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ASEBL Journal is not directed at any highly-specialized audience. The articles, while academic in nature (grounded in scholarship), are written for an audience generally in tune with and sensitive to the notions of ethics and literature. ASEBL can be Ethical Behavior or Evolutionary Biology: broadly conceived, any treatment of the convergence among ethics, biology, and literature: personal responsibility, moral identity, social emotions, human nature, consciousness and conscience. While the genesis of the journal is humanistic, that originating intent does not rule out readings that include science (though it does rule out post-modernist, deconstructive readings).

In line with the aims and scope of the journal, we are particularly interested in readings that analyze the so-called biology of morality (as manifested in literature). This re-focusing is effective as of October 2011. We continue to welcome ethical readings in a more traditionally humanistic vein (though that does not include religious ideologies or politically-conservative opinions). We are hopeful that, at some point, we can publish articles only on the convergence of ethics/biology. What makes us believe morality derives from a heavenly cloud or a theoretical Form or an abstract imperative? In great part the evolution of our social emotions is responsible for many of our behavioral codes. And yet there is something distinctive about human morality not found in other highly-developed primates.

If you wish to have a submission peer-reviewed, please so indicate and such arrangements can be made. At any rate, please query before submitting anything. Contact the editor, Gregory F. Tague. Please include ASEBL in the subject line. Submissions are to be in MLA or APA format: brief in-text cites followed by a works cited page and endnotes (no footnotes); endnotes need to be set up without using embedded footnoting programs. If you cite online sources, it is your responsibility to make certain that the links are live and active. Documents should not have any headers or footers. Articles can range (approximately) from one thousand to two thousand words.

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The Ethics and Ethos of Eighteenth-Century British Literature

Rachel Tudor

Janet Todd defines “Ideology” in *Feminist Literary History* as a “largely unreflective condition of acting and existing within a common place world [that does not] set itself up as ideology at all but instead appears as something unquestionable, as rationality or nature” (86). In other words, the ideologies of a culture are captured in its literature, and criticism’s task is to make visible that which is invisible. Consequently, through critically examining our culture’s canonical literature we can identify its dominant ideologies and the conditions under which our ancestors lived and died as well as measure the progress we have made and need to make in the future. Jean Rhys has given us, not only a gift, but a valuable tool for deciphering the covert ideologies of eighteenth-century novels, such as *Pamela* and *Evelina*, with her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Jean Rhys’ novel reveals, through narrative and rhetorical strategies, that the dominant ideologies of *Pamela* and *Evelina* are hierarchical, aristocratic, racial, patriarchal, and capriciously Capitalistic. Although the three novels considered, *Pamela*, *Evelina*, and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, were published in 1740, 1778, and 1966, respectively, all three authors lived in societies dominated, to different degrees, by the aforementioned ideologies. The ideologies that provided the parameters of the possible action of the characters in *Pamela* and *Evelina* were unarticulated and probably unconscious, whereas Jean Rhys has the advantage of modern literary criticism to uncover the ideologies embedded in literature as well as the tools to reveal those ideologies via creative and critical narrative strategies in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Rhys deliberately makes her readers aware of the ideologies buried in eighteenth-century canonical literature and its influence on our ancestors’ understanding of what is natural and rational. Rhys accomplishes her goal by setting her novel in the same time period as the earlier texts, the eighteenth-century, to reveal the dominant ideologies of the time. In addition, she has her characters demonstrably act in accord with the ideologies of the time. However, by prioritizing certain points of view and strategically using nineteenth- and twentieth-century advances in narrative technique, she makes manifest the harmful effects of ideologies that degrade human beings, especially women, the poor, and people of color. Rhys also shows her readers the covert ideologies themselves that support the illegitimate use of power and how that power may be destabilized by simply making those ideologies overt.

Hierarchism, for example, is the principle that the authority of a system is based on rank or social order. Or, in Margaret Atwood’s words, it is the answer to the question: “Who may do what to whom with impunity?” (Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights 130.) Hierarchism is demonstrated by the power to force one’s will upon another with impunity, and it has intrinsic as well as extrinsic sources. Intrinsic sources of power are attributes one possesses at birth, such as being born into a titled family, white, and male. These intrinsic sources of power reflect aristocratic, racial and patriarchal power, respectively. For instance, in *Pamela* and *Evelina* Mr. B and Lord Orville represent possessors of all three intrinsic sources of power and wield their power without restraint. External sources of power are attributes one acquires, such as monetary, judicial, ecclesiastical, and power by association or marriage. Monetary power, for example, is exemplified by the Brangtons, judicial power by Mr. B, ecclesiastical power by Mr. Williams and Mr. Villars, and power by association by Polly Green, the adopted daughter of Sir Hugh Belmont, while *Pamela* and *Evelina* acquire power through their marriages to Mr. B and Lord

Orville, respectively. Additionally, it should be noted that characters may have access to various sources of power that they do not possess themselves, either intrinsically or extrinsically, but are a reward of being citizens of a global, colonial power. Finally, it is also instructive to note the tension emanating through the antagonist exercise of power by various characters in order to achieve their respective ends, which is characteristic of all three novels and reveals not only the conflict between individuals pursuing discordant individual goals, but also the conflict which arises from competing ideologies for hegemony over society at large.

Mr. B, in *Pamela*, is the most powerful character of all three of the texts because he has successfully managed to integrate the various ideologies from which his power originates into a functioning system to exercise his will over others. Symbolically, he even has power over God inasmuch as he has the power to appoint or dismiss clergy at will. Of course, readers are intended to perceive him as a noble and benevolent tyrant. However, if he chose to use his power toward sinister ends, there is no one powerful enough to oppose him. Jean Rhys, on the other hand, demonstrates the danger of unchecked power in the hands of a capricious man. She presents us with Antoinette's father, the most powerful man on the island in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as an example of a man who uses his power, not benevolently, but malevolently to sexually abuse the Black slave women on his plantation. The unexamined warrant in *Pamela* and *Evelina* is that those with great power are also the purveyors of moral authority, whereas *Wide Sargasso Sea* clearly shows the fallacy of that assumption by merely shifting the point of view from those with power to those who are powerless. The sexually abused Black slave women, for instance, do not have any power because they are women, Black, and poor, not because they lack the ability to make ethical decisions or manage their lives. Pointedly, they are also denied access to justice as well as entrée to clergy. Symbolically, Rhys is suggesting not only the absence of justice in this world for Black women, but scorning the possibility of them obtaining justice in the next as well.

The role of racism as a source of hierarchical power in Western culture is most evident in the earliest novel under consideration, *Pamela*, published in 1740. In one example from *Pamela*, Mr. B commends the maternal nature of Sally Godfrey by informing Pamela that Sally bought and shipped a "little negro boy of about ten years old, as a present, to wait upon [their daughter]" (Richardson 516). The fact that he "was taken ill of the smallpox, and died in a month after he was landed" did not allay Sally's maternal intent to care for her child, also of about ten, by providing her with another Black boy as a surrogate mother—the ethics of severing a Black boy's relationship with his mother as well as the act of symbolically emasculating him is not intended to be considered a flaw in Sally's character by the reader—instead, Sally's appropriating of other mother's children is put forward as natural, rational, and a testament to Sally's own impeccable maternal nature. The unexamined eighteenth-century English acceptance of race as a legitimate source of power is evidenced by Pamela's unconditional and uncritical acceptance of Mr. B's example of Sally Godfrey's loving character without commenting on the irony of Sally Godfrey depriving other mothers of their ten-year-old children or the tragedy of one child's premature death. In fact, Pamela immediately turns the conversation back to how Mr. B felt after Sally left him.

It is interesting to note that working women, people of color, and the poor are usually not given names in novels from the eighteenth-century because they are not assumed to merit names. Thus the little Black boys, for example, are not named. Likewise, in *Evelina* the two poor women, who are forced to race one another for the sake of the gentlefolk's entertainment, are referred to simply as "two old ladies." More troubling, is the fact that the humiliation and pain of the two old women is

intended as a source of pleasure, not only for the gentlefolk of the novel, but readers of the story as well. The anonymity of poor people and minorities is also a distinguishing feature of eighteenth-century texts. It is important not to forget that the above cited examples are indicative of the prevailing ideologies of the period. Namely, that people may be positioned on such a low rung of the hierarchical ladder that they cease not only to be people but become non-persons. Edward Said explained in *Culture and Imperialism* that non-whites were present but invisible presences in Western texts, especially in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. He notes that in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for instance, when the source of Sir Thomas Bertram's wealth is revealed to be from the profits of slavery in Antigua, that fact is not shameful enough to cast an aspersion on the moral fiber of Sir Thomas Bertram. On the contrary, Jane Austen portrays Bertram's "properties" as a "natural extension of the calm, the order, and the beauties of Mansfield Park" (Said 80).

On the other hand, Jean Rhys shows her readers that the ideologies of racism and slavery are not natural or rational or even insuperable. It should be remembered that the freeing of the slaves in English colonies was not in response to a purely humanitarian impulse, but was the result of the high cost of enforcing slavery and the success of slave revolts, such as the slave's self-liberation from the French in Haiti. Rhys does an excellent job showing us how inculcated racist ideology is in Western culture with the example of Mr. Mason's inability, in the face of open rebellion, to believe that Blacks were dangerous. Aunt Cora warned him of the danger to his family and he responded, "there is no reason to be alarmed . . . [they are just] drunken Negros" (39). In fact, they were not drunk, and they deliberately burned down his house and were about to kill him as he called on his God, whom he surely imagines to be white, to save him; however it is an island God, manifested in the flaming parrot, that saves him. The expulsion of the white, plantation family demonstrates in Rhys' novel the defeat of white hegemony over Black slaves.

Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* also demonstrates that racism transcends merely skin color. Rhys' novel includes the historical fact of the slaughter of the island's original inhabitants, subsequent occupation by white colonials, the importation of African slaves, and Europeans' disdain for whites born on the island. For instance, the African slaves began calling the white colonials born on the island "white niggers" because they witnessed the disdain they see European-born whites have for the island-born whites. The European-born whites' term for the island-born whites is "Creole." Mr. Rochester's pride tells him that he cannot "go back to England in the role of rejected suitor jilted by [a] Creole girl" (Rhys 78).

Mr. Rochester is an excellent example of other dangerous ideologies: aristocratic and patriarchal. Rhys' novel demonstrates the potent peril when these harmful ideologies work in collaboration with one another. Rochester is virtually penniless at the beginning of Rhys' novel, but his aristocratic family origins entitle him to marry Antoinette, and his patriarchal power deprives her of her inheritance. Mr. Rochester's pride, however, does not permit him to publically present a Creole bride when he returns to England to accept a substantial inheritance upon the death of his elder brother. These ideologies, Rhys asserts in her troping of *Jane Eyre*, are why Antoinette is locked in Mr. Rochester's attic and concealed from public view. She is not a madwoman in the attic, but a sane woman who was the victim of extremely injurious ideologies. Likewise, Pamela reveals the danger of aristocratic and patriarchal power to all women. We should note, for example, the reaction of the inhabitants of Lincolnshire to Mr. William's entreaty to free Pamela from Mr. B. Their response is "he hurts no family by this" (Richardson 138). Couched in this response is the notion that if a person is not of noble birth, her life is of no consequence,

especially if one is also born a woman. Of course, the ideology of aristocratic power is not new. Aristophanes asserted that aristocrats do as they wish and the common folk suffer as they must. However, it should be noted that Aristophanes disparages this behavior in his plays whereas Samuel Richardson does not. Aristophanes was critical of undemocratic ideology and purposefully used his talent to oppose it. On the other hand, the clergyman in *Pamela*, Mr. Peters, tells Mr. Williams that Mr. B's kidnapping, assault, and attempted rape of Pamela is "too common and fashionable a case to be withstood by a private clergyman of two . . . tis what all young gentleman will do" (138-9).

In the novels, the only way for the heroines to defeat, or at least circumvent, patriarchal and aristocratic power is through suicide. Pamela's contemplation of suicide showed Mr. B that he cannot possess her by force and Antoinette's self-immolation, as well as her attempted immolation of Mr. Rochester, is her way of escaping Mr. Rochester's power. Escaping from the tyranny of patriarchal power is the motive behind the self-destructive behavior of Pamela and Antoinette as well as many women today who are contemporary victims of patriarchal power. It is, however, paradoxical that the women in *Evelina* and *Pamela* are enamored by the selfsame patriarchal-aristocratic power that oppresses them. Evelina, for instance, is obviously captivated with titles: she favors Lord Orville, but the text suggests that she would not be unresponsive to the attentions of Sir Clement Willoughby either. Mr. B, on the other hand, is pointedly without a title and, thus, less appealing to her. It should also be remembered that women authors, such as the philosophically astute George Eliot in *Silas Marner* and *Adam Bede*, record the infamy and frequency of "young squires" using their titles to exploit women, especially with the promise of marriage or the stratagem of a mock marriage.

Pointedly, in Rhys' novel, Antoinette does not marry Mr. Rochester for his title; she marries him because she loves him. One of the most heartbreaking moments in the novel is when Mr. Rochester crushes a flower wreath Antoinette makes for him. The flower wreath is a metaphor for her love. Instead of loving Antoinette, Mr. Rochester shuns, beats, imprisons, and renames her. Jean Rhys, who was born in the Caribbean, is well aware that the power to name is emblematic of the exercise of colonial power. Though Antoinette, aka Bertha, dies, her story is given voice by Rhys. Thus, Rhys subverts patriarchal and aristocratic power by giving the reader a new context in which to read the canonical text *Jane Eyre*, as well as other eighteenth-century novels. Rhys cleverly recasts Jane Eyre, a canonical woman, as the indispensable co-conspirator of numerous deleterious ideologies required to validate and perpetuate patriarchal, aristocratic, and colonial power over people, especially women, of color. An imaginative reader may well envision Jane Eyre as emblematic of women today who collaborate in the oppression of other women as well as the poor, minorities, and the politically disenfranchised.

Capricious Capitalism is another covert ideology present in all of the novels. Accordingly, it is not only race, gender, and color which are sources of illegitimate power, but also money. Money plays an instrumental role in making Antoinette eligible to marry Mr. Rochester. He undoubtedly would not consider marrying her without the prospect of considerable financial gain. Antoinette's dowry enables Mr. Rochester to live like a gentleman. In *Pamela*, Pamela's parents are paid "many guineas" for her. Money also plays a decisive role in the unfolding of the plot of *Evelina*. Madame Duval and the Brangtons, for example, exemplify the emerging middle-class, and money buys them power; and power allows them more control over their lives. However, Fanny Burney's portrayal of the Brangtons indicated she has little respect for the nouveau rich. The narrator condemns the Brangtons' discussion of money as improper and offensive to Evelina's genteel sensibilities. Evelina is

shocked and appalled that the Brangtons use her name to get a silver-smithing job from Lord Orville, thereby crassly undermining middle-class notions of solidarity and family. These actions, in the text, distinguish their association as a class (working) against the upper-class to usurp the power of the ruling class via money, as mere profiteering.

It is important to recognize that the origin of the wealth of the ruling class is obscured in eighteenth-century novels. Perhaps the origin of the monetary power of the ruling class is not discussed because of the illegitimacy of its origin—domestic and foreign imperialism (of course, that would imply that the authors knew that there was something “wrong” with imperialism); more likely, it is because the wealth has been naturalized through the ownership of property. Nevertheless, the fact that the ruling elite do not have to labor for their wealth should be a source of shame, not pride, because the ruling elite seize their wealth through violence and the threat of violence. Rhys somberly demonstrates the horror of colonialism by using Mr. Rochester’s ruthless treatment of Antoinette as a metaphor for the violence of colonialism in general. It is important to note that Burney does not have a problem with wealth per se, but only with the newly minted middle-class variety and the access to power it brings them. Burney portrays the middle-classes’ obsession with acquiring money as shameful, thus, deriding the advent of the emergence of the middle-class in the eighteenth-century, but not ruthless Capitalism itself. Nevertheless, even Burney recognizes that money is the only way those without aristocratic power could protect themselves from aristocratic power. On one occasion, for instance, Madame Duval is arrested by a Captain and she warns him, “let me go, or I promise you I’ll get you put in prison . . . I’m no common person” (Burney 40). Madame Duval’s threat to have the Captain arrested shows her faith in her wealth to buy justice as well as a way to distinguish herself from a “common person.”

Therefore, crass Capitalism is a significant source of extrinsic and intrinsic power in eighteenth-century novels. It does matter, however, if one is born with money or acquires it. Capricious Capitalism, the relentless pursuit of money for its own sake, is considered natural and rational, with the caveat that there is something inappropriate about being too public or too new to money, referencing, no doubt, the antagonistic relationship between two ideologies: an ideology of a natural aristocratic, hierarchical order and the ideology of emergent capricious Capitalism. An example of the merging of these two seemingly antagonistic ideologies is Polly Green. Polly is the wet-nurse’s daughter. She is nobody until she is adopted by Sir Hugh Belmont. However Polly, like Pamela, must prove herself worthy of the new position she has in society. It should be noted that half of the text of *Pamela* occurs after Pamela’s marriage; ostensibly this is to show whether or not Pamela, who is not of aristocratic birth, can be successfully acculturated to her new lifestyle. Evelina’s aristocratic origin, by contrast, allows *Evelina* to end with her marriage precisely because she is “well-bred” and is by nature, therefore, worthy of her exalted position in society.

The need for patronage, in the patriarchal sense, is clearly evident in *Evelina* and *Pamela*. Lord Orville’s patronage is the only thing, we may assume, that prevents Sir Clement Willoughby from raping Evelina. Evelina is constantly threatened by strange men and is rescued repeatedly by Lord Orville or Sir Willoughby. By the same token, her female patrons, Madame Duval and Mrs. Selwyn fail to keep Evelina safe, ostensibly because Madame Duval and Mrs. Selwyn are themselves powerless because they are women. Likewise in Richardson’s text, Mrs. Jenkins is powerless to protect Pamela. However, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys reverses the motif: Mr. Mason is powerless to save the women, but Aunt Cora’s voice saves the men by graphically interpreting the parrot’s fiery death as a supernatural warning not to hurt her and her family.

A dominant motif in *Pamela* and *Evelina* is getting the women married; only in marriage can these women be safe, only by becoming the properties of men are they out of harm's way. Whereas, in another motif reversal, Jean Rhys writes her novel to show that marriage and a woman's embrace of patriarchal power and male authority does not save Antoinette, but results in her ruin. Antoinette's marriage, for example, seals her deadly fate and not her salvation. Mr. Rochester is not only a physical threat to her well-being, but emphatically an existential threat too.

Jean Rhys' re-textualizing canonical texts, such as *Jane Eyre*, is a vital part of embedding ethics and ethos into our literature by making us conscious of the hidden ideologies rooted in our literature. Consciousness is a necessary first step to being able to make deliberate choices about our values and lifestyles. Which ideologies, for example, are empowering and which ideologies are injurious? Janet Todd writes, in *Feminist Literary History*, that "Literature is peculiarly implicated in the general oppression of women . . . because it [has] colonized the minds of both sexes with those stereotypes that have kept each gender firmly in place" (23). If that is true, does literature now have a duty to share the burden and pleasure of liberation? While there is no justification for one person exercising power over another, especially not because of gender, much of our canonical literature valorizes inequitable relations between women and men as not only natural, but rational, necessary, and functional. In *Pamela* and *Evelina*, people without power, especially women, are treated as people without rights; they are abused mentally, physically, and sexually. Twentieth-century texts, such as *Wide Sargasso Sea*, identify and challenge the dehumanizing ideologies of our canonical texts as well as our lack of compassion for people who are somehow different than us. Martha Nussbaum is on the mark when she writes in *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, "what I want from art and literature . . . is not erudition; it is empathy and the extension of concern" (432). The unfortunate fact is, however, that the majority of contemporary readers of canonical texts too often fail to hear the silent cries of the victims of the reprehensible ideologies embedded in canonical texts. What is noticeably missing from much of modern literary criticism is compassion. Authors, such as Jean Rhys, gives voice to those cries—all we have to do is listen.

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Early Feminism in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

Jemma Hinkly

The eighteenth-century woman was modest and socially inhibited. Women were often denied the same rights and privileges as men; as written by Daniel Defoe, “We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence, which I am confident, had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves”(Woolf, xvii). Believed to be one of the earliest examples of the novel, Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* tells the tale of a progressive woman clearly far ahead of her time. Moll can easily be seen as one of literature’s first feminist characters; she has remarkably masculine attitudes towards money, is liberal with her sexuality, and exhibits questionable moral behaviour. Lady Mary Chudleigh embodies similar sentiments in her feminist poem *To The Ladies*, in which she “warns other women of the tyranny of men in marriage and the corresponding lack of status married women have” (Williamson, 94). Although her work fails to describe a woman as progressive as Moll Flanders, in writing about oppressive eighteenth-century attitudes towards women and marriage, Chudleigh promotes feminist social change. Finally, Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* chronicles the coming of age of young Catherine Morland. Catherine’s declared role as a “heroine” makes her a feminist force, and it is her love of literature that shows her to be an early example of the self-educated woman. Although each work presents a very different type of woman, clearly *Moll Flanders*, *To The Ladies*, and *Northanger Abbey* all promote feminist change through the attitudes of women, and are important feminist writings far ahead of their time.

Women living in eighteenth century Britain led extremely limited lives. Frequently denied the rights to an education, female roles rarely extended beyond the home. Furthermore, men began marrying to further their financial means and therefore women were often viewed as chattel. Defoe writes:

Betty wants but one thing, for the market is against our sex just now; and if a young Woman have Beauty, Birth, Breeding, Wit, Sense, Manners, Modesty, and all these to an Extreme; yet if she have not Money, she’s no body, she had has good want them all, for nothing but money now recommends a Woman; the men play the Game all into their own Hands. (21)

Thus, Moll Flanders was eager to earn her way to a well-off marriage. While other women searched and married for love, Moll was monumental in her desire to marry as a means of supporting herself. Throughout the novel, Moll constantly refers to her number of “shillings,” “pounds,” and “guineas.” One can easily see that Moll is extremely conscious of her own funds. This particular interest in money seems rather un-lady-like, and similar to the ways in which men obsess over money. However, the ways in which Moll earns a living are hardly conventional. In the beginning of the novel when Moll is but a young woman, she is first bewildered with the idea of receiving money from a suitor in exchange for love. She reveals, “I was more confounded with the money than I was before the love” (24). This early discovery on has profound influence throughout her life, in which she views her relationships as financial investments. While eighteenth-century men were choosing wives on the basis of their financial worth, Moll Flanders pursues many of her husbands as to improve her own finances. In these ways Moll’s attitudes towards money are very progressive and almost masculine.

Chudleigh's poem allows little room for financially independent women. Unlike Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, the life of the woman described by Chudleigh is extremely limited, and one in which her role as wife has become her sole profession. Chudleigh writes, "Wife and servant are the same, But only differ in the name" (1-2). Afforded none of the pomp and romance usually associated with marriage, being married has literally become her job. No better than a servant, she seems to exist only to meet the needs of her husband. In doing so, "him still must serve, him still obey, And nothing act, and nothing say" (17-18). The needs of her husband have her so consumed that the woman described by Chudleigh is hardly allowed to venture towards her own interests, let alone earn her own money or even manage the funds of the family. This prohibits her from attaining any independence whatsoever, and thus she remains completely dependent on her husband. Chudleigh urges women to escape marriage as a means of retaining not only their own financial freedom, but any freedom in general. Unlike Moll, her existence is totally defined by her marriage and she lacks the freedoms to pursue Moll's financial liberty and masculine attitude. Unfortunately, this position was much more common for the eighteenth-century woman.

In sharp contrast, Austen's Catherine Morland is distinctly unmarried. Though certainly a young romantic, she finds the greatest sense of romance in the gothic novels and writings she completely immerses herself in. Austen describes some of Catherine's influential literature:

She read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventful lives.

From Pope, she learnt to censure those who

"bear about the mockery of woe."

From Gray, that

"Many a flower is born to blush unseen,

"And waste its fragrance on the desert air."

From Thompson that

----- "It is a delightful task

"To teach the young idea how to shoot." (2)

These important words by the likes of such great eighteenth-century poets as Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray, and James Thompson all have a profound influence on Catherine. Rather than simply read these works, she takes important life lessons from them. Austen avoids merely referencing these authors, but rather takes special care to include some of their most influential verses that reveal Austen's own familiarity with the work. In these ways it can also be inferred that perhaps Catherine Morland is a symbol for Jane Austen herself. Additionally, this love of literature gives Catherine definition through the novels she reads rather than definition through marriage (unlike the women in both Defoe and Chudleigh's works). More importantly, her desire to read brings forth a desire to self-educate. As a student of literature, this almost seems to become her loose profession. Though Catherine may not necessarily possess a thirst for money, her thirst for knowledge and adventure is certainly characteristically male. Thus Catherine Morland becomes a feminist figure as she promotes women's early involvement in education.

In a secular age when marriage and social structure were dictated by the church, Moll Flanders' attitudes towards husbandry and sex are extremely liberal. Throughout the course of the entire novel, Moll admits to sleeping with almost two-dozen men, marrying five, and bringing forth eight children (171). Her behaviour is certainly unconventional, and in stark contrast to the chaste behaviour embodied in eighteenth-century values. Not only was Moll forthcoming with her sexuality, but her attitude towards marriage and the pursuit of love are also very different. Moll states, "I had been tricked once by that Cheat call'd, Love, but the Game was over; I was resolv'd now to be Married, or Nothing, and to be well Married, or not at all" (58). Rather than fall victim to the "Game" of love played by men, Moll is determined to decide her own course. Thus, she regards marriage as a relatively love-less arrangement, where her goal, instead, remains to better her future and to increase her stability. Moll's intolerance for wasteful romance and attention to her own vitality and future undoubtedly make her a feminist character.

Chudleigh also seems to view marriage as a loveless arrangement. While the woman she describes may lack the sexual audacity of Moll, they are alike in that neither approaches marriage as a happy, loving institution. Chudleigh first alludes to marriage as, "when that fatal knot is tied" (3). Marriage is often celebrated as a joyful, new beginning; however, Chudleigh uses morbid imagery in her portrayal of the ceremonious occasion. She adds to the image of a careless marriage with the lines, "Then all that's kind is laid aside, And nothing left but state and pride" (7-8). The marriage she describes lacks all emotion, and appears to be more of a formality. Her descriptions suggest that more than anything else, she views marriage as the death of a woman's freedom.

Unlike the women described in the writings of Defoe or Chudleigh, Austen's Catherine regards marriage as an equal, loving relationship. In pursuit of true love throughout the course of the novel, she finally succeeds in meeting it as the story ends with Tilney's proposal. However, while Catherine believes in marriage as a happy ending, she is thoroughly modern in her approach. In *Catherine Morland's Gothic Delusions: A Defense of Northanger Abbey*, Waldo S. Glock writes:

(Catherine) represents the modern world of plain fact, a world in which common sense and sincere intention, not sentimental gestures and exaggerated artifice, must be allowed to define the essential quality of modern life. She is a democratic heroine who seeks, not honor or fame, but individual fulfillment. She wants a family and domestic tranquility, and the love and respect of a husband whose marital integrity will anticipate the conventional orthodoxies of mod-Victorian morality. (37-38)

Although Catherine embraces marriage, by no means does she condemn the freedom and rights of women. Catherine's view of romance allows women to search for love while maintaining their own "individual fulfillment." For Catherine this means not compromising her own bold behaviour as heroine or her imaginative tendencies resulting from her love of gothic literature. Her view on equality and respect within a loving marriage are certainly in favour of women, and thus increase her role as a feminist character.

Finally, Moll's unusual understanding of morals and cultural norms make her a progressive female force. As previously mentioned, throughout her tale Moll forms significant relationships with multiple lovers. While her behaviour was often characterized as unchaste and too-sexually liberal, Moll perceived each of her relationships as acceptable (with the exception of her marriage to her brother-husband). Moll's dalliance with thievery is also of questionable morals, what begins as

simple pick-pocketing quickly escalates to borderline kidnapping. However, just like with her many partners, Moll is able to justify her actions and herself as morally sound because she believes she commits these actions as a means of survival. Virginia Woolf writes of Moll:

From the outset the burden of proving her right to exist is laid upon her. She has to depend entirely upon her own wits and judgment, and to deal with each emergency as it arises by a rule-of-thumb morality which she has forged in her own head. (Woolf, xiv)

Thus, one must not judge her actions too harshly, but rather see that all her actions are committed out of a need to survive—no matter how immoral they may seem. More importantly, in committing her actions Moll defies whatever social implications are expected of her; she neglects moral standards to take care of her own needs. Thus, Moll’s moral behaviour reinforces her place in literature as a strong, self-sufficient woman.

In sharp contrast, the woman described by Chudleigh appears to be perfectly morally sound. However, this isn’t due to her own moral compass, but rather the maleficent, overbearing control of husband. The most poignant lines of Chudleigh’s *To The Ladies* read:

Like mutes, she signs alone must make,
And never any freedom take,
But still be governed by a nod,
And fear her husband as her god (13-16)

This excerpt manages to capture the sentiments of the entire poem, in which women are portrayed as completely subservient to men. The woman described by Chudleigh is physically, as well as figuratively, denied a voice in the presence of her husband and controlled by the simplest of his gestures. Her freedom to determine even her own moral behaviour is non-existent, as dictated by a man who in his own right has become her “god.” The most loaded description throughout the entire poem, the specific use of the word is appropriate, as the woman has come to follow by the rules and sermons of her husband as a religious figure. This idea is only furthered with the line, “When she the word *Obey* has said” (5). The capitalization and use of italics makes the word “Obey” one of the poem’s most important. Thus it appears that absolutely all of the woman’s actions are determined by her husband, as she has no choice but to blindly obey his bidding.

Though not as sexually perverse as Moll, Catherine has her own moral set and influences. Unlike the woman described in Chudleigh’s poem, Catherine’s morals are not predetermined and enforced by a man. Her role as “heroine” means she often acts against society’s traditional expectations of women. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a heroine as, “a woman admired or idealized for her courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.” Catherine is certainly characterized as such, especially in regards to her love of gothic romance and pursuit of romance with Mr. Tilney. As a woman who possesses the courage to indulge in the dark mysteries of the gothic and Northanger Abbey, achievement in her vast knowledge of literature, and the nobility to reject the advances of men she has no interest in (Mr. Thorpe), Catherine is a perfect example of the heroine in eighteenth century British literature. As she behaves as such throughout the novel, she constantly acts against the modesty that is expected of eighteenth-century women. Her courage and sense of nobility are radically masculine, as well as accompanying descriptions of her behaviour as a young heroine. Described as a tomboy in her

youth, Austen writes of Catherine, “What a strange unaccountable character! ...she was moreover noisy and wild, hated confinement and cleanliness, and loved nothing so well in the world as rolling down the slope at the back of the house” (2). While growing up, Catherine displays boyish behaviour that contributes to her later becoming a heroine. Her title as a heroine dictates her behaviour as a feminist character, one in which she embraces strong masculine characteristics that otherwise act against society’s expectations of traditional womanhood.

As a male writer, Defoe provides an interesting perspective not only to one of the first examples of the novel, but also to the feminist in eighteenth-century British literature. With her attitudes towards money, liberal sexuality, and questionable moral behaviour, *Moll Flanders* is most certainly one of the earliest and most significant feminist characters in all of British literature (outside of Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath*). As female voices, Lady Mary Chudleigh’s and Jane Austen’s writings are, as well, crucial parts of early feminist attitudes (which can be read alongside writings by Mary Wollstonecraft). In *Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750*, Marilyn L. Williamson describes the goal of Chudleigh’s message to women through her writing:

Chudleigh was convinced that men would not change their treatment of women because the difference in status was in men’s interest, and so she felt that if changes were to take place, they would have to be in women’s attitudes towards themselves and in the personal resources they brought to their condition. The greatest danger, Chudleigh perceptively saw, was that women would internalize the misogynist images of them and accept the slavery of a marriage forced upon them by the interests of their fathers. (Williamson, 95)

Defoe also seems to adopt a similar approach in his writing. Collectively, Austen’s, Chudleigh’s, and Defoe’s writings all promote a feminist cause through changing women’s attitudes towards themselves, rather than relying on male social change.

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A Harmonious blend of Tradition and Modernity in Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli*

Archana Parashar

Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* is a story of the lives of Rajasthani women who live in the "purdah," inside the Haveli trapped in a world where even glances of the outside world are forbidden to them. Rama Mehta intends to depict the existential dilemma of a large section of society—the educated class that is influenced by the western beliefs and yet cannot uproot themselves from their age old traditions. The novel is an attempt to regain this faith.

Inside the Haveli is deservedly regarded as a classic in India, where it was published in 1977. By avoiding any breath of didacticism, Mehta allows us to understand the complexity of the dilemma, suggesting that there are many kinds of fulfillment, and warning that we should be very certain before discarding all our mothers' values, lest we lose in the process much that is irreplaceable. Mehta's *Inside the Haveli*, which won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1979, depicts the lives of women inside a haveli in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Mehta skilfully describes the hopes and despair, superstitions and beliefs, joy and sorrows of the women inside the haveli. Here, we will glance at how traditional values and practices are negotiated in the present times by different classes of women inside the haveli.

The Haveli has to go, and its inevitable decline is implicit throughout the book, but with it will go much else. Geeta's desire to help educate her maids' children is of course praiseworthy and progressive, but by pulling this one thread, she threatens to tear a hole in a social fabric which sustains and supports even while it limits and confines. Udaipur becomes symbolic of the contemporary Indians who are getting uprooted and do not understand why people still cling to their heritage. Geeta, a Bombay-based cultivated and educated girl enters the haveli when she gets married and eventually becomes a part of it. This brief discussion focuses on how she gradually moves away from the western world, Bombay life, and adapts and assimilates in the haveli's indigenous traditions.

In the post-independence period women are gradually occupying the centre stage along with the other oppressed groups. It is natural, therefore, that women writers and even male writers should treat them in diverse aspects. Their novels reflect the varied features of contemporary Indian society on the threshold of awakening and change.

Geeta, an educated girl from Bombay where there was "free mingling of men and women," is married into an aristocratic family where women "remained in purdah." There is juxtaposition of different worlds. The urban modern world, is vis-a-vis the traditional conservative world; the world of the poor is vis-a-vis the world of rich; and the joint family is vis-a-vis the individual—all of which provide for a variety and complexity of human relationships within the family. Geeta's marriage to Ajay Singh is a marriage into a family dominated by patriarchal feudalism. Geeta has to live in "a constricted atmosphere . . . [in a] world of women" where men are regarded as gods. But the male dominated world is confined only to the men's section. Rama Mehta wants us to see the haveli which has "no shape from the outside, but inside there is definite plan" (6). It is the women who are at the centre of the novel. The onslaught of the collective will of the women of the haveli does not completely efface Geeta's individuality although it does restore communal values. Though in the beginning she is irritated and angry at the loss of her individuality she later, to some extent, internalizes the discipline of the haveli. The life inside the haveli is regulated

by a strict code of conduct and by relationships adhering to a fixed pattern. Any violation is resisted and frowned upon. Those who are inducted into this closed world are indoctrinated in such a way that they are made to accept it as the only way of life worth living. The desire for change is suppressed. The apparent homogeneity and togetherness are deceptive but they are accepted in the name of tradition, custom and family values which give the haveli a distinct character. Men interact with the outside world, but women remain within the closed system and are supposed to preserve the values. Women are not supposed to speak, question or reveal their emotions to anyone outside the confines of the haveli. Geeta is supposed to obey the commands of her grandmother-in-law and even Pari, the oldest maid servant of the family. These matriarchs control the environment in the haveli. “This hierarchical weave of generations of mistresses and generations of servants complex in its patterning of personal loyalties and power rivalries, is the synchronic pole of communal identity, for the book shows repeatedly the emotional investments everyone has in everyone else’s lives” (Siegle 23).

It takes almost fifteen years for Geeta to adjust herself to the life of haveli. It is her mother-in-law’s love and concern that win her heart and draw her into the life of haveli. Thus we see Geeta growing into the “web of relations,” herself. Though Geeta has accepted the discipline of the haveli without protest, there are many times “when she (feels) the crushing weight of the walls that shut off the outside world” (88). Geeta’s has resentments about the “male privileges” of food and the separate and more comfortable section in the haveli; there is also a “remoteness” where wives are not allowed to go alone with their husbands; and finally, women cannot talk to men, especially elders, which is more forceful than her submission to the traditions of the haveli. She expressed her frustration at living within the confined, gendered space of the haveli: “I know the men have no problems in the world of Udaipur; you are all pampered, you lead your lives, and think women are mere chattels” (53). The dream of leaving Udaipur dies in her heart. At the same time she feels relieved, for at last she is sure that her life was to be in the haveli.

It is Geeta who induces the inhabitants of the haveli into a silent transformation that is provided by education and awakening. It is interesting that the changes in human environment are brought about by a woman. Geeta is not a rebel nor is she a radical feminist, but in her own quiet way she brings about changes in the lives of young girls in the family and outside. Geeta does not completely conform to the old mores of the haveli, but she absorbs some of its values. That is why the resistance to it is not violent. Geeta starts teaching women from all classes of society. Initially there is a lot of resistance (the maid servants think that an educated girl would be a total misfit in the community), but their criticism does not deter her, and she is determined to empower the servants and their children through education. With the support of her in-laws and her husband she is able to send Sita (the daughter of a run-away maid) and Ravi (a bright servant boy) to school. She herself runs her own “school” and teaches servants, their children and the daughters of the haveli. For those who find it impossible to read and write, Geeta starts sewing classes and engages a woman to teach them to cut and embroider. The tangible effect of all these efforts is that they get economic independence. “Binniji [Geeta] (has) changed the lives of these girls . . . most of them now can read and write; they can get work”(191). Women from other havelis complain that education is “making rebels of our servants” (165). Pari recognizes the undertone of complaints, “their own daughters and daughters-in-law come and sit for hours with Binniji [Geeta]. It’s only the poor that they prevent from coming because they no longer have to depend on the havelis” (191). Geeta is instrumental in changing the lives of these girls.

Geeta achieves another victory when she does not consent to the engagement of her very young daughter, Vijay, with a well-bred, educated young man from another haveli. “If I have ruined my life, the children are not going to ruin theirs” (206); and she tells her husband that she cannot “be fooled again. I know nothing matters more than money and prestige to you all” (207). She thinks that the union of two havelis through marriage was more important, to the others, than the fact that Vijay “would languish in the vast haveli” (220). Her daughter becomes one locus of her resistance. She does not accept the proposal in spite of the persuasion of her in-laws, though she does rethink it towards the end of the novel. It is with determination and humility that she tackles the problem of child marriage. In Geeta we find a harmonious blending of the positive phase of tradition and modernity.

Often in my reading of the book I feel disturbed with the fact that Geeta refuses the engagement of her daughter at such an early age but she agrees with mother-in-law (after a little resistance, of course) to get Sita (born of servants) married and stop her schooling. “Binniji, you have made Sita’s life . . . But now we must accept their condition” (188). She is forced to accept that marriage is the only security for women. As the children and women learn to read and write Geeta gets a deeper understanding of poverty. Geeta consents to the marriage because she comes to understand that for the poor it was important to abide by family customs, otherwise they would lose the family’s approval. It is Geeta who has made it possible for Sita to be married into a family with land, a well, a house and bullock. It is from her that we can learn not to define ourselves definitively but in constant contextualization. Geeta, the new mistress of the haveli, has transformed traditions, fought her battles, achieved her victory and made the “gift of learning” to posterity.

In post-independence India, patriarchal hierarchy co-existed with a developing democratic ethos. A new class of women emerged who were shaped by old traditions and strengthened by the power of education they had acquired. These women liberated themselves from the hold of conformism and male domination. They tried to control their own environment and to improve women’s educational and economic opportunities.

Geeta is a humanist in action who is able to modify tradition and reorganize the social forms. She herself undergoes change and brings about a change through her action. This modern, educated woman, belonging to the upper echelons of society, schools the other women and is responsible for the arousal of “humanist consciousness” in both the men and women in the haveli.

There is a subliminal message in the novel. Though hers was a struggle for independence, she would never have been able to achieve anything without the support of her husband and father-in-law. Her struggle, therefore, is not so much against patriarchy as against a social system that denied women their due freedom. Geeta finally emerges as a humanist who has opened the way for the other women to free themselves from the circumscribed reality of their lives. She offers the way for a positive change by means of education, protesting against child marriage and differential treatment of boys and girls. She has opened up new horizons of possibilities arousing a sense of self-worth and self-esteem in women. It is through education that such a change is affected. Once the girls begin to perceive things for themselves they begin to question and change. In the words of T.L. Vasvani, “education must be illuminated and re-illuminated in the light of the soul . . . The new community of girls and women in India must be a community of Light And Light Knows no distinction of creed or community” (Ruhela 167). It is into this world of light that Geeta has moved the women of the haveli.

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