several strongholds and merchant ports on the Eastern coast of India. The first establishment was Fort St. George in the mid-seventeenth century. In the late seventeenth century, the English EIC established Fort St. David, further south, for greater access to merchant networks already existing in the area.[31] There were a few difficulties in setting up Fort St. David, "including coming to an agreement with the local elite and dealing with their demands" (Seshan 214). Some of those in power in the area wanted the English to trade in the pepper and high-quality cloth common in the area, but merchant networks were perhaps not so pleased to see the EIC so firmly ensconced. At the time of its establishment, Fort St. David was essentially an extension of Fort St. George, "but one that was in a different political region (at least initially), and therefore held out promise of possibly greater freedom to manoeuvre" (Seshan 216). The forts were more than one hundred miles apart and Fort St. David focused on trade. The EIC was organized under a Court of Directors, established in 1709, "composed of twenty-four stock-holding members elected annually" (Chaudhuri 27). The Court of Directors had formal channels of authority and was organized into two larger parts, "a superior body in London" and "a subordinate one in Asia" that included the President and his Council (Chaudhuri 27).[32] However, Margot Finn argues women maintained the behind-the-scenes management of finances and social relationships. She uses for her case study a Mrs. Chitty, who gives gifts and sells merchandise through her networks, paying outstanding bills for many family members and effectively managing investments (Finn). Eliza Fowke's letters demonstrate the way women,

[31] Other nationalities, such as the Dutch, maintained their own East India Companies and equivalents. In this chapter, I am focused on the British East India Company. When necessary, all others will be clearly identified.
[32] Chaudhuri includes a helpful chart for structural reference within a discussion of the EIC's formal management structure in the early eighteenth century.

though lesser in number than the men in India and not part of the official power structure detailed in EIC documents of record, managed the work of empire through social relationships and economic endeavors at these two EIC footholds. These two forts, Fort St. George and Fort St. David, and their inhabitants make up the centers around and through which Eliza Fowke orbits. She arrives first in Fort St. David, about half a century after its establishment. It is still connected by regular contact and political influence with Fort St. George and still a merchant outpost slightly closer to fabric production industries than Fort St. George. Eliza later moves to Fort St. George, the more established EIC port with a long-standing hierarchical political structure that ordered the lives of the English living there.

The gifts and commerce traversed oceans; studying Fowke's relationship with the British imperial project requires a study of the colonial relationship with the water surrounding the two forts, the towns, the people. The oceans served as the means of transportation to and from the colonial outposts as well as a place of territorial battles between ships and nations. Isabel Hofmeyr highlights the importance of using what she calls a hydrocolonial lens in studying the work of colonialism. She describes *hydrocolonialism* as "a commitment to understanding a world indelibly shaped by imperial uses of water." Such a study of the hydrocolonial suggests "accelerated processes of waste making… where certain people were rendered as waste, whether through the slave trade, indenture, or penal transportation" (Hofmeyr 13). In the case of this study, Fowke and the EIC use the water surrounding the southeastern coast of India as transportation for colonial subjects, the field of battle, and an important space of cultural production, which we will see in Eliza's letters. As the EIC created and maintained settlements along the coast, they employed local merchants to render complicit other factors and producers of goods. At the individual level, Eliza, though, does not acknowledge any of this activity in her

letters preserved in the archive, instead distancing herself from the work of imperial industrial exploitation by focusing on her marriage and social engagements, erasing as many colonial subjects and Indian people as necessary. In her letters, she discusses the hardships of others, most particularly her English neighbors, while eliding the Indian people around her and dismissing the French. In doing so, Eliza becomes a monument to the whiteness of the British imperial project even as she attempts to erase the bodies of others.

Eliza Fowke's story

One night in the late 1730s, a young girl wrote her first letter home from boarding school. "Home" was with her maternal aunts; her parents were already dead. Eliza sits using her large cursive and unsteady hand to tell her aunts, Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, that she has "been at Scool 3 week [sic]" and "I like it very well but not so well as home" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 February c. 1739). Her handwriting is large and uneven, taking up the entire page for a short note home. She wishes for a letter from her aunts to help her adjust to her new school with Mrs. Atkinson in Liverpool. With each letter, Eliza's handwriting improves, grows smaller and neater, and her spelling becomes more regular. As her letters and handwriting develop, Eliza narrates the smaller events that makeup a childhood. She needs a filling in a tooth and writes home for money (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, undated). Then, she catches an illness and writes home again, this time just to tell her aunts that she looks forward to seeing them in the summer (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, undated). School is helping her writing, but a family member has died, she has been ill, and Eliza wants to see familiar faces. Eliza travels home to London to visit her aunts, later returning to school and telling stories about chickens and moving up in her class as Mrs. Atkinson adds new students (Eliza Fowke to Mrs. Maskelyne, 3 March c. 1739). She is proud of her progress and being at school, but desperately wants to see family.

Ten years go by with no letters saved in the archives of her life. Ten years of boarding school, living in London, taking care of her aunts. Ten years of being at home reading, working on her needle handicrafts, helping her aunts manage their small finances and write to extended family. At the end of these ten years, Eliza and her aunts argue, and Eliza leaves for India with her brother, John Walsh. The letters that survive are unclear about the subject of their argument, but it was enough for Eliza to make a life-altering decision to travel back to the place of her birth: Madras.[33] She is soon remorseful, though, or perhaps just lonely, and writes letters from the ship she is on and by the first ship to leave Fort St. David after she arrives.[34]

"there's not one day passes without
my doing it will my dear Aunts ever forgive me the ungrateful
behavior I so often been guilty of tho' it was really more
Peevishness of temper than ingratitude: & I always blamed
my self for it the moment I was Cool. but beleive me my Dear
Aunts when I reflect upon some particular instances of it tis
with so much remorse that you've been most severely revenged
upon me how could I give a moments uneasiness to such
dear kind friends when it was in my power to help it?
but I was young & violent in my passions & could not bear
the least controul tho' for my own good. accept of
this excuse for I do assure you that notwithstanding
my humours always did & always shall love you as my

[33] Chennai
[34] I have made significant effort to preserve the feeling and spirit of the letters by leaving in spelling errors, questionable grammar, and line formatting. Images of the letters are unavailable and not allowed; my transcriptions attempt to show Eliza's writing style, though translated into typeface.

my own Soul" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskeylne, 10 October 1749)

The above excerpt is from a letter dated 10 October 1749 and shows an unexpected self-awareness in the wake of their argument. Eliza has had quite a bit of time to reflect on her conduct. The same letter describes her journey to India in few sentences. She was "extreamly Sea sick" and "kept [her] bed ten days," though she finds a silver lining in her sickness, in that she could stifle the grief she felt in leaving Sarah and Jane Maskelyne (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749. Eliza, a young woman of eighteen, finds society on the ship confining and boring. Her only real outlet is writing letters to the aunts with whom she argued. Any sickness Eliza felt is in service of her familial and new social relationships aboard the ship. It is mentioned only in passing.

Eliza makes a point to distance herself from other British women traveling to India. Instead of making friends with other young ladies on the ship so she might know someone upon arrival, she decides to highlight her age difference and maturity.

> The Young Ladies my Ship Mates were very
> good natured girls but quite Children. they were
> almost always out upon Deck in the day & used to
> go to bed before me at night so that I had very little
> of their Company I diverted myself with reading
> all the Morning about one we used to go dinner
> [t]hen I read again till tea time afterwards we
> al walked upon Deck till Seven o'clock & then
> two of the Gentlemen passengers, my Brother & I play'd
> Whist till supper & about ten we all retired but you know
> that is too early an hour for me so I generaly took up my

> Book again till I was sleepy this was my life aboard
> a ship I was quite tired with the same thing over & over
> again for so long a time together & what was worst of all
> I very seldom had an opportunity of a little private
> Chat with my Brother. the Captain behav'd very politely
> we none of us had any quarrel the whole Voyage. but
> toward the latter end there was a great coolness being
> so long confin'd put us all out of humor & Spirits &
> I never was gladder in my life than when I saw shore (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749)

Eliza describes herself in class terminology and age. She accepts that the captain should be in society with them and that there are more than the usual number of gentlemen with whom to play cards, but this is partially because all the other young women kept the habits of girls – or perhaps the habits of young ladies of the countryside, rather than London. Eliza points out to her aunts that she is a grown woman because she keeps the habits of an adult socialite in reading, playing cards, and being unable to go to bed early. Her education at the boarding school, it seems, has paid its dividends in her habits. The rhetorical choice to highlight her own maturity supports Eliza's efforts to distance herself socially from the other young women. Eliza is only about nineteen years old during her voyage to Fort St. David—she is not more than a handful of years older than the young people described in her letter. Eliza distances herself in maturity, class, age, and habit in one short section of her letter, choosing instead, as we discover later in the letter, to rely on the "correct" social acquaintances of Company life at the fort.

Interestingly, Eliza does not discuss the sea or the ocean voyage in detail in her early letters, besides to mention her sickness. She instead focuses on the British people traveling with

her and the upper social levels of the officers, like the captain. H.V. Bowen calls these avoidances and shifts in emphasis away from the ocean and maritime travel "unfortunate and indeed misleading because it diverts attention from the emergence of a British global maritime empire, several of the most dynamic mainsprings of which were located in the Indian Ocean region" (Bowen 46). Eliza's omission feels deliberate in this light. Having travelled the oceanic routes between Madras and England in her childhood and again in adolescence, Eliza experiences the ruin of oceanic colonization and she is intimately familiar with the hydrocolonial space. She knows the Indian Ocean and her voyage to the Indian coast is important to British maritime activities, both military and merchant. Through Hofmeyr's hydrocolonial lens, we see Eliza attempts to erase the movement and effects of the ocean and her time spent in an oceanic hydrocolony, i.e. an imperial ship.[35] The sea and ocean are ever-present and unavoidable. To leave them out of the letter is an intentional attempt to ask Jane and Sarah Maskelyne to focus on Eliza's social travails, rather than the journey and the more explicit colonial activities.

Eliza's brother served as her escort and current family connection to the EIC; her father had worked in the EIC. John Walsh, Eliza's brother born in 1726, first joined the EIC in 1742 like most young men did: as a writer. In 1747 John returned to England for two years, by the end of which he had risen to the rank of Senior Merchant (Carlyle & McConell). These were the conditions of his return to Madras with his sister, Eliza. When he arrives in India, he is soon named "Counceller Secretary & Storekeeper," which, according to Eliza, are fine-sounding titles "but little profit" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 2 November 1749). John plans to set himself up as a man of business in India; Eliza believes he "deserves it," the "poor Dear" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 2 November 1749). Someone in India, an unnamed

[35] Hofmeyr discusses what kinds of spaces might be thought of as hydrocolonies in her introduction to *Dockside Reading*, pages 15-16.

friend of the family referenced in Eliza's letters, "recomended him to the Diamond Consignments," and John does well enough in trading diamonds that Jane and Sarah Maskelyne send explicit congratulations to John on his success (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 August 1751). John became private secretary to Lord Clive in 1757, who had married John's cousin, Margaret Maskelyne, in 1753, after Eliza's return to England. John Walsh's family connections led to his acquiring significant wealth through diamond trading and the distribution of winnings via Lord Clive after the Battle at Plassey in 1757.[36]

Eliza later returns to the subject of her journey from England to India and describes it much differently. Looking back two years later, Eliza decides to tell her aunts:

> I can not describe to you the misery
> I suffered, no sickness I every felt came near it
> the little hole of a Cabbin I was stuffed
> into where there was not a breath of air
> made me worse and the continual [noise?]
> nastiness and stink made me almost distracted (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 20 February 1750/51)

The contrast between this second description, from a letter dated 20 February 1750/51, is stark. The first letter, sent in 1749, describes the journey in ways that confirmed British habits, Eliza's maturity, and built up her class standing. The earlier description aimed to comfort Eliza's aunts and focused on her social position. The later description, also sent to her aunts, paints a picture of suffocation and madness. In writing of the ocean now, Eliza begins to acknowledge her place

[36] T.H. Bowyer, E.I. Carlyle, and Anita McConell trace many of these family connections through letters and EIC records and created entries in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography for both Joseph Fowke and John Walsh. Notably, Elizabeth (Walsh) Fowke has no entry.

within the hydrocolonial routes that have affected her experience of imperialism. At first, she was an adolescent attempting to avoid her watery connections. Two years later, the ocean takes away her air, forces her into a small space, isolates her, and empties her stomach. The "misery" of the second description is a far cry from her rose-colored glasses of a nineteen-year-old. Eliza bathed her journey in politenesses, in ways that confirmed Eliza's social safety because she had social standing and uncompromising Britishness. Two years later, Eliza had a husband, financial stability, and social standing of her own; she no longer needed to create security in the narrative of her letters and instead told her aunts the real story.

After establishing herself as a woman with the appropriate upper-class social habits, Eliza begins to use her shiny narrative to describe the society she finds when she arrives on shore. She mentions the "Poor Miss Rouse's," who have arrived at Fort St. Davids to find their parents dead. A distant cousin volunteers to take them in, and, according to Eliza, this might be "look'd upon as an extraordinary piece of Generosity in England but here 'tis thought only common Humanity" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749). British society on the southeastern coast of India in the middle of the eighteenth century was carried out differently, likely more closely knit because of the limited numbers and occupation of a foreign land, and Eliza's mode of explanation is to use her London experience of society as a reference point.

In using British and London society as a point of reference, Eliza begins to identify social codes we recognize today as quintessentially British. Kate Smith and Margot Finn find the same use of British society as a reference for Eliza, "[situating] her readers by using reference points they would understand" (Smith). Eliza writes that "they are certainly much more hospitable here than in Europe I believe they look upon them selves as a little community Banish'd their Country so think themselves obliged to make it as agreable to one another as they can" (Eliza Fowke to

Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749). Eliza's sense of community is tied to the (white) British people she finds in Madras and their close-knit community. Part of being this close-knit group is keeping others out. At the time of Eliza's writing, "the Company had only very small commercial and military establishments, and the total number of Britons in India probably fell some way short of 5,000" (Bowen "Britain in" 53). The inhabitants of Company housing are familiar partially because they are small in number. Eliza must be on good terms with everyone around her because society is confined. The main social interlocutor Eliza relies upon is a Mrs. Prince. Mrs. Prince "went with me to all my visits & they were return'd to me at her house & she advises me & tells me their customs which in a great many things are very different from ours & in so an obliging friendly manner that i think myself very happy in meeting with such an acquaintance" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749). Mrs. Prince takes Eliza in, finding her a bed to sleep in and friends with whom to visit until Eliza can set up house with her brother, John. Eliza's future within the colonizer community is bound into her own ability to identify and encourage British social expectations of a woman her age and class status, as seen in her letter about the oceanic travel and her relationship with one of the more powerful women in the residential community of the Company surrounding Fort St. David.

Eliza's focus on Britishness and codifying her place in society, though, brings with it an erasure of its own, particularly when she is focused on fulfilling whatever ideals she associates with the upper ranks of British society in India at the time. The first and clearest example is housing. Eliza writes a discussion of her housing situation, focusing on nationality and race.

> here are no houses hardly to be had
> you'd be surprized to see what strange holes people
> are for'd to put up with. all the English houses

were knock'd down when the french attack'd the place. So we

are obliged to live in the black people's they are all built

in the same fashion exactly like an English Barn[37]

that I live in is as good as any in the place it's a little

Bed Chamber divided off at each end & the middle

is our Parlour. (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749)

In this excerpt about housing, taken from her first letter sent home and dated 10 October 1749, Eliza uses nationality to discuss military power and conquest. The "English houses" were knocked down by the French in a recent battle along the portion of the coastline surrounding Madras and Fort St. David. Eliza uses race [black] to discuss all non-English and non-French peoples living in the same area, a common convention at the time, as I discuss below. Eliza attempts to "makeover" the home in which she lives. She is "positively re-ordering her environment, making it conform to an idea," by first renaming her home as a "Bed Chamber" and a "Parlour" (Douglas 3). The rest of Eliza's work to "chase dirt," to use Mary Douglas's vocabulary, is implied in her effort to rename. If she calls the three rooms bed chambers and a parlour, then Eliza can decorate them and furnish them accordingly. They have become English in her use and revisioning of the home and they do the work of creating Eliza's English display of class and culture. Eliza asserts her racial identity as distinctly not-[black] and reorders everything around her to be marked by her British nationality.

[37] This word, "Barn," is one about which I remain unsure. I made my best deduction using the context and what I could gather on the page. This letter is not one that allows for photography under British Library guidelines.

In the same section of the same letter, Eliza does reordering work for Mrs. Prince and the British women living near the fort, as well. Eliza claims Mrs. Prince "has as many servants to wait upon her as a Dutchess" and associates her with a particular sort of cultural spectre. This spectre and broad stereotype of Britishness is characterized as "inoperable lazy" by Eliza. The British women in this community are "carried along in a Pallanqueen," a transport a bit like a sedan chair but perhaps a bit larger and more ornate, "like the Vaux Hall boats," with "five blacks & a soldier marching before with a Sword in his hand & a boy running by my side to keep my petticats Down." So, for one woman to travel around within their own community, five Indian men, one (presumably Indian) soldier, and one young Indian boy are all employed regularly. Possibly more people were needed for the duties of carrying the palanquin, as well. Those with more money and "grandeur" have "half a Dozen of these Soldiers" to guide their transports (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749). The "pallanqueens" themselves, often spelled "palanquin" or "palankeen," were a cultural appropriation from Eastern cultures.[38] The depiction of British women in the Fort St. David community is specially crafted to display a sense of value in need of protection by

Figure 1: India, A Nabob (governor in India under Mogul Empire) being carried on palanquin (covered litter), Narghile pipe (Hookah) by Pierre Sonnerat, from Journey, engraving, 1774, detail / De Agostini Picture Library / G. Dagli Orti / The Bridgeman Art Library

[38] "'Palanquin, a kind of chaise or chair, borne by men on their shoulders, much used by the Chinese and other Eastern peoples for travelling from place to place.' – *Bailey's Dict.* 2nd ed." (Yule and Burnell 661)

including so many armed men and a sense of power in having appropriated the palanquin and added more protection. British settlers manage a two-fold operation: they denigrade Indians carrying their palanquins, while appropriating the custom of palanquins and casting it a luxury. To be lazy is a luxury of the wealthiest settlers, but laziness and luxury require others to become a nameless carrier of one's palanquin. A few years later, in 1810, another traveller writes of palanquins that "this splendid piece of ingenuity is appropriated solely to the conveyance of his majesty, and of such nobles, and European, or Arabian visitors, as may obtain permission to visit [his majesty] at Domoni" (Williamson 116). While Eliza Fowke lived in India many years before, the association with colonial privilege is apparent in how she describes riding in a palanquin as being similar to the British "Vaux Hall boats." They are an opportunity to "see and be seen," as the saying goes. The women's petticoats and gowns are also protected by children; the clothes are seen as monetarily valuable or valuable in their display of class position. These intense protections assist in suggesting "a degree of anxiety about the tribulations of long-distance rule and its effect on the British character." British women needed to protect themselves from becoming "suspect in the wilderness of Indian idolatry" even while appropriating technology found in that so-called "wilderness" (Sen xxv).

Protecting themselves from non-British people while traveling, "protecting" the material goods like dresses that they deem valuable and appropriating the palanquin to use for indolence and laziness (as Eliza puts it) is the British women's work of imperialism. The threat of soldiers running or riding along with a carriage moves with the white women, protecting their value as colonizers to the idea of the Company-State and its rule. Sudipta Sen suggests these sorts of protections and responses to worries resulted in the "gradual segregation of Britons and their Indian subjects, a distance that was made formal as the company-state become more firmly

entrenched in the Indian soil" (Sen xxv). But, while Eliza is writing her letters, this work of segregation is evident in the protections and fears of British women. Indolence and laziness are ways British women separated themselves and Eliza reinforces her own Britishness by associating herself with the practices of separation and protection that she details in the letter. Though she at first pokes fun at the palanquins by calling those who use them "inoperable lazy," the descriptions all include the personal pronoun "my." Eliza's own skirts are held down from the wind and away from the dust. She takes palanquins to move about. She, in her first letter back to her aunts, practices the imperialism she at first does not understand but has adopted, either instinctually or as she is inculcated and implicated within the EIC colonial efforts.

At Madras

The city of Madras, now known as Chennai, already had a long history before the British and French arrived. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Madras was "an amalgam of three separate though overlapping societies: the suburban villages, which belonged to the precolonial agrarian society of Tondaimandalam; the predominantly Indian town centers, which had their own links with indigenous urban and rural society but which grew mainly in response to the new colonial trading settlement;" and the colonial society reflecting the commercial and colonial interests and policies of Britain and, for a time, France (Neild 218). The region around Madras was comprised of the town and settlement, Fort St. George, and Fort St. David, the busier British port just down the coast. Eliza Fowke first arrived at Fort St. David, living amongst the British there and navigating the houses that resemble "Barns" and the multitude of performative labor management of all those soldiers and servants running around the palanquins—all manifestations of British colonialism. After a while, Eliza and her brother, Joseph Fowke, traveled to Fort St.

George. Mrs. Prince's husband was given a post as deputy governor of Fort St. George in 1749,[39] and after they had moved to the other British fort, Eliza and her brother soon followed in the winter of the same year.

Madras and Fort St. George were different from Fort St. David in both organization and individual experience. Fort St. George, established before Fort St. David, had a surrounding "White Town" and settlement of British Company men and their families. Indian and non-white residents were pushed to a separate suburban area. It was important to the British to find ways to display their colonial success to each other, and part of that display was fortifying themselves within their whiteness and Britishness through spatial constructions. The British in the "upper ranks of colonial society—high level Company officials and successful merchants—sought to create a lifestyle commensurate in luxury and prestige with their growing political and economic power in Madras" (Neild 224). Eliza felt the same push to perform her brother's rise in fortune and position and her increase in social power: while "that house that I lived at in St Davids was a

Figure 2: Fort St. George on the Coromandel Coast, 1754. National Maritime Museum (https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-105996)

[39] I found this information from (https://www.worldstatesmen.org/India_BrProvinces.htm#Madras) and hinted at in Eliza's letters (though she never mentions exactly which post Mr. Prince is to have) but have been unable to confirm it through EIC records, largely because of a lack of access to the archives.

Barn this that I am going into is a little palace I assure you" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sara Maskelyne, 1 February 1750). This is a complete change for Eliza. At Fort St. David, Eliza was new and inexperienced and dependent upon Mrs. Prince's social capital and her brother's breaking into the diamond trade in his new position as a senior merchant with the Company. The move to Fort St. George, however, brought Eliza a bigger house and a finer way of life in the White Town section of the EIC port town.

While Eliza's October 1749 letter focused on "redecorating" her narrative to emphasize her Britishness, her February letter changes in tone. She has moved to Fort St. George. Her brother is successful in trade, more than anyone anticipated, apparently.[40] Eliza is more lighthearted than her previous letter and she has found herself some social entertainment.

> I like India
> very well, we want a few publick diversions 'tis true & more
> variety of Company, but those that we have are very
> sociable we have often Balls & dine & sup together of a
> Moon light night we walk about the town & play at
> french tagg or some such thing, its just like living in a
> Country town in England, but in a much grander manner
> & puts me vastly in mind of your living at Gloucester. (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749)

Eliza has focused on making her experience in Madras individual by describing a specific walk and adding a game of "french tagg" as an example. She also makes sure to remind her aunts—

[40] Eliza's letters suggest that the family was unsure whether John Walsh would acquire fortune and good standing in India, though his father and grandfather had previously done so. Walsh seems to have a knack for the side trades conducted by EIC officers and makes himself a fortune that supports his sister until her marriage.

and herself—of her Englishness in her reference to Gloucester. She describes the area of Madras she resides in as being like an English country town, perhaps a bit like Gloucester. This undoubtedly would have conjured a unique reading experience for Eliza's aunts. As they read, they imagine Eliza in England again, visiting Gloucester and playing with other young people without a care in the world. Eliza and her aunts participate in this letter and the above excerpt in colonizing India explicitly through their association of British activities with Britishness taking place in Indian geographical space. This is not a case of "atopic" blank space, as Siobhan Carroll has described other, unsuccessfully colonized marginalized spaces. India is not an atopic, unrecognizable space relegated to fictional literature (Carroll 9).[41] Eliza has claimed the work of colonization in her personal, nonfictional writing and included her aunts in her intellectual work of continually remaking herself as British, in opposition to Indian geography and society.

Eliza suggests her experience in India is much like that in a "Country town in England," but with the grandeur of wealth in a country with a lower cost of living. The mention of "french tagg" perhaps seems at odds with the claim to Englishness and country manners, but Eliza has included the French game between mentions of balls, dining in society, and the substantial comparison between life in the Madras region and an English country town. Eliza is comfortable mentioning fashionable French games in a region recently under French control. I suggest this is because playing such fashionable games with a group of young people in a luxurious South Asian garden is so closely associated with English garden experiences like walking down St. James' Park or enjoying the festivities at the Vaux Hall Gardens. The reference also reinforces

[41] "Spaces that the empire could not successfully colonize were spaces that literature alone might claim, and so, I argue, individual author's representations of atopias during the period that William Galperin and Susan Wolfson have dubbed the Romantic Century (1750-1850) reflect not only their attitudes toward the growth of Britain's maritime empire, but also the part they saw texts playing in that expansion." Carroll, 9.

European, imperialist identities as equal to whiteness, creating distance from South Asian inhabitants and identities.

Notably absent from her description of community entertainments is mention of military or EIC activities. Eliza's change in tone is interesting in light of the history of Madras. In 1746, Madras came under the naval authority of France. The French laid siege to the weak English defenses, conveniently while English support was absent. French authorities collected a handsome ransom in return for their possession.[42] When news of the French possession of Madras in 1747 reached England, Admiral Boscawen was entrusted with raising crew and forces and sailing six ships from England, receiving four ships from Admiral Griffin and utilizing eleven EIC ships. Beginning at Fort St. David, Boscawen, the British forces, and the EIC eventually retook Madras and left Pondicherry to the French (Dodwell 26-30). Eliza would certainly have been geographically, politically, and emotionally close to the military action led by Admiral Boscawen and the French defeat. And yet, Eliza makes no mention of these events. She focuses, instead, on the frivolities of "French tagg" and the English landmarks she can incorporate into her letter. Rather than

Figure 3: The Honorable Edward Boscawen Rear Admiral of the Blue Squadron of His Majesty's Fleet 1747, by Johan Faber and Allan Ramsey https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-127542

[42] Henry Dodwell details the battle between Dupleix and La Bourdonnais and the English authorities in Madras in his book, *Dupleix and Clive: The Beginning of Empire*, first published in 1920. The book relies on the same archives I have consulted for this chapter, though Dodwell's narrative influence is apparent. He suggests La Bourdonnais received "88,000 pagodas [that] were actually delivered to him in gold" and diamonds (Dodwell 15).

associate herself with the actions of the British imperial ships and the EIC, Eliza chooses deliberately to focus on her casual social interactions and lighter pursuits.

In her second letter, sent from near Fort St. George, Eliza begins sending purchases back to her aunts. These, too, she connects within English context. Her first package is "a dozen Shifts which I beg your acceptance of its all that I cou'd get any one to take by this Ship." Eliza sends some basics back to her aunts made of the fabric she finds in Madras and Fort St. George. Eliza tells Jane and Sarah Maskelyne that the shifts "are not the finest Cloth for I know you'd dispose of them" if they were, and "people dont wear such fine linnen in England as they do here." Fortunately, Eliza has thought of this and sent linen of the quality her aunts might deem for "Common use" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749/50). During the 1740s, cotton fabrics from India, like those Eliza sends and describes, "were so immensely popular in Britain precisely because of their quality and versatility, which the English could not imitate" in the early part of the eighteenth century "because they lacked the technology" of Indian producers (Skeehan 47). However, by the time Parliament repealed the 1721 Calico Act in 1774, "Indian cotton textiles no longer appeared able to compete with an industrializing, large-scale British manufacturing industry" that imported raw cotton from its many colonies (Skeehan 53). [43] Eliza contrasts the quality of fabrics in India and England without mentioning an Indian fabric maker, but the quality of the fabric available to her is notably better than the fabrics available in England. Eliza notes people in India have such increased access to excellent quality fabrics that they daily use them for their dress, while those in England cannot. Later, Eliza will

[43] Skeehan includes a longer discussion of the calico debates surrounding the British wool industry that culminated in the 1721 Calico Act. Parliament sought to protect the domestic wool industry from easy importation of high-quality fabrics from India. In doing so, Skeehan argues the calico laws "accelerated the African slave trade, the growth of colonial American cities, the expansion of the Atlantic plantation system," and "the codification of racial difference in the Americas" (Skeehan 49).

direct her anger toward Indian dressmakers. For now, though, Eliza manages to send goods back to England with no mention of where she purchased the fabric or how the shifts were made up, but an acknowledgment that the quality of cotton fabrics for items like shifts is significantly better on the Eastern coast of India.

Eliza has begun to create rituals in Madras and Fort St. George, rituals of "purity and impurity" that "create unity in experience" (Douglas 3). They are the rituals of imperialism in the mid-eighteenth century. Eliza goes out in the mornings to enjoy the cool weather; she buys cloth and clothing appropriate to differing class positions; she plays fashionable games and dances in public British balls. Mary Douglas argues that social rituals like the ones in which Eliza participates are the means by which "symbolic patterns are worked out and publicly displayed;" through these rituals "disparate experience is given meaning" (Douglas 3). These rituals are the symbolic patterns of imperialism in the mid-eighteenth century on the Coromandel Coast. Recreating British fashionable society is an important ritual for unifying the small society around the forts. On an individual level, tying imperialist rituals to English cultural landmarks for her aunts is Eliza's own individual imperialist ritual. This is how Eliza perpetrates and experiences colonialism: she must erase Indian people around her and contextualize all her experiences within English cultural symbolism, assuring she is anchored within English culture in the minds of her family.

Though her next letter included in archival collections is not dated until September 13, 1750, Eliza married Joseph Fowke in May of 1750. Joseph Fowke was not entirely a stranger before Eliza met him in India. Eliza mentions in her letter to her aunts that "if I am not mistaken you laid him out for me you selves, at least I find by my unkle Walsh's Letters that he did" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 13 September 1750). Joseph Fowke was known to

the Walsh family. The Walshes, Fowkes, Maskelynes, Kelsalls, and Benns were all connected by marriage and familiar relationships. Eliza and Joseph were married seven months after Eliza's return to the Coromandel Coast of India. In describing Joseph, Eliza strangely does not frame Joseph within English or British context. She says she believes her aunts "will approve of this Match better than any of the Fort St. Davids Gentlemen that Mrs Harrison told you of (supposing I cou'd have had them) for they have not yet their money with the greatest honor in the World" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 13 September 1750). Joseph is compared to other Company members and military men at Fort St. David, rather than to British society, which Eliza used to discuss housing, or to French society, which Eliza used to discuss available entertainments. Eliza breaks with her usual pattern of linking herself and her companions to Britishness more generally, in favor of associating her new husband with her family (specifically her Uncle Walsh) and the Company activities there in the Madras region. Her life in the Madras/Chennai region is stable and imperially acceptable enough for Eliza to pause her work of claiming Indian spaces for "Britishness" and instead claim her husband's status as part of his work with the EIC. Joseph Fowke can, in Eliza's mind, stand on his own metaphorical feet. She does not reference anything British besides the familial ties to Joseph, instead leaving him in direct association with his fortune and the EIC.

After discussing her marriage, Eliza turns to other changing social rituals. The first friendship loss Eliza mentions is that of Mrs. Prince, her earliest acquaintance in the Madras region and the person who helped her get her footing in British society at Fort St. David. Eliza does not detail exactly what happened with Mrs. Prince, or it was not preserved in the archives, but she describes the situation twice in the letters that survive in the family folio. Eliza writes in September of 1750 that she "did not find Mrs Prince so good an acquaintance as I thought I

shou'd at first, she is a very unequal Woman and has such odd humours that I have left of visiting her." Whatever has happened has caused a rift in the community of ladies visiting back and forth to pass their days. Eliza now finds society with Mrs Powney and her family, but not anyone else; she finds in Madras that fall "a very bad society." Mrs. Prince's "odd humours" are perhaps her show of anger over some falling out. Eliza claims Mrs. Prince insults her at parties and public gatherings, enough to warrant mention in a letter to her aunts, who have no association with local society and gossip beyond their niece (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 13 September 1750).

Coincidentally, the Prince family had fallen out of favor with Eliza around the same time they begin to fall out of favor with the Company, and Mrs. Prince experiences the dual ruination of imperialism. Mr. Prince's tenure as Vice Governor of Madras ended in February of 1752,[44] following a similar trajectory as Mrs. Prince's deteriorating relationship with Eliza Fowke and Eliza's rise in social standing. Perhaps Mrs. Prince was unaccountably short with Eliza during an afternoon visit or two. Perhaps Mrs. Prince no longer benefitted Eliza or lent her social power in her favor. Perhaps Mrs. Prince purposefully snubbed Eliza and did not invite her to the Governor's house in her early days there. Whatever Mrs. Prince's action may have been, Eliza has taken account of the social capital she wields and recognized the significant downturn in the Princes' social and political fortunes. The Princes are no longer in the Governor's house, and Eliza no longer finds their society pleasing. Mrs. Prince, we know, set up Eliza in her "barn" when she first arrived and helped her determine which rooms worked best functionally. The actions and choices of the two women were closely aligned in the beginning, suggesting Mrs. Prince both perpetrates imperialism and helps Eliza along on her journey to continue the same.

[44] This information is gleaned from the same source as above. I have not been able to confirm it through primary source material.

Taking Eliza at her word that Mrs. Prince's social position declined, Mrs. Prince has served her imperial purpose and is cast off as detritus of the intensive British community building necessary for colonization on the Indian coast. She becomes the type of debris and ruin she created in her own wake.

Eliza's October letter brings an abundance of social updates highlighting the more subtle work of imperialism in the mid-eighteenth century while resolutely ignoring many of the masculine and militarized pursuits. One notable event is the departure of the Morses. Eliza writes that Mrs. Morse "behaved extreamly obliging to me I dine wherever I please & she always receives me in a friendly manner" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749). Mrs. Morse was to return to England on the ship of Admiral Boscawen, Mr. Morse leaves the governorship, and that is the extent of the information Eliza sees fit to include at the end of their tenure in India (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1750). Mr. Morse was instrumental in navigating finances when Eliza and John first arrived in India; at the end of their time in India, the Morses receive only a few lines of acknowledgement. Naval records show Admiral Boscawen arrived in England in April of 1750 ("Commissioner" ADM 106/1081/208), suggesting this was the ship that carried Mrs. Morse back to England. Admiral Boscawen had concluded his military tasks in driving the French out of the coast and was returning to England for further orders. This is as close as Eliza comes to speaking directly about military movements and action. She mentions Admiral Boscawen only in passing, focusing briefly on the Morses and the small bit of information she chooses to include. There is no mention of ship timetables, community celebrations of victory in battle, changing of governorships. Eliza discusses instead the behavior and character of her friends and her emotions on their departure. The community gossip and drama belie the violence of the series of military engagements along the coast within

view of the British forts and their surrounding community. Eliza buries the lede, so to speak, obscuring colonial occupation within her short mention of the Morses' return to England.

With the Morses gone and Mrs. Prince turned out to be disagreeable, Eliza remains contentedly married and pleased with her position in society. She is "in a situation to patake of al that this Country affords [sic]." She is "very sociable" with her neighbors, and they "have a House at the Mount where we go very often and which makes an agreable change." Eliza moves easily in the society around her. There are "parties of pleasure" in the country and "now and then a Ball in Town." Between two housing locations, good neighbors, parties of pleasure, and balls, Eliza seems very pleased with the early part of her married life. She writes to her aunts that with "such good friends as a Husband and Brother at home" she passes her time "tollerably well" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1750).

Eliza works carefully in her letters to acknowledge some of her personal struggles while framing them in distinctly British social activities. By July of the next year (1751), Eliza is bored and isolated. She writes that "Madrass affords no variety, that we have very little Company and those not over agreable" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 24 July 1751). Eliza circulates with a handful of families who remain her friends and are the "good kind of people." But British society is so confined in the Madras region that Eliza's quarrel with Mrs. Prince turns out to be "very disagreable but not quite so bad as the insults that Lady sometimes" slings at Eliza in public (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 24 July 1751). Sudipta Sen argues that "by the mid-eighteenth century, the British had become deeply entangled with Indian politics, society, habits, customs, and manners" (Sen xiv). Some of those ties are certainly evident in Eliza's use of the palanquins and attendance of local balls, which are mentioned in the discussion of Mrs. Prince. However, Eliza makes sure to balance any news of unpleasantness and

Indian society with a mention of distinctly British pleasures. She makes her situation "as pleasant as possible, and generaly have somebody or other at my House, and sometimes go little jaunts of Pleasure into the Country" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 24 July 1751). After spending some time complaining about her situation and the small circle she finds there, Eliza makes sure to return to a discussion of British enjoyments. This is in keeping with Sen's further claim that "at the same time" as their connection with Indian life, "the imperial ambitions of the East India Company demanded a measured distance from its Indian subjects" (Sen xiv). Eliza reclaims her Britishness and her links to the larger imagined British social standard by mentioning her regular company and her day trips for pleasure. She pushes back against her experiences of society in Madras to create a "measured distance" and recast herself as distinctly British and part of the East India Company.

Part of maintaining a distinct difference from non-British and British residents of the Madras region was carefully including exactly who Eliza wanted to discuss in her letters. For the British members of her circle, Eliza speaks carefully about disadvantages and shame. Of her cousin, likely Rev. William Maskelyne,[45] Eliza writes to her aunts:

> I hear Billy has got a
> Bastard by [illegible name – nanney?] and keeps her openly
> as his Milstress which is not much to
> the honour of a Clergyman, we m not make
> some allowance for youth but I am afraid

[45] Rev. William Maskelyne is the only William near to Eliza in age that she could be referencing, as far as I could find. He is the brother of Lady Margaret Clive (nee Maskelyne) and child of Edmund Maskelyne and Elizabeth Booth. Edmund Maskelyne is the brother of Eliza's mother.

this will be a great disadvantage to him (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 13 September 1750)

Here, the criticism involved honor and disadvantage. Billy is a concern because he fails to adhere to moral standards of a clergyman.[46] He is not a concern because of his sexual promiscuity—Eliza says they may "make some allowance for youth" and this seems acceptable reason to let the possession of a mistress slide. The controversy is over his social class position as a clergyman associated with the Walsh and Fowke families and the advantages he might miss because of his fecundity. In the same letter, Eliza mentions a generalized illness and its treatment. She has described her social hardships in having a limited circle after the argument with Mrs. Prince, and now she has had a "Jaunt with the Country distemper," likely a disease related to syphilis.[47]

During her illness, apparently Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, in a letter not included in the family folio, advised Eliza to see local doctors who would have detailed knowledge of the sicknesses of the Madras region. Eliza says that she followed their advice "and had black doctors, and thank God am very well again" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 24 July 1751). Eliza has detailed all the principal actors in her narrative. She has discussed her cousin clergyman, her small group of friends, hyperfocused quarrels and gossip with Mrs. Prince, and which ship the Morses are to take back to England. She details her brother's trade ventures and purchases of fabrics. But, when discussing her doctors, Eliza performs two actions: she racializes them and elides their part in her narrative. Eliza calls her medical professionals "black doctors,"

[46] Billy is not a concern in relation to Lord and Lady Clive. The Clives are not yet married. Lord Robert Clive is, at the time of the letter, in Bengal recovering from an illness. Margaret's somewhat arranged marriage to Clive is discussed in a later letter by Eliza.

[47] Only one source references explicitly a "Country Distemper," and it is regarding a syphilis strain causing "yaws," a degeneration of the body as a symptom, as a widespread effect of skin contact in the North American colonies. The disease was likely brought from Africa, where it continues, with enslaved people, and physicians in the early eighteenth century believed it a result of poor living and a diet heavy in pork (Parramore).

an adjective that would have directly associated her doctors with the section of town called Black Town. Her doctors are not from her section of White Town. Eliza would be familiar with the fact that "mortality rates in the Black Town and other urban and village localities from both known diseases and other still undiagnosed were alarmingly high during these years. Congestion and poor sanitation were acknowledged contributors to the spread of disease, and current medical opinion held that poor ventilation and noxious odors also played a role in causing illness" (Neild 242). As she moves from the White Town to the Black Town, Eliza scrunches her nose at the smell and holds her head high to maintain an emotional and social distance. Yet, these doctors have the medical expertise she desperately needs. In her retelling, Eliza creates the distinct difference Sen suggested was a necessary part of occupying India in the mid-eighteenth century for the British. Eliza also erases their presence. She included names of dozens of people, including information about their rank and economic status. But for these people, whoever her doctors were, Eliza decides not to include their names, professional training, or even the treatments they suggested and offered. She distances herself so far that she performs the erasure she dreads Mrs. Prince performing on her, compounded by her racialization of medical professionals.

Eliza spends time describing one woman not in her upper-class or Company social circles: a servant. Eliza does not describe the woman in terms of racialized geography or economic status, leaving many of her identity markers ambiguous. Eliza begins by describing the woman's character. She is "the old servant that came out with" Eliza and her brother. Eliza hints that perhaps not all servants maintain excellent characters while in India, but this woman "liv'd very reputable at Madrass before it was taken" by the French during one of the many seizures of military control of the Madras region. Importantly, she is "verry much valued for her honesty,"

thus Eliza's aunts should have no fears in that regard—Eliza says Jane and Sarah should not "think that I trust to them more than other people for I am grown vastly careful but there is not possibility of avoiding it." Eliza's language, devoid of explicit racial categorization or marginalization, reinforces her own positionality by contextualizing the servant woman exclusively using class position. Eliza is the careful white woman who does not trust people in the lower classes to be as honest as she wishes and who values public reputation for goodness and honesty. Immediately following this description, however, Eliza describes the larger social climate much more openly than nearly every other letter. She writes that "the heart of the Country is too violent to bustly about much but to [convince] you that she is very [h]onest or I very careful I [have] not lost one thing since I came ashore in a whole month with is something extraordinary" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 10 October 1749). Eliza frames the Madras region and Fort St. David as "violent." This excerpt is from her second letter in October of 1749, and Eliza has spent the bulk of the letter relating her experiences to British social expectations for her English class position. But in the context of reinforcing her own position, Eliza slips here and describes Madras in a way that does not fit the rosy picture she paints elsewhere. Fort St. David is more violent and less safe than England, and its social climate is hidden in the rest of the letter behind the palanquins and ladies' drama.[48] Here, the danger felt by Eliza glimmers through in her attempt to position herself as an effective household manager. Her social position is reliant on other white women in the region, but Eliza's class position relies on

[48] This letter, Eliza's first long letter from For St. David, sent in October 1749, was sent via the Chesterfield, a British ship. The Chesterfield, according to naval records, met with the French ship Guarland and the two vessels engaged in a battle. Upon arriving back in Portsmouth in February 1750 (carrying Eliza's letter), the two gunnery crews were exchanged (presumably so the English crew would be on the formerly French ship and the new crew could be trained on the English ship), and the Guarland was repainted in English colors. "Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth Yard, 9 February 1750, ADM 106/1081/111, National Archives.

her active subjugation of other classes, including in this case another British woman though a servant, and the cultural fear surrounding theft and honesty.

As she contextualizes herself in relationship with English geographical locations and social expectations, Eliza casts off, erases, and ignores those she finds incompatible with her negative, ongoing creation of British identity. The work of imperialism remains incomplete until space and geographical markers are imbued with the colonizers' cultural meaning. Eliza Fowke's social position in Madras/Chennai is anything but precarious or ruinous during this period of her life. Eliza performs what Sudipta Sen describes as the British Imperial project in India in the coming decades: "The British did not wish to be seen as an Indian power and they did not wish to assume indiscreetly the mantle of sovereign authority in India" (Sen xiii). The EIC had well-established structure enough to run an efficient merchant apparatus, but the success of their economic trades depended on the complicated network of associations with the Mughal Empire.[49] Similarly, Eliza did not wish to become "Indian," though she was, after all, born in India and married in India. She, more than many, could claim a British Indian identity, and yet Eliza deliberately chooses to contextualize her movements and choices within British cultural markers. Eliza openly ignores British state military context, choosing instead to associate herself with lighter pursuits and visits to gardens. She geographically and socially racializes her doctors while neglecting almost anyone else non-white. She participates in family gossip that would question the position of the entire family tree, most of whom reside in the Madras region for most of their lives. Eliza distances herself from the idea of being "Indian," though she was born in India, spent most of her life in India, and returned less than a decade before the end of her life,

[49] Sudipta Sen suggests the entanglements of the EIC with the Mughal Empire made sole British sovereignty an impracticality, as well as arguing the EIC organizational structure, while appropriate for its own activities, would not support an extraterritorial state (Sen xiii-xiv).

when her husband returned with her. She claims Britishness through her letters, though her life and family are in India, maintaining distance from an Indian identity as she contributes to British assumptions of authority. In this she is a demonstrative example of the participation of women in the British imperial workings.

Goods and the In-Between

To I will focus in this section on the movement of goods and materials between India and Britain to find hints and traces of those she erases and elides. I read for Eliza's relationship with material goods and culture and its use in creating and maintaining her colonizer position in India. This is not a comprehensive history of capitalist formations of trade and exploitation between the British empire and the Coromandel Coast of India, but a continuance of my efforts to read along the bias grain of archival materials. Margot Finn and Kate Smith suggest such broad readings of European empires can "distort our understanding" given the "limitations of textual archives." In particular, the object archive privileges "elites over subaltern historical agents and British over Indian voices and narratives." But mean we should not avoid these object archives, though they are skewed and place undue weight on the experiences of the British. Biased records can still "offer an imperfect, elite window" into past lives and localized experiences, revealing "vital (albeit often fleeting and partial) glimpses of the excluded" (Finn & Smith 16). My study of the material commerce in Eliza Fowke's letters attempts to do the kind of work Finn and Smith suggest is necessary: gazing through Eliza's larger windows of her own experiences to find glimpses of others. I will use some of the broader historical contexts in service of a deeper dive into Eliza's individual economic choices and how those choices leave spaces for reading other bodyminds.

With a constantly fluctuating socio-political population in the Madras region, British "engagement with Asian material culture often merged with and was complemented by Britons'

participation in wider European aesthetic traditions" (Finn & Smith 6). In the case of Eliza Fowke, these engagements appear in the categories of clothing and tea. The first type of cultural material, which can be read as a type of text, and perhaps the most common among women sending items from India to England, is fabric. As Skeehan notes, "fabric weaves the body into a series of social, economic, and political relations and establishes links between gender, social order, commerce, and empire. […] Material texts broaden our understanding of the generic complexities, hybridities, languages, and media that constitute the aesthetics of global modernity" (Skeehan 4). The fabrics and garments Eliza sends to her family in England tell the story of her social standing, her economic power, the political relationships she deems important, her gendered experience of life in India, and so much more. We cannot see the fabrics and must rely on Eliza's descriptions, which can tell us a great deal about what she found valuable and worthy of explanation. In the winter of 1749, Eliza sends dresses and tea to her aunts in England.

> the work is after the Europe manner but
> very indifferent as you see they told me they cou'd do it very
> well I was extreamly angry when I saw it & wou'd have
> made them pull it every stitch out & done it over again if there
> had been time, I m glad to see the Sleeves are tollerable I order'd
> them too to put tapes to the nexks but here are such blundering
> Creatures (tho to give them thier due I believe its more owing
> to not understanding our language than to want of Capacity) however
> the next shall be done as they ought to be I am resolved if I am
> obliged to make them stay in the room by me whilst they do
> it (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749/50)

In this excerpt from her letter of 1 February 1749/50, Eliza makes several interesting rhetorical moves to frame her gifts and purchases. The first is to nod to the "aesthetic traditions" of British fashion by mentioning the makeup of the dresses are "after the Europe manner." Eliza yet again places her own affective taste within the context of Britishness. She purchased these shifts and dresses because they satisfy a need within British clothing fashions, in this case specifically for her older aunts. After mentioning her British taste and preferences, Eliza says she was "extreamly angry" with the aesthetic choices and work done by the Indian seamstresses. The seamtresses did not conform to her ideas of Britishness in making the dresses and shifts exactly how she believes they should be made. Eliza doubles down on her anger, calling the seamstresses and tailors "blundering Creatures," not granting them names or individual identities. Eliza footnotes her criticism by adding the errors in taste are perhaps due "to not understanding our language than to want of Capacity" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749/50). The use of "our" places Eliza within the British affective taste she claims, but also deliberately suggests the seamstresses are "othered" by their lack of insider knowledge, insider knowledge of a community to which they cannot belong because Eliza does not deem them British in taste or experience. Eliza Fowke constitutes her place as a white British woman in relation to the social, non-white, and non-British position of the tailors and seamstresses.

Conversely, the category of non-British would itself not exist without, in this case, Eliza claiming Britishness and denying it to the dressmakers. Eliza was born in Madras and returned there as a young woman, married Joseph in Fowke, and bore children after returning to England. Her position as a member of both colonial British Indian communities and English communities is in flux during her interactions with the various communities surrounding Company forts. Eliza uses the descriptor "our language" to position herself as British and erase her close personal

history with the Coromandel Coast. She elides the sense of community she may have felt with others born and raised in the same geographic area in favor of othering everyone who does not also claim white Britishness and British sensibilities. Having been born in Madras and now living there again, Eliza is in danger of being outside British social formation by her distance from England and her close association with Madras. As Manu Chander has written in *Brown Romantics*, one does not become "brown" or any other vague racial descriptor and then become marginalized; rather, one is "brown" *because* they are marginalized (Chander 3). Eliza is constantly in danger of becoming marginalized and therefore "othered" or possibly even racialized as Indian. To establish her Britishness, she must perform the same othering and ruination she fears being enacted upon her.

The other item mentioned explicitly in Eliza's letters is tea. Eliza sends a "Backbane tea" to her aunts, to be used for the health and wellness of a family member. The name or relationship of the family member is unreadable in the letter due to damage to the paper. The woman, likely Jane Maskelyne, must continue to drink the tea and "go on with it regularly for she must not expect to be cured of it at once now" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749/50). She has been ill for "so many Years but have patience & think that slow remedyes are often Surest." Eliza has sent the tea to provide long-term care for another woman in her family, a display of her belief in herbal remedies for illness and a demonstration of her attempt to care for a family member from such a great distance as India to England. In this time period, "'East India' accounted to 13.3 percent" of imports to Britain in 1752-54 (Finn & Smith 6). They had not yet reached their peak, as they would in the mid 1780s, but such sending of goods both in small packages and larger merchant ships was a substantial portion of the imports in Britain in the 1750s. Eliza engages here in the commerce of the EIC and the early British imperial

governance of the East Indian coast. In sending the tea to her aunts and following up, Eliza incorporates the women into the activities of building colonies on the Coromandel Coast. Eliza and her British family all now participate in the economic exchange of colony and colonizer.

The reciprocal numbers of exports from Britain to India at the same time was not so high. "In 1752-4 exports to Asia represented 7.9 percent of total exports" and would continue rising through the end of the eighteenth century (Bowen 61). As a colonial subject, Eliza extends the British colonial economy in this direction, as well, in the same letter discussed above. She writes: "I stir my tea every day with your spoon which I take particular care of my Self & always think of you when I see it" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749/50). For Eliza, the spoon is special because it attaches her to Britain and because it reminds her of her aunts, whom she will not see for many years. Eliza writes of stirring her tea and thinking of them. Mary Douglas might think of this moment as a ritual that expresses some sort of anxiety about the body's orifices (Douglas 153). Eliza's tea consumption, spoon usage, and therefore her mouth, all highlight the "sociological counterpart" of her anxiety: "a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group" (Douglas 153). Eliza is, in India, technically a cultural and ethnic minority, though she is a white colonizer with power. Her emphasis on the usage of the spoon shows an attention to her cultural connections to both her aunts and the rituals of British teatime. Eliza feels connected to Britain and her British family while in India, in this instance through her thoughts concerning her mouth.

> I stir my tea
> every day with your spoon which I take particular care of
> my Self & always think of you when I see it, I han't had an
> Opportunity of laying out your kind present yet for here

> is nothing to be had but wearing things when the Chin
> Ships come in I will buy some pretty thing or other that will
> last tho there is no occasion for keepsakes between us for we[?]
> never forget one another but for all that I will buy some.
> that I may have the pleasure of looking at it & thinking
> my Dear Aunt Jenny gave me this. (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1 February 1749/50)

In the same passage as her rituals connecting origin and purity, Eliza builds her imperial networks, trading on the perception of China in the mid-eighteenth century. In this time, Chi Ming Yang writes of the duality of Chinese goods, at once "ancient and hypermodern," in providing the beautiful china, tea, and other imports deemed fashionable and trendy while maintaining a connection to the reality of a long-standing Chinese Empire (Yang 2-3). Eliza is waiting for the Chinese ships to buy some unnamed and unknown "thing or other that will last," though she knows she likely has neither space nor reason for extra keepsakes. She participates, through "some pretty thing or other," in "the climate of manufacturing that had developed" between Britain and China "and would continue to fuel the British Empire" as a partial "response to a new century of imitating Asia," by substituting Chinese goods for British ones (Yang 5). Eliza also participates in what Eugenia Zuroski describes as "the production of modern identity" and "English selfhood" worked "inward and outward simultaneously" using a "cultural strategy to organize things Chinese as a fundamental element of English culture" (Zuroski 4). Eliza substitutes the Indian or British Indian gift she intends to purchase for her aunts for a Chinese-made item, continuing the mid-eighteenth-century trend of substituting domestic industrial items for imported ones. In doing so, she uses Zuroski's framing of a "cultural strategy" to continue to claim her British subjectivity. In projecting a purchase of chinaware and Chinese goods, Eliza

supports her British identity, her subjectivity as a woman participating in a global economy, and projecting an image of being both trendy, in the short-term sense of fashion, and stable, in the long-standing sense of imperial work.

Through the exchange of gifts, keepsakes, clothes, and letters, Eliza Fowke maintains a tenuous physical connection to Britain. It is one she must continually reinforce because of her personal history in India and because of her position as a colonizer. Eliza distances herself from the "black" Indians around her, the seamstresses toiling over her clothes, to maintain her position as a colonizer.

Geographic Ruins

Though I am arguing bodies should be counted among the ruins of the imperial project, there are physical and geographic ruins remaining as detritus in the wake of empire, as well. Eliza mentions a few of these ruins that I would like to take just a small section of this chapter to discuss. This discussion is shorter than the others, as it is not as centrally related to my argument concerning bodies. However, bodies experienced ruination while in the midst of such geographic and physical ruins, the material detritus adding to the experience of imperial destruction, making the inclusion of these other ruins important to this chapter.

In May of 1751, Eliza traveled to a "famous Pagoda" in the Madras region. [50] In writing to her aunts, Eliza describes the trip:

> last May Mr Fowke and I made a longer excursion
>
> than ordinary, and went to that famous Pagoda, you have so often
>
> heard my Aunt Kelsall speak of, that was built after the Modell

[50] Figure 4 gives an idea of what a pagoda would have looked like in the time period. This painting was done in 1804, but Eliza would have viewed a similar pagoda about fifty years before. "A View Within the Walls of a Pagoda, Madras." http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/largeimage69469.html

> of Solomons Temple, but that I take to be a travellers Story for it is exactly like all the other Pagoda's here, only much larger and more beautified, it very well worth seeing… (Eliza Fowke to Jane Maskelyne, 24 July 1751)

Figure 4: A View Within the Walls of a Pagoda, Madras. By Francis Swain Ward, 1804.

Eliza's choice of description of the trip to the pagoda, in this instance a generic term used to describe a Hindu temple, demonstrates the function of such sites in colonial memory and ruination. She first relates the temple to her extended family, referencing her Aunt Kelsall, to reinforce her ties to British family. Though the Kelsalls have been in India for decades, as have the Maskelynes and Walshes, Eliza takes the time and space in her letter to remind herself and her aunts of her family ties.

Immediately after relating her interest in the pagoda to family, Eliza associates the Hindu temple with Christian imagery, bringing her own colonial meaning to the space as her imperial work. Eliza references Solomon's Temple, a well-known and remembered artifact of Christianity that supposedly demonstrated King Solomon's enthusiasm for worshipping the Christian God, though he later persecuted his son's best friend, the future king. Tim Edensor has argued that associating certain memories with sites like the sacred temple Eliza visits in India "provide important anchoring functions" (Edensor 833). Eliza works to anchor herself and her experience in white, British Christianity, even through her experience of a non-Christian sacred space. She does so subsequently to her reference to extended family. She inscribes her own community

memory, in the form of her family ties and religious imagery, onto an Indian site of religious significance being altered into a tourist experience.

Eliza's descriptions would not be complete without ascribing her colonial experience onto the "pagoda," and she does so by calling the reference to Solomon's Temple a "travellers Story" and immediately discounting such grand references and declaring the pagoda "exactly like all the other Pagoda's here, only much larger and more beautified" (Eliza Fowke to Jane Maskelyne, 24 July 1751). Eliza's religious reference, discounting of the Hindu significance, praise of the temple, and suggestion that it is worth visiting, create together a cultural site where certain memories are encouraged and geographically reified. Edensor writes that such sites are "premised on the danger that such regulated, commodified, highly encoded, desensualised sites of memory might become all-pervasive in the spatialisation of memory." Sites like the temple and Eliza's description of it suggest that "the inscription of memory on space is thus caught up in regulatory regimes which determine where and how things, activities, and people should be placed" (Edensor 833). Eliza regulates the types of memory and cultural imagination that can be associated with visiting this particular site, even as it holds religious and community significance to others. She needs a familiar reference point for herself, which she finds in her Aunt Kelsall. Eliza continues, incorporating a vague dismissal of non-Christian religious importance, though she is sure to mention it in her letter to her aunts. Her inscription of memory onto the "pagoda" ends by suggesting the participation in such encoded cultural imagination is still an important process in which others should continue to engage. Eliza, then, joins countless other Britons who appropriate the Indian landscape and space, rewriting it within a western cultural imagination.

Through her personal letters, Eliza performs the same work we see happening in the broad strokes of colonial history: she has cast off what she sees as excess or detritus, in this case

the Hindu religious associations of a sacred site, and reimagined the cultural and tourist associations she finds valuable to the imperial project. The physical state of the "pagoda," which Eliza describes as more beautiful and well-maintained than others she has seen, does not fit our conventional idea of a colonial ruin as a building or site experiencing physical decline. In erasing and rewriting cultural associations, though, Eliza creates imagined detritus as she perpetrates imperial social violence.

England & India

Eventually, Eliza Fowke returns to England. She visits her aunts when she arrives sometime before August of 1752. After settling herself in a house, Eliza continues to write long letters to her aunts whenever she is not with them. She visits them often, brings them medicines, is concerned for their wellbeing, and details visits and plans to them, just as she did when thousands of miles away. She has three children within the next few years, though her letters begin to be undated and shorter. One child takes wobbly first steps. Jane and Sarah come to visit the family.

While she is in England, Eliza keeps apprised of the major happenings in her Indian community and begins to show more awareness of the non-white people in her circles. In writing of political movements of "Nabobs," Eliza writes: "Alas, poor Natives whatever side Conquers they must suffer!" (Eliza Fowke to Jane and Sarah Maskelyne, 1753). Though she failed to consistently show the work and bodies of Indians and non-whites while she lived in India, her letters begin to include a wider set of players and people when she views India from her position in England. Eliza is relatively comfortable, pregnant in England, and opens her letters to those she previously excluded. In Eliza's security as a wealthy white woman in Britain, close to her aunts and producing heirs, she feels comfortable widening her gaze to feel at least pity for Indian natives she erased in her writing while living on the Coromandel Coast.

As the years progress, Eliza's health begins to fade, and she moves from country retreat to country retreat. She enjoys going to the Reading Races, but cannot walk long distances anymore, nor ride the five to six miles she used to ride in the Indian countryside. Her first child goes away to boarding school in Surrey and Eliza feels his loss keenly. Joseph Fowke, Eliza's husband, made his fortune in selling diamonds in India. But he is described by T.H. Bowyer as a "reckless gambler, querulous with friends and relations, negligent of his children" and strangely "talented enough" at politics and governance "to be considered more than once for a governorship" in India (Bowyer). Joseph might have mentioned his other daughter, born to an unnamed woman in India, just to pester Eliza (Bowyer). Living in Hanover Square unable to enjoy herself to the fullest extent and managing her "querulous" husband, Eliza's letters become quick family updates, a bit of grief and longing, then details about maids and housekeepers, cleaning the grates every day, and sending her aunts a particular sort of fabric or lace or hat. She is a long way from the large packages of beautiful muslin fabrics she previously sent from India and the long, gossipy letters saved in the family archives. She dies at the age of twenty-nine in 1760.

Eliza transforms, across time and geography, into white waste of British imperialism. Gee suggests waste "was attended to because it showed what was important and interesting about the concept, the very notion of waste" (Gee 4). Eliza becomes wreckage after creating so much imagined cultural detritus and eliding the lives of countless others. She has lived many years of her life in India, married an official in the EIC, and returned to England to care for her aging aunts and spend her last days in ill health with a grumpy husband. But, like the Hindu temple in India that Eliza and her husband had visited year prior, Eliza's physical state and disability do not matter as an ontological fact of ruin. She is lost in the cultural memory of the EIC's imperial conquest of England. Lord Clive's victories at Plassey and the subsequent codification of British

governance in India leave Eliza and her letters to be found in the archive without much attention. Gee writes that "the waste matter of eighteenth-century philosophy was usually seen as valuable because it was a leftover: a sign that something important had happened, leaving a residue behind" (Gee 4). Eliza, a living person rather than non-living refuse, becomes the sign that something important had happened in India, all the while fading into and under more memorable state and military moves in India. Such women were painted in fiction to have a romanticized experience, marrying fortuitously and collecting exotic goods. Perhaps they wrote memorable letters they might later publish as a book. Margaret Maskelyne, Eliza's cousin with whom she corresponded often, certainly found fame and fortune and a long life as the wife of Lord Robert Clive. Eliza's experiences are retained for us in archives and left for readers to observe and study, but only a handful of her long letters survive in the family records for us to read. Only three other scholars have written and published about them. She reflects British imperialism as she both creates imperial detritus and becomes it herself.

However, Eliza is not the only residue left behind; Eliza leaves many others in her wake. Her letters are certainly a sign that British imperial workings had done things deemed important in the trajectory of the Empire. But Eliza's letters and legacy continue to obscure others who will not be studied and appreciated as a sign of importance if we do not redouble our efforts to acknowledge their lives and sacrifices. Eliza restricted the people included in her letters very carefully, based on her level of perceived social comfort. She only included non-white Indians after she felt less precarious in England. Even then, Eliza shifts her attention often to the pursuits of her cousin, Lady Margaret Clive, and Lord Clive, both of whom returned to India when Eliza and her husband did not.[51] Eliza and the people she excludes all become the waste of British

[51] Joseph Fowke did return to India, but in 1771 with his second wife, Kitty Lavinia Treacher.

imperial efforts in India. Waste, in this case the waste of people and their bodies and lives, "consists of leftovers that contain the memory or echo of the matter they used to be" (Gee 8).

At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that to perpetrate imperialism is to commit ruination. Eliza Fowke's adult life is constituted by ruin and ruination. She both leaves others behind as ruins and becomes a ruin herself, decaying into oblivion other members of her family continue to receive historical critical attention. She begins with familial relationships in tatters after arguing with her aunts and running away to India. She perpetuates the wasting of Indian resources and intellectual skills in her engagement with the communities surrounding the EIC forts. And, as she returns to England, she continues her work of ruination through her letters, documenting her own ill health and acknowledging people in India under the thumb of the British military and EIC. Ann Laura Stoler argues that "ruination is more than a process that sloughs off debris as a by-product. It is also a *political project* that lays waste to certain people, relations, and things that accumulate in specific places" (Stoler 11). This is certainly the political project in which Eliza takes part. She upholds the EIC imperial activities and actively colonizes the southeastern coast of India. She exploits medical knowledge and the available goods around her. She describes people in terms of their houses and how like the British she perceives them to be. Eliza continues the process of ruination even as she becomes a ruin within the archives of the British imperial project.

CHAPTER 3: "USEFUL TO THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM": BLACK ECOFEMINISM, THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION, AND THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF WHITE FEMININITY

A *monument* is something between an effigy and an ode, between a venerated structure and an intangible reminder. The *Oxford English Dictionary* catalogs definitions of "monument" that include a remarkable piece of literature, a statue, a token, a tomb.[52] All of these meanings push us to consider what a monument is, what it might be, and perhaps we may ask what or who, exactly, becomes a monument. Monuments document an end, an endurance, ruin. This chapter is particularly interested in the connections between monuments and ruin in this chapter, especially within the context of the imperialism and settler colonialism. Historian Ann Laura Stoler describes imperial and colonial ruins as "what people are left with;" arguing that turning to ruins is a turn "to what remains blocking livelihoods and health, to the aftershocks of imperial assault, to the social afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things" (Stoler "Introduction" 9). Following Stoler, I consider the residues of empire, the intangible and tangible remains. What is left behind that must be coped with, dealt with, expunged? Further, how do we treat the remains in our cultural memory? What use are they in narratively forming a counter-memory embedded in the racial landscape of the Americas in the early nineteenth century? Chapter Three complicates the idea of "what people are left with" by considering the residues of ruin specifically in terms of bodies: both the literal bodies and remains of people and the textual remains of narrative bodies and their implications. Ruin and ruination are written on corpse and corpus, on living and literary bodies.[53] In the remains of empire, bodies are injured, damaged, wrecked, sexualized, taken

[52] *Oxford English Dictionary*, online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), s.v. "Monument."
[53] I am not equating physical death with literary death, rather considering the action and effects of ruin/ation.

advantage of, assaulted, sent away, and killed. Bodies are memorialized and, in this study, I consider the ways in which they become monuments.

This chapter examines the intersection of ruin and the bodies of women in Caribbean colonial spaces, the intersection of identity markers like race, class, gender, etc. with the experience of ruin/ation. Chapter one asked what happens to women in fiction when they transgress sexual and financial boundaries. Women are closely linked to the colonial economy and the conspicuous consumption of the eighteenth century. Chapter two focuses on the experiences of one white woman on the southeastern coast of India for a few years of her young adulthood in the late 1740s and early 1750s and asks how whiteness and womanhood intersect in the small, day-to-day interactions that were part of building the British empire. In this chapter, I use two narratives of the Haitian Revolution to examine the experiences and identity formation of both women of color and white women: Leonora Sansay's *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingue* and "Theresa: a Haytian Tale," written by an author signing themselves only "S." I want to know, much like Marlene Daut, what we might glean from highlighting narratives of women of color alongside those depicting the dominant discourse surrounding the Haitian colonial occupation and subsequent revolution.[54] I find white femininity unable to countenance Black subjectivity; Black women written by Black authors as part of the African diasporic imagination use ecofeminist liberation to counter the harm of whiteness in revolutionary space.

I juxtapose these two narrative accounts of the Haitian Revolution to create what Tiffany Lethabo King has called a Black shoal. Like its physical and oceanic counterpart, a critical shoal slows our thinking, makes unplanned connections, stretches the shoreline limits, and interrupts

[54] Marlene Daut writes that she is "asking what picture of the woman of color might emerge if we read simultaneously in opposition to and in consultation with the dominant epistemology, recognizing that colonial discourse was always filled with both 'rival and reciprocal energies' (Stoler, 2010a, 53)?" Daut *Tropics* 204.

movement. In the context of a revolution, a shoal can interrupt the course and momentum of the flow of critical theories about genocide, slavery, and humanity in the Western Hemisphere" (King xv). We are stopped on the shoal to read the history of the Haitian Revolution with new vision, connecting histories that may have previously floated away with the tide. Rather than reducing Blackness to liquidity and Indigeneity to landedness, Lethabo King argues "the shoal is an alternative space always in formation (expanding or eroding) and not already overwritten or captured by the conceptual constraints of the sea or the land" (King 8).

I place "Theresa," a lesser-known story of the Haitian Revolution, next to Sansay's *Secret History* as part of an ongoing effort to resist that white temptation to refuse to "name the quotidian spectacle of death as conquest" (King 11). The experience of Blackness in "Theresa" resists the reducing metaphor of Blackness as liquidity by locating subjectivity in Black experience of land and fruit tree groves, just as the metaphor of shoaling slows the water, the thought, to see connections and points of resistance. Lethabo King reminds readers that the colonial and post-colonial imagination often anticipates Blackness as "liquidity, fluidity, and flow" – the settler colonial imagination associates Blackness with the Middle Passage, diaspora across watery borders, a fluid identity. But this is a "totalizing metaphor for Blackness" and "the shoal disrupts the nautical and oceanic coherence of Blackness as only liquid and enables other modes of thinking about Blackness" (King 8). "Theresa" begins with the death of a family member and a fluid journey of Blackness escaping military imperialism but ends with life and a sound defeat of French military troops. The same landscape that facilitates new iterations of Black subjectivity rejects a history of white settler conquest, pushing Clara and *Secret History* out of Haiti/St. Domingue. In this chapter I attempt to name the violence and death of

colonialism while honoring the narrative of the Haitian Revolution written as part of African diasporic identity: life and liberation through the revolutionary subjectivity of Black women.

Leonora Sansay, author of *Secret History*, was a gentlewoman from Philadelphia. She was friends with Aaron Burr, to whom the book and its letters are addressed. Sansay's husband, named Louis in striking similarity to Clara's husband St. Louis in the novel, had a plantation in Haiti. Burr had encouraged Leonora to marry Louis, just as Burr encouraged Clara to marry St. Louis in *Secret History.* Leonora is described by Michael Drexler as "a public woman, a coquette," and she was a "sometime mistress, a confidante, and perhaps, a political operative" with and for Aaron Burr (Drexler 27). Both Leonora's letters to Burr and the fictionalized letters from Mary to Burr in *Secret History* describe the final days of French rule in St. Domingue, under the control of General Rochambeau.[55] In examining Clara's position as a monument in Sansay's *Secret History*, I argue Clara, as an icon of white femininity, must be distanced from colonial slavery, revolutionary experience, and colonial land management practices to be properly memorialized by her sister at the end of the novel as an idealized monument of white femininity. Settler colonialism "that narrowly posit[s] land and labor as the primary frames from which to theorize" itself cannot continue under the "scrutiny of an alternative reading practice and an analytical suture or thoroughfare that reveals the ways the Blackness mediates the relations of conquest in the Western Hemisphere" (King 11).

Clara must separate herself from Black subjectivity and African diasporic identity formation in the revolutionary Caribbean. This disconnection from the realities of settler colonialism occurs through the five senses in the Cuban countryside and Clara's justification of colonialist land possession. The association of imperialism and settler colonialism with land also

[55] I discuss the history of the Haitian Revolution in greater detail below.

troubles our binary association of Blackness with fluidity and liquidity. Sansay posits an ideal femininity that excludes women of color because they cannot be disconnected from colonialization — women of color are viewed by Sansay as similar to the land: managed property – even while Sansay, as a settler colonist and colonial American, remains part of the colonial apparatus.[56] Sansay and her two main characters cannot stay in the incompatible settler colonial environment as it transforms into violent, militarized revolution. Her association of Blackness with land becomes inadequate as well, as Haitian revolutionary forces send Clara and her sister out of St. Domingue. The tide of Rochambeau meets the force of Dessalines and the two women ride the undercurrent to Cuba, and later to Philadelphia.

A long way from Haiti and Philadelphia, the author of "Theresa," S, writes from an experience of antebellum Blackness in the United States and African diasporic insistence on Black subjectivity. The story was published serially in four parts in *Freedom's Journal:* January 18, 1828; January 26, 1828; February 8, 1828; and February 15, 1828. The titular heroine of the story, Theresa, finds resistance to the French within the protective landscape of what is now Haiti and her mother deftly manipulates colonial power structures to ensure the safety of their family unit. Instead of the incompatibility of Haitian topography and whiteness, Theresa, her sister, and her mother find protection, rest, and military strategy in groves of fruit trees and the hills surrounding their decimated village. The connection between Black women and the Haitian

[56] In using Clara as a bifurcated story of her own journey, Sansay attempts to recuperate her own white femininity by distancing herself and her story from slaving practices and the French invasion of St. Domingo. Additionally, Talia Argondezzi reads *Secret History* and *Zelica* alongside each other, finding "these novels suggest that, then as now, greater political and racial awareness is not enough to compel white women to include women of color fully in their vision of women's empowerment." My argument focuses on Secret History and Clara's literal path toward white femininity. Argondezzi "The Haitian Revolution.". https://doi.org/doi:10.1353/saf.2020.0000.

landscape facilitates, encourages, and catalyzes revolution beginning in a grove near an unidentified small village in the colonial territory of St. Domingue.

While much of the contemporaneous white-authored fiction surrounding the Haitian Revolution sets up monuments to the perils of companionate marriage and white masculinity, this chapter attends particularly to the ways in which women's bodies of all races are also left as wreckage in the wake of imperial violence and subsequent departure. Non-fictional and fictional bodies are killed, damaged, or lost. Marlene Daut writes that fictional narratives of the Haitian Revolution point to "a distinct connection between the highly sexualized mythology of women of color found in colonial writing from Saint-Domingue and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial European descriptions of these same women as not only degraded and corrupt, but violent and vengeful during the Haitian Revolution" (Daut *Tropics* 200).[57] In this chapter, **I argue the bodies of Black women are connected to the liberation and sensory experiences of the land they inhabit and love, driving out whiteness after white colonizers have destroyed the earth. The end of slavery in Haiti is accomplished through a revisioning of the earth without the violence and bloodshed of settler colonialism. To use another vocabulary, Black ecofeminism counters white imperialist violence enacted on the Haitian landscape, on enslaved bodies as well as indigenous populations.**

In 1993, Greta Gaard wrote that "ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature." Ecofeminism argues that "no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an

[57] I have written only about two fictionalized account of the Haitian Revolution and its attendant colonial tension, though hundreds, at least, exist. These two texts serve as a case study.

equal attempt to liberate nature" (Gaard 1). Marginalized groups, especially women and even more especially women of color, are routinely equated in the cultural imagination with nature and our collective treatment of it; controlling nature and controlling marginalized peoples are similar processes for oppressor and colonizer. The capitalist urge to control and oppress certain peoples is the same urge to control and oppress natural surroundings. Patricia Murphy argued in 2019 that "cultural discourse has closely allied and virtually equated nature and women, augmenting their shared oppression in male-dominated civilization" (Murphy 3). Applying this definition to St. Domingue, the colonial geographical space of Haiti cannot be fully liberated from French oppression without simultaneous liberation of all of its oppressed peoples.

Revisioning and rewriting history, creating and narrating the stories of women buried in history "calls for strategies of intervention that call into question the assumptions in dominant histories of war and revolution not only about what constitutes histories of revolutionary acts and resistance to authority, but also what constitutes history itself" (Daut *Tropics* 217). In my study here, Sansay presents a narrative of Saint Domingue very much complicit in and reinforcing of the "dominant histories of war and revolution" as she recounts the fictionalized history to Aaron Burr and her reading audience. The anonymous S, however, entirely unknown but almost assuredly a Black American,[58] writes back into the archive and cultural memory a story of agency for Black women in Saint Domingue, a story of war and revolution that brings Venus, the archetypal black enslaved woman, into the archival light and gives her words and a full narrative and a history (Hartman "Venus").[59] Unlike in the letters of Eliza Fowke, where the letters of a

[58] Marlene Daut cites three critics of "Theresa" all in agreement the author was almost certainly of African descent: Dickson Bruce, Francis Smith Foster, and Jean Lee Cole. Daut does not disagree with the assessment of the author's "race" (scare quotes also in original) but takes issue over the general assumption the author is male. Daut suggests female authorship is at least equally as likely (Daut 290-293).
[59] Hartman describes the archetypal enslaved Black woman and her representation of the "convergence of terror and pleasure."

white woman obscure and elide the people of color around her, this chapter addresses two texts highlighting the depiction of depicting women of color in specific "tropical temptress" roles that display the anxieties and fears of colonists. In other words, rather than eliding women of color, authors fixate on the danger and desire they feel regarding women of color, the impossibility of whiteness and the possibilities of Blackness. While Sansay refuses to ask "Who is Venus?", a question Saidiya Hartman writes is impossible to answer but necessary to consider, S, in "Theresa," tells us the story of one Venus and what she might have done in another imagined futurity (Hartman "Venus" 2). S dares to consider what this Venus might have been 'in a free state,' a radical act of imagination on the part of an African-American writing in a nation still upholding the violent tenets of slavery. "Theresa" writes revolutionary Black ecofeminism into the African diasporic imagination once again, as a serialized short story published in Wisconsin before the abolition of slavery in the United States.

A Brief History of the Haitian Revolution

Before addressing narrative fictional accounts, I will begin with a brief history of the revolution in Saint Domingue. The largest and only successful slave revolt deserves more attention and remembrance than it receives in anglophone scholarship and educational systems and deserves a section unto itself. While the aim of this project is not to give a complete history of the Haitian Revolution, a brief discussion here with contextual highlights helps anchor my later analysis.[60]

The French colony of St. Domingue, emerging across the seventeenth century, was organized into a network of trading companies by Governor Jean-Baptiste du Casse in the late

[60] For monographs on the subject of the Haitian Revolution, see CLR James's *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* and Laurent Dubois's *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. For a comprehensive review of scholarship about Saint-Domingue and Haiti between 2010 and 2015, see Taber's "Navigating Haiti's History: Saint-Domingue and the Haitian Revolution," *History Compass*, vol. 13, no. 5, 2015.

seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The companies were designed to continue and increase the importation of slaves to the French Antilles. The heart of the network was the Compagnie de Saint-Domingue, run by wealthy French ministers and businessmen, many of them with protestant backgrounds and Huguenot ties (Voss & Weber 211). Du Casse, creating and enhancing the companies and networks in St. Domingue, anticipated early in his governorship "that production on Saint-Domingue would soon exceed French domestic demand, and he predicted that it would be easy to re-export excess sugar profitably from Bordeaux" to other large cities in continental Europe (Voss & Weber 214). Before this, historians suggest that "French metropolitan planners initially saw Saint-Domingue as a refuge for poorer whites forced out of sugar-producing Martinique rather than a sugar colony in its own right" (Taber 237).

Besides exports of sugar, Du Casse also suggested the colony needed a population of at least 30,000 to defend themselves from assaults by the British and Spanish and he foresaw the stubbornness of slave owners as leading to a possibility of rebellion "if they felt pushed around" (Voss & Weber 214). The French later reached an agreement with Spain, the Asiento (or Compagnie de l'Assiente), regarding the importation of slaves directly from Africa. The number of imported slaves never quite reached its predicted heights, but Saint-Domingue saw a rapid increase in the number of enslaved Africans. By 1720, Saint-Domingue had a population of about 47,500 enslaved people, about 8,000 French whites, and about 1,500 freedmen, well exceeding Du Casse's requirement of 30,000 to 40,000 people (Voss & Weber 220). Saint-Domingue, like its British neighbors and fellow plantation economies, used an industrial monocrop model based on enslaved labor that imported the bulk of its food while focusing on growing sugar cane. With the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the Asiento transferred from the French to the British. The Compagnie de l'Assiente dissolved, and the Campagnie de Saint-Domingue

was absorbed into the Compagnie de l'Occident (Voss & Weber 228). As a result, smaller slaving companies increased in number and shipping of sugar became easier and more reliable. St. Domingue became "the engine that drove the French economy" and its reliance on slave-produced sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton for European markets (Wood 759). The organizational structure of the colony influenced its relationship with the enslaved population and the French government. As the French government changed significantly over the second half of the eighteenth century, the colony expanded in economic importance as sugar producer and a port between France and its Louisiana Territory.

Decades later, after a lengthy exchange between St. Domingue, French Parliament, and the National Assembly on the nuances of colonial slavery and its relationship to the bourgeoisie, the rebellion and revolution began in 1791 using communication through vodou practices involving fire signals. The enslaved in and around Cap Francois (nicknamed Le Cap and about the size of Boston) planned to kill whites and take the colony (Dubois 22). As C.L.R. James explains, "the plan did not succeed in its entirety. But it very nearly did," and began a decade-long civil war (James 86). France, having just undergone its own revolution, had granted rights to free men of color, arriving with the news the previous March. St. Domingue previously had a complicated and particular Code Noir, which detailed the legal structure around the treatment of the enslaved and protected slave owners. The Code Noir contained "key statements" regarding the legal culture in St. Domingue and nuanced racial distinctions with which France interfered through their legal proclamation of rights for free men of color (Wood 761). The enslaved population at the time made up around 90% of the island's total population (Wood 759). Free people of color "experienced increasing economic integrations with whites during the 1770s and 80s, further contributing to the unease of colonial law culture of St. Domingue (Taber 238).

France later declared slavery abolished in its constitutions of 1793 and 1795, suddenly emancipating "the colony's nearly 500,000 slaves" and decimating the Code Noir previously regulating strained relationships between racialized groups (Wood 760).

Toussaint Louverture, a Haitian general who rapidly became a revolutionary leader, was 45 years old when he joined revolutionary efforts in 1791, already gray-haired and nicknamed Old Toussaint (James 90-91). He was legally freed in 1776, married, and had two sons. He had been a livestock steward and read extensively, though some of his revolutionary reading habits appear to be exaggerated to feed the revolutionary hero myth. He first worked with the Spanish and British, then the (Republican) French. Louverture sent the Spanish out of St. Domingue with the help of the French National Convention in 1794, citing the recent republican French abolition of slavery as his reason for changing alignment (Fagg). The formerly enslaved became French citizens that same year.[61] Toussaint was installed by the French as Commander-in-Chief of the entire colony on May 2, 1797 (James 189).

The British intervened in the fate of their nearby neighbor and decided to make a "great push" in 1795, leveraging their position in Jamaica. But service in the West Indies was a well-known death sentence due to the prevalence of yellow fever. Extreme losses forced the British to reconsider their military push in St. Domingue. They pulled their troops in 1798 with Louverture's promise that he would not support any slave revolts in nearby Jamaica. Drexler writes that "by 1800, Toussaint had become the dominant military and civil leader of Saint Domingue;" he named himself "governor for life" and aided the French in rebuilding the plantation economy (Drexler's footnote, Sansay 63). Though Toussaint did offer "new legal

[61] CLR James suggests the granting of citizenship was the idea of Toussaint himself, who first proposed it to the Spanish as a tactic to win many over to their forces (James 124).

constraints on planter brutality," his new laws aligned closely enough with the previous colonial structure that they "could be read as an extension of Code Noir protections of slaves against torture" (Wood 765). While the French and British sorted themselves out, Toussaint organized a governmental administration and "divided the island into six departments, and the boundaries that he fixed remain to this day" (James 244). He abolished, imposed, and then modified a tax structure, "organised a maritime police," and consulted with French and American consuls and experts (James 245).

The French arrived to attempt to reclaim governance in Saint-Domingue on February 2, 1802. They were surprised to find Haitian resistance to their control, even after Toussaint had begun losing his political power and strong base amongst the Black laborers. Toussaint and a few other men had written a Constitution that swore allegiance to France, but conspicuously "left no room for a French official" (James 264). Toussaint, formerly relatively generous to military opponents he defeated, now imposed scorched-earth tactics, burning villages behind him and leaving bodies of French soldiers piled in the sun. In April of that year, Henri Christophe, a Haitian general, defected to the French, along with a portion of the Haitian forces. The French promised Louverture freedom and integration of his troops with French troops, but he was later deceived and taken prisoner. Sansay describes the event through the eyes of Mary, one of her two main characters: "On the night of our arrival, Toussaint the general in chief of the negroes, was seized at the Gonaives and embarked for France. This event has caused great rejoicing" (Sansay 63). He died a prisoner in the Jura Mountains in 1803.

Jean-Jacques Dessalines, future President-for-life of the Republic of Haiti, and Alexandre Pétion, a French Liberal, seized their opportunity to join Haitian forces in October of 1802 while the head of the French forces, General LeClerc, lay dying of yellow fever. Sansay writes that

"the heat is intolerable and the season so unhealthy that the people die in incredible numbers" (Sansay 63). This was certainly true for the British and French in St. Domingue. LeClerc was succeeded by Vicomte de Rochambeau, who targeted anyone Black, leaving political nuance behind. Rochambeau and Dessalines waged a violent war against one another, matching cruelty with cruelty. After significant confusion and Dessalines's defection to France and return to military action with St. Dominguans, the Haitians finally defeated the French at the Battle of Vertieres on November 18, 1803. Napoleon had sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States in April of that year and decided to give up most of his interests in the Americas and Caribbean after losing St. Domingue. Haiti became the first nation state formed from a successful slave rebellion in 1804.

Sansay's *Secret History* begins in 1802 on the day of Toussaint's seizure. Mary, one of the main characters, describes the event: "On the night of our arrival, Toussaint the general in chief of the negroes, was seized at the Gonaives and embarked for France. This event has caused great rejoicing" (Sansay 63). St. Domingue has not devolved quite yet into a conflict largely along racial lines (as it will in 1803,) but the fictionalized account of the island's society describes significant tension. The setting of "Theresa" is somewhat less clear, but the descriptions of Toussaint and his military give readers some clues. Because Toussaint is fighting against the French but has not been captured, "Theresa" is likely set some time in early 1802: after Napoleon sent troops but before Christophe, a Haitian military figure, defects to the French.

While the conflict between General Rochambeau and Jean-Jacques Dessalines became something of a race war, "understanding the Haitian Revolution also requires avoiding using racial designations—white, mulatto, black—as categories that can generate explanations rather than as social artifacts that demand them" (Dubois 5). French officials in the late eighteenth

century, too, often "hesitated between skin color and the absence or presence of slave ancestry as a marker of identity" (Force & Hoffus 134). One French Enlightenment writer, Moreau de Saint-Mery, "invented 121 racial classifications beyond" those commonly used in colonial life (Taber 236). Even so, the majority population of Saint Domingue was some degree of Black or African and the revolt and revolution figured prominently in African Diasporic imagination. Dubois cautions against reducing the St. Domingue revolution to race, while CLR James declares that "the distinction between a white man and a man of colour was for them fundamental. It was their all" (James 34). Racial tensions decreased only during the short reign of Toussaint in 1801, according to James (James 248). These analyses unfortunately obfuscate the presence of enslaved Natchez peoples; hundreds of Natchez surrendered to Napoleon's French army in 1731 and were promptly "loaded onto boats and sent to Saint-Domingue" (Smyth 266).[62] Little record was kept of them after their arrival and enslavement.

Like Dubois, I use racialized terminology in reference to the formation of identity and racialized femininity in reaction to the Saint Dominguan revolution. Building on his practice, I aim "to avoid essentializing differences and instead to highlight their mutability and shifting political and social meaning" (Dubois 6). Indeed, "to the administrators of Saint-Domingue, the most important characteristic" of a person was not their race, rather, "the definition of whether someone was a slave or not became the fundamental characteristic to define people of color on the island" (Smyth 275). In my case study here, I examine such mutability and social meaning through the use of fictional accounts and what they can tell us about the power over the imaginary of a successful slave revolt in a French plantation colony.

[62] Smyth's historical account of the Natchez in Saint-Domingue is the first of its kind and was published in 2022.

Losing Companionate Marriage and Rejecting Whiteness in Sansay's *Secret History*

Sansay uses two sisters, Clara and Mary, to suggest companionate marriage is impossible for white colonialists, especially in St. Domingue, and that whiteness is preserved through a steady dissociation from the ecological topography and experiences of the island. Sansay is interested in gendered freedom for white women, a freedom that requires they remain white during and after the Haitian Revolution. Clara and Mary must dodge animals and abusive men; they look down their noses at anyone not benefitting from colonial capitalism. Sansay is not overly concerned about the fate of St. Domingans outside her circle and does not critique settler colonialism, only French excess in broad strokes. She describes the brutality of the early stages of revolution, especially in describing a massacre of many plantation owners, but her focus remains on the two white woman protagonists. In an opposite construction to ecofeminist texts, for the Haitian environment to be liberated and free of colonialism, whiteness must leave. And for white women to experience idealized European identities, they must leave the Haitian island.

Clara's story is told primarily through letters written by her sister, Mary, addressed to Aaron Burr. Clara has been in St. Domingue for a while with her husband, a husband chosen for her by family and close friends. Clara's marriage is unhappy; Mary comes to see Clara's situation for herself, and the two women survive the final days of French rule in Haiti. They eventually escape to Cuba before Mary finally convinces Clara to fully abandon her husband and return to Philadelphia. The novel's epistolary form lends itself to legibility and credulity for the contemporaneous reader. Readers know how to approach prose that resembles family letters crossing the Atlantic from a travelling wealthy relative. Sansay's use of the epistolary fulfills what David Kazajian notes is integral to the form: the letters are "characterized by indirection, misdirection, performance, mediation, chance, and affect" (Kazajian 13). Mary performs for Aaron Burr, the suggested recipient, and for Sansay's readership, asking us to believe her

description of Clara's inherent perfection and the difficulties experienced in St. Domingue and the Caribbean. Mary describes Clara's abusive marriage, the revolutions against the French in St. Domingue, society in St. Domingue, and the tale of the two sisters' escape to Philadelphia. Clara and her history participate in the "construction of early hemispheric American literary history" through the legible phenomena of women's Atlantic travel and cultural exchange (Barnett-Woods 168).

From the earliest letters, Mary associates environmental surroundings with individual identity and colonial construction. Upon arriving, Mary "was delighted with the profound tranquillity of the ocean, the uninterrupted view, the beautiful horizon," and she wishes she "could build a dwelling on the bosom of the waters" to be "sheltered from the storms that agitate mankind" and "exposed to those of heaven only." In stark contrast, Mary describes St. Domingo as "a heap of ruins" with "streets choaked with rubbish" (Sansay 61). The ruins and rubbish are characterized as the consequence of the initial slave revolt in 1791. A few French families are returning to their estates during the time Napoleon has a loose handle on St. Domingue, the time Toussaint is captured. The streets contain rubbish because the houses have been "destroyed" and the white colonizing families have suffered distress enough to "fill with horror the stoutest heart, and make the most obdurate melt with pity" (Sansay 61). Depictions of interiority and colonial conquest are consistently described in relationship with the environment. Mary constructs the colonial experience by carefully describing nature using adjectives with a positive connotation, while describing St. Domingo with negative verbiage. She builds a version of selfhood that needs to be in the "heaven" of nature and emotionally or socially distanced from the "rubbish" of colonialism.

After making sure readers textually experience the climate and her nuances of colonial experience, Mary grounds us in the rhetoric surrounding coquettes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Mary documents the "intolerable" heat, Clara's brush with yellow fever, and adds that Clara "is alone and she is wretched" (Sansay 63-64). Melissa Adams-Campbell has shown that "Mary employs the rhetoric of companionate marriage—the most prominent of romantic ideologies circulating in the early national US—to assess Clara's situation." When "faced with the impossibility of a companionate marriage," Clara "becomes a coquette" (Adams-Campbell 128). This likely mirrors Sansay's own position as a coquette and flirtatious society woman. She was known to have been Aaron Burr's mistress and a desirable woman to several men who stayed at her father's inn across from the statehouse in Philadelphia (Drexler 27). Talia Argondezzi defines the term "coquette" and suggests a similar move toward the coquette trope in *Secret History*: "In a personal observation that parallels their political observations, Mary condemns Clara, however sympathetically, as a 'coquette': Clara solicits male attention without proffering actual sex" (Argondezzi 5). Clara flirts ostentatiously with General Rochambeau. Mary declares the "gallantry of the French officers is fatiguing form its sameness," but Clara attracts "pointed attentions" from Rochambeau, "which she encourages," to anger her husband (Sansay 77). At least, that is Mary's given reason for Clara's flirtation. Mary assures readers "the boisterous gaiety and soldier-like manners of general Rochambeau, can have made no impression on a heart tender and delicate as is that of Clara. But there is a vein of coquetry in her composition which, if indulged, will eventually destroy her peace" (Sansay 77). Clara's husband is wildly jealous and declares Clara shall not attend any more balls or parties, leading to a test of wills between spouses (Sansay 79). Clara uses her white femininity in a purposeful effort to anger her husband. Her flirtation is her weapon used in response to St. Louis's, Clara's husband's, threats and anger.

Adams-Campbell relates Clara to the nineteenth-century American coquette, and Argondezzi sees the epithet of "coquette" as a condemnation. The nineteenth-century coquette is most often "punished for her rebellion" against "the protocols of monogamous heterosexual marriage," "often dying in shame at the end of the tale."[63] However, the eighteenth-century coquette is frequently reformed, taught, or harshly corrected to avoid her impending death. I argue the coquette of the wider British imperial literature of the eighteenth-century would be a more appropriate referent for Clara's behavior. Following conventions of eighteenth-century coquette literature, Clara would first test her boundaries, then likely either be pulled into a 'correct' path by an older and wiser mentor or come dangerously close to ruining her reputation before a dramatic change of heart. Mary acts as Clara's mentor to write her back into social acceptability which in this case, strangely, means a certain type of coquettishness.

Clara's articulation of coquettish behavior is associated with the British eighteenth-century and only available to white women; the practice is explicitly tied to her social position and whiteness. Clara is in a position of power as the wife of a wealthy slave owner, a beautiful white woman, and the favorite of all the French generals and captains. She is narratively tied to European Catholicism and Western European ideas of companionate marriage; the connections highlight her whiteness, especially within the context of Mary's arrival as mentor on the day of Toussaint's capture: Clara is not Haitian but emphatically European.[64] Victoria Barnett-Woods argues that *Secret History*'s "concept of creole nationalism is restricted to that of the hemispherically mobile white creole woman" (Barnett-Woods 173). Argondezzi follows the idea

[63] Adams-Campbell references American literary coquettes, most notably Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* (1797), using these as literary reference points for Clara as a coquette (Adams-Campbell 128).
[64] "In the novel's romantic plot, Clara reflects the island colonies of the Caribbean, since she, of course, is also locked in a power struggle with a despot, her husband. Clara is also linked to Caribbean and southern European Catholicism through her interest in and admiration of the Virgin Mary Basilica in El Cobre, Cuba" (Argondezzi 5).

to its next conclusion, connecting the danger of women's pleasure and Clara's whiteness: Clara "logically cannot renounce enslaving, since being attended by enslaved people promises pleasure" to a white colonizer (Argondezzi 16). Clara and Mary's letters were expected and legible for the novel's readership as *white* women traveling the Atlantic ocean and encountering the Caribbean colonial violence. Clara's participation in white coquettish behavior corresponds to her place in St. Domingo's white society. She is not enslaved and will not renounce enslaving as a colonizing practice. She and Mary repeatedly tie themselves narratively to European ideals and the privileges of whiteness in the Caribbean colonies, even while arguing Clara is subjected to a violent façade of companionate marriage.

In addition to whiteness, Clara's coquetting relies on the natural environment around her and the discursive epistolary form. Argondezzi notes that Clara's "nonreproductive sexual practices link her body to the fallow land and disorganized ranches of the Caribbean islands whose poverty she and Mary lament, land that promises great fecundity but does not deliver" (Argondezzi 5). Clara flirts but does not bear children; marriage between her and St. Louis is not one of love or companionship. Scholars such as Susan Scott Parrish, Ralph Bauer, and Christopher Iannini have noted the usefulness of letters in transmitting information about the natural world of imperial spaces, particularly the Caribbean; "authors learned to negotiate complex imperial assumptions about the proper function and form of colonial reportage" surrounding natural philosophy, socialization, metropolitan construction, etc. The novel demonstrates no role for Clara in plantation management, and yet the epistolary form and her coquetting habits use the natural environment as a method of identity formation and recognition. Clara's possibly flirtation with Don Alonzo, for example, is her means of escape from St. Louis, Clara's husband. St. Louis met Don Alonzo and brough him to their home a few times, but soon

St. Louis was incredibly jealous of Clara's receiving Don Alonzo as a visitor, and alternately decided that is Clara "avoided him it was an acknowledgement of his power" (Sansay 138). This same gentleman, Don Alonzo, is first imprisoned after St. Louis accuses him of running away with Clara, and later publicly accuses St. Louis of falsely imprisoning him. Don Alonzo has a sister in Bayam, where Clara goes, and the two carry on with a flirtation there. Clara writes: how eloquent are his eyes! you know the insinuating softness of his voice!" (Sansay 148). The pair spends their time making "excursions in the beautiful environs of this place" and dining "beneath the shade of the palm tree, or the tall and beautiful cocoa" (Sansay 149). Importantly, Iannini points out that "nature was only available to these authors as a medium of self-fashioning because of the previous history of Caribbean nature discourse, which had established important institutional structures, networks of patronage, and reading publics for colonial letters" (Iannini 11). Sansay relies on the epistolary form and a discursive structure surrounding the white experience of the Caribbean natural world for her two leading women. Clara's interiority is mirrored and significantly affected by her experiences with the natural world of the colonial space, framed within the epistolary figure of the coquette. In connecting epistolary and natural histories, Sansay creates a femininity that cannot include women of color because they do not have the same relationship with European agrarian capitalism, white women's discursive epistolary form, nor the natural environment.

Based on her focus on Clara and Mary's whiteness and racialized experience of St. Domingo and leaving during the Haitian Revolution, Sansay's fear is of miscegenation. Clara ironically fulfills many of the expectations of "corrupt female desire," "degradation," and "dangerously seductive qualities" associated with women of color in St. Domingue (Daut *Tropics* 199). Her performance of white coquetting and participation in imperial slaving

practices carefully points readers away from Clara's possible association with women of color in Haiti, attempting to avoid a moment of shoaling connection. Her husband is afraid of her beauty and sexualized desire – so afraid that he threatens to take it away with acid to her face. He locks her up in more than one house to keep her 'safely' ensconced in his own bubble of imperialism. He seems to believe that if he keeps her tucked away and under his control, she will demonstrate her participation in European marriage ideals and her lack of oversexualized desire associated with the Caribbean.[65] But Clara demands to be seen, to be remembered.

Sansay perpetuates and facilitates the slippage readers feel between herself as author and the two sisters in her novel. Michael Drexler, in the introduction to the novel, writes that Leonora Sansay used the name Clara for her own alter-ego of sorts. Clara was "at first a flirtatious device to provoke Burr to recall the woman he had passed off on another," but Clara takes on another life in *Secret History* (Drexler 29). Sansay revisits her time in Haiti through the two sisters, Clara and Mary, using her own coquettish alter-ego to mediate the experience. The white femininity she claims for Clara, Sansay also claims for herself. Sansay and Clara want to be remembered, memorialized. Sansay writes the novel itself as a sort of monument to her experience and the loss of her coquettish identity. Aaron Burr has left Washington, D.C., by the time the novel is published in 1808; Sansay has served as his courier, his mistress, his confidante. Now, Sansay may remember her flirtatious younger self forever through her character, Clara. Clara as a textually constructed identity wishes to be remembered outside the house of her abusive husband. The two women, the same woman, become monuments to their experience through their textual construction.

[65] Felicity Nussbaum details the long history of association between sexual desire and hot climates in *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives*.

Revolutionary Black Women

In a nearly opposite construction from Sansay's *Secret History*, "Theresa: A Haytien Tale" depicts the relationship between women of color in Saint Domingue who experience the Haitian Revolution by and through their ecological surroundings, rather than as a distancing. "Theresa" tells the story of a family of three women: two sisters, Theresa and Amanda; and their mother, Madame Paulina. The story begins with the impending march of the French into a small village and the death of Madame Paulina's brother fighting in opposition to the French. Madame Paulina plans an escape with her daughters into the surrounding hills in pursuit of a small cabin she remembers from long ago. On the way to the cabin, which the women never reach, Madame Paulina crossdresses as a French soldier, forges documents to pass safely, and finds a peaceful hiding place in a grove of pimento trees. Theresa feels the moral imperative to use the knowledge she gained while impersonating a prisoner of her disguised, French-soldier mother against the French and sets out on her own to inform Toussaint Louverture. She is hailed as a hero, returns with a large escort party to find her mother and sister disappeared, fights off a surprise group of French soldiers with her escort party, and finds her mother and sister amongst the baggage and things left behind by the French after a resounding win by Louverture's forces.

The author signs themself only as "S," but is almost certainly an African-American. According to the limited scholarship on "Theresa," its inclusion in the "Original Communication" section of the periodical and the lack of a clear marker delineating white authorship in the Black-run periodical warrant the assumption of African-descended authorship (Daut *Tropics* 290-293).[66] "Theresa" is "one of the most important representations of the Haitian Revolution before 1865 in that it represents a radical departure from both male- and female-

[66] Marlene Daut and other scholars have taken up the mantle of authorship and I do not presume to do so here. I find Daut's subsequent argument convincing: that the author could have been a man or woman, but the more interesting information to glean is in the story itself.

authored fictions that featured female protagonists of color and were set in revolutionary Saint-Domingue" (Daut *Tropics* 297). This short story tells us about the public perception of the Haitian Revolution, as well as what African-American communities could and might do with such a history. Dubois writes that the Haitian Revolution "became an example of what could be accomplished and a source of hope" for those fighting against slavery (Dubois 2). "Theresa" demonstrates and deems morally right the roles women might have in a revolutionary context of revolt against white colonialism.

"Theresa" was published in *Freedom's Journal*, a newspaper run by free Black men that published work by African-American authors. The two editors, John Russworm and Samuel Cornish, began *Freedom's Journal* in March 1827. "Cornish resigned six months after the first issue of the journal" and "Russworm took over until 1829, when he decided to leave the U.S. for Liberia" (Daut *Tropics* 311). In total, the paper ran for one hundred and three issues, published on Fridays, in a four-page, four-column format.[67] In her chapter dedicated to Theresa, Marlene Daut pushes against the assumption that Black authors, Haitian revolutionaries, and Black abolitionists are presumed male until proven otherwise. She does not suggest an alternative author to the suggestions of critics like Frances Smith Foster and Dickson Bruce,[68] rather Daut provides some potential woman authors and asks why we, as scholars and critics, still lean toward an assumption of male authorship.

Leaving the specter of authorship to focus on the tale itself, Daut and Albanese both suggest the story "actually presents an argument for the idea that it was not just men who were

[67] The Wisconsin Historical Society has added digitized copies of every issue to their website, which can be found here: https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4415.
[68] Foster offers up Prince Saunders as possible author of "Theresa," assuming the author, "S," was likely a man because of the male-dominated editorship and writership of *Freedom's Journal*. Bruce suggests James McCune Smith as possible author of "Theresa," also assuming the author is likely male. Foster 636. Bruce 172.

revolutionary" and that "women of color could also be revolutionaries in their own way and thus, in the words of Theresa, 'be made useful to the cause of freedom'" (S 642; Daut *Tropics* 295). Albanese proposes a "radical" Theresa, a story of "how three women with no paternal figurehead crossdress, lie, counterfeit papers, enjoy overwhelming spiritual experiences with any number of divine entities, marginalize Toussaint to a pitifully impotent figure, and roam on a landscape shadowed by Dessalines' advent" and the violent genocide taking place around them (Albanese 599). Such a Theresa, radical and revolutionary, only exists when we "look beyond anglophone texts" which reproduce "those power structures that monolingual transnationalists may otherwise wish to dislodge" (Albanese 599). Radical and revolutionary Theresa is outside the European colonial scope of cultural production, instead found within the pages of a Black periodical based in antebellum Wisconsin.

The story suggests that Teresa and her mother and sister require a safe location that corresponds with their physical condition and danger as they escape the attack on their town. Teresa and her sister "were expanding, like the foliages of the rose into elegance and beauty" as their mother kept them hidden from the "injustice" of the French. The text is unclear what exactly the "injustice" of the French might be, but because of the focus on the gender markers on the women, it is a reasonable suggestion that the young women were at risk of gendered violence, perhaps rape, from the French. Their mother fears for their physical safety not just as people in a small village being attacked by the French; Madame Paulina fears whiteness entering her daughters through forced, violent sex. As part of their escape, Madame Paulina remembers "a small hut […] in an unfrequented spot, in the delightful valley of Vega Real, and on the eastern bank of the beautiful Yuma" (S 540). Just as the daughters are protected from French cruelty, beautiful, and coming into their own bodies, so they will seek protection, at least in the

mind of their mother, in an environment similarly protected, beautiful, and fecund. From another standpoint, "injustice can be understood as a process to diminish or compress space," "justice is seen as a liberatory act that frees marginalized identities from oppressive spaces" (Ducre 23). When Madame Paulina and her daughters were compressed into the village by the advance of the French and the death of Madame Paulina's brother, they enacted their own justice by expanding their space. The women and their author claimed the environmental surroundings and as many landed mythologies as the author could gather for the liberation of three women pressed on all sides.

As they fear the violence of sexual assault and physical attack from French soldiers, Madame Paulina, the mother, performs masculinity repeatedly, before being again feminized. Externally, Madame Paulina dresses "in the uniform of a French officer" to such convincing effect that "a captain of the French army" does not hesitate to ask her "the time she left St. Nicholas, and whether conducting the two prisoners" (S 641).[69] More than just her attire, though, Madame Paulina produces a letter of safe passage that she has forged herself and hands it to the "lieutenant" as she enquires about French military activities and collects "much valuable information." Madame Paulina forges military documents and is, according to the narrator, "favoured by a ready address, and with much fortitude," which convinces the French of her trustworthy masculinity (S 641). In doing so, she "mediates the relations of conquest in the Western Hemisphere" through her power over settler colonial structures of meaning and authority (King 11). Madame Paulina disrupts French settler colonial violence with Black fungibility somehow passing as white masculinity.

[69] The two "prisoners" are, of course, Madame Paulina's two daughters in disguise.

Masculinity, particularly white masculinity, suffers under the gaze of the three women in the story and their narrator, S. Madame Paulina has dressed as a French soldier convincingly enough gain access to French military information. General Leclerc, brother-in-law to Napoleon Bonaparte and leading the French efforts against the future Haitians, wrote to Napoleon near the beginning of the final French assault in Haiti: "We must destroy half of those in the plains and must not leave a single colored person in the colony who has worn an epaulette."[70] Officers color could not be left alive. Madame Paulina passes not only as a military man but as white enough not to be killed on sight as a person of color wearing military garb. The daughters are dressed as prisoners of the false French soldier and keep their eyes and heads down while they listen to all the French soldiers tell their mother. Theresa herself, "Seeming to be inattentive, she pensively bent her eyes towards the earth, listening the wile as he unconsciously developed many military schemes, which were about being executed, and if successful, would, in all probability, terminate in the destruction of the Revolutionists, and, in the final success of the French power in this island" (S 642). The daughters, too, must have been convincing as illiterate or unintelligent young women to glean such important strategy information. Even if we treat this moment as a "suspension of disbelief" in the work of the storyteller, to be so completely able to pass as a white soldier and be treated as prisoners is remarkable narrative agency for Madame Paulina and her daughters.

Thinking through the revolution and resistance of the time, Madame Paulina passing as a white man and her two daughters passing as non-threatening prisoners fulfills an imperialist justification of slavery. Colin Dayan writes that such a justification "depended on converting a biological fact into an ontological truth—black = savage, white = civilized." Madame Paulina

[70] I found a letter from Leclerc to Napoleon with this information quoted twice in two different sources, but I have not found the primary source to attribute. Shen "General Leclerc."

"must not only pay tribute to those who enslaved but *make [her]self white, while remaining black*" (Dayan *Haiti* 8, italics in original). In her article on portraiture and Creole identity, Deidre Coleman notes that "custom and habit" could cause an oscillation between Black and White. Joshua Reynolds, a prolific portrait artist of the mid- to late-eighteenth century, argued that "the beauty or otherwise of a person's complexion was subjective and relative, very much determined by familiarity" (Coleman 175). The flexibility of race lends itself to Madame Paulina's narrative passing. She uses other signs and familiarities to perform whiteness, such as papers and speech patterns, performed in the countryside of Hispaniola. Madame Paulina takes on the "civilized" nature of a white man and reifies French ontological truths surrounding whiteness even as she counters white military might with Black ecofeminism. In this case, the conversion to whiteness is temporary and Madame Paulina will be reunited with her daughters and Haitian protection by the end of the story. During this temporary whiteness, to convince the French soldiers of her own place in their military ranks, Madame Paulina makes herself white through her clothing, forgery skills, and demeanor and address. She must also remain Black for the story, which uses the three women of color to give women power within the fate of the Haitian Revolution.

Madame Paulina and her daughters must remain Black in the arc of the story. The writer, S, publishes the story in a Wisconsin-based periodical managed by a Black editor who publishes works written primarily by Black authors and journalists. *Freedom's Journal* circulated in "eleven states, the District of Columbia, Haiti, Europe, and Canada" ("Freedom's Journal"). The periodical posted job advertisements, birth and death notices, marriages, biographical stories, original stories, etc. Theresa's narrative is part of the Black and African diasporic memory in a community of African Americans. In *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora,* Stephanie Smallwood argues the African diasporic and immigrant identity

serves as a claim to subjectivity and citizenship. Stories like "Theresa" contribute to a "shared Atlantic experience and memory" that "served as a touchstone for new cultural practices that emerged in the New World diaspora." Smallwood writes that "only through the capacity and willingness to invent and experiment—to grow and change the cultural tools carried in memory and create new ones to meet the demands of this new world—could Africans hope to remain recognizable to themselves as *human* beings in a system that held so much of their humanity in callous and calculated disregard" (Smallwood 190). S, the author of "Theresa," contributes to Smallwood's description of African diasporic memory, using it to counter past accounts of the "savage inhumanity of the black rebels and the corresponding vulnerability" of whites (Drexler 23). The story invents and imagines the place of Black women in the Haitian Revolution, her interactions with white soldiers and colonizers, and the relationship between African diasporic women and the land in which they find themselves. Madame Paulina passes as white momentarily, to achieve a goal that is fundamentally about Black liberation; her part in the imagination of African revolutionary work and Haitian slave revolts remains integral to her importance as a narrative character, as does her relationship with the pimento grove and the Haitian land. Madame Paulina and her daughters are not "savage" or brutal – they are powerful and clever. Rashauna Johnson argues "the routes of slavery became a palimpsest onto which African Americans mapped post-emancipation journeys" from eighteenth-century St. Domingue and the Haitian Revolution to the twentieth-century Great Migration in the United States (Johnson 427). "Theresa," published in 1827, participates in the palimpsest of African diasporic memory as it negotiates shared Atlantic experiences of identity formation and Black diaspora.

While the people of color in St. Domingo suffer, S argues the land suffers noticeably as well; the suffering of each is tied to the other. For example, Theresa, after such an escapade with

the French soldiers, finds herself unable to sleep. The adrenaline has not worn off after such a close encounter. She lets her mind wander through the events of the day and "brought to her imagination the once delightful fields of her native Hayti, now dy'd with the blood of her countrymen in their righteous struggle for liberty and independence." The island, once flourishing and producing food, even within the strictures of imperialism, is "reduced to famine, now the island of misery, and the abode of wretchedness" (S 641). The author suggests that as the blood of St. Domingans is shed by the French, so the land itself suffers. Imperial policies have caused the suffering of both the land and people of St. Domingue. The land has not healed or taken in the blood of those that have died in such a righteous struggle. Instead, Haiti lays ruined by the violence of imperial rule and French attempts at reconquering the island.

Shoaling

Sansay uses Caribbean environs to separate Clara and Mary from the practices of slavery and the Haitian Revolution, thus reifying their white femininity, while the author of "Theresa: A Haytien Tale" connects Madame Paulina and her two daughters with the surrounding environment to demonstrate the righteousness and justice of the Revolution. Katherine McKittrick suggests that Black geographies "must be conceptualized as always bringing into view material referents, external, three-dimensional spaces, and the actions taking place in space, as they overlap with subjectivities, imaginations, and stories" (S 641). Madame Paulina, her two daughters, and their author, "S," "signal alternative patterns" using their imagined and racial-sexual geographies in relationship with the revolution at hand (McKittrick *Demonic Grounds* xiv). Black women cause and further the revolutionary efforts in Saint Domingue, while white women must abandon failing settler colonialism, at least in part, the land, and the ocean, so initially admired, to preserve their whiteness. Both Black and white women become meaningful monuments of their respective experiences: Theresa as a memorial of the catalyzing revolution

and the remarkable place of Black women in all revolutions, and Clara as a reflective monument to white femininity and its detached violence.

As they attempt to escape the violence quite literally surrounding their small town, Madame Paulina, Amanda, and Theresa find shelter in “a thick grove of the Pimento tree" and Madame Paulina “proposed to her daughters to rest in this spot until darkness again should unfold her mantle” (S 641). The place they find requires a suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader, or a lack of knowledge of the flora of Hispaniola. The inconsistencies of the environment speak to the inexperience of the author, S, as they publish in Wisconsin. Though we do not know the author, the inconsistencies in the landscape suggest the author did not have intimate knowledge of the physical makeup of St. Domingue and Haiti, though perhaps they did know of some of the cultural mythologies, which I discuss below. Madame Paulina and her daughters do not find danger or fear in the grove of trees; there are no soldiers here or political violence. Nature instead provides respite and refreshment for the women. With protection, the pimento grove offers more literal nourishment in the form of food and drink. They “ceased partially to be oppressed with fear – the milky juice of the cocoanut allayed their thirst and moistened their parched lips, and the delicious orange, and luxurious mango, in spontaneous abundance, yielded a support to their nearly exhausted natures” (S 641). Pimento trees are not native to Haiti, but they are found in Jamaica. Tropical fruit trees, like the orange mentioned in this passage, thrive in Haiti. One popular folk tale in Haitian culture uses the orange tree as an instrument of a child to economically and gastronomically defend themselves from an evil stepmother character. The orange tree obeys the child in the story and the stepmother breaks apart into pieces after being selfish and treating the child poorly (Wolkstein). Coconut palm trees, in contrast to the orange tree growing in groves on a hillside, belong on a beach. The two

are not usually seen together in a grove like that described by the author of "Theresa." And yet, here the coconuts give their "milky juice" to satiate the women hiding in the pimento grove. The third fruit mentioned as part of the grove is the mango. Mangos are native to Haiti and one variety, the Madame Francique mango, has become the national fruit of Haiti. Companion plants for mango include tropical fruits like bananas, but not typically orange trees. The orange and mango carry important symbolism for Haitian history, while the coconut and pimento are less important. The pimento tree is not likely to be found on Hispaniola, even. The trees are practically magical, coming up with fruits for the women to stave off hunger and coconuts for hydration. The author places the women in a mystical grove of trees they understand to exist in the Caribbean, but not necessarily in St. Domingue—their knowledge is imperfect, but the narrative focus is on the women characters experiencing rest and nourishment in the grove.

The mystical nature of a grove consisting of an odd assortment of trees brings deep peace to the three protagonists of the story to accompany the fruit. Albanese argues that the author of "Theresa" "uses natural rhetoric to justify political labor while also showing that nature is hardly a stable metric against which to measure moral action" (Albanese 579). The grove offers more than just the physical relief described above. The pimento grove also calms the emotions and bodies of the women, along with the connection to African diasporic fairy tales and imaginary described above. They first arrive "wearied and fatigued by a journey which was not less tiresome than hazardous" to find that "their much exhausted natures, were greatly refreshed by the cool breeze which gave to their whole bodies a calm sensation, in which their souls soon participated" (S 641). Madame Paulina and her oldest daughter, Amanda, feel calm enough to sleep. They have escaped French troops, passed as a French captain and two prisoners, forged

documents, run up hills and across the countryside, and upon entering the grove find food, drink, emotional calm, and, almost unbelievably, sleep.

Theresa is the only member of the group who cannot find rest. She finds focus and imagination in the grove, instead. Though she is exhausted and "the vigour of her body was indeed much exhausted," her mind continues "more active than ever; she saw with the mind's eye the great services which might be rendered to her country" (S 641). Theresa uses this imagination not to contemplate her own escape from death or her uncle who has just died fighting the French. She does not imagine what might have happened had she been discovered while playing a prisoner. Rather, "she brought to her imagination the once delightful fields of her native Hayti, now dy'd with the blood of her countrymen in their righteous struggle for liberty and for independence" (S 641). The covering of the land with the blood of Haitians and enslaved people could be what has ruined the countryside around St. Domingue. Grammatically, the cause and effect are unclear. S describes "the once flourishing plantations ruined and St. Domingo once the granary of the West Indies, reduced to famine, now the island of misery, and the abode of wretchedness" (Sansay 641). The ruination is in the passive voice, however. St. Domingue is not ruined by its own actions, nor by those who are "righteous" in their fight for liberty and independence from the French. The revolutionaries are justified in the eyes of the author, even as their blood is spilled fighting for that rightness. This suggests the ruination of St. Domingo and Haiti is not due to the blood that has been spilled, but rather whoever has done the spilling: the French, Napoleon's forces.

As she escapes the ruining force of the French, Theresa's movement through nature, in particular the pimento grove, echoes her uneasy oscillation between obedient daughter full of sensibility and determined revolutionary. Albanese argues "the tale needs this grove precisely *in*

order to show history's violent movements" and that "if Theresa absorbs nature, she also absorbs the way that nature marks, punctuates, or disrupts history" (Albanese 579). However, Theresa moves back and forth between peasant daughter and Haitian revolutionary as she contemplates her actions. While "the vigor of her body was indeed exhausted," the "emotions of her mind were more active than ever" imagining the revolutionary future she might bring about if she could share the military strategy of the French with Louverture (S 641). Theresa leaves a comforting note for her mother and sister, written on the soft bark of a nearby tree and pinned to Madame Paulina's outerwear, while promising to return with military power in the form of an escort party (S 643).

While the imaginary and military turmoil lies with Theresa—she has let her mind move between two identities and obligations—the emotional turmoil belongs to Theresa's sister, Amanda. S recounts:

> But soon recovering, she [Amanda] beheld the piece of Gourd bark pinned to the skirt of her mother's coat—she hastened to unpin—it was the hand writing of Theresa—they read it with avidity—joyful in the happy discover, the mother and the daughter embraced each other. (S 643)

This is the first time the author resorts to so many emdashes to convey such sharp, quick emotions on the part of the women. The women's emotions race in staccato as they piece together what happened to Theresa. The short phrases convey deep sensibility on the part of all three women. But their distressing sensibility is soon relieved with the joy of comfort and a warm embrace. Theresa's departure causes emotional distress that "S" conveys grammatically. The reader feels Amanda's anticipation of danger and possible comfort as she discovers and reads the note left by Theresa. The turmoil is short-lived—the women first fall nearly to hysterics

but recover quickly as Amanda spots the note and she and her mother discover Theresa's whereabouts.

The only true cause of distress in the pimento grove that is not immediately rectified is men who cannot be bothered to communicate clearly. Though Amanda and Madame Paulina are temporarily distressed, Theresa's note on the gourd bark alleviates their worries after only a few moments. When Theresa arrives back at the grove after relaying her military strategy information to Toussaint Louverture, she comes with an escort party of soldiers. One soldier is sent ahead to find Madame Paulina and Amanda. He does not find them. Instead of returning to the escort party to report that he is going to continue searching or with some other plan, Theresa "observed the gloomy melancholy, which settled on his brow, that plainly foretold all were not well. She inquired into the result of his journey to the grove, and as an earthquake rends the bosom of the earth, so the intelligence her gentle soul" (S 644). Theresa now believes her mother and sister to be dead because of the soldier's gloomy face and poor job at gathering intelligence. He did not appear to bring back any tracking information, ideas on where the women had gone, nor a plan to find them. He brings back only gloom and misery, first on his own countenance, then extending to Theresa's broken heart.

By including Louverture, S draws upon a deep mythology in the early United States surrounding the Haitian Revolution. Ivy Wilson draws on portraiture to suggest "Louverture was being positioned as a black founding father, with the same iconic value as George Washington" (Wilson 80). The author of "Theresa" uses this powerful iconography to create an alternative narrative memory—what Wilson might call "counter-memory historiography." Wilson argues that writers "crafted these images [of Louverture] as discursive allegories to enter into debates about the diaspora and Pan-Africanism, black independence and sovereignty, and chattel slavery

in the United States and elsewhere" (Wilson 82). Using an impotent and practically useless Louverture in her narrative, S suggests his impotence as an icon in U.S. debates about slavery. A Haitian reader, or one well-versed in the revolution's history, might also call to mind stories of Louverture where he "had helped destitute white women," and "had been forgiving of whites, even those who had betrayed the Republic" (Dubois 213). Louverture was kind to French whites while Black women hid in groves to escape military violence. S finds their Black geography, using McKittrick's vocabulary, "is both haunted *and* developed by old and new hierarchies of humanness" (McKittrick *Demonic Grounds* xvii).

Madame Paulina and her daughters overthrow the expected hierarchical power of Louverture as "governor for life" in Haiti/St. Domingue, as he is battling back the French. In this story, Theresa relays information to Louverture and he thanks her, supplying soldiers to accompany her return to her family. He is a secondary character, providing no substantive plot or information. Written in 1827 and published in a Black-owned and -edited newspaper, S elevates Louverture's failure to save fellow Blacks in Haiti through his lack of action and involvement in the two military conflicts of the story. In the intervening years between the Haitian Revolution and "Theresa" in 1827, Haiti was divided into the Republic of Haiti and the northern Kingdom of Haiti. It was united under Jean-Jacques Boyer, after the suicide of Henri Christophe, in 1820. Periodicals across the world, particularly in the northern United States, followed the progress of Haiti closely. As Sara Fanning writes, "independent Haiti was the black nation that African Americans looked to as an alternative" to returning to Africa or finding another land with freedom and protections (Fanning 75-76). In "Theresa," Louverture, previously a hero and more of a distant figurehead of a past life at the time of publication, takes a metaphorical back seat as revolutionary women evicted by military threats change the course of St. Domingue and Haiti. It

is Theresa and Madame Pauline who save the town. It is the women connected with the pimento grove who gather intelligence regarding military operations and facilitate a sort of sting operation. It is Madame Paulina who spies on French troops and Theresa who serves as messenger. Louverture provides escorts to Theresa and takes her hard-won knowledge of military plans. S holds up Black women as the catalysts of military might; Black women are the heart of the revolution.

The eventual happy ending to the story, where the three women are reunited as a family unit after a skirmish with the French, is due to the land surrounding them and at the expense of French blood. The island of Haiti is previously described as "dy'd with the blood of her countrymen" (S 641). After battling with the French, escaping imprisonment yet again, and avoiding death, the island now "drank up the lives of hundreds in their blood" (S 645). The lives lost in this scene are those of the French soldiers who fought with the party escorting Theresa. While the island was covered and dyed with Haitian blood, the island absorbs and drinks the blood of the French. There is no trace of them left behind in the story besides the baggage, prisoners, and various detritus they leave behind, suggesting the French soldiers, too, become forgotten debris of imperialism. The island has provided rest and respite for the women, protection from the French, and now moral victory in the absorption and erasing of French lives. The French had been killed by yellow fever and Black woman revolutionaries and their powerful liberation efforts.

Leonora Sansay's *Secret History* describes a different relationship with the island of St. Domingo. Rather than the island helping the two sisters of the story, Clara and Mary, St. Domingo sensorily pushes them out. Their whiteness is not compatible with the revolutionary

changes happening on the island and must leave to preserve itself. To transform into the white, colonial ideal, Clara's senses are taken away or restricted and she regains them as she travels through the Cuban countryside. The sensory experience crosses two different journeys, and as she gains back her sensory stability, Clara also reinforces her position as a colonizer by morally justifying colonization. Nature and white femininity bring Clara back to her literal senses, and these senses aid her in performing her white colonialist femininity.

Madame V—, a friend, confirms Clara's existence in a new space using her sight, while St. Louis, Clara's husband, threatens Clara with sightlessness and unsightliness. In the few letters written by Clara, St. Louis visually confirms his power over her by supervising her evening routine and assuring himself that she was undressed and not going out for the evening (Sansay 139). Clara writes of her last night in the home of her abusive husband that he "came home in a transport of fury" and threatened to rub "aqua-fortis"[71] in her face to prevent her beauty from exciting desire. Clara describes her horror, saying, "to kill me would have been a trifling evil, but to live disfigured, perhaps blind, was an insufferable idea and roused me to madness" (Sansay 138). Clara believes unsightliness and sightlessness are a threat worse than death. The flexibility and familiarity behind race performance noted by Deidre Coleman is important once again as Clara's husband threatens to burn her face. A pale and pink complexion were important for performing a European whiteness. It was so important not to be "sallow" or "yellow," in fact, that women would engage in rituals of skin-whitening through cashew oils and deep dermal abrasion (Coleman 174). To have acid on Clara's face would not make her more white. It would instead take away her European style of beauty, which Mary has mentioned several times as an asset. She does not want to live in a world where she physically, due to a loss of sight, or

[71] Nitric acid

metaphorically, due to alteration of her physical beauties, cannot maintain her whiteness and power.

Clara also needs to see and be seen outside the control of her husband to be relieved of her failed companionate marriage. After Clara escapes her husband and traverses the mountain in the early morning dark, Madame V— at first "doubted for a moment the evidence of her senses" because "her surprise at seeing me was so great" (Sansay 140). But this sighting of Clara physically and metaphorically places her outside the colonial town boundaries from whence she came and, just as St. Louis confirms her dishabille and lack of power, Madame V— confirms Clara's extrication. Clara is sighted (able to see because her husband has not taken her sight) and sighted (seen by a friend) outside the boundaries of her European, patriarchal marriage. She later observes the landscape and its farming population, which is discussed below. Her ties to settler colonialism and her extrication from its immediacy into exile (to Philadelphia) are visually confirmed.

Clara's escape through the mountains remakes her agency and interiority from her very lungs. She is breathless as she runs through town but upon reaching the mountain beyond, "the air became purer. Every tree in this delightful region is aromatic; every breeze wafts perfumes!" (Sansay 139-140). Clara wakes from a metaphorical nightmare, breathing the fresh morning air for the first time. She now knows of the pleasant aromas available to her because she has left the bounds of the colonial settlement and abusive marriage. Similarly, when Clara and her friend, Madame V—, begin their more extensive journey over larger mountains, Clara writes that "the road passed through groves of majestic trees, intermingled with the orange and the lime, which being in blossom, the senses were almost overpowered by the odours which filled the air" (Sansay 143). Clara is nearly "overpowered" by the exoticism available to her as a colonial white

woman. Her olfactory senses are highly sensitive to such a new experience, and she is rewarded, temporarily, with orange blossoms. Departing from the settler colonial apparatus reveals new possibilities. Perhaps, if she travels further and leaves the Caribbean, new pleasant smells await her.

There are a few important instances of auditory surprise in Clara's journey to becoming a monument to white femininity. As she runs, Clara notices the silence of the mountain and countryside. "The Town," she writes, "which lies at the foot of the mountain, was buried in profound repose." Shortly, "the silence was broken by the melodious voice of a bird, who sings only at this hour, and whose notes are said to be sweeter than those of the European nightingale" (Sansay 140). Tellingly, Clara says this nature, the Cuban countryside, is sweeter than the European experience she escapes. It is more wonderful to be wandering an unknown wilderness outside the colonial town than it is to be in a European-American marriage. The change in soundscape marks Clara's distance from her previous metaphorical and geographic location within the bounds of French colonialism. She has left the town where she and her husband were living and now tests a relationship with the mountains in the area.

On her second journey, with Madame V— over a larger mountain range, Clara and her traveling companions stop in a hut for the first evening and Clara continues to test her auditory relationship with the Cuban and Caribbean countryside. In the middle of the night, Clara hears "the most unaccountable noise, which seemed to issue from all parts of the room, not unlike the clashing of swords" (Sansay 145). The auditory experience is so unfamiliar to Clara that she must relate it to European materials, swords, a notably masculinized metaphor. Clara hears thousands of crabs, which are seasonally expected in the mountainous countryside. The guide confirms this for Clara and passes on an anecdote about colonizers experiencing the crabs. In that

story, the crabs change the course of colonial history by startling the English away when they believe the sound of crabs is Spaniards "preparing to attack them." The trickery is partially the sound of the crabs, but also the genius of an imprisoned Spaniard. The English depart and the community continues to celebrate the anniversary of the event (Sansay 14-16). The knowledge of local nature and the effects of the sounds of thousands of crabs serves as a tool for the Spaniards in resisting the English and a mode of resistance for local peoples against a colonizing Other. Clara only hears these stories and experiences seasonal migrations after leaving the restrictions of the colonial city. She cannot hear beyond American and French coloniality until she is outside the city and outside her own ruination in the form of abusive marriage and colonial poverty. But the sound of the crabs also terrifies Clara and furthers her distancing from the land and people. The crabs are a mode of resistance and she is the colonial Other being resisted.

Clara is pulled into new social associations by touch, first by Madame V— and then by the crabs. When first joining Madame V--, Clara is confirmed through sight, described above, and then by physical touch. Madame V— "doubted for a moment the evidence of her senses," before "seizing [Clara's] hand," bringing her indoors, where "pressed in her arms," Clara "felt that [she] had found a friend." Madame V— only believed her sight enough to express surprise and needed confirmation that her friend was indeed present and accounted for (Sansay 140-141). The mountain itself had cut many of Clara's ties to her plantation-owning husband through her clothing, which was controlled by her husband. Her shoes "were torn to pieces by the ruggedness of the road, and I had no other covering than a thin muslin morning gown." Madame V— gives Clara new clothing and accessories as she welcomes her into her "hut." One sense is not enough for Clara to be extricated from her previous situation: touch must be added to sight.

On her second journey, Clara takes particular care to describe the feeling of crabs and where they travel as they startle her out of her sleep and the geographical space. She writes that Madame V— "said a large cold animal had crept into her bosom and getting it out, it had seized her hand." The crabs use their touch first to invade domestic space and then to enact change on their surroundings. Clara tells Mary that "the ground was covered with them, and paths were worn by them down the sides of the mountain. They strike their claws together as they move with a strange noise, and no obstacle turns them from their course" (Sansay 145). The crabs are not swayed from their journey by the people or even houses they encounter. The natural migrations of the animals of the countryside continue, irrespective of Clara's colonial position. Further, the crabs sever Clara's idea of the countryside as a peaceful place, waking her in the night with their noise and touch.

Taste, for Clara, is linked with colonial land management practices, an idea I will return to shortly. Upon arriving at their overnight break traversing the larger mountain range, Madame V—, Clara, and their guide find a "tall, sallow man" and his family. Clara walks outside and discovers vast fields and pastures "covered with innumerable herds of cattle." Her first instinct is to establish ownership and she is astonished that "this miserable looking being, whose abode resembled the den of poverty is the owner of countless multitudes of cattle, and yet it was with the greatest difficulty that we could procure a little milk" (Sansay 143). The family does not eat bread, vegetables, or fruit, as Clara expects they would. Bread "is a luxury with which they are entirely unacquainted." Clara is continually surprised at different eating practices, but since she only writes three letters in *Secret History,* the inclusion of eating habits in this letter is worth noting. Clara uses bread as an opportunity to discuss class and wealth in relation to taste and agriculture. The prices of bread and flour were rising in the late eighteenth century, leading to

occasional riots and the creation of consumer societies.[72] A farmer in the mountains would likely need to grow their own grain to make bread and contribute to the consumer supply chain. The farmer Clara discusses does not contribute to the market for grain and she associates his lack of production with an inferior sense of taste.

Clara utilizes her discussion of taste as an opportunity to moralize on the effects and uses of colonialism. As she moves away from her violent brush with European conquest, she suggests not all parts of colonialism are negative. Clara describes the land management practices of the family living in a hut on the mountain:

> A small piece of ground, where he raised tobacco enough for his own use, was the only vestige of cultivation we could discover. Nothing like vegetables or fruit could be seen. When they kill a beef, they skin it, and, cutting the flesh into long pieces about the thickness of a finger, they hang it on poles to dry in the sun; and on this they live till it is gone and then kill another.
>
> Sometimes they collect a number of cattle and drive them to town, in order to procure some of the most absolute necessaries of life. But this seldom happens, and never till urged by the most pressing want. (Sansay 144)

Here, Clara begins to hint at the opinions needed to fulfill her colonizer identity. She notes how the local population subsist, interact with the land, and care for their animals. It is important enough that she writes it to Mary, and it is important to Sansay as a vague referent to her own experience in the Caribbean colonies. *Secret History*, published in 1808, did not reflect the same

[72] Joshua Bamfield writes in depth about this problem and socio-capitalist contexts: Bamfield, Joshua. "Consumer-Owned Community Flour and Bread Societies in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries." *Business History* 40, no. 4 (1998).

anxieties as “Theresa” in the 1820s. However, the early Haitian Constitution of 1805 “precluded all whites from owning land or running a plantation again in Haiti, so that it was, *de jure*, a black nation” (Fanning 65). Though Sansay writes about her experiences in 1802 to 1804, she would have been acutely aware of the ongoing importance of Haitian nation building. The discussion of food production, as mentioned above, points toward an expectation of contributing to the supply chain of colonialization and capitalism from the local, non-white people. Farming is an integral part of keeping capitalist markets stable, in Sansay and Clara’s view—this particular farmer does not fulfill his capitalist duty. Clara finds the lack of capitalist engagement baffling, suggesting Sansay may have thought Haitians were not up to the task of perpetuating capitalist markets in their early nation where no whites were allowed to own land.

In the same paragraph, Clara describes the difference between the people living on the mountainside and her experiences in colonial geography. Madame V—, who has guided her across the countryside thus far, attempts to guide Clara’s thoughts.

> Madame V— walked with me under the trees, near the house, and remarked the striking difference between this country and St Domingo. There, every inch of ground was in the highest state of cultivation, and every body was rich, here, the owners of vast territories are in the most abject poverty. This she ascribed to the different genius of the people, but I think unjustly, believing that it is entirely owing to their vicious government. (Sansay 144)

Clara, who formerly needed Madame V—‘s senses to confirm her existence outside the town and the power of her husband, now believes herself more discerning. Clara rejects the explanation of such strange (to her) farming practices and lack of appreciation for fine, European material culture as being a “different genius” and instead ascribes the blame to the government. These

thoughts are linked to an agrarian stadial theory, in which local or indigenous people, in this case people living in the Cuban mountains, lacked "the capacity or ability to possess land in a recognisably private, individual and exclusive manner – primarily as a result of their ignorance of the arts of agriculture" (McCarthy 66-67). The people Clara and Madame V— encounter on the mountainside do not reach the "highest state of cultivation." Madame V— attributes this to an innate inability of the people to reach a more "civilized" state and economic system, while Clara, in her quotation above, blames the government and, by extension, management of the supply chain. Irrespective of the difference of opinion, the Cuban population, especially away from the Spanish settlements, is notably less "advanced" than Spanish, French, and English countryside management operations, according to their colonialist ideas.

Clara's shock at the lack of productive crops and extortion of the land reflects her expectations for colonialism. In *Colonial Lives of Property*, Brenna Bhandar examines European agrarian ideals and how they are implemented in colonization. Cultivation, not merely ownership or delineated land, "was understood within the relatively narrow parameters of English agrarian capitalism" to "justify an ownership right" (Bhandar 35). In *Secret History*, nothing in the narrative suggests the people living on the mountain are Indigenous or First Nation, like those in Bhandar's texts, or even pre-colonial. In fact, they are attached to Clara's journey through the senses and relationship with colonialism. However, the ideas of the people on the mountain are outside Clara's demonstration of the "narrow parameters of English agrarian capitalism" and the function of Western colonialism produces the results Bhandar notices. Clara's observations suggest to the reader that perhaps the cattle farmers' ownership of the land is unjustified: a mysterious and uncolonial phenomenon. The land was noticeably uncultivated, according to

Western agrarian expectations, and therefore viewed as waste.[73] Clara hints at justifications for colonialism in pointing toward the need she sees for Western "civilization" in cultivating the land. Presumably, for Clara, Western ideas of cultivation would financially and morally benefit the people, as well: they could eat more produce and sell both cattle and produce for financial gain. Sansay's suggestion would be recognizable to her knowledgeable reading audience. Suggesting the land was in a "natural state" and unproductive signaled to early Americans the land was an "appropriate object of settlement and appropriation" and former claims of possession "could safely be ignored."[74] Even as Clara distances herself from the dirt of colonialism, the Haitian Revolution, and the restrictive colonial settlement, she takes this opportunity to point toward the "advancement" available through agrarian capitalism. She has only distanced herself geographically, unwilling to separate herself from the ideology of settler colonialism.

The sensory experience brings Clara fully back to her "senses" as a white woman, reinhabiting Mary's ideal femininity through dissociation with revolution. Clara is distanced sensually (multiple meanings intended), physically, and naturally from the French West Indies and the Haitian Revolution, leading her to enduring status in the narrative as a monument. Clara justifies colonialist agrarian practices even as she moves away from the nitty-gritty of the

[73] Bhandar follows the idea of waste and uncultivation to its dark conclusion: "Whereas wasteland was free for appropriation, those who maintained subsistence modes of cultivation, for instance, were cast as in need of improvement through assimilation into a civilized (read English) population and ways of living" (Bhandar *Colonial Lives* 36).

[74] Cheryl Harris, relying in large part here on the writings of John Locke and John Quincy Adams, writes in "Whiteness as Property" that, with regard to First Nations people, "although the Indians were the first occupants and possessors of the land of the New World, their racial and cultural otherness allowed this fact to be reinterpreted and ultimately erased as a basis for asserting rights in land. Because the land had been left in its natural state, untilled and unmarked by human hands, it was 'waste' and, therefore, the appropriate object of settlement and appropriation. Thus, the possession maintained by the Indians was not 'true' possession and could safely be ignored." Harris, Cheryl. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707–91.

Caribbean colonies. Clara's sensorial journey distances her from pre-agrarian colonial space; this movement is then reaffirmed by her physical removal to Philadelphia, into the society of Aaron Burr. Sansay's reified vision of whiteness is ontologically situated in natural education, but instead of the environment and the women of *Secret History* liberating each other or supporting each other, Clara must move forward in her stadial experience of society—she must distance herself from the pre-agrarian and anti-colonial space to inhabit the ending ideal.

As she concludes the narrative, Mary takes a few moments to describe how Clara is an ideal of white femininity. Clara is a perfect specimen of a woman, with sensibility, education, intelligence, social grace, marital faithfulness (despite her coquetting, according to Mary), proud frankness, and "delightful tranquillity." Notably, all other people are left out of this description, aside from her husband, who is only included to highlight how good Clara is to have tolerated him for as long as she did. In fact, Clara is idealized partially due to her capacity for withstanding ruination within marriage. Otherwise, Mary leaves out all others. After traveling through the Cuban countryside, witnessing at least two revolutions in the Caribbean, visiting a handful of Spanish colonial societies, including anecdotes of people of color, all those things fade away as Mary focuses on Clara's perfection.

The women migrate to Philadelphia in their flight from the Caribbean, a capital "teeming with exiles driven from their homes by" continuous cycles of revolutions sweeping through the Atlantic world (Dubois 8). The city swarmed with free people of color, merchants, white masters, and enslaved people being treated as property in a city rapidly changing with the birth and ideological formation of the Unites States. While Clara and Mary may distance themselves geographically, attempting to create an idealized white femininity disassociated from plantation slavery and its violence, the two women find themselves ideologically still in a place of unrest

regarding institutions of slavery. They left Saint Domingue, walked through Cuba, took a boat to Philadelphia, and find themselves in the same ideological quandary from the beginning of the novel: how can white femininity – seen by some as "clean" and beautiful and perfect, verging on becoming the "angel of the house" – negotiate such a close relationship with people and bodies who cannot fit such an ideal?

Sansay and the anonymous "S" fall into the trap Daut argues is common in narratives about the Haitian Revolution: "beliefs about 'race' wrought by pseudoscientific debates have seeped in and affected an author's portrayal of people of color as either 'friends' or 'enemies' of the Haitian revolution and/or post-independence Haiti" (Daut *Tropics* 66-67). Sansay and S cannot tell the story of Haitian independence without a reliance on characterization of race. Both use a peasant class "romanticized for their pastoral innocence and endurance" (Dayan *Haiti* 7). Sansay uses the racialized peasant class to distance her white heroines and promote agrarian capitalism, while S uses the same to galvanize the work of Black women in affecting revolutionary change. Sansay posits ideal white femininity, shaped by class experiences and a failed companionate marriage. "S" tells the story of three women of color supporting the moral cause of revolt against French rule, published in the context of African diasporic subjective identity. The ideal Black woman in Haiti, then, can be a revolutionary and, according to "Theresa," must be. "Theresa" insists Black women can and should contribute to revolutionary and liberatory causes.

Both stories are written by Americans and for American audiences, but for wildly different purposes. Sansay writes publicly to Aaron Burr, knowing his importance and role in the recent American revolution and relations with France; S published their story in *Freedom's*

Journal, one of the first news periodicals created by and for Black Americans. The anxieties about race, socio-economic differences, and their roles in revolutions overthrowing the European colonizers glare through both narratives. Sansay in her concern over whiteness being upheld in an idealized form of femininity, and S in their description of what might be possible if women of color connect with the land and use their skills for righteous causes of liberation. These moments of connection provide momentary shoals for the meeting of ideas, settings, and contradictory narrative implications. The two texts do not overlap much in their intended purposes, Sansay writing for white Europeans familiar with French colonial losses and "S" articulating revolutionary African diasporic possibilities, but the two texts meet briefly to describe the same revolution from different perspectives, motivations, catalysts, and outcomes. They form a shoal in the collective experience of the revolution and rebellion at St. Domingue.

Sansay uses what she supposes are "seemingly stable white, heterosexual, classed vantage point[s]," attempting to displace geographical knowledge and suggest "some bodies belong, some bodies do not belong, and some bodies are out of place" (McKittrick *Demonic Grounds* xv). But Sansay and her two sister characters are soon the ones displaced as they find the geography around them reimagined as what Katherine McKittrick calls a "black geography." These alternative geographies, Black women's geography in particular, "signal alternative patterns that work alongside and across traditional geographies" (McKittrick *Demonic Grounds* xiv). Author "S" imagines a protective, flexible, almost fairy-tale geography that adapts to the needs of the three women in their story, while Sansay's Clara and Mary see white imperialist geographies of settler colonialism. The moments of shoaling connection begin to break down, leaving Mary and Clara to sail back to Philadelphia.

Conclusion

While women's bodies remain wreckage of the Haitian Revolution, Sansay and the author of "Theresa" posit differing discursive forms, textually constructed bodily forms, and outcomes for their heroines. Sansay suggests white women need to be distanced from the realities of slavery and the harshness of colonialism – they are cast out as refuse. Sansay based the two characters on her own experiences in Saint-Domingue; Sansay later largely disappeared in American records, moving city to city and changing her name, unable to escape fully her previous life amongst men of statecraft. S, author of "Theresa," ties her heroines to the renewal of the land and its ability to absorb righteousness and repel the French. Whiteness must leave Haiti; Haiti facilitates Black liberation.

Placing these two accounts of the Haitian Revolution beside each other reveals the many uses of revolutionary narration and memory in the American context. In a crucial moment of revolution, "white colonials and free and enslaved Blacks in St. Domingue and British North America confronted precisely the same situation: how to reconcile the development of modern doctrines of universal political liberty and equality with the economic engine of modernity—namely, a colonial system of labor and production premised upon dehumanizing practices of race slavery" (Dillon and Drexler 3). In their respective narrations, Sansay argues white colonial women must separate themselves fully—from their sensory input to their letters—from colonial space and revolutionary danger—to maintain connection with white femininity, even while becoming colonial refuse cast out of St. Domingue. S, author of "Theresa," argues the essential role of Black women in catalyzing revolutionary action and creating the counter-memory, a living sort of monument, necessary for addressing race slavery.

Clara becomes a textual monument to of white femininity and its incompatibility with colonial space, while women of color are pointedly occluded in Mary's narration. Other bodies

are released from the narrative through death—killed in massacres, lost at sea. But Clara remains propped in the pages as a narrative monument to the white colonial experience, and the land she traverses bears the history of ruination of the European imperial project. In extricating herself from colonial space, Clara and Sansay leave thousands of people behind, both narratively and geographically. Sansay leaves. Clara and Mary leave. The narrative and letters do not include resolution for the thousands of people still existing in colonial space. In disentangling herself, Clara commits further colonial violence. Sansay suggests idealized white femininity cannot fully exist in colonial and post-colonial geographical and natural space because Sansay's white femininity is dependent on a multi-valanced distancing from those same spaces and perpetuates the colonial violence Clara tries to leave behind.

"Theresa" presents a family unit persisting in the face of white colonialism and Black women as the heart of revolution. The French repeatedly attempt to disrupt the microcosm of women of color, but the pimento grove and St. Domingan countryside uphold the moral rectitude of revolution. The grove refreshes the women; the gourd provides makeshift paper for a note protecting the feelings and well-being of Madame Paulina and Amanda; after the French try to take the women from the pimento grove, Haitian forces repel the French soldiers and the family reunites at the edge of the grove. The land absorbs the trauma of revolutionary efforts in Haiti and restores those with the moral high ground. The European colonizers must depart.

Sansay posits a white femininity achievable via a natural journey only possible for women like herself.[75] Clara becomes a monument after experiencing ruin from an abusive marriage—an empty reminder of her privilege as a wealthy white woman and her intersectional

[75] Many scholars read Clara and Mary as a bifurcation of Sansay's own experiences in Haiti and St. Domingo.

experience of mobility through imperial spaces, all wrapped up in a prosaic ode to her perfection. The women of color around her experience ruin as well but are denied a position as a monument. “Theresa,” in contrast, denies white colonizers a place in the final tableau. A family community built of women of color and their Haitian military escorts rejoice in their persistence, having forced the French to retreat from the protective pimento grove.

EPILOGUE

Sane people did what their neighbors did,
so that if any lunatics were at large,
one might know and avoid them.
Middlemarch, George Eliot

The previous three chapters demonstrate that the ruined woman, figurative and literal, is a consistent figure in the history and scope of the British Empire in the long eighteenth century. She has been sent to colonial outposts as a consequence of being too loose with her money. She has died slowly of a chronic illness after leaving colonial communities. She has been forcibly excised from a colonial space. She has been revolutionary. The texts included in this project ask us to consider the ways in which bodies, especially narrative bodies, function as monuments, wreckage, detritus, ruins, or ruined women. Women's bodies, physically and textually constructed, remain for us to excavate and examine carefully, seeing the imperial project written all over them. The ruin/ation of women's bodies both constitutes and is the effect of imperialism across the long eighteenth century.

The chronological boundaries of the three previous chapters span much of what is often referred to as the long eighteenth century: beginning in 1722 with Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and pushing to 1827 with "Theresa: A Haytien Tale." However, imperialism and Empire reach their zenith a bit later in the nineteenth century and in this epilogue I consider another woman ruined by imperialism, Charlotte Brontë's Bertha Mason Rochester, to gesture toward the crucial ways ruin/ation continues and consolidates in Victorian England and beyond. Brontë's Bertha is a woman caught between the eighteenth-century "ruin" and the nineteenth-century version of ruin: the "fallen woman." To be "fallen" implies one has somehow tripped or made a mistake,

conveniently leaving out the culpable patriarchal phallus that has broken a mystically sacred hymen. If we consider such women not "fallen" but cast off, the waste of empire, we can see how women reflect the errors of British masculinity as it casts its vision to new seas and colonies. As we have it from her husband, Mr. Rochester, Bertha is "mad; and she came of a mad family: -- idiots and maniacs through three generations!" (Brontë 379). She has been shut up in Thornfield for years, having been pronounced mad by Rochester's physicians, suffering the same consequences as Lady Mellasin in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, though with the geographical locations reversed. Bertha inhabits a slightly different imperial position from her eighteenth-century sisters; her supposed transgressions occur in colonial space and she is correctively returned to England.

In Chapter One, I describe Lady Mellasin transgressing in her finances and her pledges to her husband; as a consequence of her actions, she is sent to Jamaica to be with others who share her proclivities for questionable financial transactions and sexual encounters. Bertha, a colonial subject, has agreed to a marriage she believed to be stable, British, and financially viable; when she is found incompatible with Rochester's ideas of British subjectivity, she is pronounced mad and shut up above stairs. Bertha inhabits a different imperial position as a colonial Other, which I discuss at length below; her supposed transgressions occur in colonial space and are magnified by her nuanced, racialized, and classed position in England. **I argue Bertha Mason is a narrative ruin of imperialism, constructed as such by both Jane and Rochester, through the vector of her disabling mental illness and crumbling whiteness. Bertha represents a further development of imperial ruin/ation as mental illness and effigy are added to her story.**

Bertha Mason is most usually critically framed in terms of her relationship to Jane. Famously in feminist literary criticism, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their quintessential analysis of *Jane Eyre* in their *Mad Woman in the Attic*, characterize Bertha Mason as a "nighttime specter" who serves as a doubling "avatar of Jane" (Gilbert & Gubar 359). What Jane wishes to do, indeed what she does as a "sane" woman, mirrors what Bertha Mason does as an exaggerated specter of madness. While Jane's fire is metaphorical, Bertha's is physical when she lights Rochester's bedclothes one night. While Jane subconsciously feels resistance to her first attempt at marrying Rochester, Bertha Mason resists for her, tearing her veil after trying it on in the mirror, strangely staring at herself in Jane's mirror. While this analysis is important, Bertha Mason deserves her own critical space without the specter of Jane. Surely, she is more important than her relationship to Jane. By reducing Bertha to a spectral double for Jane, scholars enact violence similar to Rochester's treatment of Bertha's madness; we risk Bertha's subjectivity in service of Jane as the mediator of analysis. Elizabeth Donaldson revises Gilbert and Gubar's doubling, arguing "*Jane Eyre*'s plot rests on a structure not exactly of made doubles, but of juxtapositions between normative and non-normative bodies," between "masculine rationality and feminine embodiment (Donaldson 102). Bertha Mason had a failed marriage to Rochester, was treated horrifically after being diagnosed by Rochester's doctors, then hidden away even though she was likely more lucid than not. We must see Bertha for what she is: the wreckage of imperialism and settler colonialism in Jamaica present in the metropolitan metaphorical heart of empire.

As a point of clarification, Bertha Mason is not trapped in the attic, but rather an inhabitant of a space between household member and servant. Bertha lives on the third story of Thornfield, sharing the gallery hallway with other servants and storage rooms, rather than the

rooms of the mistress of the house; Deanna K. Kreisel has detailed the metaphorical and critical differences between the attic and the third story of Thornfield (Kreisel). Bertha has her own suite of rooms and a door hidden by a tapestry, pointing to the secrecy surrounding her imprisonment. Just before a large party of gentlepeople come to stay with Rochester, Jane overhears a servant named Leah and an unnamed charwoman speaking about Grace Poole receiving large wages for her work. Grace Poole, as Jane discovers later, is Bertha Mason's keeper and monitor. In the overheard conversation, Leah stops the charwoman as soon as Jane is spotted. "Doesn't she know?" the charwoman whispers, and "Leah shook her head, and the conversation was of course dropped" (Brontë 241-42). Bertha is known by the servants and lives with and around them, part of the servants' routine and space.

Bertha is not the madwoman in the attic; she is the madwoman in the servants' wing, unknown to gentility and those in between clear social strata. The other person, besides Jane, who does not know of Bertha is Mrs. Fairfax, Rochester's housekeeper and distantly related to Rochester through marriage. Her lack of knowledge highlights her own in-between place at Thornfield, much like Jane's place as governess and love interest and Bertha's precarious position. Similarly, Moll Flanders, the titular main character of Defoe's novel, discussed in the first chapter, begins as a member of the servant class but under the protection of several high ladies, gradually rising to gentility and colonial land ownership through theft, cleverness, and sex. In Brontë's novel we see a different trajectory; Bertha Mason begins as colonial gentility and at Thornfield becomes something – someone – between servant and mistress. Bertha's presence and familiarity with the servants highlights her "fall" from gentlewoman to an unknown position among the servants but also cared for by them.

During the late eighteenth century, "the concept of normality is invented" and disability is no longer "tied to an individual event, like the mother's witnessing a violent crime, but to a genetic entity or a group defect—ethnic, racial, national, or class-related" (Davis 62). Novels of this time period "take up the role of enforcing normalcy by producing images of the perfect and disabled body" (Davis 69). *Jane Eyre* sits on the metaphorical line between the novels of the late eighteenth century that enforce the contrast between normalcy and disability, like perhaps Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall* or Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*, and the nineteenth-century ideas of disability as something to be exploited and stared at in freak shows and public events.[76] Bertha Mason's relationship with Jane's and Brontë's idea of what is "normal" and expected of a great lady and a wife of Rochester makes Bertha "mad." Jane describes ideal women as "very calm generally," but with space to "feel just as men feel." Women, like their rational male counterparts, "suffer from too rigid a restraint" (Brontë 178). Bertha's non-normative mental state is juxtaposed with Jane's "calm" and formulated "exercise." Rochester's description of Bertha's mental illness is in keeping with contemporaneous trends Lennard David finds in the latter half of the long eighteenth century. Shaun Grech reminds postcolonial scholars that "disability existed and was constructed, imagined and lived in the colonial," and the study of settler colonialism and imperialism demands the study of disability, as well (Grech 8). Normativity, as a developing concept in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when "framed and analysed in historically and geopolitically referential ways," is "traceable to what we may call a *colonial normativity*" (Grech 10, italics in original). The ideal, normative, non-mad body was a function of the colonizer, not the colonized. Bertha, as non-normative, reifies

[76] In her introduction to *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, Rosemarie Garland-Thompson writes that "human corporeal anomaly" gradually becomes associated with the term "freak" during the Victorian era, corresponding with the development of the freak show. Before this, physical anomaly is less of a spectacle to be methodically consumed.

her relationship with settler colonialism, leading to her contextualization within Grech's description of colonial normativity. Bertha's disability is inextricably linked to her colonial positionality.

Bertha Mason is disabled by her association with several categories Rochester deems abnormal: a mad mother, Creole, and drunkard. Her family is "idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother, the Creole, was both a mad woman and a drunkard!" and these seem disabling failings to him indeed (Brontë 379). Rochester, as a colonizer, encountered Bertha as an Other, and colonizers "construct" the Other "racially, culturally, bodily, and spiritually" (Grech 9). Of course, Bertha is not a colonial Other as a product of violent marginalization or enslavement. She is a Creole embedded in a liminal racial and ethnic position, which I discuss more below. She is colonized, though, through her relationship with Rochester's British subjectivity and whiteness. When colonized women do not behave as men expect of them, a woman might be declared hysteric or mad by her colonizer. Correspondingly, madness is "a product of powerlessness" where women use unexpected social responses to escape from a situation, but those unexpected responses are the very thing that justifies the "mad" diagnosis.[77] Madness can be seen as a failure to follow or departure from social expectations. Donaldson reminds us that Bertha's "madness is contextualized as a matrilineal legacy of national, ethnic identity and physical disorder" (Donaldson 106). But crucially, Bertha's madness exists in the context of British imperialism in Jamaica and its attendant corporeal violence. Bertha is diagnosed as "mad" by Rochester's choice of doctor, and the response of the male doctor and Rochester is to lock Bertha away in a small suite of rooms in the servants' quarters. When she

[77] R.A. Houston traces a few genealogies of the discussion of madness in their article, "Madness and gender in the long eighteenth century." (Houston 310)

attempts to escape by setting fire to Rochester's curtains and bedding or laughing loud enough for Jane to hear, her husband feels confirmed in the diagnosis of madness, for she has failed to respond to the situation as he wished and expected of a normative, rational man and colonial Other.

Bertha, while a white, Jamaican, Creole, is also not the same white as her English counterparts. Jane is described as deeply feeling, though Quakerish and plain. Brontë and Jane constantly compare Bertha, however, with animal figures, noises, and postures. Bertha is described in colors and shapes never attributed to her English counterparts. Bertha has "shaggy locks," a wild gaze, a "purple face" with "bloated features." When confronted with a party that has come to view her as a spectacle for legal and moral clarification, Jane says Bertha "sprang and grappled [Rochester's] throat viciously" and bit him in the cheek (Brontë 381). Bertha and Jane are in the same room, nearly side-by-side, and Jane remains the quiet, chaste, plain, unassuming young English woman, while Bertha is uncontrollable, violent, rough, and purple. But, as Spivak writes, "imperialism and its territorial and subject-constituting project are a violent deconstruction" of the oppositions inherent in othering subjective identities (Spivak "Three Women's Texts" 249). Bertha's identity is deconstructed in relation to Jane; she is stripped of her whiteness and some of the privileges associated with it, including spousal care. White Britons in the West Indies were part of a decades-long rhetorical war over exactly what affected their racial formation. Some, like poet James Grainger, suggested that British whites "become consumers of climates, rather than being determined by those climates" and they are "extracted from their material affects" resulting from the Caribbean climate. Enslaved people and Africans, "on the other hand, are nowhere imagined as consumers but only as effects of climate" (Egan 197). Deidre Coleman reads a Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Susanna Gale within

the context of Creolization in the West Indies, reminding us of Edward Long's description of British fears surrounding Creoles. Life in the West Indies as part of the wealthy white planting class "involved an unseemly intimacy with large numbers of Black attendants" and the young women were always-already at risk of miscegenation (Coleman 171-172). Irrespective of how Bertha Mason *became* a different sort of white, though, the "discursive redeployment" of her tropicalization reinforces her position as someone not-quite-like her husband and the governess, someone they deem deserving of marginalization (Aravamudan 15). Bertha might "have found more comfort and care from her husband had she been white like Jane," but she has always-already been cast off as waste, as a ruin of Rochester's influence and usage (Nygren 118). She is not "white like Jane" and Rochester; she is white with an asterisk of Jamaican family history, animal features, and irrational femininity. Bertha is two-fold othered by her coloniality and her construction in opposition to Englishness.

Rochester's description of Bertha's mental illness further removes her subjectivity. While initially telling Jane that Bertha's mental illness is matrilineal and hereditary, Rochester links madness to drunkenness and sexuality, which are "failures of the will, not the body, in Rochester's opinion. Therefore, despite Bertha Mason's fated madness, Rochester still holds her morally accountable for her illness" (Donaldson 106). Bertha's mental illness is both matrilineal and an individual failure of her morality, as framed by his own expectations of normality. Rochester, though distancing himself from the Mason family because of their association with Bertha's mental illness, still holds Bertha accountable for her own loss of subjectivity. Because she is another sort of white from Jane and Rochester, and because of her position as a colonial subject, "Bertha already has less access to justice." Her disability "only compounds the problem," leaving room for Rochester to cast her off as detritus of his time in imperial Jamaica

(Nygren 117). Indeed, Rochester considers himself unmarried, as if Bertha exists only as a painful reminder of a colonial past, a ruin. She loses her subjectivity as a consequence of Rochester's scale of accountability; he blames her for her disability, stripping her of social rights, power, and her position as lady of the house. Rochester continually ruins Bertha while blaming her for his actions and assessment.

While dismantling Bertha's subjectivity, Rochester attempts to cast *himself* as a ruin and victim through his contact with imperialism, though he cannot maintain both his status as a ruin and his British colonizer subjectivity. While in Jamaica, he brought in "medical men" to diagnose his wife and they had "pronounced her mad, she had of course been shut up" (Brontë 398). Though Bertha is the person shut into a suite of rooms, Rochester claims he experiences suicidal ideation, telling Jane that he "unlocked a trunk which contained a brace of loaded pistols: I meant to shoot myself" (Brontë 398). The prospect of becoming a ruin of colonialism leaves Rochester preferring death. Though he suggests he is ruined himself, he assures Jane he is not mentally ill: "I only entertained the intention for a moment; for, not being insane, the crisis of exquisite and unalloyed despair…was past in a second" (Brontë 398). Rochester feels his ruin/ation is permanent, given its role in keeping him from Jane. But his experience of mental fragility and suicidal ideation is acceptable to his construction of normality and passes quickly enough for him to dismiss it as a consequence of his wife, rather than his own mental faculties. Indeed, he frames his experience with mental illness in direct contrast to Bertha's experiences. Bertha's illness is matrilineal, not patrilineal, and thus does not interfere with his ideas of patriarchal authority. Rochester declares himself "not married" and resists his mental illness, as it is masculine rather than feminine or matrilineal (Brontë 395). Rochester retains his subjectivity as a British colonial, maintaining his colonial position of power, thus avoiding becoming a

permanent ruin. He suggests he was on the brink of ruin/ation but avoided that fate, for now, with his patriarchal sanity and juxtaposition with Bertha's mental state.

The reader and Jane are not to worry about Bertha ruining Rochester, even at the moment of his confession, because a mysterious wind told him to keep her hidden and enjoy his life without her. The wind is "a wind fresh from Europe" that brings the voice of Hope, who tells Rochester to go "and live again in Europe: there it is not known what a sullied name you bear, nor what a filthy burden is bound to you" (Brontë 399). Rochester decides, based on the advice of the wind, to bring Bertha to England, enclose her on the third story of his large estate house, and depart to the pleasures of Europe and European women. In his description of the mysterious wind and the voice of Hope, Bertha is afforded only enough subjectivity to become "that woman, who has so abused your long-suffering," "sullied your name," and "outraged your honor" (Brontë 399). Rochester refuses to name Bertha during his dialogue with Hope and this part of the narrative he gives to Jane. Bertha's position in relationship with Rochester constructs her "as disabled because she is the colonial Other, and the ableist hegemony erases Bertha's personhood," down to her name (Nygren 119). Bertha does not get a choice of going to England; she does not get a name. She is cast aside, quite literally, and left disregarded in a drafty house while her husband sleeps with several women in continental Europe and neglects to give name to her publicly.

Though Rochester delicately claims he is nearly a ruin of his marriage to a white, Creole, mad, Jamaican woman, Bertha remains the perpetual and condemned ruin of imperialism. Through her mental illness, ill-fated marriage, treatment from her husband, and lack of appropriate care, Bertha "becomes a disabled female subject who is a casualty of patriarchal, colonialist, and ableist hegemony" (Nygren 117). Rochester and Jane separate Bertha's whiteness

from their own, othering Bertha as a colonial set apart from their Englishness. Rochester further removes Bertha's subjectivity by highlighting her matrilineal madness, which Rochester views as abnormal from his patriarchal sanity.

Tragically, Bertha turns herself into a monument, an effigy. She lights a fire to her estate house, which she never claimed as mistress nor was allowed to manage, and proceeds to the roof. She shouts until "they could hear her a mile off" (Brontë 529). Bertha yells until she has the attention of as many people as she can gather. She calls until Rochester goes to rescue her, and townspeople gather around the building. When Rochester arrives on the roof and calls for her, Bertha "yelled, and gave a spring, and the next minute she lay smashed on the pavement" (Brontë 529). Bertha chose her own moment to become a memorial of her own ruin, ensuring many witnessed her memorialization. Though her position as a colonial Other, her disability, and Rochester's machinations conspire to ruin Bertha, she chooses her own moment of memorialization. Rochester refused to claim her during her life and would not give her name publicly. Bertha calls Rochester's name in condemnation for her treatment and assures him all of England will know of her dramatic death and his failings as a husband. She lit a fire, gathered an audience, implicated Rochester directly, and jumped to her death.

Bertha claims greater choice over her end than other women I examine in *Wrecked.* Lady Mellasin of Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless* is sent to Jamaica without recourse; Eliza Fowke cannot stop her slow descent into illness and she never returns to India, the scene of her early childhood and coming of age. Clara and Mary of Sansay's *Secret History* escape revolution to Philadelphia, but though they might have fled, their relationship with colonialism remains memorialized in a novel. The only other textually constructed women deciding their fate are the women of "Theresa: A Haytien Tale." They choose their destiny in life just as Bertha eventually

chooses hers in death. Madame Paulina and her daughters choose revolutionary action and justice. Bertha chooses the only thing she can: her death. Bertha Mason shows a development of the ruined woman, moving from a ruination and monument of the broader imperial project to an active agent in her own end. Her agency over her death shows narrative development of the social ideas of the consequences of imperialism but remains limiting: Bertha cannot choose life. But rather than be lost to the hidden room in the servants' wing forever, Bertha chooses to be remembered.

The women in this dissertation all experience ruin/ation and become varying degrees of detritus, monuments, memorials. Their experience of imperialism leaves them geographically relocated, given over to vice; a vessel for children left behind by a gambling husband; forcibly removed from positions of authority; independent and revolutionary. The conditions of each woman's wrecking and ruin/ation differ widely across the eighteenth century. Earlier in the century, ruinous or transgressive behavior sent women from London to the colonial periphery. In the mid-eighteenth century, women negotiated the changing relationships between metropole and outpost while all was in flux. They did the small and constitutive work of empire. Revolutionary women of the late-eighteenth century push out the centralized governance in favor of establishing the post-colonial, African diasporic imagination. Women power, agency, and position as an imperial ruin continue to change into the nineteenth century. In their separate ways, women touched by imperialism become memorials and monuments to their ruinous experiences. They are, in short, wrecked.

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