

“What is your pretense in this house, to keep me a prisoner here?”:

The Role of the Captor in 18th Century British Captivity Novels

by

Emily Ventola

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To Brady, my faithful companion

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Abstract

As the modern novel gained popularity in the eighteenth-century, so too did the theme of domestic captivity. British novelists, in particular, were increasingly drawn to the motif of the young heroine trapped within a domestic prison. Yet despite the prevalence of this theme in early modern literature, and with a few striking exceptions, there has been little commentary on how these novels address issues of gender and class identity and as well as heteronormative sexuality. This thesis provides an analysis of three eighteenth-century novels which prominently feature the theme of female domestic captivity: Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), Charlotte Turner Smith's *The Old Manor House* (1793), and Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). In order to conceptualize how these novels connect domestic captivity to cultural identity issues, I focus on the interaction between the captive heroine and both the male and the female captors.

Chapter 1 focuses on *Pamela* and the physical threat posed to the heroine by a hyper-masculinized male captor. Here, I identify how femininity is defined by the perseverance of 'virtue' and how the captive state poses a threat to that virtue by idealizing eroticism. I also address the intricate sexual relationship between servant and master in the domestic sphere. Additionally, this overt sexualization of captivity is complicated by the inclusion of a sexually undesirable female captor whose masculine physical qualities necessarily lead to a discussion of gender ambiguity within the novel.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the ideas put forth in the previous chapter by analyzing the concept of a differently masculinized male captor in *The Old Manor House*. Here I examine the central male character who conflates his role as captor with his desire to act as the liberator of the captive heroine. I examine how captivity can threaten the sexual identity of the heroine without the fear of physical harm that exists in *Pamela*. Instead this chapter raises questions of how captivity can function emotionally and psychologically. To illustrate this idea, I also provide an analysis of the manipulative female captor whose actions in the novel stem from her own insecurities regarding her sexual agency.

Finally, Chapter 3 turns to *The Romance of the Forest* in order to consider how male sentimentality affects the social and sexual identities of female characters. I introduce the concept of hyper-femininity among women as a response to male sentimentality's complication of the gender binary. This chapter also deals with class identity. The two male captors I have identified enjoy different degrees of economic agency, which determines how they fulfill their roles as warders.

Ultimately, an analysis of how both male and female captors interact with the imprisoned heroine serves to complicate the gender binaries within these novels, adding complexities to our understanding of how social and sexual identities are formed and represented.

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Introduction

Women, confined to one [employment], and having their thoughts constantly directed to the most insignificant part of themselves, seldom extend their views beyond the triumph of the hour. But were their understanding once emancipated from the slavery to which the pride and sensuality of man and their short-sighted desire, like that of dominion in tyrants, of present sway, has subject them, we should probably read of their weaknesses with surprise.

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)

In his 1986 essay, “*Pamela: Autonomy, Subordination, and the ‘State of Childhood’*,” Raymond F. Hilliard analyzes the complicated, sexually-charged relationship between captor and captive that is the focus of Samuel Richardson’s novel, *Pamela*. Hilliard provides a succinct explanation of why *Pamela*’s licentious, predatory villain and captor, Mr. B, behaves the way he does: “B’s story is one of...arrested development...the powerful as well as the subordinate in the novel, men as well as women, are the prisoners of their conditioning” (Hilliard 215). This quote summarizes scholars’ understanding of eighteenth-century literary captors for the past twenty-five years. Captive heroines, such as Pamela, have been extensively critiqued by authors, psychologists and feminists alike. The captor, however, has rarely been a focus of study, often explained away simply as a byproduct of social construction. This thesis not only centers around the literary captor, but also aims to disprove Hilliard’s theory that captors are mere “prisoners of their conditioning.” Instead, I argue that captors have a much more complicated role in the domestic captivity novel. Central to my argument is the idea that domestic captors are not just sexually-driven men. In this thesis, I focus on three eighteenth-century captivity novels: Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740), Charlotte Turner Smith’s *The Old Manor House* (1793) and Ann Radcliffe’s *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). These novels feature both

male *and* female captor figures, who each play a distinct and critical role in the development of the story. Additionally, I argue that domestic imprisonment can manifest itself both physically and emotionally, as a study of the literary captors in these three novels will demonstrate. These men and women develop relationships with the captive heroine that serve to complicate issues such as class identity, heteronormative sexuality and the gender binary.

But why study the captor? What can the captor tell us about gender and sexuality that an analysis of the captive heroine alone cannot? An answer to this question requires a look into where the domestic captivity novel falls in the broad spectrum of early modern British literature. We can begin with the implications of the word 'domestic.' This thesis focuses specifically on female captivity within an eighteenth-century manor, where the 'home' becomes the physical and emotional prison of a young female. However, as Eve Tavor Bannet points out, "In the eighteenth-century, the word *domestic* was still applied to men as well as to women, arguably to men more properly than to women...The word *domestic* was applied not only to people living in the same household but to members of different households who shared the same chief or family head" (Tavor Bannet 127). Tavor Bannet explains that our modern definition of domesticity -- household activity and duties performed by women -- does not reflect the definition that existed in the eighteenth-century. Nevertheless, there is certainly a connection being made in these early modern captivity novels between the physical house and the position of women within it. As I argue in this thesis, these words offer further commentary on the distinction between women who are imprisoned within the home and the men who are free to move in and out of it. Or, as Paula Backscheider asserts, the domestic is characterized as a "political

microcosm, as a site for dialogic conflict, and as the space in which the coming divide between public and private was prefigured and negotiated” (Backscheider, “The Rise of Gender as a Political Category” 57). For this reason, I will use the word ‘domestic’ in its modern sense, as a decidedly feminine space that is controlled and influenced by men.

Emphasizing the domestic factor in novels like *Pamela* is crucial because, as critics have pointed out, not all captivity novels take place in the home. In their book, *The Imaginary Puritan*, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse assert that Richardson’s *Pamela* is “generally considered the first *domestic* novel” (Armstrong & Tennenhouse 199, my emphasis). They note, however, that earlier eighteenth-century authors, such as Daniel Defoe, were already writing stories about men who became prisoners in far-away lands or in the midst of a grand adventure. These early captivity novels center around the narrative of being physically removed from England. They pose the question, how can one maintain a national identity abroad? By setting his captivity novel inside a British home, it would appear that Richardson is not as interested in what it means to be physically *in England* as opposed to anywhere else. And yet, Armstrong and Tennenhouse identify an important connection between Richardson and Defoe:

Robinson Crusoe appeared around 1719, some twenty years before *Pamela*, and there are important similarities between the two works of fiction. Richardson, one could argue, simply replaces Crusoe’s island in the New World with the interior spaces of the household, the female body, and the private world of the emotions as revealed in Pamela’s letters to her parents (Armstrong & Tennenhouse 200).

If the domestic sphere can serve as a substitute for an “island in the New World,” this suggests that there is something unfamiliar or misunderstood about the characterization of the home. Richardson, and his fellow authors of domestic captivity, must have believed that the privacy afforded to the British home consequently made it as mysterious as an isolated island. So what is being negotiated within the domestic realm?

The answer, according to Armstrong and Tennenhouse, lies with cultural identity. Just as Crusoe struggled to maintain his national identity while imprisoned on an island, captive domestic heroines are in constant threat of losing their ‘cultural identity’:

“[Richardson] simply translated the basis for the heroine’s identity from nationality and religion into class and sexual conduct” (Armstrong 375). While there is scholarly debate surrounding Armstrong and Tennenhouse’s claims, they are correct to argue that there is a connection between cultural identity issues and the genre of the domestic captivity novel. They are also correct in associating class and sexuality with the concept of cultural identity. Additionally, I suggest a third component of cultural identity: gender. This thesis examines how the three components of British cultural identity -- class, gender, and sexuality -- define the relationship between the captive heroine and the captor. I posit that it is the manipulation of cultural identity that forms the crux of the antagonism in the domestic captivity novel.

We have now established that the domestic setting of the eighteenth-century captivity novel is important to the notion of cultural identity that is being placed under threat in the story. At this point, I would like to take a moment to consider the structure of the captivity novel. Armstrong claims that the following “cluster of narrative ingredients” is incorporated into the domestic captivity novel:

1) a lone heroine whose self-definition and cultural value are under assault...2) an individual who manages to hang onto her value and identity by transcribing personal experiences under extreme circumstances, and 3) a written account that testifies to the captive's unwavering desire to return to an English home (Armstrong 373).

Richardson's *Pamela* certainly contains Armstrong's "ingredients" for a domestic captivity novel: 1) Pamela is a young servant girl whose virtue is threatened by the sexual advances of her lascivious master; 2) *Pamela* is an epistolary novel; and 3) Pamela writes frequently of her desire to return home to her parents. As this thesis will demonstrate, not all captivity novels fulfill these three requirements. Nevertheless, Armstrong's explication is helpful in furthering our understanding of how the structure of the captivity novel facilitates the development of power dynamics between captor and captive. Particularly illuminating is her claim that the heroine's cultural identity is "under assault." The nature of domestic captivity is such that it threatens the class, gender and sexual identities of the imprisoned heroine. For female characters, resigned to life in the shadows of men, cultural identity is of pivotal importance. Thus, eighteenth-century authors depict a threat to this identity as the apex of harm that can be caused by domestic captivity.

In creating a working class heroine in *Pamela*, Richardson seems to be arguing that cultural identity is more important than perceptions of social hierarchy. As many critics have argued, what made *Pamela* a remarkable piece of literature at the time of its publication was not that it applauded a young woman's efforts to remain chaste. It was that the young woman in question was a servant. Richardson was able to convince his readers to care about Pamela in spite of her servant status by placing her in "a world bent

on destroying her cultural identity, which she tries to maintain by writing letters” (Armstrong & Tennenhouse 208). It is Pamela’s fear of losing a part of her identity that makes her condition within the novel so pitiable. This fear is what sits at the heart of domestic captivity.

And who better to instill this fear than a domestic captor? By their very nature, captors hold some degree of power over the imprisoned heroine. To return to Hilliard, domestic captors are not merely “prisoners of their conditioning” who dramatize “the paradox that people with power can be like children in their very attempts to assert dominance” (Hilliard 215, 212). In fact, they play an integral role in shaping what the captivity novels have to say about class, gender, and the sexuality of women during the eighteenth-century. Much of the heroine’s life in captivity is defined by how her cultural identities are threatened in the face of those of her captor. The perpetual sense of fear that defines the captive state is sustained by the complexity of the relationship between captive and captor. This argument is perhaps best supported by showing that not all domestic captors are sexual predators like Mr. B. In fact, they are not even all men. Each of the three novels I will analyze in this thesis features male *and* female captors who exercise and complicate their power over the captive heroine physically and emotionally.

In Chapter 1, I focus on *Pamela*. This is the earliest novel I discuss, which may explain why the story’s captors are somewhat easier to characterize. They rather neatly fall to one side of the gender binary. In this novel, Richardson introduces a central male figure, Mr. B, who goes from being the eponymous servant girl’s master to her captor after locking Pamela away in his manor. Mr. B presents an unyielding sexual threat to Pamela in his repeated and often forceful attempts to make her his mistress. In this way, Mr. B

conforms to a traditional, albeit greatly exaggerated, form of masculinity, which I refer to in this chapter as 'hyper-masculinity.' The presence of a hyper-masculine male in the captive state poses a distinctly physical threat to the imprisoned heroine. The male captor is able to exert his authority over the heroine's body in the form of physical touch. In contrast to this hyper-masculinization, the novel portrays Pamela as the idealization of femininity. Richardson defines femininity through an adherence to 'virtue' -- a quality that the captive state puts under threat by portraying the heroine as an object of sexual desire, thus making virtue prominent. In pitting Mr. B against Pamela, the novel presents hyper-masculinity as inherently problematic on the one hand, and yet glorifies it on the other for promoting heteronormative sexual desire between men and women. The chapter fleshes out these complicated topics by analyzing the sexualization of the servant-master relationship in the domestic sphere.

The overt sexualization of domestic captivity in *Pamela* is further complicated by the inclusion of a sexually undesirable female captor. Mrs. Jewkes, who is herself in the service of Mr. B, helps her master in his attempts to seduce young Pamela. As her primary warder who keeps a daily watch over Pamela, Mrs. Jewkes' authority is resolute. This chapter examines the image of the 'key' as a symbol of power in domestic captivity. Mrs. Jewkes holds the keys to Pamela's room, the site of her imprisonment, which creates a heightened power dynamic between the two women. Complicating this relationship is Mrs. Jewkes' apparent 'man-like' physical qualities. Pamela describes her female captor as 'masculine' in appearance, a fact which leads to the question of gender ambiguity in the novel.

In Chapter 2, I turn to Smith's *The Old Manor House*, which was published over fifty years after *Pamela*. This chapter elaborates on the ideas set forth in Chapter 1 by analyzing the reconfiguration of masculinity. The male captor in this novel is Orlando, whose aversion to violent sexual passions differentiates him from Mr. B. He is generally a kind man and, at best, appears unaware of the power that he has over his captive heroine and intended love interest, Monimia. In fact, Orlando's reaction to his role as captor is so different from that of Mr. B that he seems to step outside of the traditional 'masculine' gender identity established by the Richardsonian villain. I hesitate to refer to Orlando as a 'feminized' male captor, for that suggests that diverse masculinities can only be described in terms of gender binaries. I will instead refer to his character as 'differently masculinized.' I argue that in spite of this change of masculinization in the male captor, the captive state can still threaten the sexual identity of the heroine without the fear of physical harm that exists in *Pamela*. This chapter raises questions of how captivity can function both physically *and* emotionally, a position that is furthered through an analysis of Mrs. Lennard, the novel's imposing female captor. Mrs. Lennard is Monimia's aunt and guardian and she uses this inherent authority to keep Monimia locked away in a bedroom. This chapter again examines the symbolic nature of the 'key,' this time focusing more on what it means for the keys to a manor to be possessed by a servant. Class issues, however, are secondary to the more prevalent question of the gender binary. As in *Pamela*, the relationship between the captive and the female captor in *The Old Manor House* is grounded in issues of gender identification and the perceived sexual value of women. An unattractive spinster like Mrs. Jewkes, Mrs. Lennard's treatment of her niece

is complicated by adherence to conventional gender norms and the social construct of marriage.

Chapter 3 focuses on Radcliffe's early gothic novel, *The Romance of the Forest*. This chapter continues with the theme of a differently masculinized male. In this case, however, there are two male captors, La Motte and the Marquis, both of whom negatively affect the cultural identities of the captive heroine, Adeline. The male captors in *The Romance of the Forest* adhere to a different kind of masculinization than either Mr. B or Orlando. Critics have referred to La Motte's and the Marquis's approach to heteronormative sexual desire as 'sentimental ideology,' or 'sentimentality.' Claudia Johnson describes this behavior as "admixtures of tenderness and desire" (Johnson 74). In other words, Radcliffean male captors are characterized by sentimental 'passions' toward the female captive. These passions, however, are typically focused on the men's sexual attraction to Adeline. A shift from the focus on the hyper-masculine as demonstrated in *Pamela* to the masculinized sentimentality in *The Romance of the Forest* offers a new look at the gender binary that defines the captive space. Sentimentality challenges the distinctiveness of the gender binary, suggesting instead that there exists a broad spectrum of masculinity along which a person can fall. The female characters in Radcliffe's novel, however, overcompensate for male sentimentality by adopting traits which I will refer to as 'hyper-feminine.' Hyper-femininity involves the heightened sexualization of women, which disallows homosocial female friendships. *The Romance of the Forest* is unique in that it does not feature a central female captor. An analysis of the female characters that are present in the novel, however, can reveal both how female

sexual identities develop as well as how these identities are put under threat due to domestic captivity.

Finally, in all three chapters, I discuss how the novels were affected by the emerging influence of gender ideologies in the eighteenth-century and the debates around them. Throughout the 1700s, female writers such as Mary Astell, Catherine Macaulay and, perhaps most notably, Mary Wollstonecraft immersed themselves into various conversations on matters of women's cultural identity: inequality between genders, the sexualization of women, and the historicization of womanhood, to name a few. I hesitate to refer to these women or their works as 'feminist,' since that term did not exist in the eighteenth-century and the authors themselves would not have referred to themselves as such. It is certainly true, however, that modern scholars have come to associate the term feminist with their writings, particularly the works of Wollstonecraft. While it is impossible to exactly pinpoint how much of an influence theorists like Wollstonecraft had on the writings of Richardson, Smith and Radcliffe, it is important to be aware of the critical commentary on gender that existed at the time that these authors were publishing their novels. I hope that including the theory into this thesis will help to illustrate the nature and importance of cultural identity in eighteenth-century British society.

Chapter 1: Richardson's Masculinized Captors & the Sexuality of Servanthood

The Hyper-Masculine Male:

The domestic captivity system developed in Samuel Richardson's 1740 novel, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*, has proven a difficult subject for critics to broach. While many scholars have commented on the class and power dynamics that frame the tumultuous relationship between Pamela and her employer, Mr. B, with a few striking exceptions, there has been little direct reference to the young heroine's situation as 'imprisonment' or 'captivity.' Jerry C. Beasley, for instance, describes the novel as "a fantasy that re-enacts the classic battle of the sexes" (Beasley 39). Such a description suggests a light-heartedness to Pamela's situation and downplays the very serious sexual threat that she faces in her captive state. Yet even Richardson himself shied away from explicitly vocalizing the desperation of his heroine's position. In a letter to a friend, he wrote about the inspiration for *Pamela*: "Two booksellers, my particular friends, entreated me to write for them a little volume of letters...to instruct handsome girls, who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue, the above story recurred to my thought; and hence sprung Pamela" (Richardson & Stinstra 28).¹ The metaphorical "snares" that Richardson refers to are represented in his novel by the very real presence of "captivity." And yet, in Richardson's own words, the novel began as a type of conduct book for young women. How do we extend our reasoning from the pedagogy of conduct to domestic captivity?

I would argue that the reason critics like Beasley do not refer directly to captivity in *Pamela* is because they do not focus on Pamela's relationship with both male *and* female

¹ Samuel Richardson to Johannes Stinstra, 2 June 1753

characters. It is understandable why this is so. *Pamela* is an epistolary novel, comprised of letters and journal entries written by the adolescent heroine. The majority of her thoughts and descriptions are directed towards her relationship with Mr. B. However, if we analyze how Pamela's domestic position is targeted and manipulated by characters of both sexes, we can begin to see how her position within B's manor encapsulates larger themes of class, gender and sexual imprisonment. I begin, though, with a look at Mr. B, the male captor of the novel. B is the epitome of sexualized violence and espouses what I will refer to as 'hyper-masculinity.' His relentless sexual energy poses a threat to the steadfastly virtuous heroine by trapping her in a sphere of sexual vulnerability. The novel provides a comparison of the concepts of male and female heteronormative sexual identities, which are defined and illustrated through the imprisonment of the heroine.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Pamela is a poor fifteen-year-old domestic servant who becomes the object of sexual desire to her master, Mr. B. He makes frequent, unsuccessful attempts to seduce Pamela into becoming his mistress. Following Pamela's eventual decision to leave her post and return to her parents' home, Mr. B abducts her and locks her away in one of his remote estates. Here she is placed under the supervision of the manipulative and spiteful Mrs. Jewkes. Although Mr. B continues to make advances towards her, many of which can be read as attempted rape, Pamela soon finds herself falling in love with her captor. As implied by the title, Pamela's virtue is eventually 'rewarded' when Mr. B agrees to marry her -- a narrative twist which brings forth many questions about the nature and operation of physical captivity and power.

In order to understand the motivations and functionality of Mr. B's physical captivity of Pamela, we must first examine the social systems in place that allow for the power dynamic to develop. The nature of Mr. B's dominance over Pamela is defined largely by her servant status. The very notion of servanthood aids the confinement of people of the lower class by positioning them at the mercy of an employer. But just as domestic servants are at the bottom of the class spectrum, so too do they remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy within the home, the place of employment. Thus, Richardson justifies the relationship between Pamela and Mr. B by laying its foundation in the socially acceptable context of domestic service. Mr. B, as both Pamela's social superior *and* employer, is free to temper her mobility and agency within the home. What complicates the scenario between them is sex.

In her book *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism, and Violence Between Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Kristina Straub summarizes what both historians and literary critics refer to as 'the servant problem': "Conduct literature shows an overwhelmingly clear consensus: any female domestic servant is a walking sexual target" (Straub 36). The class identity of the female domestic servant is controlled by her master, and consequently her sexual identity becomes an open target. Straub explains that, "Women servants cause trouble in families even without active effort. Just by being, their sexuality threatens to ensnare any man, servant or master, who comes within their purview" (Straub 35). In other words, the servant-master relationship is inherently sexualized. The female servant does not have to vocalize her sexual proclivities (or lack thereof) to her master -- her social inferiority proclaims her sexually available regardless of her moral or ethical feelings on the matter.

The sexualization of servanthood has a long established history in literature. Straub argues:

Such tensions in the relations between servants and masters emerge from a long history of love and hate that crosses historical periods and geographic locations. What is specific to eighteenth-century England in the emergence of social consciousness of those tensions, expressed in literature that tries to make sense of, and even to resolve them, as part of a larger, shared 'social' problem (Straub 2).

The "problem" Straub refers to is the perception of the female domestic servant. In spite of her status as a lower-class woman at the mercy of a sexually deviant master, the domestic servant was seen as dangerous, a masterful manipulator who would use her sexual charms to increase her class mobility. As Straub suggests, "Sex, for many writers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, is represented as a means by which female servants can gain a morally suspect power...The maid's ability to attract desire across class lines made her a disturbingly mobile figure in the literature on service" (Straub 36-37). While I agree that the influence that Pamela's mere presence has over the aristocratic Mr. B is remarkable, I question whether this influence equates to class mobility. Even if Pamela became Mr. B's mistress, that would not automatically move her up in the social hierarchy. Pamela understands the risk of submitting sexually to Mr. B without the security of marriage, and she is willing to challenge the authority of her wealthy master in order to protect her sacred virtue. What is remarkable about Pamela, therefore, is that she recognizes the sexual influence she holds over Mr. B *but still refuses*

to give in to his desires (until they are married). This, unsurprisingly, has serious consequences for Pamela as it allows for her frequent victimization as a domestic captive.

The servant problem -- the sexualization of female servants -- places Pamela in an incredibly difficult social dilemma. Her situation is not simply defined by her employment, nor is it simply defined by Mr. B's attraction to her. Thus, every decision that Pamela makes has consequences that affect multiple aspects of her cultural identity. Mr. B presents Pamela with numerous opportunities for escape, and the concept of returning home, of regressing back to a childlike dependency, is often repeated by Pamela in letters to her parents: "Oh that I had never left my little bed in your loft!"; "[I] dream that I am with you"; "I long to come to you" (Richardson 58, 69, 75). Pamela's desire to return home is never realized, however, mostly due to her decision to delay her departure pending the completion of a frivolous domestic chore: "Perhaps I shan't come this week, because I must get up the linen" (Richardson 68). Pamela's apparent reluctance to leave Mr. B's home, in light of the constant threats to her virtue, has been read as an indication of her subconscious desire to stay. But Straub is correct when she argues that,

Claiming mobility as a servant means risking some form of criminalization, since erecting an economic agency exposes her to sexual advances or to criminal charges: she is either vulnerable to 'some harm, almost as bad as what I would run away from,' that is, rape, or she is liable to be seen as a thief (Straub 50).

No decision that Pamela makes is ever simple. Regardless of whether or not she *wants* to stay with Mr. B, her decision has ramifications that affect her status as a servant, as a woman, and as the object of Mr. B's sexual desire. It conflates her concerns regarding

both financial responsibility and adherence to virtue -- two burdens that, in fact, cannot be separated. This is where the notion of captivity comes into focus. Mr. B understands Pamela's predicament. He offers her the freedom of returning to her parents, knowing that she cannot act upon it.

With the understanding of the connection between sexuality, servitude and captivity, we can now move into a more detailed discussion of Mr. B as a hyper-sexualized male captor. The acts of violence committed by Mr. B against Pamela all have a distinctly sexual tone. Pamela describes a scene where Mr. B grabs her and he "kissed me, for all I could do" (Richardson 89). Pamela manages to break away, only to be pulled back: "I was going, however; but he stepped after me, and took hold of my arm, and brought me in again: I am sure he made my arm black and blue; for the marks are still upon it" (Richardson 90). The image of the bruises on Pamela's arm is an important result of this interaction. The bruises are a symbol of Mr. B's physical dominance -- a lasting reminder of what he is capable of doing to Pamela and the violent threat associated with her captive state.

This threat is very nearly realized in the infamous attempted rape scene. In this scene, Mr. B dresses as a female servant and sneaks into bed next to Pamela. He forcibly pins her to the bed and cries, "You cannot get from me, nor help yourself: yet I have not offered any thing amiss to you. But if you resolve not to comply with my proposals, I will not lose this opportunity. If you do, I will let you leave. I abhor violence" (Richardson 242). Mr. B seems to believe that he is offering Pamela a choice about what is to happen to her. But what sort of choice is Pamela to make? Either she must become Mr. B's mistress or he will rape her. Furthermore, how capable is Pamela of

making a choice when she is physically pinned to her bed? The physical touch is once again a pivotal factor in the interaction between servant and master. The scene continues with Pamela's reply: "O, sir," I exclaimed, "leave me, but do leave me, and I will do anything I ought to do." "Swear then to me," said he, "that you will accept my proposals!" And then (for this was all detestable grimace) he put his hand in my bosom" (Richardson 242). Mr. B uses the physical touch as a means of coercing Pamela into agreeing to his demands, disregarding the fact that he has stripped her of her ability to make her choice freely. Pamela only avoids being raped after she "quite fainted away" (Richardson 242). Thus, the only way that Pamela is able to escape the captivity within her own bed is through an inability to respond to it.

The act of rape, as far as we know, is never completed in *Pamela*. The narrative is somewhat ambiguous as to what actually happens between Pamela and Mr. B; Pamela comments cryptically, "[I] did not come to myself so soon...And I remember no more, than that, when, with great difficulty, they brought me to myself, [Mrs. Jewkes] was sitting on one side of the bed, with her clothes on; and [Mr. B] on the other, in his gown and slippers" (Richardson 242). As Pamela claims to "remember no more," what actually happened while she was unconscious will never truly be known. Regardless, Pamela's virtue is never *legally* violated, although she spends the entirety of the first half of the novel under constant threat of rape. So if the threat of rape can be disregarded simply through Pamela's insistence that she does not remember what happened to her, what does this say about the notion of rape in general?

To a degree, Richardson's portrayal of rape plays into gendered stereotypes of femininity. As Susan Staves notes, "to be the target of a would-be rapist seems to be a

necessary sign of female desirability” (Staves 86). Although Staves makes this claim in reference to the comic novels of Henry Fielding, the sentiment can be easily applied to the Richardsonian novel. In order for Pamela’s virtue to be ‘rewarded,’ as the title suggests, it must be put under threat. Rape, therefore, is underplayed as merely a means of heightening the attractiveness of Pamela’s virtue and innocence. But at the same time, Staves also argues that rape is rarely completed in early modern novels because its very nature suggests that men have failed in their patriarchal duty to protect women. As both the hero and the villain of *Pamela*, Mr. B must act in such a way that his advances towards Pamela later remain within the ‘acceptable’ limits of male/female sexuality.² Otherwise, Richardson’s readers would ultimately be unlikely to embrace the marriage between Mr. B and Pamela as socially appropriate. Admittedly, the couple is certainly not the most beloved in literary history. Their union is made acceptable, however, by the fact that Mr. B does *not* rape Pamela and therefore does *not* violate her chastity. His reputation and his status as a gentleman is thus preserved -- he is the virtuous Pamela’s eponymous ‘reward.’

Richardson clearly understood that his characterization of Mr. B must be threatening enough to invoke fear for Pamela’s safety, yet reserved enough to legitimize their marriage. It was important that he pay heed to the reader’s sympathy for Pamela’s union with Mr. B because Richardson was writing in a time when the freedom (or lack thereof) that women faced in matrimony was being challenged. In 1700, several decades before *Pamela* was published, philosopher Mary Astell passionately wrote:

² Richardson would later challenge this perspective in his novel, *Clarissa*, wherein the titular character would indeed become a victim of rape, leading, ultimately, to her death.

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 30).

In her writings, Astell vehemently criticizes the incredible amount of power that husbands hold over their wives, the latter of whom she marks as “slaves.” Astell goes on to encourage women to choose a life of celibacy over the strictures of marriage.

In order to counter these emerging gender dialogues, Richardson is diligent in his characterization of Mr. B. While B may pose a threat to Pamela’s cultural identity, his behavior toward her is consistently checked by the fact that he does agree, eventually, to marry her -- because, of course, it is ultimately Mr. B’s decision to marry Pamela, and not the other way around. As Astell argues, “A man can never be under any sort of obligation to marry against his liking, but through some reigning vice, or want of fortitude.” Likewise, “A woman...can’t properly be said to choose; all that is allow’d her, is to refuse or accept what is offer’d” (Astell 17, 29). Richardson, however, is careful to posit marriage as the alternative to Pamela’s domestic captivity, thereby challenging Astell’s argument that women are slaves to their husbands. Marriage, even to one’s domestic captor, is the woman’s reward.

The attempted rape scene pitted against the later marriage between Pamela and Mr. B serves to underscore the importance of women’s cultural identity in the captive state. It is true that Mr. B poses a great physical threat to Pamela, but the larger implications of this stem from the fear of losing one’s cultural identity. Pamela clings to the value of her

virtue because it is essentially the only thing she can control. As a poor, female servant, much of Pamela's identity is defined by her relationship to her master. Mr. B determines Pamela's sexual worth by attempting to make her his mistress; he determines her social value by locking her into an inescapable domestic captivity framed by the socially acceptable notion of servanthood. Mr. B has the power to mold Pamela's cultural identity to suit his own wishes, and it is this incredible override in authority that shapes the fear (felt both by the reader and by Pamela) of domestic captivity.

Gender Ambiguity:

When considering the nature of the relationship between the captor and the captive, we must consider who actually holds the power over confinement. Specifically, who holds the key to the 'prison'? While Mr. B's presence in the novel underpins the connection between captivity and sexuality, he does not actually fill the role of Pamela's daily warder. That duty falls to Mrs. Jewkes, a middle-aged spinster. Mrs. Jewkes is the servant in charge of Mr. B's country manor. Therefore, she is in charge of all of his 'property,' including the captive Pamela. Mrs. Jewkes' manner of confining Pamela is more complicated than that of Mr. B. Even though both Mr. B and Mrs. Jewkes employ physical domination as a means of maintaining power over Pamela, their methods are strikingly different.

When Mr. B physically traps Pamela -- that is, when he has her pinned down in his attempts to rape her -- he relies on strength and the fact that his body is larger than Pamela's. Mrs. Jewkes does not rely on size or strength, nor does she need to. The control she holds over Pamela, while lacking the physical touch, is just as frightening as

Mr. B's violations. For instance, Pamela describes her nightly routine with Mrs. Jewkes: "My wicked bed-fellow has very punctual orders, it seems; for she locks me and herself in, and ties the two keys (for there is a double door to the room with different locks) about her wrist, when she goes to-bed" (Richardson 148). Here, for the first time in the novel, we are presented with the image of the key, which is a very powerful symbol. It represents not only Pamela's captivity, but also a potential pathway to liberty. In Pamela's hands, a key can unlock prison doors and lead to independence and freedom. In the hands of Mrs. Jewkes, however, the key represents confinement, isolation and a power hierarchy. With the key in her possession, Mrs. Jewkes asserts dominance over Pamela. She quite literally holds Pamela's confinement (and freedom) in her hand. Richardson also cleverly mentions that Mrs. Jewkes ties the keys "about her wrist." This reminds us of Pamela's interactions with Mr. B, wherein he repeatedly held her down by her wrists in his attempts to seduce her. This juxtaposition reinforces the theme of power given that Pamela is out of control of her own body and Mrs. Jewkes is not. Wrists, therefore, come to symbolize Mrs. Jewkes' sense of authority, whereas for Pamela, the wrists are metaphorically, but powerfully, shackled.

Without even laying a hand on young Pamela, Mrs. Jewkes is able to exert physical authority over her, and her tactics are seemingly more exacting than Mr. B's. Mrs. Jewkes employs many direct tactics to prevent Pamela from leaving. She takes almost all of Pamela's money, claiming, "Why, what occasion have you for money? To tell you the truth, lambkin, I did not want it. I only feared you might make a bad use of it" (Richardson 169). In leaving Pamela with "not five shillings left to support me, were I to get away," Mrs. Jewkes ensures that it will be almost impossible for Pamela to escape on her own

(Richardson 169). In another scene, Mrs. Jewkes takes all of Pamela's shoes away from her. Shoes, like the key, are a symbol of mobility and freedom. We get the sense that Mrs. Jewkes is tearing away Pamela's freedom piece by piece, trapping her within an increasingly confined space. Once again, there is the idea that Mrs. Jewkes can maintain physical control without actually touching Pamela.

What is complicated about Mrs. Jewkes is that, while she is ruthlessly malicious towards Pamela, her character is not entirely unsympathetic. Mary Astell argues that women's characters are often influenced by the lack of freedom and choices available to them. Their behavior can be explained by the fact their fate lies in the hands of men: "If...it be a woman's hard fate to meet with a disagreeable temper, and of all others, the haughty, imperious, and self-conceited are the most so, she is as unhappy as any thing in this world can make her" (Astell 37). Astell suggests that a woman's "disagreeable temper" is a consequence of her overall frustrations with her social status. And indeed, it is important to remember that, while Mrs. Jewkes serves as Pamela's captor for much of the novel, she herself is in a type of imprisonment. She, too, is entirely under the power of Mr. B and her actions throughout the novel serve his benefit. In fact, the most salient difference between Pamela and Mrs. Jewkes is that Mr. B is not in love with the latter. The sexualization of the servant-master relationship does not exist between Mrs. Jewkes and Mr. B. This is explained by the fact that Mrs. Jewkes is completely physically unattractive, to the point that she actually appears to have masculine features. Pamela provides us with a scathing description of Mrs. Jewkes' appearance:

She is a broad, squat, pousy, *fat thing*, quite ugly, if any thing human can be so called; about forty years old. She has a huge hand, and an arm as

thick -- I never saw such a thick arm in my life. Her nose is flat and crooked, and her brows grow down over her eyes; a dead, spiteful, grey, goggling eye: her face is flat and broad; and as to colour, looks as if it had been pickled a month in saltpetre. I dare say she drinks. She has a hoarse man-like voice, and is as thick as she's long; and yet looks so deadly strong, that I am afraid she would dash me at her foot in an instant, if I were to vex her (Richardson 152).

Note especially Pamela's attention to Mrs. Jewkes' "thick arm" and "man-like voice." Tassie Gwilliam argues that Pamela sees Mrs. Jewkes as "having an ambiguous gender and sexuality," which proves distracting to Pamela at key moments throughout the novel (Gwilliam 123). Going back to the attempted rape scene, Gwilliam argues that Mrs. Jewkes' presence during this scene contributes to the overall sense of gender ambiguity amongst the characters: "Pamela's belief in Mrs. Jewkes's masculinity distracts attention from and displaces the fact that [the disguised Mr. B] *is* male. Mrs. Jewkes tends to take over Mr. B's position as sexual villain; part of the scene's sleight-of-hand involves the transfer onto Mrs. Jewkes of the most vicious aspects of Mr. B's desires" (Gwilliam 124). Simply put, the fact that Mrs. Jewkes looks and acts like such a "man" distracts Pamela from the fact that the other person in the room *is* a man (albeit dressed as a woman). Pamela projects her feelings of betrayal and violation not onto the deceitful Mr. B, who arguably deserves her derision, but instead onto Mrs. Jewkes. Mrs. Jewkes becomes the symbol of masculine sexual harassment and indecency in spite of the fact that she is not actually a man. In this scene, Pamela's disdain for Mrs. Jewkes' ambiguous sexual

identity overrides the literal physical threat posed by Mr. B, a fact which underscores the gender-normative idealizations presented in this novel.

The problem of Mrs. Jewkes' gender ambiguity is magnified by her relationship with Pamela. Gwilliam argues that Pamela, removed from the security of her childhood home, initially searches for a maternal figure in Mrs. Jewkes, but instead finds only the ruthlessness of a female captor. The fact that Mrs. Jewkes possesses only 'masculine' physical features (in Pamela's eyes) means that "female alliances and the maternal are devalued" in the novel (Gwilliam 123). This at least partially helps to explain why Pamela eventually ends up falling in love with the predatory Mr. B. He represents the *ideal* masculinity -- that is, masculine qualities that are espoused by a man. On the other side, Mrs. Jewkes also espouses masculine qualities, but because she is a woman, the novel portrays this as unnatural. In a sense, Pamela derives her concept of what is rightfully 'feminine' and what is rightfully 'masculine' from her relationship with Mrs. Jewkes. Pamela's marriage to Mr. B, therefore, fulfills the socially constructed ideal of heteronormative sexuality.

Richardson justifies Pamela's perception of Mrs. Jewkes in the later part of the novel. After the marriage between Pamela and Mr. B, Mrs. Jewkes not only loses her status as Pamela's domestic captor, but she also loses many of her 'masculine' physical qualities. Gwilliam notes:

Mrs. Jewkes, who has been the...focal point of gender confusion, retreats into her 'natural' state of servitude, and into her 'natural' gender. Mrs. Jewkes almost literally shrinks; from the monstrously hermaphroditic, and monstrously maternal, presence of the novel's first half she becomes an overweight,

vulgar, but essentially unthreatening female servant (Gwilliam 125).

We are left to consider, therefore, that Mrs. Jewkes' role as female captor is, at least in part, to serve as the foil to Pamela's marriage to her male captor. Richardson's portrayal of the masculine woman as the antithesis to heteronormative marriage and sexuality is certainly problematic as it enhances the adherence to (dangerous and threatening) gender subjectivities. However it does raise important points about how female sexual identity is either rewarded or punished by society. As Astell laments, "what poor woman is ever taught that she should have a higher design than to get her a husband?...A husband indeed is thought by both sexes so very valuable" (Astell 66). In the end, Pamela's feminine desirability wins her the husband prize. A character like Pamela may suffer as a domestic prisoner and be put at risk of losing her sexual value, but her adherence to virtue and the subjectivities of the gender binary eventually grant her an advantageous marriage. On the other hand, the gender ambiguity and sexual ambivalence of Mrs. Jewkes ultimately leaves her husbandless and, therefore, powerless.

In *Pamela*, Richardson presents us with two different, but equally important, representations of masculinity. The hyper-masculinization of Mr. B, coupled with his violent attempts to seduce Pamela, suggest a connection between the inherent sexuality of the servant-master relationship and the social advantages conferred on heteronormative men. The impact of a 'manly' female captor raises additional points about the social value of feminine sexuality. This novel's focus on the masculinization of both men and women sets the stage for the chapters of this thesis that follow. My analysis of the captors in *The Old Manor House* and *The Romance of the Forest* addresses how the concept of masculinity diverges from its presentation in *Pamela*.

Chapter 2: Gender Roles Re-imagined in *The Old Manor House*

Captor versus Liberator, Captivity versus Marriage:

In the introduction to her biography of Charlotte Turner Smith, Loraine Fletcher refers to Smith, author of ten novels, as, “the most popular English novelist of her time” (Fletcher 1). Although she is relatively unknown today, Smith’s work left a significant literary mark on the modern novel. Her professional success was not reflected in her private life. Smith’s marriage, which had been arranged by her father when she was fifteen, was unhappy. Only a few years into her marriage, the young author made what Fletcher calls “the common late-eighteenth-century link between women’s subjection in marriage, and slavery” (Fletcher 38). In a letter to a friend, Smith wrote, “the more my mind expanded, the more I became sensible of personal slavery; the more I improved and cultivated my understanding, the farther I was removed from those with whom I was condemned to spend my life” (Fletcher 38). In time, Smith would come to explore the concept of women’s lack of agency in the domestic sphere in her novels.

Published in 1793, *The Old Manor House* critically analyzes the captivity, exchange and ownership of women. It is important for us to have an understanding of Smith’s pointedly negative views towards marriage because her opinions on matrimony help to organize her narratives of the institutionalized injustices committed against women in captivity. Marriage is conflated with domestic captivity in *The Old Manor House*. For this reason, Smith styles her domestic captors in a way that is much different from the Richardsonian captors. The threat that Smith’s captors pose to the imprisoned heroine in terms of affecting her cultural identity is much subtler, with the emphasis placed more on emotional captivity within the home rather than on physical violence. This shift in

characterization can most readily be seen in the figure of the male captor, who is not hyper-sexualized like Mr. B, but is instead 'differently masculinized.'

The Old Manor House tells the story of Orlando Somerive, the second son in a middle class family. Orlando is set to inherit the vast estate of his distant relative, the elderly spinster Mrs. Rayland. However, his situation is put in jeopardy when he falls in love with Monimia, the orphaned niece of Mrs. Rayland's housekeeper, Mrs. Lennard. Orlando is forced to keep his feelings for Monimia a secret from Mrs. Rayland, or almost certainly risk losing his inheritance. To complicate matters further, Mrs. Lennard keeps her niece imprisoned in a bedroom tower at almost all times. Thus Orlando and Monimia are forced to meet only with the greatest of caution and secrecy in the dead of night. As a result, the relationship between the pair is defined by the concept and condition of imprisonment. Monimia's physical captivity creates a barrier between the young lovers. At the same time, Orlando is placed in his own sort of captivity in relation to Mrs. Rayland. She controls his financial future and, consequently, prevents Orlando from openly expressing his love for Monimia for the sake of satisfying his benefactress.

When analyzing this complex layering of captors and captives, we need to consider what this novel is not. It is not, like *Pamela*, the story of a violent, abusive master's sexual exploitation of his young servant (although Monimia *is* a servant in the Rayland manor). Nor is this story told from the point of view of the captive heroine. Instead, it is narrated, remarkably, from the perspective of the central male figure. As readers, we are privy to Orlando's thoughts and feelings, while we only get glimpses of Monimia's perspective through the few letters that she writes to Orlando. This narrative structure stands in contrast to that of *Pamela*, where our understanding of Mr. B is mediated by the heroine's

narration in the form of letters and journals. In Smith's novel, therefore, we are challenged to analyze the captivity of the female protagonist through the perspective of a character who actually serves the dual role of both captor and would-be liberator.

Initially, Orlando's role in the novel appears to be that of a savior: "no knight of romance ever had so many real difficulties to encounter in achieving the deliverance of his princess, as Orlando had in finding the means merely to converse with the little imprisoned orphan" (Smith 35). Here we have a romanticized version of the relationship between Orlando and Monimia. The narrator depicts Orlando as a white knight, riding to the rescue of the imprisoned orphan princess. The words "little" and "orphan" serve to portray Monimia as delicate and in need of protection. They also portray Monimia as infantilized, which makes Orlando's desire to protect her seem noble. The inclusion of the word "princess" is particularly notable. As the domestic prisoner of a female servant, Monimia's class status is nowhere close to that of a princess. If it were, Orlando would have no hope of engaging his interests with Monimia. If Monimia were a titled lady, Orlando -- the second son in a middle class family -- would have little chance of being united with her. It is interesting, then, that he figuratively places Monimia on a grand social pedestal to which she could never hope to ascend.

Additionally, Orlando is not Monimia's master, and his interest in her seems derived from a genuine desire to intervene on her behalf. The love that Orlando claims towards Monimia, therefore, reads very differently from the sexualized energy between Pamela and Mr. B. And yet, the same notion of "fear" is present in both novels. Both Monimia and Pamela are at risk of losing their cultural identity to the desires of an intrusive male figure. The love that Orlando professes to feel for Monimia, however, is complicated by his very

perception of her as a prisoner: “Her imprisonment, the harshness of her aunt toward her, and her desolate situation, contributed to raise in his heart all that the most tender pity could add to the ardency of a first passion” (Smith 28). Orlando’s love for Monimia is, by his own admission, bolstered by a “tender pity” for her situation. There is a real connection between the “passion” and “ardency” of love and the notion of pity. The fact that Monimia is made a prisoner in her own bedroom makes her somehow more attractive to him and fuels his desire to be with her. Thus, the question becomes, did Orlando fall in love with Monimia because he could save her?

The answer, at least in part, appears to be yes. Orlando is drawn to Monimia’s desolation and is encouraged by his perceived ability to free her. At the same time, Orlando is attracted to the power dynamics within his relationship with Monimia. He recognizes the power that, as a man, he necessarily holds over her: “Orlando was tempted to kiss [the tears] away before they reached her bosom; but he remembered that she was wholly in his power, and that he owed her more respect than it would have been necessary to have shewn even in public” (Smith 52). This scene emphasizes the sexuality of captivity. The image of Monimia’s tears falling down her breasts combines both the innocent plight of the captive female with the sexuality of her position. As a prisoner, and even simply as a woman, Monimia is forced to place herself entirely in the hands of those who hold power -- physically, mentally and sexually, the corollary to Orlando’s perceived role as a man. Admittedly, the sexuality of this scene is quite different from the overt sexual aggression present in *Pamela*. Unlike Richardson’s novel, there are no scenes of attempted rape in *The Old Manor House*. However, there is undoubtedly something attractive and sexually gratifying about an imprisoned woman who needs a man’s mercy

to be saved. Here, we really begin to see the differences between the violent, domineering Richardsonian villain and Smith's re-imagined male captor. Orlando and Mr. B are both aware of the control they hold over a female captive. However, Orlando's control over Monimia is not rooted in physical domination; he is a differently masculinized male. Orlando acts upon what he sees as his gentlemanly duty to liberate Monimia from her domestic bondage -- a duty that stems not only from gender, but also from class identities. He does not subscribe to the ideals of hyper-masculinity espoused by Mr. B, although his characterization is not feminine either. He champions heteronormative sexuality in his pursuit of Monimia; he simply goes about it in a different way.

For this reason, we must question the legitimacy of Orlando's motives when he claims to want to save Monimia from her captivity. While he may love her, he simultaneously revels in his ability to hold power over her. For instance, Orlando insists on controlling Monimia's education: "I would find proper books for you; for you may one day have occasion for more knowledge than you can acquire in the way in which you now live" (Smith 41). On the one hand this could be read as Orlando's genuine concern for Monimia's intellectual capacity; on the other hand, it suggests that class is playing a pivotal role in this scene. As the heir to Mrs. Rayland's vast estate, Orlando is privileged with educational benefits and seems to hold himself to the standards of the upper class identity he will one day assume. There is the strong implication that Orlando is framing Monimia's education according to expectations that he has for her as his love interest and eventual wife.

Smith was not alone in her attentiveness to the gendered politics of knowledge. Around the time that *The Old Manor House* was published, there was a great deal of criticism regarding women's intellect. In 1790, author Catherine Macaulay wrote:

It must be confessed, that the virtues of the males among the human species, though mixed and blended with a variety of vices and errors, have displayed a bolder and a more consistent picture of excellence than female nature has hitherto done. It is on these reasons that, when we compliment the appearance of a more than ordinary energy in the female mind, we call it masculine (Macaulay 205).

If Orlando monitors Monimia's education, then he does not run the risk of having a wife who will be viewed as "masculine" or as *too* educated. He can grant Monimia the class-based privilege of education while at the same time keeping her situated within the boundaries of the gender binary. Macaulay, however, goes on to argue that "[women's] peculiar foibles and vices...originate in situation and education only" (Macaulay 206). Macaulay, too, links women's self-awareness to the capacity for free thought and action; she focuses on male self-interest here:

So little did a wise and just Providence intend to make the condition of slavery an unalterable law of female nature, that, in the same proportion as the male sex have consulted the interest of their own happiness, they have relaxed in their tyranny over women...However, till that period arrives in which women will act wisely, we will amuse ourselves in talking of their follies (Macaulay 207).

Macaulay's argument is complex: on the one hand, she recognizes the need for the education of women, but on the other hand, she also reflects the perspective of men like Orlando, who would use their class and gender status to grant the privilege of education to women. In spite of the lack of educational opportunity faced by women, Macaulay does not specifically call for a mandated revolution in their education. She is content to wait until such a time that women begin to "behave wisely," since she claims that enlightened men have "relaxed" their tyranny over women. But how, we might ask, are women supposed to behave "wisely" when they lack education? Smith appears to be wondering the same thing. She integrates the topic of women's education into the larger problem of domestic captivity to highlight the fact that the situation is much more complicated than either Orlando or Macaulay recognizes due to the clash of cultural identities.

These issues become more evident as the relationship between Orlando and Monimia unfolds. Even though Orlando's class status is precarious at best, being entirely at the mercy of the wealthy Mrs. Rayland, he is still granted enough social agency to act on behalf of Monimia. We have seen how Orlando conflates the role of the 'captor' and that of the 'liberator' in his efforts to rescue Monimia, whose status as a domestic captive places her in a vulnerable position at the bottom of the social hierarchy -- a fact that heightens her appeal in Orlando's eyes. Near the end of the novel, after the death of his benefactress, Orlando marries Monimia. Given Smith's comments on the connection between matrimony and confinement, however, it is not surprising that the union between these two characters does *not* resolve the issue of captivity in the novel. Joseph Bartolomeo notes, "[Orlando] installs his wife in the house referred to in the title, a place where she had been psychologically and even physically imprisoned -- in a turret, no less

-- and he restores her aunt, her jailor and tormentor, to a position of authority in the household" (Bartolomeo 646). By returning Monimia to the manor house, the scene of her imprisonment, Smith highlights her perception of the captive qualities of marriage. Even when she has been "rewarded" for her chastity -- that is, provided a husband of good fortune -- Monimia is still subject to the power dynamics that defined her adolescence. She is returned to the site of her former imprisonment, reaffirming the idea that she is not in control of either her own living arrangements or her social standing. More precisely, Monimia's cultural and social identities are placed into the hands of her new husband. While Orlando may believe that he has saved Monimia from her imprisoned fate, his actions actually perpetuate the divide between his authority as a man and Monimia's limited agency as a woman.

Both Pamela and Monimia marry men who, at some point, served as their domestic captors. Both men threaten the security of and exact control over the heroines' cultural identities. And yet, Orlando is simply more *likable* than Mr. B. On the whole, he presents a more sympathetic view of the male captor than the violent and domineering Mr. B. He is always kind to Monimia, if somewhat patronizing. In a strange gender reversal from *Pamela*, Orlando's marriage to Monimia suggests a masculine version of virtue rewarded. Orlando perceives that it is his duty as a man to liberate the imprisoned Monimia from her aunt's clutches. For his actions he is rewarded with the ideal wife -- one who is demur and obedient after years of the systemic diminution of her cultural identity by her domestic captors. Bartolomeo claims, "[Smith's] parodic self-consciousness about the conventions of romance as they operate in the novel advances an implicit but potent critique of the ideology they support, one that objectifies women and celebrates female

powerlessness” (Bartolomeo 647). Generally, I agree with this reading. *The Old Manor House* has been criticized by twentieth century feminists for its apparent reinforcement of “a fundamentally conservative, patriarchal ideology when it comes to the domestic sphere of courtship and marriage” (Bartolomeo 646). Bartolomeo and I both agree, however, that Smith offers more criticism than support for the system set in place for courtship. I believe that we can even take Bartolomeo’s argument a step further. I argue that Smith not only censures the conventions of romance, but actually attacks marriage as institutionally oppressive to women, as witnessed through its conflation with domestic captivity in the novel. Orlando’s dual role in *The Old Manor House* furthers this idea. It can sometimes be difficult to see how Orlando’s role as a captor is being masked by his attempts to serve as Monimia’s liberator. Likewise, it is easier to see how domestic captivity stifles women’s cultural identity than it is to acknowledge how marriage subsequently functions in a similar way. Overall, Smith laments that the only way for Monimia to escape the physical captivity of Mrs. Lennard is by subjecting herself to the more subtle captivities of marriage.

Mrs. Lennard Holds the Keys:

As I argued in my discussion of *Pamela*, it is important, when analyzing captivity novels, to distinguish which characters hold what kind of power. Often, we find that power manifests itself differently from captor to captor. We have seen how Orlando’s actions serve to perpetuate Monimia’s captive state. But there is a much more visible type of imprisonment occurring in *The Old Manor House*. For this, we turn to Mrs. Lennard. Mrs. Lennard is the devoted servant to Grace Rayland, owner of the eponymous manor house. As the orphaned Monimia’s last remaining relative, Mrs. Lennard is granted total control

over her niece's upbringing, which is characterized by a complete lack of familial affection. Mrs. Lennard seems to view Monimia not as a blessing, but as a burden and consequently keeps her locked away in a tower bedroom. When we are first introduced to Mrs. Lennard, she is, like Mrs. Jewkes, a spinster. Betty Rizzo argues that Mrs. Lennard's marital status can help us to understand why she positions herself as the domestic captor of her young niece:

[Lennard] labors in the absence of a controlling man and therefore can take full economic advantage of her position...One of the essential messages of this situation, albeit carefully embedded, is that women are not created as care-giving units and insisting they are is dangerous (Rizzo, *Companions Without Vows* 163).

Even though Mrs. Lennard is without a husband, she is begrudgingly placed into the maternal (or at least, the caregiver) role, one that she quickly comes to resent. Rizzo is correct to suggest that Smith is experimenting with society's correlation between women and care-giving by questioning the legitimacy of this link. Mrs. Lennard also complicates the meanings of marriage in the novel. As we saw in the previous section's discussion of Monimia, Smith suggests that marriage is dangerous to women in that it threatens their cultural identities and celebrates female submissiveness. Here she expands this idea by criticizing society's tendency to categorize women as domestic or maternal, regardless of whether they are married or not. Essentially, being an unmarried woman can be just as dangerous as being married -- at least in terms of gender stratification.

Early in the novel, Smith provides a vivid description of Mrs. Lennard's imprisonment of her niece:

Mrs. Lennard slept at some distance; but there was no other way of Monimia's going into any part of the house but by a passage which led through her room; for every other avenue was closed up, and the last thing she did every night was to lock the door of the room where her niece lay, and to take away the key. The window was equally well secured, for it was in effect only a loop; and of this, narrow as it was, the small square of the casement that opened was secured by iron bars (Smith 35).

Here, as with Mrs. Jewkes in *Pamela*, we have the potent image of the key. The key and the cage (the "iron bars") are overt references to imprisonment. Mrs. Lennard's control over Monimia is defined by possession. She literally holds the keys to Monimia's room, thereby granting her control of Monimia's physical person. Not only is Mrs. Lennard locking Monimia in a domestic prison, but she also "take[s] away the key" -- takes away her freedom, her chance to escape. As Rizzo points out, it is remarkable that Mrs. Lennard even holds the key to Monimia's room, given that she herself is a servant to a female aristocrat: "By gradually taking all the business of the house from the hands of the all-too-willing Rayland, Lennard becomes its true mistress, with duplicate keys even to the butler's private cellar" (Rizzo, *Companions Without Vows* 165). In *Pamela*, Mrs. Jewkes is frequently left alone in the manor with her young captive when Mr. B goes off on business. For this reason, it makes sense that Mrs. Jewkes would hold the key to Pamela's room. However, Mrs. Rayland is a permanent resident in her manor and yet she still provides keys to Mrs. Lennard. Even though she is a servant, Mrs. Lennard manages to work her way up the social hierarchy *within the domestic sphere*. She trumps even Mrs. Rayland in control of the manor -- control which comes at a heavy price to poor Monimia.

Mrs. Lennard's imprisonment of Monimia is complicated, however, when young Orlando begins regularly visiting the manor. Orlando poses a serious threat to the situation established by Mrs. Lennard. He represents the very reason for Mrs. Lennard's imprisonment of her niece as well as a tangible reason for Monimia to resist her captivity. Thus, Mrs. Lennard makes clear her feelings regarding a relationship between Orlando and Monimia:

If I ever catch you speaking to that wicked boy, or even daring to look at him, I will turn you out of doors that moment - let this teach you that I am in earnest. Having thus said, she gave the terrified girl a violent blow...on the lovely neck of her victim, where the marks of her fingers were to be traced many days afterwards (Smith 21).

Mrs. Lennard's threat to throw Monimia out of the house does two things: first, it reiterates the idea that Mrs. Lennard is truly the mistress of the manor, not Mrs. Rayland; second, it highlights the difficult choice that Monimia faces. Either she can choose to remain in captivity under her aunt, or she can choose to leave. Just as Mr. B knows that Pamela cannot leave his home without negative consequences, however, Mrs. Lennard knows that her penniless, orphaned niece has no place to go outside of the manor. Monimia is damned if she stays and damned if she leaves. Mrs. Lennard thus taunts her prisoner in a callous effort to assert her social dominance within the manor.

As a final mark of her superiority, Mrs. Lennard deals Monimia a "violent blow." The bruises left behind on Monimia's neck remind us of Mr. B's treatment of Pamela when he left bruises on her arms during a scene of attempted rape. In both cases, the bruises are significant in that they are lasting reminders to the female captive of their physical *and*

social inferiority to their captors. In this scene, Mrs. Lennard reaffirms the physical power that she holds over Monimia while simultaneously revealing the extent to which she will go to maintain ultimate power in the manor house.

Despite her physical violence, it is Mrs. Lennard's psychological manipulation of Monimia that is truly heinous. While Mrs. Lennard may be Monimia's physical captor -- that is, she holds the keys to Monimia's bedchamber -- she also contributes to the young girl's sense of emotional imprisonment. Mrs. Lennard is described as "an hungry tigress who has long been disappointed of her prey" (Smith 117). By this description, she appears to yearn for the chance to exert control over Monimia. She is a predator and Monimia is her defenseless prey. A perpetual sense of danger surrounds Mrs. Lennard -- a quality that adds to the victimization of Monimia and exacerbates her fear of her aunt. And like a predator, Mrs. Lennard takes every opportunity to play on this fear. For instance, Orlando points out to Monimia her aunt's tactic of using ghost stories to scare her: "She has...brought in supernatural aid; and, fearful of not being able to keep you in sufficient awe by her terrific self, she has called forth all the deceased ladies of the Rayland family...and beset you with spirits and hobgoblins if you dare to walk about the house" (Smith 56). Monimia dismisses Orlando's claims, stating that Mrs. Lennard herself believes in the ghost stories that she tells. However, this scene suggests that Mrs. Lennard is able acutely to tap into the emotions and fears of a young girl and manipulate these fears in order to suit her purpose. Additionally, note the fact that Mrs. Lennard calls forth the "deceased *ladies*" of the family. She extends her manipulation of women into the spirit world specifically for the purposes of female gender repression. For these reasons,

Mrs. Lennard is truly the most dangerous character in the story, and perhaps even more ruthless than Mrs. Jewkes.

Furthermore, Mrs. Lennard's language serves to reinforce both Monimia's fear as well as her sense of inferiority. Mrs. Lennard repeatedly insults her niece: "you, artful little hussey"; "Why thou art a driveller, a perfect idiot"; (Smith 20, 58). Mrs. Lennard's words perpetuate a sense of worthlessness in Monimia. Why should she bother attempting to escape when her own aunt proclaims her an idiot? But what we are left with is the question of *why* Mrs. Lennard treats Monimia so heartlessly.

In one sense, Mrs. Lennard's actions can be explained by her desire to maintain control within the Rayland manor. There are other factors at play here as well, however. While Mrs. Lennard may be successful at orchestrating the power dynamics in the house, in the eyes of society, she has 'failed' as a woman. She was unable to attain a husband, thereby underlining her lack of adherence to conventional gender norms. While it is true that Mrs. Rayland is unmarried, she is also a Lady, an upper-class woman, which gives her a genteel alternative social identity. Mrs. Lennard is a servant and no amount of influence that she may hold over Rayland manor can forgive her marital status. As an aging spinster, Mrs. Lennard is increasingly aware that her value to men -- that is, her sexual value -- is diminishing. Mrs. Lennard almost pathetically tries to maintain her sexual (and thereby, social) worth:

[Mrs. Lennard] loved to be thought a woman of sense, and to hear how fine her person must have been in her younger days. She was even now accustomed to say, that though not so well to *meet*, she was still well to

follow; for she fancied her tall perpendicular figure exhibited still a great deal of dignity and grace (Smith 102).

Consequently, Mrs. Lennard is fiercely jealous of Monimia's great beauty and sexual value in the eyes of men, particularly Orlando. Her heartless behavior towards her niece calls attention to the sense of her sexual desire, longing and aspiration -- energies that, frustrated by the stigma placed on her as a lower-class woman, turn to negativity.

Mrs. Lennard's situation is exacerbated by her "weakness for male attentions" (Rizzo, *Companions Without Vows* 165). In a self-satisfying attempt to prolong her sexual value, she shamelessly flirts with younger men at balls and other social gatherings. Rizzo claims:

Lennard's pretensions to male admiration at the annual ball (and later her foolish marriage to a much younger man) suggest...she was suppressing the sexuality of [Monimia] to 'prove' her own superior and enduring charms, which is why she is furious at the attraction between Monimia and the young Orlando (Rizzo, *Companions Without Vows* 165).

Mrs. Lennard is unnerved by the fact that, although she maintains physical control over Monimia, she can never match her sexual value in the eyes of men. Mrs. Lennard's frustration with her diminishing sexual agency mirrors Smith's own frustration with the lack of choices available to women in terms of marriage and social mobility. It is perhaps for this reason that Smith allows us to feel some pity for Mrs. Lennard. Like Monimia, Mrs. Lennard is socially defined by her adherence to gendered perceptions of femininity and female sexuality. In failing to live up to these ideals, Mrs. Lennard finds herself in a position of social isolation, which she tempers by promoting her status within the Rayland

manor. Her attempted strangulation of Monimia's cultural identity by the means of domestic imprisonment is evidence of Smith's larger theme of the complicated, gender-privileged relationship between sex and social mobility.

Chapter 3: Sentimental Men & Hyper-Feminine Women
in the Radcliffean Gothic Novel

Broadening the Masculine Spectrum:

Ann Radcliffe opens her 1791 Gothic novel, *The Romance of the Forest*, with a passage that she adapted from Act 3 of *Macbeth*:

I am a man
 So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
 That I would set my life on any chance,
 To mend it, or be rid on't (Radcliffe, *RF*, 1).

As faithful readers of Shakespeare may recall, the line from the play actually reads: “*And I another, so weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune*” (*Macbeth*, 3.1.110-3, my emphasis). Radcliffe purposefully inserts the words “I am a man,” a decision that reflects this novel’s emphasis on questioning the importance and impact of masculinity. As a Gothic novelist, Radcliffe is interested in reshaping the character of the traditional domestic captor. Critic Kari J. Winter surmises that “female writers of Gothic fiction fear the unchecked power of men and therefore explore the possibility of resistance to the patriarchal order” (Winter, 21-22). In *The Romance of the Forest*, this resistance is perpetuated through a deliberate exploration of male characters who espouse differently masculinized behaviors. Radcliffe challenges the social power associated with manhood by creating male characters who do not adhere to the hyper-masculinized ideal set forth by the Richardsonian villains. Yet, she illustrates how these men are still able to maintain power and control over women, thereby highlighting the dangerous, systemic hierarchies present within a patriarchal society. In this chapter, I argue that masculinity can be understood in terms of a broad

identity spectrum. While their behavior may not be *hyper*-masculine, the male captors in *The Romance of the Forest* still adhere to a masculine identity that grants gender-privileged authority over the captive heroine and holds sway over her social and sexual identities.

The Romance of the Forest, as we might expect from a Gothic novel, begins on a dark and stormy night. The heroine, Adeline -- “a beautiful girl, who appeared to be about eighteen” -- is mysteriously placed in the care of Pierre and Constance de la Motte, who are on the run from Paris to escape creditors (Radcliffe 5). The group takes refuge in an abandoned, decaying abbey in the middle of a dark forest. While there, Adeline meets and falls in love with a young soldier named Theodore. Unfortunately, Adeline also catches the eye of Theodore’s commanding officer, the lascivious Marquis de Montalt, who also happens to be the owner of the ruined abbey. The Marquis kidnaps Adeline and locks her in his manor. After the Marquis realizes that Adeline is actually the long-lost daughter of his brother (whom the Marquis had murdered some years earlier), he decides that instead of pursuing Adeline, he will have her killed. Eventually, his plan is foiled. Adeline inherits her late father’s title and estate and marries Theodore. Adeline’s new-found inheritance signifies the end of the captivity in which she spent the entirety of the novel.

Adeline’s serial captivities have already begun the first time we see her. Held prisoner by a group of “ruffians,” Adeline is handed off to the care of Pierre de la Motte. La Motte’s role in the novel is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he serves as Adeline’s protector; he takes responsibility for her welfare and shows what seems to be genuine concern for her safety. Yet on the other hand, the line between ‘protector’ and

'captor,' as in Smith's and Richardson's novels, becomes blurred. La Motte's role in the novel is shaped largely by what the narrator calls his tendency towards 'passions,' and what critics refer to as male 'sentimentality' -- a powerful, and sometimes excessive, influx of emotion. La Motte, for instance, is described as "a man whose passions often overcame his reason, and, for a time, silenced his conscience...his mind was active, and his imagination vivid, which, cooperating with the force of passion, often dazzled his judgement and subdued principle" (Radcliffe 2). La Motte experiences emotion so deeply that it sometimes overcomes his reason -- "reason" being the antithesis of sentimentality. La Motte's characterization initially works to Adeline's advantage. His sympathies enable him to take pity on Adeline: "He endeavoured to comfort her, and his sense of compassion was too sincere to be misunderstood" (Radcliffe 7). Adeline is thus granted protection against an evil world through the guardianship of La Motte and his wife.

The relationship between sentimentality and masculinity is complicated. June Howard argues that emotion has been stigmatized so that it "is correlated...with the feminine as opposed to the masculine" (Howard 73). La Motte's sentimentality certainly reads much differently from the ruthlessness of Mr. B. In comparison to B's idealized hyper-masculinity, passionate sentiments and sympathies may appear emasculating. La Motte's characterization, however, is not so distinct. While he may be prone to passionate feelings, La Motte is still motivated by heteronormative sexual desires. Radcliffe challenges socially constructed gender ideologies by broadening the spectrum of what can be considered 'masculine.' La Motte may not fit into the Richardsonian mold of masculinity, but that does not mean he is 'feminized' either. The narrator pointedly remarks that La Motte's tenderness is motivated by his physical attraction to Adeline:

“Notwithstanding his present agitation, he found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him with indifference” (Radcliffe 5). Although La Motte may represent a differently masculinized male, his sexualized interest in the captive heroine is just as threatening as with Mr. B. La Motte’s sympathy towards Adeline is not purely based on the desperation of her situation alone, but more specifically on the tragedy of a beautiful young girl in a state of terror. Note the use of the word “object” in the above quote. La Motte’s attraction to Adeline seems to be based on exteriorization and not necessarily on her value as a person. The problem here becomes much like that of *The Old Manor House*. La Motte’s idealization of Adeline, like Orlando’s of Monimia, traps her in a model of female sexuality from which there is no escape. Adeline’s and Monimia’s actions become limited to those that are defined by the standards of a gendered sexuality. La Motte’s attraction to Adeline’s beauty is therefore heteronormative and “natural,” and consequently problematic in that it assigns the young heroine a sexual value that forms the basis of her worth. La Motte’s characterization thus underscores the main social critique of *The Romance of the Forest*. He may be a sentimental male, but La Motte’s relationship with the female captive is inherently oppressive because of the power that patriarchy affords him.

In spite of the control that La Motte is able to hold over Adeline, he poses no physical threat to her. The same cannot be said, however, of Adeline’s other captor, the Marquis de Montalt. When the Marquis arrives at the abbey, he is immediately infatuated with Adeline. Even though he is already married, he wishes to take Adeline for his second wife. Much in the style of *Pamela*’s Mr. B, the Marquis makes frequent advances on Adeline. Unlike Mr. B, however, the Marquis’ sexual passes are not often successful. His

repeated attempts “to impress a kiss upon the hand of Adeline” are easily thwarted by her “withdrawing it hastily” (Radcliffe 130). The Marquis is certainly not as forceful as Mr. B, and as a result, Adeline is able to rather easily escape his touch. Claudia Johnson argues that “the Marquis de Montalt is within the reach of sentimental ideology” (Johnson 83). He, like La Motte, does not express the hyper-masculinity of the Richardsonian captor. Rather, the Marquis is depicted as self-conscious and imploring -- a strikingly different portrayal of masculinity.

Despite the impurity of his intentions, the Marquis is concerned with how Adeline perceives him. When the Marquis proposes to Adeline, “tears swelled into her eyes, but she endeavoured to check them.” The Marquis is passionately moved: “For a moment, he was awed by the dignity of her manner, and he threw himself at her feet to implore forgiveness. But she waved her hand in silence and hurried from the room” (Radcliffe 122-123). The Marquis appears to be subject to the same masculine ‘passions’ that tend to overtake La Motte. We can contrast this image of the Marquis collapsing at Adeline’s feet to that of Pamela begging for Mr. B’s sympathy. The Marquis is exhibiting differently masculinized sentimentalities, which appears to give Adeline a sense of control over their relationship. She abruptly silences him with a wave of her hand and is free to leave the room of her own volition. It is necessary, however, to examine the power dynamics at play here. Adeline is only able to exhibit control in this scene because of the male sentimentalities of her captor. Her ability to brusquely leave the room is *not* a result of her victory over the Marquis or over patriarchy in general. Adeline’s situation is still precarious, and the Marquis is still free to pursue her.

In spite of the Marquis's failures in the art of seduction, there is yet something unmistakably frightening about him. Adeline may be able to evade his sexual advances, but she is never free of his domination. This is because, while the Marquis is certainly less 'traditionally' masculine than the Richardsonian captor, his heteronormative pursuit of Adeline is never criticized except by Adeline herself. As Johnson explains, "*The Romance of the Forest* never presents the heteroerotic interest of virile men as a threat...it is the blockage of erotic endearment that causes problems, and the Marquis' sexual desire for Adeline is the only *undepraved* thing about him" (Johnson 82). As with La Motte, the disturbing criticism of the Marquis focuses on his ability to maintain patriarchal control in spite of the fact that he is a differently masculinized male captor. The Marquis's sentimental passions do little to deter him from his desire to maintain power, especially sexual power, over Adeline. Radcliffe suggests that even when masculinity is reframed in terms of sentimentality, it still privileges men and affords them the power to manipulate the cultural identities of women. The concern, then, is not how masculinity is manifested, but rather the inherent social benefits granted to men who subscribe to it.

While the Marquis and La Motte are similar in their adherence to male sentimentality, the greatest difference between the two lies in the issue of class. The Marquis is an aristocrat and the advantages that he enjoys as a result of his economic privilege aid his desire to maintain control over Adeline. As Johnson argues, "The real measure of [the Marquis's] corruption and that of the world which privileges him...is rather the ease with which he can buy men to denature themselves in his service" (Johnson 82). The Marquis holds both economic and social superiority over La Motte, which he takes advantage of to serve his own means. When the Marquis learns that Adeline is actually

the daughter of the brother that he had murdered long ago, his sexual desires give way to a much more sinister plan. He determines to have Adeline killed. But as Johnson explains, “Under sentimentality... murdering a woman is so unnatural that the Marquis himself cannot order it” (Johnson 84). Instead, he turns to La Motte. The Marquis commands, ““Make no inquiries for my motive...but it is as certain that I live that [Adeline] must die”” (Radcliffe 226). Bound by his social inferiority to the Marquis, La Motte is compelled to act on his demands.³ It is crucial to consider the implications of this interaction between the two male captors. Although there is class hierarchy, there is also inter-dependency. La Motte relies on the Marquis for protection, a debt which is repaid by taking on the Marquis’s delegated enforcement of violence. Radcliffe suggests that there is something inherently alarming about the relationship between male sentimentality and the impact of class identity. Men like the Marquis are able to mask their dangerous intentions behind the socially acceptable construction of male passions. For much of the novel, the Marquis avoids taking ownership for his misdeeds by citing sentimentality as an indicator of the naturalness of his desires. At the same time, the Marquis manipulates the hierarchical class order as a means of implicating La Motte into his socially-privileged schemes.

Caught in the middle of this dangerous relationship, of course, is Adeline, whose very freedom is negotiated between the power dynamic of the Marquis and La Motte. Her cultural identity -- her sexual value as a woman -- is entirely absorbed in the interplay between male sentimental passions and the oppressive authority of class privilege. The

³ La Motte eventually decides that he cannot murder Adeline after she begs him to spare and protect her. Adeline’s beauty combined with her heartfelt pleas succeed in which Johnson calls “appeal[ing] to manful pity” (Johnson 85).

very question of whether Adeline lives or dies is determined by her male captor. She is defined by an exchange of ownership. The maintenance of her captive state is both directly and indirectly controlled by the Marquis and La Motte at various points throughout the novel. Her freedom and cultural identity are, therefore, in the control of men who struggle to balance their social authority with their heteronormative sexual desires and adherence to a reimagined masculinity.

The Hyper-Feminized Woman:

When Adeline's love interest, Theodore, is arrested by the Marquis' soldiers late in the novel, he writes to Adeline, lamenting, "'tis only now I perceive all the horrors of confinement -- 'tis now only that I understand the value of liberty" (Radcliffe 194). By this point in the novel, we as readers have come to be critical of the different social conditions of men and women. While Theodore's legal imprisonment is certainly pitiable, his attempt to relate his situation to Adeline's leaves something to be desired. As demonstrated in the previous section, the "liberty" that Adeline is denied is more than physical. Her literal confinement is only one aspect of Radcliffe's social critique. Theodore assumes that he can honestly sympathize with Adeline now that he has been stripped of his physical agency. He fails, however, to consider the social, cultural and sexual factors that also confine Adeline -- factors about which he knows very little. Nevertheless, Theodore's appeal to Adeline does raise an important point: captivity in *The Romance of the Forest* is a gendered system in which male and female characters occupy diverse and complex roles and positions.

The striking feature of *The Romance of the Forest* is that the novel does not feature a strong female captor. There is no Radcliffean equivalent to Mrs. Jewkes or Mrs. Lennard, but this does not mean that the novel isn't interested in the social behavior of women. Quite the contrary, in fact. We might speculate that the absence of the Radcliffean female captor is a consequence of the characterization and interactions of men. The different masculinization of the male captors in *The Romance of the Forest* stands in contrast to the traditional understanding of the socially constructed gender binary. Male sentimentality suggests an alternative means of considering masculinity; the behaviors of masculine men are not as clearly differentiated from those of feminine women, as in *Pamela*. Since the concept of what is strictly 'masculine' behavior and what is strictly 'feminine' behavior gets convoluted in *The Romance of the Forest*, the novel's female characters appear to overcompensate for the lack of clarity and become hyper-feminized. Specifically, they become hyper-sexualized. Adeline's youthful body, for instance, becomes an object of great interest to the men in the story. In one particularly descriptive scene, Adeline suffers a fright and faints. La Motte, his son and Theodore quickly surround her and the scene plays out as follows: "Her beauty, touched with the languid delicacy of illness, gained from sentiment what it lost in bloom. The negligence of her dress, loosened for the purpose of freer respiration, discovered those glowing charms, which her auburn tresses, that fell in profusion over her bosom, shaded, but could not conceal" (Radcliffe 87). Adeline comes to with her breasts somewhat exposed to a group of men. The sight of her "glowing charms" ignites sentimental passion in the men. They gather around her unconscious body, drawn in by her beauty and the "languid delicacy" of her sexuality. The physical attractiveness of Adeline's body and the

vulnerability of her sexual identity as she lies unconscious seem necessary for the arousal of sentimental passions among the male characters. Adeline must be hyper-feminized in order to validate the heteronormative sexuality of the differently masculinized male captors.

Adeline's self-worth is determined, therefore, by the effect that she has on men. Her society values her as a hyper-sexualized being and little more. But because genteel sexuality is the only social model available to her, Adeline does not shy away from it. Quite the contrary. In fact, Adeline harbors negative feelings towards the convent (where she spent her childhood) for its complete rejection of female sexuality and social participation. She vehemently denounces the convent as a virtual prison:

Condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and imprisonment of the most dreadful kind...the horrors of monastic life rose so fully to my view, that fortitude gave way before them. Excluded from the cheerful intercourse of society -- from the pleasant view of nature -- almost from the light of day -- condemned to silence -- rigid formality -- abstinence and penanced -- condemned to forego the delights of a world, which imagination painted in the gayest and most alluring colours (Radcliffe 36-37).

The parallels that Radcliffe draws between Adeline's two lives are unmistakable. Adeline feels imprisoned within the convent because she is denied the "delights" of the world -- that is, a world where she is admired by men. When she is free of the convent, she becomes the object of desire for several male characters, but is literally held prisoner by them. Radcliffe suggests that the hyper-feminization of women puts them in a double

bind. Their agency is bound to a social system to seeks to objectify them for the benefit of heterosexual desire.

Heterosexual desire and hyper-feminization also pose a problem for female characters in this novel in that they disallow homosocial friendships between women. This is perhaps best illustrated in Adeline's relationship with Madame La Motte. Initially, the two women form a close relationship. Their friendship quickly comes to an end, however, when Madame La Motte wrongly suspects that Adeline is having an affair with her husband. In the months following Adeline's delivery into La Motte's care, La Motte has been "devoted to melancholy and grief" (Radcliffe 45). Madame La Motte begins to despair that her attempts to cheer him up fail to work:

Madame La Motte...endeavoured, by all the stratagems which affection could suggest, or female invention supply, to win him to her confidence... Finding all her efforts insufficient to dissipate the glooms which overhung his mind, or to penetrate their secret cause, she desisted from farther attempt (Radcliffe 45).

Madame La Motte is distraught by the fact that she cannot, through her feminine "inventions," cheer her husband. If her desirability fails to bring even her own husband out of his misery, what social purpose has she left to fulfill? As a middle-aged woman, Madame La Motte realizes that she does not have the same sexual desirability as Adeline, which seems to lead her to unjustified suspicions. Her jealousy soon overwhelms her. She does not bother to determine if her suspicions are accurate, but instead falls into despair that her friendship with Adeline must come to an end: "when she wept that she could no longer look for happiness in the affection of La Motte, she wept also, that she

could no longer seek solace in the friendship of Adeline” (Radcliffe 46-7). Female friendship, in Madame La Motte’s mind, must be severed to allow for heterosexual desire.

Around the same time that Radcliffe was penning *The Romance of the Forest*, Mary Wollstonecraft was examining the concept that heteronormative behavior should take precedent over homosocial female friendship. She argues:

I have known many weak women whose sensibility was entirely grossed by their husbands; and as for their humanity, it was very faint indeed...But this kind of exclusive affection, though it degrades the individual, should not be brought forward as proof of the inferiority of the sex, because it is the natural consequence of confined views (Wollstonecraft 279).

Wollstonecraft argues that married women seem to lose their sense of “humanity” because they become singularly devoted to their husbands. Females, from their infancy, are not valued as individuals, so their “sensibility” is reflected through their relationship to their husbands. This is certainly true in the case of Madame La Motte. Her marriage has enveloped her in ignorance that, while not unnatural for her sex, ultimately narrows her consciousness. Note that Wollstonecraft invokes the metaphor of captivity to explain this behavior. Madame La Motte’s singular devotion to her husband is a “consequence of confined views.” Matrimony has placed her in a metaphorical prison that mirrors the literal prison that confines Adeline. It has drawn her attention away from homosocial concerns -- including friendship -- in order to focus on the importance of heterosexual interests. This excerpt from Wollstonecraft also can be used to explain why there is no Radcliffean female captor. Madame La Motte is too preoccupied with the state of her relationship with her husband to pay much mind to whatever agency or power she holds over Adeline. In

contrast, the spinsters, Mrs. Jewkes and (for most of the novel) Mrs. Lennard, are not so burdened and thus may assert themselves as captors.

The only other potential candidates to fill the role of 'female captor' in *The Romance of the Forest* are the prostitutes who live in the Marquis's manor. It appears that their only function in the story is to convince Adeline of the Marquis's kindness. Johnson describes these women as "sex dolls who, advancing and retiring at the wave of their master's hand, advance his seductions by reciting, automata-like, his praises to new initiates" (Johnson 83). The prostitutes fill the Marquis's house, acting as a reminder both to Adeline and the reader of the reason why he brought her there. Their appearance in the novel is quite brief, but their impact is significant. These women are not participating in the "natural" practice of matrimony, as lauded by Wollstonecraft. Instead, they represent the epitome of the hyper-feminized woman -- a woman whose very existence is purely sexual and whose reputation has been shattered by the social uses of sexuality outside of matrimony. While symbolically important, the prostitutes, like Madame La Motte hold no physical power over Adeline. They are not captors, and yet interestingly they still pose a type of threat to Adeline. Both Madame La Motte and the Marquis's prostitutes perpetuate the standards for female sexuality and hyper-femininity. Madame La Motte wrongly accuses Adeline of having an affair with her husband. The prostitutes encourage Adeline to become the Marquis' mistress. In both cases, female characters encourage the idea that a young, lower-class woman must be placed in a heightened state of sexualization. Adeline is saved only when she is able to claim her inherited aristocratic title. She escapes, therefore, not from the physical clutches of a female captor, but from

the hegemonic cultural identity that women like Madame La Motte and the prostitutes push her to fulfill.

Wollstonecraft's views on the role of women in society speak strongly to the problematic standards espoused by characters like Madame La Motte: "[W]omen at present are by ignorance rendered foolish or vicious...[T]he most salutary effects tending to improve mankind might be expected from a *revolution* in female manner[s]" (Wollstonecraft 184). At the same time that Radcliffe was writing *The Romance of the Forest*, Wollstonecraft was advocating for a gender revolution -- one that would encourage the equal consideration of men and women. According to Johnson, Radcliffe was not particularly interested in philosophical discussions of gender inequality: "Although critics have subjected Radcliffean themes -- about domesticity, female propriety, and aesthetics -- to political interpretation, she is generally not supposed to have been much aware of ideological conflicts raging during the years she was publishing, 1789-97" (Johnson 75). Regardless of Radcliffe's knowledge of Wollstonecraft's work, however, *The Romance of the Forest* certainly draws parallels to the rising gender debates of the late eighteenth-century. The hyper-feminization of female characters speaks to the imbalance of the social freedoms granted to men and women. Female characters are forced to invoke a sense of hyper-sexualized energy in order to assert their individuality in a male-dominated world. Thus, to maintain their cultural identity, women are required to conform to the masculine idealization of gender subjectivities, an act which only serves to perpetuate the cycle of hegemonic order.

The broadening of the masculine spectrum in Radcliffe's work ultimately frames a discussion of where femininity and female sexuality fall in a gendered social hierarchy.

The fear that this novel inspires comes from the notion that men do not have to subscribe to the violence and hyper-masculinity illustrated in *Pamela* in order to maintain domestic control over women. Socially acceptable traits such as male sentimentality can be manipulated to justify the furtherance the domestic captivity and ownership. Men may be allowed to adhere to a wide spectrum of masculinized behaviors, but the pervasion of patriarchy in our social consciousness dictates the social, sexual and gendered identities available to women.

Conclusion

I began this thesis with an epigraph by Mary Wollstonecraft, which ends with the assertion that if women were “emancipated from the slavery” of men, then “we should probably read of their weaknesses with surprise.” I chose this quote not simply because I believe it encapsulates the author’s astute literary sensibilities -- her own vivid experiences as a critical reader of literary conventions -- but also because it speaks to the idea that our society is constructed in such a way that it inherently limits how we perceive cultural identities. The system of male-managed “slavery” determines what and how “we should probably read.” Our society has historically privileged male power and the ownership of women, which consequently frames our understanding of cultural identity according to masculine standards. Wollstonecraft claims that if we strip away the layers of gender hierarchy, we are left with a characterization of women that will “surprise” us. We have been conditioned by systemic gender inequalities to make assumptions about social and cultural identities. Wollstonecraft argues, as does this thesis, that it is necessary to challenge the construction of the relationship between men and women to illuminate the complexities of their respective social influences as well as to analyze how we evaluate these influences. It is not, therefore, just the cultural identities of characters in the novels that are at stake; the cultural consciousness of authorship, reading and criticism are at stake as well, including our openness to being surprised by works that subvert or challenge normative identities.

My aim in this thesis is to demonstrate the multitude of class, gender and sexual issues that govern the relationship between the captive heroine and her domestic captor. In so doing, I hope to engage an ongoing literary discussion of the ways in which cultural

identity functions in society that is comprehensive, challenging and, as Wollstonecraft would affirm, surprising. Central to this reading of the captivity novel is a reimagined understanding of the domestic captor as essential to the explication of social issues. Overall, it is my hope that this thesis demonstrates the importance of studying the captor as an integral and independently developed character whose impact on domestic captivity serves to reveal some truths about the importance of one's cultural identity.

I would like to offer three specific proposals for additional study. First, I suggest an inquiry into the triangulation of captivity. The novels that I analyze in this thesis all imply that domestic captivity requires three parties. In *Pamela*, we have Mr. B, Mrs. Jewkes and Pamela herself; in *The Old Manor House*, we have Mrs. Lennard, Orlando and Monimia; and in *The Romance of the Forest*, La Motte, the Marquis and Adeline. What does this triangulation suggest about the nature of captivity? Can captivity even exist with only two people?

Second, I suggest a fuller investigation of the progression of the captivity novel over time. This thesis focuses on a specific moment in literary history: the rise of the domestic captivity novel in the eighteenth-century. But the notion of literary captivity was not born in this era, by any means. Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue that the British model of the domestic captivity novel actually emerged from seventeenth century North American texts written by colonial women who were held prison by Native American tribes. They argue that popularity of these captivity narratives inspired British authors to adapt the genre to fictive novels that addressed issues specific to English social life. A very early idea for this thesis, in fact, was to track the changes in the captivity narrative across the Atlantic, which led up to the works discussed here, over the course of the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Now, however, I believe that the later history of domestic captivity more pressingly requires critical analysis. I therefore encourage both historians and literary critics to analyze the development of the domestic captivity novel beyond the eighteenth-century: how do authors like Jane Austen and Charles Dickens address the theme of women held captive within the home? How is the relationship between captive heroine and domestic captor reflected in modern media, such as the Disney princess films? Does the pattern of triangulated captivity present in the eighteenth-century novel carry over to these later works? An analysis of the function and characterization of the captor or captors leads to numerous points of departure for further study on the impact of domestic captivity.

Finally, a third topic for further study recalls the figure of the female captive. As this thesis has repeatedly noted, the captive heroine has acted as a focus of literary criticism since at least the eighteenth-century. This type of analysis, however, has often been framed around a reading of the female captive as a singular entity and fails to account for her interaction with the captor. My examination of the relationship between the domestic captor and captive reveals complex interplay that heavily influences the development and identity of the imprisoned heroine. In this thesis, I analyze both male and female domestic captors who fall along various points of the spectrum of masculinity, which probes questions regarding the development of gender and sexual identities in the captivity novel. The focus on masculinized captors, however, necessarily limits this thesis' ability to discuss the behaviors and motivations of the captive herself. I believe that it would be productive for critics to return to the figure of the domestic captive to address her

characterization in light of the impact of triangulated captivity and differently masculinized captors.

After all, as this thesis has hopefully demonstrated, captors are not static figures that can be summarily categorized or understood. They are influenced by factors such as class, gender and sexuality, and their motivation for fulfilling the role of domestic captor is integrated with the hierarchy of these identities. The domestic captor is a viable, interesting, and complex literary figure whose contribution to the formation and representation of cultural identities we can no longer afford to overlook.

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