Facts and Fictionality: Essay-Periodicals and Literary Novelty

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PhD

University of York
English and Related Literature
June 2020

Abstract

This thesis is about the influence of the periodical essay on the novel – and vice versa – in the early years of the eighteenth century. Focusing on the period 1700-1760, it addresses the interchange between essay-periodicals and longer form prose writing and, in so doing, begins to close the distance between the two separate fields of periodical studies and histories of the novel. The thesis engages these two areas to challenge, at the same time as taking seriously, the divisions that result from subsuming other print media into a broader narrative of the "rise" of the novel. I argue that fiction, and more specifically fictionality, is not synonymous with the novel (as is often assumed to be the case), but is a mode of literary expression that resulted from the cross-fertilization of periodical and long form prose writing. Yet while attention has been paid to the relationship between the essay-periodical and dramatic writing, there is no current study of the relationship between the essay-periodical and the novel in this period; the significance of the concomitant emergence of these two forms within the complex print ecology of the early eighteenth century has received comparatively little attention.

Chapter One explores the emergence of the essay-periodical as a new genre of writing and argues that this form belongs squarely to the eighteenth century. Chapters Two through Five offer four author studies: Daniel Defoe; Eliza Haywood; Henry Fielding; Samuel Johnson. These demonstrate how the terminology of novel studies intersects with periodical studies. Each chapter addresses a specific trait that emerges as a key feature of that author's periodicals and novels: conversability and inclusivity; witness testimony and credibility; taste and self-conscious innovation; and anxieties over different literary forms.

Contents

Acknowledgements

My greatest thanks go to my supervisors, Alison O'Byrne and Jon Mee for their generosity, encouragement, patience, and humour in guiding me through this project, reassuring me that there was indeed a wood even if at times I could see nothing but trees. I am also indebted to the wider community at the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies whose enthusiasm has been contagious and made York such a fabulous place to work and think. I am especially grateful for the advice and wise words of Jim Watt and Chloe Wigston Smith. Beyond CECS, particular thanks are due to Matthew Sangster for countless pieces of advice and for deepening my knowledge of what is really is a very long eighteenth century.

Since arriving at CECS in 2015, I have been grateful for the support offered by the postgraduate community and have made friends for life. A special thank you goes to Gabriella Barnard-Edmunds, Sharon Choe, Fiona Milne, Harrie Neal, Millie Schurch, and Lilian Tabois: there is always time for a brew and brownie, and crochet, we have discovered, is life. I am especially indebted for the friendship and support of Ben Jackson and Montana Davies-Shuck: thank you for the for laughter, solidarity, spare rooms, and five years of referencing questions – it's been quite a journey.

From my second year of study, this work was supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/L503848/1) through the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities. I am extremely grateful to WRoCAH whose support enabled me to carry out international research trips and attend the conferences which have so enriched this project. I am also particularly grateful for the AHRC IPS fellowship and BSECS Early Career Fellowship which made so much of this research possible; staff at the Harry Ransom Centre and Cambridge University Library were wonderfully helpful and patient as I ordered up volume after volume of periodicals.

I also want to thank Krissy Schlanek and Dan Thurling for encouraging words, a place to stay, and countless cups of tea (and occasionally something stronger!). Special thanks are also due to everyone at Karian and Box, especially the Content team, for helping me keep things in perspective. As the first person in my family to go to university, the PhD journey has often seemed a very opaque one. I owe more than I can say to my parents for supporting me on this journey; to my grandparents, Bert and Olive, who never saw this thesis completed, I hope I have made you proud.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

Since the publication of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, scholarship has credited the early eighteenth century with the invention of a genre that would become synonymous with fiction. Watt's study and its focus on formal realism – a term he coins to refer to the way "the novel [offers] a full and authentic report of human experience" – has precipitated a widespread interest in the genesis of the novel in English and prompted a series of further studies that explore origins for, and influences on, the emergence of long form prose fiction.[1] Michael McKeon, for instance, has examined the importance of romance writing for the development of the novel and more recently J. Paul Hunter has investigated the novel's "ability to take over from other species and assimilate them into a new form."[2] In each of these studies, the deployment of fiction is shown to be essential to the emergence of the novel and other genres of fictional prose are typically viewed as precursors or steppingstones that helped to facilitate the novel's teleological rise. Focusing on journalism, or what Hunter describes as a relationship between the moment, the momentary, and the momentous, Lennard Davis has posited

[1] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* rpr. (London: Hogarth Press, 1987), 32. More recent studies include: Paula R. Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Joseph F. Bartolomeo, *A New Species of Criticism: Eighteenth-Century Discourse on the Novel* (Newark; London: University of Delaware Press; Associated University Presses, 1994); Homer Obed Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel from Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Susan Carlile ed., *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2011); Rachel Carnell, *Partisan Politics, Narrative Realism, and the Rise of the British Novel*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); J. A. Downie, "The Making of the English Novel," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 9, no. 3 (1997): 249–266; Brean S. Hammond, *Making the Novel: Fiction and Society in Britain, 1660-1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York; London: Norton, 1990); Thomas Keymer ed., *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 1: Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Michael McKeon, *Theory of the Novel: An Historical Approach* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000); Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Cheryl Nixon, *Novel Definitions: An Anthology of Commentary on the Novel, 1688-1815* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009).

[2] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 58.

a news/novels discourse theory whereby early novelists distanced themselves from the romance tradition to exhibit a "type of ambivalence toward fact and fiction," and so blur the boundary between fiction and newsprint.[3] As part of this exploration of news, Davis has acknowledged the influence of "parliamentary statutes, newspapers, advertisements, printer's records, handbills, letters, and so on" on the emerging novel.[4] However, relegated to the province of "and so on" are all periodical publications that did not fall into the category of newspapers. While a newspaper was, by definition, a periodical on account of its publication at routine intervals, a periodical did not have to be a newspaper. And it is with these other modes of periodical publication, and specifically the essay-periodical – a genre that emerged at the same historical moment as the novel and which, I argue, played a vital role in the development of fictional narrative – that this study is concerned. It examines the interplay between fact and fiction in the essay-periodical and longer form prose in the period 1700-1760 by focusing on the works of four authors: Daniel Defoe, Eliza Haywood, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Johnson.

The essay-periodical, by which I mean an essay-based publication usually printed on a weekly or semi-weekly basis and featuring a selection of news items and advertisements, became one of the most popular print genres of the early eighteenth century. The genre often enjoyed large and diverse reading audiences, thanks in part to having a relatively low cost, being widely accessible in coffeehouses and similar social spaces, and due to the blend of news items, diverting stories and moral entertainments that were provided within the confines of a single publication. On account of its diverse content, the essay-periodical demonstrates the assimilative

[3] Hunter, *Before Novels,* 168; Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 121.
[4] Davis, *Factual Fictions,* 7.

qualities that Hunter describes as defining novelistic fiction. Exploring this assimilative tendency and universal appeal of the essay, Adrian Wallbank argues that the periodical attempted to create an egalitarian space within which the public could debate with each other as well as the author, arguing that the form created "a sort of discursive, dialogic 'heteroglot' textual community – a 'society of the text' or 'portable coffeehouse' as Klancher describes it."[5] While this textual society is rendered visible through the range of elements contained within the periodical – including, but not limited to, essays by different authors, readers' letters, and advertisements – Wallbank and Klancher also draw attention to the importance of the space in which the essay-periodical was most commonly encountered, read, and discussed. This sociable metaphor was later appropriated by Hunter, who describes the novel as "a portable coffeehouse or elongated conversation in print."[6] While the connection between coffeehouse culture and periodical writing has been well-established, the use of the same spatial metaphor to conceptualise both the essay-periodical and the novel reveals much about how we might begin to view the essay and longer form prose fiction as part of the same rhetorical project, not least as both media sought to instruct and entertain reading audiences through using factual information and fictional anecdotes.[7]

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[5] Adrian J. Wallbank, *Dialogue, Didacticism and the Genres of Dispute: Literary Dialogues in the Age of Revolution* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), 8; Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 23.

[6] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 176.

[7] See Brian Cowan, "Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 3 (2004): 345-366; Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2005); Markman Ellis, T*he Coffee House: A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004); Markman Ellis, *Eighteenth-Century Coffee-House Culture* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006); Steven Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture," *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (1995): 807-834; Cynthia Wall, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

In focusing on facts, fictions, and literary novelty, this study has two main aims. It considers the development of fictive modes of expression by addressing the interchange between essay-periodicals and longer form prose writing and, in so doing, it begins to bridge a fissure in current scholarship and close the distance between periodical studies and histories of the novel. It challenges, at the same time as taking seriously, the divisions that result from subsuming other print media into a broader narrative of the 'rise' of the novel, and so considers how the essay-periodical developed as part of a wider discourse of fictionality within the first half of the century. And secondly, it rethinks the significance of the essay-periodical as a distinctive literary genre that belongs squarely to the period 1700-1760. Considering how fictionality took on a new prominence in this period as a result of the interactions taking place between different print media, I re-examine strategies for printed communication to address how authors developed new ways to explore and reform the morals, manners, and tastes of the age.

It is often held that writers of novels "cut their teeth in print journalism, learning narrative and expository craft by interpreting what was happening almost at the moment of action" before embarking upon careers as long form fiction writers.[8] This judgement overlooks the significance of the essay-periodical for the history of prose fiction and is typical in privileging a narrative of the 'rise' of the novel over a consideration of how strategies for communication cross-pollinated between emergent literary forms. The tendency to view journalism as a precursor to, and training ground for, novelistic writing flattens the significance of essay-based periodicals and their influence on the emergence of prose fiction. A casualty of these tendencies is that less attention has been paid to *how* narrative and expository craft developed as a result of

[8] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 193.

the fundamental imbrication of the novel and the essay-periodical, both of which emerged in response to the period's extensive cultural, political, and economic change. Yet there is no existing study of the relationship between these two genres in this period.

When scholarly attention is given to the essay-periodical with regard to the history of fiction, the genre tends to be subsumed into the category of journalism and is not considered as a distinctive literary form in its own right.[9] As the careers of individuals including Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding demonstrate, there was no simple teleological progression from the role of periodicalist to that of long form fiction writer. Haywood's *Female Spectator* (1744-46) and *Parrot* (1746) sit at the mid-point of her career, appearing after her amatory fictions and secret histories but before her later novels, such as *Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), and Fielding's periodicals appeared alongside his novels throughout the 1740s and early 1750s. Metaphors such as 'cutting teeth' suggest an inevitability in the transition from journalist to novelist that is not born out by publication dates. Moreover, the novel was not, in the period covered by this study, a tangible end goal for authors to work towards: it was yet to crystalize into a distinctive genre and arguably would not do so at all until the latter part of the century.[10] What McKeon terms the novel's distinctive "genreness" was yet to be defined and the novel lacked a distinctive set of characteristics.[11] Contemporaries of Defoe, for example, would not have termed him a novelist, despite his highly

[9] See for example: Donovan H. Bond, W. R. McLeod ed. *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism: Papers Presented at a Bicentennial Symposium, at West Virginia University*, (Morgantown: School of Journalism, West Virginia University, 1977); Iona Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment* (London: Routledge, 2005).
[10] Leah Orr, "Genre Labels on the Title Pages of English Fiction, 1660-1800," *Philological Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (2011): 67. See also Hunter, *Before Novels*; McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*; William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (University of California Press, 1998).
[11] McKeon, *Theory of the Novel*, 4.

innovative works, and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is the only one of his longer form prose fictions to feature in lists of novels created later in the century.[12] This suggests that the terms in which the novel is conceptualised today are different from how eighteenth-century readers understood and navigated the printed world.

Much has been done to reclaim the essay-periodical as a key genre within the context of eighteenth-century literary studies, but the focus of this work has mostly been on how the genre influences theatre. As such, there remains a propensity, as Manushag N. Powell notes, to view periodicals as separate from other print forms; this has "prevent[ed] us from using them to learn about the literary side of print culture."[13] Periodicals, I want to suggest, were a key component of literary print culture and a vibrant element of the print ecology. The essay-periodical and novel did not just address the same topics, but assumed the same rhetoric as "the performances taking place within the pages of the periodicals [began] to dictate the terms of the performances that can take place in other texts, even cross-pollinating with drama and the novel."[14] How such a cross-pollination takes place between the novel and the periodical remains to be explored fully. On the occasions when a correlation between the essay and the novel has been gestured towards, it is done in a precursory manner and the precise terms on which the relationship takes place are left undetermined. For instance, Robin Valenza notes that "more so than the essay, the novel comes to define the kind of writing that stood at the opposite pole of polite letters from learned discourse because it not only affects a conversable style, but also attempts to model

[12] See Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *The British Novelists*, 50 vols (London: 1810); *Novelist's Magazine* (London: 1780-88).
[13] Manushag N. Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* (Lanham: Bucknell University Press, 2012), 16. See also: Emily Hodgson Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction: Novels and the Theater, Haywood to Austen* (New York; London: Routledge, 2009); *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690-1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).
[14] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 10.

conversibility."[15] Although the novel had the scope to model such exchanges at length this judgement is, I think, too quick to pass over the essay form. Titles such as the *Spectator* (1711-14), which ultimately defined what was possible within the essay-periodical genre, modelled a conversable style and in many ways were much like an early novel. After all, essay-periodicals, too, could be expansive in their scope; the 635 issues of the *Spectator* were typically around 1,500 words each, which makes the project longer than most prose fictions.[16] Many of these individual issues addressed matters relating to both learned discourse and polite letters. Although the novel might have become the space in which these concerns were regularly expressed, prior to its stabilisation and emergence as a distinctive literary genre, these issues were the province of essay-periodicals.

The connections between the essay-periodical and the novel exist on both a thematic and a formal level. When Hunter identifies ten key qualities that are demonstrated by novels, including contemporaneity, tradition-free language, digressiveness and fragmentation, and a self-consciousness about their own novelty, he could just as easily be discussing the essay-periodical, which also displays all of these traits.[17] Meanwhile, features typically associated with the essay-periodical included, as Powell suggests, a self-consciousness about its own form, miscellaneous content, engagement with contemporary events, and a direct interaction with readers.[18] By putting these two lists of defining qualities side by side, the parallels between the

[15] Robin Valenza, *Literature, Language, and the Rise of the Intellectual Disciplines in Britain, 1680-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46.
[16] Using this word length, the *Spectator* runs to an approximate total of 950,000 words making it comparable in length to Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748).
[17] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 23-25. The other features are: credibility and probability; familiarity; rejection of traditional plots; individualism, subjectivity; empathy and vicariousness; and coherence and unity of design. Hunter notes not all novels demonstrate all of these traits.
[18] See Manushag N. Powell, "Eliza Haywood, Periodicalist(?)," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14, no. 4 (2014): 168.

two genres become clearer. However, to understand why these two species of print emerged at the same historical moment closer attention needs to be paid not just to their shared thematic concerns, but to their formal imbrication at the level of expression and use of fiction.

Such a line of inquiry lends itself to a metaphor drawn from evolutionary biology. While the print ecology enables a closer examination of the genealogical relations between different media, there is also a dominant rhetoric of cross-pollination and speciation used in literary studies that is especially useful for an investigation into the mutual influence of the periodical and longer form prose fiction. Thinking in ecological terms facilitates an exploration of how different kinds of writing interacted, cross-fertilizing and shaping each other's development. The resulting continual interaction between different media has led Tom Mole to coin the term "media ecology" to "suggest an understanding of culture as a space in which several media interact with one another" and in which change "in any one medium produce[s] change in all the others."[19] This biological metaphor goes deeper than ideas of cross-fertilization to underpin the interrelations between print media and the environmental conditions under which those forms developed. With the first essay-periodicals and longer form prose fictions appearing simultaneously towards the turn of the Georgian era, this period heralded something of a revolution within the print marketplace. After all, as Mole argues, "any medium can be properly understood only in relation to the others, and to the material networks of circulation on which they rely."[20] The period that I am interested in, however, witnessed not the introduction of one new medium

[19] Tom Mole, *What the Victorians Made of Romanticism: Material Artifacts, Cultural Practices, and Reception History* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 17. See also Multigraph Collective, *Interacting with Print: Elements of Reading in the Era of Print Saturation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 10–11.
[20] Mole, *What the Victorians Made of Romanticism*, 17.

but two. As such, to understand the emergence of one of these forms it is necessary to also understand the history of the other. By using the ecological metaphor and drawing on theories of fictionality, I consider the cross-fertilization and development of narrative modes, addressing a period when both the essay-periodical and longer form prose fiction were contesting their formal idiosyncrasies and developing new strategies to simultaneously engage, divert, and instruct reading audiences.

Fictionality refers to the way fiction functions. As Richard Walsh argues, it accounts "for the *effects* of representation which dominate the experience of reading fiction" – in other words, the structures used in fictional writing to demonstrate that a narrative is not factual.[21] Therefore, fictionality is the rhetorical and aesthetic means through which invented stories and anecdotes are communicated. In this way, it transcends questions of both form and genre, and is a condition that can exist outside of narrative discourse: as Walsh notes, fictionality is a "rhetorical resource integral to the direct and serious use of language" and is the "master-trope of fictional narrative."[22] Recently, there has been a shift in the way fiction is conceptualised within literary studies as the terms 'novel' and 'fiction' are increasingly intertwined, and sometimes even used interchangeably. The resultant tendency to shift critical understandings of fiction in this manner has prompted a change from seeing "fiction as a convention of narrative, to fiction as narrative form."[23] Emily Hodgson Anderson has emphasised the importance of addressing this, though, such a conflation of fiction as both method of writing and the *product* of writing has a longstanding history; Samuel Johnson, for one, defined fiction as both "the act of feigning or inventing" and

[21] Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 6.
[22] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 16; 6.
[23] Hodgson Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship*, 14.

as "the thing feigned or invented."[24] While Johnson never identifies fiction as a specific narrative form, he does view it as both the end product of invention and the art of invention itself.

To challenge the growing tendency to view fiction as narrative form, in this study I use the term fiction to refer to that which is invented, or not a fact, while I use fictionality to think about how fictional modes of expression are being developed. Focusing on fictionality is useful for teasing out how fictional expression changes in response to evolutions within other species of print as it reasserts the notion that fiction is a convention of narrative, rather than a narrative form in its own right. The term fictionality, then, enables a reassessment of the linguistic and rhetorical construction of fictional narrative by drawing attention to the conventions and structures through which fiction is articulated. The privileging of the novel when considering the defining characteristics of long form prose fiction has resulted in a propensity to associate fiction and fictionality almost exclusively with this genre. Yet fictionality is found in other forms of writing, too. I here want to re-examine the role of fiction within the essay-periodical and make the case that the periodical is not merely a steppingstone for writers who wanted to progress to become long form fiction writers, but a vital component of the history of fictional narrative in English.

For scholars of the eighteenth century, fiction, and by extension fictionality, is commonly believed to have become "manifest, explicit, widely understood, and accepted" in the novel, prompting Catherine Gallagher to claim that this rhetorical mode of communication is "unique and paradoxical" to the novel.[25] She goes so far as to argue that "the novel, in short, is said both to have discovered and to have obscured

[24] "Fiction" in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: 1755).
[25] Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," *The Novel* 1 (2006): 337.

fiction" as it assumes mastery over it, obscuring fiction's uses in other genres.[26] This effectively makes the term "novel" a synonym for fiction. However, I suggest that the inverse is true and that in the course of the eighteenth century rather than the novel discovering fiction, fiction discovers the novel. For fiction is not a product of a singular historical moment, but is continually developing and has its origins in oral history and folklore. As fictionality is not the product of any one genre, it can be found in any text that affects the entertainment, diversion, intellectual stimulation, and instruction of readers.[27] For, to use Walsh's words, fiction resides "in a way of using a language, and [fictionality's] distinctiveness consists in the recognizably distinct rhetorical set invoked by that use."[28]

Rather than fiction having its apotheosis in a single historical moment, there are periods in which audiences gain an enhanced awareness of its presence. In these moments, audiences obtain a heightened understanding of how fiction manifests itself in the written record as new formats emerge that throw fictional discourse into sharper relief. The early eighteenth century is one of these periods. While Monika Fludernik has touched in passing on the ways that Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Spectator* papers took "a step towards a negotiation between fact and fiction by reconciling them in a framework of alternation," her focus is more towards the ways in which the realist novel "took up the model of history to merge factual claims and fictional invention."[29] With the realist novel and the periodical engaging in the same fundamental process of moving between factual and fictional modes of expression, it

[26] Gallagher, "Rise of Fictionality," 337.
[27] See Monika Fludernik, "The Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," *Poetics Today* 39, no. 1 (2018): 78.
[28] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 15.
[29] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 85.

is surprising that the essay-periodical's role in the development of fiction has remained underexplored.

In discussing the emerging dominance of fiction in the eighteenth century, scholars such as Sandra Sherman have argued that "during the early part of the century, 'fiction' was not a formalistic concept, but a broad epistemological crux fusing all sorts of writing – 'literary' and 'nonliterary'" that challenges the way readers interpret and engage with the real.[30] As this suggests, fiction itself is not a stable idea. As well as being found in 'literary' and 'non-literary' works, it exists, too, in long and short form prose being "a mode of existence like no other, defined by hesitation, vacillation, [and] back-and-forth movements," as Bruno Latour suggests.[31] This vacillation is particularly evident in the early eighteenth century print ecology. Rachael Scarborough King argues that "the back-and-forth interaction between periodicals and novels forged an emerging consensus around an early, extra-academic syllabus of 'good' or 'improving' novels that could be considered as part of the realm of literature alongside poetry, history, and the classic periodical essays of the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Rambler*."[32] Such alternation was not confined to creating a consensus about improving works, but was part of the process of forming those two genres in the first instance. This fluctuation is inherent in many forms of writing as literature was defined broadly in the period as "learning, [and] skill in letters."[33] As Denise Gigante notes the periodical, therefore, emerged at a moment "when literature was less sharply distinguished from other forms of writing, such as journalism, philosophical

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[30] Sandra Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.
[31] Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into modes of Existence*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 224.
[32] Rachael Scarborough King, "'[L]et a girl read': Periodicals and Women's Literary Canon Formation" in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture*, 231.
[33] "Literature," *Dictionary of the English Language*. See also Daniel Defoe, *An Essay upon Literature: Or, an Enquiry into the Antiquity and Original of Letters* (London: 1726).

speculation, private memoirs and letters, travel narratives and sermons."[34] Writing in any of these modes requires learning and skill. While periodical writing is often dismissed as ephemeral and considered to be less literary than writings in more established genres, Gigante's list situates the periodical directly alongside more established and even better-bred literary forms. The realm of literature, then, was very much in flux, and new genres and forms could redefine the print ecology.

With such a degree of fluidity underscoring conceptions of fiction and literature in the period, within this study the words "genre," "form," and "novel" are to be treated with caution, especially as form and genre, while often used interchangeably, are not synonymous terms. Genre refers to the species of writing, while form relates to the arrangement of the content and how a work functions. Or as Scarborough King puts it, "genre is not defined by its medium, but medium conditions generic categories" as genres do not exist in isolation but "in systems of interrelated classes."[35] Genre, to further the ecological metaphor, is therefore the species to which a text belongs – for example, gothic romance, epic poem, political pamphlet – while prose and verse belong to a higher taxonomic rank, being the point of origin from which all categories of writing then derive. Within the resulting systems of interrelated forms of literature, it is worth reiterating that the eighteenth-century novel was not a distinctive genre in its own right. Geoffrey Day suggests just this, arguing that contemporary readers "do not appear to have arrived at a consensus that works such as *Robinson Crusoe, Pamela, Joseph Andrews, Clarissa, Tom Jones, Peregrine Pickle* and *Tristram Shandy* were even all of the same species."[36] When eighteenth-century readers did invoke an idea

[34] Denise Gigante, *The Great Age of the English Essay: An Anthology* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2008), xvi.
[35] Rachael Scarborough King, *Writing to the World: Letters and the Origins of Modern Print Genres* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 14.
[36] Geoffrey Day, *From Fiction to the Novel* (London; New York: Routledge; Kegan Paul, 1987), 7.

of the "novel," the word was associated with the romance tradition, being defined as "a small tale, generally of love," though it was coming to assume a secondary meaning related to newness; Samuel Johnson defined a "novelist" in the middle of the century not as a writer of prose fiction per se but as an "innovator; assertor of novelty."[37] Rather than using the term "novel" on their title pages many of the prose fictions discussed in this study styled themselves as "histories" – invoking not the idea of a chronological record, but rather "a narration of events and facts delivered with dignity."[38] With dignity recalling the idea of learning and skill in the use of letters that was central to definitions of literature in the period, there is considerable latitude for works of history to incorporate fiction. Therefore, these labels are not necessarily claims about genre, but rather are suggestive of the form that the text assumes and the terms upon which its arguments will proceed. As such, when I use the word "novel" in this study I do so based on the appearance of the term upon title pages or because authors use the word to refer to their own works. Elsewhere, I adopt the phrase "long form prose fiction" to refer to those texts which, today, are often categorised as novels but had no such label attached to them at the time of their publication.

This thesis first addresses the history of the periodical and the characteristics that defined the eighteenth-century essay. It then offers a series of author studies, each focusing in detail on the work of a single writer who, as part of a varied literary career, was successful as both a periodicalist and a novelist. These studies move broadly in chronological order to trace innovations within a given writer's periodical works that also have a profound influence on their novels, and vice versa. Thus, the chapters emphasise one aspect of each individual's essays that was also a defining rhetoric of

[37] "Novel"; "Novelist," *Dictionary of the English Language.*
[38] "History," *Dictionary of the English Language.*

their longer form prose. This allows an exploration of the interchange between these forms as well as the mutual influence they exerted on each other's communicative strategies and use of fictive narrative. The individuals considered – Daniel Defoe, Eliza Haywood, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Johnson – were the lead author, and sometimes owner, of their own periodical title and taken together their works span the full range of this thesis, appearing 1704-1760. My focus here is on authors who made substantial contributions to the history and development of both genres, having prominent careers as writers of both periodical and longer form prose fictions.

Focusing on the essay-periodicals of the late Stuart age, the first chapter examines the history of the essay-periodical and the genre's increasing use of fictional modes of expression. It draws from debates currently taking place in novel studies to make the case for the interchange between these two forms. The chapter explores the periodical's emergence as a distinctive genre that belongs firmly to the eighteenth century, examining its relationship to other popular genres before turning to consider how it established its own idiosyncratic tone and style. Paying particular attention to the *Tatler* (1709-11) and *Spectator*, I make the case for fiction as a constituent part of the essay-periodical and address how Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's essays developed new methods for creating fictional anecdotes, interpolated tales, and short stories. Their essays display many of the characteristics that are often identified as defining features of longer form prose fiction. Even though the Addisonian model is considered to epitomise the genre, Addison and Steele's projects are actually an anomaly and their mode of expression was never fully replicated within the single-sheet essay-periodical. While Addison and Steele increased the use of fiction within the periodical, they were not responsible for its introduction, as is often assumed to be the case. An earlier model for periodical fiction is provided by Edward (Ned) Ward's

monthly periodical the *London Spy* (1698-1700) which offers an earlier example for how different instances of fictional writing could be adopted by periodicalists. To explore the history of the essay-periodical I focus in particular on three defining traits of the emerging genre: its use of an eidolon; conversability, including direct interactions with readers; and the blending of factual reportage with moments of entertainment and diversion. I argue that the late Stuart periodical was a key place where fiction could develop, take on new guises, and ultimately become a new mode of expression, specifically adapted for this new species of print.

Addressing the relationship between periodicals and longer fictions, Chapter Two predominantly examines the period before the publication of the *Spectator*. It considers the role of dialogue within Daniel Defoe's *Review* (1704-13) to explore how his interest in stating facts right comes to the fore in his periodical essays and lays the formal groundwork for the "true accounts" and "true histories" that constituted his longer prose narratives, particularly *Colonel Jack* (1722) – one of his lesser known and most disjointed works of prose fiction. Exploring questions of conversability, I consider how Defoe creates new methods for communicating with readers in both his periodical and longer form fictions. I focus on two specific moments within the *Review* – paying attention to the Scandal Club sections and Mad Man dialogues, respectively written in 1705 and 1708 – to address how he developed both a new tone and a new structure for interacting with reading audiences. The methods he adopted here would later come to define his longer form fictions, as is evident in *Colonel Jack*. Taking the episode that is set in Virginia as a case study, the chapter examines how Defoe uses typographical elements to both reassert and negate the distance between Jack's world and that which his readers inhabit. I explore how Defoe affects new ways of conversing directly with readers in longer form prose through the use of footnotes and

set piece dialogues. Both Defoe's periodicals and longer form fictions ask readers to decide for themselves whether the text they are reading is a "History or a Parable" and to think carefully about the various interpretations facilitated by this juxtaposition of terms.[39] Thus Defoe's essays and longer form prose fictions entertain the possibility that they can be both works of truth and invented fictions, depending on how individual readers choose to interpret them – something that will be explored further in Chapter Five. By continually blurring the boundaries between fictionality and factuality, Defoe's periodical writings develop the rhetoric that reading audiences would eventually expect from the novel, while his novels demonstrate the periodicalist's concern with interpreting and re-presenting foreign and domestic events.

Moving from the conversable world to that of eye- and ear-witness testimony, Chapter Three explores how Eliza Haywood's periodicals and longer form prose fictions expose the power of print. Using her works to examine readers' susceptibility to being taken in by fictions, Haywood adopts a rhetoric of observation to encourage readers to question whether everything they read is true and to wonder what designs the author may have upon them. Although Haywood's writing has been recovered from obscurity during the last thirty years or so, there remains a tendency to view her works of the 1740s, and in particular the *Female Spectator,* as a watershed moment that divides her earlier supposedly scandalous and even pornographic secret histories and amatory fictions from her later moral novels. By taking a longer view of her career, I place Haywood's periodical writing in conversation with two of her longer form prose works – her first, *Love in Excess* (1719), and her last, *The Invisible Spy* (1755).

[39] Daniel Defoe, *Defoe's Review 1704-1713*, ed. John McVeagh, 9 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003), V:1 37.187; Daniel Defoe, *Colonel Jack*, ed. Gabriel Antonio Cervantes and Geoffrey M. Sill (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2016), 60.

Love in Excess initiates an interest in curiosity, inquiry, and discernment that would come to define Haywood's explorations of the power of print throughout her career. Focusing on eye-witness testimony, I consider how Haywood uses fictionality to turn spy upon the marketplace as her texts explore the shortcomings of other print media. Although always present in her writing, these concerns found a more direct and sharper exposition in her second periodical, the *Parrot*, which launched a direct attack on the propensity of reading audiences to be taken in by, and unthinkingly regurgitate, the "false and ridiculous Rumours of Coffee House Politicians, as well as the lying Legends which issue from the Press."[40] By the end of her career, Haywood was a master of both genres, merging their formal qualities so effectively that she creates novels that are periodically-inflected, while her periodicals read like long form prose fiction.

Chapter Four examines debates on the reading public's taste for printed fiction within Henry Fielding's *Jacobite's Journal* (1747-48), *Tom Jones* (1749), and *Covent-Garden Journal* (1752). By exploring readers' consumption of different print forms as well as how those media became increasingly self-aware of the ways in which readers interacted with them, this chapter reappraises how Fielding uses fiction to criticise and reform readers' taste for entertainment and diversion. Writing texts that were highly conscious of how they acted upon their readers, Fielding's novels articulate a concern with novel writing, while his periodicals are sceptical of the periodical press. If Fielding's novels reflect Clifford Siskin's sense of 'novelisms' – the discourse of and about novels in which "writing turns critically upon itself," taking in the "developmental narratives within both the tales themselves […] *and* the critical

[40] Eliza Haywood, *The Parrot: With A Compendium of the Times* in *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood II*, ed. Christine Blouch, Alexander Pettit, and Rebecca Sayers Hanson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), 9:308. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

turns upon them" – then, I argue, his periodicals create a mode of expression that we might term 'periodicalisms.'[41] These works, too, reflect critically upon themselves to address how fiction is made manifest, explicit, and even ridiculous within periodical print. To attack methods for fiction writing from within, Fielding creates a series of fake courtrooms in which recent publications can be put on trial and discrepancies and inconsistencies in news accounts can be exposed. He reveals the rhetorical constructions that underlie different species of print to encourage readers to develop a more discerning and ultimately more critical taste in printed fictions. As Fielding moved between writing periodical and longer form prose fictions in the 1740s and 1750s it is to be expected that the two forms cross-fertilized with one another. However, there remains a tendency to view them as separate branches of Fielding's corpus. Iona Italia, for example, states that Fielding's periodical writing "conforms to the Addisonian tradition and shares very few features with his novels."[42] Both Fielding's periodical and longer form fictions, I argue, merge factual claims with fictional invention – something that scholars such as Fludernik associate with Fielding's long form prose fictions, but crucially not his essays – to critique the print ecology and challenge the features and conventions of prose fiction from within.[43]

The last author study focuses on Samuel Johnson, who was one of the most eminent essay writers of the period and was undoubtedly an asserter of novelty, even if he was not a novelist in the sense the word is used today. When Johnson began writing periodicals in the early 1750s, the print ecology had evolved considerably from the first appearance of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*; periodical essays were rarely

[41] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 177; 187.
[42] Italia, *Rise of Literary Journalism*, 15.
[43] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 85.

published as standalone works, being instead absorbed into other publications, such as the *Universal Chronicle*, the *Craftsman*, and the *Daily Advertiser*, or supplemented with the addition of advertisements and news columns. Johnson's *Rambler* (1750-52) broke with this. It represented a return to an earlier tradition of periodical publication in which advertising was scarce; each instalment of the *Rambler* was filled with an essay of around 1,200-1,700 words in length and nothing else.[44] Johnson's essays are more sombre than the Addisonian model and moved away from the conversable aspects of periodical writing to instead focus more closely on matters of literary criticism. Taking *Rambler* 4 as its departure point, Chapter Five explores Johnson's deeper anxieties with fiction writing and even the profession of authorship itself. It argues that contrary to the belief that he regularly wrote against the novel, he uses his essays to assess fiction writing more generally and actually adapts many elements of novelistic writing for use within his essays and longer works. In discussing *Rasselas* (1759), Anna Letitia Barbauld claimed that Dr. Johnson "has not disdained to be the author of a novel."[45] Rather Johnson appropriates novelistic discourse and a range of fictional modes in his writings from the *Life of Savage* (1744) to *Rasselas*, as well as in his periodical essays. The chapter examines how Johnson uses fiction within his own work to demonstrate the fundamental imbrication between the essay-periodical and the novel as well as defining the formal grounds upon which the two media would diverge and firmly establish themselves as distinct species of prose fiction.

The thesis concludes by considering the declining fortunes of the essay-periodical in the second half of the century. While the single sheet essay underwent a brief resurgence in popularity in the wake of the *Rambler*, by the time George III

[44] James Lowry Clifford, *Dictionary Johnson: Samuel Johnson's Middle Years* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 73.
[45] Barbauld, *British Novelists*, XXVI.i.

succeeded to the throne in 1760 the essay-periodical had effectively ceased to exist as a distinctive genre in its own right. The essay format was increasingly absorbed into monthly miscellanies and magazines; rather than producing their own works, many writers of periodical essays became columnists, with works such as John Hill's *Inspector* (1751-53) and Johnson's *Idler* (1758-60) being features of other periodicals. I consider how Johnson stands at the end of the tradition set out in this thesis and look towards the changing relationship between the essay-periodical and longer form fiction in the second half of the century.

Developing a Genre: Fact, Fiction, and Fictionality

The eighteenth-century essay-periodical traces its origins back to the work of Francis Bacon and Michel de Montaigne. Their essays, originally printed in codexed volumes, were commonly invoked by periodical writers in the early eighteenth century when outlining the genealogy of their new species of literature. Exploring both public and private matters Bacon and Montaigne's works addressed the profound and the mundane, and covered a variety of subjects such as "Of Truth," "Of Gardens," "Of Conscience," and even "Of Thumbs" and "Of Smells."[1] While such topics were not off limits to eighteenth-century periodicalists, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's generation of essay writers usually directed their attention towards social and moral affairs. Their shorter pieces of prose assumed a more obviously self-improving tone than the Baconian essay; they were primarily invested in telling people what to think and how to behave. There were, however, two vital aspects of Bacon and Montaigne's work that were retained by eighteenth-century essayists and which would become defining features of the essay-periodical: its composition was in prose and each new instalment provided a first attempt at exploring something.[2] What truly set the eighteenth-century essay apart from the earlier model and established it as a new literary genre was its publication at routine (or periodic) intervals and its regular explorations of modern life.

The essay-periodical's interest in current affairs was part of a wider trend that had been slowly sweeping the nation since the outbreak of civil war in the 1640s, and

[1] "Of Truth," "Of Gardens" in Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000); "Of Conscious," "Of Thumbs," and "Of Smells" in *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, trans. M. A. Screech (London: Allen Lane; Penguin, 1991).
[2] Richmond Bond, *'The Tatler': The Making of a Literary Journal* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press; Oxford University Press, 1971), 127.

which burgeoned in the 1680s as the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis triggered a heightened obsession with news.[3] Against the backdrop of this political turmoil, the first question-and-answer periodicals emerged. These highly opinionated single-sheet publications, such as *Heraclitus Ridens* (1681-82) and its rival the Tory-leaning *Observator in Dialogue* (1681-87), typically appeared on a weekly or biweekly basis. The question-and-answer format was then adapted by John Dunton in the *Athenian Mercury* (1690-97). Having less of an overt political bias than its predecessors, the *Athenian* was the first paper to actively solicit correspondence from reading audiences. Asking readers to send in questions that the 'Athenian Club' would answer, Dunton's periodical, as Helen Berry argues, affected "a new type of dialogue, between an anonymous 'club' of experts and their reading public."[4] The *Athenian* encouraged discussions on a wide variety of topics. These ranged from matters of astronomy – "Whether the Sun is a mass of liquid gold?" – to horticulture – "Whether you get male and female trees?" – but also encompassed the more bizarre, such as "Whether the Eating of Blood be lawful?"[5]

The question-and-answer periodical was relatively short-lived and it soon ceded to a more sophisticated dialogic format. Like their predecessors, these more conversational periodical works were usually political. One of the two participants was educated in the ways of the Whig or Tory party and this figure was typically

[3] For origins of the newspaper press see: Donovan H. Bond, W. R. McLeod ed. *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism: Papers Presented at a Bicentennial Symposium, at West Virginia University* (Morgantown: School of Journalism, West Virginia University, 1977); Grant Hannis, "Daniel Defoe's Pioneering Consumer Journalism in the Review," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 13–26; Italia, *Rise of Literary Journalism*; Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014); Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005); Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016).

[4] Helen M. Berry, *Gender, Society, and Print Culture in Late Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 7.

[5] See "Contents" in *Athenian Mercury* vol.5 (London, 1694); *Athenian Mercury*, No. 27, May 8, 1694.

named after the publication itself, such as Mr. Observator or Mr. Rehearsal, who respectively voice John Tutchin's whiggish *Observator* (1702-12) and Charles Leslie's Tory *Rehearsal* (1704-9). These first-person narrators, or eidolons, provide continuity between the different papers and establish the idiosyncratic 'voice' that joins together each paper in the series. The other individual was a more rustic figure who was to be educated in the ways of that particular party. While these dialogues started out as a straightforward back-and-forth exchange, fictional anecdotes and illustrative stories began to become a regular feature of these conversations and became a key part of the papers' political agenda. These more imaginative pieces are a forerunner of the polite essays of the eighteenth century, but they were not the only literary form to shape the emergence of the periodical essay. Other genres that influenced the eighteenth-century essay-periodical include news pamphlets, character sketches, and Letters to a Friend in the Country – a genre of familiar letter writing in which an inhabitant or visitor to London recounts events in town to an acquaintance. The influence of these other genres on the emerging essay-periodical can easily be seen in Edward Ward's *London Spy* (1698-1700). In the eighteen instalments of Ward's monthly paper, he recounts the rambles of a newcomer to London for the benefit of those not acquainted with the city. Over the course of the periodical, Ward presents readers with a series of conversations between the main narrator and his more learned friend. These are supplemented by character sketches, doggerel verse and, on rare occasion, news events. By drawing together elements from a range of print formats Ward trains, and arguably retrains, a satirical eye on the city, its people, and their mannerisms; his naïve country philosopher renders the familiar strange by offering a series of unusual observations on the manners and morals of the city and its inhabitants. Though it was never as popular as the daily *Spectator* papers, the *London*

Spy was widely read and featured many of the elements that would go on to characterise Addison and Steele's projects, such as: narration by a first-person persona; the use of inset tales, anecdotes, and fictional stories; and a unifying narrative voice which connects the different issues together.

Having been influenced by print genres that were popular in the late Stuart age, it is worth emphasising that the essay-periodical was very much a phenomenon of the eighteenth century. Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell remind us that "modern periodical culture belongs to the eighteenth century because of the concomitant rise of the coffee house, the penny-post, and the newspaper; the emergence of writing as a viable paid profession; and the faster communication between readers and writers that all these changes enabled."[6] This chapter explores what was novel about the late Stuart essay-periodical and addresses how the genre informed the production and circulation of fictive narrative prior to the crystallization of the novel. It considers how Addison and Steele understood their roles as periodicalists before focusing on three defining features of their new species of writing: narration and the use of an eidolon; direct conversation with readers; and an integration of factual and fictional material.

Tatlers and Spectators: Forming a Genre

On Tuesday, April 12, 1709, Richard Steele published the first instalment of the *Tatler* (1709-11). He inaugurated a triweekly project that many would come to view as the first instance of a new species of print: the essay-periodical. The *Tatler* was then succeeded by the *Spectator* (1711-14), which Steele co-authored with Joseph Addison. While earlier periodicals were expressly political and even partisan in their outlook,

[6] Batchelor and Powell "Introduction" in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain*, 2.

Addison and Steele did something different. Their projects blended factual and fictional content to provide readers with a series of anecdotes, interpolated tales, and short fictions, in addition to news-based reports and veiled political opinions. Rather than being concerned with current affairs, the essays often addressed what Isaac Bickerstaff, the authorial persona of the *Tatler*, referred to as "fabulous Histories and Fictions."[7] The essays therefore moved beyond newspaper reportage and political hack writing and explored social, moral, literary, and philosophical matters – often in an imaginative fashion. In changing the style and widening the scope of periodical works, Addison and Steele embarked upon a new kind of venture – one that J. A. Downie and Thomas Corns suggest caused "the evolution of a more sophisticated method of influencing their readers' political preconceptions."[8] Yet the essay-periodical was not just a vehicle for shaping political ideas or for critiquing the news press: it was also a means to affect readers' diversion and entertainment, as well as their instruction and education. In short, the appearance of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* marked a new era of periodical print.

Rather than being expressly Whig leaning like the *Observator* or Tory like the *Rehearsal*, Addison and Steele's papers claimed to be more representative of the diversity of daily life and positioned themselves above the intrigues and scandals of political affairs. Their papers instead focused on social behaviours and morality; they were particularly concerned with ideas of politeness, or "agreeable Raillery," and encouraged society to laugh at its follies.[9] To affect a simultaneously educative and

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[7] *Tatler* 117 in *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 3 vols (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), II.197. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

[8] "Introduction" in *Telling People What to Think: Early Eighteenth-Century Periodicals from the Review to the Rambler*, ed. J. A. Downie, and Thomas N. Corns (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1993), 3.

[9] *Spectator* 126 in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), II.3. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

entertaining agenda the *Spectator* (more so than the *Tatler*) increasingly made use of fictional narrative. Stories, inset tales, digressive narratives and illustrative anecdotes were regular features of this new species of print. When surveying the kinds of short stories found within the *Spectator*, Donald Kay identifies nine categories of fiction: "(1) the Character, (2) the dream vison-cum-allegory, (3) the fable, (4) the domestic apologue, (5) the satirical adventure tale, (6) the oriental tale and rogue literature, (7) the fabliau, (8) the exemplum, and (9) the mock-sentimental tale."[10] Thus, within the pages of the *Spectator* we can find a microcosm of the wider print marketplace, demonstrating the affinity between the essay-periodical and other species of print that deploy fictionality. Many of the forms that Kay identifies are considered to have influenced the development of the novel, having a clear correlation to works of long form prose such as the criminal or spiritual auto/biography, adventure tales, sentimental and picaresque narratives, and personal histories. However, while Kay explores the presence of these different kinds of fiction within the *Spectator*, he does not consider the periodical's dynamic relationship with, and mutual influence on, these other print forms. Some of the better-known instances of fiction within the *Tatler* and *Spectator* fall neatly into the categories on Kay's list, but they are also instances of highly imaginative, even novelistic writing. This includes allegories such as the dissection of the beau's brain (*S*.275) and the coquette's heart (*S*.281), or the trial of the hooped petticoat (*T*.116). These are clearly invented stories, used to illustrate a moral lesson, but the anecdotes published within the *Spectator* could also have far reaching implications. The history of Inkle and Yarico offered by Steele in *Spectator* 11 is a particularly notable example of the wider impact periodical fictions could have on the print ecology. The history builds out of a single passage from *A True and Exact*

[10] Donald Kay, *Short Fiction in The Spectator* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1975), 9.

History of the Island of Barbados (1657), creating a backstory for the characters and making them plausible individuals of the kind found in longer form prose fictions. It recounts the tale of the eponymous lovers in such detail that Mr. Spectator remarks upon hearing their narrative that "I was so touch'd with this Story […] that I left the Room with Tears in my Eyes" (*S*.11 I.51). Steele's rendition of their history went on to be dramatized in a play of the same name, with multiple versions entering into circulation in 1787. The fictions printed within the *Spectator*, then, were not simply designed as short-lived pieces of diversion, but had the potential to exert a lasting influence on literary print culture.

Although the *Spectator* brings together different elements of the print ecology, Addison and Steele did not pioneer this manner of writing within the periodical. The diversity of the *Spectator*'s content recalls Ward's *London Spy* and also brings to mind modern scholarship on the history of the novel which emphasises the form's omnivorousness.[11] As the periodical combines different modes of storytelling with elements borrowed from other kinds of ephemeral print, the form plays a vital part in the development and sophistication of fiction. Fiction, as noted earlier, and as Sandra Sherman claims, is "a broad epistemological crux fusing all sorts of writing – 'literary' and 'nonliterary.'"[12] As an essay-periodical encompasses both literary and non-literary kinds of writing within a single publication, the significance of the genre for studies of fiction becomes clearer. The *Spectator* deployed fictionality so effectually that some later readers would view Addison's essays as a precursor to the novel; this suggests that when the novel stabilised into a recognisable form in the nineteenth

[11] See Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 7; Hunter, *Before Novels*, 58; Frank Palmeri, *Satire, History, Novel: Narrative Forms, 1665-1815* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Press, 2003), 16.
[12] Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 1.

century reading audiences recognised its close relationship with periodical writing. For instance, a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* declared that "if Addison had written a novel, on an extensive plan, it would have been superior to any that we possess. As it is, he is entitled to be considered, not only as the greatest of the English Essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English Novelists."[13] Addison of course never wrote a novel, but his association with the kind of writing that would come to be defined as fundamentally novelistic complicates the histories of the genre offered by Davis, McKeon, Watt, and others. The fact that later generations of reading audiences identified novelistic qualities within these essays furthers the idea that fictionality is not unique to the novel; fiction is present throughout the print ecology.

Addison and Steele did much to establish the essay-periodical as a novel print form. Their papers define and delimit the scope of the genre and many of the qualities that I have outlined here remained vital components of the form throughout the period covered by this study. Yet Addison and Steele also shaped the genre's mechanics and material form, influencing the frequency of its publication and graphic design, as well as the binding, anthologising and collecting of papers. They carefully created a brand for their various projects as the designs used for the *Tatler* and *Spectator* would be replicated across their other periodicals, including the *Guardian*, *Reader*, *Lover*, and *Englishman* all of which appeared between 1713 and 1714. This establishes a visual coherence and continuity between their periodical projects but also between the individual papers which make up each series. Printed on folio half sheets – a cut of paper that was usually around 38x24cm in size – the *Tatler* appeared on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays to coincide with the days that the post left London.[14] The

[13] "ART. VII. The Life of Joseph Addison," *Edinburgh Review*, July 1843, 237.
[14] David Allington et al., *The Book in Britain: A Historical Introduction* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), 177–78.

Spectator, however, broke with this model to become the first daily essay-periodical, appearing every day except Sunday. By publishing essays multiple times a week, Addison and Steele appropriated the print schedule used by news-based publications. They also imitated the newspaper's format and layout. The periodical's title is printed in a Romanesque font and is followed by a dateline and a motto (usually in Latin or Greek), which is set within double black lines; the essay itself is then split across two columns. The issue number appears in Roman numerals in the upper right-hand corner, while the printer's colophon runs along the bottom of the reverse side. These features lend a predictability to the papers: it is known when and where each essay was printed, where it sits in the sequence, and how many days must elapse before the next instalment would appear. Such predictability has led Jon Klancher to argue that periodicalists, more so than other writers, brought readers into a public conversation as "every decision of style, topics, print size, page format, and above all the particular frame of its textual community is geared toward that discursive colonialism."[15] While I am sceptical of the colonial metaphor, Klancher's notion that a body of readers is created by their shared experiences of engaging with print material is reflected in the way the essay-periodical took elements from pre-existing genres. The periodical established its formal qualities in conjunction with other species within the print ecology. Rachael Scarborough King has emphasised the connection between essay-periodicals and newsprint, exploring how the essay-periodical appropriated design elements from the newspaper in order to appear that it was part of, rather than directly opposed to, factual news reportage: "By engaging with newspapers through visual appearance, shared content, and self-reflexive commentary, these early and influential periodicals ultimately enabled the broadening and deepening of the category of 'the

[15] Klancher, *Making of English Reading Audiences*, 25.

news.'"[16] This could trick readers of newspapers into picking up a copy of the *Tatler* or *Spectator* as it was impossible to distinguish at a glance which works were factual and which were journals of opinion and so more inclined to use fictionality. This also enabled political periodicals to catch out inattentive readers. The *Rehearsal*, for example, would copy the design and layout of the *Observator* in the hope that an idle coffeehouse reader might accidentally pick up the Tory paper instead of the Whig one and begin to change their political beliefs.

Learning how to distinguish between works that related fictional as opposed to factual content was as important for readers of essay-periodicals as it was for readers of long form prose fiction. With fiction taking on a new home in the essay-periodical it is not uncommon to find that individual essays clearly identify when they are using fictional material. *Spectator* 123, for instance, is particularly forthright in acknowledging its use of fictive expression and novelistic tendencies. The essay provides a tale of unknown parentage in which the fortunes of characters are reversed – subjects that would come to be a mainstay in mid-century novels such as *The Fortunate Foundlings* (1744) and *Tom Jones*. As Mr. Spectator explains, "The Moral of it may, I hope, be useful, though there are some Circumstances which make it rather appear like a Novel, than a true Story" (*S*.123 I.502). Addison's novel-like story details the exchange of children between two noble families – each family knowingly raising the other's child, before eventually arranging for them to marry one another and unite the two estates. The concerns of longer form fictions were also those of the periodical essay, and the essay, as Addison would go on to explore in more detail in another paper, was highly novel and innovative in its outlook. Crucially, this episode appears

[16] Rachael Scarborough King, "The Gazette, the Tatler, and the Making of the Periodical Essay: Form and Genre in Eighteenth-Century News," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 114, no. 1 (2020): 46.

"like a Novel" almost a decade before the appearance of the prose fictions that are today considered to be among the earliest examples of the genre. While it might be expected that Addison is using the term "Novel" as a synonym for "Romance," this does not seem to be the case given the way he uses the terms elsewhere. In *Spectator* 446 he adopts these two terms to refer to different kinds of prose fiction. When discussing the history of a man who has directed his "Life and Conversation" by the example of "the Fine Gentle-man in *English* Comedies" (*S*.446 IV.69), he declared that "If I can prevail upon [the author] to give me a Copy of this new-fashioned Novel, I will bestow on it a Place in my Works, and question not but it may have as good an Effect upon the Drama, as *Don Quixote* had upon Romance" (*S*.446 IV.69).

As Addison settled into his role as a periodicalist he increasingly reflected on what his new occupation entailed. In particular, he considered how the blend of serious and entertaining discourses within the *Spectator*'s essays enabled it to realise the ambitions voiced in the tenth issue to bring "Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-tables, and in Coffee-houses" (*S*.10 I.44). Thus, in *Spectator* 124 he declared that:

> Our common Prints would be of great Use were they thus calculated to diffuse good Sense through the Bulk of a People, to clear up their Understandings, animate their Minds with Virtue, dissipate the Sorrows of a heavy Heart, or unbend the Mind from its more severe Employments with innocent Amusements. (*S*.124. I.507)

Texts such as the *Spectator* had great utility if they could provide solace, amusement, and instruction simultaneously. But this combination of material was not easy to create within the confines of a periodical essay. Within a single sheet of paper, periodicalists needed to be diverting, stimulating, and pithy and so express a range of ideas in a succinct fashion: "An Essay-Writer must practise in the Chymical Method, and give the Virtue of a full Draught in a few Drops" (*S*.124 I.506). This chemical method had

wider implications for how Addison understood his responsibility to turn the mind away from serious employments and towards more entertaining occupations. He would return to scientific metaphors in a later paper to liken the periodical to an experiment that was designed to draw "Mens [sic] Minds off from the Bitterness of Party" (*S*.262 II.519). He noted how periodicals shared an aim with the Royal Society to turn "many of the greatest Genius's of that Age to the Disquisitions of natural Knowledge, who, if they had engaged in Politicks with the same Parts and Application, might have set their Country in a Flame" (*S*.262 II.519). The chemical method not only enabled writers to get to the heart of their subject matter quickly, but was beneficial for the stability of the entire country. The essay's brevity provided a means of engaging readers without running the hazard of being too bold and inflammatory, or too dull and insipid. The *Spectator* was just right. Adopting the middle ground, the essay-periodical avoided setting the country aflame or boring it into an unthinking stupor. Therefore while Rachel Carnell argues that "the subtle narrative manoeuvres that novelists cultivated in order to convey or, if necessary, to be able to deny their political allegiances helped to effect some of the complex narrative techniques that have come to be associated with formal realism," this was also true of the periodical.[17] Subtle turns of phrase and the slow building up of ideas across multiple issues united the town by affecting verisimilitude, clarifying understandings, and stimulating the minds of the reading public.

Filled with such a series of subtle narrative manoeuvres, the essay readily lent itself to the cultivation of new modes of expression. Contemporary dictionaries define the form as an "Attempt, Proof, Tryal: A short Discourse upon a Subject" – a definition

[17] Rachel Carnell, *Partisan Politics, Narrative Realism, and the Rise of the British Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 14.

that was later picked up and expanded by Samuel Johnson when he added the sense of a "loose sally of the mind; an irregular indigested piece."[18] Both of these definitions are informed by Addison's work as a periodicalist. In discussing how he selected the topics for his *Spectator* essays, Addison stated that:

> When I make Choice of a Subject that has not been treated of by others, I throw together my Reflections on it without any Order or Method, so that they may appear rather in the Looseness and Freedom of an Essay, than in the Regularity of a Set Discourse. (S.249 II.465)

This looseness was a defining quality of the genre. In a later issue Addison split his *Spectator* papers into two categories: "Among my Daily-Papers which I bestow on the Publick, there are some which are written with Regularity and Method, and others that run out into the Wildness of those Compositions which go by the Names of *Essays*" (*S*.476 IV.185). Of this second category of papers, Addison notes that "it is sufficient that I have several Thoughts on a Subject, without troubling my self to range them in such order, that they may seem to grow out of one another" (*S*.476 IV.186). To satisfy curiosity, provide entertainment, but avoid inciting riot or radical reform, the *Spectator* developed in an erratic, piecemeal manner, continually experimenting with its form and content and so played a significant role in establishing the essay-periodical as a distinctive literary genre.

Eidolons and Eyewitnesses

One of the most important contributions that the essay-periodical made to the development of fictional writing was the eidolon – the first-person narrating figure who presides over each essay and acts as a bridge between the isolated instalments,

[18] "Essay" in Nathan Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London, 1726); "Essay" in *Dictionary of the English Language*.

stories, and anecdotes. Functioning slightly differently from the authorial persona found in longer form prose fiction, the eidolon is an insubstantial or ghostly figure who differentiates between public and private identities. The term "eidolon" shares an etymology with the word idol and was understood in the early eighteenth century to mean "no more than an Image, a Representation, or a Picture, which renders things distant actually visible to us."[19] Periodical eidolons were designed to communicate directly with reading audiences and acted "as a form of public self that is working to give the appearance of cohesiveness to a textual enterprise that was intimately linked to public service and humanist morality."[20] They do this by functioning as "a projected image, the double, phantom, or simulacrum" of the author, to use Powell's definition of the term.[21] When considering the importance of the eidolon for essay-periodicals, Richard Squibbs has boldly asserted that it "stands as the genre's most distinctive contribution to literature" and has declared it to be the periodical's *sine qua non*.[22]

Such definitions of the eidolon, however, are slightly complicated by the figure of Isaac Bickerstaff. Unlike other eidolons whose lifespan was tied to the project in which they appear, Bickerstaff not only outlived Steele's *Tatler* but also predated it. The persona of Bickerstaff was appropriated from Jonathan Swift's *Predictions for the Year 1708* in which he famously predicted that Partridge the Almanack-maker would "infallibly dye upon the 29th of *March* next, about Eleven at Night, of a raging Feaver."[23] Despite Partridge protesting that he was still alive, a significant portion of the reading public continued to believe otherwise, perpetuating the fiction despite all

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[19] de La Créquinière, *The Agreement of the Customs of the East-Indians: With Those of the Jews, and Other Ancient People: Being the First Essay of This Kind* (London, 1705), 42.
[20] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 7.
[21] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 24.
[22] Richard Squibbs, *Urban Enlightenment and the Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay: Transatlantic Retrospects* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 10-11.
[23] Jonathan Swift, *Predictions for the Year 1708. Written to Prevent People from Being Further Impos'd on by Vulgar Almanack-Makers* (London, 1708), 4.

evidence to the contrary. Steele briefly continued this hoax in the *Tatler*, stating that "I am sorry I am obliged to trouble the Publick with so much Discourse, upon a Matter which I at the very first mentioned as a Trifle—*viz.* the Death of Mr. Partridge" (*T.*1 I.22). By using Bickerstaff, Steele tapped into a pre-existing reading audience and implies that those who had enjoyed Bickerstaff's *Predictions* may enjoy this new work, too. But he also reinvents Bickerstaff's personality. As Charles A. Knight points out, "Steele's Bickerstaff lacks the cool irony of Swift, but comes across as more personable and genial" as, in his new role as a periodical eidolon, Bickerstaff "combines his function as the paper's principle reporter and sole editor with his role as astrologer."[24] Steele used his borrowed eidolon until the last and when closing the paper reasserted the connection to Swift, declaring that the *Tatler* was written "in the Character of an old Man, a Philosopher, an Humourist, an Astrologer, and a Censor, to allure [the] Reader with the variety of [its] Subjects, and insinuate […] the Weight of reason with the Agreeableness of Wit" (*T.*271 III.363). The ghost of Partridge resurfaces as Steele reveals how Bickerstaff was little more than an image or phantom through whom the paper's content is filtered.

More usually, eidolons were unique to the periodical in which they appeared and were often named after the work over which they presided. That Isaac Bickerstaff has a proper name, therefore, further emphasises the unusual qualities of the central organising principle that narrates the *Tatler*. Eidolons such as Isaac Bickerstaff, the *Guardian*'s Nestor Ironside, the *Covent-Garden Journal*'s Alexander Drawcansir, and the *World*'s Adam Fitz-Adam are more rounded figures, more likely to render "things distant visible" than their two-dimensional, nameless counterparts. It is easier to imagine them existing in the world than it is the personas of Mr. Spectator, Mr.

[24] Charles A. Knight, *A Political Biography of Richard Steele* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 51.

Review, and Mr. Rambler. Yet regardless of their plausibility, it was the inclusion of these narrating figures that helped to establish the essay-periodical as a new species of literature. The eidolon was typically responsible for defining the tone and scope of each project. Further clues as to the scope of a periodical work were provided by the titles periodicalists gave to their projects and the individual essays usually performed the action implied by the title. Hence, the *Spectator* spectated, the *Grumbler* grumbled, the *Review* reviewed, the *Reader* read, and the *London Spy* spied. More enigmatic works such as *Heraclitus Ridens* also proceeded in accordance with their titles, albeit in a less obvious manner. *Heraclitus Ridens,* or "The Laughing Heraclitus," is a reference to the Greek philosopher and the paper proceeds in accordance with his theories. It explores ideas of social harmony and professes to investigate "*the publick Good*" and "prevent Mistakes and False News" by finding a way to "mingle Advantage and Diversion."[25] While the titles of periodical projects allowed readers to identify the terms on which the work would proceed, they also exposed it to criticism, particularly if the content failed to live up to what the title promised:

> TATLER is apparently a title too low and ludicrous; SPECTATOR too cold and unconcerned; GUARDIAN too assuming; and INTELLIGENCER quite foreign to the purpose […]; RAMBLER is too vague and frivolous; and ADVENTURER too romantic.[26]

After attacking the poor titular choices of other publications, the author of the *Humanist* (1757) went to great lengths to validate his own choice, declaring that "The title of HUMANIST is clear of all these objections; and implies neither more nor less, than that it interests itself in all the concerns of human nature."[27] The terms on which each essay-periodical would proceed are typically laid bare from the outset. Indeed,

[25] *Heraclitus Ridens,* No. 1, 1 February, 1681.
[26] *Humanist*, No. 1, March 26, 1757.
[27] *Humanist*, No. 1.

Nicola Parsons argues that the name of "the *Tatler* suggests its investment in material oral culture, while the title of the *Spectator* introduces a critical distance between the paper's eidolon and the events that occasion his essays."[28] The titles of periodical works clearly describe what readers can expect from the performances and narratives that will be found in each of its issues and in the case of the *Tatler* and *Spectator,* their titles make it clear that their content will be very different from that found in the *Courants*, *Posts,* and *Mercuries* that dominated the news press.

Embodying the spirit of the publication, it was the eidolon that facilitated the essay-periodical's conversable tone and established the ongoing narrative that would connect the disparate papers. The monthly instalments of the *London Spy,* for instance, are woven closely together by the eidolon as his first twenty-four hours in London are the focus of the first three issues. As the spy's first day in the capital takes three months to relate, readers are walked through his first impressions of the city in great detail. In drawing out his observations to an almost impossible length, Ward's nameless narrating figure is not just someone that readers are expected to see through, but is also a character whom readers are invited to laugh at on account of his naivety. Reading audiences do not necessarily see the world through his eyes, as we might expect to do with an eidolon, for he regularly misinterprets the sights and sounds around him. For instance, he mistakes a cry for scullars and oars as that of "Scholars, Scholars, will you have any whores?"[29] Yet it was not sustainable for the *London Spy* to continue relating first impressions of the city in such detail; at some point he had to become accustomed to the sights around him. While the spy initially moves through the city, narrating all aspects of his journey, the later papers focus more on the

[28] Nicola Parsons, *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 94.
[29] Edward Ward, *The London Spy*, ed. Paul Hyland (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1993), 46.

conversations he has with his friend on route, rather than on the landscape that they travel through. This change brings the *London Spy* closer to becoming a kind of serialised fiction as inset stories and anecdotes begin to be included in the papers with greater regularity. The stories provide a way for the two companions to pass the time but also lift the lid on contemporary affairs and scandals, bringing readers more directly into contact with the world the spy inhabits. Reading audiences are presented with a new perspective on London's affairs by seeing the city from the perspective of an overwhelmed visitor.

Eidolons such as Ward's spy expose the chaos that lies within every aspect of urban life. As Dana Brand suggests, it was only by having a figure who appeared to talk to readers directly that periodicalists could "impose order, continuity, and coherence *in the act of watching* what appears to be chaotic."[30] The periodical, then, could bring relative calm to chaos and provides a framework through which readers could look at the world afresh. The potential for the periodical essay to reconcile order and chaos to encourage a new social order was recognised early on in the genre's history with John Gay remarking in the *Present State of Wit* (1711) that "Bickerstaff ventur'd to tell the Town, that they were a parcel of Fops, Fools, and vain Cocquets; but in such a manner, as even pleased them, and made them more than half enclin'd to believe that he spoke Truth."[31] Steele boldly asserted that "It will be much more easy therefore to laugh [them] into Reason" than to affect reform "by any serious Contempt" (*T*.47 I.335) of the public's behaviour. The essay-periodical not only entertained and diverted, but satirised and insulted as the genre created its own rules and conventions to promote social reform, deploying fictionality to encourage the

[30] Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 33.
[31] John Gay, *The Present State of Wit, in a Letter to a Friend in the Country* (London: 1711), 13.

public to adopt a new way of thinking. As Powell proposes, "periodicals are, and expect their audience to be, intensely aware of the traditions they create within the genre" but they also "craft their fictions of identity to demonstrate how well they understand their own game."[32] The genre's rules were still in flux in the first half of the eighteenth century, meaning that the game was open to reinterpretation by each author who chose to play it; the essay-periodical might have exposed the more chaotic parts of society but it was not itself an orderly and regulated medium.

Conversing with Readers

The deployment of an eidolon enabled essay-periodicals to adopt a more familiar tone than that which had hitherto been seen within the periodical press. These first-person narrating figures directly addressed themselves to reading audiences and often invited them to enter into a regular correspondence with the paper. This conversational quality has prompted Katherine Shevelow to argue that the periodical's methods for "encouraging a high degree of audience engagement with the text represented an attempt to establish a continuity between readers' lives and the medium of print, between extra-textual experience and textual expression."[33] With letters sent to the eidolon typically being included in future issues of the periodical, this enabled the distance between lived and textual experiences to become narrower. Communication between readers and authors had been commonplace within periodicals since the appearance of the *Athenian Mercury* and within the essay-periodical epistolary conversations were usually mediated by the eidolon. As Scarborough King has argued,

[32] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 25.
[33] Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (London: Routledge, 1989), 43.

periodicalists were often seen "filtering the circulation of letters through the central figures of Isaac Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator and defending the use of fictional letters."[34] While periodicalists routinely edited the letters they received, it was not uncommon for them to assume a pseudonym and write them themselves to give the impression of conversability. With fictional letters appearing in print alongside genuine communications from readers, correspondence became a means to blur the lines between fact and fiction. This lends a distinctive fictional quality to periodical correspondence and Scarborough King has noted how "the *Tatler* and *Spectator* were consistently ambivalent about the status of print and the border between reportorial and imaginative genres, and they continued to use the bridge genre of the letter as a means to reflect upon these developing arenas."[35] Crucially for my considerations here this blending of factual and fictional material not only affects conversability, but pushes the essay-periodical closer to the realm of imaginative, novelistic fiction.

Letters had two key functions. They offered a way for periodicalists to introduce topics that may not have been entirely in keeping with the scope of the project, and also provided a way to dwell on certain subjects at length and to consider them from a variety of perspectives. Indeed, correspondents sometimes used the pages of the periodical to spar with one another and often made direct reference to the various fictions and anecdotes published in previous issues. In the letters printed as part of the *Spectator*, correspondents can be seen "exchanging anecdotes through conversation and manuscript in order to better interpret a narrative, and with it the world about [them]" – something Kate Loveman suggests is a feature of fiction writing in all

[34] Scarborough King, *Writing to the World*, 77. See also 'Letters to Steele as editor of the following periodicals. *The Tatler* ff. 1-122b.; *The Spectator*. ff. 123-171b. Vol. DLXXXVII, ff. 175'. British Library, London.
[35] Scarborough King, *Writing to the World*, 75.

genres, but which is, I think, particularly pertinent for essay-periodicals.[36] When considering how these manuscript and anecdotal conversations were to be incorporated into periodical works, Mr. Spectator declared that he "had a Right to make them my own, by dressing them in my own Stile, by leaving out what wou'd not appear like mine, and by adding whatever might be proper" (*S.*442 IV.52). The textual world of the essay-periodical was a carefully curated fiction as letters were remediated and re-voiced depending on how well they aligned with the rest of the publication. This gives the impression that the eidolon not only observes the city and its people, but is able to survey and in some cases correct the workings of other media by making them conform to the periodical's own style.

The tone and style of the eighteenth-century essay-periodical was defined by its interactions with reading audiences. Eidolons could be imagined as part of the crowd in the streets or in the taverns, coffeehouses, and public assemblies that the reading public frequented. This closed the distance between the world of imaginary figures such as Mr. Spectator and Isaac Bickerstaff and the real London that readers inhabited. With readers able to imagine themselves potentially brushing shoulders with these eidolons, this also provided an opportunity for periodicalists to speak to readers directly and even to reflect on the difference between how they imagined reading audiences would engage with their work and how their essays were actually interpreted:

> It is my frequent Practice to visit Places of Resort in this Town where I am least known, to observe what Reception my Works meet with […] I take the Liberty to give an Account of the Remarks which I find are made by some of my gentle Readers upon these my Dissertations. I happen'd this Evening to fall into a Coffee-house near the *'Change*, where Two Persons were reading my Account of the Table of *Fame*. The one of these was commenting as he read, and explaining who was

[36] Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 45.

> meant by this and t'other Worthy as he pass'd on. […] You must know, whatever he read, I found he interpreted from his own Way of Life and Acquaintance. (*T*.83 II.26-27)

The account of Fame mentioned here is a reference to *Tatler* 81, which was published five days earlier. The capacity of the periodical to reflect upon the success of its own papers was a result of the speed with which successive issues could be produced; with new instalments coming out every few days, periodicalists could quickly rectify or adapt their tone and style to help ensure that their works satisfied the public's taste. With the essay-periodical able to reflect on its own reception and almost adapt its style in 'real time' according to readers' preferences, eidolons such as Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator could more easily be imagined seated alongside reading audiences as part of the crowd at the coffeehouse, gathering information for their next paper and making notes on everything they see. This helped to give the impression that the papers were written almost in the same instant that they were being read and that readers could directly influence their content:

> When I want Materials for this Paper, it is my Custom to go abroad in quest of Game; and when I meet any proper Subject, I take the first Opportunity of setting down an Hint of it upon Paper. […] About a Week since there happened to me a very odd Accident, by Reason of one of these my Papers of Minutes which I had accidentally dropped at *Lloyd's* Coffee-house […] there were a Cluster of People who had found it, and were diverting themselves with it at one End of the Coffee-house[.] (*S*.46 IV.195-96)

Addison went on to detail how the crowd interacted with his notes and he prints in full the minutes that he has supposedly dropped. In reproducing his list, the essay becomes a 'portable coffeehouse' as reading audiences temporarily become part of the crowd that Addison describes at Lloyd's. The way the essay is written enables readers to imagine themselves participating in this scene in the moment that it occurs. Yet they also occupy a second position: reading audiences witness events from Mr. Spectator's

perspective and so observe the cluster of people who engage with the minutes from a distance. In moments such as this where the conviviality and conversability of the coffeehouse finds its way directly into the pages of the periodical, each reader can speculate as to how likely they are to be overheard and witnessed in the moment that they themselves are reading the *Spectator*. There is the potential for their own experiences of interacting with print to feed directly into the work and inform the conversations that take place within the pages of the printed text.

As it developed its conversable manner, the essay-periodical increasingly deployed a colloquial or familiar tone when addressing reading audiences. While Hunter notes that the novel became "subjective, individualistic, realistic – [offering] an account of contemporary life peopled with ordinary characters in everyday situations using the informal language of everyday life" to communicate with "ordinary readers" on their own terms, he could just as easily be talking about the essay-periodical.[37] It was but "a short step from the imaginative world of Mr. Spectator and his club to that of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe or Moll Flanders," as Brian Cowan suggests.[38] As the periodical increasingly embedded itself into readers' lives and everyday situations, it is worth remembering that the *Tatler* was not originally designed as a single essay project but started out as a series of separate news-like items:

> All Accounts of Gallantry, Pleasure, and Entertainment, shall be under the Article of White's Chocolate-house; Poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-house; Learning, under the title of the Graecian; Foreign and Domestic News, you will have from St James's Coffee-house; and what else I have to offer on any other Subject, shall be dated from my own Apartment. (*T*.1 I.16)

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[37] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 30.
[38] Brian Cowan, "Making Publics and Making Novels: Post-Habermasian Perspectives" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. J. A. Downie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 67.

These coffeehouses situate the *Tatler* within a specific geographical area: White's and St James's were on St. James's Street, Will's in Covent Garden, and the Grecian in Devereaux Court off the Strand.[39] This placed Steele's project at the heart of urban life and allowed him to explore sites of interest to readers, keep abreast of news by creating a network of dispatches from different locales, and so establish himself as the town gossip. It was not until the sixty-third issue that the sections from the Apartment began to dominate, replacing the news from the various coffeehouses, to make the *Tatler* a single essay publication. The use of real locations to emplot the essays into readers' lives was continued in the *Spectator* which made regular use of places such as the Royal Exchange, Covent Garden, Westminster, and St James's. Instituting themselves into the metropolitan spaces that readers themselves frequented, essay-periodicals, as Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger suggest, resorted "to the venues and rhetorical strategies of interpersonal exchange or critical commentary, its persona and other fictional characters tailoring their comments according to the critic's social aims, his supposed original audience and venue."[40] The periodical used real locations to embed itself into readers' daily lives, affecting a more inclusive tone to give the impression that authors were speaking directly to each individual reader.

The semi-weekly essay-periodical allowed readers to engage with, and participate in, their culture in ways that had not previously been possible. At the same time, as Scott Black suggests, essays also enabled that culture to evolve.[41] The essay-periodical could encourage social reform at the same time as precipitating ecological

[39] See Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses; a Reference Book of Coffee Houses of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1963); Bond, *Tatler*: *Making of a Literary Journal*, 4.
[40] Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, "Addison and the Personality of the Critic" in *The Spectator: Emerging Discourses*, ed. Donald J. Newman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 187.
[41] See Scott Black, *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 10–11.

change within the print marketplace. The genre's capacity to communicate with readers on a regular basis opened up a range of narrative possibilities, creating alternative frameworks through which readers and authors could explore the period's rapid technological changes, expanding global commerce, and evolving cultural landscape. As Stephen Copley has shown, periodicalists depended upon "the mechanisms of commercial circulation as the enabling condition of their work," relying on processes of production, consumption, and commodification to facilitate "the extra-material conversational exchanges that they seek to promote."[42] Crucially, therefore, essay-periodicals responded to and helped to shape perceptions of modern society. As Jon Mee argues, "essayists were frequently perceived as the water carriers of culture" and the "genre presented itself as attuned to the diversity of experience in everyday life, written in a manner of easy address to its reader."[43] Such tuning to the revolutions of everyday life took time. Only when read on a regular basis could the essay format give readers an expansive understanding of everyday life and its social currents.

This continual engagement with social affairs and ability to adapt to different experiences was as much a result of the essay-periodical's conversable tone as it was of its material appearance. Although originally read as a series of standalone papers, many essay-periodicals speculated on the ways in which readers might approach them as more coherent works. This was in no small part a result of the cohesiveness that resulted from the eidolon offering a point of connection between a periodical's different narratives and anecdotes. That there was the potential to view periodicals

[42] Stephen Copley, "Commerce, Conversation and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Periodical," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18, no. 1 (1995): 67.
[43] Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20.

both as a series of individual papers and as a more extensive whole has prompted Parsons to reflect on what she terms their "double temporality": "each issue is a new and independent item at the same time as it exists within a recognisable series that stretches forward and backward."[44] Periodicals, then, became a way of maintaining a conversation over time. When presented with a periodical on the day it first appeared, readers may have been more inclined to view each essay as an isolated publication as they had no sense of where, precisely, a given paper fell within the sequence, or of the longer-term designs authors had upon them. As Defoe expressed it in a *Review* essay in 1705: "Readers are strange Judges when they see but part of the Design; 'tis a new thing for an Author to lay down, his Thoughts, Piece-Meal, importunate Cavils assault him every Day, who claim to be answer'd to Day before to Morrow."[45] Addison shared this concern. In the *Spectator* he examined how the brevity of the essay-periodical affected the way readers interacted with each instalment and considered how the piecemeal nature of periodical print helped shape the tone and style used by periodicalists: "those who publish their Thoughts in distinct Sheets, and as it were by Piece-meal, […] must immediately fall into our Subject and treat every Part of it in a lively Manner, or our Papers are thrown by as dull and insipid" (*S*.124 I:506). But essays did not have to stand alone as single texts. Periodical writers may not have the time or space for prolixity, but topics could be discussed across more than one issue and debates could be staged across more than one sheet of paper, such as the series on the Pleasures of the Imagination (*S*.411-421).

[44] Nicola Parsons, 'Secret History and the Periodical' in *The Secret History in Literature, 1660-1820,* ed. Rebecca Bullard and Rachel Carnell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 149.
[45] "Preface" in *Defoe's Review 1704-1713,* ed. John McVeagh, *Rev*.I:1 Preface.3. Further references to the *Review*, *Little Review*, and the *Review*'s supplements are given parenthetically in text.

The connections between the different papers became more obvious when the instalments could be read in a more extensive manner. The reissuing of papers as complete volumes accentuated the periodical's narrative qualities and also changed how reading audiences interacted with the genre. Anna Laetita Barbauld, for instance, viewed the *Spectator* as a "book" which is to be "laid on the shelf in honourable repose."[46] The periodical became a symbol of one's education and is suggestive of its owner's literary taste when possessed in a codexed form. That the *Spectator* came to be considered as a book and not as a series of "distinct Sheets" is further testament to the way in which periodicals could function not just as a series of partitioned papers but as more cohesive projects. For example, in the *Bee* (1733) Eustace Budgell drew attention to the periodical's use of continuous pagination, stating in the first issue that "we had almost forgot to acquaint our Readers that for their Convenience of binding up this Pamphlet in Volumes (which we presume for several Reasons most of them will do) we have directed our Printer to make the Pages of every set of Pamphlets for a whole Year follow one another."[47] Periodicalists were very aware that some readers preferred to peruse their papers in a more intensive manner. Addison stated in mid-July 1711 that on account of the encouragement given to him by readers' letters and his bookseller, "I shall continue my *rural Speculations* to the End of this Month; several having made up separate Sets of them, as they have done before of those relating to Wit, to Operas, to Points of Morality, or Subjects of Humour" (*S*.124 I.507-8). The reprinting and reissuing of works in sets, bundles, and volumes, however, implies a shift in the way readers encountered essays and how they viewed the kinds of conversations that took place within and between the different instalments. Beauties

[46] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *Selections from the Spectator, Tatler, Guardian, and Freeholder*, 2 vols (London: 1849), vi.
[47] *The Bee: or, Universal Weekly Pamphlet*, No. 1 (1733), 3-4.

of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* which collected and digested the essays and rearranged them by theme began to appear from 1753. Yet individual readers also commonly excerpted and rearranged the essays to affect an alternative pedagogical agenda and to re-form the original conversation. Being able to access the essays in a variety of material forms, readers from all social backgrounds could interact directly with these essays long after their original publication. Queen Charlotte, for example, kept a commonplace book solely for extracts copied from the *Spectator*, taking the conversations of the periodical far beyond the coffeehouse and bringing them into the royal household.[48]

Fact or Fiction?

In existing studies of periodical literature, the presence of fiction has typically been accounted for in one of two ways. The first tends to focus on a single title and identifies moments when fictional stories, anecdotes, and asides are inserted into the project. The second views the periodical as a training ground for those wanting to have careers as long form prose fiction writers, as discussed in the Introduction. Both of these approaches have resulted in a tendency to view fiction and the narrative conventions deployed in essay-periodicals in a precursory way and in isolation of the wider print ecology. For instance, Michael Ketcham argues of Addison's writing that his essays "have descriptive formulas, recurring metaphors, and conventions that make the *Spectator* series a self-contained literary universe," but it is also through creating these descriptive formulas, metaphors and conventions that the essay-periodical interacts

[48] 'Commonplace book containing extracts from *The Spectator*.' GEO/ADD/43/10. Royal Archives, Windsor.

with other media.[49] The *Spectator* did not create its own universe so much as reshape the existing literary world, finding a new way to engage with readers and ultimately precipitating change throughout the entire print ecology.

This awareness of how the essay-periodical interacted with the wider ecology saw the genre becoming highly self-conscious of its own construction, and particularly its relationship to current affairs. More so than other genres, the essay-periodical, as Ketcham suggests, affects "a kind of writing to the moment since Mr. Spectator's attention to the world is marked by instants of perception."[50] The partitioned nature of periodical print enabled the form to help reading audiences navigate and rethink both the printed world and the one they lived in at clearly demarked calendrical intervals – concerns that have often been associated with the period's longer form prose fictions such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pamela* (1740), and *Clarissa* (1748). While Hunter argues that the novel provides a "picture of life in several dimensions and […] offers ready advice, easy to translate unasked into our personal experience," this is also true for the essay-periodical, which routinely offers snapshots of daily life to impart both advice and entertainment.[51] By moving beyond the scope of the conduct books and character sketches popular in the late Stuart period, titles such as the *Spectator* began to facilitate a "more complex, more novelistic reading of social performances," as Ketcham

[49] Michael G. Ketcham, *Transparent Designs: Reading, Performance, and Form in the Spectator Papers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 8.
[50] Ketcham, *Transparent Designs*, 5. For longer form fiction see Thomas Keymer, *'Pamela' in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Marta Kvande, "Printed in a Book: Negotiating Print and Manuscript Cultures in Fantomina and Clarissa," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 2 (2013): 239–257; Christina Lupton, *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018); Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[51] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 92.

suggests.[52] This makes Addison and Steele's papers an ideal starting point from which to re-evaluate the significance of fiction within the essay-periodical.

The *Tatler* and *Spectator* regularly crossed the line between the real and the imaginary, blending the distinction between factuality and fictionality. This could be done surreptitiously, for instance through the editing or falsifying of letters, or more brazenly by creating sensational tales about distant or imaginary lands in the manner of romance narratives. Within the *Spectator* Addison often draws attention to his use of highly imaginative material by directly asking readers to consider whether they were being presented with fiction or "Truth and Matter of Fact" (*S*.397 III:487). He went so far as to explicitly warn "Readers to be in a particular manner careful how they meddle with Romances, Chocolate, Novels, and the like Inflamers" (*S*.365 III:374). Notably, readers are not forbidden from meddling or experimenting with these things; Addison only asks for them to exert caution when they do so. Fiction was useful for the *Spectator*'s moral agenda as readers could often learn more from engaging with an invented scenario than from an account of real events. This was a view that he shared with Defoe, as we shall see in the next chapter, who framed the relationship between facts and fictions as similar to that between history and parables. Both authors privilege the end result of a story over the mode of its delivery and the question of fictionality versus factuality was of secondary concern. It was more important that readers could derive some form of moral benefit or improvement from the material they read than it was for the material to be truthful:

> I immediately said to my self, tho' this Story be a Fiction, a very good Moral may be drawn from it, would every Man but apply it to himself, and endeavour to squeeze out of his Heart whatever Sins or ill Qualities he finds in it. (*S*.587 V:7)

[52] Ketcham, *Transparent Designs*, 50.

The utility of a narrative was of greater importance than its factuality as both facts and fictions could successfully instruct and educate reading audiences. The close-knit relationship between truths, lies, and instruction would become a recurring theme which Addison would return to on more than one occasion. For example, in *Spectator* 190 he declares that "I was not a Creature silly enough to be taken by so foolish a Story" (*S*.190 II:245), while in number 521 he points out that "These and many other Hints I could suggest to you for the Elucidation of all Fictions; but I leave it to your own Sagacity to improve or neglect this Speculation" (*S*.521 IV:356). Similarly, in *Spectator* 542, Addison states that "I think the most ordinary Reader may be able to discover, by my way of writing, what I deliver in these Occurrences as Truth, and what as Fiction" (*S*.542 IV:439). He calls attention to the importance of his phrasing and so to how the *effects* of an author's representation of events dominate the experience of reading fiction, and how fictionality is "a rhetorical resource integral to the direct and serious use of language," to recall Walsh's definition.[53] Addison ultimately lays the responsibility for distinguishing between fact and fiction at readers' doors as he blends truth and fiction together within the same anecdote.

Taken together, essays 521 and 542 offer an insight into how the *Spectator* understood fiction and, falling towards the end of the original run of papers, these essays can provide a moment of reflection on how fiction was deployed in the earlier issues. Number 521 takes the form of a letter and addresses how narratives that profess to be factual are most likely to be invented: "I contemn the Men given to Narration under the Appellation of a Matter of Fact Man: And according to me, a Matter of Fact Man is one whose Life and Conversation is spent in the Report of what is not Matter of Fact" (*S*.521 IV:353). The interest in determining what was fact and what was

[53] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 6; 16.

fiction surfaced again three weeks later in *Spectator* 542. Paying particular attention to the terms on which his fictional narratives have proceeded, and exploring the different voices incorporated into the *Spectator*, Addison declared that using letters "gave me an Opportunity of introducing a great variety of Characters into my Work, which could not have been done, had I always written in the Person of the *Spectator*" (*S*.542 IV:438). He noted that "the Dignity Spectatorial would have suffered, had I published as from my self those several ludicrous Compositions which I have ascribed to fictitious Names and Characters" (*S*.542 IV:438). Blending facts and fictions made possible a new iteration of print communication whereby the ludicrous was presented alongside the serious and authors could take pleasure in their resulting ability "to mortifie the Ill-natured" (*S*.542 IV:438) who mistook fact for fiction and fiction for fact. In a moment that prefigures the use of fiction within longer form prose works, Addison observes that while there are those "who say an Author is guilty of Falshood, when he talks to the Publick of Manuscripts which he never saw, or describes Scenes of Action or Discourse in which he was never engaged," readers "would do well to consider, there is not a Fable or Parable which ever was made use of, that is not liable to this Exception" (*S*.542 IV:439). The relationship between fable, parable, and falsehood, as we shall see, is one that was often explored in longer form prose works and was frequently examined by Defoe. However, Addison was highly attuned to this same issue. In a subsequent essay he surveys the terminology that would come to be used on the title pages of long form prose works. Invoking history writing, travel narratives, adventures, and even the novel, Addison concluded *Spectator* 583 by noting that he had related a story with the sole intention of using it "in order to introduce in my next Paper, a History which I have found among the Accounts of *China*, and which may be looked upon as an Antediluvian Novel" (*S*.583 IV:595).

By deploying the terminology that would go on to be found on the title pages of longer form fictions, the *Spectator* begins to fashion a unique cultural agenda which shows an awareness of the different kinds of fictional expression that could be found within the essay-periodical.

Using a similar framework to that found in the early novel, the *Spectator* relies on a series of tales, histories, and narratives to create a new perspective on the current historical and cultural moment. When writing the biographies of prominent literary figures, Johnson focused on how Addison developed a new mode of writing within his periodicals and declares that he coined a mode of expression that was almost unprecedented within writing in English:

> Before the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, if the writers for the theatre are excepted, England had no masters of common life. […] [A]n *Arbiter elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from thorns and prickles[.][54]

Crucially for my purposes here, Johnson went on to describe the *Spectator* essays as "happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of invention."[55] Viewed in these terms, the *Spectator* provides an early example of fiction being used to divert reading audiences, helping them to pass an idle quarter of an hour over the tea equipage, but also setting down maxims that the learned could pour over for hours. Therefore, "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" and "the busy, the aged, and the studious," to use Johnson's descriptions of the various classes of reader, could take delight in the same text and

[54] Samuel Johnson, "The Life of Addison" in *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), III.7.
[55] Johnson, "Life of Addison," III.8.

the "happy" variation in those fictions is testament to their prevalence and universal appeal within the *Spectator*.[56]

Aligning learned maxims with moments of diversion, the eighteenth-century essay-periodical blended fact with fiction to offer a more imaginative and opinionated interpretation of current affairs and daily occurrences than those found in newspapers. As the *Spectator* adhered to the publication schedule of the only daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, early readers who were unfamiliar with the rules of periodical print could be forgiven for expecting that the title would offer them factual rather than invented content, not least as the *Spectator* read like an essay but was published like a daily newspaper and looked like one, too. As noted earlier, this meant that at a quick glance, the two forms were indistinguishable. The visual connection to news print meant that the essay-periodical, as Richard Squibbs suggests, could not only contrast "the absorbing aesthetic pleasures readers will find in history with the transient diversions of news reading," but also with reading fictions.[57] Readers searching for factual content about shipping and foreign affairs would have been surprised to find fabulous stories of Indian kings (*S.*50), Oriental tales such as the vision of Mirza (*S.*159), abstractions on the definition of the imagination (*S.*411-21), as well as the better known fictions previously mentioned.

The reimagining of news items and the regaling of histories of distant lands was becoming a key strategy for entertaining reading audiences. As Andrew Pettegree wryly comments, this was a period in which "news also became, for the first time, part of the entertainment industry. What could be more entertaining than the tale of some

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[56] *Rambler* 4 in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, vols III-V (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), III.21; "To Samuel Richardson," 9 March, 1751, in *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Bruce Redford, 5 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), I:48.

[57] Squibbs, *Urban Enlightenment*, 36.

catastrophe in a far-off place, or a grisly murder?"[58] News events had become a staple of the essay-periodical in Ward's *London Spy*. Through his colourful descriptions of humdrum life, Ward found a way to expose the scandal and exorbitance of the everyday. While Scott Black argues that "the story of realism's development, and the novel, is a story of how fiction accommodates the ordinary," this is equally true for the essay-periodical as the movement between facts and fictions was a defining quality of both forms.[59] Notably, as Davis has shown, the attacks most commonly levied on newspapers "focused on the fact that news was made up, fictional, and only published to cheat people of their money."[60] Essay-periodicals joined in this attack on news writers but were equally as guilty, if not more so, of making up accounts of events and creating a blend of factual and fictional content to ensure readers' diversion. Within the *Tatler,* Steele noted the importance of blending news with entertainment in order to affect amusement:

> But since in History, Events are of a mixed Nature, and often happen alike to the Worthless and the Deserving, insomuch that we frequently see a virtuous Man dying in the Midst of Disappointments and Calamities, and the Vicious ending their Days in Prosperity and Peace, I love to amuse my self with the Accounts I meet with in fabulous Histories and Fictions[.] (*T.*117 II.197)

Fabulous histories and fictions were the order of the day and as John Richetti observes, "serious essays, especially in the *Spectator*, were supplemented by entertaining narration in other numbers" to make up for the sobriety of other papers.[61] This suggests an inconsistency within periodicals as they oscillated between providing serious content and more entertaining, fictional anecdotes. While Hunter contends that the

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[58] Pettegree, *The Invention of News,* 6.
[59] Scott Black, *Without the Novel: Romance and the History of Prose Fiction* (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 5.
[60] Davis, *Factual Fictions,* 75.
[61] John Richetti, "Non-Fictional Discourses and the Novel" in *Oxford History of the Novel in English,* 353.

narrative fictions of the mid-century novel were "put together for an audience hungry for mixed fare," a similar mixture of content is found within the essay-periodicals of the early eighteenth century.[62] While Johnson famously criticised *Tom Jones* for including characters who demonstrate both virtuous and vicious behaviours, this mixture of traits was also seen in periodical works and periodicalists were as likely as novelists or historians to relate events that lacked a satisfying moral resolution. Cheryl Nixon notes that the qualities and traits late eighteenth-century periodicals ascribe to the novel, namely "the fictional narrative's relationship to reality, popular literature's need to maintain morality, and the female reader's misapplication of romance […] are concerns central to the literary criticism of earlier periodicals."[63] Just like longer prose fictions, the essay-periodical could take the fabulous and idealised, the vicious and the virtuous, and display these traits side by side.

Towards the Novelistic

From the *London Spy* to the *Spectator*, and, as we shall see in the rest of this study, from the *Review* to the *Rambler*, periodical writers created a series of anecdotes and inset fictions that entertained, diverted, and instructed readers. As such, fictionality, rather than being the province of the novel, was integral to the essay-periodical from the genre's inception. Many of the items in Hunter's list of qualities that help define the novel can be applied to the periodical, just as many of Powell's qualities for periodical essays resonate with longer form prose fiction. It is worth remembering, as Emily Hodgson Anderson has pointed out, that early eighteenth-century novels were just that – new, novel, and innovative – and their authors were creating "new examples

[62] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 22.
[63] Nixon, *Novel Definitions*, 25.

of prose often packaged under different headings of histories, memoirs, intrigues, and travel narratives."[64] Leah Orr's study of the terminology used on the title pages of long form prose fictions has shown that the novel was still being packaged in various guises and the term 'novel' would not be widely used before the 1780s.[65] But the essay-periodical, too, was new, novel, and innovative and its content could be similarly packaged under the headings of histories, intrigues, travel narratives and the like. Both these print forms therefore demonstrated similar kinds of literary novelty as they sought to affect readers' entertainment and diversion.

In studies of long form prose fiction, attention has often focused on how the novel is able to write to the moment, develop believable characters who demonstrate subjectivity, and is conscious of its own innovation. Brean Hammond, for example, notes that the novel is the genre most often associated "with representations of the lives of individuals" and that it invites readers to "recognize, identify with, and profit from" the tales of various imagined characters.[66] Yet, as we shall see, this means of profiting from the lives of individuals – real or invented – was also integral to the essay-periodical, which mediated readers' daily lives in a way that other print media could not. Through capturing the conviviality and diversity of coffeehouse conversation, the periodical demonstrates a kind of formal realism that is more commonly associated with the novel: it displays "a set of narrative qualities that make characters appear to be particular individual people living particular individual lives."[67] Although Rachel Carnell makes this observation as part of a discussion of the novel, this is pertinent for periodical studies too and in this respect, the essay-

[64] Hodgson Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship*, 13–14.
[65] Orr, "Genre Labels on the Title Pages of English Fiction," 67.
[66] Brean S. Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670–1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 219.
[67] Carnell, *Partisan Politics*, 5.

periodical is a close relative of longer form prose fiction. While essay-periodicals do not have characters as such, the *Spectator*'s Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Honeycomb and Sir Andrew Freeport are relatively plausible figures, or at least are familiar character types, who can be imagined leading real lives and frequenting real places.

Within the rest of this study, therefore, I want to reframe the questions routinely asked of the novel to reappraise the role of fiction in periodical writing and consider the essay-periodical's resultant relationship with, and influence on, longer form prose. In the early eighteenth-century, the essay-periodical began to be defined by a certain set of characteristics, both when it came to its material design and to matters of content, tone, and style. As the format of the essay-periodical settled into something recognizable, individual essays no longer needed to draw attention to their use of more fictional accounts, anecdotes, and inset stories and so when looking for instances of fiction within the genre it is easy, as Monika Fludernik observes, to privilege "fictive entities on the story level rather than textual features."[68] In other words, it is easier to identify the presence of anecdotes, fabliau and so on than it is to examine how they work as features of the text. However, by shifting attention to consider fictionality – and to what, precisely, is fictional about the periodical – the importance of the essay-periodical for the development of fiction in an age before the novel crystallized takes on new significance. After all, as Brand suggests, essay-periodicals play "a significant role in creating the experience of modernity," presenting reality "as a perpetually new and discontinuous spectacle."[69] It was by re-presenting modernity that the genre was able to reform the print ecology. As the chaotic world of the *London Spy* was replaced by the more orderly one of the *Tatler*

[68] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 82.
[69] Brand, *Spectator and the City*, 27.

and *Spectator*, the periodical began to discover its fundamental emollience and moved towards a more sophisticated engagement with fiction.

Daniel Defoe: Conversability and Inclusivity

> *It's many Peoples Opinion, That the Consequences of Mr.* Daniel de Foe's *Peaceable* Review *is Strife and Contention, and that it does as equally serve to keep up the Animosities, Feuds and Dissension of Parties (and prevent the desir'd Union) as Mr.* Lesly's *Rehearsal of the* Observator.[1]

Three days after Queen Anne succeeded to the throne, a new age of periodical print dawned when the first daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, entered into circulation on March 11, 1702. Intending to make full use of this advance in printing technology and the opportunities the daily press afforded for keeping reading audiences up to date with political affairs, Robert Harley, the Earl of Oxford and Speaker of the House of Commons, proposed to create a ministerially-sanctioned periodical that could act as a mouthpiece for the government. His idea was simple: create a publication that would hold the press to account by countering the false "stories raised by ill-designing men."[2] In a letter to the Lord Treasurer, Sidney Godolphin, Harley spelled out his intention to find "some discreet writer of the Government side, if it were only to state facts right."[3] The proposed paper would offer a rebuff to printed attacks on the government while simultaneously propounding the government line, however obliquely. Daniel Defoe was not the most obvious person to choose to spearhead such an undertaking. When Harley began his search for a periodical writer Defoe was imprisoned, having been pilloried for libel following the publication of his anti-ministerial pamphlet *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. However, Harley recognised Defoe's talent for polemical writing and employing him "for the Government side" effectively killed two birds with one stone. He hired a skilled essayist and bought the (relative) silence

[1] *LRev.* II:1 4.280.
[2] Robert Harley to the Earl of Godolphin, 9 Aug. 1702, f.3, Add. MS 28055, Official Correspondence of Sidney Godolphin, 1st Earl of Godolphin, Lord High Treasurer. British Library, London.
[3] 'Harley to Godolphin', Add. MS 28055.

of a vocal government critic. Eighteen months after Harley wrote to Godolphin, Defoe, businessman, pamphleteer, poet, and essayist, embarked upon his career as a periodicalist. The *Review* was born.

Although designed to counter the newspaper press, Defoe's political periodical did not take the form of a news publication but instead proceeded as a journal of opinion; while it professed to "state facts right" it also embellished the truth with fictionality. This chapter addresses how Defoe used fiction in both his periodical writing and long form prose to develop new ways of conversing with reading audiences. It uses Richard Walsh's definition of fictionality "as a distinctive rhetorical resource, functioning directly as part of the pragmatics of serious communication" to consider how Defoe tests out the seriousness of his prose writing within the *Review* (1704-13) and C*olonel Jack* (1722).[4] I focus in particular on the *Review*'s Scandal Club and Mad Man dialogues, and the sections of *Colonel Jack* set in Virginia to explore Defoe's innovative use of dialogue and how he uses fictionality to develop new ways of speaking directly to readers. While conversation is a mode of expression often associated with the novel, I want to suggest that conversability is also integral to the narrative structures found in his essay-periodical.[5] Scholars including Hunter have suggested that "early novelists shared the public taste for contemporaneity and novelty and quickly discovered how to blend it into a substantial and complex web of narrative and discursive prose," but this taste had previously been shared with periodicalists.[6] As we shall see, both the *Review* and *Colonel Jack* draw attention to their inherent fictionality, blending fictional narrative, discursive prose, and news reportage to ask

[4] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 1.
[5] For conversation in the novel see Hunter, *Before Novels*; Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 31; William Warner, "Staging Readers Reading," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 12, no. 2 (2000): 391–416.
[6] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 176.

readers to determine whether they are a "History or a Parable."[7] Fictionality pervaded both Defoe's periodical and longer form prose; the *Review* incorporates many narrative devices that today are associated with long form prose fiction, while his fictions from the 1720s display many of the features of his periodical writing. After first exploring how Defoe uses conversability within the *Review*, this chapter will go on to examine how those strategies enabled him to develop new ways of interacting directly with reading audiences in *Colonel Jack*.

Commerce and Conversation

Since the publication of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the English Novel*, Defoe has been hailed as a key figure in the novel's development and is credited with influencing various subspecies of the genre including, but not limited to: realist, picaresque, moral, criminal, domestic misconduct, and adventure novels.[8] Defoe's fictions demonstrate a capaciousness in their ability to align different discourses as they bring together elements of history writing, politics, satire, journalism, and news reportage. Yet this amalgamation of forms and narrative practices was a continuation of strategies that he had previously deployed within his periodical writing. Although the *Review* is often seen to be a purely political work it was a key instigator in revolutionising the late Stuart print ecology. The project might have been government sponsored but Defoe had a significant degree of autonomy to shape the *Review*'s content as he saw fit. Within its pages he experimented with new forms of expression to create novel ways

[7] *Rev*.V:1 37.187; Daniel Defoe, *Colonel Jack*, ed. Cervantes and Sill, 60. Further references are given parenthetically in text.
[8] Watt, *Rise of the Novel*. See also J. A. Garrido Ardila, *The Picaresque Novel in Western Literature: From the Sixteenth Century to the Neopicaresque* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Carnell, *Partisan Politics*; Gabriel Cervantes, "Episodic or Novelistic? Law in the Atlantic and the Form of Daniel Defoe's Colonel Jack," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 24, no. 2 (2012): 247-77; Patricia Spacks, *Novel Beginnings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

for reading audiences to interact with print publications and the *Review* used dialogue, reader correspondence, indirect speech, and fictive narrative to enhance, and at times contradict, its political stance.

In order to understand how Defoe created a more direct way of communicating and speaking to readers in his long form prose fictions and periodical essays, it is first necessary to understand what constituted a 'conversable' text. Although the term is more commonly associated with the essays written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, Defoe's explorations of trade and politics could also demonstrate conversability. Conversation was defined in the period as "Discourse among several Persons, general Behaviour, Intercourse or Society" but also as "commerce; intercourse; familiarity."[9] Commerce, meanwhile, was defined as "Trade, Dealing, Traffick, Conversation by Word or Letter. Correspondence of any Kind."[10] This pair of definitions reveal a close relationship between the conversable world and the commercial. In exploring the common mutability of conversation and commerce, David Solkin contends that "like traders in search of credit or custom, speakers fashioned their language and appearances to gain the favour of their listeners."[11] This is also particularly apt for writers, and especially for periodicalists. Their works were available to purchase multiple times a week and periodical essays were more likely to be read aloud around the tables of the coffeehouse than they were to be read silently or in private. The *Review* circulated through a network of hawkers, coffeehouses, and taverns (among other social spaces), emphasizing its position as something that was both commercial and conversational. Stephen Copley has shown how periodicalists

[9] "Conversation" in Thomas Dyche and William Pardon, *A New General English Dictionary* (London: 1737); "conversation" in *Dictionary of the English Language*.
[10] "Commerce," *New General English Dictionary*.
[11] David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993), 22. See also Mee, *Conversable Worlds*, 18.

depended "upon mechanisms of commercial circulation as the enabling condition of their work," and this seems to resonate particularly with Defoe's *Review* given how much of the periodical is concerned with trade.[12] Commerce and conversation informed every aspect of periodical print, from its composition to its printing, its point of sale to the act of reading, and even the way in which material was set out upon the printed page.

Appearing between February 19, 1704 and June 11, 1713, the *Review* was an unusual publication. It was originally conceived as a year-long undertaking – and Defoe made several attempts to bring the project to a close in February 1705 – but it continued for a further eight years, first supporting a Whig ministry and then changing allegiances when Harley was elected as head of a Tory government in 1710. Looking more like a news pamphlet than a late Stuart single sheet periodical, the *Review* was printed on a folio half-sheet that was then folded to create four pages. It also had a highly regular print schedule, appearing for the most part as a triweekly paper. For a period of twelve weeks, this was supplemented biweekly by the *Little Review* meaning that Defoe published his periodical on a daily basis for three months. In terms of its content, the *Review* rejected the question-and-answer format popularised by the *Athenian Mercury* and eschewed the two-dimensional dialogues that were first popularised in Sir Roger L'Estrange's Tory *Observator in Dialogue* and which were still being used by Defoe's rival, John Tutchin, in the *Observator*. In short, almost every element of the *Review*'s design set it apart from other periodical works circulating in the marketplace at the time. The first two to three pages of each issue were filled with a leading essay while the remaining page space, for the first nineteen months, offered an entertaining section called "Advice from the Scandalous Club."

[12] Copley, "Commerce, Conversation and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Periodical," 67.

This was later replaced by a "Miscellanea" section. Although not a constant feature, the Miscellanea allowed Defoe to discuss more than one topic within each instalment, and it was in this part of the paper that his eidolon, Mr. Review, first entered into regular conversations with a Mad Man. Together, the Scandal Club and the Mad Man dialogues showcase Defoe's experiments with new communicative strategies. These sections add a diversity of voices and a range of topics to what was otherwise a monologic and very heavily political publication, and the resultant playfulness and experimental tone saw the periodical increasingly turn to use fictionality.

The paper's fictional and more conversable elements significantly widened the scope of the leading essays, enabling the *Review* to expand its focus from politics and London-based affairs to address concerns in other parts of the nation. Particular interest was paid to affairs in Scotland and correspondents also wrote in from Stratford, Stamford, and Nottingham, showing that the *Review* did, as its full title implied, provide a review of the state of the entire nation.[13] To appeal to such a geographically disparate reading audience the *Review* began to assume a more colloquial and conversational mode of expression. This set it apart from other political periodicals, such as the *Observator* and *Rehearsal*, and initiated what would turn out to be a more general demotic shift within periodical writing. Within the confines of the *Review*'s pages Defoe created an arena, bounded by the dimensions of the printed page, in which he could counter the ill-designs of newsmongers and also process and re-voice the nation's concerns. He often prided himself on his ability to interact with people from all backgrounds and the way in which he could "Talk to Everybody in

[13] See *Rev*.I:1 54.352; *Rev*.II:1 11.66; *LRev*.II:2 19.476. The original title was *A Review of the Affairs of France: And all of Europe, As Influenc'd by that nation: Being, Historical Observations, on the Publick Transactions of the World; Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of News-Writers, and Petty-Statemen of all Sides*. It then became *A Review of the State of the English nation* in the run up to the 1705 elections before becoming *A Review of the State of the British nation* [sic] upon the passing of the Act of Union in 1707. It then assumed the simple title of '*The Review*' from 1712 until its demise.

Their Own way."[14] The *Review's* pages provided somewhere for people of different political and religious opinions and various social backgrounds to interact freely within a single, imagined space. However, the conversations taking place within the paper were carefully controlled as the periodical ultimately reflected Defoe's (or rather Harley's) political agenda. Therefore, when the *Review* began to take in letters and publish them as part of the Scandal Club, they were not printed in the order they were received, but rather in accordance with how well they aligned with the political discussions in the leading essay. For instance, a letter dated January 8, 1704/5 was printed five days later on January 13, but letters sent in mid-December 1704 had been kept back and were not printed until two months later, being found in the issue for February 17.[15] By printing these letters, however late, the *Review* showcases its author's skill in talking to everyone as the periodical instigates moments of conversation and discussion, even if Defoe waits until the opportune moment before using reader correspondence to open up conversations as part of a wider political agenda.

The original purpose of the Scandal Club was to examine the "Scandalous Mistakes, Ignorances and Contradictions" (*Rev.*I:1 6.45) printed in the newspapers and to correct anything with which readers found fault. Yet this model did not last long. Defoe discovered that readers were as likely to police and dictate the content that he printed in the *Review* as he was to regulate theirs: "I must acquaint the World that the following Letter was sent us last Week, and the Society having found the Observations were very Just, have given the Publick a View of them as they are" (*Rev.*I:1 18.121). He carefully chose which letters would appear in print and ultimately, as the paper's

[14] 'To Robert Harley', 26 November, 1706. MS.: Duke of Portland, Defoe Papers, 1 ff. 90-91.
[15] See *Rev.*I:2 90.688; *Rev.*I:2 100.767.

author and editor, had the final say in any debate. When the papers from 1704-5 were reissued as a volume and supplemented with a preface and an index, Defoe noted that the receiving and answering of letters was not part of his original intentions. While he did his "best to oblige them," his role as correspondent and querist was one of "meer Circumstance, casually and undesignedly annex'd to the Work" (*Rev*.I:1 Preface.4). Many of the *Review*'s conversable qualities resulted from a rethinking of the publication's rhetoric and purpose for the answering of letters was a task that Defoe never originally intended to undertake but was something "to be comply'd with" (*Rev*.1:1 Preface.4). The *Review*, as would later be the case with the *Tatler*, adapted its original format in order to comply with readers' expectations.

While these letters demonstrate the *Review*'s capacity for conversability, it is worth emphasising that readers did not view the publication as conversable in the same way as the *Athenian Mercury* or *Spectator*. The word 'conversible' when used in relation to periodicals is more typically applied to the writings of Addison and Steele. In the *Guardian* (1714), Addison used the term to refer to an individual who is open to intercourse or sociability, a definition which resonates with the one that is most commonly used today and which was initially proposed by David Hume.[16] Hume described the conversable world as having "a sociable Disposition, and a Taste of Pleasure, an Inclination to the easier and more gentle Exercises of the Understanding, to obvious Reflections on human Affairs, and the Duties of common Life."[17] Yet the *Review*, with its abrasive tendencies and unusually direct opinions often gave the impression of running contrary to any such pleasurable interactions, notwithstanding that what "Hume's version of the politeness paradigm implicitly acknowledged was

[16] *The Guardian*, No. 137, August 18, 1713.
[17] David Hume, 'Of Essay-Writing', in *Essays, Moral and Political*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1741–2), II:1.

that conversation out in the world was frequently bumpy," as Mee reminds us.[18] The *Review*'s conversable elements were often missed by readers who viewed the publication as antagonistic, characterised by moments of invective and abuse that were thinly veiled as raillery. John Gay was among those who associated the *Review* with antagonism, rather than sociability, noting in 1711 that "the Poor *Review* is quite exhausted, and grown so very Contemptible, that tho' he has provoked all his Brothers of the Quill round, none of them will enter into a Controversy with him."[19]

That the *Review*'s default position was understood by many to be provocative suggests that rather than being conversational, the paper was highly antagonistic. Interacting with it ultimately required one party (and not usually the *Review*) to capitulate and accept the views of the other. Therefore, the very qualities that made the *Review* conversable could just as easily make it contemptible. Reading audiences were more likely to identify its rough edges and moments of collision, prompting Defoe to insist "That the Author of the *Review*, was really no Monster, but a Conversible Sociable Creature" (*Rev*.II:2 95.651). The *Review's* bumpiness meant that reading audiences often missed its conversable elements, focusing on the project's reliance on moments of "Strife and Contention" as opposed to seeing it as offering a more "Peaceable Review" (*LRev.*II:1 4.280). In keeping up animosities between different parties at the same time as advocating political toleration, the *Review* was not a straightforwardly "Conversible Sociable Creature" but was characterised by a form of "amicable collision," to adopt the phrase of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury.[20] But the *Review* was conversable because it was bumpy. The experience

[18] Mee, *Conversable Worlds*, 10.
[19] Gay, *Present State of Wit*, 7.
[20] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31.

of interacting with others usually results in a polishing and adjustment of previously held opinions. Printed conversation, by virtue of having an editor who could moderate the language used by participants, is no exception. Language could always be polished and refined up until the moment of going to print. Defoe in his role as author-editor, then, could mediate the conversations taking place within the pages of his periodical, either tipping the debate towards an amicable resolution and a consensus of opinion or defer the argument until a later date in accordance with his desires to be conversable and sociable.

Rather than conversation always being free-flowing or demonstrating emollience, exchanges between different parties within the *Review* typically occurred at the level of barter until some form of consensus or compromise was reached.[21] One such example, and one which I shall explore in more detail later, is the exchanges between Mr. Review and the Mad Man. The Mad Man is very much Mr. Review's intellectual equal and although the two originally spar and the Mad Man is eventually silenced after he tells "a rude Story" (*Rev.*V:2 101.467), each interlocutor was, for the most part, willing to acknowledge the other's opinion. Highly aware of the natural roughness in its tone, the *Review* tests the parameters of its conversable style by using collision not simply to antagonise readers but as its main mode for interacting with other publications, particularly the *Observator* and *Rehearsal*. However, what began as collision is smoothed into agreement as the conversations within the *Review* are ultimately transacted in accordance with the rules of commerce, trade, and barter. Only once a consensus has been negotiated does anything bordering on the polite occur.

[21] "Barter," *New General English Dictionary*.

When defining politeness and polite conversation, Shaftesbury noted that "Nothing is so advantageous as a free port" and nothing was more important than "free conversation" to create a true standard of wit and communication.[22] However, the gentlemanly style of conversation that offered the best model for discursive interactions should be shaped by a "natural roughness," and was not necessarily polite. In Shaftesbury's words:

> Our sense, language, and style, as well as our voice, and person, should have something of that male feature, and natural roughness, by which our sex is distinguished. And whatever *politeness* we may pretend to, it is more a disfigurement than any real refinement of discourse.[23]

Discourse was more properly suited to a form of collision or banter and so in trying to be polite this mode of communication was witnessing a wearing away of the natural shape of a man's conversation. Showing signs of how continually interacting with others causes one's natural roughness to be worn away, Defoe's proclivities for bantering and bartering eventually soften as his periodical developed a mode of exchange that was closer to the politer, conversable essays soon to be popularised by Addison and Steele.

Over time, the *Review* began to turn away from the heated discussion of political affairs that had so characterised its earlier issues and occasionally proceeded in a far less acerbic manner. After the elections of 1705, for example, Defoe and Charles Leslie, author of the *Rehearsal*, entered into a more intellectual conversation with each other within their papers, briefly setting aside some of their animosities until business returned to normal in the run up to the 1708 election. Rather than always entering into conflict with readers and other publications, the *Review* began to invite

[22] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 31.
[23] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 233.

reading audiences into the world inhabited by Mr. Review and the project became more accessible: "I was a going on with my Lamentation about the low Price of Sermons, and the high Price of Plays – When behold I met with this agreeable Interruption, in a Letter from a Friend of mine at *London*" (*Rev*.IV:2 101.515). Here, the friendly interruption is replicated in print as the original debate is cut off mid-sentence upon the arrival of the letter. The typography demands that everyone beholds its arrival. Interruptions such as this see Defoe experimenting with the construction of his paper to give the impression that it is written as a single stream of consciousness to which readers could be made partial. By affecting such a direct mode of address, the *Review* was not so much developing a new mode of conversability as offering a variant on the banter, jests, and even insults it had previously directed at reading audiences, inviting them to share first-hand in its lamentations and enjoyments. Defoe was well aware of the provocations that his periodical offered and its propensity to give offence or even to alienate its audience: in the preface to the second volume he speaks directly to "The Gentlemen who were pleased to be Subscribers for the Encouragement of this Work, in Spight of all the Banters and Reproaches of the Town" (*Rev*.II:1 Preface.5). Banter was defined in the period as "sportive amusing speech, mocking or jeering" and this mode of expression was a vital part of the *Review*'s conversability and its (not so) amicable collisions.[24] Defoe regularly advocated a mode of expression that was more forceful than polite conversation, proposing that uncomfortable truths and sportive language – replete with illustrative fictional tales – were a more effective way of communicating with reading audiences than free-flowing conversation. Drawing a direct contrast between his work and the way

[24] "Banter," *New General English Dictionary*.

Addison and Steele's later projects smoothed over complex and controversial topics, Defoe stated in 1711 that:

> The *Tattler* [sic] and *Spectator*, that happy Favourite of the Times, has pleas'd you all; indeed you were asham'd not to be pleas'd with so much Beauty, Strength, and Clearness; so much Wit, so Gentlemanly Reproofs, and such neat Touches at the vulgar Errors of the Times: But alas! Are we to be laugh'd out of our Follies? Will we be rally'd out of our dear Brutallity? Our Vices are too deep Rooted to be Weeded out with a light Hand; the soft Touches, the fineness of a clean Turn, nay, the keenest Satyr dress'd up in, and couch'd under gentle and genteel Expressions, has no effect here[.] (*Rev.*VIII:1 61.293.)

The *Tatler* and *Spectator* are too polite and so are unable, as far as Defoe is concerned, to impact society's values in a meaningful way. What is required to reform manners and affect a polite, pedagogical agenda, is not polite discourse, but rather uncomfortable truths and harsh words. Couching things under a gentle and polite mode of expression would only address the surface level of the problem; it was better to confront issues and hypocrisy head on.

Hence, as Shaftesbury's point about disfigurement reminds us, there is something fundamentally impolite, forcible, and self-contradictory in polite discourse, and so within conversation in general. *The English Theophrastus* (1702) previously defined politeness as "a dextrous management of our Words and Actions, whereby we make other People have better Opinion [sic] of us and themselves."[25] It was easy, however, for language to be managed without such dexterity; the freedom of exchange that conversation depended upon, especially in the *Review*, could bring conversation very close to undoing the benefits that politeness endeavoured to provide. Conflict and impolite behaviours always bubble beneath the surface of a sociable exterior. It is possible, then, to view politeness as little more than a fiction that always threatens to

[25] *The English Theophrastus: Or, the Manners of the Age* (London: 1702), 108.

tip over into the impolite – just as banter, or jests, can become an affront if their playful aspect is not correctly understood. This potential for conflict is exhibited even within works which are often considered to epitomise ideas of politeness. Antagonism played a vital role in the *Spectator* and Addison identified raillery as a key part of literary diversion:

> Sir Roger De Coverley and Sir Andrew Freeport are of different Principles, the first of them inclined to the *landed* and the other to the *monyed* Interest. This Humour is so moderate in each of them, that it proceeds no farther than to an agreeable Raillery, which very often diverts the rest of the Club. (*S*.126 II:3)

The relationship between Sir Andrew and Sir Roger is characterised as a "constant, yet friendly, Opposition of Opinions" (*S*.174 II.186) or an "agreeable raillery" on account of their conflicting views. This fine line between friendly and oppositional conversation was more regularly seen in the *Review*, for instance, when Defoe takes special note of a lady who first accepted a comment "as a Civility, but afterwards took it for a Banter, and at last for an Affront" (*Rev*.I:1 39.248). Meanwhile, one of the readers' letters is introduced with the note that its author was "fond of making a Dispute of a Jest" (*Rev*.II:1 11.67) implying that it was easy to misunderstand the *Review* and take it for a monster, or an offensive creature. The more free and direct conversation could be, the more easily it could give offence.

Designing Instruction and Diversion

Defoe's particular version of conversability – characterised by moments of conflict, controversial opinions, and banters – is at the heart of the *Review*'s 'Scandal Club.' It is here that he began to test-out different forms of fiction, slowly incorporating elements of fictionality into what was otherwise a highly fact-oriented publication.

The ancillary section "Advice from the Scandalous Club" or, to give it its full name, "Mercure Scandale: OR, Advice from the Scandalous Club. BEING a Weekly History of Nonsense, Impertinence, Vice and Debauchery" complemented the leading essay to offer a more imaginative and informal perspective on news events.[26] The Scandal Club, or "the Society" as Defoe frequently termed it, was integral to the *Review*'s design until August 1705 and it often addressed the failings of other periodicals and their respective authors. Outlining the "Absurdities and Contradictions" that "*News-Writers, Fellows of Scriblers College, Students in Politicks,* and *Professors* in *Contradiction*" were publishing, the Scandal Club issued a warning to other writers that:

> If they come to Banter Religion, Sport with things Sacred, and dip their Pens in Blasphemy, as some times they are very free with their Maker[,] Our Scandalous Club is a New Corporation Erected on purpose to make Inquisition of such Matters, and will treat them but scurvily as they deserve. (*Rev*.I:1 1.8)

The Club's propensity to banter became more pronounced as the Society expanded its horizons and began to deal in "any thing Curious, any thing Experimental, either in History, in Politicks [or] in Physicks."[27] However, crucially for my considerations here, the Club also told readers that it aimed to affect either "your Instruction, or your Diversion" according to how readers chose to interpret the Club's inquiries.[28] The section acted as a counter weight to the *Review*'s serious political content by engaging with topics in a more whimsical manner, being shaped by the "Clamour, Scoffs, Banters and Raillery" of correspondents who sent in "teazing and querulous Epistles" (*Rev*.I:1 Preface.3).

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[26] Defoe dropped the "Mercure Scandal" from the title on 2 May 1704 (*Rev*.I:1 17.113).
[27] "A Supplementary Journal to the Advice from the Scandal Club For the Month of September, 1704," *Rev*.I:1 392.
[28] "Supplementary Journal for September," *Rev*.I:1 391.

Grounding itself in banters and raillery, the Club offers light-hearted relief to those readers who perceived the *Review* to be "always serious, and […] too Voluminous, too Tedious, either for their Leisure or Inclination."[29] Yet the scandalous proceedings often playfully reimagine material found within the more serious essays and help Defoe's political content to find a wider audience. For instance, when the leading essay addresses France's absolute government and the rebellion of the Camisars, the Scandal Club explored the same events, albeit in a more spirited manner: "This Paper having been Treating of the *Camisars*, it caus'd the Society to call before them the Author of the *Dayly Courant*, who was accused of Scandalizing the poor Protestants of the *Cevennes*" (*Rev*.I:1 15.102). Conversely, material that might be expected to belong to the Scandal Club section was sometimes placed into the leading essay. During a discussion of French wars on May 13, 1704, Mr. Review notes that "I should have refer'd the Observation of what we are now upon, to the *Scandalous-Club*, but 'tis a Matter too serious" (*Rev*.I:1 20.130). Further cross-fertilization between the two sections occurred ten days later as the leading essay opens with the declaration "We told you in our last, of a Trial at Law, at the Queen's Bench Bar at *Westminster*, about a Gentleman's Assassinating another in the Street" (*Rev*.I.1 23.146). The essay proceeds to draw a comparison to an illustrative tale in which "Our Scandalous Club [brought] a Case before them of another Gentleman, who stabb'd an Honest Man into the Back." Readers are expected to be familiar with both the factual and the more anecdotal versions of this story: "I have related both these Stories, in Order to compare our Proceedings in such Cases in *England*" (*Rev*.I.1 23.146). This process of retelling allowed less serious matters to infiltrate the leading essay while still allowing the Scandal Club to freely address apolitical matters such as "Divinity,

[29] "Supplementary Journal for September," *Rev*.I:1 393.

Morality, Love, State, War, Trade, Language, Poetry, Marriage, Drunkenness, Whoring, Gaming, Vowing, and the like."[30]

To facilitate such diverse discussions, the Scandal Club began to develop a more conversable and inclusive tone. Through the framework of the Club Defoe spoke to his readers directly, either by voicing his own opinions, or by speaking on behalf of the club's collective members. This created doubt about the nature of the Club and in response to readers' queries Defoe declared of the Society's compilation that "I say we are *Nomen Multiudinis*, a Number, but 'tis a Singular one" (*LRev*.II:2 21.502). The accounts from the Scandal Club are typically written in the first-person, moving between a singular "I" and a collective "we," and specific members are only mentioned on very rare occasion.[31] As such, the *Review* can continue to be monologic at the very moment that it supposedly opens itself out to feature a range of different personae. This ambiguity about the singular multitude captures something of the way readers typically interacted with print and exploits the fact that a significant portion of the *Review'*s readers actually listened to the paper being read aloud. Leslie stated in the *Rehearsal* that "the greatest part of the People do not Read Books, Most of them cannot Read at all. But they will Gather together about one that can Read, and Listen to an *Observator* or *Review* (as I have seen them in the Streets)."[32] Defoe's first person pronouns, then, are particularly pertinent; when the essays are read aloud, audiences become both the "I" and the "we" of the Scandal Club. The fictional Club could be both a multitude and a single entity.

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[30] "Supplementary Journal for September," *Rev*.I:1 391.
[31] For examples of Club members being addressed see *Review*: I:1 7.52; I:123.149; I:1 50.323; I:1 55.357.
[32] Charles Leslie, "Preface" to *A View of the Times, Their Principles and Practices: In the First Volume of the Rehearsal* (London: [1708]), [u.p.].

This potential for multivocality to enter into the *Review* is enhanced by the paper's handling of reader correspondence. However, this overtly conversable form of communication was not part of the project as Defoe had originally envisaged it, as noted earlier. When the *Review* was reissued in bound volumes, he revealed in the preface that "the receiving or Answering Letters of Doubts, Difficulties, Cases and Questions, as it is a Work I think my self very meanly qualifiy'd for, so it was the remotest thing from my first Design of anything in the World" (*Rev.*I:1 Preface.4). It was not until the thirty-first issue that Defoe developed a framework for dealing with this unexpected task. Until this point, letters were excerpted and incorporated seamlessly into the accounts of the Club's dealings, rather than being printed in full, and all paratextual features such as an address, date line, and the sender's name were removed. Only once Defoe began to replicate the features of a manuscript letter in print do the voices of the correspondents truly begin to affect the style of the *Review* and enhance its fictionality. The voices of individual readers are clearly identified on the page by being bracketed with the opening address of "Gentlemen," "Gentlemen of the Scandalous Club," "Sir," or on rare occasion "M. Review" or even "Mr. de Foe," before closing with the sender's initials and return address.[33] Yet the inclusion of senders' addresses is a superfluous detail when the letters are reproduced and replied to in print, and so the occasions when an address is included are worthy of note.

The geographical information provided by senders reveals that Defoe's correspondents hail from across the country. They also based themselves in a handful of key locations across London. When letters from Will's, John's, and Lloyd's coffeehouses appear in the same issue, this gestures to the kinds of spaces in which

[33] Letters to 'Mr de Foe' are found in *LRev.*II:2 19.476; *LRev.*II:2 21.502.

the *Review* was being read.[34] The letters also reflect the conversations that could take place there. For instance, letters sent from Lloyd's relate to business while those from Will's are more inclined towards the arts. This utilises the same associations between space, place, and conversation that Steele would deploy in the *Tatler*, as discussed in the previous chapter. Offering a snapshot of metropolitan life, the *Review* for 27 January, 1705, brings together readers from coffeehouses in Holborn, the Royal Exchange, and Covent Garden and allows their voices to intersect with one another in a single space.[35] This collapses the geographical distance that separated these establishments and the page reimagines and materialises the physical networks of communication that the *Review* was both participating in and helping to create. Other participants in the *Review*'s conversations were based in the Strand, Mile End, Hackney, and Southwark.[36] Removing the geographical distance between these correspondents and presenting their voices side by side within the confines of a single page, the *Review* captured the essence of lived conversation in the metropolis, representing and re-presenting real verbal exchanges. Thus the "dialogic 'heteroglot' textual community" that Adrian Wallbank identifies within periodicals, as previously discussed, is readily demonstrated by the *Review* as various communities are rendered visible through its pages.[37]

While conversations with reading audiences might have originally been housed within the Scandal Club they slowly began to diffuse into the *Review* as a whole. In the leading essays Defoe turned away from a straightforward factual discussion and began to include dialogues, anecdotes, and inset stories as part of his political content.

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[34] *Rev.*1:2 94.711-13.
[35] Locations for the coffee-houses have been determined using Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses*.
[36] See "Supplementary Journal for September," *Rev*.I:1 397, 409; "Supplementary Journal for December," *Rev*.I:2 643; "Supplementary Journal for January," *Rev*.I:2 721.
[37] Wallbank, *Dialogue, Didacticism and the Genres of Dispute*, 8.

The inclusion of other voices implies that Defoe is not alone in propounding his political agenda and the subject matter of his invented conversations fulfil one of the central conditions of fictionality: "stories told with the purpose of illustration and instruction."[38] Over time, stories that aim to provide instruction become increasingly common within the *Review*. For instance, when concluding a discussion of French legislation on duelling, Defoe emphasises his point by changing rhetorical strategy, using everyday interactions to both show and tell his audiences why duelling was reprehensible:

> This reminds me of a certain Story which I can recommend to the Reader from very good Authority.
>
> A Certain Gentleman, whose Wife was no Honester than she should be, had some Private Intimation of it from a Friend, and was so particularly led to the point, that he surprized a Gentleman in Bed with her.
>
> The Person finding himself in his hands, Demands his leave to rise and take his Sword; *withal my Heart, Sir,* says the Gentleman, *and your Boots too, if you please, and take your Mistress with you, I have nothing to say to you*; the Gentleman gets up and tells him, *Sir, you have done like a Man of Hounour, and I cannot but tell you, that if you expect the Satisfaction usual upon such Cases, I think my self obliged to give it. No: why so,* Replied the Gentleman? *Let me Lie with your Wife first, and then I'll fight you withal my Heart; 'tis my Wife has affronted me*, says he, *and not you; and I know how to deal with her*: and so turned her out of Doors. (*Rev*.I:1 16.107-8)

Functioning slightly like gossip, a mode of expression that Copley describes as having an "inconsequential fictionality," this anecdote supposedly refers to real people, and demonstrates a transition between real and fictional conversation in order to impart a specific moral lesson.[39] This way of laying out dialogue, whereby the lines of one speaker flow straight into the next is typical of Defoe's methods for demarcating conversation in his longer form prose fictions, something that I will further examine

[38] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 78.
[39] Copley, "Commerce, Conversation and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth-Century Periodical," 60.

later with regard to *Colonel Jack*. Though an instance of storytelling at its most brief, this episode demonstrates on a smaller scale many of the key aspects of narrative that would later be associated with the novel. Defoe even identified such instances of fiction as a vital communicative strategy. When writing about the "End and Use" of fiction in the *New Family Instructor* (1727) he stated that when fiction is properly directed it enforces "sound truths, making just and solid Impressions on the Mind" and "Fables, feigned Histories, invented Tales, and even such as we call *Romances*, have always been allow'd as the most pungent Way of writing or speaking."[40] For Defoe, fiction was the most important means of communication and while Gabriel Cervantes notes of Defoe's longer prose works that they demonstrate the narrative techniques required for a work to be classified as a novel – namely, "characterization, the construction of time and space, representations of speech, [and] plot" – these elements are also found in his periodical works and are evident in the anecdote quoted above.[41] The wife's conduct is characterised, the space is set in the matrimonial bed, the plot is an adultery narrative, and the voices of the two gentlemen affect the tale's moral resolution and advance the sequence of events. Even supposedly factual and highly political works such as the *Review* demonstrate narrative qualities that are more readily associated with longer form prose.

These moments of fiction could also forge new connections between the *Review*'s different instalments and sections. Fictional events that are related in one issue are likely to reappear later on and stories that were discussed in one set of papers often bleed into, or resurface, in another. For example, a letter in the supplementary publication the *Little Review* is concerned with pastry and confectionary cooking, and

[40] Daniel Defoe, *The New Family Instructor; in Familiar Discourses between a Father and his Children* (London: 1727), 52.
[41] Cervantes, "Episodic or Novelistic?," 253.

sparks an ongoing conversation about how the *Review* preserves "Pies and Custards from the fierceness and barbarity of the Oven" (*LRev.*II:1 16.437). Other readers respond to create a running joke about the *Review*'s ability to take a roasting, and the "Crusty" (*LRev.*II:2 19.479) treatment it has received at the hands of ignorant readers. This also opens up a tongue-in-cheek exploration of the alternative uses reading audiences put periodicals to, implying that anyone foolish enough to use the *Review* for baking would be rewarded with heavy cakes; their cooking would be flavoured with the paper's dense and even indigestible political content. Another ongoing conversation within the *Review* is with the individual who signs his letters "J.J.". He is the most prolific of the Society's correspondents and four of his letters are printed in full, while others are alluded to in passing: "J.J. may hereby see how Terribly we are Threatened with forging Letters, and therefore we desire to be excused from engaging with that formidable Person, unless the Gentleman will promise us his Assistance and Testimony, in Case of Protection" (*Rev.*I:1 28.182). Once J.J. is silenced, other voices begin to dominate and the issue for February 17, 1705, for example, features a series of letters that show the *Review* conversing at length with another reader. Printing both sides of the correspondence, the Club collapses time and geographical distance by publishing in full a conversation that had been ongoing since November the previous year. Private letters become public as Mr. Review claims that he would be unable to "lay down his Pen in Peace, if he should fail to do Justice to [this] Case" (*Rev.*I:2 100.766) as he could not "Answer the Trust repos'd in him, without giving the Publick this Account" (*Rev.*I:2 100.768) of charitable giving. By blurring the distinction between public and private conversations, this exchange witnesses a sophistication of the more formulaic pattern used in the early meetings of the Scandal Club. The letters supposedly capture the voices of real correspondents,

rather than simply projecting Defoe's views and opinions through the mouth of another.

Correspondence performed a complex role in the *Review'*s modelling of conversation as Defoe regularly toyed with reader expectations, even using the Scandal Club to stage debates with himself. Potential examples of this are in the letters signed "D.D.," "D.D.F.," and "Review" as he either directly falsifies reader correspondence, or correspondents selected pseudonyms that would give the impression that Defoe was writing in himself to show support for his paper.[42] Whether they are real or invented, these letters suggest Defoe's willingness to control and mediate conversations within the Club as the letters have the capacity to blend reportorial and imaginative genres, as noted in Chapter One. Other pseudonymous, and possibly falsified letters, come from individuals who sign off "Philo-Patr.," "Philolog.," "Philotheus," and "Philo-Review." The prefix "Philo" indicates the correspondent's love for the second part of their name, which incidentally forms the subject of their letters. Hence, Philo-Patr. writes about what it is to be an Englishman and a patriot, Philolog. is of a religious bent, and Philo-Review expresses his enthusiasm for the *Review* itself. J. A. Downie argues that "false vindications, letters, petitions, and secret histories" cemented Defoe's credentials as a superior propagandist by allowing him to marshal evidence and so 'prove' his point by supposedly collecting evidence from a variety of sources, creating a constellation of materials and discourses that support his political views.[43] The belief that Defoe was fabricating material prompted him to emphasise the authenticity of the *Review's* correspondence. When a letter is printed in praise of the publication, Defoe declares

[42] For letters signed D.D.F, see *Rev.*I:1 48.313; for letters from 'Review' see I:1 40.258 and I:2 100.767.
[43] J. A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 14.

that "Originals of these and other Letters of this Nature, are left with the Printer of this Paper, for any Person to peruse that doubts the Truth of them" (*Rev*.I:1 25.161). Seeing is believing as Defoe uses handwritten letters to authenticate the printed text. His readiness to vouch for letters of "this Nature" calls the provenance of others into question. Letters of other natures, such as those by D.F. may, therefore, be nothing more than instances of fiction and deception as Defoe blurs the boundary between imagined conversations and plausible, lived interactions.

As the *Review* continued to evolve, Defoe developed a way to bring letters and more conversable exchanges out of the Scandal Club and into the essays proper. When the club was disbanded in May 1705 ahead of the general election, the project's conversability and use of fiction was temporarily suspended as the entertaining content of the Scandal Club impinged on the page space available for Defoe's weightier political discussions:

> The Author of this Paper, finding the Publick and more Weighty Subject he is now upon, is more than sufficient to take up all the room, both in his Serious Thoughts, and in the Paper it self […] thought fit to Adjourn the Diverting Part, till those more Valuable Matters were something over. (*Rev*.II:1 31.184)

With this practical decision to banish the Scandal Club and displace it into a new publication – the *Little Review* – the paper's use of fictionality changed. In the build-up to the elections, Defoe declared that he would be casting out "the Merry Part" of the paper to allow "the History [to] be more, and the Entertainment less" (*Rev*.II:1 31.185) and on 22 August, he ceased to publish affairs from the Scandal Club altogether and dedicated his efforts solely to the *Review*'s political content.[44] Reading

[44] Defoe often refers to the Club as the "Merry Part" but see especially "Supplement for October," *Rev*.II:2 475.

audiences were hardly enamoured with this decision and they were still calling for its reinstatement three years later:

> *M*. I have a Message to you, and desire a Conference on the Subject-Matter of the last Conference.
>
> *Rev*. What is it? Pray let's know the worst of it.
>
> *M*. Why, 'tis an humble Petition from the Hawkers and News-sellers, that you will turn your Talk a little to something diverting and pleasant, and not always be canting and talking religiously; they say they wish you would set up your *Scandal Club* again, then the People would buy the Paper; but while you are upon these serious Subjects, it's like an old Ballad, no Body cares for it, and when they offer it to Sale to People, they huff intolerably. (*Rev.*V:2 80.386)

Without the Scandal Club, the *Review*'s sole focus was politics and this was isolating readers who desired diversion, not instruction: "People would take up the Paper, and find it related to *Scotland* and the Union, and throw it away" (*Rev.*V:1 Preface.1). The nation's "Palate was glutted" and Defoe noted that as soon as readers "had fed on the Shell of the Union, they were satisfy'd." When the *Review* entered its fifth volume in 1708, readers were tiring with the project. Rather than crowding around to hear the paper read in the streets as Leslie described, the work was being cast aside unread as it seemed to keep going over the same ground, rather "like an old Ballad." Defoe stated in the preface to the fifth volume that although he had tried to entertain readers, "he found this Affair [of Scottish union] so necessary, so useful, and with some few good Judgments so desirable, that he chose to be call'd dull and exhausted" (*Rev.*V:1 Preface.2) rather than discourse upon other topics – pre-empting Gay's accusations that the *Review* grew contemptible and languid. If the paper was to survive, Defoe needed to find a new way to engage reading audiences and reintroduce fictionality to the project.

Dialogues and Storytelling

In the wake of the 1705 election, Defoe resumed his experiments with entertaining discourses and began to interact with readers in alternative ways. The letters that had previously been printed in the Scandal Club, *Little Review*, and monthly supplements increasingly found their way into the leading essays as there was nowhere else for them to go, and Defoe even turned to the dialogic format he had previously avoided. Bringing conversability directly into contact with the *Review*'s political agenda he created short, anecdotal conversations such as those between a Judge and a Creditor, a Jacobite and a Presbyterian, a grazer and a farmer, and an Alderman and a Citizen.[45] The dialogues between the Presbyterian and Jacobite are the only interactions that were sustained across multiple papers and these "Scotch Dialogues," as Defoe terms them, take place across five consecutive issues (16-25 January, 1707).[46] Yet they are a poor cousin of the more sophisticated exchanges between Mr. Review and the Mad Man which would appear regularly for a period of six months in 1708. The Mad Man dialogues were partly a response to the political change and uncertainty that ensued, for Defoe at least, when Robert Harley fell from government and the Whig party took control of the House following the 1708 elections.[47] While the Mad Man's controversial opinions reflect Defoe's desire to re-engage reading audiences, they also reveal the frustrations and new-found freedoms that resulted from the loss of his employer.

Unlike the dialogic exchanges in the *Observator* and the *Rehearsal*, Mr. Review's conversations with the Mad Man were conducted as though the two

[45] See respectively *Rev.*IV:1 30.152; III:2 164.819 – 168.840; V:1 31.155-56; IV:2 170.884-85.
[46] *Rev.*III:2 166.830.
[47] James O. Richards, *Party Propaganda Under Queen Anne; the General Elections of 1702-1713* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1972), 101-2.

interlocutors were each other's social and intellectual equals. The figures are so well matched and certain in their opinions that it is often impossible to determine which one of them is actually the lunatic. This has led scholars such as P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens to identify these conversations as "one of Defoe's most cunning and pungent pieces of satire."[48] The interlocutors continually spar with one another as their didactic and pedagogical exchanges make readers think carefully about which side of the political debate madness really lies on. Wallbank notes that "dialogue *is* often the site of contestation and dispute, and […] is often associated with instruction and pedagogy – particularly in cases it where it resembles catechistical questioning."[49] This distinction seems particularly fitting for the exchanges with the Mad Man. These interactions exploit the capacity of dialogue to portray, to use Michael Prince's words, "a mind capable of enacting division, of breaking wholes (received truths) down into disparate parts, yet capable also of recovering coherence through the free use of reason."[50] As his name implies, the Mad Man embodies the divided mind but while he is characterised as a lunatic, he is lucid and rational in his arguments. This calls into question whether it is his political opinions that are mad, or if it is those of Mr. Review and his readers. The Mad Man is a skilful and plausible interlocutor and unlike the two-dimensional figures that readers were used to encountering in dialogic periodicals such as the *Observator* and *Rehearsal*. His voice began to dominate in the *Review* as the dialogues displace the leading essay to fill the entirety of the *Review*'s pages on twenty-six occasions, and the five issues printed between July 22 and August 3, 1708, are occupied completely with conversations with the Mad Man.[51]

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[48] P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, *A Political Biography of Daniel Defoe* (London: Routledge, 2016), 94.
[49] Wallbank, *Dialogue, Didacticism and the Genres of Dispute*, 4.
[50] Michael Prince, *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment: Theology, Aesthetics, and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 14.
[51] *Rev.*V:1 50.248 – 55.272.

The first of the *Review*'s interactions with this skilled opponent was introduced with the note: "And now, Gentlemen, to divert you with a little Variety, shall I give you a new Scene, and tell you a Story, whether it be History or a Parable, let the Issue discover" (*Rev.*V:1 37.187). The ensuing ambiguity between history and parable, or between truths and allegories, opened up a new strategy for communications within the *Review*: the dialogues provide a masterclass in writing digressive wit, interpolated tales, and episodic stories. Aware that this content shows a higher degree of invention than readers were used to encountering within his publication, Defoe warned them that the conversation will not proceed in a straightforward manner:

> And thus you are entertain'd a while with the wise Discourses of the *Review* and a mad Man; how it may please you, Time must discover: I must tell you, that at first Sight this mad Man has been a shrewd Fellow, and believe you will find he will not cross the Proverb, that Fools never go mad; whatever he is now, he has been no Fool, and you will find many a shrewd Rub from him, let all our modern self wise Men stand clear of him. Our next continues this mad Dialogue; wherein the Lunatick appears to be neither Fool nor mad Man; as you will there find. (*Rev.*V:1 37.188)

Time has not discovered whether this is a history or a parable: a single issue has been insufficient to determine whether the conversations are educative and real, or invented and entertaining fictions. Yet as this comment concludes the dialogue, and is neither clearly set out in the voice of the Mad Man or Mr. Review it calls into question who is voicing the rest of the paper: the dialogues take place between Mr. Review and the Mad Man, but they are introduced and concluded by an external figure. This way of framing the dialogues is symptomatic of a more free-flowing and familiar interaction between Defoe and his readers. As John Richetti argues, Defoe's "colloquial manner is a strategy, only one of his various styles and tones, although perhaps his most

frequent and effective mode."[52] Yet there is also a self-consciousness and performativity to the conversations that merits closer attention.

Defoe's colloquial strategy was not confined to the potentially falsified letters in the Scandal Club but also shapes the Mad Man dialogues in which Mr. Review relinquishes his role as an omniscient narrator. These conversations appropriate an authorial "I" that is neither fully aligned with Defoe, the Mad Man, or Mr. Review, and speak directly to a "you" that could be Mr. Review, the individual reader, or the entire reading audience. As Harvey Sacks notes, the "openness of 'you' means that 'you' can in fact be a way of talking about 'everyone' – and indeed, incidentally of 'me'."[53] This expansive and inclusive quality of the personal pronouns applies, too, to the narrative "I." The first-person pronouns invoke the voice of the individual reader, but also encompass the entire reading audience (especially when the text is read aloud) in addition to including Mr. Review and even Defoe himself. This creates an intimacy and equality between all stakeholders and participants as the private conversation between the Mad Man and Mr. Review has the potential to become universally inclusive. Crucially, the conversations take place in 'real time' as they meet in the "now" that is the dateline printed on this particular essay – June 24, 1708 – and the alternative "now" in which the paper is being read:

> I Entertain'd you with a new Dialogue between the Author of this Paper and a mad Man, upon an Occasional Encounter; the Story has real Foundation in Matter of Fact, but how far, and to how much Purpose the Humour may be improv'd, Time must shew; they are now met again.
>
> *Mad Man*. Well, Mr. *Review*, are you prepared to talk with a Mad Man any more, says the Bedlamite?

[52] John Richetti, *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 96.
[53] H. Sacks, *Lectures on Conversation*, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 1.349 in Wallbank, *Dialogue, Didacticism and the Genres of Dispute*, 11.

> *Review.* You pretend to be *mad*, and yet you talk after a Manner, that the People will say you are more *Fool* than *mad Man*, and more *Knave* than either. (*Rev.*V:1 38.192)

As readers are invited to participate in the conversation as virtual witnesses, Defoe again exploits the fact that many members of his reading audience were actually listeners. The two voices are clearly identified, each speaking alternate lines as would be expected in a play-text. But the essay effectively stages the conversation twice, including notes such as "says the Bedlamite" as part of their lines to make sure that anyone listening to the *Review* being read aloud cannot fail to differentiate between the two speakers.

This performative aspect of the conversations allows Defoe to put words into the mouths of his reading audiences, as well as into those of Mr. Review and the Mad Man. When discussing Defoe's longer prose fictions, Hunter notes that "many passages put in the mouth of the first-person narrator or of some other character, are mostly at one with Defoe's didacticism [… as] he reviews his culture and proceeds unabashedly to instruct the time."[54] This is also true for the Mad Man dialogues as the way in which readers are involved in the conversation is integral to Defoe's desire to affect instruction. The dialogues invite speculation and encourage readers to explore different possibilities and different interpretations of events:

> [H]ow he should be brought to put it to a day at last, what shall be said for it? – Where's my mad Man, what will he say to it, I wonder?
>
> *Mad Man.* Not so far off, Sir, as you think; a mad Man is always pretty near the *Review*, you know; what's your Will with me, Sir?
>
> *Review*. What is your Opinion of the Duke *De Vendosme*, pray, and this Accusation of his, in suffering himself to be drawn into a Battle?
>
> *M.* My Opinion is, Sir, that he was, *as I told you the World is*, MAD. But what is that to the Purpose, I take both sides to be mad, and therefore my Opinion weighs not in this Case.

[54] Hunter, *Before Novels,* 55.

> *Rev*. Is our Side mad too?
>
> *M*. Ay, ay, mad, quite mad; I believe, the Duke of *M—gh* is as mad as any of them, and much madder than the Duke of *Vendosme*. (*Rev*.V:1 51.254)

The speaking figure who introduces this dialogue could converse with the Mad Man whenever he wished and uses two different voices to participate in the exchange: those of Mr. Review and Defoe himself. This particular interaction also sparks a conversation between Mr. Review and the Mad Man that would continue for the next four issues and in which the Mad Man articulates controversial opinions that the *Review* cannot express directly. Defoe does not criticise the Duke of Marlborough – only a Mad Man would be so bold as to defame his name in this way. The Mad Man then becomes a phantom-like figure, rather like an eidolon, through whom criticisms of the Duke can be voiced without directly exposing Defoe to charges of libel or character defamation. The Mad Man, then, is a means to articulate contentious matters of foreign and domestic policy. Thus, the *Review* can be seen to lapse into a conversational mode of expression, breaking off mid-argument to consult the Mad Man whenever Defoe wants to address controversial topics, for instance: "Come hither, my mad Man, what say you to this Project of Peace?" (*Rev.*V:2 73.356); "What shall be expected of such a Generation? Has my *Mad Man* nothing to say to them?" (*Rev*.V:2 75.365). Controversy bubbles beneath the surface of their imagined conversations. Out of all these interjectory sentences only one – "This is a Dialect, my mad Man is fitter to answer than I; *where are you, Lunatick*?" (*Rev*.V:2 83.397) – is spoken by Mr. Review. The others all feature as part of the essay and so are outside the clearly delineated structure of the dialogue. By introducing the Mad Man in this way, he clearly becomes a foil that enables Defoe to transition seamlessly from a

factual discussion to a conversable and fictional debate in which controversial political affairs can be contested.

Moving in and out of the *Review*'s various instalments, the Mad Man's didacticism takes on an episodic quality that is not dissimilar to picaresque models of fiction writing. As his voice is not a continual presence in the paper, he provides an alternative structure through which to affect education and diversion; his voice can be projected or dismissed on a whim. But the Mad Man is not easily silenced. Like J.J. in the Scandal Club, he keeps coming back to offer a dissenting view on matters of politics and public affairs:

> I Cannot discourse with my mad Man, but he tells so many wicked unhappy Truths, that I am forc'd to lay him aside every now and then, for Fear of his Lunatick Excursions.
>
> *Mad Man.* You may lay me aside as often as you please another Time, but I will not be laid aside just now, for the Case requires it, *and I will speak.*
>
> *Review.* What is the mighty new Occasion you have offer'd? Pray, let's hear it. (*Rev.*V:1 53.261)

Such moments are highly artificial as Defoe, of course, voices both characters and it is only when it suits his wider agenda that either interlocutor will speak their mind. The Mad Man takes control of this issue of the *Review* to hold the paper to account, rather like the earlier correspondents to the Scandal Club, though, the Mad Man is usually only outspoken in this manner when Defoe had something he wanted to discuss but was unsure how to safely broach the topic. Although the Mad Man's voice may occasionally be silenced – during the period Mr. Review conversed with his lunatic there are thirty issues in which the voice of the latter does not feature at all – he is a continual hinterland presence, constantly shaping the course of the essays. Even when the Mad Man is absent from a particular issue, the effects of his voice can still be heard:

> Our Madman having upbraided us, and that but too justly, with not being so thankful as our Neighbours, has desir'd us to present you with the Act of the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland* for a National Thanksgiving on Account of their Deliverance from the *French* Invasion[.] (*Rev*.V:1 41.206)

Fully supporting the earlier notion that "the Lunatick appears to be neither Fool nor mad Man," the Mad Man's views are re-voiced by Mr. Review who not only supports the Mad Man's opinions but provides additional evidence to justify his beliefs. The alignment of their voices becomes absolute as each begins to engage with and develop the other's views. Such alignment of perspectives was essential to conversation for as Prince notes, the conversational impulse that underlies dialogue allows "increasing autonomy of individual subjects and an increasing diversity within the social order while still portraying an inevitable consolidation of viewpoints, characters, and interests."[55] The link between the Mad Man and Mr. Review deepens as their views become more closely aligned and moments of collision give way to easy talk.

Defined by a rhetoric of madness, lunacy, and folly, the conversations with the Mad Man allow Defoe to develop a distinctive way of exploring socio-political affairs, not least as the epithet 'mad' is applied to anyone that Defoe, Mr. Review, or the Mad Man rails against.[56] It is worth noting that the correlation between madness and print was not unique to Defoe's periodical: L'Estrange used madness to engage with contentious and provocative political sentiments in 1681, commenting in the *Observator in Dialogue* that "'Tis the Press that made 'um *Mad*, and the *Press* must set 'um *Right* again."[57] Following the example of the former press censor, Defoe uses

[55] Prince, *Philosophical Dialogue*, 15.
[56] See for example *Review*: I:1 47.302; I:1 56.360; I:2 80.594; II:1 25.144; II:2 65.456; II:2 114.758; II:2 125.816-17.
[57] *Observator in Dialogue* No. 1, April 13, 1681.

the trope of madness to challenge the state of current politics, implying that the act of assuming an oppositional stance was an act of madness:

> *Mad Man.* You will never have done talking ridiculously, Mr *Review.*
>
> *Review*. Nor you madly, what's the Matter with you now?
>
> *M*. I tell you they are in the right of it, what is it you quarrel at?
>
> *Rev*. I quarrel at the unthankful Temper of the Nation, and their unsatisfy'd reproaching Disposition upon all that serves them.
>
> *M*. I told you all along you were distracted, stark mad, raving, and such as that[.] (*Rev.*V:1 57.278)

While antagonism may course throughout the *Review*, Defoe and by extension Mr. Review, had little patience for those whom he believed were mistaken in their (political) views. He would attack High-flyers, High-churchmen, Dissenters, Tories, Whigs, and Jacobites in their turn, rounding on anyone who did not share his own views for moderation and toleration.[58] The querulous nature of the dialogues enabled a confrontation in which everyone's views were potentially mad, including those of readers. However, the unity that emerged between the Mad Man and Mr. Review as they created a more sane political world did not last. Their conversations ultimately returned to the fractious terms on which they began. The Mad Man went too far in his criticisms of the government, and to assert distance between the *Review* and the opinions of the lunatic, Defoe ended their conversations on 18 November and banished him from the periodical.

[58] For examples of attacks on these groups see *Review*: II:1 42.257; II:2 83.587; II:2 91.629; III:1 54.285; III:2 98.501; IV:1 30.150; V:1 6.36.

Distinguishing Histories and Parables

With the words "Exit Review" (*Rev*.IX:2 107.426) concluding Defoe's major foray into periodical writing in 1713, he began to turn his talents elsewhere. He initially tried his hand at other periodical projects and many contemporaries believed him to be responsible for the Tory-leaning *Monitor* (1714). He also infiltrated the Jacobite press upon the instruction of his latest government employer, Charles Delafaye, who was under-secretary to the Secretary of State, the Earl of Sunderland, in an attempt to moderate the content of works such as Nathaniel Mist's *Weekly Journal* (1716-25). While working for Delafaye, Defoe also began his career as a long form fiction writer and found a new outlet for the rhetorical modes of communication that he had developed while working as a periodicalist. As James Sutherland observes, "the plain-spoken, down-to-earth, unpedantic and colloquial style of the *Review* is not his only manner of writing, even in the *Review* itself; but it may be called the staple of his style, not differing noticeably from that in which he wrote *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders.*"[59] This staple, I would like to suggest, plays out across his longer fictions more broadly and the *Review*'s rhetoric, as this section will show, has a much closer relationship to *Colonel Jack* than to *Robinson Crusoe* or *Moll Flanders*. Recounting the "History and Remarkable Life" of an orphan turned pickpocket, who gets embroiled in a murder, is kidnapped and sold as a slave in Virginia, before turning soldier, Jacobite, and smuggler, *Colonel Jack* is in equal part historical narrative and novel literary entertainment. Its varying modes of address and episodic structure make it one of Defoe's most conversable texts as well as one of his most periodical-like. From the disjointed structure to its engagement with politics and regular use of set

[59] James Sutherland, *Daniel Defoe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 74.

piece dialogues, *Colonel Jack* appropriates and develops many of the strategies for conversability that were first pioneered in the *Review*.

Like Defoe's periodical essays, *Colonel Jack* makes use of material that was being published elsewhere within the print ecology and regularly draws from factual works, including histories, parliamentary bills, and accounts of troop movements on the continent. Accordingly, it reflects the journalist's ability to bring global history into the lives of individuals as the narrative offers a series of self-reflections and reported conversations in which Jack looks back on his life "from a safer Distance" (61). This distance sees the text guide readers through Jack's various political, moral, and theological pitfalls with a view to improving their moral conduct, hoping that audiences will learn from Jack's mistakes. Reiterating the same basic pedagogical lessons time and again, *Colonel Jack* tells a socio-political story in a piecemeal fashion. This has prompted Gabriel Cervantes to note that despite "its similarity in style and theme to *Moll Flanders*, [*Colonel Jack*] has languished at the margins of Defoe's oeuvre as an ostensibly 'episodic' narrative" on account of its highly disjointed and sometimes repetitive structure.[60] The narrative's various episodes rub against one another as each new adventure revisits and reworks the issues raised in the last. This 'piece-meal' or periodical-like quality of *Colonel Jack* invites a re-evaluation of this text as it contains an extensive engagement with both the rhetoric of essay-periodicals and long form prose fiction.

One of *Colonel Jack*'s most obvious generic affiliations is with history writing. Cervantes and Geoffrey Sill have argued that, more so than Defoe's other texts, *Colonel Jack* reveals "the capacity of literary works to operate as a special sort of

[60] Cervantes, "Episodic or Novelistic?," 256.

historical document."[61] *Colonel Jack* does this by engaging with the recent past, discussing contemporary politics and making direct reference to recent pieces of legislation, such as the 1717 Act of Grace (310); this is a key departure from the model of history writing found in Defoe's other prose fictions, which are set around the time of the Restoration. Yet *Colonel Jack* is more than simply a historical document. To view it as such flattens its complexities and overlooks the constellation of other discourses that are appropriated by the narrative. The rhetoric found in essay-periodicals runs throughout the text and *Colonel Jack*'s engagement with religious redemption, whiggish reform, and didacticism aligns it with Defoe's essays. Recalling Defoe's periodical writing, the preface to *The History and Remarkable Life of the truly Honorable Col. Jacque, commonly call'd Col. Jack* is highly reminiscent of the opening to the *Review*:

> I need not say one Word more as an Apology for any part of the rest, no, nor for the whole; if Discouraging every thing that is Evil, and encouraging every thing that is vertuous and good; I say, If these appear to be the whole Scope and Design of the Publishing this Story, no Objection can lye against it, neither is it of the least Moment to enquire whether the Colonel hath told his own Story true or not; If he has made it a History or a Parable, it will be equally useful, and capable of doing Good; and in that it recommends it self without any other Introduction. (60)

This way of speaking to readers was common throughout Defoe's periodical and long form fictions. One of the most direct expressions of the importance of the relationship between histories and parables is found in the preface to the *Serious Reflections* where he stated that "the just and only good End of all Parable or Allegorical History [… was] moral and religious Improvement."[62] In addition to sharing the *Review's* interest in histories and parables, this passage's attention to how the narrative is

[61] "Introduction," *Colonel Jack*, 15.
[62] Daniel Defoe, *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London: 1720), [u.p.].

capable of "doing Good" and being of use also recalls the periodical's fascination with the relationship between instruction and diversion:

> For the Body of this Paper, we shall endeavour to fill it with Truth of Fact, and not improper Reflections; the Stories we tell you shall be True, and our Observations, as near as we can, shall be just, and both shall Study the Readers [sic] Profit and Diversion. (*Rev*.I:1 1.9)

In repackaging these concerns within his long form prose fictions, Defoe reveals an ongoing interest in the process of storytelling and the impact that his chosen means of expression will have on readers.

Desiring to affect "Profit" and "Diversion" *Colonel Jack* makes similar claims to the *Review* as it asks readers to decide whether it is a work of invention or a true history. Within both texts questions of verisimilitude and plausibility are ultimately subordinated to utility; amid the blending of factual and fictional discourses what matters most is that readers derive some form of profit from their diversion. This goes some way to accounting for *Colonel Jack*'s episodic structure. From *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to *Roxana* (1724), Defoe's long form prose fictions follow the example of periodical writing to present a series of unfortunate events in which isolated scenarios are piled on top of one another. Navigating the line between history and parable, the life stories of Jack, Crusoe, and Roxana do not need to be entirely probable. It is more important that the work comes together to create an overarching message than it is for the actual movement and transition between the narrative's different parts, or episodes, to be plausible.

This relationship between inset narratives and the improving agenda of the narrative as a whole is most readily seen in the parts of *Colonel Jack* that are set in Virginia. Defoe's unusual brand of conversability resurfaces here within the dialogues that take place between Jack and Mouchat, the enslaved labourer whom he saves from

a whipping when working as an overseer. Space does not allow for a full consideration of this section of the narrative in relation to race and slavery, and I want to focus on the implications of Defoe's use of conversation as the medium through which he engages with the slave trade. Challenging the penal system used on the plantations, Jack initiates a dialogue with the plantation's owner, and also with his imagined reading audience. But to do so Defoe intrudes on Jack's narrative. Usurping Jack's ownership of his own life story, the text begins to include footnotes written both from Jack's perspective and from that of the editor figure. The footnotes initially offer an explanation of the idiolectical phrasing and non-standard English Defoe assigns to Mouchat – explaining that "Great Master" is the term "the *Negroes* call the Owner of the Plantation" (181) – but also offer a wider perspective on plantation life. In introducing readers to elements of the slave trade, the footnotes begin to displace Jack from his own narrative. Through them, we see Defoe stepping outside the clearly delineated framework that he creates for his dialogues and opening up the text by directly inviting readers into Jack's world. This desire to help readers gain a handle on Jack's life on the plantations is most evident in those footnotes that read like stage directions in a play-text in which instruments of torture and oppression are invoked as though they are little more than props: Jack "here […] shew'd him the Horse-whip, that was given him with his New Office" (179). Defoe enables readers to visualize the scene in great detail, embellishing it with additional information to allow them to imagine themselves as witnesses to the conversation.

Existing outside the main body of the narrative, the footnotes gloss aspects of Jack's personal history, providing additional information to aid readers' comprehension, without necessarily advancing the narrative. Yet the notes also function as a form of blockage to communication as the reading eye is asked to traverse

the page in a non-linear fashion, moving between the body of the text and the notes at the bottom of the page. Readers have to engage with different parts of the narrative simultaneously in order to fully comprehend Defoe's purpose and to improve their own understanding of the text:

> Hark ye young Man, How old are you? *Says my Master*, and so our Dialogue began.
>
> *Jack.* Indeed Sir I do not know.
>
> *Mast.* What is your Name?
>
> *Jack.* They call me COLONEL* here, but my Name is JACK, an't please your Worship.
>
> *Mast*. But prethee, what is thy Name?
>
> *Jack. Jack.*
>
> *Mast.* What, is thy Christian Name then *Colonel*, and thy Sir Name *Jack?*
>
> *Jack.* Truly Sir, to tell *your Honour* the Truth, I know little or nothing of myself, † not what my true Name is; but this I have been call'd ever since I remember[.]
>
> *I was not call'd Col. *Jack as at London*, but *Colonel*, and they did not know me by any other Name.
>
> † NOTE, he did not now talk quite so blindly, and Childishly, as when he was a Boy, and when the Custom-House Gentleman talked to him about his Names. (169)

Demonstrating different voices and communicative strategies, this pair of notes allows the dialogue to create a new relationship between the narrator and the characters; the intrusion of an alternative narrating voice to justify the expansion of Jack's vocabulary exposes the text's artificiality. The fictional framework that governs Jack's universe is exposed as the "The Editor" (60) who introduces the narrative reasserts their presence by drawing attention to inconsistencies, rather than silently correcting them.

While *Colonel Jack* is not unique among Defoe's long form prose fictions in using footnotes to improve readers' understanding or explain abrupt changes within

the narrative, they appear here in greatest number and are clustered exclusively in the section set in Virginia. With fewer than three footnotes appearing in each of *Captain Singleton*, *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, *Roxana,* and *Moll Flanders*, and just five in the *Journal of the Plague Year*, the nine footnotes found within *Colonel Jack* are particularly significant. Defoe's other long form prose fictions typically use notes to explain the cultural relevance of certain places or to add factual details, such as that "The Part of the River where the Ships lye up when they come Home, is call'd the *Pool*," or that "The Bell at St. *Sepulcher's* Tolls upon Execution Day."[63] In *Colonel Jack*, however, the footnotes address a range of topics and deploy a variety of voices, ranging from that of Jack himself – "I was not call'd Col. *Jack* as at London, but Colonel" (169) – to the fictional editor. The editor typically provides additional information so that readers can more fully understand the world in which these conversations are taking place, such as in the 'note' quoted above, that explains Jack's syntax and speech patterns, or the one that describes how the plantations were created: "Note, all the Land before it is planted is over grown with high Trees" (195). These authorial asides cause the text to step outside the parameters of the dialogic exchanges that they were intended to supplement.

The footnotes, then, speak directly to readers to help them navigate the text but also to impart instruction in a more direct manner:

> Why don't you know that he is to be hang'd to Morrow, *says the Clerk,* for making the great Master angry*.
>
> Yes, yes, *says Mouchat,* me know, me know, but me won't speak, me tell something.
>
> Well. What would you say, *says the Clerk.*

[63] Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. Paula Backscheider (New York: Norton, 1992), 170; Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, ed. Paul A. Scanlon (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2005), 277.

> O! me no let him makèè de Great Master angry, with that he kneel'd down to the Clerk.
>
> What ails you? *Says the Clerk*, I tell you he must be hang'd.
>
> No, no, *says he*, no hang de Master, me kneel for him to Great Master. You † Kneel for him!
>
> *Note, he understood the Plot, and took the opportunity to tell him that, to see what he would say.
>
> † He understood him, he meant he would beg your Honour for me, that I might not be hang'd for Offending you. (186)

The notes primarily seek to assist readers' comprehension and have no direct impact on the unfolding narrative. They also provide new scope for fictionality by introducing new voices into the text. While the editor supplies the first note, the second is in the voice of Jack himself – the "I" that might be hanged. This causes the pair of footnotes to simultaneously model two different conversations: Jack's gloss is for the benefit of readers but also serves as a point of clarification for his own master to whom he is supposedly recounting this particular episode. The footnotes therefore break the flow of the conversation that is taking place between Mouchat and the Clerk as readers are required to pause mid-sentence and consult information provided at the bottom of the page. This creates a blockage in communications. Considering how communications break down within Defoe's longer form fictions, David Trotter notes that within Defoe's texts characters' encounters "with unintelligible jargons or languages is a sure sign that they have strayed from the grid of correspondence."[64] The footnotes visualise the fact that for many readers, these conversations lie outside the 'grid' of their knowledge. The notes are used to explain institutions of slavery are all inserted into a part of the text that is set on the other side of the Atlantic, but also take place outside the grid of the text, requiring the margins of the page to be configured in a slightly

[64] David Trotter, *Circulation: Defoe, Dickens, and the Economies of the Novel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 12.

different way. The footnotes stand outside the rigid typeset structure of the dialogue to reassert conventional syntax and grammar by reinterpreting and revoicing Mouchat's lines. The notes can both educate readers and clarify points of the text for them.

Defoe's willingness to gloss Mouchat's speech changes the terms on which his voice circulates within the narrative and affects a new kind of conversability; Mouchat's words must take on an alternative structure before other characters and reading audiences are willing to hear what he is saying. Mouchat's voice, however, is used to affect a specific agenda within *Colonel Jack*. Defoe uses these exchanges to challenge the violence of the plantations, and, as he had done fourteen years earlier with the Mad Man, adopts the voice of a marginalized individual to challenge some of the views that readers were likely to hold. The footnotes thus reassert the fictional and carefully constructed aspect of Jack's life history and along with the set piece dialogues become a space in which the polite, conversable world inhabited by the English reading public comes into contact and collision with some of the realities of plantation life:

> *Jack*. But what do they never show any Mercy?
>
> *Negro*. No, never, no never, all whipee, all whipee, Cruel, worse than they whippee de Horse, whipee de Dog.
>
> *Jack*. But would they be better if they did?
>
> *Negro*. Yes, yes, *Negroe* be muchee better if they be Mercièè; when they whippee, whippee, *Negroe* muchee cry, muchee hate, would kill if they had de Gun (183).

As Defoe purports to replicate the cadence of Mouchat's calls for mercy, he adapts punctuation to control the speed and pronunciation of his lines. Defoe was well aware that his African dialogues were highly contrived and he had previously outlined a theory for this kind of conversation in *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*,

noting of Friday's speech that "those of *Africa*, when they learn *English*, they always add two E's, at the End of the Words, where we use one, and place the Accent upon them."[65] Mimicking the cliched mode of speech that is often seen in travel narratives from the period, Defoe brings readers into contact with a version of the trade in enslaved peoples, and uses Mouchat's voice to advocate for reform, though, Defoe never condemns the trade itself.

Hunter has argued of Defoe's fictions that "almost everything he wrote has a palpable design on the reader, and he speaks to us for our own good," often using a variety of voices to affect his educative agenda.[66] He goes on to suggest that Defoe's "method is essentially a homiletic one: point out what is wrong, tell your audience what is right, cite an authority or provide a reason, and exhort, exhort, exhort."[67] Defoe certainly exhorts, especially within the dialogues, but the success of this approach lies in whether readers view the text as a history or a parable. After all, Defoe never directly explains the moral lesson of Jack's various experiences and instead invites readers to interpret the narrative as they see fit: "I recommend it to all that read this Story, that when they find their Lives come up in any degree to any Similitude of Cases, they will enquire by me, and ask themselves, Is not this the time to Repent?" (340). Tinged with theological implications, the desire to unabashedly "exhort, exhort, exhort" is challenged within *Colonel Jack*. The narrative finds an alternative way to impart lessons, creating a model for conversation that invites readers to make their own decisions about how to act rather than straightforwardly instructing them from the rostrum. The exhortatory element turns the dialogue into catechism. This is implied by the way the conversations are set out on the page. The name of the speaker is

[65] Daniel Defoe, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London, 1719), 211.
[66] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 55.
[67] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 55.

provided at the beginning of each line, rather than being included in the dialogue in a he said/she said construction, visually allowing the conversations step outside the main body of the text. This manner of framing or staging interactions between two people was a holdover from the Mad Man dialogues. Unlike Defoe's other long form prose fictions, in which conversations are usually typeset in italics and the voices blend together as part of the narrative, staged dialogue occurs regularly within *Colonel Jack*. Within the text there are over ten separate instances of staged set piece dialogues but, like the footnotes, these are concentrated in the portion of the text set in Virginia and seven of them are found here.[68] These clearly delineated conversations visualize power structures and inequalities: they occur when Jack talks to his master on the plantations, to Mouchat, the anonymous gentleman who looks after his money when he is a boy, and a constable.

The footnotes and other pieces of ancillary information within *Colonel Jack* help to keep the conversations about the slave trade on a general, almost superficial footing; Defoe ultimately observes the trade's mechanics without directly petitioning for change. Viewed in this way, *Colonel Jack* shares the periodical's proclivity to 'review' or monitor society and this episode, like the rest of *Colonel Jack*, acts as a repository for historical events. The narrative documents current affairs by paying meticulous attention to statistics and financial matters, drawing heavily from newspapers, acts, treatises and so on. The text's reliance on these kinds of print material comes to the fore in the contemporary references that run throughout the narrative, particularly with regards to Jacobitism. As the text acts as a storehouse for political, and often Jacobite, concerns – the latter being emphasised from the

[68] This kind of set-piece dialogue is rare within Defoe's fictions. Only four of his other works use them: there are three instances of this kind of dialogue in the *Journal of the Plague Year,* two in *Captain Singleton* and *Roxana,* one in *Robinson Crusoe*.

homophonic similarities between Jack, Jacque, and Jacobite – it is easy to overlook the innovative structure of *Colonel Jack* as the prose fiction finds novel ways to explore the different kinds of power relationship at play within early eighteenth century society.

The ensuing fragmentation with *Colonel Jack* reflects the political and economic instability of the time. Indeed, as Katherine Armstrong argues, "*Colonel Jack* goes beyond an indictment merely of Jacobitism to characterize the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a period of general disorder and dissimulation in both public and private life."[69] The text captures this chaos through its disjointed structure. Each new scenario that Jack finds himself in allows the personal history to exact a critique of socio-political affairs and, as with the *Review*, this pulls the narrative in two directions: entertainment and instruction. Jack reminds both himself and readers that he is writing his "own History, for [he] is not writing a Journal of the Wars" (255). Yet the two are often directly intertwined: Jack participates in the War of Spanish Succession and the 1715 Uprising, and his experiences of those conflicts are substituted for those of the nation more broadly. Upon learning that rebels taken at Preston are indentured and sent to Virginia, Jack begins to worry about his own position as he had been briefly present at that rebellion and fears that someone will identify him as a Jacobite sympathiser. This provides context for Defoe to offer a brief overview of events at Preston and their aftermath:

> [T]he Action at *Preston* happen'd, and the Miserable People surrender'd to the King's Troops; some were executed for Examples, as in such Cases is usual; and the Government extending Mercy to the Multitude, they were kept in *Chester* Castle, and other places a considerable time, till they were disposed of, some one Way, some another, as we shall hear. (301)

[69] Katherine A. Armstrong, "'I Was a Kind of an Historian': The Productions of History in Defoe's Colonel Jack," in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro and James Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 109.

Details are provided for events that Jack, in Virginia, would be unlikely to have direct knowledge of, tipping the narrative back into the realms of parable and speculation by exposing its fictionality. The text here resembles dispatches of foreign news as Jack is reliant on reports that he hears about events back in England. His personal story stands in for the anxieties of all those involved in the Preston rising, even if Jack's actions are self-interested as his concern is entirely for his own fortune rather than for the fate of his fellow protestors. That Jack's experiences can stand in for the nation has prompted Armstrong to argue that "the personal ambition which makes Jack careless of his fellow human beings is what binds him to them and to his historical moment, for it proves that he is the product of that careless and divided society in the first place."[70]

Defoe does not simply progress from being a periodicalist to a novelist. He continually develops and refines a mode of expression that began to course throughout the print ecology, and which would be found in both long and short form fictions. While Richetti characterises Defoe's longer fictions such as the *Journal of the Plague Year* as "a pseudo-history and a proto-novel" this terminology, with its desire to see Defoe breaking new ecological ground, does not reflect the more organic cross-fertilization that occurred between the essay and long form fiction.[71] The conversable essay that would come to define eighteenth-century periodical writing was pioneered by Defoe, and the conversational style of his periodicals bleeds through into the pages of his longer form fictions. In experimenting with antagonistic and conversational modes of expression Defoe created new structures for carrying out conversations and arguments with readers in both his periodicals and longer form fictions. As Mee

[70] Armstrong, "Productions of History," 110.
[71] Richetti, *Life of Daniel Defoe*, 301.

argues, "conversation may have been promoted as an arena for settling differences without conflict […] but it proved a battleground for all kinds of anxieties about the nature of communication" be it in fictions, histories, or parables.[72] From the shapeless Scandal Club and the Mad Man dialogues, through to Crusoe and Colonel Jack, Defoe's characters use conversation as a battlefield from which to launch an attack on commonly held beliefs and ideas. The friction that characterised the intersubjective exchanges in Defoe's periodical essays might have softened in his longer form prose works, but the desire to spark the collision of minds remained the same. It is too simplistic to chart a progression from the periodical to the novel. There is a continual interchange between the two forms as each medium experiments with new modes of discourse to create alternative models for fictive narrative.

[72] Mee, *Conversable Worlds*, 5.

Eliza Haywood: Witness Testimony and Credibility

> *The Rabble gather round the Man of News,*
> *And, gaping, seem to listen with their Mouths* […]
>
> So fond, indeed, are most People of Novelties, that they run greedily to hear what they before are convinced will have no Resemblance of Truth in it; and instead of condemning, as they ought to do, the Imposter, seem pleased at his Endeavours to deceive them.[1]

With a career that stretched across five decades, Eliza Haywood was nothing if not a prolific writer. From 1719 up until her death in 1756 she worked dextrously across a range of print genres. More so than any other author in this study, Haywood played fast and loose with the print ecology and by the end of her career she was writing novels that resembled periodicals and creating periodicals that clearly appropriated the rhetoric of longer form fiction. This dextrous blending of literary form has prompted Kathryn King to characterise Haywood as "slippery, fluid, multifarious, strategic, opportunistic, [and] chameleon-like."[2] Throughout her career, Haywood exploited the diverse range of literary genres and print formats that were circulating in the print marketplace, not only writing periodicals and novels but also dramas, amatory fictions, political satires, and secret histories. She regularly brings these genres into dialogue with one another and irrespective of the outward form her writing takes, her fictional prose consistently demonstrates an interest in the power of print. Examining the print ecology with a sceptical eye, Haywood deploys fictionality to explore the shortcomings of different literary forms and to criticise the tendency among reading audiences to fail to recognise when an author is using fiction. Concerns with the way readers interacted with print find a succinct expression in her periodical the *Female*

[1] *The Female Spectator*, No. 18 in *The Selected Works of Eliza Haywood: Part II*, ed. Christine Blouch and Rebecca Sayers Hanson, 3 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), II.3:200. Further references are given parenthetically in text.
[2] Kathryn R. King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 195.

Spectator (1744-46) as she describes those who gather around the "Man of News" as "listening with their Mouths" (*FS*.18 III.200), rather than with their ears. In considering how reading audiences interact with print and news reports in problematic ways, Haywood invokes a disjunction between listening and speaking, and so between reading and hearing, that characterises her wider exploration of readers' credulity and their inability to identify true testimony from what is false or invented.

This chapter examines Haywood's use of fictionality as she exposes the shortcomings in the way reading audiences interact with printed texts. It focuses in particular on eye- and ear-witness testimony to consider how she uses her scandal fictions, periodicals, and novels to explore the power of print and encourage readers to think more carefully about how the material they read has been constructed. Exploring how print is a technology with the potential to mediate and moderate society's views and reading practices, Haywood uses observation, hearing, and empirical knowledge more generally to develop reader awareness of how fiction was becoming the dominant mode of expression within both long and short form prose. From *A Spy upon the Conjurer* (1724) to the *Invisible Spy*, *The Dumb Projector* (1725) to the *Female Spectator*, the oral, aural, and visual are recurring tropes in Haywood's writing. Critical attention typically focuses on her use of the visual. Juliette Merritt, in particular, has drawn attention to how Haywood "appropriates the critical and epistemic gaze of the spectator" to create an exposé of female existence, arguing that "to read her is to witness an analysis of those conditions and a set of strategies through which women can enhance their social power."[3] I here want to extend Merritt's analysis to examine how Haywood aligns this epistemic gaze with other senses, most

[3] Juliette Merritt, *Beyond Spectacle: Eliza Haywood's Female Spectators* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 12; 22.

notably the aural, as she explores not only social power but the construction of prose fiction itself. Addressing how Haywood uses the aural, oral, and visual this chapter moves chronologically through four of her works to consider how she turns spy upon the print ecology. This approach challenges the trend in Haywood studies to use the *Female Spectator* as a watershed moment that separates her scandalous early works from the supposedly more moral texts written toward the end of her career. I bring her periodical writing into conversation with two of her longer form prose fictions – her first, *Love in Excess* (1719), and her last, *The Invisible Spy* (1755) – to examine how they are inflected with the formal qualities of periodical writing, just as her periodicals are imbued with the rhetoric of longer form fiction.

Genre Bending Proclivities

The significance of Haywood's writing for the history of prose fiction in English has only been acknowledged within the last thirty years or so. While she is notably absent from many studies of the history of the novel, including those by Lennard Davis, Michael McKeon, and Ian Watt, feminist scholarship has illuminated how Haywood champions women's voices, subverts traditional gender roles, and challenges conventional uses of established literary genres.[4] It would not be an overstatement to argue that Haywood's work is essential for any investigation into the role of fiction within the early eighteenth century. She had a vast knowledge of the print ecology and literary marketplace, and even briefly ran her own print shop in Covent Garden under

[4] See Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992); Toni Bowers, *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christine Blouch, "Eliza Haywood and the Romance of Obscurity," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 3, no. 3 (1991): 535–52; Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Marilyn L. Williamson, *Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990).

the "Sign of Fame" in 1740. Her extensive knowledge of the print trade underscores her continual interrogation of the conventions used in different print formats. This has prompted recent scholarship to begin to focus on Haywood's awareness of the mechanics of print culture, but such studies are usually confined to the *Female Spectator* or the *Invisible Spy*, and do not consider how these concerns run throughout her body of work more generally.[5] Even though Merritt has called for scholarship to take a "long view" of Haywood's work, and so pay attention to the sustained use "of a set of preoccupations and strategies" throughout her career, there is still a tendency to divide Haywood's texts into early and late, or into scandalous and moral works.[6] This has made it easy to miss the rhetorical and formal connections that exist between her earlier more scandalous works, her periodical enterprises, and her later moralistic novels.

The tendency to segregate Haywood's works into early or late texts has been common practice since the late eighteenth century. In the *Progress of Romance* (1785), Clara Reeve called for Haywood's "first writings [to] be forgotten, and the last [to] survive to do her honour" specifically noting that the "works by which she is most likely to be known to posterity, are the *Female Spectator*, and the *Invisible Spy*" – respectively, a periodical and a long form prose fiction.[7] Reeve was not alone in preferring Haywood's later works; David Baker noted in 1782 that Haywood's genius lay "in the novel kind of writing."[8] Yet Baker's "novel kind of writing" is a phrase that opens up two issues: it implies not only a genre – novels – but an innovative way of writing. These twin meanings of 'novel' are particularly evident in Haywood's most

[5] See for example Merritt, *Beyond Spectacle*; Lynn Marie Wright and Donald J. Newman, *Fair Philosopher: Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006).
[6] Merritt, *Beyond Spectacle*, 5.
[7] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, 2 vols. (1785), I:122.
[8] David Erskine Baker, *Biographia Dramatica* (London, 1782), 215.

generically unstable work, the *Invisible Spy*. The text still resists a definite genre classification for some scholars; Anthony Pollock describes it as "one of [Haywood's] last periodical enterprises" and Jennie Batchelor terms it a "pseudo-periodical."[9] Manushag N. Powell, meanwhile, categorises the text as a novel with the caveat that although "not conceived, published, or marketed as a periodical [… the *Invisible Spy*] is nonetheless governed by rhetorical gestures that tie it far more thoroughly to the Addisonian mode of periodical writing."[10] This generic indeterminacy emphasises the mutual influence of the essay-periodical and the novel on one another as Haywood's last work of long form prose demonstrates many of the features that Powell and J. Paul Hunter respectively associate with the essay-periodical and the novel.[11] In Baker's terms, then, the *Invisible Spy* is a *novel* novel on account of its highly innovative and periodical-like structure. The text's generic indeterminacy, then, seems a conscious choice that results from a lifetime of working successfully across different genres.

This blending of the essay-periodical with elements of longer form prose fiction is not only found within the *Invisible Spy*. Powell has observed that Haywood was an expert writer of periodicals and that she "used a wide variety of periodical conventions in her late projects, so much so that the line between periodical and other formats becomes tantalizingly blurred."[12] I want to suggest that this variety of periodical conventions is not only found in Haywood's late projects but exists too within her amatory fictions of the 1710s and 1720s. The conventions of periodical writing that Powell identifies, as discussed in the Introduction, can be found in works such as *Love in Excess*, which was originally published in three separate parts between

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[9] Anthony Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690–1755* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 166; Batchelor and Powell, "Introduction" in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain*, 8.
[10] Powell, "Eliza Haywood, Periodicalist(?)," 181.
[11] See Powell, "Eliza Haywood, Periodicalist(?)," 168; Hunter, *Before Novels*, 23-25.
[12] Powell, "Eliza Haywood, Periodicalist(?)," 168.

1719 and 1720. Haywood's fluid conceptualisation of genre facilitates her heterogenous approach to print form. Her dexterity in bringing together and blurring the boundaries between different species of text suggests that eighteenth-century readers and authors did not conceive of these works along the strict generic lines that we do today. Rather Haywood draws together elements of different print forms to "take advantage of the fads in the literary marketplace" as Paula Backscheider suggests.[13] While such a decision is driven by the need to make a living from writing, Haywood also exploits those fads by adopting the rhetorical strategies and narrative outlook of various species of fiction in order to expose the workings of her chosen genre.

Haywood regularly encourages reading audiences to consider the process of writing and so contemplate the designs an author has upon them when they set pen to paper. She also asks them to think more carefully about what they themselves do when they read. As noted earlier, Richard Walsh has suggested that fictionality accounts "for the *effects* of representation which dominate the experience of reading fiction," and it is with these effects and more specifically how individual readers understand them, that, I argue, Haywood is concerned in her periodical and longer form prose fictions.[14] Haywood regularly turns a sceptical eye on the written word as she creates a series of literary spies and spectators who expose the mutability of print and challenge reading audiences to interrogate their own reading practices more thoroughly. Teaching readers to identify the use and effects of literary devices within prose fiction formed a key part of Haywood's work and Catherine Gallagher has noted that for novelistic fictionality to be successful, readers first had to acquire "the ability

[13] Paula R. Backscheider, "The Shadow of an Author: Eliza Haywood," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 11, no. 1 (1998): 93.
[14] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 6.

to tell it apart from both fact and (this is the key) deception."[15] Helping readers to identify moments of fact and fiction is crucial to Haywood's exploration of the workings of the print ecology. In repeatedly drawing attention to how texts facilitate knowledge production and consumption, she repeatedly asks readers to question where the line between facts and fictions actually lies. Monika Fludernik argues that fictionality provides a "strategy of deceptive (or ironic) authentication through factual pretense" that is a response to "the craving for factual information in the wake of scientific endeavour."[16] As we shall see throughout this chapter, in order to tell fictionality apart from deception Haywood regularly taps into a rhetoric of scientific inquiry, referencing theories about the plurality of worlds, microscopy, telescopy, and the 1714 Longitude Act, to affect scrutiny of printed texts in both her periodical and longer form prose. By using eye- and ear-witness testimony, Haywood explores the relationship between empirical knowledge and the more epistemic knowledge that is acquired through the process of reading and processing printed information.

Love in Excess **and Fatal Inquiry**

Love in Excess, or, to use the work's full title, *Love in Excess; or the Fatal Enquiry. A Novel*, brings together three different modes of writing. The prose fiction is a scandal or seduction narrative, an investigation or treatise, and an inventive story that takes the form of a short tale of love. When considering how the term "novel" was used in this period, particularly with regard to romance writing, Scott Black has pointed out the ease with which ideas of novelty can slip into discussions of the novel. He argues that "novelties could have had a self-conscious existence […], a self-consciousness

[15] Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," 338.
[16] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 79.

that is part of the story of their emergence."[17] Such self-consciousness, I want to suggest, is particularly evident in a novel that deliberately styles itself as an inquiry. *Love in Excess* not only searches into affairs of the heart but into its own construction and status as a printed fiction – not least as the key elements of the plot revolve around the sending and (mis)interpreting of handwritten letters and printed texts. Haywood's seduction novel links "the desire to find something out, curiosity, with the desire to be aroused" and as Barbara Benedict suggests, she accordingly "negotiates the two poles of curiosity to endorse inquiry while condemning credulity."[18] Such a connection between curiosity and arousal is inevitable in a work of seduction as the characters' delight in sexual exploration is the means through which readers' interest in the plot is aroused voyeuristically. Thus, as each of the characters is seduced by the various love letters, so readers are seduced by the text; their own curiosity to learn how the plot will resolve itself causes them to become participants in the text's seductions. The simultaneous seduction of characters and readers allows *Love in Excess* to reflect not just on its manner of construction but enables the narrative to encourage readers to think more carefully about their own interactions with the story and what they themselves do when they read. As such, the novel is filled with "places where we can glimpse a genre-in-the-making looking at itself," as King has suggested.[19] Haywood's amatory fiction begins to experiment with a series of tropes that are more often associated with "better established and, one might say, better bred literary forms" in order to simultaneously affect entertainment and diversion, curiosity and seduction.[20]

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[17] Scott Black, "Trading Sex for Secrets in Haywood's *Love in Excess*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 15, no. 2 (2003): 222.
[18] Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 139.
[19] Kathryn R. King, "Spying upon the Conjurer: Haywood, Curiosity, and 'the Novel' in the 1720s," *Studies in the Novel* 30, no. 2 (1998): 180.
[20] King, "Spying upon the Conjurer," 180.

Viewed in these terms, *Love in Excess* might first and foremost be a seduction narrative, but it sets up an interest in curiosity, inquiry, and discernment that would diffuse throughout Haywood's writing. I therefore want to reframe our understanding of *Love in Excess* in relation to questions of epistemological authority. I focus on the novel's second volume to examine how the fascination with the power of the written word that has been identified in Haywood's later works can be seen, too, in her earlier writings.

Love in Excess turns upon misdirection and confusion as the main plot line revolves around the sending and receiving of letters. Toni Bowers argues that these letters "not only offer (seemingly) direct representations of interior passions, especially those of women, but also add layers of complication to the novel's overlapping plots of seduction and deception."[21] Yet, as most of the correspondence relates to affairs of the heart, the reproduction of these materials within the novel transforms readers from detached spectators into unwitting voyeurs who are complicit in the novel's secrets and intrigues. By having access to private correspondence, reading audiences become intimately acquainted with everyone's secrets and Haywood uses the exchange of letters and accounts of characters reading to explore the connection between fictionality, speculation, credibility, and reading practices.

The first of the novel's fated inquiries begins when Count D'elmont receives an anonymous letter from a would-be lover. The letter was sent by Alovisa who took pains to ensure that "my letter bore no certain mark by which he might distinguish me."[22] This care results in D'elmont only having a single clue from which to determine who sent the epistle: the author will distinguish themselves by having "the eyes of the

[21] Toni Bowers, "Epistolary Fiction" in *Oxford History of the Novel in English*, 411.
[22] Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess, Or, The Fatal Enquiry*, ed. David Oakleaf (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), 43. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

most passionate of all his votaresses" (39). As D'elmont searches the faces of his admirers to identify his would-be lover, the written word opens up a world of speculations, fantasies, and possibilities. As Nicholas Hudson has suggested of Haywood's work in general, within her fictions "writing [becomes] more powerful than speech because it is private and unsupervised, allows the reader to dwell luxuriously on certain words, and leaves gaps for the imagination to speculate" about their meaning.[23] The irony is, of course, that as D'elmont speculates about Alovisa's words so, too, do readers. Private correspondence is opened up to be surveyed, or supervised, by multiple pairs of eyes, each of which will dwell upon different words and engage with them in alternate ways. The reading of letters becomes an alternative mode of spectatorship or witnessing and it is through the inclusion of these letters that readers of *Love in Excess* are given access to the opinions of the seducer as well as to those of the person they desired to seduce. Over the course of the novel, some twenty-nine instances of correspondence are printed in full and hence the twin acts of reading and writing are highly significant to *Love in Excess*. The letters are objects to be consumed by the characters, in this case Amena and D'elmont, as well as by readers who share in the pleasures and dissatisfactions of their courtship. Yet reading audiences can also see more than the individual characters as they are partial to the inner thoughts of almost everyone within the novel, often having an insight into the conditions under which the letters were written and sent. Reading audiences also know from the outset that D'elmont's powers of deduction and inquiry are flawed: he might speculate that this particular letter was sent as a joke by his companions, before changing his mind and attributing its authorship to Amena, but readers are always

[23] Nicholas Hudson, "Formal Experimentation and Theories of Fiction" in *Oxford History of the Novel in English,* 340.

aware of its real sender. It is through detailing the deceptions, fictions, and misimpressions that result from consuming written materials that Haywood invites readers to reflect upon their own credentials to interpret printed information and ultimately to distinguish fact from fiction.

Haywood's concern with how people understand and make use of the material they read is most evident in the novel's second volume in which three episodes centre around the act of reading. In one of these Melanthe is praised for "the softness of the style" (107) of some verses on love when she reads aloud from her pocketbook, while the other episodes focus on the two central characters: D'elmont and Melliora. In the first of these D'elmont stumbles across Melliora when she is contemplating "the works of Monsieur L'fontenelle" (100). Fontenelle was best known for his popular work *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686), or *Discourse concerning the Plurality of Worlds* – a text that Haywood would go on to discuss further in the nineteenth number of the *Female Spectator*. In referencing Fontenelle's scientific treatise, Haywood offers an alternative textual diet to that of the romance narrative and Melliora is therefore seen to reject narratives that proceed along the lines of *Love in Excess*. For, when D'elmont remarks on the unusual nature of Melliora's choice of reading material, she offers him the riposte that she usually avoids romances as consulting this kind of narrative would deprive her "of so choice an improvement as this book [Fontenelle] has given" (100). Continuing the exchange, D'elmont observes how lucky she is to be born in "an age successive to that which has produced so many fine treatises for your entertainment" (100). There is a striking contrast made in the dialogue between literary genres suited for improvement and those which affect entertainment or mere diversion. Yet in setting up this clear opposition between entertainment and instruction, *Love in Excess* is a romance that, to a certain degree,

attempts to affect both – even if its readers are guilty of having set aside scientific scrutiny to consult a work of romantic intrigue. This scene, therefore, seems a pointed comment in which Haywood's novels become, as Black argues, "part of the discourse in which the pleasures of novelty are offered not just as objects to be consumed but as terms in which to think, terms with which readers may understand what they do as readers."[24]

In creating reading scenes Haywood draws attention to her chosen literary form and to the implications of her text's classification as an inquiry and a novel. This is further evidenced in the third and final reading scene. Here, audiences become more closely aligned with Melliora who this time is discovered reading a romance, despite her earlier protestations that she prefers other kinds of narrative:

> [C]asting his eyes on the book which lay there, [D'elmont] found it to be Ovid's *Epistles*. "How madam," cried he, not a little pleased with the discovery, "dare you, who the other day so warmly inveighed against writings of this nature, trust your self with so dangerous an amusement? How happens it, that you are so suddenly come over to our party?" "Indeed, my lord," answered she, growing more disordered, "it was chance that directed this book to my hands"[.] (108)

Rather fittingly, given that they mainly contain affairs of love, Ovid's *Epistles* are invoked as a dangerous source of amusement and are ultimately used to aid D'elmont in his seduction. As Ovid's work revolves around the language of love and the eyes, the text is particularly suited for inclusion here and the *Epistles* notably provide the epigraph to the novel's second volume, which uses a quotation from the tale of Palamon and Arcite.[25] Haywood's use and citation of Dryden's works was not uncommon and reading audiences were well aware of her reliance on his narratives. The *Grub Street Journal* (1730-37), for example, satirised her amatory fictions and

[24] Black, "Trading Sex for Secrets," 225.
[25] See John Dryden "Palamon and Arcite" in *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (London: 1700), I:331-36.

printed an epigram about a woman whose deficient literary tastes lead her to find that while "Dryden's *Fables* are stuff of no use; / Haywood's *Novels* have charms – they're so charmingly loose!"[26] Yet in this scene in *Love in Excess*, Haywood finds use for Dryden's work; therefore, to follow through the logic of the couplet either her novel is not charming and so is useless, or both works possess equally loose morals. By taking the longer view of Haywood's career, it would appear that both the *Fables* and *Novels* are actually 'stuff of great use.' References to Dryden are found not just within Haywood's supposedly scandalous or "loose" writings but are also used to affect the moralizing agenda of her polite periodical; within the *Female Spectator* he is mentioned by name on thirty occasions and his works and translations are often quoted at length. Reading, then, can be deployed to affect a range of agendas and, in this case, it forms a key part of seduction. In considering D'elmont's attempts to seduce the object of his desire through reading, William Warner has argued that we can map "D'elmont's seduction of the virtuous Melliora onto Haywood's seduction of the reader who would abstain from novels" as "Haywood allows her heroine to become a figure for the general reader she intends to seduce."[27] Readers are lured into the world of romance reading, just like Melliora. Accordingly, D'elmont's speech could just as easily be addressed to readers who have already fallen prey to this kind of seduction and so choose to fill their leisure time by reading romances rather than scientific treatises.

With each new romantic plot line in *Love in Excess*, Haywood offers a variation on the theme of seduction. Every intrigue, case of mistaken identity, and misdirected letter represents a subtle shift in the rules that characters and reading

[26] "Epigram on a Lady, who despised Dryden's *Fables*," *Grub Street Journal* No.196, September 27, 1733.
[27] Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, 119.

audiences have to play by in order to understand the narrative. Black has suggested that "novels train readers to be agents in a textual game, not just subject to textual seduction; they are self-conscious narrative experiments that require self-aware readers for their effects."[28] *Love in Excess* is certainly a textual game as Haywood subtly changes the text's framework to constantly provoke readers' curiosity, ensuring that they cannot tire of their inquiries and will continue to derive pleasure from the narrative. While Black argues that the essay-periodical "offered early modern readers a tool that trained the readerly skills required in an evolving print culture" and which recognise "the interactive, mediated, and mediating activities of reading," these concerns are as evident in Haywood's longer form prose fictions as they are in her essays.[29]

The capacity of the written word to mediate the experiences of a single individual is aptly demonstrated when D'elmont thinks he has finally succeeded in his seduction of Melliora and found a way into her bed. However, rather than seducing the object of his desires he is actually both the seducer and the seduced. The person who had lain in his arms is actually another: Melanthe. The Count's confusion is captured and replicated by the narrative's broken syntax as Melliora enters the room and witnesses the after-effects of his unintended conquest:

> He beheld the person, whom he thought had lain in his arms, whom he had enjoyed, whose bulk and proportion he still saw in the bed, whom he was just going to address to, and for whom he had been in all the agonies of soul imaginable, come from a distant chamber[.] (144)

For an impossible moment, Melliora is both in the bed and in the doorway. While Warner notes that in moments such as this the reader "watches over the shoulder of

[28] Black, "Trading Sex for Secrets," 224.
[29] Black, *Of Essays,* 3.

the intriguer," in this case D'elmont, they are also in the doorway with Melliora, serenely watching the spectacle unfold.[30] Reading audiences function as a "virtual witness" – a position that has been defined by Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer as the process through which a reader can "be recruited as a witness and be put in a position where he could validate experimental phenomena as matters of fact" – as they assume a more detached, prospective view that is neither fully aligned with the position of D'elmont or Melliora.[31] Readers know that the spectacle is real and D'elmont's powers of perception have betrayed him. It is in these moments that *Love in Excess* becomes particularly attuned to its own fictionality as this turn of events is only a surprise to D'elmont. While the Count asks "am I awake […] or is everything I see and hear illusion?" (144), readers always knew that Melliora was not in the bed. Yet to a certain degree D'elmont's confusion and inability to recognise the object of his desires is not without grounds. As Helen Thompson points out, "the novel's first volume assigns female characters names (Amena, Alovisa, Anaret, and Ansellina) that barely sustain the basic semiotic function of differentiation."[32] When Melliora and Melanthe are added to the mix in the second volume, the syntactical confusion worsens. Like the reader, D'elmont begins to struggle to remember who is who. As all he sees and hears is illusion, Haywood calls into question the semiotics of her entire fiction and exposes the depths of the fictionality and deceptions at work within *Love in Excess*. Rather like D'elmont, the novel's readers are challenged to make sense of what they see and read.

[30] Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, 96.
[31] Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 63.
[32] Helen Thompson, *Fictional Matter: Empiricism, Corpuscles, and the Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 108–9.

Eye-Witnesses and the Business of Spectating

The *Female Spectator*, begun a quarter of a century after the publication of *Love in Excess*, continues and deepens Haywood's exploration of visual, oral, and aural evidence. While the work clearly owes a formal and titular debt to Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Spectator*, Haywood's monthly essays are characterised by a generic playfulness, and even restlessness. Indeed, this hybrid essay-periodical showcases her full range of dramatic, novelistic, poetic, and scandalous writing. The *Female Spectator* was expansive, covering a variety of subject matter and exploring topics at length; with essays three times as long as those written by Addison and Steele, Haywood's periodical was able to proceed along a very different path to that laid out by earlier models of periodical essay writing.[33] She emphasises the multivocality of her project and expresses a desire not just to spectate but to speak out, stating that "how many Contributors soever there may happen to be to the Work, they are to be considered only as several Members of one Body, of which I am the Mouth" (*FS*.1 II.19). While this "one Body" includes the readers whose letters are incorporated into the work, it refers directly to Haywood's unusual eidolon. The eponymous Female Spectator directly channels the voices of three other women – Mira, a married woman; the unmarried Euphrosine; and the nameless Widow – and is a conduit through which four sets of spectatorial observations are orally conveyed. With the Female Spectator declaring herself to be a reformed coquette, the club represents the different social roles typically available to women throughout their lifetime. It is by exploring the connection between the aural, oral, and visual that the *Female Spectator* aligns fictionality with a naïve empiricism to critically examine the credibility of the printed

[33] Each book is estimated to be 6,000 words in length. See Sarah Prescott and Jane Spencer, "Prattling, Tattling and Knowing Everything: Public Authority and the Female Editorial Persona in the Early Essay-Periodical," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000), 45.

word. Taking a sceptical view of how readers are often seduced or engrossed by the output of the press, Haywood's flagship periodical exposes and probes the presence of fictionality within the wider print ecology.

Throughout the *Female Spectator* Haywood uses a rhetoric of witness testimony to critique the ways in which print materials produce epistemological and empiric forms of knowledge. One helpful way of thinking about how Haywood crafts her own mode of observational wisdom and authority is to situate her within broader understandings of reading as a form of knowledge production in the eighteenth century. Scholars including Benedict have noted that early periodicals carry out "quasi-scientific analyses [of] the social world" and Roger Maioli has recognised the link between scientific inquiry and the rhetoric of early fiction, arguing that knowledge gained from reading is "drawn from one's direct observations, the testimony of eyewitnesses, and oral and written sources of attested credentials."[34] While Maioli makes this comment of long form fiction, Michael Ketcham has taken a similar approach to periodical print, likening reading a periodical to the process of knowledge production and noting how the form functions like "corpuscular moments of experience" which are partitioned into discrete units.[35] Thus the periodical's "medium of publication mimics the medium of cognition."[36] This makes the twin arts of witnessing and spectatorship more important for the periodicalist than they first seem. Within the context of the *Female Spectator*, this becomes particularly evident in the second issue. Here Haywood creates a series of anecdotes that consider the importance

[34] Benedict, *Curiosity*, 93; Roger Maioli, *Empiricism and the Early Theory of the Novel: Fielding to Austen* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 13.
[35] Ketcham, *Transparent Designs*, 162.
[36] Ketcham, *Transparent Designs*, 162.

of trusting sensory perception before turning to address the impression that can be created by eye-witness testimony and visual information:

> [W]hat the Eye is Witness of strikes the most, and makes the most deep and lasting Impression:—I chose, therefore, rather to mention this Lady, because I doubt not but many of my Readers were Spectators, as well as myself, of her amiable Behaviour on this Occasion, and perhaps also on many others, when I was not so happy to be present. (*FS*.2 II.78)

With reading being a mode of direct observation, it is fitting that Haywood's experiments with fictionality and credibility within her printed works manifest themselves in a rhetoric of witness testimony. The connection between witnessing, reading, and spectating is at the forefront of Haywood's project as the *Female Spectator* crafts its own mode of observational authority.

When setting out the scope of the *Female Spectator*, Haywood stated that the method by which her project was most likely to succeed was through relating "Observations of human Nature" as "Curiosity had, more or less, a Share in every Breast" (*FS*.1 II.18). The text's "Speculations" would be extended "even as far as *France, Rome, Germany*, and other foreign Parts" and Haywood professed that she had secured "an eternal Fund of Intelligence" as she places spies "not only in all the Places of Resort in and about this great Metropolis" (*FS*.1 II.19). These observations, speculations, and information gained through spying are then "exhibited under the general Title of *The Female Spectator*" (*FS*.1 II.19) as the eidolon collates these different accounts before re-presenting them as narratives, inset tales, and essays for the benefit of reading audiences. Readers then act as a form of witness to the observations and testimonies recorded in the periodical, something that is emphasised in the ninth issue, where a correspondent declares that "I would not be thought to influence you to any Partiality in my Favour: All are Witnesses of what I write" (*FS*.9 II.330). In this letter, sent by a correspondent who identifies themselves only by the

name "The Querist," reading is clearly established as both a form of witnessing and spectating. By clearly connecting reading and writing with these two modes of observation, Haywood makes readers integral to her spectatorial agenda. She invites readers to use their own skills to determine whether the accounts offered in the *Female Spectator* are truths or lies, parables or inset narratives.

A fascination with the lives of others underpins Haywood's periodical. When outlining the scope of the *Female Spectator*, she declared that one of the project's main aims was to gratify reading audiences by making them "acquainted with other People's Affairs" (*FS*.1 II.18). This recalls the basic premise of the scandal narratives and secret histories such as *Love in Excess* that were popular earlier in the century.[37] Within the *Female Spectator*, familiarity with personal affairs was not simply a means to satisfy curiosity and affect readers' diversion but "should at the same Time teach every one to regulate their own" (*FS*.1 II.18) affairs and behaviours. To affect both entertainment and a pedagogical end, among the many stories offered by the *Female Spectator* are "a little Narrative of supernatural Appearance" (*FS*.11 II.377), a "Narrative of an Adventure" (*FS*.14 III.39), and several narratives of love. As Aleksondra Hultquist notes, in the *Female Spectator* Haywood "couches her advice in a forum that offers practical instruction through narrative examples."[38] However, Haywood never explicitly advocates one course of action over another and the decision whether to follow any of the examples of her 'little narratives' is left entirely up to readers. This use of illustrative stories aligns the *Female Spectator* more closely to theories of novelistic fictionality; Walsh states that one of the key traits of this mode

[37] See Bullard and Carnell, *The Secret History in Literature*.
[38] Aleksondra Hultquist, "Marriage in Haywood; or Amatory Reading Rewarded" in *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s*, ed. Susan Carlile (Plymouth: Lehigh University Press, 2011), 37.

of expression is the ability to create an "occasion of storytelling, dedicated to that goal of imposing fictional worlds, and eliciting the reader's moral engagement with them."[39] Haywood constantly elicits though unlike Defoe does not directly tell her audience what is right, or turn to exhortation.

Providing readers with a series of morally inflected tales, each instalment of the *Female Spectator* typically engages with a single theme and offers multiple perspectives on a topic by grouping together a series of letters, anecdotes and short stories. These themes are especially noticeable in the three issues that explore microscopy and telescopy as the periodical turns to directly consider scientific modes of observation after receiving lengthy letters from one "Philo-Naturæ."[40] The natural philosopher is by far the most prolific of the *Female Spectator*'s correspondents and while over 150 different letter writers feature in the periodical, he is the most vocal and his letters are printed on four separate occasions. Encouraging women to embark upon microscopic investigations, the lover of nature notes how "the *Royal Society* might be indebted to every fair *Columbus* for a new World of Beings to employ their Speculations" (*FS*.15 III.88). So-called "fair philosophers," he suggests, possess an acute eye for detail; the attention that is often paid to items of dress "at the Ball, the Court, [or] the Opera" (*FS*.15 III.81) can easily be retrained for alternative forms of scrutiny. However, Philo-Naturæ's advocacy of microscopic inquiry is to be treated with caution. Reflecting on experiential knowledge and the correlation between the early novel and scientific inquiry, particularly regarding microscopes and telescopes, John Bender notes that in both of these forms "artificiality and contrivance all raised

[39] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 6.
[40] For a discussion of the reliance of these letters on the microscope see Tita Chico, *The Experimental Imagination: Literary Knowledge and Science in the British Enlightenment* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2018), 68.

the spectre of fictionality and trust."[41] Haywood's exchange with the philosopher is no exception and she never fully endorses his lessons. While Haywood had previously championed women's book learning, exploring the benefits of print for "informing the Mind, correcting the Manners, and enlarging the Understanding" (*FS*.7 II.254) in an earlier issue, Philo-Naturæ warns women against pursuing bookish knowledge. He proposes that they should eschew the theories of Aldrovandus and Newton and explore the natural world only so far as their natural curiosity permits and "so much as Nature herself teaches" (*FS*.15 III.83-84). There is a clear irony in Haywood's handling of this suggestion that women should stay away from book learning: Philo-Naturæ's letter is followed by an alternative story which argues that "the Love of Reading, like the Love of Virtue, is so laudable, that few are hardy enough to avow their Disgust to it" (*FS*.15 III.91). Reading matter that is "well digested" (*FS*.15 III.92) ought to be consumed on a regular basis and when content is selected by a person of discretion, capable of making a "Choice of some interesting Part of History" (*FS*.15 III.91), reading cannot fail to be an instructive pastime, even for those who are not naturally inclined towards bookish pursuits. This concern with the propriety of reading is part of the issue's broader exploration of discernment, taste, and perception; Philo-Naturæ's letter is situated between a theoretical discussion of taste and an anecdote about how to acquire a taste for books. Given Philo-Naturæ's views on women's education, it is perhaps unsurprising that the quadrumvirate ultimately find microscopy to be a short-sighted venture. As the microscopic "Experiments" of the Female Spectator and her club are curtailed by inclement weather, they begin to turn their attention to the telescope and in book seventeen this prompts Haywood to assert

[41] John Bender, "Novel Knowledge: Judgement, Experience, Experiment," *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 292.

her own book learning and familiarity with other scientific modes of inquiry by showing a familiarity with the works of Copernicus, Galileo, Gasendi, De Molieres, Euclid, Newton, and Descartes.

This pointed referencing of books which engage with different theories of optics allows Haywood's fictional and illustrative stories to revolve around an awareness of empirical modes of knowledge production. This dual interest in factuality and fictionality underpins the *Female Spectator*; while the periodical uses inset tales and fictional anecdotes from the outset, Haywood also claimed in the very first number that her periodical sought to "bring real Facts upon the Stage" (*FS*.1 II.20) – or rather upon the printed page in order to educate readers. The performativity inherent in this conception of the periodical's aims suggests that the *Female Spectator* is constantly attuned to the dangers of authors spreading misinformation, and particularly in the dangers of having that misinformation acted out in a public forum. Hence, Haywood takes affront with the "Rabble" who "gather round the Man of News" and "listen with their Mouths" (*FS*.18 III.200) and so neither properly see, nor listen, to information that is being presented to them. The complex relationship between listening, talking and seeing has led Catherine Ingrassia to argue that "like her fictional texts, Haywood's periodicals [...] examine sites of oral and discursive exchange and create a complicated representation of the shifting hierarchical relationship between oral and literate culture."[42] However, Haywood's periodicals are not simply "like" her fictional texts, rather they *are* fictional texts. Haywood's exploration of the intersection of the oral and the literate transcends questions of genre

[42] Catherine Ingrassia, "Eliza Haywood, Periodicals, and the Function of Orality" in *Fair Philosopher*, 147.

and is as pertinent to her use of fiction in her periodical writing as it is to works such as *Love in Excess*.

Within her periodical essays Haywood often reflects on the intersection of factuality and fictionality, noting that:

> Fabulous Accounts of *real* Facts, instead of informing the Mind, are the most dangerous Corrupters of it, and are much worse than *Romances*, because *their* very Titles warn us from giving any Credit to them; and the *others* attempt to beguile our Understanding, and too often succeed by the Cloke of *Simplicity* and *Truth*. (*FS.*15 III.92-93)

While its scandalous and even immoral content made *Love in Excess* unpopular with mid-century readers, the *Female Spectator* suggests that romance writing was less dangerous than misreported facts or those works of fiction that styled themselves as 'true histories.' The danger for readers lies in not recognising how information has been dressed up by its author. The *Female Spectator* states that it is on account of its "more pleasing Garb" that fiction is able "to make a very deep Impression; or, more properly speaking, creates a Prejudice in us" (*FS.*15 III.93). Such an awareness of how fiction can be cloaked within other modes of writing, and that the prejudice that it creates "shuts our Eyes against Conviction" (*FS.*15 III.93), offers an insight into how Haywood may have deployed fictionality within her own writing. Erla Wilputte has observed that throughout her work, Haywood creates "a self-conscious reflection of writing and reading" which promotes "an awareness of the conventional literary devices and precipitat[es] an interrogation of readers' uncritical acceptance of them."[43] However, Haywood is not merely promoting an awareness of conventional devices; she initiates an interrogation of these modes of construction, and of readers'

[43] Earla A. Wilputte, "Parody in Eliza Haywood's A *Letter from H— G——g, Esq.*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 17, no. 2 (2005): 211.

understanding of them, by bringing genres together in unusual ways and exposing the conventional by putting it into a nonconventional form.

In deviating from expected literary conventions Haywood's writing can make a deeper impression on readers and can begin to conduct a form of social experiment. The function of books – whether essay-periodicals or novels – is to act as "repositories of empirical evidence" not by necessarily relating universal truths, but rather "by adding to the reader's store of experiences," as Maioli suggests.[44] Therefore, as noted earlier, each issue of the *Female Spectator* presents a series of closely linked scenarios as it attempts to run a range of 'experiments' that examine human behaviours; each story offers a subtle variation on the last, changing the conditions under which the social investigation is carried out. In considering the empirical and epistemological rhetoric found within Haywood's novels, Bender has noted that Haywood's texts rely "on a rhetoric that allows, [and] even demands, that readers add to their stock of knowledge through assent to the truth of absent experience."[45] These same demands are made of readers of the *Female Spectator* through the competing scenarios offered in each instalment of the monthly periodical. Knowledge can be achieved through the virtual witnessing, or rather reading, of Haywood's periodical fictions. This results in the *Female Spectator* considering the importance of being both an eye- and ear-witness to verify the truth of a (fictive) scenario: "All are Witnesses of what I write, and join to beg you will give Judgment with Freedom and Impartiality" (*FS*.9 II.330); "I was once an Eye-witness of an Example of this kind'" (*FS*.16 III.109). After all, "all who venture to appear in Print, are to be judged" (*FS*.22 III.321). It is the paradox of print that it can criticise the veracity of eyewitness testimony at the same time as

[44] Maioli, *Empiricism and the Early Theory of the Novel*, 20.
[45] Bender, "Novel Knowledge," 293.

being aware that in encouraging readers to engage more critically with what they read the spectatorial text brings about its own inevitable judgement and criticism. The social experiment that is performed by the *Female Spectator* requires readers to recognise that while they are able to observe the experiments conducted in each of her inset stories, they are also participants in a larger social experiment that examines reader credulity.

While fictionality pervades the *Female Spectator*, the importance of fiction for this periodical is aptly demonstrated in the nineteenth issue, which uses the language of long form fiction as part of its exploration of witness testimony and credibility. After publishing a brief letter from a correspondent who identifies themselves as Eumenes, Haywood publishes a "history" of Topsy-Turvy island, an account which she claims "is the Transcript our ingenious Correspondent has obliged us with" (*FS*.19 III.220-21). In considering this transcript, it is worth recalling Fludernik's definition of fictionality "as the invention of fictive worlds which are presented in textual, dramatic (i.e., performative), or visual (and audiovisual) form for the entertainment, diversion, intellectual stimulation, and (moral) instruction of recipients."[46] The report about life on the island therefore provides a fictional, almost novelistic interlude within the *Female Spectator*. Haywood vividly sets "before the Eyes of my worthy Fellow-Citizens of *London*" (*FS*.19 III.220) an alternative model for society as she describes the imaginary island in intricate detail, outlining both its history and the lifestyle of the inhabitants. Furthering the connection between this episode and longer form prose fiction, and particularly the claims of the latter to be found manuscripts or edited biographical works rather than pieces of invention, the "Adventures" that Haywood relates about Topsy-Turvy island are those which have come within "the Reach of my

[46] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 77–78.

Observation" even though they might "seem dark and intricate, if not fabulous to my Readers" (*FS*.19 III.221). Acknowledging the fabulous nature of this tale, Haywood went on to note that stories of this ilk "will scarce gain Credit in *England*, yet it is no more than a Truth my own Eyes have been witness of" (*FS*.19 III.223). It is with a touch of irony, then, that she follows this story with another of Philo-Naturæ's letters. She once again undermines his views to add further weight to her suggestion that there is a danger in running "madding after Novelties, which are so far from giving us either Profit or Improvement" (*FS*.19 III.241) without first pausing to ask whether the pursuit will affect diversion or if it is simply a form of pure folly.

Time and again Haywood navigates the line between what is credible and what is implausible within the *Female Spectator* as she encourages her readers to avoid the temptation of overly indulging their fancy. Returning to her earlier concerns with telescopy and the probability of other worlds, she concludes her exploration of life in Topsy-Turvy island by returning to the question of whether life exists on other planets. Haywood revisits Fontenelle's *Discourse* and explicitly warns against speculating on matters that cannot be resolutely resolved:

> To be too inquisitive, however, into Things in which we have no Concern, and which, with the utmost Labour, assisted by the greatest Learning and strongest Capacity, we can never be able to penetrate, is doubtless both a Sin and a Folly. (*FS*.19 III.238)

Speculating about matters that have no empirical basis in fact is a waste of effort. The tales of Topsy-Turvy island, then, ought to be approached with caution. The imaginary island is at once an extreme instance of folly, being little more than an inset tale and an instance of diversion, though of course, the notion of an undiscovered island with a utopian way of living has precedence in literature. Yet speculating about whether such an island, or even other worlds, might exist in the first place seems somewhat at

odds with the occupation of a spectator who, by definition, looks out and surveys the world around them. This dilemma is partly addressed in an earlier essay in which Haywood suggested that the spectator has a duty not only to record true events but could also create stories and relate information that they had invented so long as their inventions would benefit readers:

> [M]y Readers will cry, that my Business, as a *Spectator* is to report such Things as I see, and am convinced of the Truth of, not present them with Ideas of my own Formation, […] to which I beg leave to reply, that the Impossibility lies only in the *Will*; — much may be done by a steady Resolution, — without it, nothing. (*FS*.10 II.366)

Invention and fiction are key strategies within periodical writing. Yet in voicing this sentiment the *Female Spectator* puts itself under scrutiny as this particular essay goes on to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the publication's own narrative practices. Focusing on what constituted the business of a spectator and how warmly the actions of the Female Spectator and her club were received, Haywood notes that "all this, I doubt, will be look'd upon as visionary" and that "I do not, indeed flatter myself with living to see my Counsel in this point make any great Impression" (*FS.*10 II.366). This anxiety over the impression her works make furthers Haywood's broader concern with print as a form of knowledge production by invoking the idea of the tabula rasa. She suggests that the impressions her periodical fictions make upon readers' minds may not be deep; among credulous readers the impact of her pedagogical stories might be short-lived, and the nuances not recognised. Improvement will only be brought about as a result of constant, steady endeavour to expose the false impressions and lies that are regularly being promoted in print.

Parroting the Press

When Haywood declared that she would be dropping "the shape" of the *Female Spectator* in 1746 she expressed a desire "to assume another in a short Time" (*FS*.24 III.422). And eleven weeks after the final instalment of her monthly periodical was published, Haywood reprised her role as a periodicalist as the *Parrot* entered into circulation. While the *Female Spectator* engaged with a broad range of topics, this new project offered a more direct exploration of news in a particularly unstable moment. The *Parrot* considers both global and domestic military affairs and critically examines how eye- and ear-witness testimony were used within the news press. The tone and style of the two periodicals was very different, even though the *Parrot* often put into practice some of the pedagogical lessons that were hinted at in the *Female Spectator*. As Ingrassia argues of the *Parrot*: "Throughout the treatment of the Jacobite Rebellion and its aftermath the maxim articulated in the *Female Spectator* – private actions shape the public good – guides the advice offered in the main body of the periodical."[47] As such, the periodical does not live up to its namesake. It is more inclined to act independently to influence public opinion than it is to passively parrot what has been printed elsewhere and it offers an unusually sympathetic view of the 1745 Jacobite Uprising. The *Parrot* was a lone voice within the marketplace for, as Robert Harris observes, in this period even papers that typically eschewed political engagement were penning anti-Jacobite polemic.[48] Acutely aware of its unusual views, the Parrot of the title professes that he is no "meer *Parrot*, which without Distinction utters all he hears" (*P*.1 185) and instead declares himself to be an extraordinary

[47] Catherine Ingrassia, "Eliza Haywofod's Periodicals in Wartime" in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture*, 186.
[48] Robert Harris, *A Patriot Press: National Politics and the London Press in the 1740s* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993), 193.

creature of rare judgement who is more like an oracle, uniquely positioned to comment on current affairs.

Wearing its political inclinations boldly upon its sleeve, or rather in its green feathers, Haywood's second periodical reworked the output of the newspapers on a weekly basis to participate in, and satirise, coffeehouse debates about foreign and domestic politics. The periodical was constructed in two distinct parts, with the leading essay being followed by "A Compendium of the Times. In a Letter to a Friend in the Country."[49] This second section provides a series of news items strung together in a narrative fashion and unlike the front page of the *Parrot* itself, the Compendium features a dateline which ties the second section of the periodical more closely to current affairs. This allows the *Parrot* to take two subtly different stances towards news. The relative lack of direct engagement with contemporary events in the leading essay recalls "Haywood's dismissive comments in *The Female Spectator* about merely factual news accounts," as Rachel Carnell suggests.[50] In the *Female Spectator* accounts of "Armies marching,—Battles fought,—Towns destroyed,—Rivers cross'd, and the like" (*FS*.8 II.295) are supposedly contrary to the project's agenda of laying "open the secret Springs which set these great Machines in Motion" (*FS*.8 II.295). Yet this kind of news was central to the second part of *Parrot* and the compendia were used to either expand material discussed in the essays by providing a factual basis for the more imaginative and anecdotal first section, or to lay the factual groundwork for the next issue.

[49] For more on the construction of the Compendium see King, *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, 144-46.
[50] Rachel Carnell, "It's Not Easy Being Green: Gender and Friendship in Eliza Haywood's Political Periodicals," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 2 (1999): 207.

The *Parrot* is a highly innovative and original text that deliberately reworks and regularly re-presents news reports that were circulating in other publications. The work's blending of fictional narrative with factual reportage results in the periodical exhibiting "tonal complexities more readily associated with imaginative satire than with polemical journalism" as it laments "the credulity of an enchanted populace" who believe everything they read.[51] These journalistic moments also see Haywood deploying strategies more typically seen in long form prose fiction and using anecdotes and allegories to educate her readers. For example, in the second instalment of the *Parrot*, Lord Cumberland is cast not as the victor of Culloden but as Oram, a supposedly beloved and admired courtier who traps flies, "pulling off the Legs of some, the Wings of others, and the Heads of the largest" (*P*.2 200) for his own amusement. This barbaric act serves as an allegory for Cumberland's treatment of the Jacobite leaders as Haywood describes Oram as a butcher who is amused to see "the severed Limbs and mangled Carcasses lye spread upon the Field of Action" (*P*.2 200). Her focus on the flies shows an unusual interest in the fate of individuals who are easily ignored, overlooked, or even squashed by those in authority. Throughout the carnage, the Parrot watches Oram in silence, saying "nothing all the while, for fear of incurring a Displeasure, which might have been no less fatal to me" (*P*.2 200), and the inaction of the Parrot metaphorically stands in for that of a nation who looked on while the massacre of Jacobite supporters took place. Yet such attention to the impact of politics on the general public is not unique within Haywood's writing and is reminiscent of the more political debates that are found within the eighth issue of the *Female Spectator*. Here Haywood noted that "We little People may hear and see, but must say nothing. — There are some sort of Secrets which prove fatal if explored"

[51] King, *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, 139.

(*FS*.8 II.296). Both political secrets and those of the kind found in *Love in Excess* are "like massive Buildings erected by Enchantment, will not endure too near Approach, but fall at once, and crush the bold Inspector with their Weight" (*FS*.8 II.296). There was a time to be outspoken about matters, but also a time to veil those criticisms in fictionality.

The relationship between sound and silence, babbling and thinking, dominates in the *Parrot*. The publication's most explicit criticism of the way reading audiences unthinkingly repeat information that they pick up from the press is found in the final issue, when the project directly challenges "the false and ridiculous Rumours of Coffee House Politicians, as well as the lying Legends which issue from the Press" (*P*.9 308). A keen ear is equally as important as a sharp eye when it comes to detecting malicious rumours and gossip. Witness testimony is ultimately shown to be an imperfect form of epistemology and the *Parrot* examines the fundamental "disconnect between mind and mouth" and the "exasperating English propensity to parrot rather than think," as King has observed.[52] To explore this disconnect the *Parrot* "conflates the positions of subject and object, speaker and listener, writer and reader" to build upon and reimagine the problems with witnessing – either visually, orally, or aurally – that Haywood had set out in other works.[53] Hence, a wise man, the *Parrot* suggests, knows that "Ears were placed on each Side the Head, and the Seat of Judgment in the Middle; to the end, that whatever Reports were made concerning any Question in Debate, might be equally attended to, and examined before a definitive Sentence was passed in favour of either" (*P*.2 199). The mind must process knowledge gained through sense

[52] King, *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, 135.
[53] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 181.

perception before determining whether it is eye- or ear-testimony that bears the closest approximation to factuality.

The challenges that the *Parrot* poses to reader credulity are most often found within the Compendium and it is here that Haywood creates some of her most vocal engagements with news culture and writes some of her most effective inset narratives. Using the Letter to a Friend in the Country genre that was popular in the late seventeenth century, this second section supposedly expresses personal opinions as it takes the form of correspondence with an intimate acquaintance, rather than speaking directly to a public reading audience. Compared to the leading essays, the Compendium makes more regular recourse to fictionality as it is designed to both inform and divert the imagined friend. In the first of these letters that Haywood creates a strongly sympathetic Jacobite story and in a postscript, she focuses on political executions and notes that "the Truth of [the following] may be depended upon" (*P*.1 192). The account that follows, however, is not concerned with the execution itself, but rather with a single member of the crowd. Haywood relates an inset narrative that centres not upon the condemned Jacobite army officer, James Dawson, but on his fiancée:

> Not all the Perswasions of her Kindred could prevent her from going to the Place of Execution;– she was determined to see the last of a Person so dear to her […] She got near enough to see the Fire kindled, which was to consume that Heart she knew so much devoted to her, and all the other dreadful Preparations for his Fate, […] but when all was over, and that she found he was no more, she drew her Head back into the Coach, and crying out, *– My Dear, I follow thee, – I follow thee,* – Lord Jesus *receive both our Souls together*, fell on the Neck of her Companion, and expired in the very Moment she was speaking. (*P*.1 193)

Haywood creates an entirely new account of Dawson's execution, telling it not from the perspective of the condemned man himself, or as a member of the crowd, but opting to view the scene through the eyes of his betrothed. Haywood fictionalises her

account, reconfiguring a political execution into a tale of injustice, constancy, and devotion. King notes that this episode is by far the most developed in the Compendium, and that "its consistency with Haywood's known habits of mind and favoured writing conventions suggests the strong likelihood that she wrote it herself."[54] The episode bears a strong resemblance to Haywood's earlier scandal fiction *Memoirs of a Certain Island* (1724) and is a reworking of Mira's response to the execution of Count Deleau. The account Haywood provides is unlike other contemporary reports of Dawson's execution, which either focus on his last words or refer to male family members. Only in the *Parrot* is attention paid to the fiancée. Yet it is the *Parrot*'s version of events that is reproduced in most published accounts of Dawson's trial. Although attributed to a different source in William Cobbett's *Collection of State Trials*, for instance, the version offered there is identical to that found in the *Parrot*.[55] Haywood's story blurs the line between fact and fiction so effectively that it creates a deception that would endure and capture the minds of successive generations of readers, even resurfacing in an issue of *Punch* in 1841.[56] Given how much of the *Parrot* is concerned with exposing fiction within the news press, there is a certain irony in how this instance of fiction has since permeated the factual record.

The *Parrot*'s morbid fascination with public executions continued two issues later. The third Compendium concludes with the line "Several of my Friends have taken Places to see the Execution of the Lords next *Monday*, so as I shall have an exact Account of all that happens in that melancholy Scene, my next shall bring you the

[54] King, *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, 145.
[55] "True Copies of the Papers wrote by Arthur Lord Balmerino and others, published in the year 1746" in William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason*, 33 vols (London, 1809-26), 18.375.
[56] See *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, September 1841 (London), 107.

Particulars" (*P*.3 224). However, rather than the account being positioned in the next Compendium, these particulars are discussed in the leading essay the following week: "Poor *Poll* is very melancholy, – all the Conversation I have heard for I know not how long, has been wholly on Indictments, – Trials, – Sentences of Death, and Executions" (*P*.4 225). The essay proceeds as an inset narrative, telling the tale of a man who returned home to unknowingly witness his father's execution, though, as with Haywood's other execution scenes, the grotesquery of the spectacle itself is not described. Again, the focus is on those who witnessed events. The Parrot steps outside the role of a virtual witness and detached storyteller to offer moments of speculation and personal conjecture, wondering "How dreadful was the Consequence that attended this Man's unhappy Propensity, to make one among the Crowd at such Spectacles!" (*P*.4 231). The irony, of course, is that as the *Parrot* recounts how this man became part of the crowd, readers, too, join the assembled masses. They are made complicit in the execution and so become one of the people whom the essay is trying to improve. The *Parrot* does not express a concern with the fate of the accused but for that of the assembled crowd: "it is not the Fate of the Guilty, but the Humour of such who testify an Impatience and kind of Fondness for being Eye-witnesses of it, that gives me the most Concern" (*P*.4 228-29). There are some things that should be taken on trust and are best left unwitnessed – a notion that is somewhat ironic in a publication that is directly interested in the power of print and its capacity to create a probable and plausible visual record.

It is in a periodical directly concerned with the intersection of the aural, oral, and visual that Haywood makes some of her most direct interrogations of eye-witness testimony to explore the connection between these linked sensory perceptions. The entanglement of visual, aural, and oral modes of inquiry was central to Haywood's

periodical writing and it worth noting that in the *Female Spectator* the eidolon is as likely to turn parrot as the *Parrot* is to turn spectator:

> Another Humour there is also which very much prevails in some People, and that is, to avoid being thought weak and incapable of diving to the Bottom of Things, they affect to find out Mysteries in every thing;– they construe into Meanings the most insignificant Trifles;– their Eyes, their Ears are perpetually upon the Watch[.] (FS.10 II:338)

In setting eyes and ears upon the watch, Haywood's Female Spectator uses the same sensory faculties as the Parrot. Eyes and ears are both essential for "diving to the Bottom of Things" and exposing the lies and rumours of coffeehouse politicians as well as to counter the tendency among readers to falsely attribute meaning to the most microscopic or most insubstantial details. The *Parrot*, it is worth noting, might be outwardly concerned with ear-witness testimony, but most of the stories contained within the periodical relate to scenes that the bird has witnessed. Conflating these senses results in giving "Ear to meer Speculations' (*P*.6 267), testing out and reprising matters of fact and fiction to prompt readers to think again about whether the accounts they read in the newspapers are factual, as they claim, or fictional – something I discuss further in the next chapter.

In the final instalment of the *Parrot*, Haywood launches her most direct criticisms of the press to date and in so doing embarks upon one of her most explicit attempts to improve the way readers interpreted and interacted with printed fictions. A letter from Amicus Veritas, a friend of truth, directly addresses the need for reading audiences to distinguish between the realms of fact and fiction. The friend considers how people parrot information without stopping to question whether the information they have been told is correct. He describes the "strange Credulity which has, of late Years, possessed the People of these Kingdoms" and "shut every Sense against the most glaring Truths," prompting readers to "swallow the most gross Absurdities" with

ease (*P*.9 307-8). With readers' eyes and ears closed to the fictions and deceptions that were rife within the print ecology, it is left to a parrot to expose the misguided credulity of reading audiences. The willingness to shut senses to the truth dominates in the final issue of the *Parrot* and the matters raised in Amicus Veritas's letter are put into narrative form in an inset story about a jeweller who falsely accused his maid of theft – an allegation that ultimately led to her execution – before he had scrutinised all the facts:

> THE chief Motive I had for relating this little Story, which, I assure you, I had from very good Hands, was to shew the Danger of being too certain of any thing;— to prevail on People to have that laudable Scepticism of doubting all,— examining into all, and waiting Time, the only faithful Solver of Difficulties, before they set down any in their Minds as real Facts. (*P*.9 307)

Even when it seems that all the evidence points in a single direction, there is still a need to be sceptical and to wait to explore the various possibilities before jumping to a conclusion. The dangers of credulity are illustrated again and again in Haywood's writing. This moment in the final issue of the *Parrot* recalls the earlier interrogations of the intersection of truths, lies, and deceptions previously conducted in the *Female Spectator* in which Haywood had demonstrated an anxiety about the acute "Degree of Stupidity" shown by the population as they are prepared to "take for Sacred Truth Today, what Yesterday we knew was but Invention:"

> There are Lies calculated to last a Month, a Week, a Day, nay sometimes contradicted by those that forged them the same Hour; and whoever should pretend to relate any thing he hears from common Fame, or from more of the public News-papers will be in very great Danger of having either his Understanding or his Sincerity suspected. (*FS*.18 III.200)

To listen to the man of news is to be taken in by lies of various duration. However, in exposing these moments, it becomes more noticeable that instalments of the *Female Spectator* are calculated to last a month. This throws into sharper relief the problem of

constantly having to suspect the sincerity of all papers of news: "In how unhappy a Dilemma is the sincere and honest Mind involved, when, to be secure, one must doubt of every Thing!" (*FS*.18 III.201). To doubt of everything requires us also to doubt the words of the person who tells us to doubt in the first instance, be they parrot, spectator, or something else entirely.

From Spectators to Spies

While the *Parrot* was a short-lived work, only running to nine issues, many of the topics raised in this outspoken periodical would resurface nine years later in the *Invisible Spy*. This text, Backscheider has suggested, "is about the power of print, [and] its diverse forms and uses," and it is within Haywood's final long form prose fiction that we find some of her most explicit and self-aware explorations of fiction and witness testimony.[57] The narrating figure, Explorabilis, named only on the title pages of the text's four volumes, desires "to penetrate into the most hidden secrets, and be convinced of their veracity by the testimony of my own eyes and ears."[58] The text recalls both the plot of *Love in Excess* and the pedagogical aims of the *Female Spectator* as Explorabilis intends to use their adventures to affect instruction, making private affairs public in order "not to ridicule, but reform" (15) readers. As such the *Invisible Spy* reprises the ambition both of essay-periodicals and secret histories. The narrative opens by parodying the opening line of the *Spectator* about how readers seldom peruse a book with pleasure until they get to know its author: "I have observed that when a new book begins to make any noise in the world, as I am pretty certain

[57] Backscheider, "The Shadow of an Author," 101.
[58] Eliza Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, ed. Carol Stewart (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 15. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

this will do, every one is desirous of becoming acquainted with the author" (7).[59] Haywood's long form prose fiction proceeds in full awareness of its affinity to Addison and Steele's periodical but soon deviates from this model. Instead of offering their own history, Explorabilis gives a list of their potential occupations before declaring that "whether I am any one of these, or whether I am even a man or a woman, they will find it, after all their conjectures, as difficult to discover as the longitude" (7). This manner of introducing the eidolon-narrator sees a return to scientific models of inquiry; determining their identity will prove as difficult as designing an instrument capable of calculating the longitude to within half a degree of accuracy – a challenge set by the government in 1714 and which would not be answered until 1765, nine years after Haywood's death. While there is still much to be said about the *Invisible Spy*'s affinity to periodical print, for the rest of this chapter I want to consider how this unstable text provides Haywood's most direct exploration of the credibility of the written word and the ways fiction undermines the veracity of witness testimony.

The *Invisible Spy*'s exploration of print culture is made possible through two objects which enable the narrator to turn spy and commence their invisible rambles. The text begins when Explorabilis is invited by a Magi to peruse his Cabinet of Curiosities and is told that they can keep whichever object most appeals to their fancy. Unable to make a decision, Explorabilis selects two items that "are, in a manner, concomitant" (11) and are of equal importance for anyone setting out to be an eye- or earwitness. The first of these is a "Belt of Invisibility" which when "fasten'd round the body, next the skin, no sooner becomes warm than it renders the party invisible to all human eyes" (10). The second is "The Wonderful Tablet, which, in whatever place it is spread open, receives the impression of every word that is spoken, in as distinct a

[59] See *S*.1 I.1.

manner as if engrav'd" (10). It is only with these items that Explorabilis becomes qualified to act as a spy for

> [T]he Belt of Invisibility put a thousand rambles into my head, which promised discoveries highly flattering to the inquisitiveness of my humour; but then the Tablet, recording every thing I should hear spoken, which I confess my memory is too defective to retain, fill'd me with the most ardent desire of becoming master of so inestimable a treasure[.] (11)

Recording events in the instant they occur, and so affecting a way of "writing to the Moment" that even Samuel Richardson could not have imagined, the tablet creates a true ear-witness testimony; it cannot be unwittingly corrupted by a defective memory or ill-chosen words.[60] The account it produces will be an entirely accurate record of what was spoken and although the tablet is clearly fantastical, Haywood continually likens it to the material objects used in print culture. The tablet is described as being similar to, but fundamentally different from, paper – "when shut, it seemed very small; but when extended was more long and broad than any sheet I ever saw of imperial paper" (10). That it can be opened and closed invokes the codexed book, but Haywood's description contrasts it to the stitched sheets of paper, cut duodecimo, in which readers encounter this narrative.

The tablet renders aural information into print by recording everything that is spoken in its vicinity, instantaneously transposing the spoken word into a written, and hence visual, record. Unlike a written testimony which is created after events have been witnessed, the accounts offered by the tablet are not subject to the deficits of the author's memory or to the embellishments of their imagination. This has prompted Merritt to argue that "in the figure of an observer/writer, a primary feature of the

[60] Samuel Richardson, "To Lady Bradshaigh," 8 December, 1753 in Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 257.

spectatorial text itself, Haywood discovers a most promising possibility: seeing and writing, essentially two forms of witnessing, can be united to buttress the authority of each."[61] However, the spy is not a writer per se. They transcribe the content recorded by the tablet and while they are doing so embellish the factual record – or place truth into "a more pleasing Garb" (*FS*.15 III.93), to use the words of the *Female Spectator* – to turn a record of the spoken word into a more dynamic and entertaining narrative. The act of transcription facilitates the addition of non-aural details, such as descriptions of houses or access to the spy's own thoughts. For instance, the spy begins to provide extraneous details that describe their own opinions and movements: "I retired at the same time, smiling within myself to have seen how much it is in the power of the smallest trifle, relating to dress and adornment, to discompose a woman" (37). They also start to provide information about how they navigate their way around London, enhancing the plausibility of their invisible rambles by incorporating precise details of their movements through the metropolis – "as the night was pleasant and pretty warm, the season consider'd, I saunter'd towards the Serpentine-River" (464). Such moments throw into relief the practicalities, as it were, of moving through a city unseen and describe the challenges of invisibility; Explorabilis often finds their way blocked by locked doors and gateways, resulting in additional information such as "I resolved to wait until the door could be open'd" (79). In addition to allowing for these kinds of asides that help to connect the isolated stories and so enhance the flow of the written text, the act of transcription enables the narrative to be broken down into more easily readable dialogues, usually laid out as set pieces, such as those in *Colonel Jack*. Having such control over the presentation of this aural account, Explorabilis embarks

[61] Merritt, *Beyond Spectacle*, 9.

upon a process of rewriting that sees fiction and digressions being incorporated into the factual record:

> These were the reflections which occur'd to me after I came home, as I was about to transcribe the remaining part of my evening's progress out of my precious Tablets: – I had some farther thoughts on the occasion, but as they might seem more proper for the pulpit than to be inserted in a work of this nature, I shall add no more, but proceed to the narrative of that adventure which gave rise to them. (438)

In the more obviously editorialised moments of the *Invisible Spy*, Haywood exposes the shortcomings of the version of eye- and ear-witness testimony that is facilitated by the belt and tablet. As the narrative proceeds, the text increasingly examines its own mode of construction and becomes increasingly self-conscious about its rhetorical strategies. Fludernik has noted of fictionality that oral storytelling, when it is part of conversational narrative, replicates the "structure, formal techniques, and experiential quality" of printed fictions.[62] This seems to be a fitting description for the *Invisible Spy* due to its reliance on a conceit in which the written word is recorded in the same instant that oral storytelling takes place, before it is remediated as Explorabilis transcribes that account of events after the fact.

As the narrative engages with its own manner of construction, the *Invisible Spy* not only demonstrates the close connection between periodical and novelistic writing, but also begins to interrogate the print ecology more widely. The *Invisible Spy* shares *Love in Excess*'s interest in the seamy side of personal life and explores matters of personal power and sexual appetite. Both of these texts contain elements of the secret history, a genre which, like the novel, is often characterised by "an interest in private scenes of intrigue and sensitivity towards the relationship between fact and fiction."[63]

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[62] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 78.
[63] See Rebecca Bullard, "Secret History, Politics, and the Early Novel" in *Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 138.

The interest in intrigue and imaginative story telling resonates with Explorabilis' aim to "expose vice and folly in all their various modes and attitudes" and "to set both things and persons in their proper colours" (15). The spy goes so far as to state that "it is for the entertainment of the gay, the witty, and the truly virtuous, who, by the way, are never censorious, that these lucubrations are chiefly intended" (108). This latter claim is made during the account of one of the spy's rambles, which details an intricate romance narrative that reimagines some of the events in *Love in Excess*. The tale involves four people: Conrade, Florimel, Melanthe, and Dorimon. Conrade, who was originally betrothed to Melanthe, falsely believes that she has been seduced by Dorimon after he sees her in the presence of a gallant whom he mistakenly believes has stolen her heart. This gallant was in fact Florimel, Melanthe's childhood friend, who was wearing a coat belonging to her brother, Dorimon. It is up to Melanthe's father to set the record straight. But Conrade is so out of sorts upon discovering that his eyes have betrayed him that he is "in such a consternation, that he scare knew where he was, much less had the power of distinguishing the sense of anything he saw or heard, till Florimel related to him, in her sprightly fashion, every particular" (111). Upon regaining his faculties Conrade cries "Say no more, sweet lady, I am ashamed of my past folly, and only wish you would exert all the influence you have over your witty she-gallant, not to expose this story in print; – I should be sorry, methinks, to see myself in a novel or a play" (111). The irony, of course, is that not only has their story been deliberately engineered for inclusion in a long form prose fiction, but follows a narrative arc found in a novel published over twenty years earlier. Conrade's fears materialise in the text that readers hold in their hands.

Time and again within the *Invisible Spy,* Haywood draws attention to the fictional and artificial nature of the printed text she has created, exploring the

mutability of the printed word and the process of writing itself. She emphasises the hidden labour that goes on when writing and constructing a prose fiction by confessing "the truth" that "not 'till the transcripts I had drawn from my Tablets were copied over fair for the press, could I have imagin'd they would have employed so much paper and time as they in effect have done" (364). This causes a further breakdown of the conceit that readers have been witnessing events alongside the spy and this aside, voiced in the first-person, offers a moment of direct reflection on the labour involved in writing this text. Eve Tavor Bannet has noticed that Haywood often takes an inconsistent narratorial stance, observing how Explorabilis switches "from first to third person narration for the duration of his narratives, and thus [disappears] from view behind characters, letters, speeches and narrated events."[64] While for the most part it is possible to forget that the work is presided over by Explorabilis, there are moments when the spy's presence is asserted in unexpected ways. Explorabilis, after all, is not just the text's point of consciousness but is the means through which Haywood spies upon the print ecology. Exploring the use of first-person narrative more generally, Sarah Tindal Kareem argues that "by triggering readers' recognition of their own susceptibility to illusion, eighteenth-century fiction makes first-person experiences the basis for their critical awakening."[65] As the first-person narrator is awakened to the fictions inherent in the printed record, so are readers.

The *Invisible Spy* thus offers a return to ideas voiced in the *Female Spectator* and the *Parrot* about the credibility of witness testimonies. The spy increasingly functions like an eidolon, becoming "no more than an Image, a Representation, or a

[64] Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Narrator as Invisible Spy: Eliza Haywood, Secret History and the Novel," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14, no. 4 (2014), 148.
[65] Sarah Tindal Kareem, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Reinvention of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24.

Picture," ultimately erasing themselves from their own narrative to enable the layering of invented story after invented story as the narrative continues to expose its own fictionality.[66] However, while Explorabilis is supposed to be as unknowable as the longitude, and even their gender is a mystery, they are eventually identified as male; notably, the only other male narrator that Haywood creates is her green-feathered parrot. This establishes a closer connection between the *Parrot* and her final long form fiction. The *Invisible Spy* shares the *Parrot*'s interest in current political affairs and many of the episodes – often no longer than a periodical essay in the Addisonian tradition – use their engagement with politics to expose and challenge the work's formal construction and generic affiliations. For example, when reflecting on the compilation of the *Invisible Spy*'s four volumes, Haywood steps out from behind the mask of Explorabilis to note that:

> [A] work which I intended should have made its appearance the latter end of last winter is postpon'd 'till now; which, as an Author, I cannot help looking upon as a double misfortune, […] the facts contain'd in it will be found of a less recent date; and in the next, by being so long in hand some particular passages in it have taken wind[.] (364)

The *Invisible Spy* ties itself very closely to the political calendar; the text regularly engages with current affairs and the desire to appear before the "end of last winter" would have seen the text being published before the general election of spring 1754. This desire to engage with and presumably influence political affairs sees the *Invisible Spy* become, as Powell suggests, "stunningly like the afterlife" of a periodical.[67] Contemporary events and particularly political affairs underpin many of the stories told as part of Explorabilis' invisible rambles. For example, the story of Miss Hasty in the second volume enables Haywood to debate the terms of Lord Hardwicke's

[66] Créquinière, *Agreement of the Customs of the East-Indians*, 42.
[67] Powell, "Haywood, Periodicalist(?)," 175.

Marriage Act (1753) and a letter from Judaicus opens up a discussion of the Jewish Naturalization Bill (1753).[68] But in taking too long to finish, some of these stories have already "taken wind;" they have become common knowledge and are less news worthy.

The presence of letters within the *Invisible Spy* emphasises the extent to which Haywood uses her prose fiction to comment on the wider print ecology. The second of the novel's four volumes features a series of letters that were addressed to "The Invisible Spy" and left for them "at the Printing Office" (119) – presumably, we are meant to believe, in the hands of Thomas Gardner, who printed most of Haywood's works. The letters are introduced with a note that they have been inserted here "as I have no other way of communicating my sentiments to the authors of them, and shall leave it to the public to judge impartially between them" (119). Although the *Invisible Spy* does not solicit correspondence, unlike the *Female Spectator*, the inclusion of these letters, along with Explorabilis's replies, appears to be a holdover from essay-periodical writing. The letters give the impression that readers are able to participate in the narrative directly and hold it to account, rather like a periodical work: "Sir, I am shock'd and scandalized beyond measure at your title […] An invisible Spy! – why, it is a character to be more dreaded than an Excise, a Custom-house or a Sheriff's Officer" (122). Yet as the text was published as a whole, rather than in a series of parts, it was not possible for any correspondent to write in; the conversable element of the author-reader relationship is entirely fictional. Therefore, by inserting these most likely fabricated pieces of correspondence, Haywood reveals just how easy it was for

[68] See *Invisible Spy*, 159; 121.

writers, and in particular periodicalists, to invent the kinds of letters that were regularly printed in works such as the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Review*.

Haywood's final work, then, demonstrates the extent of her skills as a periodicalist and a writer of long form prose fiction as she merges the conventions of both genres to facilitate a sustained interrogation of the print ecology. Bringing together items of news, political affairs and pamphlets, as well as short stories and anecdotes, Haywood helps her readers to see not just that fiction is present in most of what they read, but to think about how fiction works upon them. It is in aligning fictionality with witness testimony that Haywood allows reading audiences to reflect on their own interactions with the printed world. While it is often the unpredictable uses of the essay that make that genre the one more usually associated with facilitating readers' engagement with and participation in their culture, such participation could also be facilitated by long form prose fictions such as *Love in Excess* and the *Invisible Spy*.[69] As Haywood's longer form works feed into her essay projects, and vice versa, it becomes evident how her writing in these two genres formed part of a continual experiment with and investigation into fiction and the workings of the print ecology. The self-conscious examination of reading and writing that had manifested itself in Haywood's work ever since the publication of *Love in Excess* is explicitly spelled out in her final prose fiction. It is in the *Invisible Spy* that she demonstrates her full range of skills as a fiction writer while also continuing to expose the naivety of audiences who read words of fiction as though they were factual.

[69] See Black, *Of Essays*, 10.

Henry Fielding: Literary Taste and Self-Conscious Innovation

> [T]his mental Repast is a Dainty, of which those who are excluded from polite Assemblies, must be contented to remain as ignorant as they must of the several Dainties of French Cookery, which are only served at the Tables of the Great.[1]

When opening *Tom Jones* (1749), Henry Fielding made it clear that this text, like so much of his writing, would be concerned with how print materials were consumed by their readers. An author, he tells us, "ought to consider himself, not as a Gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary Treat, but rather as one who keeps a public Ordinary, at which all Persons are welcome for their Money" (25). *Tom Jones* is certainly a work upon which everyone could dine – providing they had sufficient funds. For the price of 18s it offers an expansive mental repast and Fielding's prose fiction spans six volumes, dividing 208 chapters across eighteen books.[2] By contrast, earlier long form prose fictions, including *Colonel Jack* and *Love in Excess*, tended to lack a single chapter division. Fielding's use of segmentation, therefore, represented a novel way for readers to encounter, and consume, prose narratives, but such partitioning was already familiar to readers of essays. Francis Bacon described the essay form as being like "grains of salt, that will rather give you an appetite, than offend you with satiety."[3] He implied that a single essay could whet the intellectual appetite but consuming an entire series of them would not result in gluttony or indigestion. The same gustatory metaphorical field has been explored by scholars in relation to Fielding's long form prose fiction, but they have tended to neglect its role

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[1] Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, ed. Sheridan Baker (New York: Norton, 1973), 451. Further references are given parenthetically in text.
[2] *London Evening Post*, January 19 – January 21, 1749. See also *London Evening Post*, February 28 – March 2, 1749 for accounts of the text retailing at 16s if bought "sew'd in blue Paper and Boards" rather than bound.
[3] Bacon, "Dedicatory Epistle" in *Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, 317.

in his periodical writing.[4] As we shall see, Fielding's periodicals and long form prose fictions attempt to counter readers' poor literary diets and he uses his own tastes in literature to attempt to refine the palates of reading audiences. This chapter focuses on the question of taste in the *Jacobite's Journal* (1747-48), *Tom Jones*, and the *Covent-Garden Journal* (1752) to consider how Fielding creates texts that demonstrate an acute awareness of their own narrative conventions as they seek to improve the literary taste of the reading public.

Although better known today as a novelist and a dramatist, Fielding had a long career as a periodicalist, which began in 1739 when he served on the editorial board and acted as the lead writer for the *Champion* (1739-40). Six years elapsed before he embarked upon his first solo periodical venture, writing the *True Patriot* in 1745, before creating the *Jacobite's Journal* and *Covent-Garden Journal*. While working as a periodicalist, Fielding also sat as a magistrate, operated his own business (the Universal Register Office), and penned the prose fictions for which he is better known today: *Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones*, and *Amelia* (1752). With Fielding working on his periodical and longer form prose writings simultaneously throughout the 1740s and early 1750s it is to be expected that the two forms cross-fertilized with each other. However, there remains a tendency to view Fielding's periodical and longer form fictions in isolation of one another with some scholars going so far as to state that Fielding's periodical writing "conforms to the Addisonian tradition and shares very few features with his novels."[5] This chapter re-examines the role of fictionality, taste,

[4] See James Evans, "The Ordinary's Provision and the Cook's Dressing: Tom Jones, Book 1, Chapter 1," *A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 32, no. 3 (2019): 149-153; Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Maioli, *Empiricism and the Early Theory of the Nove*; Henry Power, *Epic into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and the Consumption of Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[5] Italia, *Rise of Literary Journalism*, 15.

and aesthetics within Fielding's periodicals and longer form fictions to argue for a close connection between his work in these two genres.

While Fielding's statement in *Tom Jones* that a good author will not confine himself to that "which may be met with in the home Articles of a News-Paper" (262) has often been emphasised by those who have considered his attitudes to journalistic writing, I want to suggest that scholars such as Lennard Davis are too quick to view this as evidence that he explicitly cuts "at both ends of the umbilical cord" to separate his periodicals from his longer form fictions.[6] *Tom Jones*, with its extensive anti-Jacobite sentiment and accounts of the movements of the Pretender and Jenny Cameron, is deeply concerned with home news. It is an extension of the anxieties Fielding raised previously in the *True Patriot* and *Jacobite's Journal*, and both these projects feature articles from a range of newspapers. Fielding's assertion, then, that authors ought to move beyond the scope of the newspaper press is not necessarily evidence that he believes good authors need to distance themselves from this species of writing. *Tom Jones* is closely tied to news events and many elements of the narrative recall Fielding's own work as a periodicalist. He styles the first chapters of each book as "Essays" (137; 478). In them, he revoices the explorations of the state of the print marketplace that are found in his periodicals, especially the sustained attacks on newspapers, by building upon his earlier assertions in the *True Patriot* that "there is scarce a Syllable of TRUTH in any of them."[7]

The connection between Fielding's periodical and longer form fictions is more deeply rooted than a shared interest in news culture. As both media are highly self-

[6] Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 200.
[7] *True Patriot,* No. 1, Tuesday, November 5, 1745. All references to Fielding's periodicals are to the original editions. Issue numbers are provided in text with the corresponding abbreviations *TP*, *JJ*, and *CGJ*.

conscious of the ways in which print material is to be consumed and digested, there is a playful aspect to how Fielding weaves together his writing in these two genres. For instance, one Joseph Andrews is listed among those who donate to charity in the *Covent-Garden Journal* (*CGJ*.39) and Parson Adams not only makes a cameo appearance at the end of *Tom Jones*, but supposedly corresponds with the *Jacobite's Journal* (*JJ*.32). While Monika Fludernik has noted the ways that Fielding's long form prose fictions "merge factual claims and fictional invention," there has not yet been an exploration of the ways these modes of expression are shared with his essays.[8] In adding a layer of fiction to his factual stories and a veneer of factuality to his fictions, Fielding demonstrates an acute awareness of the conventions deployed by both media. By drawing attention to the construction of his prose fictions Fielding does not ask his readers to believe that his works are true – as Daniel Defoe does, for instance – but invites them to think more carefully about the rhetorical construction of the literary entertainments that they enjoy. This chapter opens with an account of the history of taste before turning to consider how a hunger for newness and novelty dominated in the *Jacobite's Journal*. I then focus on the episode of the Man of the Hill in *Tom Jones*, which J. Paul Hunter declares "is perhaps the most famous story-within any novel," and re-examine this episode in relation to the sense of literary taste that Fielding developed in his periodicals.[9] The chapter concludes by examining how Fielding returned to the modes of fictionality used in the *Jacobite's Journal* in his final periodical work, the *Covent-Garden Journal*, to make readers think more critically about the quality of the print materials they consumed.

[8] Fludernik, "Fiction of the Rise of Fictionality," 85.
[9] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 48.

Defining the Taste of the Times

Ideas of taste kept evolving throughout the eighteenth century. One of the first people to offer a theoretical definition for the term was Joseph Addison, who suggested in *Spectator* 409 that taste was a quality that could be learnt or improved upon over time, usually through regular conversation with those who already possessed it. Focusing specifically on literary taste, he argued that when someone finds "a Coldness and Indifference in his Thoughts" when reading a text that had been universally acclaimed, "he ought to conclude, not (as is too usual among tasteless Readers) that the Author wants those Perfections which have been admired in him, but that he himself wants the Faculty of discovering them" (*S.*409 III.528). But even those who admired the right kind of texts could still be deficient in taste if they liked them for the wrong reasons, as is the case with an eminent mathematician who said "that the greatest Pleasure he took in reading Virgil, was in examining Æneas his [sic] Voyage by the Map" (*S.*409 III.529). Similarly lacking in taste is the "Modern Compiler of History, [who] would be delighted with little more in that Divine Author [Virgil], than in the bare Matters of Fact" (*S.*409 III.529). An individual fully in possession of taste, by contrast, would read the same text and discern "not only the general Beauties and Imperfections of an Author, but discover the several Ways of thinking and expressing himself" (*S.*409 III.528). In contemplating this relationship between beauties and imperfections, Addison took the issue one step further to examine the correlations between literary judgement and sensory taste. Both these forms of taste are ultimately expressed by the tongue which, he claimed, either takes delight in the flavours of the food it encounters, or voices displeasure at what it has been confronted with:

> We may be sure this Metaphor would not have been so general in all Tongues, had there not been a very great Conformity between that Mental Taste, which is the Subject of this Paper, and that Sensitive Taste

> which gives us a Relish of every different Flavour that affects the Palate. (*S*.409 III:527)

Playfully making a connection between the spoken word and eating by showing how the tongue performs both tasks, Addison shows how mental taste and sensitive taste assume a common rhetoric. Just as sensitive taste determines whether foodstuffs can be too sweet or too sour, depending on what the individual is accustomed to, so mental taste can be cultivated by exposure to a certain kind of text.

Addison's definition of taste was built upon and revised by others throughout the course of the eighteenth century.[10] In 1736 the *Gentleman's Magazine* observed how "the Word *Taste* is lately grown into universal Use" and associated the word primarily with the pursuit of newness, noting that "the general Taste of the *English* is founded [on] a *Love* of *Novelty*," and the *Connoisseur* (1754-56) would declare taste to be "the darling idol of the polite world."[11] This sense of the term differed from that found in more philosophical works. The Earl of Shaftesbury had suggested that taste was a 'moral sense' that was the product of culturally determined factors and which was painstakingly acquired: "A legitimate and just taste can neither be begotten, made, conceived, or produced, without the antecedent labour and pains of Criticism."[12] And it is worth noting that the principle aim he identified for his *Characteristicks* (1711) was "to assert the reality of a beauty and charm in moral as well as natural subjects, and to demonstrate the reasonableness of a proportionate taste and determinate choice in life and manners."[13] These different configurations can be seen to inform Edmund Burke's later suggestion that taste meant "no more than that faculty or those faculties

[10] See in particular Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*; David Hume, *Four Dissertations: I. The Natural History of Religion. II. Of the Passions. III. Of Tragedy. IV. Of the Standard of Taste* (London: 1757).
[11] *Gentleman's Magazine* 15 May, 1736. Vol VI.260; *Connoisseur* No. 120, May 13, 1756.
[12] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 408.
[13] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 466.

of the mind, which are affected with, or which form a judgement of, the works of imagination and the elegant arts."[14] The importance of judgement cannot be understated: to possess taste requires an awareness of what is untasteful and it is no coincidence that both food and the arts can be explored through the same juridical language and defined in relation to a discourse of aesthetics. In both cases, there can be no sense of bitter without sweet, or as David Hume put it:

> Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, no more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings.[15]

Readers were similarly fitted to discern these qualities and this empirical element of taste meant that it could, to a certain degree, be taught. One's sentiment would be refined, or coarsened, by repeated exposure to objects, including printed works, which were "fitted by nature" to produce a certain kind of response. Knowledge of what is right hinges upon a knowledge of what is wrong and so taste, like aesthetics, "is thus always a contradictory, self-undoing sort of project, which in promoting the theoretical value of its objects risks emptying it of exactly that specificity or ineffability which was thought to rank among its most precious features," as Terry Eagleton suggests.[16]

The implications of taste, then, went far beyond the *Dictionary* definition of "to eat" or "to have a smack" and taste increasingly assumed the dominant meaning of enjoyment, or the ability "to relish intellectually."[17] Entertaining these different senses of taste within his periodicals and longer form prose fictions, Fielding sought to challenge and refine the nation's taste for print materials. In 1747 he defined taste

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[14] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful: With an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste, and Several Other Additions* (London, 1787), 5–6.
[15] Hume, *Four Dissertations*, 217.
[16] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.; Blackwell, 1990), 2–3.
[17] "Taste" in *Dictionary of the English Language*.

as "the Knowledge of what is right and fit in everything," recalling Addison's belief that taste was something that could be learnt.[18] However, as scholars such as James Noggle have noted, taste is "not only a constitutive element of the rise and progress of modern culture but also a contributor to its complications and fragility."[19] These complexities and fragile nature of the term are evident in the definition of taste that Fielding would go on to offer in the *Covent-Garden Journal*. Within his periodical he created a "short Glossary of such Terms" that were in common use in order to "fix to each those exact Ideas which are annexed to every one of them" (*CGJ*.4). Here, he declared taste to be "The present Whim of the Town, whatever it be" (*CGJ*.4) and in so doing aligns taste with ideas of fashion and fascination – two concepts that he would return to in a later essay and which he suggests provided the "Means to keep the Vulgar at a Distance" (*CGJ*.37). This whimsical aspect of taste captures something of its evanescence: what was à la mode and tasteful one day might be deplored the next. Guaranteed to be fashionable, however, was the ability to recognise untasteful consumption in others. Fielding addresses this not just in relation to fashion but with regard to print. John Bender argues of the opening chapters or "Essays" (137), to return to Fielding's term for the introductory chapters in *Tom Jones*, that "as Fielding's narrative experiment unfolds, his introductions encourage readers to become moral philosophers and active critical enquirers."[20] This experiment encourages readers to become active inquirers into the workings of literary taste; the essays remind them of the need to continually judge the value of the information put before them. Fielding

[18] Henry Fielding in Sarah Fielding, *Familiar Letters Between the Principal Characters in David Simple*, 2 vols (London: 1747), I:298. For attribution of this to Henry Fielding see Goldgar, "Introduction" in *The Covent-Garden Journal; and, A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Wesleyan University Press, 1988), xxxiv; Christopher D. Johnson, *A Political Biography of Sarah Fielding* (Oxon: Routledge, 2017), 102.
[19] James Noggle, *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24.
[20] John Bender, "Novel Knowledge" in *This Is Enlightenment*, 291.

began to use taste as a standard for measuring the value of printed works and his publications become increasingly self-aware about their own manner of construction and consumption.

Within Fielding's works, one of the most commonly discussed passages is the opening of *Tom Jones*. The first chapter sets out his ideas on taste and emphasises how the text has been carefully constructed in order to satisfy, and improve, readers' appetite for good quality prose fiction:

> How pleased therefore will the Reader be to find, that we have, in the following Work, adhered closely to one of the highest Principles of the best Cook […] we shall represent Human Nature to the keen Appetite of our Reader and shall hereafter hash and ragoo it with all the high French and Italian Seasoning of Affectation and Vice[.] (26)

The likening of writing to cooking, and in particular the use of the seasoning metaphor, was familiar to readers of his periodical essays as Fielding had previously featured a similar rhetoric in the *True Patriot*:

> It was however agreed, that in your last Number you had crowded your Table too full with *plain Dishes* of this kind, without any *Decoration* whatever. Your apocryphal History of the Rebellion was indeed a Sort of *Hotch-Potch* very difficult to digest. I am glad you offered it only as a *Taste*, and have promised to give us no more such *Food*.
>
> If the Public can swallow these *Compositions*, it is an Evidence that their *Appetite* is totally *depraved*[.] (*TP*.5)

A "debauched Appetite" had typically been associated with the consumption of poor-quality literary works, with Swift previously contending that "the great Modern Improvement of Digressions" created by Grub Street had resulted in a hotchpotch of literary dishes, such as "Soups and Ollio's, Fricassées and Ragouts."[21] He took this metaphor further to suggest that knowledge was beginning to resemble the nation's

[21] Jonathan Swift, "A Tale of a Tub" in *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 95.

diet in following the same "Fashion of jumbling fifty Things together in a Dish."[22] While ragouts would not necessarily have constituted "plain dishes," seasoning was equally important for both long form fiction and periodical essays.[23] Hence, the delectability of an author's work was not necessarily conditional on whether they wrote Grub Street pamphlets or more respectable long form texts, but rather on the way they made use of their basic ingredients: characters, scenes, fictionality, dialogues, and so on. As tastes in literary print culture developed, gustatory metaphors became commonplace in discussions of both periodicals and longer form works. For example, a contributor to the *London Review of English and Foreign Literature* (1775-80) noted of the mid-century essay-periodical that: "The *taste* for *sentiment* hath prevailed in almost all the popular productions within this period; we have had it served up in all modes of cookery, from the ragouts of Johnson's Rambler, down to the hashes of Hawkesworth's Adventurer."[24] Such rhetoric would continue to be invoked in relation to the essay throughout the century and the 'olio' would even become a genre in its own right.[25]

In attempting to create a new literary diet for readers, Fielding suggested that they should consume those works which followed the recipe of classical literature. A preference for classical modes of writing is evident in the terms coined when he tried to define his new species of prose fiction: the "comic Epic-Poem in Prose" or the

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[22] Swift, *Tale of a Tub*, 95.
[23] See Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (Edinburgh, 1774).
[24] "ART. VIII. Devotional Pieces, compiled from the Psalms and the Book of Job: to which are prefixed, Thoughts on the Devotional Taste, on Sects, and on Establishments" in *London Review of English and Foreign Literature* (October, 1775), 318.
[25] Francis Grose, *The Olio: Being a Collection of Essays, Dialogues, Letters, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, Pieces of Poetry, Parodies, Bon Mots, Epigrams, Epitaphs* (London, 1793). See also William Fordyce Mayor, *The Juvenile Olio; or Mental Medley: Consisting of Original Essays, Moral and Literary* (London: 1796); George Huddesford, *Bubble and Squeak: A Galli-Maufry of British Beef with the Chopp'd Cabbage of Gallic Philosophy and Radical Reform* (London, 1799); Thomas Medley, *Hotch Potch: Containing a Conclamation of Original Pieces, a Higgledy-Piggledy of Controversies and Opinions on Various Interesting Subjects* (London, 1774); George Huddesford, *Salmagundi; a Miscellaneous Combination of Original Poetry* (London, 1791).

"prosaic-comi-epic" as he respectively terms it in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones.*[26] These hybrid or even hotchpotch terms were carefully chosen for Fielding's new literary form: his prose fictions have many generic affiliations but crucially they are not 'novels.' His hybrid genre might have been a jumble of elements, but the dish he desired to create smacked of the epic:

> [W]hen any kind of Writing contains all its other Parts, such as Fable, Action, Characters, Sentiments, and Diction, and is deficient in Metre only; it seems, I think, reasonable to refer it to the Epic; at least, as no Critic hath thought proper to range it under any other Head, nor to assign it a particular Name to itself.[27]

Viewed in these terms, most prose fictions had the potential to be epic and the conditions here identified – fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction – are also found in periodical writing. Fielding would go on to develop this literary recipe further and acknowledges that for a work to be truly epic it needs to appeal to more than one generation of readers, offering enough contemporary details to provoke laughter among contemporaries while also having a timeless quality that would make the work accessible in "charming Ages yet to come" (443).

Henry Power has suggested that Fielding is "fascinated by the collision between classical inheritance and market forces."[28] The prosai-comi-epic was constantly aware that its "meaning and value will be determined by [its] consumers," but Fielding also thought that prose fiction had to appeal beyond its own time if it were not to become wastepaper.[29] The same aspiration for longevity is evident in his periodicals for all that they were tied to a diurnal schedule. Their Latin mottos – a holdover from Addison and Steele's model for the genre – pointed modern readers to

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[26] *Joseph Andrews* in *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3; *Tom Jones*, 137.
[27] *Joseph Andrews*, 3.
[28] Power, *Epic into Novel*, 35.
[29] Power, *Epic into Novel*, 3.

consider how the periodical existed beyond its current context.[30] In making the epic appeal to a society that revolved around newness and variety, Fielding, as Clifford Siskin argues, takes "the epic's 'exten[sion],' 'comprehensiveness,' 'large[ness], and 'variety'" and expands it "comically to include 'inferior' persons."[31] Thus, he uses the epic to legitimise his new kind of writing and in so doing brings classical forms of writing into contact with the more scurrilous, day-to-day events that entertained modern readers.

To expose what was untasteful in the works of others, Fielding's texts uncover their own construction and draw attention to their use of fiction. This is particularly notable in his periodical writing where he seeks to expose the workings of the genre from within. While Siskin writes about the significance of "novelisms" – a term he coins to refer to the discourse of and about novels in which "writing turns critically upon itself" – Fielding's periodicals demonstrate what I want to term "periodicalisms."[32] His essays probe their material form and generic conventions to critically explore their own manner of construction. Yet Fielding's essay-periodicals not only turn upon themselves to expose the shortcomings of their fictionality but use their self-critical turn to police the print ecology and encourage readers to develop a more sophisticated taste in printed (and fictional) material. Hunter has observed that "very early in Fielding's career in prose fiction we can already see his willingness to attack from the inside, to become a spy upon his reader."[33] Scholars such as Ian Bell have drawn attention to how *Joseph Andrews* is "a highly self-conscious book, fully aware of its own story-telling devices, conscious of its dialogic relation with other

[30] See *Tom Jones*, 314.
[31] Clifford Siskin, "The Historicity of Romantic Discourse" in *Theory of the Novel*, 572. See also 'Preface', *Joseph Andrews*, 4.
[32] Siskin, *Work of Writing*, 177.
[33] J. Paul Hunter, *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 83.

books."[34] It is worth emphasising that, especially given the nature of its relationship with Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews* is itself a piece of literary criticism. As Fielding attacks the very genre in which he is working, it is to be expected that among the most prominent features of *Joseph Andrews* are its "constant dialogue with the audience, the sustained examination of their literary qualifications and their fitness to read the book so carefully made for them."[35] However, both Hunter and Bell's comments resonate strongly with Fielding's essays. As we shall see, his periodical works are similarly conscious of their process of storytelling and Fielding's essays push beyond the Addisonian model to routinely reflect on their own literary qualities and their fitness to be read. Spread over four pages and filling two folio half sheets, Fielding's essay-periodicals offer a greater range of content than the *Spectator* and take on the qualities of a miscellany. While the sections that followed on from the leading essay are omitted from reprinted issues of the publication – both contemporary reissues and modern critical editions privilege the essays over the other content – Fielding's periodicals also feature news stories, list personal announcements such as births, marriages, and deaths, print correspondence, and incorporate short fiction through introducing satirical columns such as the *Covent-Garden Journal*'s "Court of Censorial Enquiry" or the "Apocrypha" in the *True Patriot.* Just as Fielding moves beyond the traditional model for the essay-periodical, so he breaks new ground by simultaneously adorning his facts with fiction and dressing his fictions up as facts. Fielding's novels and periodicals, as the rest of this chapter will show, are concerned with satisfying the reading population's appetite for entertainment and diversion.

[34] Ian A. Bell, *Henry Fielding: Authorship and Authority* (London; New York: Longman, 1994), 99.
[35] Bell, *Fielding: Authorship and Authority*, 99.

Fictions of Jacobite News

From the woodcuts used in mastheads to ironic public notices, and from false news items to advertisements, every element of Fielding's essay-periodicals is chosen to offer a carefully selected diet of material to his reading audiences. He exploits the creative potential inherent within each aspect of his chosen medium and regularly reminds readers that his texts have been carefully prepared for their delectation. As such the historical items, news reports, and advertisements found within his periodicals are as significant as the essays themselves and the connections between these different sections need to be taken into consideration when seeking to understand Fielding's use of fictionality within his periodicals. While Bertrand Goldgar has pointed out that "the interaction between the reflective essays and the specific events which inspired them" is "easy to miss when the essays are read in isolation from the rest of the paper," the relationship between these sections is yet to be fully explored.[36] I want to suggest that these various sections are integral to Fielding's use of fictionality and examination of literary taste as they demonstrate the breadth and depth of reading audiences' exposure to different models of fictional writing. Each section contributes to his wider exploration of literary taste and plays a part in his examination of how long and short form fictions cross-fertilized with one another.

We have already seen how Addison and Steele created a distinctive brand for their periodical works. Fielding does something similar within his more miscellaneous periodicals by creating a structure that he could use across different projects. The *Jacobite's Journal* opens with a leading essay which is followed by sections on foreign affairs, mock court proceedings, domestic news, and other public notices before

[36] Goldgar, "Introduction," *Covent-Garden Journal*, xxxiv.

concluding with advertisements. This partitioned structure was replicated in the *Covent-Garden Journal*; here Fielding first offers accounts from Covent Garden itself, before featuring Court proceedings, an essay on modern history in lieu of news items, foreign affairs, and advertisements. These different sections allowed Fielding to experiment more fully with the relationship between facts and fictions as well as providing a framework that he could use to realise society's desire for variety and diversion. As he flits from one item to the next, the construction of his periodicals replicates the restless attention spans of readers who were continually searching for entertainment. This listlessness finds expression in the fake news items, biting satires, and inset stories which are often humorous and entertaining in their attempts to parody and attack other species of print. For example, in a series of short subsidiary essays in the *Covent-Garden Journal* titled "The Journal of the Present War," Fielding's eidolon, Sir Alexander Drawcansir, battles with Grub Street pamphleteers, taking with him a large body of veterans who are led by Bacon and Locke to serve alongside "General A. Millar," Fielding's bookseller. Here, Fielding adopts the guise of a war correspondent to combat "the State of Anarchy that prevails among Writers; and the great revolution which hath lately happened in the Kingdom of Criticism" (*CGJ*.1). Millar's muster role includes a mixture of real figures and imagined characters as he drafts "General Thomas Jones," "Rodorick Random," and "Peeragrin Puckle" – all characters in works published by Millar – alongside the living figures of David Garrick and James Lacy.[37] For the reader familiar with the literary marketplace, Fielding's satire takes on a wider significance – not least thanks to the typographical slippage between "Pickle" and "Puckle" that transfigures Smollett's character into a malevolent

[37] See *CGJ* 1-3.

demon or bogeyman.[38] The devil is quite literally placed in the fictional and typographical details. Fielding continued to feature false stories in his periodicals to directly confront the relationship between fact and fiction. With these shorter essays and supplementary columns usually located between foreign and domestic news items, he lends a factuality to his fake reports and a fictionality to the fact-orientated news items.

Within the *Jacobite's Journal* Fielding blurs the distinction between fact and invention by bringing Jacobite fictions and mythology into conflict with the historical truths of 1688, 1715, and 1745. The "Emblematical Frontispiece" which appeared on the first twelve issues set the tone for the publication by creating a visual representation of the *Journal*'s interest in false news and false history. Designed by Hogarth, the woodcut depicts a donkey, being led by the nose by a bare-footed monk, upon which a man and a woman are seated; we are to infer that this is the manner in which Jacobites are led by popery. The image also prominently features two published texts: the *London Evening Post* (which is being eaten by the donkey) and a work by James Harrington, the seventeenth-century essayist whose controversial *Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656) outlined plans for a utopian republic. The connotations of Fielding's woodcut are clear: only an ass would consume the *London Evening Post* and Harrington's work is little more than a spur to rebellion – being depicted with a barb on the spine, it is used to drive the unfortunate donkey onwards so that its mistress can halloo her views to a wider audience. While serving to suggest that Jacobitism is one of the most foolish things in nature, and one which only an ass would suffer under, the image of the donkey also recalls the frontispiece for the 1729 edition of the *Dunciad*. Fielding makes recourse to recent satires on the condition of

[38] "Puckle," *Oxford English Dictionary.*

the modern print trade, adapting and reconfiguring their rhetoric. In distilling these wider concerns with both politics and the print ecology into a single image, the masthead encapsulates the paper's aims and can convey its disdain of Jacobitism even to those readers who merely glanced at the work in a precursory manner before casting it aside.

Or so he thought. Many readers supposedly read the paper as a genuinely pro-Jacobite work. The *Jacobite's Journal* noted that those who had misinterpreted the woodcut did so on account of the ass and critics went so far as to suggest that it was a portrait of Fielding himself: "several ingenious and witty Printers of News Papers have very facetiously taken Occasion to call the Author himself an Ass" (*JJ*.13). The eventual removal of the offending donkey caused a shift in the fictional and satirical framework of the publication as Fielding declared that "When the Ass disappeared from this Paper, it might be reasonably concluded that the Jacobite would not stay long behind" (*JJ*.17). Exposing the folly of those who believed the *Jacobite's Journal* to be supporting the Jacobite cause, he suggests that there cannot really be "any Persons weak enough to maintain such Tenets in Earnest" (*JJ*.17). Yet Fielding's reason for dispensing with the image after the twelfth issue was not only that people supposedly thought the work was supporting "the young Chevalier" and Jenny Cameron, but was the result of a desire to generate more space for the paper's entertaining elements:

> [T]he Ass and his Retinue do indeed take up too much Room, and must oblige us either to suppress Part of our own Lucubrations, or some of those material Articles of News which we weekly transcribe from others; or lastly, those Pieces of Intelligence called Advertisements, which, tho' not always the most entertaining to our Reader, do afford very agreeable Entertainment to ourselves. (*JJ*.13).

With the lucubrations and advertisements being a source of entertainment, at least for Fielding, the ancillary and paratextual elements of the *Jacobite's Journal* require much

closer attention than they have so far received. In these sections Fielding publishes not only genuine advertisements and articles of news but also highly editorialised accounts of people's deaths, sightings of ghosts, and notices for books that never existed. Although he might have been an ass in the eyes of some critics, he was actually concerned with trying to make an ass out of others, and in so doing catching the unsuspecting and uncritical reader off guard.

Throughout the *Jacobite's Journal* Fielding's desire to entertain himself often sees him expose the deceptions propagated by other periodically published works. Excerpting material from the more popular newspapers of the day, the *Jacobite's Journal* offers a digest of the week's headlines, copying out parts of reports verbatim. Fielding then offers his own opinions on how those stories have been reported, concluding the items of news with an italicised gloss that undermines the factuality of his source texts. Comments such as "Happy it is for the Age, that the *Ignoramus* of this and other News-Papers, will be in weekly Rehearsal at our Vigilatory" (*JJ*.1), "this Paragraph be Nonsense and unintelligible" (*JJ*.4), and "This News is, I am afraid, too good to be True" (*JJ*.20) are not only found regularly within the *Jacobite's Journal* but appear throughout his periodical works. Yet Fielding does not just offer his opinion on the veracity of different news reports; he lets the newspapers undermine themselves as he searches for variations and inconsistencies in their stories before printing the different accounts side by side. This facilitates the creation of a series of composite news items in which each sentence comes from a different newspaper. Each bulletin, as it were, is usually contradictory to its predecessor as Fielding seeks to expose the extent of the misinformation, or even invention and fiction, that was circulating in the news press. This practice was a holdover from the *True Patriot* in which Fielding had

first begun to print different versions of news stories side by side, twisting military accounts into pieces of entertainment and diversion:

> The Rebels having carried off their Killed and Wounded when they were driven out of the Village of Clifton, it has not been possible to ascertain their Loss, but 70 have been since taken Prisoners, G. Several of the Rebels were killed and wounded, and 55 made Prisoners, D.A. One who saw the Action says 7 of the Rebels were kill.d [sic], and 60 taken Prisoners, L.C. Of the Rebels 5 were found dead in the Field, and 30 or 40 in the River, 70 are taken by the Country People, D.A. 160 of the Rebels killed and taken, S.J.E. 30 of the Enemy were killed, L.C. 4 of the Rebels were found in the Field, *idem*, another Day. All agree Lord Elcho is taken, some say mortally wounded, some not. (*TP*.9)

Such a positioning of news items exposes the falsehoods within the news press as a whole as well as demonstrating the various contradictions that could be found within a single title. This particular item emphasises the inconsistent reporting of the *Daily Advertiser* – denoted by the abbreviation "D.A." – as the statistics provided by that paper are clearly contradictory.[39] By digesting, interpreting and re-presenting the works of newsmongers Fielding creates an alternative kind of news narrative, one that not only blurs the relationship between fact and fiction but which exposes the lies and fictions inherent within periodical publications.

Fielding took this exploration of Jacobite rumours one step further, launching a "Gallimatias" [sic] section, which was designed, as its title suggests, to expose the "confused language, meaningless talk, [and] nonsense" spread by other papers.[40] Although the galimatias are usually associated with the *Jacobite's Journal,* where the section was a regular feature, it was first trialled in the *True Patriot* for 31 December, 1745, and offered "a faithful Abstract of Rebellious History from last Week's Dunghill of Papers" (*TP*.9). Exposing the nonsense published by news writers, the galimatias

[39] Fielding's abbreviations are: G. Gazette; D.A. Daily Advertiser; L.C. London Courant; S.J.E. St James's Evening Post.
[40] "Galimatia," *Oxford English Dictionary*.

reveal the shortcomings of news reportage and the relative dearth of news, showing how some events were being printed time and again to no real purpose:

> General Ligonier is recover'd. G.A. He is judged in a fair way of Recovery, D.A. He is perfectly recover'd G.A. He is to set out To-morrow, being Thursday. He set out to Day, being Thursday. He set out Yesterday, being Thursday. *Several Papers.* (*TP*.4)

These variations on a story give rise to speculation as to what really happened. We can gather that Ligonier's health is improving and he will return to the field, but there is considerable disagreement as to the extent of his recovery. Such instances of confused reporting were not uncommon within the news press. Obituaries are sometimes printed for those who have not actually died and reports circulated of battles and events that never took place in an attempt to satisfy the public's thirst for news and their desire to see the Jacobite threat overcome:

> Our last Advices from Stirling assure us, that 350 Deserters from Lord John Drummond's Regiment were come into that Place; and that Jenny Cameron, who has been of late so much talk'd of, is actually a Prisoner there. L.C. *These Advices are thought and believed to assure with the same Degree of Truth as those above*. (*TP*.16)

Upon consulting the above advice, we find that "*There is no Truth in what is thought, what is hoped, nor what is believed*" (*TP*.16). These items of news are little more than fiction, invention, and lies. Scepticism about news reporting dominated Fielding's periodical writings and would also shape the course of *Tom Jones*, as we shall see. Within the *Jacobite's Journal* there are further instances of composite news items and a series of misinformation about executions: "Serjeant Smith, for deserting to the French, is order'd to be *shot*, D.G. To be *hang'd*, D.A. To be *hang'd, drawn, and* quarter'd, G.A." (*JJ*.2). The very next issue contains the similarly perplexing announcement of "Returned to Life. General Wade. General Wentworth. S.J.E. The latter since dead again, W.E." (*JJ*.3). It is not known how Serjeant Smith will be

executed, and General Wentworth is probably dead. Fielding's interpretations of news stories in the *Jacobite's Journal* began to take on the form of short, sometimes imaginative, essays. These were typically printed under the rubric of "Modern History" and it is in these sections that Fielding's comments on the reliability of the news are given a fuller rein. Viewed in this way the periodical complicates the connection between news and novels famously described by Davis as the essay-periodical fictionalises news in much the same way as long form prose fiction.[41]

Fielding's periodicals appeal to the nation's desire for novelty and variety by inviting speculation about the extent to which factuality and fictionality were deployed within different print media. Like his long form prose fictions, which offer, as Vivasvan Soni suggests, a "vehicle for the exercise and development of judgment […] because [their] narratives offer such rich possibilities for exploring the alternatives" which could but crucially did not happen, Fielding's periodicals offer different versions of events.[42] These alternatives are not just played out within news items but link together the different sections found within a single issue of the *Jacobite's Journal*. For example, in the seventeenth issue, Fielding notes how "an Infinite Number of Readers have not the least Taste or Relish" for the Jacobite conceit and his eidolon, John Trott-Plaid, and so he decides to cast out the Jacobite element of the work. However, Fielding then goes on to feature Jacobite voices in other parts of the periodical and invites two Jacobites into the Court of Criticism and in the section on domestic news he includes a column titled "Jacobite Wit in the London Evening Post" (*JJ*.17). He brings the different sections of the *Journal* into conversation with one another to channel different views and offer multiple perspectives on a single idea.

[41] Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 55–56.
[42] Vivasvan Soni, "Judging, Inevitably: Aesthetic Judgment and Novelistic Form in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2015): 176.

This ability to spin a story in a variety of ways pre-empts his longer prose works in which Fielding embeds stories within stories to create variations on the same theme in a similar manner to his periodicals.

***Tom Jones* and the Seasoning of Fiction**

It has long been observed that *Tom Jones* is a carefully constructed novel that is acutely aware of its status as a work of prose fiction. It is also a very symmetrical text which is split into three roughly equal parts that respectively recount Tom's adventures in the country, on the road, and in the city. Within that, each new book opens formulaically with a chapter that explores the arts of writing and authorship. These introductory chapters often take the form of theoretical digressions and do not contribute to the onwards trajectory of the plot; Fielding uses them to step outside the narrative and directly interrogate the art of fiction writing by calling attention to the inherent fictionality of his chosen form. The content of these chapters, however, ultimately spills over into the main body of the text as Fielding declares early on that "I intend to digress, through this whole History, as often as I see Occasion" (28). It is on these digressionary moments, and in particular in Book Eight – the section in which Fielding offers one of his most significant digressions on the art of authorship before embarking upon his longest inset narrative – that I want to focus here.

As noted earlier, each book in *Tom Jones* contains a series of short chapters. This partitioning of the narrative ensures that the text is readerly; it can be picked up and set aside with ease to assist readers' consumption and digestion of the wider narrative. Such modes of division were not unique to *Tom Jones* as Fielding had noted previously in *Joseph Andrews* that "it becomes an Author generally to divide a Book,

as it doth a Butcher to joint his Meat, for such Assistance is of great Help to both the Reader and the Carver."[43] The heavy labour has already been done and the prose has been pre-prepared to enable readers to move through it in bite-sized chunks. These divisions make the work more readily consumable as the content of each chapter is summarised in a single line that acts as a prospectus for how that portion of the narrative will proceed. For example, chapters might be concerned with "Shewing what Kind of a History this is; what it is like, and what it is not like," "The Arrival of a Surgeon. His Operations, and a long Dialogue between Sophia and her Maid," or be found to "[Contain] such very deep and grave Matters, that some Readers, perhaps, may not relish it."[44] Like contents lists in reprinted volumes of periodical essays, these epigraphic sentences allow readers to work through *Tom Jones* in a more indexical fashion, enabling them to pass over sections which may offend their personal taste, such as that which is described as "A most dreadful Chapter indeed; and which few Readers ought to venture upon in an Evening, especially when alone" (249). Furthermore, these chapter titles contribute to the work's self-conscious deployment of fictionality as they show Fielding exerting control over the narrative and carving out discrete moments within the text to reflect on the art of fiction writing. In considering the importance of these divisions, Hugh Amory has observed that throughout his prose fictions Fielding is so far "from wishing the reader to forget that the story is a story, with an author in charge, that he built into the fabric of his narrative a continuous authorial commentary not only on the events, but on the composition of this narrative."[45] Such moments of authorial interjection are a defining part of Fielding's style in both his periodicals and longer form prose fictions. His interjections

[43] *Joseph Andrews*, 78.
[44] See chapter descriptions for: Book II, Chapter 1; Book IV, Chapter 14; Book IV, Chapter 4.
[45] Hugh Amory, "Introduction," *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* ed. Hugh Amory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), xiii.

became both more frequent and more direct until, in *Amelia*, he declared that he would place a "Scene in a Chapter by itself, which we desire all our Readers who do not love, or who, perhaps do not know the Pleasure of Tenderness, to pass over; since they may do this without any Prejudice to the Thread of the Narrative."[46] The story is so carefully wrought that entire chapters can be skipped without detriment to the wider plot.

Reminiscent in length, tone, and style to periodical essays these digressive chapters illustrate, to use Darryl Domingo's words, "the absurdity or impropriety of being drawn in too deeply by a manifest fiction."[47] The opening chapters see Fielding examining fictionality as a mode of expression; he exposes the artificiality of his narrative before showing how his prose fiction comes into contact with the world his readers inhabit. Fielding inserts references to ground his text in real events: there is a puppet show that stages part of Colley Cibber's comedy *The Provok'd Husband* (1728), a masquerade scene, and multiple references to *Hamlet* which culminate in Tom seeing Garrick perform the titular role. The diversions that entertain the characters are the same events which reading audiences would have seen advertised in periodicals such as the *Covent-Garden Journal*. This helps to blur the boundaries between the world of the text and the real as Fielding aligns the marvellous world of his fiction with that of everyday life. Such blurring is particularly evident in Book Eight which from the outset draws attention to its verisimilitude:

> As we are now entering upon a Book, in which the Course of our History will oblige us to relate some Matters of a more strange and surprizing Kind than any which have hitherto occurred, it may not be amiss in the prolegomenous, or introductory Chapter, to say something of that Species of Writing which is called the Marvellous. […] First then, I think, it may very reasonably be required of every Writer, that he keeps

[46] Henry Fielding, *Amelia* ed. Linda Bree (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview: 2010), 130.
[47] Darryl P. Domingo, *The Rhetoric of Diversion in English Literature and Culture, 1690-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 209.

> within the Bounds of Possibility; and still remembers that what it is not possible for Man to perform, it is scarce possible for Man to believe he did perform. (256-57)

The marvellous might, at first glance, belong to the realm of romance or amatory fiction, but it can also be found within more historically inclined works.

While Fielding warns about the need to adhere to the realms of possibility, there is something ironic in the fact that his interest in probability is voiced in a section of the text that is relatively implausible and which exists outside the framework of the wider fiction. The introductory chapter is, therefore, itself marvellous as it emphasises the different threads at work within *Tom Jones* and draws attention to those which are embellishments or digressions. The movement between the real and marvellous is particularly evident in the text's engagement with Jacobite affairs. Rumours about the Jacobite army and Young Pretender course throughout the middle section of *Tom Jones*, and as Tom's actions move with the political tide there is something marvellous about his entire history, which relies heavily on chance and contingent meetings. This is most evident in the case of the Man of the Hill, whose story brings together various facts and fictions about the Jacobites.

While the bulk of the Man's story is concerned with moral conduct, particularly with relation to gambling, he shares Tom's political beliefs. The latter was so opposed to the Jacobite cause that he contemplated joining Cumberland's forces.[48] Yet the anti-Jacobite view is not the only one to circulate within this portion of the text: it is during the Man's story that Fielding decides "to inform the Reader of a Secret, which we had no proper Opportunity of revealing before, *Partridge* was in Truth a *Jacobite*" (284). References to Jacobite politics and the Uprising occur

[48] See *Tom Jones*, 239.

frequently in the middle section of the text and as Ronald Paulson argues, "the central paradigm of *Tom Jones* is the historical event of the Forty-Five."[49] This is readily demonstrated when Tom meets soldiers who are marching against the Rebels and who hope to be commanded by the Duke of Cumberland. This creates a very precise historical context for *Tom Jones* and dates this central part of the novel specifically to late November 1745; the Scottish army began its retreat in December, and Cumberland was not appointed as commander until November 23.[50] This has led Michael McKeon to suggest that it is "Fielding's entanglement of the micronarrative of *Tom Jones* with the macronarrative of the '45 Rising [that] provides the most intricate vindication in his work of the view that novelistic 'invention' is consistent with a painstaking truth to 'history.'"[51] The Uprising itself might exist only on the very fringes of the narrative, but the Jacobite threat infiltrates most of the text and it is against the backdrop of Jacobitism that some of *Tom Jones*'s most marvellous moments occur.

The episode with the Man of the Hill is a perfect example of Fielding's self-conscious explorations of fictionality and literary taste as it serves no wider purpose within the context of *Tom Jones*: after telling his life story and recounting the events of 1688 the Man disappears as mysteriously and inexplicably as he first appeared. Fielding positions this digression not only in relation to contemporary affairs but also uses it to confront the wider print ecology and the credulity of untasteful readers. The Man cuts a figure that, although marvellous and terrifying, was familiar to readers of long form prose fiction: "His Body was cloathed with the Skin of an Ass, made something into the Form of a Coat. He wore likewise Boots on his Legs, and a Cap on

[49] Ronald Paulson, *The Life of Henry Fielding: A Critical Biography* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2000), 230.
[50] See John Allen Stevenson, *The Real History of Tom Jones* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 19.
[51] McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 418.

his Head, both composed of the Skin of some other Animals" (289). Dressed like an alternative Robinson Crusoe resplendent in his isolation, the Man of the Hill cuts a formidable figure in his unconventional garb. Although this allusion might be coincidental, this seems unlikely given that Fielding makes an explicit reference to Defoe's writing elsewhere in Book Eight. He previously invoked the "Ghost of Mrs. *Veale*" as part of a larger discussion about how some facts are essential to the "Thread of a Story" and must be recorded exactly in the order they appeared, while others are best "sacrificed to Oblivion in Complaisance to the Scepticism of a Reader" (259).[52] The Man of the Hill's story might pick up a different narrative thread to the rest of *Tom Jones*, and is a digression that shifts attention away from Tom's life history, but this section of the narrative also consciously positions itself within the print marketplace by alluding to other works of long form fiction.

While the Man's tale has little if any direct influence on the plot of *Tom Jones*, it bears a closer resemblance to the moral and legal content of much of Fielding's periodical writing. The Man's partitioned account offers a space in which to reflect on other public ills as digressions begin to be layered upon digressions:

> *Jones* desired him to pass over any thing that might give him Pain in the Relation; but *Partridge* eagerly cried out, 'O pray, Sir, let us hear this, I had rather hear this than all the rest; as I hope to be saved, I will never mention a Word of it.' *Jones* was going to rebuke him, but the Stranger prevented it by proceeding thus. 'I had a Chum, a very prudent, frugal young Lad, who, tho' he had no very large Allowance, had by his Parsimony heaped up upwards of forty Guineas, which I knew he kept in his Escritore. I took therefore an Opportunity of purloining his Key from his Breeches Pocket while he was asleep, and thus made myself Master of all his Riches. (293-94)

The Man's tale might be designed to entertain and instruct readers, but it is also a means of diverting Tom and Partridge, who sit and listen attentively to his various

[52] See Daniel Defoe, *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal* (London; 1706).

stories. With this episode designed to ask reading audiences to think about what they themselves do as readers, as well as challenging the way the characters interact with oral modes of fictionality, there is a stylistic difference between this episode and the rest of the novel. Hunter notes of this episode that "the Man's style is heavy and grave, asking for an audience response almost opposite to that demanded by Fielding's larger, friendlier, and more expansive narrative style."[53] The more contracted style of the Man's tale is closer to the tone of the *Covent-Garden Journal* in which Fielding's obsession with robbers, highway men, and the increasing crime rate permeates almost every issue. Casting off the ironic and playful tone of his introductory chapters and *Jacobite's Journal*, Fielding uses the Man of the Hill to repackage the more solemn concerns of his wider novel within a shorter self-contained, interpolated episode. The Man's story might be a diversion, but it is a foil to Tom's own narrative that drives home the more moral aspects of the plot.

Having the benefit of hindsight by writing *Tom Jones* after the suppression of the Uprising, Fielding manipulates the factual record and offers points of counter-history to provide different perspectives on recent events. Throughout the Man's history, Fielding uses the Jacobite unrest of 1688 to offer an alternative platform from which to examine the fears and threats of the 1745 Uprising. For example, when the Man recounts a story about the time he sent for an apothecary for his father, the apothecary, despite his learning, is shown to be little more than a fool who believes that everything he reads is true:

> [T]here was great News arrived in a Letter to himself, which he said would shortly be publick, "That the Duke of *Monmouth* was landed in the West with a vast Army of *Dutch*; and that another vast Fleet hovered over the Coast of *Norfolk*, and was to make a Descent there, in order to favour the Duke's Enterprize with a Diversion on that Side."

[53] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 49.

> This Apothecary was one of the greatest Politicians of his Time. […] His Advices, however, were seldom authentic; for he would swallow almost any thing as a Truth […] 'Thus it happened with what he at present communicated; for it was known within a short Time afterwards, that the Duke was really landed; but that his Army consisted only of a few Attendants; and as to the Diversion in *Norfolk*, it was entirely false. (307)

The manner in which the apothecary's information is revealed to be false is reminiscent of the galimatias in the *Jacobite's Journal*. This single anecdote allows the Man's story to reference the long history of Jacobite facts and fictions at the same time as creating an anecdote that reflects Fielding's wider interest in how news reporting contributed to spreading misinformation and false understanding. Within the context of the wider narrative, Fielding regularly draws direct comparisons between writing history and writing fiction: "Possibility alone [is not] sufficient to justify us, we must keep likewise within the Rules of Probability" (258). He also takes this one step further and observes how his readers' desire to "swallow almost any thing as a Truth" resonates with the town's almost insatiable appetite for entertainment and diversion – a concern that was playing out in his periodical writings. The strength of the Man of the Hill's story lies in its constant awareness of its status as an inset fictional episode. Only when viewed in relation to the master narrative in which it is contained does it take on wider significance, reimagining the plot of *Tom Jones* on a much smaller scale.

In addition to showing readers how fiction works, Fielding uses the episode of the Man of the Hill to model different ways of interacting with narrated stories. Jacobite facts and fictions are constantly blended together and their artificiality and fictionality is usually revealed by Partridge, whom Paulson describes as a "garrulous, superstitious Catholic-Jacobite," as he shows himself to be particularly liable to

believe in "prodigies and old wives' tales."[54] Partridge repeatedly shows susceptibility to believing in tales of the exiled Stuart monarchs, even though he is clearly capable of distinguishing between fact and fictionality as he declares of one of Tom's stories "that the whole was a Fiction" (276). Tom and Partridge's reactions to the Man's tale demonstrate their different levels of credulity, as well as their political leanings. Hunter has noted that their modes of listening cause the pair to fall into two categories of reader: "Tom, on his way to becoming sensible and mature, is the type of Judicious Reader, and Partridge of the Credulous one."[55] The significance of the interpolated tale of the Man of the Hill, then, lies not just in the way he tells this story but in the way readers react to its novelisms, and so in whether or not their responses show them to be in possession of good literary taste. Time and again Partridge shows himself to be deficient in this respect as he interrupts the Man's story either asking for clarification on turns of phrase that he does not understand – "'*Nubbing Cheat*,' cries *Partridge*, 'Pray, Sir, what is that?'" (299) – or interjecting with his own anecdotes: "You may laugh at me, Sir, if you please,' answered *Partridge*, 'but if you will hear a very short Story which I can tell, and which is most certainly true, perhaps you may change your Opinion'" (295). Such moments cause Tom to be "a little offended by the Impertinence of *Partridge*, [even if] he could not however avoid smiling at his Simplicity" (301). Yet it is by allowing Tom to interrupt the story that Fielding makes some of his most direct engagements with the current Jacobite threat:

> 'What you say,' interrupted *Jones*, 'is very true; and it has often struck me, as the most wonderful thing I ever read of in History, that so soon after this convincing Experience, which brought our whole Nation to join so unanimously in expelling King *James*, for the Preservation of our Religion and Liberties, there should be a Party among us mad enough to desire the placing his Family again on the Throne.' 'You are

[54] Paulson, *Life of Henry Fielding*, 247.
[55] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 49.

> not in Earnest!' answered the old Man; 'there can be no such Party.' (308)

The case of the Man of the Hill represents the dangers of not keeping up with current affairs at the same time as feeding reading audiences' appetites for continual variety and diversion.

A Return to Periodicalisms

Shortly after the publication of *Tom Jones,* Fielding reprised his role as a periodicalist and began to write the *Covent-Garden Journal*. This paper is more explicitly literary than his previous essay projects and is also more direct in its policing of the print ecology. It is here that Fielding furthers his explorations of fiction, genre, and news culture as he cultivates society's taste for fictional entertainments, encouraging a new taste for literature at the same time as exposing the workings of his own fictional writings. This tendency has previously been noted in *Tom Jones,* which Bell describes as being "less interested in continuing the projects of earlier prose writers and novelists, and more interested in defamiliarising them, in forcing us to confront those very conventions which are not usually made visible by authors."[56] This defamiliarizing of the work of other writers is also a key concern of periodicals such as the *Covent-Garden Journal*. With periodicals requiring a continual investment from readers, both in terms of time and financial outlay, their longevity relied on the public continuing to have a taste for them and the rise of miscellany periodicals, such as the *Covent-Garden Journal*, bears witness to the heterogeneity of that taste. The *Covent-Garden Journal* capitalises on the diverse nature of readers' taste as the leading essays, false news

[56] Bell, *Fielding: Authorship and Authority*, 169.

items, and editorialised historical accounts all police the print ecology by exposing the conventions of fictional prose which are often overlooked by credulous readers.

The *Covent-Garden Journal* was highly aware of the position it occupied in the print marketplace as well as of its status as a commercial object. Compared to other essay-based projects, the *Covent-Garden Journal* commanded a high retail price and when justifying the cost of his papers Fielding boasts that the periodical will offer "almost twenty Times as much as is generally contained in the Daily Advertiser" (*CGJ*.1). Or, as his bookseller supposedly argued:

> 'As you are a Man of Learning, Sir,' says he, 'and well travelled in the Greek and Roman Authors, I shall most probably, in this Paper, import many curious Treasures of Antiquity both from Greece, and Rome. Now, as Gentlemen daily give Hundreds of Pounds for antient Busts, and Statues, they will not surely scruple to give Three-half-pence for an antient Greek or Roman Sentiment.' (*CGJ*.1)

In claiming that his periodicals will be invested with the learning of classical authors, Fielding makes a value judgement about his publication. By outlaying three-half-pence on the *Covent-Garden Journal* readers would gain wisdom from the Greeks and Romans, but would also be saved the additional expense of purchasing newspapers such as the *Daily Advertiser*: its contents, along with those of other papers, would be summarised in the weekly issues of the *Covent-Garden Journal*. The invocation of classical learning, however, also recalls the aims of Fielding's long form fictions; periodicals, like the "comic Epic-Poem in Prose," could claim authority through association with classical literature and scholarship. To be in possession of a truly discerning taste, readers and authors needed to gain familiarity with Greek and Roman thinkers: "No Author is to be admitted into the Order of Critics, until he hath read over, and understood, Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, in their original Language" (*CGJ*.3). However, these classical authors are not the only influences on Fielding's

writing and literary criticism. Three years earlier in *Tom Jones*, he called upon the muse that inspired Aristophanes, Lucan, Rabelais and Shakespeare for inspiration.

Fielding places a very specific value upon his texts and suggests that his periodicals are of a quality consistent with some of the period's most culturally significant texts. To uphold classical standards of writing, the eidolon, Sir Alexander Drawcansir, styles himself as an arbiter of all things literary and assumes the role of Knight Censor – a title that is reminiscent of an epic tradition and the figure of the knight errant, but which also recalls Bickerstaff's assumption of "the Title and Dignity of *Censor* of *Great Britain*" (*T*.162 II.402). The decisions made by Fielding's "Knight Censor of Great Britain" were final and no discerning reader should disagree with his views:

> [A]ll Persons are forbid, under the Penalty *of our highest Displeasure*, to presume to criticise upon those Works with which WE OURSELVES shall think proper to oblige the Public; and any Person who shall presume to offend in this Particular, will not only be expunged from the Roll of Critics, but will be degraded from any other Order to which he shall belong[.] (*CGJ*.3)

Anyone who contradicts the opinions put forward in the *Covent-Garden Journal* will find his name "forthwith entered in the Records of Grub-Street" (*CGJ*.3), a process that Fielding playfully termed "grubbing."[57] Drawcansir, then, takes his duty as a 'Knight Censor' very seriously. Take the tenth issue of the *Covent-Garden Journal*, for instance, where he argues that a successful work of literature sees "the agreeable […] blended with the useful," and this would allow both works of romance and epic poetry to "become worthy the Perusal of the greatest of Men" (*CGJ*.10). "Real Taste," he suggests, "is a Quality with which Human Nature is very slenderly gifted" and derives "from a nice Harmony between the Imagination and the Judgement" (*CGJ*.10).

[57] For more on works being "grubbed" see *JJ*.12.

Ideas of taste and the fitness of certain texts for public consumption dominate the early instalments of the *Covent-Garden Journal* and the first two months' worth of issues carried out a sustained examination of taste and discernment, particularly in relation to reading. Fielding made it clear that his eidolon's purpose was to "instruct the Wise, and furnish Entertainment for those of true Taste" (*CGJ*.7).

How print materials curated the public's taste is discussed extensively within the earlier instalments of the *Covent-Garden Journal*, and Fielding asks younger readers in particular to "avoid the Perusal of any modern Book" until it has been sanctioned as "Evil Books corrupt at once both our Manners and our Taste" (*CGJ*.10). Yet this was part of a wider exposition of the various ways reading audiences might consume and interact with print materials. For example, *Covent-Garden Journal* 6 focuses on the indelicate matter of works being repurposed for toilet paper, offering readers the couplet "Lintott's for gen'ral Use are fit, / For some Folks read, but all Folks ---." Not all texts were suitable for reading and while Fielding mournfully, albeit somewhat glibly, pointed out that how periodical publications and works such as Lintott's would "never be able to wipe off the Injuries of Time" (*CGJ*.6), it was for the greater good of the public's constitution that works occasionally met such an end. Considering the effect of print on other bodily functions, Fielding addressed the process of digestion and the connection between modern print and cooking. In a moment that is reminiscent of the discussions of baking in the *Little Review*, he noted how some authors are forced to "see some of their best Performances stain'd with the Juice of Gooseberries, Currents and Damascenes" (*CGJ*.6). When works of poor quality, or which were originally intended only to be viewed by a small number of people, are used in this manner, they gain a new audience. Yet such works are "by no means proper Food for the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings" who are not skilled

enough to recognise that these works deal in "infidelity, Scurrility, and Indecency" and so are unwittingly fed scandalous and untasteful opinions. Such food wrappers are "too speculative and mysterious for the Contemplation of the Young and Tender, into whose Hands Tarts and Pies" (*CGJ*.6) are most likely to fall. This particular essay serves to illustrate the various ways audiences could unwittingly encounter print materials and consume them not as Addison suggested over the tea equipage but in a range of less polite social settings. Every member of society from booksellers to bakers helped to control the dissemination of print materials and had a part to play in helping to maintain the nation's taste not just for pies, but for print too.

In questioning how fit certain kinds of publication were for public consumption, Fielding directly confronts his readers about their own literary taste. Goldgar notes that "it is the writer's true taste, then, which authorizes him to enact the role of Censor of the nation's morals."[58] This authority is made evident in the "Court of Criticism" and the "Court of Censorial Enquiry" which were respectively regular features in the *Jacobite's Journal* and *Covent-Garden Journal,* and recall the original premise of the *Review*'s Scandal Club. As Fielding assumed his position as Chief Westminster Magistrate in November 1748, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that he began to create a series of literary courts in which he aligned sensational criminal news with questions of literary taste. In the first court in the *Jacobite's Journal* Fielding set himself up as a supreme judge and "strictly charge[d] the said Public not to purchase any modern literary Productions" (*JJ*.6) until they have read his verdicts on them. No work was safe and the court sessions would put on trial and sentence recently published works in any genre:

[58] Goldgar, "Introduction" in *Covent-Garden Journal,* xxxv.

> We have been therefore humbly requested, as well by our Correspondents as by the Booksellers aforesaid, to erect a Court of Criticism for the well-ordering and inspecting all Matters any wise concerning the Republic of Literature, and for the due Correction and Punishment of all Abuses committed therein. (*JJ*.6)

The focus on criticism suggests that Fielding's Court is more concerned with a process of judging well than it is with exposing matters of scandal or intrigue; he desired that his critics would become skilled in distinguishing "the faults and beauties of writing."[59] Crucially, however, Fielding's Court engages with the Republic of Literature, and not that of Letters. The Republic of Letters, he felt, had become a false measure of value, being filled with "Snarlers" who are "always the severest Critics on such of their contemporary Writers as are in Possession of what they aimed at" (*JJ*.8), continually offering criticism but never acknowledging good work. The Republic of Literature, then, represents an alternative standard for taste and quality. As Dustin Griffin contends, the republic of letters was supposed to be "an ideal literary polity" but by the mid-eighteenth century had "largely become an empty cliché or dead metaphor" as the republic constituted "little more than a rabble of unqualified and contentious scribblers."[60] By creating the Republic of Literature, Fielding aimed to differentiate between the "Low Republic," which he increasingly associated with Grub Street, and more tasteful works of literature. He created a new category that was ostensibly defined by its relation to classical republics, but which was also more suited to affecting the diversion of the modern age. Reconfiguring this terminology Fielding used his courts to create a new standard for literary works and in 1753 the *Gray's Inn*

[59] "Critic," *Dictionary of the English Language*.
[60] Dustin H. Griffin, *Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014), 135.

Journal would declare that "The Republic of Literature, is the most respectable Republic in the World."[61]

The purpose of the Courts, then, was to censure the works of other writers and pass sentence upon the Republic of Literature to ensure "the due Correction and Punishment of all Abuses committed therein" (*JJ*.6). The Courts in the *Covent-Garden Journal* proceed along the same terms and the "Court of Censorial Enquiry" first appeared in the fifth number with the intention to expose "whatever is wicked, hateful, absurd, or ridiculous." The Court went so far as to punish anyone who did not adhere to its views, stating in its prospectus that "it shall not be lawful for any Person whatever, to purchase, or read, the said [offending] Book, or Pamphlet, under the Penalty of being considered as in Contempt" (*CGJ*.5). The Court sections did not merely explore the nation's reading habits but set out to police the "Swarm of foolish Novels and Romances," as Fielding put it in *Tom Jones*, which blighted the marketplace.[62] One of his chief criticisms about foolish novels and romances is that readers may fail to "distinguish what is true and genuine in this historic Kind of Writing, from what is false and counterfeit" – a concern that he shares with Haywood.[63] He even termed *Amelia* – his prose fiction that is most closely aligned with the epic tradition – "a Romance" (*CGJ*.6) when preparing to put the work on trial in the *Covent-Garden Journal*, despite the fact that it is hard to see such a generic affiliation in the text. Fielding had previously denigrated the romance-tradition, declaring the form to contain "little Instruction or Entertainment."[64] As such, his use of the term "Romance" to describe his work is not in keeping with his own

[61] *Gray's Inn Journal*, No. 3, October 13, 1753.
[62] *Tom Jones*, 314.
[63] *Tom Jones*, 314.
[64] *Joseph Andrews*, 3.

understanding of different forms of prose fiction and he seems to apply it to *Amelia* in an ironic imitation of the text's critics.

Amelia's trial started two issues later. Fielding defended the character of his book as well as that of his eponymous character, having Amelia herself stand in the docks for three consecutive issues. Amelia's father is the chief witness for the defence, claiming her education and upbringing "followed the Rules of all those who are acknowledged to have writ best upon the Subject" (*CGJ*.8) and that in her conduct she has deviated little from those rules – namely, the expectations for the genre. However, Fielding's court is something of a mock trial. He stated in *Tom Jones* that "I shall not look on myself as accountable to any Court of Critical Jurisdiction whatever: For as I am, in reality, the Founder of a new Province of Writing, so I am at liberty to make what Laws I please therein" (53). Despite "Counsellor Town," the leader for the prosecution, making the case that the fiction offends the town's taste, *Amelia* is ultimately found not guilty; Fielding has made the rules by which she is to be tried and ensures that the book was acquitted and "delivered to her Parent, and a Scene of great Tenderness passed between them" (*CGJ*.8).

Although *Amelia*'s trial is an elaborate jest, there was also a serious aspect to these courts, especially given Fielding's appointment as a magistrate. The tone of his final periodical is closer to the sobriety of *Amelia* than it is to the more frivolous and playful style of *Tom Jones* or the *Jacobite's Journal*. Within the *Covent-Garden Journal* Fielding shows an increasing interest in criminal trials and, for instance, engaged with the case of Mary Blandy at length. Her case came to inform the content of the essays, news columns, and advertisements to effectively dominate every element of the periodical. The *Covent-Garden Journal* carries adverts for *The Secret History of Miss Blandy* (*CGJ*.54) as well as for *Miss Mary Blandy's Own Account of*

the Affair but it is also sceptical about the way Blandy's case was treated as a 'media event.' An advertisement for a work titled "A Whole Length Print of Miss Molly Blandy […] to which is annexed Lines properly adapted to HER wicked Crime" is put on trial in the eleventh issue on account of the character it creates for the murderess. The Court decides against the print as it suggests that Blandy "was adjudged guilty of the most enormous of all Crimes before Conviction" (*CGJ*. 11). They pass a sentence of infamy not just against the artist but also "against all those who indulge a vain Curiosity, by encountering such wicked and abominable Practices" (*CGJ*.11) by circulating often defamatory materials about her character prior to her trial. Fielding's sympathetic approach to Blandy's case in the Court foreshadows the leading essay on March 10, 1752. Taking the form of a letter supporting Blandy, the lead feature offers an alternative perspective on the Blandy narrative to that found in other publications:

> Here then is the Cause of all that Tragedy, which hath happened in this little innocent Family; of indeed the total Destruction of a kind and tender Father; of an affectionate and dutiful Daughter. The Villain crept into the unguarded Heart of this thoughtless Girl. (*CGJ*.20)

Fielding adds new information and reinterprets already-known aspects of the story to create a different course of events. Grisly murders, as noted in Chapter Three, sold newspapers. In weighing in upon the Blandy case, Fielding makes use of the public's morbid fascination with this kind of writing, but he also uses her story to affect an alternative agenda which permeates every element of the *Covent-Garden Journal*. He transfigures news into a source of entertainment, diversion, and instruction as the accounts of her trial give rise to essays on gallantry and seductions, while a concern with capital punishment in the issue for October 21, 1752, forms part of a wider

exploration of executions which rely on a series of illustrative stories and diffuse into all parts of the periodical.[65]

The different sections within the *Covent-Garden Journal* are closely interlinked and the relationship between them is carefully curated to blend facts and fictions. Proceedings from the Court of Censorial Enquiry, for instance, are published in between the foreign and domestic news columns, implying that these sections are more concerned with factuality than with fictionality. However, while the Courts claim they will discuss "all such historical Matters […] either of the political, the moral, or the entertaining Nature" (*CGJ*.2), Fielding has a tendency to neglect the historical in favour of the entertaining and invented. It is worth recalling his intention expressed in the *Jacobite's Journal* not to relate that which is "always the most entertaining to our Reader," but which will "afford very agreeable Entertainment to ourselves" (*JJ*.13). Thus, when Abbè Banner's *Mythology and Fables of the Antients* is put on trial, Fielding tells his readers: "Mr Addison […] reported to the Court that he had read the same, and found the Character given the said Work in the Advertisement to be strictly true" (*JJ*.9). Addison, however, had died twenty-nine years before the publication of Banner's work. The anomaly is a wink to readers that undercuts the serious nature of the courtroom scenes, offering moments of diversion for those who shared Fielding's proclivities for entertainment as the ghosts of past literary masters rise up in support of his verdicts. In a similarly playful moment, the Court of Criticism indicted one "Samuel Fut" for "being a Person of an evil Mind and Conversation" (*JJ*.22). This attack, presumably on the actor Samuel Foote, opened up a dialogue that would entertain the town for months.[66] Fielding explores the

[65] See *CGJ*.67.
[66] Foote satirised Fielding two weeks earlier in his play *An Auction of Pictures* and this article appears to be an early exchange in the ensuing feud between them.

"Theatrical Abuse" that "Fut" has inflicted on the town and asserts that against his "Buffoonry [sic] no Innocence can be secure" (*JJ*.22). The connection between stories and jests sees him exposing various instances of buffoonery in an attempt to laugh readers into developing a taste that was better suited to the new Republic of Literature.

While the Court sections in the *Covent-Garden Journal* typically focus on long form prose works, Fielding did not restrict his mock criminal proceedings to one genre and earlier court scenes engaged with the outputs of the periodical press. The courts in the *Jacobite's Journal* regularly sparred with the *Fool*, a series of essays written by William Horsley that were originally published in the *Daily Gazetteer*. As we might expect from its title, Horsley's project styled itself as a nonsense periodical and boasted to be "the Composition of many foolish People" as it surveyed the follies of the age.[67] Fielding was not enamoured with Horsley's project, declaring that "One *Horse piss*, alias *Horse-dung*, alias *Horse-lie*, alias THE FOOL, was convicted of Scurrility, and received Sentence of CONTEMPT" (*JJ*.10). The *Fool*, then, was absolute nonsense and when the *London Evening Post* reprinted a section from it, Fielding lampooned the pair of them by declaring that the *Post* had merely transcribed "the Works of one *Fool* into those of another" (*JJ*.31). The irony is that in transcribing a fool who has transcribed a fool, Fielding himself becomes a third-generation fool. But Fielding did not just attack those whose work he thought was untasteful: he also promoted those long form prose fictions and essay-periodicals which he felt were effective and best suited for public consumption. Deciding against writing his own essay for the issue on August 6, 1745, he reprinted an essay from Addison's 1715 periodical, the *Freeholder*, declaring it to be "truly applicable to the present Times" (*JJ*.36). This identifies the kind of work that Fielding wanted his periodical to be

[67] 'Preface', *Fool*, [unpaginated, A3].

associated with. He might primarily act as a censor, but he also promotes works which, he thinks, will have a positive effect on the nation's constitution.

Drawing attention to the rhetoric of taste and ingestion within both Fielding's periodical and longer form fictions helps us to see that the connection between his writing in these two genres is far stronger than previously acknowledged. By using tropes of consumption not just to think about which texts sell well, but to consider how the public judges them, Fielding creates a series of works that are highly self-aware of their fictionality and which also demonstrate a scepticism about how they will be valued. His texts continually approach the marketplace in an ironic fashion, using their awareness of their precarious status as part of a new species of writing to affect a new kind of printed entertainment. Diversion was as necessary for the author as it was for audiences and, as Domingo notes, they "ironically show themselves to be as engrossed by the 'Reigning Diversions of the Town' as were [the] audiences" that they sought to entertain.[68] In diverting readers of periodicals and longer form prose alike, Fielding demonstrates how the key difference between these two closely linked genres lies in the way they present fictional material for the delectation of their readers. Just as Fielding noted of the ox in the opening of *Tom Jones*, which can be dined upon by both a nobleman and a porter, the only difference is "but in the seasoning, the dressing, the garnishing, and the setting forth" (26), essay-periodicals and longer from prose fiction have a shared point of origin. The difference between them lies in their seasoning – namely, the manner in which they hash and ragout fiction.

[68] Domingo, *Rhetoric of Diversion*, 53.

Samuel Johnson: Anxious Authorship and the Art of Novelty

> ESSAY *n.s.*
> 1. Attempt; endeavour
> 2. A loose sally of the mind; an irregular indigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition
> 3. A trial; an experiment
> 4. First taste of any thing; first experiment.[1]

At a first glance, Samuel Johnson is an outlier in the present study. A prolific essayist, poet, literary critic, biographer, editor, (failed) dramatist, and lexicographer, Johnson worked across most literary forms. However, notably missing from this list of occupations is that of the novelist or long form fiction writer. Very few scholars today consider *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (1759) to be a novel and the text is usually categorised either as an extended essay in narrative form, a philosophical fiction, or an Oriental tale. Yet there is a strong case to be made for including *Rasselas*, and hence Johnson, in a study of the ecological development of fiction and of the relationship between the essay-periodical and longer form prose. *Rasselas* was viewed by many contemporary readers as a novel-like text and this "little story book," as Johnson termed it, featured in the bookazine the *Novelist's Magazine* (1780-88) as well as in Anna Letitia Barbauld's *British Novelists* (1810-20).[2] It is not the purpose of this chapter to contend that *Rasselas* should be read as a novel as to do so glosses over the genre-based complexities of Johnson's text. Rather, I want to consider how Johnson's longer form prose works, including *Rasselas*, reveal a fundamental imbrication between essayistic and more novelistic modes of writing and explore how fictionality permeates the wider print ecology. The way Johnson defined the essay and novel forms is particularly telling for how he understood the relationship between

[1] "Essay," in Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*.
[2] "To Lucy Porter," Friday 23 March 1759, *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, I:184. See also "To Lucy Porter, Thursday 10 May 1759, I:185; Barbauld, *British Novelists*; *Novelist's Magazine* vol. 23 (1788).

them and helps to explain why fictionality can be found in his texts that seem to show an outward disdain for fiction writing. In his *Dictionary*, he defines the novel as "a small tale, generally of love," while a novelist is an "[i]nnovator; assertor of novelty" – a definition that recalls the fourth sense of the term "essay" quoted in the epigraph to this chapter.[3] On these grounds, I want to suggest that Johnson can be seen as a novelist even if he was not strictly speaking a writer of novels.

Of Johnson's essay projects, his periodical the *Rambler* (1750-52) is the most well-known and *Rambler* 4 is one of its most commonly cited essays. The essay is usually viewed as a critique of the mid-century novel in which Johnson dismisses the genre as being little more than stories told to entertain "the young, the ignorant, and the idle."[4] This demographic, he fears, will not recognise the fictitious nature of what they are reading and will take accounts of romances, giants, and chivalric deeds as "lectures of conduct, and introductions into life" (*R*.4 III.21) and so treat them as though they were instances of fact. However, by looking at *Rambler* 4 not as an essay on the novel but as an essay on fiction (in the broadest sense of the word) an alternative view of this essay comes to light. The word "novel," it is worth noting, never appears in *Rambler* 4. Neither do related terms such as "novella," "novelty," "news," or even "newness." The words typically displayed on the title pages of long form prose fictions such as "life and adventures," "history," "tale," and so on are also notable only by their absence. "Fictions" and "poetry" are the only two genera of writing to be specifically mentioned. The plural "fictions" grounds the essay's criticisms of the print ecology at the level of genus, rather than at that of species – or of a specific genre. Johnson, then, does not emerge as a novel-sceptic as such, but shows a concern with how fiction

[3] "Novel"; "Novelist," *Dictionary of the English Language*.
[4] *Rambler* 4 in *Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, III.21. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

manifests itself, for better or worse, in different prose forms. In doing so he becomes, as Philip Davis has argued, "the writer who shows within writing what also goes on behind [it]."[5] I want to suggest that Johnson examines the presence of fiction within various genres and, as he exposes how fictionality is inherent in his own writing, the overarching fear voiced in *Rambler* 4 is not with reading fiction in and of itself but with the way authors present fictional material to reading audiences.

Exploring the implications of this reading of *Rambler* 4, this chapter focuses on how methods for writing fiction manifest themselves throughout Johnson's prose. It addresses how he uses his essays and longer form works to police the parameters of different genres and set down guidelines for what he considered to be the best uses of prose fiction. Recalling J. Paul Hunter's list of qualities associated with the novel, we find that much of Johnson's writing demonstrates contemporaneity, shows credibility and probability, is self-conscious about its own novelty, incorporates fictionality, and assumes a fragmentary or picaresque structure.[6] After exploring the role of fiction in *The Life of Savage* (1744) – the only one of Johnson's biographical essays to have been published as a standalone work before its incorporation into *The Lives of the English Poets* (1780-81) – this chapter focuses on how Johnson uses his periodical essays to explore authorship and create theories for the construction of different print genres. It then turns to consider the ways his anxieties over his chosen profession are remediated in *Rasselas,* his most generically ambiguous work.

[5] Philip Davis, "Johnson: Sanity and Syntax" in *Samuel Johnson: The Arc of the Pendulum*, ed. Freya Johnston and Lynda Mugglestone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57.
[6] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 23-25.

Novel Writing and *The Life of Savage*

From his earliest contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine* through to his later prefaces and biographical works, Johnson's publications regularly demonstrate an interest in literary form. For the best part of fifty years, he experimented with different modes of expression and put forward a series of critical theories about how different genres ought to be deployed. Most importantly for my purposes here, Johnson regularly uses novel material as he develops an innovative and idiosyncratic prose style, and incorporates modes of expression into his work that are more typically associated with the emerging novel, though, this does not mean that he embraces fiction of the kind found in the romance tradition or in works such as *Love in Excess* or *Tom Jones*. Nonetheless, fictionality can be found throughout his works from his more allegorical writings, such as *The Vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Tenerife* (1748), to his works of biography, and particularly the *Life of Richard Savage*. Johnson's account of Savage's life is very different from his other biographical pieces. He made very few revisions to his original text when incorporating it into the *Lives of the English Poets* and Savage occupies a higher proportion of space within the four-volume work than is commensurate with his literary merit.[7] Offering the biography of a one-time acquaintance, the *Life of Savage* is more personal than Johnson's other biographies and it reads more like an extended periodical essay or a long form prose fiction than a straightforward biographical work.

The *Life of Savage* details the history of an individual who claimed to be the illegitimate son of the fourth Earl Rivers, and who was arrested for possession of treasonable pamphlets, charged with murder after getting into a coffeehouse brawl,

[7] Savage's life is given more space than more canonical figures such as Milton and Swift and at 183 pages his biography is only shorter than those of Pope and Dryden, respectively 239 and 218 pages.

declared himself volunteer poet laureate, and died in Newgate prison after being arrested for a debt of £8. Savage attracted a storm of media attention throughout his life and it is not hard to see why.[8] He captured the public's imagination and prior to Johnson writing his biography, he featured in Eliza Haywood's scathing scandal chronicle *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* (1724). His notoriety would outlive the eighteenth century and Johnson's biography has since been used as the basis for multiple novels, including Charles Whitehead's *Richard Savage: A Romance of Real Life* (1841) and Gwen Jones's *Richard Savage* (1935). However, as most of Johnson's work engages with the lives of real people, rather than dealing in elaborate fictions and invented worlds, Lawrence Lipking suggests that he lacked "the easy prose style, and above all the dramatic flair or gift for inventing memorable *scenes* that all best-selling writers of fiction shared."[9] Yet Johnson *did* have the ability to imagine such scenes in both his essays and longer prose works. His text clearly inspired later novelists, especially those who were "interested in experimenting with ways of eliciting and controlling readers' assessment of character and incident and in exploring the porous boundaries of the novel and biography" as Nicholas Seager has demonstrated.[10] Johnson's biography of Savage might be many things, but a truthful account it is not and Adam Rounce has noted how Savage's "story had always steered close to myth, and it became enshrined as a legend of failed authorship following the publication of Johnson's *Life*."[11] Johnson's biography, therefore, does possess an element of flair and he turns to fictional modes of expression to expose the various

[8] See "Introduction," *Life of Mr Richard Savage*, ed. Nicholas Seager and Lance Wilcox (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press) 9.
[9] Lawrence Lipking, *Samuel Johnson: The Life of an Author* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 173.
[10] Nicholas Seager, "Johnson, Biography and the Novel: The Fictional Afterlife of Richard Savage," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 51, no. 2 (2015), 153.
[11] Adam Rounce, *Fame and Failure 1720-1800: The Unfulfilled Literary Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 66.

failures in Savage's life at the same time as examining the shortcomings of authorship as a profession – a theme that would resurface in both the *Rambler* and *Rasselas*. Throughout the *Life of Savage* Johnson demonstrates his eye for material that has strong pretensions towards novelistic expression.

Johnson's views on biographical writing are well-documented and he would go on to outline them fully six years later in *Rambler* 60. This essay acts as an addendum to the *Life of Savage* as it codifies the mode of biographical writing that Johnson had first experimented with when writing Savage's history. Within *Rambler* 60, Johnson identifies the biography as the species of writing that is most worthy of pursuit by both authors and readers. He argues that it is through biographical works that readers can really imagine, "while the deception lasts" (*R*.60 III.319), how they would have felt to have lived the life of another. He proceeded to suggest that in biographies "All joy or sorrow for the happiness or calamities of others is produced by an act of the imagination, that realises the event however fictitious, or approximates it however remote, by placing us […] in the condition of him whose fortune we contemplate" (*R*.60 III.318-19). There is a clear parallel to the aims of novelistic fictionality. Yet in identifying the fictitious and deceptive elements of biographical writing, Johnson expresses a concern with how authors went about deciding whose life was suitable for setting down in print and recording for posterity. He proposes that the lives of the middling sort could be more beneficial to everyday readers than those of kings and statesmen which typically "exhibit a chronological series of actions or preferments" (*R*.60 III.322) but do not pay attention to their hero's real character, their manners, or their morals. This failure to truly address the subject's character was something that Johnson had already begun to challenge in the *Life of Savage*. He would go on to further develop his theories for how to write biographies in his final

periodical, the *Idler* (1758-60). In *Idler* 84, Johnson claims that more historically inclined forms of biographical writing "press, indeed, upon the mind with the weight of truth; but when they are deposited in the memory, they are oftener employed for shew than use."[12] The reader does not, necessarily, benefit from knowing the exact dates and facts of an individual's life. Instead, instruction and diversion arise from understanding the wider trajectory and general course of their actions, and not from a knowledge of chronological events.

In developing an alternative model for the biography, Johnson sought to create a new iteration of history writing, using fictitious events to make readers empathise with the life of a stranger while also fulfilling the biographer's duty to pay respect "to knowledge, to virtue, and to the truth" (*R*.60 III.323). While its strict adherence to the truth is sometimes questionable, as we shall see, the *Life of Savage* is undeniably concerned with encouraging readers to have an emotional response to the calamities of another. Johnson charts the course of Savage's life "from Want and Persecution, to Plenty, Quiet, and Security, and seats him in Scenes of peaceful Solitude, and undisturbed Repose."[13] However, there is an irony at work here as Savage never truly dwelt in these peaceful scenes and Johnson's account of his life typically sees him blunder from one misfortune to the next. Accordingly, Johnson challenges readers' expectations for works in this genre. Aware that there is something rather unusual in his subject matter, which effectively constitutes a biography of failures, Johnson promises readers that his text will follow a trajectory that they were likely to be more

[12] *Idler* 84 in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, and L.F. Powell. Vol.2 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1963), 262. Further references are given parenthetically in text.
[13] Samuel Johnson, *Life of Mr Richard Savage*, ed. Nicholas Seager and Lance Wilcox, 107. All future references to the *Life of Savage* are given parenthetically in text.

familiar with: the sentimental novel. This will be a mournful tale as Johnson attempts to stake out Savage's place as a hero for literary and civil history:

> To these mournful Narratives, I am about to add the Life of *Richard Savage*, a Man whose Writings entitle him to an eminent Rank in the Classes of Learning, and whose Misfortunes claim a Degree of Compassion, not always due to the Unhappy, as they were often the Consequences of the Crimes of others, rather than his own. (49)

In this text, there is very little to move readers to joy as Savage's "narrative" – a term for an account or a story that could be either historical or a "petty fiction" – will follow the example of other texts that address "the Miseries of the Learned, and relate their unhappy Lives, and untimely Deaths" (49).[14] But there is still a lot to be gained from reading this kind of biography. Johnson suggested that previous biographers have recounted tales of great deeds and great men even though doing so was unlikely to please readers for "[i]t has been observed in all Ages, that the Advantages of Nature or of Fortune have contributed very little to the Promotion of Happiness" (49). Johnson labours this point by emphasising how the lives of those "qualified for great Attainments" are unlikely to "teach others the Way to Happiness." By contrast, the tales of "Heroes of literary as well as civil History" (49), or rather of people such as Savage, are more likely to resonate with reading audiences as their experiences are more closely aligned with their own than those of kings, queens, or other heads of state.

Rambler 60 would reframe these ideas to suggest that the history of the downfall of kingdoms "pleases common auditors only by its pomp of ornament, and grandeur of ideas" before noting that "the general and rapid narratives of history […] afford few lessons applicable to private life" (*R*.60 III.319). Reading audiences are

[14] See "Narrative" and "Story" in *Dictionary of the English Language*.

affected more, Johnson argues, when the "circumstances and kindred images, to which we readily conform our minds, are, above all other writings, to be found in narratives of the lives of particular persons" (*R*.60 III.319). Reading an account of someone such as Savage ought to be preferable to studying the history of kingdoms and far off lands and *Rambler* 60 goes a long way towards vindicating the subject matter of Johnson's "mournful" biography. Given the emergence of authorship as a profession in the mid-eighteenth century, the life of an author was perhaps a fitting subject in more ways than one for this new mode of biographical writing.

Throughout the *Life of Savage*, Johnson carefully curates Savage's life, both embellishing and redacting aspects of his scandalous personality. The events recorded in the biography should therefore be approached with relative caution as the work draws heavily from Johnson's own memories. To these personal views are added various printed sources, anecdotes and witness testimony collected from others who knew Savage. Johnson carefully pieces this information together to tell a specific narrative and in doing so he does not always recount events in the order they originally occurred; he sometimes inserts details after the fact. One of these moments is the description of Savage's relationship with Lady Macclesfield, the woman whom he falsely claimed was his mother. When Savage was on trial for murder, Johnson describes how his "mother" prevented his acquittal. Stating how "she made use of an Incident, which was omitted in the order of Time" (71) – an omission that results from the way Johnson himself chooses to tell Savage's life – Johnson skews public opinion in favour of Savage. He undermines Lady Macclesfield's account, which has since been accepted as true, to suggest that she made use of a tale of a "fictitious Assault [upon herself] to deprive him of his Life" (72). Johnson therefore defames Lady Macclesfield as her testimony runs contrary to the character that he has created for

Savage. The "Incident" in question refers to the time Savage let himself into Lady Macclesfield's house without her knowledge and attempted to enter her bedchamber; Savage protested that he merely wanted to speak to her, and Johnson here asserts Savage's take on events, overlooking the fact that Lady Macclesfield felt her personal safety was under threat. Johnson consciously encourages readers to see Savage in a certain light and this narrative, then, ought to be treated with a degree of scepticism, particularly when Johnson makes the parallel claims that "[s]uch was the Beginning of the Life of *Richard Savage*" (51) and "[s]uch were the Life and Death of *Richard Savage*" (140). This is not the life of Richard Savage per se, but rather such is the account of Savage's life as Johnson chose to narrate it. Due to the lack of factual information surrounding Savage's actual life and death, these statements reiterate the gossip-like and rumour-filled climate in which he lived. Johnson may seek to preserve his friend's memory from the "Insults or Calumnies" raised by the general population or specific individuals but, in so doing, he subjects it to his own.[15]

Throughout the biography, Johnson endeavours to reconcile the fictions, as well as the delusions under which Savage lived, with the facts of his life. Savage himself was frequently creative with the truth and this problematises the endeavours of the would-be biographer. Reflecting these difficulties, Johnson's account is far from neutral and there is a danger that the biography will tip into a vindication of Savage. Johnson is acutely aware of his lack of objectivity: "after having remarked what is false in this Dedication, it is proper that I observe the Impartiality which I recommend" (79). Struggling to affect this impartiality, however, he slips in and out of first-person narration, ultimately refusing to allow any part of the narrative to directly convict or acquit Savage of the charges laid at his door. The problems of the biographer's

[15] *GM.* XIII.416.

personal bias were detailed more fully in the *Idler* where Johnson noted that "He that writes the life of another is either his friend or his enemy, and wishes either to exalt his praise or aggravate his infamy" (*I.*84 263). As the *Life* reveals, to many people Savage could fall into both of these categories, and as the narrative progresses the text's struggles for impartiality cause it to exist in the porous boundary between long form fiction and biography, as noted earlier. The biography subtly questions the factuality of the narrative it creates as it is riddled with tentative accounts of events which "seem" to be plausible or are at best "probable." At the same time, readers are asked to "believe" the author's suppositions as events within the biography "may" or "perhaps" be reported in an accurate manner but were not necessarily true. With over one hundred such tentatively phrased claims in the biography, this semantic shift captures the text's wider ambiguities.[16] As Freya Johnston observes, such instances of "litotes and paralipsis are especially apt, and not necessarily ironic, figures for alluding to vacuities in the life of a man whose last known words were '*I have something to say to you, Sir, … 'Tis gone.*'"[17] The biography, like Savage's life, seems to be encapsulated by this hiatus, being neither one thing nor another as it continually moves between fact and fiction, delusion and reality.

The biography only has a faint illusion of being balanced or detached as Johnson uses it to simultaneously entertain two contradictory possibilities. As Martin Maner observes, "[a]t one pole there is complete sympathetic identification with Savage; the emotions aroused are pity for Savage and anger against those who

[16] Most commonly used is "may," with 44 instances, "perhaps" is the second most common qualifier, appearing 38 times while variations of "seems" appear twelve, "probable" fourteen, and "believe" nineteen times respectively.
[17] Freya Johnston, *Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking, 1709-1791* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 180; See *Savage*, 139.

victimize him."[18] Meanwhile, at the other "there is complete detachment from Savage; the emotions aroused are amusement at Savage's folly and satiric derision against the oppressors."[19] These poles are clearly seen at the end of Johnson's biography as he encourages readers to laugh at Savage while also trying to get them to pity his impoverished state. Justifying elements of Savage's conduct, he notes that "none who candidly consider his Fortune, will think an Apology either necessary or difficult" but in the same breath notes that those who judge him harshly are "no proper Judges of his Conduct" and a wise man will not easily pass judgement or "presume to say, 'Had I been in *Savage's* Condition, I should have lived, or written, better than *Savage*" (143).

While Johnson strives to avoid explicitly obviating criticisms of Savage's character, he does attempt to avert criticisms of Savage's work by inserting pieces into the biography, or reprinting them in full in footnotes – a practice that is not repeated in any of his other *Lives*.[20] Using textual apparatus in this way, Johnson ensures that his readers had enough ancillary information to judge Savage and his work for themselves. Much of the literary value of the *Life of Savage* lies, then, as Seager notes, "in what Johnson does with what he has, [and] how he fashions his material into meaningful patterns."[21] Johnson's later essays justify the tone and style in which the *Life of Savage* is written and they also validate his use of footnotes and the decision to reproduce many of Savage's poems. As already suggested, Johnson used his periodicals to create a new theory for how to deploy the biography as a genre that

[18] Martin Maner, *The Philosophical Biographer: Doubt and Dialectic in Johnson's Lives of the Poets* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 63.
[19] Maner, *Philosophical Biographer*, 63.
[20] See in *An Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage* (London: J. Roberts, 1744) "To A Hill, Esq. with the Tragedy of Sir Thomas Overbury," 24; "An Epistle on Authors," 49-50; "The Bastard," 91-92. The footnotes were removed in the *Lives of the English Poets*.
[21] Seager and Wilcox, "Introduction," *Savage*, 25.

"would reconcile the competing evidentiary claims of oral statements and eyewitness accounts, manuscript letters and diaries, and printed 'lives.'"[22] For all that the *Life of Savage* is an unusual biographical work, its use of other print forms – most of which we have already seen being deployed in the essay-periodical – help to situate it within the wider print ecology. The competing claims of the different literary forms found in the *Life of Savage* is further borne out by the way the biography was advertised. The work was promoted as being truthful, even if hastily thrown together, and, crucially, readers were told that it was *not* "a Novel filled with romantic Adventures, and imaginary Amours."[23] But that is not to say that the work could not be like a novel of a different species.

The *Life of Savage*, like Johnson's other long form prose fictions, eschews the romance tradition, but it does demonstrate qualities associated with the picaresque novel due to the way it constructs social satire and offers verisimilar descriptions of everyday life. It also has parallels to other popular species of prose fiction, especially the roguish biographies and autobiographies that were created from the testimonies of Newgate ordinaries and which influenced earlier fictions such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743). Being closely related to criminal biographies and autobiographies, it becomes easier to see how the *Life of Savage* treads the line between a life history and a fictional work. Johnson, it is worth noting, is well aware that he, too, is being swept up by Savage's sensational fictions. For, as Jane Steen writes, Johnson's "realization that he too has been deceived, and his communication of the ease with which that deception occurred as he replicates it in

[22] Scarborough King, *Writing to the World*, 137.
[23] *GM*. XIII.416.

prose" determine the tone and style of this biography.[24] Johnson notes that while anyone,

> however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful Appearance of Virtue, or by False Evidences of Guilt, such Errors will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that the Name of an Author would never have been made contemptible, had not Man ever said what he did not think, or misled others, but when he himself was deceived. (78)

Even this author could be deceived and succumb to Savage's charms, prompting the narrator to abruptly pull back from stating personal opinions when championing Savage's writing: "But my Province is rather to give the History of Mr *Savage*'s Performances, than to display their Beauties, or to obviate the Criticisms, which they have obtained, and therefore I shall not dwell upon the particular Passages which deserve Applause" (83). In summarising what the *Life of Savage* will and will not do, Johnson invokes multiple genres: history, drama, anthology, and literary criticism. Yet while he claims to offer a history of Savage's work, rather than extolling its praises, by reprinting large amounts of Savage's verse, the *Life* begins to function rather like a collection of 'beauties' as it offers a select anthology of his poetry.

Johnson's biography is, then, a dynamic part of the print ecology, continually interacting with the marketplace and repurposing aspects of other literary genres to create a hybrid long form prose work that is part compendium, anthology, critical essay, and biography. Mark Wildermuth has noted of Johnson's use of literary forms that he "individuates his viewpoint and declares a special kind of authorial presence […] by understanding the instability of texts, both constructed and natural, within the context of continuing debates on mediation, representation, and systems of order."[25]

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[24] Jane Steen, "The Creation of Character" in *Johnson: Arc of the Pendulum*, 112.
[25] Mark E. Wildermuth, *Print, Chaos, and Complexity: Samuel Johnson and Eighteenth-Century Media Culture* (Newark: University of Delware Press, 2008), 18.

These ongoing debates about mediation seem particularly pertinent for the *Life of Savage*. Like his other works, Johnson's biographical writings bring together features of different print genres as the *Life of Savage* attempts to lend order to a life that was notoriously chaotic. Johnson, like his readers, gets caught up and swept along by the delusions of Savage's life; this causes a complex interplay between factual and sensational or fictionalised content as readers have to continually question how much truth is contained within the biography.

Fiction and the Anxieties of a Periodical Writer

While Johnson helped to reform the style and content of biographical writing, he was better known for his work as an essayist and lexicographer. His enduring fame as an essayist is tinged with the irony that his own definition of an essay, as Isobel Grundy has since reiterated, describes "a genre whose name and conventions suggested a modest limitation of aims" on account of it being but a first trial or a disorderly composition.[26] Johnson's own essays, however, are far from modest in their aspirations and it is in his periodicals that he routinely sets down theories for how various genres should be deployed. This includes fictive narrative. Within his essays Johnson begins to tease apart the relationship between the essay-periodical and long form prose fiction. Rather than seeing the periodical essay as a vehicle for fiction, he increasingly began to use the form to effect literary criticism. While Johnson's periodicals still demonstrate the fundamental imbrication between essays and longer form fictions, they also show how the forms were beginning to diverge in the mid-century to become distinctive, albeit still closely related, species within the ecology.

[26] Isobel Grundy, *Samuel Johnson and the Scale of Greatness* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), 69.

Focusing on how Johnson uses his essays to create theories for the use of fiction, this section addresses his views on authorship, paying particular attention to the way his essays interrogate authors' engagement with fictionality.

Throughout his periodical writing, Johnson regularly theorises about how authors ought to use different genres. Examining everything from biography to history, poetry to long form prose fiction, he explores what constitutes good writing in each of these genres. In *Rambler* 4 he focuses on fiction and suggests that a skilled author would find this mode of expression to be a useful tool for educating the wider reading public and less than a year after publishing that essay, Johnson stated in a letter to Samuel Richardson that *Clarissa* would be read "by the busy, the aged, and the studious."[27] This configuration could hardly be more opposed to the grouping of "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" (*R*.4 III.21) whom Johnson identified as readers of fiction in the *Rambler*. That both of these demographics could derive enjoyment from reading the same genres, and even the same texts, demonstrates the universality of fiction. It is possible, as I have already suggested, to view *Rambler* 4 as making a case for fictional writing, testing out and setting down the parameters for this species of prose, and defining the terms on which fictionality could be successfully deployed. Johnson articulates clear views on the novel form and fiction writing not by writing a novel himself, but by adopting some of its rhetorical strategies into his other works. John Richetti has argued that Johnson articulates "influential views about the nature of fiction as new styles and approaches to narrative began to manifest themselves in the mid-eighteenth century."[28] In setting out parameters for fiction within his essays, Johnson declared that:

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[27] "To Samuel Richardson," Saturday 9 March, 1751, in *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, I.48.
[28] John Richetti, "Fiction," *Samuel Johnson in Context*, ed. Jack Lynch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 200.

> Its province is to bring about natural events by easy means, and to keep up curiosity without the help of wonder: it is therefore precluded from the machines and expedients of the heroic romance, and can neither employ giants to snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites, nor knights to bring her back from captivity; it can neither bewilder its personages in desarts, nor lodge them in imaginary castles. (*R*.4 III.19)

Listing elements that he wanted readers to avoid, Johnson negatively defines what a fictional text should be. However, if fiction could foster curiosity without resorting to fantastical creatures and implausible events, it could, he admitted, be used to naturally encourage deeper reflection and in so doing, divert, stimulate, and instruct reading audiences. It did not always have to idly amuse them with frivolous tales. Viewed from this perspective, works of fiction could be beneficial to assisting readers' understanding of the world around them – an aim that is not confined to long form prose fiction but which seems particularly pertinent, too, to the short digestible instalments of essay-periodicals and their associated inset narratives.

It is possible, then, to read *Rambler* 4 as an early attempt at outlining a practical theory for how to successfully deploy fictive narrative. Moreover, the essay itself exposes, before ultimately adopting, the modes of expression it wishes to criticise. Johnson may dwell upon improper uses of fictional discourse, but he also suggests how fiction could be used effectively. For instance, while *Rambler* 4 confronts works that "mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages" (*R*.4 III.23), or create characters who display both vicious and virtuous behavioural traits, Johnson also notes how vice and virtue could be usefully deployed:

> The purpose of these writings is […] to teach the means of avoiding the snares which are laid by Treachery for Innocence […]; to give the power of counteracting fraud, without the temptation to practise it; to initiate the youth by mock encounters in the art of necessary defence, and to increase prudence without impairing virtue. (*R*.4 III.22-23)

Fiction, then, could be a means to avoid the snares found in daily life by giving readers virtual access to events and life experiences that they may not have direct knowledge of. While fictive discourse could be detrimental to "the young, the ignorant and the idle" (*R.*4 III.21), a dexterous author could use that same mode of expression to affect education, using stories to expand readers' knowledge and press home a moral and pedagogical agenda – something that Johnson himself does throughout the *Rambler*. To name but a few instances, the rhetoric of longer form fiction is found, for example, in accounts of a Londoner's visit to the country (*R.*61), tales of courtship (*R.*113, *R.*114), and explorations of the education of gentlemen (*R.*109, *R.*132). The presence of fiction within the *Rambler* is a strategy for affecting moral instruction and reveals a certain irony in Johnson's use of the phrase "the purpose of these writings" when discussing works of fiction. The purpose he identifies is not simply that of long form prose fiction: it is the purpose of this mode of writing – the periodical essay – as well.

Rambler 4 is part of a wider examination of the uses of different literary forms, genres, and modes of expression that take place throughout the *Rambler*. Within the periodical's 208 essays, Johnson can be seen learning by praxis, initially condemning fictions but also recognising the power in their potential and acknowledging that in some instances fictive narrative was the most effective mode of expression. The inset stories, fabliau, oriental tales, and exempla that Donald Kay identifies in the *Spectator* are also common features of Johnson's periodicals and some of the transitions that Johnson makes into his more overtly fictional content are reminiscent of Addison's essay-periodicals.[29] Indeed, Paul Tankard argues that Johnson built upon and enhanced elements of the Addisonian periodical to create essays that became "either more exclusively critical, on the one hand – the kind of work found in the monthly

[29] Kay, *Short Fiction in The Spectator*, 9.

reviews – or more familiar, character-driven, autobiographical, and belletristic" on the other.[30] Using fiction to promote his moral agenda in *Rambler* 172, for instance, he comments that "I doubt whether this paper will have a single reader that may not apply the story to himself, and recollect some hours of his life in which he has been equally overpowered by the transitory charms of trifling novelty" (*R.*172 V.148). Fiction and novelties permeate Johnson's work and in *Rambler* 96 he even fashioned an allegory on truth, falsehood, and fiction, stating that "The Muses wove in the loom of Pallas, a loose and changeable robe, like that in which Falsehood captivated her admirers; with this they invested Truth, and named her Fiction" (*R.*96 IV.152). If the alignment of truth with the outward shape of falsehood creates fictions, then the histories of Seged (*R.*204, 205), the tale of the Ortogrul of Basra (*I.*99) and the Greenland history (*R.*186, 187) which profess to be some of the more factual papers within the *Rambler*, are also partly dressed up as fictions. They all relate novelties, disguised as truths, from which the reader is supposed to derive instruction.

With instances of fiction diffusing through Johnson's essays, the attack launched by *Rambler* 4 softens over later issues as elements of fictive prose are increasingly used to further the *Rambler*'s moral agenda. One such example of this is found in *Rambler* 145, which in many ways reimagines some of the concerns voiced in *Rambler* 4. In this essay, Johnson criticises the lack of invention and imagination in the writing of "petty authors" of whom "very few can be said to produce, or endeavour to produce new ideas […] or gratify the imagination with any uncommon train of images or contexture of events" (*R.*145 V.10). Such a desire for novelty and imaginative works at first seems at odds with Johnson's earlier essay in which he warned against relating 'unnatural' or imagined events. However, here Johnson finds

[30] Paul Tankard, "Essays," *Johnson in Context*, 192.

merit in almost every form of writing, noting that "every writer has his use" (*R.*145 V.12). Focusing briefly on periodical print, he declared that the "*Ephemerae* of learning" or daily papers are shown to have more use than "more pompous and durable volumes" (*R.*145 V.11). He began to consider the importance not only of genre but of the format and size of print publications, both fictional and nonfictional:

> Every size of readers requires a genius of correspondent capacity; some delight in abstracts and epitomes, because they want room in their memory for long details, and content themselves with effects, without inquiry after causes; some minds are overpowered by splendour of sentiment, as some eyes are offended by a glaring light[.] (*R.*145 V.11-12)

Different genres were effective in different ways. Indeed, some demographics of readers would not have the same response to texts as others and different "sizes" of text could resonate differently with certain "sizes" of reader. While Johnson noted how in repeatedly telling the same kinds of narrative some authors might be "drudges of the Pen" who are "too long 'hackneyed in the Ways of Men'" (*R.*145 V.11), there could be a use for such drudgery if it allowed ideas to circulate in an alternative capacity. It was up to authors to place ideas into various genres and formats to reach the widest possible audience.

Johnson's views on the responsibility that authors bear to their readers recur time and again within his essay-periodicals. When he began contributing to the *Adventurer* (1752-54), Johnson continued his criticism of the literary marketplace as well as furthering his examination of the twin arts of reading and writing fiction. However, while *Rambler* 4 laid the blame squarely at the feet of authors when readers believed that instances of prose fiction were factual narratives, *Adventurer* 58 argues that "the faults of books are more often more justly imputable to the reader, who

sometimes wants attention, and sometimes penetration."[31] *Rambler* 4 might censure authors for creating texts that will adversely affect "the young, the ignorant, and the idle," but *Adventurer* 58 holds those categories of reader responsible for the shortcomings of books. The basis upon which such a reversal of positions can be entertained is provided by the epigraph used in this *Adventurer* essay: "*damnant quod non intelligent*." Taken from Cicero it translates as "they condemn what they do not understand." Both the idle and the busy, the young and the aged, can misinterpret fiction, dismissing or condemning a work because it does not adhere to their expectations. If readers treat a work's fictive elements as fact, or skip over them and consider them to be beneath their notice, they are prone to misconstrue the text and become more inclined to believe ridiculous rumours, as Haywood had previously suggested. Written materials please the reader only in so far as they are understood and the perceived deficiencies of a work are often imputed to the reader's lack of attention and critical awareness, hence:

> It often happens that an author's reputation is endangered in succeeding times, by that which raised the loudest applause among his cotemporaries: nothing is read with greater pleasure than allusions to recent facts, reigning opinions, or present controversies; but when facts are forgotten, and controversies extinguished, these favourite touches lose all their graces; and the author in his descent to posterity must be left to the mercy of chance, without any power of ascertaining the memory of those things, to which he owed his luckiest thoughts and his kindest reception. (*A*.58 372)

To secure a reputation as an author it was not enough to create a work that would satisfy the contemporary audience; it was also necessary to pen something that would appeal to, and be capable of diverting, imagined future readers. Works that were

[31] *Adventurer* 58 in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, and L. F. Powell. Vol 2 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1963), 371. Further references are to this edition unless specified otherwise.

explicitly grounded in the present moment were less likely to appeal or have "graces" for those who did not live through the events in question. As such, there is a suggestion that the texts which were most likely to be remembered or enjoyed by future generations and meet with the "kindest reception" are likely to be those which were in some degree fictional or novelistic.

Throughout the *Rambler,* Johnson's concerns with how fiction was deployed slowly ceded to a more general anxiety about authorship, and this included his own occupation as a periodicalist. When he concluded the *Rambler* in March 1752, he used the final issues to reflect on his two-year long project. Tellingly, he defined his periodical writing as a form of "anxious employment" (*R.*208 V.315). This adjectival choice may at first seem rather incongruous, but it offers an alternative lens through which to view his periodical essays. In the *Dictionary*, Johnson would define "anxious" as "disturbed about some uncertain event" and "careful, as of a thing of great importance."[32] Both these senses of the word, I want to suggest, are at play in the phrase "the anxious employment of a periodical writer" (*R.*208 V.315). Johnson's essays result from a carefully thought-out, but personally distressing, occupation in which the periodicalist faced constant and unremitting deadlines and often risked non-payment should they be prevented from meeting a deadline on grounds of ill health or other unforeseen circumstances.

As the pressures of writing a paper twice a week, every week mounted, Johnson's periodical became increasingly sceptical of, and anxious about, its own format. The tone of the later *Rambler* issues is far more serious than that of the earlier papers and this has led Johnston to describe his essays as being "restrictive and

[32] "Anxious," *Dictionary of the English Language*.

confined; oscillating with predictable regularity" as he seemingly falls into the drudgery he had warned against in *Rambler* 145.[33] In his lecture on periodical essayists in the early nineteenth century, William Hazlitt described Johnson's writing as progressing as "mechanically as the oscillation of a pendulum."[34] Such oscillation suggests a dearth of new material within the *Rambler*, despite the pretensions of the periodical to affect novelty on a bi-weekly basis. By March 1752 Johnson's anxieties about authorship and the occupation of the periodicalist were becoming one with his opinions on the function of different genres. As he became fatigued with his project, the penultimate *Rambler* paper considers the author whose "fancy was tired, and […] perseverance broken" (*R*.207 V.313). The author is obliged to cease his endeavours, and "lay down his employment" before he wearies the public by "no longer exert[ing] his former activity or attention" (*R*.207 V.315). Johnson would reiterate these concerns when concluding his final periodical, the *Idler*, noting how authorial tasks when done from necessity "so often [fill] the mind with anxiety" (*I*.102 311-12). His anxieties as a periodicalist were pressing indeed and had lasted for seven years.

Yet these anxieties also manifested themselves in a concern with the way reading audiences treated print materials – both when it came to identifying fact and fiction and in terms of how they interacted with printed materials as objects. The essay-periodical was particularly liable to being received negatively as each new instalment saw the project re-exposing itself to readers' criticism. Johnson's essays are acutely aware that although they offer criticisms of other print media, each new paper will also be criticised in its turn. This is readily seen in *Adventurer* 85, which investigates the

[33] Freya Johnston and Lynda Mugglestone, "Johnson's Pendulum: Introduction," *Johnson: Arc of the Pendulum*, 2.
[34] William Hazlitt, "On the Periodical Essayists," *Lectures on the English Comic Writers: Delivered at the Surry Institution* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1819), 200.

different benefits that can arise from writing, reading, and having conversations about print materials. The essay opens with a quotation from Frances Bacon to explore the extent to which "reading makes a full man, conversation a ready man, and writing an exact man" (*A*.85 411). Johnson proceeded to engage with and challenge "an opinion [that] has of late been, I know not how, propagated among us, that libraries are filled only with useless lumber" (*A*.85 412). Using images of woodcutting, he describes the tendency to dismiss the works of modern authors as a means of imbibing prejudices about the modern print ecology. His choice of the word "lumber" as a stand-in for paper suggests that these books are in the rawest possible state, being coarse, roughly hewn, and so unfit for consumption by anyone with taste. Confronting the supposedly unrefined quality of modern texts, Johnson addresses the propensity to dismiss the work of contemporary authors due to the way they could "bury reason under a chaos of indigested learning" (*A*.85 412). Yet, while "indigested learning" might be dangerous, Johnson perhaps did not find it so. After all, he defined the very genre in which he was voicing these anxieties about with the way readers interacted with the contents of libraries as "an irregular indigested piece."[35] If these works were useless lumber, then so was the *Rambler*.

Johnson's anxieties about being a periodicalist morph into a more general concern with the present "Age of Authors" (*A*.115 457) and writing as a profession. The term "author" appears in seventy-two separate *Rambler* essays and anxieties about authorship are reiterated in thirty *Idler* papers as well as in ten of Johnson's contributions to the *Adventurer*, meaning that almost a third of his essays in these periodicals confront authorship in some way. Johnson's anxieties about the new "Age of Authors" were pressing indeed and a few weeks later in *Adventurer* 138 he would

[35] "Essay," *Dictionary of the English Language.*

reflect in detail on authorship as a form of employment. More specifically, he considers how the lot of the author is often that of the complainant due to "The neglect of learning, [and] the ingratitude of the present age" (*A*.138 493). This anxiety prompts a discussion of "the tumultuous raptures of invention, when the mind riots in imagery, and the choice stands suspended between different sentiments" (*A*.138 494). Johnson's worry that "novelty always captivates the mind" (*A*.138 495) is demonstrated in one of his conversations, recorded by Hester Lynch Piozzi, where he reflected on the kinds of learning men picked up in coffeehouses and the shortcomings of digesting only one kind of text:

> To study manners however only in coffee-houses, is more than equally imperfect; the minds of men who acquire no solid learning, and only exist on the daily forage they pick up by running about, and snatching what drops from their neighbours as ignorant as themselves, will never ferment into any knowledge valuable or durable.[36]

The periodical – closely entwined with coffeehouse culture – would seem to be identified with "the daily forage." The challenge for the periodicalist was to create something with the potential to develop into a more sustained and well-managed food source – one to which the individual would continually return, enhancing their knowledge time and again through multiple re-readings. Such views are in keeping with Johnson's exploration of the differences between history and journal writing that he had previously articulated in a letter to Edward Cave, the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731-1922):

> [T]he insertion of the exact dates […] regulate […] the proper medium between a Journal which has regard only to time, and a history which ranges facts according to their dependence on each other, and postpones or anticipates according to the convenience of narration. I think our work ought to partake of the spirit of History which is contrary to minute exactness, and of the regularity of a Journal which is inconsistent with

[36] Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson*, 4th edn (London, 1786), 267.

> Spirit. For this Reason I neither admit numbers or dates nor reject them.[37]

These comments, made while discussing options for a potential future project to provide a historical account of the British parliament, recall the definition of the term "history" as a dignified relation of events, and recuperate the term from the fantastical personal histories, or novels, that were becoming increasingly popular with readers. History functions primarily at the level of narrative, relating events in a logical order to demonstrate cause and effect without, necessarily, progressing in accordance with the onward clocking of time. The day-to-day events documented in the journal and which could also be found in date-stamped works such as essay-periodicals are subordinated to history's need to move more freely through time. Essay-periodicals needed to progress more along the lines of historical documents to outlive the day on which they were published.

Essay-periodicals, perhaps more than any other genre, were highly attuned to the different demands of history and journal writing as they offer snapshots of society at regular intervals. Reflecting on the uses of different literary forms, *Adventurer* 4 offered a brief survey of the genres commonly circulating in the marketplace. Although this paper was written by John Hawkesworth, its views are highly reminiscent of Johnson's, particularly in regard to history writing and the novel: "History is a relation of the most natural and important events: history, therefore, gratifies curiosity, but it does not often excite either terror or pity; the mind feels not that tenderness for a falling state, which it feels for an injured beauty."[38] This essay

[37] "To Edward Cave," [1743], in *Letters of Samuel Johnson,* I.34.
[38] *Adventurer* 4, November 18, 1752 (London).

goes on to suggest that the minute exactness that Johnson strives to reject in his history and periodical writing was a key feature of the novel:

> THE NOVEL, though it bears a nearer resemblance to truth, has yet less power of entertainment; for it is confined within the narrower bounds of probability, the number of incidents is necessarily diminished, and if it deceives us more it surprises us less. […] [T]rivial circumstances are enumerated with a minute exactness, and the reader is wearied with languid descriptions and impertinent declamation.[39]

This description chimes with that which would later be offered by Clara Reeve who, in embarking upon one of the first histories of the novel, described the genre as giving "a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes."[40] This relationship between printed fiction and day-to-day events is reminiscent of individual periodical essays that could be read either as journals that demonstrate an interest in the diurnal and an engagement with the quotidian, or as histories – taking a more detached, spectatorial position that assumes a prospective view of the values inherent to contemporary society.

Johnson's periodical essays, then, can be seen to inform and be informed by wider conversations that were taking place about literary genres throughout the print marketplace. His essays did not exist in a vacuum and relied heavily on their interactions with other print media and in particular other periodical publications, such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Amid financial anxieties and the desire to ensure that his papers would outlast their day of publication, Johnson used other titles to promote his periodicals, trying to entice new readers to his projects by offering a flavour of what they could expect from his essays. Thus, he took pains to try to future-proof the *Rambler*, publishing the mottoes for each essay in advance in the *Gentleman's*

[39] *Adventurer* 4.
[40] Reeve, *Progress of Romance,* 1:111.

Magazine – a work that he had been involved in since 1737. The twentieth volume of the *Magazine* served as a prospectus for the *Rambler* and lists the mottos for the first thirty issues prior to their publication – the equivalent of fifteen weeks' worth of essays.[41] Even if Johnson's definition of the essay was something loosely framed, chaotic, or indigested, he here offered readers something of a bill of fare and to give the impression that there was an immediate plan for the project as a whole.

Despite Johnson's anxieties, his periodicals were successful and while he would go on to reframe the content of many of his essays in his more fictional and allegorical works, they also continued to circulate within other periodicals. The *Gentleman's Magazine* would reprint many of his essays throughout the 1750s, either in full or in part.[42] Within the *Magazine* are also several pieces that bear striking similarities to some of Johnson's periodical essays and resonate with his views on fiction. An anonymous essay in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1739 explores the nature of periodical writing and the character of an author, and foreshadows the terminology found in *Rambler* 4:

> A Hero that employs his Sword indifferently, in just Wars, or hired Assassinations; a physician that prescribes Remedies or Poisons, without regard to any thing but his Fee; are but Emblems of the abandon'd Prostitutes of the Pen, who poyson the Principles of Nations, and publish Falsehood and Truth with equal Assurance.[43]

A true hero, then, uses his pen to publish truths and, in avoiding mixing truths and lies, presumably avoids the marvellous or frivolous to stay clear of the realm of giants,

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[41] *GM*. XX.406-9.
[42] Twenty-four *Rambler* numbers are reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*: see Vol. XX (1750): 127-29, 171-73, 261-63, 320-22, 368-70, 415-17, 463-65, 512-14, 560-62; Vol. XXI (1751) 27-29, 79-80, 127-29, 255-57, 318-20, 412-14, 462-64, 581-84; Vol. XXII (1752) 20-22, 69-73, 117-19. There are also extracts from twenty-four *Idler* papers: see Vol. XXVIII (1758): 154-56, 213-15, 259-60, 364-65, 414-15, 475-77, 520-21, 591-93, 625-26, 631-32; Vol. XXIX (1759): 71-72, 105-106, 163-64, 224-25, 256-57, 309, 410-11, 457-58, 514-15, 563-64, 615-16; Vol. XXX (1760)11-12, 57-58, 119-20, 170-71; and three *Adventurer* papers: Vol. XXIII (1753) 328-30, 376-78, 515-17.
[43] *GM*. IX.3.

knights, and imaginary castles derided in *Rambler* 4. The heroic actions of the author were also a concern in Johnson's *Idler*, which was originally published as the leading feature of the *Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette* (1758-60). In *Idler* 102 Johnson writes that "every publication is a new period of time from which some encrease or declension of fame is to be reckoned. The gradations of a hero's life are from battle to battle, and of an author's from book to book" (*I.*102 312) or even from sheet to sheet, pamphlet to pamphlet, or essay to essay. This episodic and partitioned way of describing printed works as a "new period of time" clearly resonates with the essay-periodical. Awareness of how each periodical essay functions as an isolated moment in time furthers the self-consciousness of Johnson's essays, though, of course, they do not function just as standalone pieces but can also be read in conjunction with one another to become a cohesive whole that is greater than the sum of the individual parts – something that we shall see in the next section is also true for *Rasselas*. For, as Fred Parker notes, the periodical "interrogates an opening proposition, 'sees more', and modifies or complicates it, without pretence to finality or system."[44] Each new paper brings with it a fresh starting point – providing an opportunity to reshape the work and open up new topics for discussion – and thus represents a chance for authors and heroes to make a new choice in life.

***Rasselas*: Essayistic and Novelistic (?)**

Anxieties about the nature of authorship and the role of fiction were not confined to Johnson's essays and at the end of the 1750s his apprehensions found a new expression in *Rasselas*. The text is arguably Johnson's most hybridised and generically unstable

[44] Fred Parker, *Scepticism and Literature: An Essay on Pope, Hume, Sterne, and Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 238.

work and like many mid-century prose fictions, *Rasselas* resists classification under a single genre label. The prose fiction has been read as an oriental tale, a moral tale, a novel, a satire, a history, and an allegory – a perplexing, and far from exhaustive collection of terms that has led Gwin Kolb to instead characterise the work as an apologue, an allegorical story designed to convey a moral lesson.[45] However, while this last term is helpful for understanding *Rasselas* as a whole, it is less useful for identifying the connections between *Rasselas* and Johnson's other instances of fictional writing. The ability to play fast and loose with genre is vital to the text and its formal complexity is passed over when *Rasselas* is cogently classified by the single term 'apologue.' Kolb's preferred term reaffirms the didactic and intellectual qualities of the text, and to demonstrate its pedagogical agenda he pairs *Rasselas* with nine of Johnson's periodical essays.[46] However, I want to contend that *Rasselas*'s debts to the essay form are more extensive and the connections between Johnson's "little story book" and his periodicals are more dynamic than currently thought. *Rasselas*, I argue, reflects Johnson's corpus of 340 periodical essays more broadly, not least as fourteen of his essays are concerned with the Orient. I therefore want to push beyond Kolb's exploration of the debts *Rasselas* owes to just a handful of essays to examine how fictionality aligns *Rasselas* with Johnson's other writings. Focusing on the rhetoric of long form fiction, Michael Prince has shown that the fundamental oppositions within *Rasselas* "are situated not so much between characters as between narrative frames: novel material in an oriental tale."[47] This pair of frames was also identified by contemporary readers. When introducing *Rasselas* in the *British Novelists*, Barbauld

[45] Gwin Kolb, "Introduction," *Rasselas*, ed. Gwin Kolb (Arlington Heights: AHM Publishing Corp., 1962), vi-vii.
[46] See "Introduction," *Rasselas and Other Tales*, ed. Gwin Kolb (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1990), xxxviii. The nine essays Kolb refers to are: *Rambler* 38, 65, 120, 190, 204, 205 and *Idler* 75, 99, 101.
[47] Prince, *Philosophical Dialogue*, 236.

stated that "the Hercules of literature, Dr. Johnson, has not disdained to be the author of a novel. To say the truth, nothing which he has written has more the touch of genius than *Rasselas* […] The frame of the story is an elegant and happy exertion of fancy."[48] Readers, therefore, could find within his text the very sources of wonder that Johnson had derided within the *Rambler*. But there are other narrative frames at work here, too. As we shall see, within his Oriental tale Johnson aligns the narrative stance of the periodical eidolon, the tone of the moral essay, and the structure of long form prose fiction, pulling together and reconfiguring elements from a range of genres.

Rasselas was not Johnson's first foray to Abyssinia. His first published work was a translation of Jerome Lobo's *A Voyage to Abyssinia* and ever since its appearance in 1735 Johnson had made frequent recourse to the Orient in his writing.[49] The historical knowledge Johnson acquired when working as a translator makes its way into *Rasselas* and helps make the tale somewhat weightier than the "little story book" he told Lucy Porter it would be.[50] Nevertheless, the text belies the conditions for history writing that Johnson set down in his letter to Cave and instead recuperates several of the formal qualities of the essay-periodical.[51] For instance, *Rasselas* shares the *Rambler*'s interest in exploring the "maze of life" (*R.*105 IV.196), reworking the phrase as the "choice of life," to reconfigure the periodical's interest in affecting both diversion and instruction by telling people what to think.[52] Johnson's protagonists are more like periodical eidolons than characters typically found in long form fiction as they desire to observe society without necessarily getting directly involved in it. Setting out from the Happy Valley to explore the world at large, Imlac introduces

[48] Barbauld, *British Novelists*, XXIV.i.
[49] Jerome Lobo, *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, trans. Samuel Johnson (London, 1735).
[50] See "To Lucy Porter," *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, I:185. Also Lipking, *Life of an Author*, 188.
[51] "To Edward Cave," *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, I:34.
[52] Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 35. Further references are given parenthetically in text.

Rasselas and Nekayah, the prince and princess of Abyssinia, to the lives of "common mortals" before taking them into Cairo so that they can encounter "men of every character, and every occupation" and "see all the conditions of humanity" (40). This prompts Tankard to argue that Johnson's protagonists are "privileged spectators rather than the harried participants in difficult realities that the eighteenth-century realistic novel depicts so vividly."[53] This suggests a degree of eidolon-like detachment, though, as the characters in *Rasselas* become increasingly caught up in their own affairs, they lose sight of the bigger picture and their spectatorial status is called into question. The full survey of life that the prose fiction promises is never realised and, rather than gaining enough experience of the world to make an informed decision about the relationship between different walks of life, the characters find themselves getting lost in the maze.[54]

While Rasselas, Imlac, and Nekayah divert themselves with talk over "various schemes of happiness," by the time their journey is over the only conclusion reached is that "Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained" (109). *Rasselas* fails to create its idealised moral perspective as the characters ultimately sequester themselves from the world once again as "They deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved […] to return to Abissinia" (109). The text therefore broaches a series of expansive questions but is simultaneously aware of the impossibility of answering them or, as James Watt suggests, of "even establishing a sufficiently stable vantage-point from which they

[53] Tankard, "Essays," in *Johnson in Context*, 205.
[54] See John Barrell, *English Literature in History, 1730-80: An Equal, Wide Survey* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), 42; Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, trans. Steven Rendall (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1997), 53.

could be addressed in the first place."[55] The prince and his guide return to the Happy Valley without fulfilling their original aim of surveying humanity's occupations and making the "choice of life." Rasselas and Nekayah remain social outsiders and fail to obtain the prospective view that they set out to find. One of the few ways in which the prospective view is realised is through the text's survey of the print marketplace. Imlac, when asked to recount his life as a poet, uses his life story to offer an exposition on the art of poetry writing. This enables Johnson to consider the construction of different literary forms:

> [T]he first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent which it received by accident at first [...] Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement. (27)

With Johnson defining a poet as "an inventor; an author of fiction" five years earlier in his *Dictionary*, it becomes possible to view much of *Rasselas* as offering an inquiry into the profession of the fiction writer.[56] The concerns over the difference in reception between "the first poetry of every nation" and later generations of poetry can be applied to other genres, including the first periodicals and first novels of each nation. When initially developing and contesting the use of a literary genre, no author will produce a sophisticated and elegant text. Writing in the mid-century, Johnson was a second-generation periodical essayist and so was better placed than his predecessors to reflect on what was working well in that medium. He was also writing at a time when the novel was beginning to crystalize into a recognisable form and the first generation of writers who consciously considered themselves as novelists was coming

[55] James Watt, '"What Mankind has Lost and Gained': Johnson, *Rasselas*, and Colonialism" in *Reading 1759: Literary Culture in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*, ed. Shaun Regan (Lanham: Bucknell University Press; 2013), 22.
[56] "Poet," *Dictionary of the English Language.*

into being. It is possible to extrapolate these views on poetry and apply them to other genres within the mid-century print ecology. Imlac's conclusion, therefore, that the business of a poet is "indeed very difficult" (29) sees him rehearse "the wariness about the workings of the imagination that is evident in Johnson's other writings of the period – most notably *Rambler* 4," as Watt argues.[57] Imlac's experiences of writing in other genres are also, perhaps, reminiscent of Johnson's own forays into different print media and the varying degrees of success that he enjoyed.

Imlac, then, plays a complex role within *Rasselas* being part detached narrator and part active participant as he guides Rasselas and Nekayah on their quest to make the "choice of life." He functions somewhat like a periodical eidolon, being the central organising principle through whom the distant is rendered clearly visible – the distant, in this case, referring to all life and experiences found outside the Happy Valley. Imlac, like Johnson's moralistic periodical eidolons, assumes the position of a spectator: rather than getting involved in events, he reacts to things as they unfold around him. Therefore, Imlac might be Rasselas and Nekayah's guide but he never initiates an exploration of any specific "choice of life." Rather, he offers extensive opinions on any given topic only once it is broached by Rasselas or Nekayah. Therefore Johnson-as-Imlac does not assume his seat in the "chair of instruction" (*R.*72 IV.12) like Mr. Rambler or Mr. Idler, but functions in a consultatory capacity instead of actively striving to tell people what to think. Despite this key difference from the tone of his periodicals, when setting out the framework for *Rasselas*, Johnson adopts a stance that is highly reminiscent of the attacks on fictional works found within his essays:

> Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be

[57] Watt, "Johnson, *Rasselas*, and Colonialism," 24.

> supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas Prince of Abissinia. (7)

Showing a blatant disregard for those who read simply for entertainment, the narrator emphasises the tale's difference from other texts, and in invoking ideas of fancy recalls something of *Rambler* 4's critiques of romance writing. *Rasselas* repurposes the language of novels and romances to suggest that those who "listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy" will attend to *Rasselas*; the tale smacks just enough of fancy to appeal to those who want to read texts about hope and implausible adventures. In light of this rhetoric of credulity, it is worth pausing upon the classification of *Rasselas* as a history, rather than as a fiction or a romance. This categorisation aligns the text with fictions including *Colonel Jack*, *Tom Jones*, and *Betsy Thoughtless* and also recalls the various histories that Johnson had created within the *Rambler*. Within *Rasselas* he offers a variant on the historical tale to encourage "the young, the ignorant and the idle" (*R*.4 III.21) to rethink their approach to fiction.

Rasselas, then, recuperates and revoices many of the concerns of Johnson's essays. The text sees Johnson reengaging with his earlier conceptions of novelistic and periodical writing as he expresses further scepticism about printed fictions. Imlac notes that:

> To indulge the power of fiction, and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone we are not always busy; the labour of excogitation is too violent to last long; the ardour of enquiry will sometimes give way to idleness or satiety. (93)

It is worth recalling that the essay form, as discussed in the previous chapter, was suited to whetting readers' appetites and keeping them sharp. With inquiry into the power of fiction often giving way to satiety and inattentive reading, it becomes the responsibility of Johnson's essays, apologues, and allegories to challenge idle reading

and so find a way to rekindle an appetite for inquiry. *Rasselas* is no exception. The text is an example of imaginative and fictional writing that "dwells on the difficulty of securing an objective and authoritative position from which to arrive at conclusions."[58] *Rasselas* facilitates this interpretation by dwelling on its own conditions of production and throwing into sharper relief its conscious explorations of the print ecology. For Johnson, the power of fiction is at its most dangerous when it provokes an immediate and violent excogitation as opposed to planting an idea that readers could return to and cultivate over time. Ultimately, *Rasselas* is a work of fiction that demonstrates the impossibility of trying to live in accordance with fictionalised ideals. Within this "little Book" the dangers Johnson imputed to the indiscriminate reading of prose fiction in his periodicals diffuse into a larger exploration of fancy and imagination. But it is worth noting that the danger of sending "imagination out upon the wing" is not the result of reading novels per se but is attributed here to silent and private modes of reading more generally. When asked about the "maladies of the mind" that can ensue from reading fictions in this way, Imlac states that "[b]y degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotick. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish" (94). A deep-seated dislike for fiction and particularly the novel runs throughout *Rasselas*, which has prompted T.F. Wharton to argue that by 1760 Johnson had begun to view fiction as a form of madness as *Rasselas* proposes that fiction poses an acute danger to the naïve reader for whom "all power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity" (93).[59]

[58] Watt, "Johnson, *Rasselas*, and Colonialism," 34.
[59] T.F. Wharton, *Samuel Johnson and the Theme of Hope* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 118.

With fiction having the potential to cause madness, *Rasselas* furthers Johnson's exploration of the shortcomings of modern print culture and in particular reaffirms his belief that authors have a responsibility to their readers and should impart moral and social instruction. Within *Rasselas,* Johnson explores not only the relationship between fact and fiction but confronts the way knowledge is obtained through texts. *Rambler* 4 placed the responsibility on authors to enhance its readers' "knowledge of the world," encouraging them to consider events that are "agreeable to observation and experience" and which will help to facilitate their wider education (*R*.4 III.22). The true province of prose fictions, including works such as *Rasselas*, however, is "to bring about natural events by easy means, and to keep up curiosity without the help of wonder" (*R*.4 III.19). Language should be deployed with nuance and aplomb to ensure that it conveys the desired meaning in an effective manner. However, *Rasselas* demonstrates how this is rarely the case and after Imlac tells his life history, "The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound, and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences" (46). Rasselas's disappointment in discovering the "emptiness of rhetorical sound" is a reconfiguration of Johnson's view, previously articulated in *Rambler* 23, about the degeneration of printed texts and in particular the deterioration of the essay form that resulted from periodicalists continually striving to satisfy readers' demands for entertainment. Readers were disappointed if essays were not witty and frivolous: "Others soon began to remark that he [the *Rambler*] was a solemn, serious, dictatorial writer, without sprightliness or gaiety, and called out with vehemence for mirth and humour" (*R*.23 III.129). While Johnson did admire the skill of the rhetoric and humour used in the *Spectator,* he felt that the popular periodical had lost the humanistic qualities found in Bacon's model of essay writing and the

solemnity of the *Rambler* represented an attempt to recapture some of the form's earlier gravity. Addison, he believed, had distilled ideas down too far in an attempt to make them universally comprehensible and find a mode of expression that had a wide appeal, for as he would put it in the *Life of Joseph Addison*, "His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy."[60] The *Spectator*, therefore, was conversable and easy to read, but its teachings could at times ring hollow.

While the *Rambler* often had a studied air of solemnity on account of its highly moralised opinions, *Rasselas* sees those concerns being put into a different guise as it aligns the ideals of Johnson's essay-periodical with a format that is more palatable to the mid-century reader. Adopting something of the gaiety that might be found in a longer form fiction, *Rasselas* can be read as a series of individual essays, that are joined together by an overarching narrative. Each individual episode or separate exploration of a "choice of life" can function as a standalone discussion piece in order to reimagine how individuals engage with the world. Appropriating strategies for essayistic writing into a longer prose fiction, Parker suggests that *Rasselas* "dramatizes the intellectual's relationship with the wider world, a theme which Johnson had addressed many times in *The Rambler*, and which lies at the heart of eighteenth-century scepticism."[61] Taking on a highly performative quality, *Rasselas* can begin to stage the discussions that took place within other genres. It not only echoes the early picaresque novel but also assumes the episodic construction of the essay-periodical as individual chapters could be read in isolation. To a certain extent, the different episodes and explorations of different life choices can stand alone: the tales of the

[60] Johnson, "Life of Addison," III.38.
[61] Parker, *Scepticism and Literature*, 258.

astronomer, poet, hermit, and scholar can all be read independently. *Rasselas*'s chapters act as guides to different occupations and many of them function rather like inset tales or digressive episodes. Rather than reading the book cover to cover, readers could select chapters indexically and read them in isolation to find a short guide to a particular "choice of life." In other words, *Rasselas* can be read as a series of partitioned chapters which, when taken together, assume a fundamental coherence, rather like a codexed periodical.

Time and again in *Rasselas*, the parallels to *Rambler* 4 come to the fore, but the prose fiction's debts to the essay-periodical and especially to the *Rambler* go beyond this one essay. The text also draws heavily from *Rambler* 118, which considers humanity's collective choices as "we raise our eyes to higher prospects, and contemplate our future and eternal state, without giving up our hearts to the praise of crowds, or fixing our hopes on such rewards as human power can bestow" (*R.*118 IV.269). Dwelling on the sources of wonder that inspire people in various occupations, Johnson considers authors, sportsmen, astronomers, philologers, and encomiasts as they traverse the "valleys of life" and sleep in "universal negligence" (*R.*118. IV.269), noting how they are too caught up in their own affairs to see the bigger picture. While Mr. Rambler is expected to guide his readers through the mire of life choices, so too is Imlac. As Rasselas rambles across Abyssinia, Imlac becomes the all-seeing eye and voice of experience who drives the onward motion of the text and facilitates the work's peripatetic qualities. Yet, as Parker states, "Imlac's conclusions are also events in a journey, moments in a dynamic process, movements from one place to another."[62] Imlac's various stories are all part of his life journey and it is his experience of the world that ultimately dictates that of Rasselas and his sister Neyakah. He therefore

[62] Parker, *Scepticism and Literature*, 259.

functions as the text's logical hinge, bringing together a series of disparate experiences as he tests out each new course of life and ultimately rejects every hypothesis that is suggested.

Rather than exhorting and championing a specific course of action, Johnson issues a warning to his readers that "the world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests, and boiling with whirlpools" (35). Nothing is ever quite as it seems and the attempts of Johnson's rather two-dimensional characters to explore the world follow the example of his essays to offer fictional, illustrative stories that attempt to affect the entertainment, instruction, and diversion of reading audiences. As such the characters in *Rasselas* take on a universal quality to enable their experiences to resonate with the reading public at large. Johnson provides a brief description of their occupations – Imlac is a tutor and failed poet, Rasselas is the "fourth son of the mighty emperor" (7), and Nekayah is Rasselas's favourite sister – but there is no indication as to whether they are short or tall, fair or dark, fat or thin; the individual reader can imagine them as they desire. They are everyone and no one, and this capacity to blend seamlessly into the crowd makes the characters in *Rasselas* more akin to periodical eidolons than the fleshed out figures of the early novel: like Mr. Spectator, the *Guardian*'s Nestor Ironside, or the *Connoisseur*'s Mr. Town, the figures in *Rasselas* shapeshift, being at once knowable and utterly unknown, living both in the world and crucially distanced from it.

Surveying the Print Ecology

Rasselas was not the only text that Johnson was working on in 1759; he had recently concluded his *Literary Magazine* (1756-58) and was still publishing the *Idler* while working on his "little Story book." As such, there is a close connection, chronologically at least, between Johnson's periodical essays and allegorical prose fiction. While Mr. Rambler had acted as an aloof and often distant critic, in both *Rasselas* and the *Idler* Johnson demonstrates a much closer interest in examining how everyday life could be mediated by print. The characters and correspondents found in the *Idler* are mostly servants, apprentices, shopkeepers and small tradesmen. In supposedly extending its influence beyond the middling classes, the *Idler* is most unusual in embarking upon a sustained – albeit imagined – dialogue with those in service, such as Betty Broom, Molly Quick, and Dick Minim. As Wildermuth notes, this sees Johnson bring "the world of the street where stationers and mercurial vendors hawk their wares into close contact with all the learning that the ancients and the moderns can afford" as he brings down learning and philosophy more effectually than Addison ever had.[63] This enables Johnson's periodicals not only to theorise on the construction of different species of print, but to contemplate the social and cultural implications of working in one literary form as opposed to another. Wildermuth goes on to note that in Johnson's essays there emerges "a conceptualization of a society that derives its capital, vibrancy, and energy from the mediating power of the printed word."[64] His printed works explore authorial anxieties and criticise the shortcomings of almost every genre at the same time as reflecting on how some literary forms were more appealing to certain demographics than others.

[63] Wildermuth, *Print, Chaos, and Complexity,* 108.
[64] Wildermuth, *Print, Chaos, and Complexity,* 108.

The need for authors to moderate their tone and style to appeal to different reading audiences recurs time and again throughout Johnson's periodicals and longer form fictions. In *Rambler* 145, for example, he contemplates the changing needs of reading audiences and, as mentioned earlier, he considers how each demographic of readers "requires a genius of correspondent capacity" (*R*.145 V.11-12). Certain modes of expression, and certain genres and publication formats resonated more fully with one group of readers than another and so were better suited to affect reform within that group. Fiction is one of these modes and while often seen as the easy option for writers who lacked the time or skill to ground their work in real events – "fiction is easier than discernment; and most of these writers spare themselves the labour of inquiry" (*I*.45 140) – it could also be used to great effect, not least if authors adhered to Johnson's earlier warning to secure their inventions "from unjust prejudices, perverse opinions, and incongruous combinations of images" (*R*.4 III.21). Fiction had the potential to become the go-to medium through which to divert and educate reading audiences – the pitfalls of knights, giants, and castles notwithstanding.

By setting himself up as a literary critic at the same time as using his works to survey the various occupations available to the professional author, Johnson uses his essays and longer form prose works to create a new vantage point from which to survey the mid-century print ecology. From here he could not only explore the imbrication of different modes of writing but could begin to theorise about how different genres should be used. He outlines the standard to which he expects his peers to adhere and against which he hopes his own work will be judged. Acknowledging that some kinds of fiction were preferable to others, Johnson notably found merit, as we have seen, in Richardson's sentimental novels, even though he derided Fielding's work, especially *Tom Jones*. In addition to appealing to a wide audience, as discussed

earlier, one of the strengths that Johnson identified in *Clarissa* was the ease with which readers could digest Richardson's fiction, for while "the Story is long, every letter is short."[65] The multiple letters that make up *Clarissa*, then, when supplemented by an index, could easily be read in the manner of a periodical. In this respect, *Clarissa* functioned rather like bound editions of the *Rambler*, and both were works from which readers could repeatedly derive instruction and entertainment.

In challenging the framework for the novel at the same time as reimagining the uses of the essay-periodical, Johnson shows how the periodical and novel had the potential to affect significant change within the print marketplace. He confronts the tendency for these two forms to blend together at the same time as contesting the parameters for each of them. Johnson guided the essay-periodical away from being a vehicle for facts and fictions and towards being one for literary criticism. Thus, he began to tease apart the formal and aesthetic qualities of the two genres and it is worth noting that from the mid-century onwards far fewer novelists were also routinely writing periodical essays. While Johnson may not have contributed to the simultaneous development of the novel and periodical in the same way as Defoe, Haywood, or Fielding, he helped to stabilise both the essay-periodical and longer form prose fiction, setting down guidelines that both forms would continue to adhere to up until the periodical essay emerged as a distinct vehicle for literary criticism in the early nineteenth century.

[65] "To Samuel Richardson," *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, I:48.

Afterword

We have seen how the essay-periodical evolved and reimagined its relationship with the print ecology throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. The genre had come a long way from its origins in the question-and-answer publications of the 1680s; the conversable and entertaining essays written by Addison and Steele cross-fertilized with long form prose fiction at the hands of Defoe, Haywood, and Fielding, before giving way to Johnson's weightier moral essays and works of literary criticism. As I have suggested, periodical essays had a significant impact on the development of fiction and the essay-periodical was not a subset of journalism or news reportage but a distinctive literary genre in its own right. It was through the essay-periodical that reading audiences gained an enhanced awareness of the effects of fictional representation and first acquired a new understanding of the ways in which fiction manifested itself in the written record. Periodicalists thus created new ways to affect entertainment and diversion at the same time as using fiction to reform the morals, manners, and tastes of the age. As the essay-periodical appeared alongside those works of long form prose which would go on to be identified as early novels, it is to be expected that these two new literary genres informed, and were informed by, the emergence of the other – not least because they both provided a commentary on one another's development.

Yet Johnson stands at the end of the tradition that I have been describing in this study. While the single-sheet essay-periodical experienced a brief resurgence in popularity upon the appearance of the *Rambler*, the *World* (1753-56), and the *Connoisseur,* by the time George III succeeded to the throne the genre was entering into decline. Very few authors were working extensively as both periodicalists and

long form fiction writers by the mid-century. While Tobias Smollett and Horace Walpole, for example, published in both forms, they were whilom periodicalists rather than the lead writer or owner of their own title. Samuel Richardson was acquainted with the workings of the periodical press through his employment as a printer, but he was not a periodicalist; meanwhile, Frances Brooke ran her own periodical, the *Old Maid* (1755-56), though was a translator of longer form fictions rather than a novelist. With authors increasingly working as either periodicalists or long form fiction writers, the close relationship between these two media began to change.

Given the constant evolution of the print ecology the divergence of these two genres was somewhat inevitable. The market for periodical print diversified upon the introduction of miscellany periodicals, critical reviews, and monthly magazines. It was within these other forms that the essay took on a new guise, leaving behind the folio half sheet and assuming a new home in other species of periodical publication. This was part of the genre's natural development but was also a response to a change in the public's reading habits. The coffeehouse, once vital for the distribution of periodicals, entered into decline and circulating libraries started to replace them as one of the key spaces in which readers would access printed materials.[1] This shift prompted essay-periodicals and longer form fictions, as Klancher and Hunter have noted, to increasingly function as a form of "portable coffeehouse;" the two genres began to create alternative textual communities and remodel for new generations of readers the sociable and conversable interactions found within those institutions.[2] While coffeehouse libraries typically stocked pamphlets, maps, and printed music, circulating libraries increasingly acted as repositories for longer form works,

[1] See Allington, *The Book in Britain*, 177; Ellis, *Coffee House: A Cultural History*, 211-15.
[2] Klancher, *Making of English Reading Audiences*, 23; Hunter, *Before Novels*, 176.

particularly novels.[3] This reflects a rising demand for long form prose fiction in the second half of the century which was partly precipitated by the slow crystallization of the novel, though, it is worth noting that the novel was still resistant to a restrictive generic definition.[4] While Powell has argued of the essay-periodical that "the performances taking place within the pages of the periodicals begin to dictate the terms of the performances that can take place in other texts, even cross-pollinating with drama and the novel," by the 1760s the balance was shifting.[5] Long form prose fiction was beginning to dictate the performances taking place within the pages of periodicals. Thus, the essays published in monthly magazines and reviews were increasingly concerned with policing the standards of literary work rather than themselves being a source of inset narratives, tales, and fictional anecdotes.[6] While cross-pollination was still occurring between periodicals and longer form prose, periodical essays were less likely to engage with matters of fact, fiction, and fictionality in the same way as those written by Defoe, Haywood, and Fielding earlier in the century.

The relationship between the essay-periodical and longer form prose fiction was shifting. The two genres were no longer working as closely together to determine the construction of fictional writing or to account for how the effects of language dominate the experience of reading, to paraphrase Walsh.[7] Instead, the continual back-and-forth movement between the essay-periodical and long form prose fiction was resulting in the formation of a consensus about what constituted a 'good' or

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[3] See Markman Ellis, 'Coffee-House Libraries in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London', *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 10, no. 1 (2009): 3–40; Ellis, *Coffee House: A Cultural History*, 214.
[4] John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 77.
[5] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 10.
[6] On the nature of reviews see for example: Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh, 1788-1802* (London: Methuen, 1978); David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* (Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 3.
[7] Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 6.

'improving' body of literary works.[8] As we have seen through the *Review*'s Scandal Club and Fielding's Courts of Criticism, the essay-periodical had always desired to "improve" literature by shaping the public's taste for printed materials and encouraging them toward those works that were most likely to affect education and instruction. But essays were also helping to improve literature by encouraging the development of new modes of expression.[9] These two senses of 'improvement' are evident in the third issue of the *Connoisseur*: "We Writers of Essays, or (as they are termed) Periodical Papers, justly claim to ourselves a place among the modern improvers of literature."[10] This comment is telling about how periodicalists viewed their responsibilities to readers. The eidolon, Mr. Town, notably styles himself as a "Critic, and Censor General," emphasising the importance of literary criticism for the mid-century periodicalist. The role of the Censor, or even corrector, had always been central to periodical essays: prior to the creation of Mr. Town and the *Covent-Garden Journal*'s Sir Alexander Drawcansir, John Tutchin had remarked that in the *Review* Defoe set "himself up for Director-General, and Corrector-General."[11] But the role of the Critic was a new occupation for the eidolon, who was becoming an increasingly aloof and distanced figure, less likely to be found in the coffeehouses readers frequented. Authors began to step out from behind their narrating figures to directly expose the shortcomings of printed works without suggesting how any such deficiencies could be 'corrected.' Ultimately, the rise of the author as literary critic precipitated the removal of the eidolon; magazines and review periodicals were not

[8] Scarborough King, "'[L]et a girl read': Periodicals and Women's Literary Canon Formation" in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain,* 231.
[9] "Literature," *Dictionary of the English Language.*
[10] *Connoisseur*, No. 3, February 14, 1754.
[11] *Observator*, 9-13 August, 1707.

usually presided over by a first-person narrating figure whose function was to provide the connection between the publication's different instalments.

The changing role of the eidolon, and their eventual demise, was perhaps to be expected. The second generation of essayists could not proceed upon the same terms as Addison and Steele. Reflecting upon the transformation of the periodical press in the eighteenth century, as well as on the evolution of print genres, William Hazlitt remarked that "the Periodical Essayists, Steele and Addison, succeeded to our great Comic Writers, and the Novelists, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, to these."[12] While this study questions the neatness of this transition from one age of writing to another, Hazlitt captures something of the novel's reliance on the essay-periodical (even if he overlooks the influence the novel exerted on periodical writers). Mid-century essays, he noted elsewhere, were almost a different species to those written by the first generation of periodicalists and many considered more recent periodical endeavours to be less diverting or entertaining than their predecessors: "The Periodical Essayists, that succeeded the Rambler, are, and deserve to be, little read at present."[13]

By the 1760s the essay-periodical had cross-pollinated so successfully with other genres that neither its tone, style, nor material appearance was in keeping with that of the essays written during the late Stuart period. Fictionality had outgrown the confines of the single sheet. But that is not to say that fictionality had fully-fledged to become a mode of expression that was "unique" to the novel.[14] While the novel was beginning to assume a recognisable form and took on a distinctive "genreness," there was still no universal consensus as to what, precisely, a novel looked like, and

[12] William Hazlitt, "The Periodical Press," *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, May 1823 (London), 353.
[13] Hazlitt, "On the Periodical Essayists," 204.
[14] Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," 337.

fictionality was still present in other genres.[15] The novel might have begun to crystallize, but its form had not yet set: "the term 'novel' did not become significantly more popular on title pages than other labels until the mid 1780s."[16] 'History' was still the preferred term. The novel, therefore, was still partly dependant on other genres to help situate itself within the print ecology and this caused its relationship with the periodical to enter into a new phase. Periodical publications began to provide a framework for the distribution of long form prose fictions. For example, *Love in Excess* was reissued from September 1741 to January 1742 as a monthly supplement in the *London Morning Advertiser*, and Charlotte Lennox's periodical the *Lady's Museum* (1760-61) was designed specifically to house her novel, *Harriet and Sophia*. Periodicals were becoming a way for readers to access long form prose fiction, and titles such as the *Novelist's Magazine* (1780-88) began to create a body of texts that readers ought to be familiar with. The monthly issues of the *Magazine* also retrospectively created the category of the "novel" by applying the term to works of prose fiction that had never marketed themselves in that way, including the *Invisible Spy*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Amelia*, and *Rasselas.*

In focusing upon the many periodicals and longer form fictions written by Defoe, Haywood, Fielding, and Johnson it becomes possible to reassess the importance of, and fundamental imbrication between, two genres that emerged at the same chronological moment and which challenged the borders between fictional and non-fictional prose. For sixty years the essay-periodical occupied a central position within the print ecology, and periodical studies have much to contribute to our understanding of literary print culture – particularly with regard to studies of fiction

[15] McKeon, *Theory of the Novel*, 4.
[16] Orr, "Genre Labels on the Title Pages of English Fiction," 67.

and histories of the novel. Passed down through successive generations of periodicalists, the periodical essay established itself as a dominant mode of expression, being the form through which reading audiences could most readily engage with, and reimagine, the (printed) world. The genre was a "forerunner of modern literary studies and cultural criticism" as its primary stylistic objective was to teach reading audiences to read critically while providing a space in which to state and dispute cultural and social values.[17] The essay-periodical, therefore, was much more than a training ground in which fiction writers could 'cut their teeth' and develop their expository craft before embarking on a new stage of their career. By the second half of the century, the single sheet essay that used fictionality to affect the instruction, diversion, and entertainment of its readers was evolving into a new medium, once again reasserting its novelty to take on a new role within the ever-changing print ecology.

[17] Gigante, *Great Age of the English Essay*, xvii.

Abbreviations

A	*The Adventurer* (1752-54)
CGJ	*The Covent-Garden Journal* (1752)
FS	*The Female Spectator* (1744-6)
GM	*The Gentleman's Magazine* (1731-1922)
I	*The Idler* (1758-60)
JJ	*The Jacobite's Journal* (1747-48)
LRev	*The Little Review* (1705)
P	*The Parrot* (1746)
R	*The Rambler* (1750-52)
Rev	*The Review* (1704-13)
S	*The Spectator* (1711-12)
T	*The Tatler* (1709-11)
TP	*The True Patriot* (1745)

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