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The New Model Eighteenth-Century Novel

Robert Folkenflik

I begin not with a model but an anecdote. Clifford Siskin's *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (1998)¹ describes an overflow crowd at the 1993 American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) annual meeting for a session with “papers that located the English novel in America and in captivity narratives, linked it back to prose fiction from the classical past, and detailed how confluences of genre, gender, and nation produced a novel that was originally English and always on the rise. When, in the ensuing discussion, a member of the audience commented that the cumulative effect of this work was to remake the novel into something that it simply had not been before, heads nodded vigorously throughout the room.” The audience protestor is identified as John Richetti; the authors of the papers are Nancy Armstrong, Margaret Anne Doody, and William Beatty Warner: those papers have now become books that, along with others, are the subject of my millennial consideration of the eighteenth-century British novel. The ASECS paper-givers and a number of others have been consciously rejecting or revising the received models of the novel, especially that of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*. To put the response simply in the terms of Siskin's exemplum is to risk missing, as he knows well, that this is a scholarship highly aware of the choices it makes, the systematic implications of those choices and of the models rejected. These writers (and others I shall consider) tend to be very

¹ Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 157. References to this book and to the others I quote are to the editions cited.

aware also of their positions as academics in institutions that have written and rewritten the novel's history since the eighteenth century.

In looking at models of the novel, I limit my attention to books of the 1990s, and I think of this piece as a complement to "The Heirs of Ian Watt," which looked at the models of the eighteenth-century novel in books written in the 1980s.² This account is necessarily highly selective. I do not, for example, discuss books that focus on novels of the 1790s or later. And many books that talk about the novel thematically, or only while discussing a number of literary genres, do not provide a model or theory of the novel. To take an example, Felicity Nussbaum's *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (1995)³ is wide-ranging and daring. Her ability to bring intercontinental perspectives to bear on English culture is rich and rewarding. "Polygamy, *Pamela*, and the Prerogative of Empire," for example, one of her fruitful triads, brings Oriental and biblical thinking on polygamy by British patriarchs into play in the domestic world of Richardson's *Pamela* and Mr B. in an original and convincing way. Too often practitioners of Cultural Studies make their best points through analogy and metaphor, but Felicity Nussbaum shows that the analogies and metaphors of her book are eighteenth-century England's own. It is not a book about the "novel," but its consideration of a number of novels, including some rarely discussed, is welcome and contemporary.

I will also give inadequate attention to the books renovating the building blocks of the novel—plot and character. In *Desire and Truth: Functions of Plot in Eighteenth-Century English Novels* (1990), Patricia Meyer Spacks continues the modern investigation of plot, an aspect of the novel to some extent bypassed since the Structuralists and brought back into the purview of contemporary interest by books such as Peter Brooks's *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (1984). As in his book, psychology comes first, though she gives it an eighteenth-century rather than a Freudian priority. The novelists she focuses upon, Charlotte Lennox, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and Walter Scott, are now typical of the canon. For some of the writers under consideration here, such as Homer Brown, the inclusion of Scott is justified beyond the notion of the "long eighteenth century." Deidre Lynch's *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (1998) takes a wide interdisciplinary view of character at once original and related to the work of Catherine Gallagher and

2 Robert Folkenflik, "The Heirs of Ian Watt," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 25 (1991), 203–18.

3 Felicity Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

Warner discussed below. Lynch's approach, long overdue, focuses on the links between "legible faces, minted money and imprinted texts."⁴

Doody was one of those identified as presenting a new model at ASECS, but her immensely wide-ranging *The True Story of the Novel* (1996)⁵ devotes so little space to the eighteenth century (about twenty pages of the historical first three hundred, passing examples among the following two hundred pages of tropes) that it will not be considered here. The book's value comes from reminding us of the vast range of narrative fiction of which the eighteenth-century novel is only a part. Her emphasis on the persistence of Greek and Roman romances throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provides a useful inflection.

No one writing on the eighteenth-century British novel these days can afford to forget the long history of prose fiction, the practice of other countries at the time, the participation of women novelists. The earlier work of Peter Brooks on the conventions of courtly fiction in *The Novel of Worldliness* (1969) was never adequately assimilated in scholarship of the British novel; we should not similarly ignore Joan DeJean's *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (1991). Josephine Donovan's *Women and the Rise of the Novel, 1405–1726* (1991) is a broader-ranging comparatist study of French, Spanish, and English women novelists. Thomas Kavanagh provides a model of the novel focused on probability and employing French examples in *Enlightenment and the Shadows of Chance: The Novel and the Culture of Gambling in Eighteenth-Century France* (1993).⁶ Constructing models of the novel has become something of a scholarly industry. Robert A. Erickson even provides in *The Language of the Heart, 1600–1750* (1997)—a cardiocentric study of the Bible, William Harvey's *The Motion of the Heart, Paradise Lost*,

4 Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Desire and Truth: Functions of Plot in Eighteenth-Century English Novels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

5 Margaret Anne Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

6 Peter Brooks, *The Novel of Worldliness: Crébillon, Marivaux, Laclous, Stendhal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Josephine Donovan, *Women and the Rise of the Novel, 1405–1726* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991); Thomas Kavanagh, *Enlightenment and the Shadows of Chance: The Novel and the Culture of Gambling in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). Ronald Paulson's *Don Quixote in England: The Aesthetics of Laughter* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) devotes a chapter to the single most important novelistic model for eighteenth-century novels.

Oroonoko, and *Clarissa*—a model of the novel based on Harvey's concept of circulation (pp. 84–88).⁷

I start with the earliest of these books to appear, one that will not be accused of remaking “the novel into something that it simply had not been before.” J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (1990) is the freshest large look at the relation of the novel to the history of reading. Hunter contends that the novel developed from a range of genres and thematic material, certainly one convincing way of approaching that amoebic form, the novel. Since an earlier generation of scholars did something like this with less consciousness of the implications, the question is how his consideration of these issues advances our knowledge. In some ways it does so because the inquiry into reading shows what audiences were prepared to accept. While he revisits some of the materials of his earliest work—the spiritual autobiographies and guide literature that were the subject of *The Reluctant Pilgrim* (1966),⁸ an attempt to establish the models for *Robinson Crusoe*—he brings an impressive range of reading of his own to the fore. I cannot do justice here to the learning, subtlety, and tact with which he develops his arguments, though the numbered list, accompanied by mini-paragraphs, which he gives in his opening chapter, “What Was New about the Novel,” will seem familiar—“*Contemporaneity*,” “*Credibility and probability*,” “*Familiarity*,” “*Rejection of traditional plots*,” “*Tradition-free language*,” “*Individualism, subjectivity*” (a glissando from Watt to the postmodern here), “*Empathy and vicariousness*,” “*Coherence and unity of design*” (hidden under this rubric is the claim that “Novels tend to be more ideological than most literary species”), “*Inclusivity, digressiveness, fragmentation: the ability to parenthesize*,” “*Self-consciousness about innovation and novelty*” (pp. 23–25). These must be taken in conjunction with his awareness that the novel is a large, loose, baggy form with features that do not “fit” any simple definition of the novel. His openness to what exceeds models (“The Critical Tyranny of Formal Definition” is the title of chapter 2) is among his major contributions to thinking about the novel. Although one could claim that the book is really *after* and *during* novels (certainly Doody and DeJean, among others, would), and his list often correlates strongly with Watt's account of the novel and “formal realism,”

7 Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600–1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

8 J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990); *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and the Quest for Form in "Robinson Crusoe"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966).

Hunter's best finds for pre-novelistic texts are John Dunton's *Athenian Mercury* (1691–97) and Robert Boyle's *Occasional Reflections* (1665) with its "Discourse" on Occasional Meditation as form. Hunter's book presents not so much a new model as a compendious account of where traditional thinking about the novel has taken us. The many things of value here do not arise from the construction of a new model. Hunter is also the author of the best single study of one model of the novel's audience, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader."⁹

As a model for reading the novel, Catherine Gallagher's *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Market Place, 1670–1820* (1994) provides a brilliant and witty point of departure. Appearing first as an essay, "Nobody's Story: Gender, property, and the Rise of the Novel," which may be thought a model of her book as well as the novel,¹⁰ this concept of Nobody as a bodiless image derives from one familiar during the eighteenth century and earlier. Gallagher develops the variations on her theme, and the implications are far-ranging and sometimes startling in their appositeness. Several of her claims are striking. She notes that if we follow the logic of Roland Barthes and see the "contingent, unmotivated detail" as "the code of the 'real' in fiction," then the "obvious conclusion," unnoticed by Barthes, is that "realism was the code of the fictional" (p. 174). Moreover, she demonstrates, developing her argument through an investigation of Hume on sympathy, that since in reading the novel we are sympathizing with Nobody, often to a greater extent than we sympathize with people we know, we have a sentimental relation to the novel, in the sense that I.A. Richards defines sentimentality as a "response ... too great for the occasion" (not her example).¹¹ Her excellent insight is put to effective use in the book. At the same time it is worth noticing that something like this awareness was to be found in the eighteenth

9 J. Paul Hunter, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader," *Genre* 10 (1977), 455–84. In "Richardson's Ideology of Reading," a paper given for the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publication at the University of Edinburgh, I argued that for Richardson the preferable model of reading was social and aloud in opposition to clandestine, silent reading. This audience conception is modelled within *Pamela* by Mr B.'s reading Pamela's letter to a social group with her permission and Richardson's reading of his works in progress to his coterie. This countermovement does not contest the general applicability of Hunter's model.

10 Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Market Place, 1670–1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); "Nobody's Story: Gender, Property, and the Rise of the Novel," *Modern Language Quarterly* 53 (1992), 263–77, reprinted in *Eighteenth-Century Literary History: An MLQ Reader*, ed. Marshall Brown (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 27–42. For a book that relates property in the novel to the traditional genres of georgic and pastoral, see April London, *Women and Property in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

11 I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, n.d.), p. 244.

century itself. William Craig's *Lounger 77* (1786) contains an account of the fictitious Woodfort, who weeps "at the perusal of a tender novel. ... Yet in real life Woodfort's feelings and generosity unaccountably forsake him" and he is harsh to his tenants and debtors as well as to his relatives. The narrator finds such behaviour neither uncommon nor, despite his quiet irony, unaccountable:

To account in some measure for this appearance, it may be observed, that when a representation is given of fictional distress, it is done in such a manner, and with such circumstances accompanying it, as have the most powerful tendency to affect the heart. ... The mind therefore may be affected with a fictitious story, or a tale, when it will not be affected with a real event occurring in common life; because that real event cannot be perceived in all those strong colours and mingled with all those attracting circumstances with which a romantic story may be wrought up.¹²

I am conflating a good deal here about the difference between fiction and "real life," the way in which the production of "passive feelings of sensibility" militates against "active and firm exertion" (along with a reference to Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion*), and the educational implication that there is "much danger" in "softening [children's] minds" through "affecting them too frequently and too deeply by fictitious tales of woe" (37:171). The analysis, parts of it fairly standard, may help to establish how some of the most interesting work now being done recapitulates and theorizes eighteenth-century attacks on the novel that have not had much of a hearing among intellectuals or within the academy until recently.¹³ Gallagher recognizes the importance of such attacks.

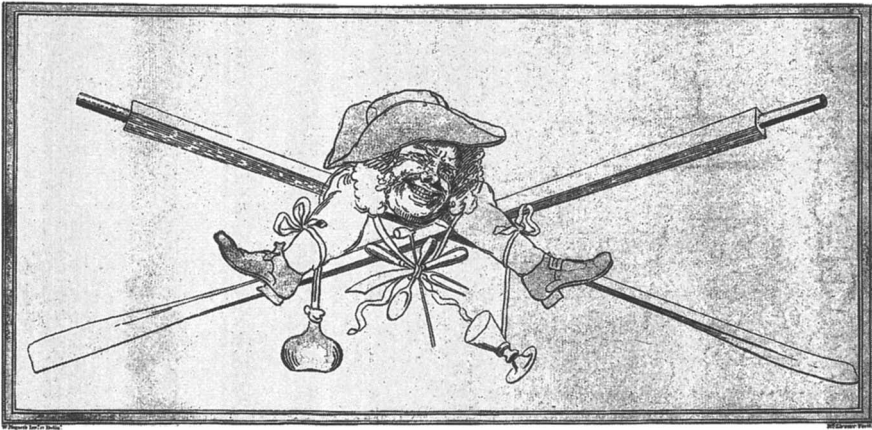
Gallagher does a good deal more, however. Her eloquent and aphoristic variations on Nobody spin out a central thematic of the novel. Nobody has no body and is therefore "the site of a material lack and an open invitation" (p. 171). Nobody is "nobody *in particular*" and therefore, in opposition to historical writing about nonfictional beings ("thinness of detail at the time almost always indicated specific extratextual reference"), this Nonentity needs to be described in detail, if not minutely (p. 174). Nobody exists in opposition to Somebody (as in the visual representations of the pair by Hogarth), a class difference.¹⁴ While Nobody becomes a

12 *The Lounger, British Essayists*, ed. Lionel Thomas Berguer (London: T. and J. Allman, 1823), 37:167–68.

13 In "The Heirs of Ian Watt," I suggest that Lennard J. Davis's *Resisting Novels* revives "eighteenth-century and Victorian distrust of the novel, but on political rather than moral and religious grounds" (p. 211).

14 [Ebenezer Forrest], *An Account of ... The Five Days Peregrination of ... Messieurs Tothall, Scott, Hogarth, Thornhill, and Forrest* (London: R. Livesay, 1782). Richard Livesay's engraving of Hogarth's original 1732 drawing *Tail-Piece* is plate 9. Reproduced by permission of the General Rare Book Collection, California State Library.

fictional character, Somebody is the subject of a *roman à clef*. Nobody is apt to be a woman, a key suggestion in this book, though not entirely borne out by the figure (Hogarth's little man with extremities and no trunk, for example) or by novels as a whole. Gallagher asserts that "Fiction ... stimulates sympathy because, with very few exceptions, it is easier to identify with nobody's story and share nobody's sentiments than to identify with anybody else's story and share anybody else's sentiments." She adds that because "the stories are nobody's, everyone can have an equal interest in them" (p. 172). The acute economic pun has its parallel in Craig's *Lounger* essay: "Accustomed to be affected with objects only that are removed from ourselves, and where there can be no competition with our own interests, we may be unmoved when our own interests or other inclinations interfere" (37:171). This could be put even more sharply in eighteenth-century terms: interesting (moving, affecting) subjects are those which do not conflict with our own interest. What Gallagher claims convincingly is that our interest in Nobody's story has a great deal to do with the making of the modern self. The reasons why this model should not appear until late in the book, however, require comment.



TAIL-PIECE.

WAGNER has been by the side of the author in the illustration.

What Gallagher in her original model in her essay did not consider was the implications of its subtitle, which really drives the chapter-to-chapter narrative. She says that friends advised her against the title, for hers is not the story of women excluded from the canon, of mute, inglorious Judith Defoes. Her "'nobodies' ... are not ignored, silenced, erased or anonymous women. They are literal nobodies: authorial personae, printed books, scandalous allegories, intellectual property rights, literary reputations, incomes, debts and fictional characters" (p. xiii). She wants to tell a story of how women authors (all novelists here) "thrived" by em-

phasizing “their femininity to gain financial advantage” and how in doing so “they invented numerous ingenious similarities between their gender and their occupation” (p. xiii). And yet I wonder if through their “vanishing acts,” their literally anonymous status (typically, names male and female were not signed to works, though often known), and their inability, if married, to own or have title to their productions, these women authors are not making a success of being nobodies in their own right. Gallagher says as much towards the end of her introduction when analysing the nature of their alienation. She notes a “rhetoric of ‘dispossession’ in their texts,” an awareness on their parts “that copyright, their former ‘property,’ was no property at all but a mere ghostly possibility,” the employment of tropes of “their labor as the accumulation of credit,” which in turn put them in debt (pp. xxi–xxii). (Being indebted was the standard status in a patronage culture. It is interesting to see the survival of such a status among professional writers, some of whom had patrons.) Earlier, she had nicely analysed their “author-selves” as “partial nobodies” (p. xix). Marx is central to her thinking, and such recent theorists of the novel as Lennard J. Davis and Michael McKeon help, though she sees the first as “too censorious” of fiction and the latter as too focused on epistemology to pay attention to ontology (p. xvii). Her individual chapters play out these themes in stages from Behn to Manley, Lennox, Burney, and Edgeworth (who kept insisting that her novels were only the illustrations of her father Richard’s ideas and, as such, inferior to them).

John Zomchick’s focus on the “juridical subject” in his *Family and the Law in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Public Conscience in the Private Sphere* (1993),¹⁵ linking him to Gallagher’s and Nancy Armstrong’s quest for the modern subject, points to the law’s importance in the secularization of the modern world. His analogies are often suggestive: “Eighteenth-century juridical and fictional discourses produce a cognate subject: the private subject of ordered pleasures” (p. 10). It may seem that his dual focus is a way of bringing public and private into conjunction, but he is also concerned with family as a “threat to” as well as a “goal for the protagonists of the novel” (p. 13). Davis had also called attention to this realm of discourse when he claimed that a Foucauldian news/novel discourse was the source of the novel.¹⁶ Zomchick’s novelists are well chosen. In addition to the inevitable lawyer and magistrate Fielding, it

15 John Zomchick, *Family and the Law in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Public Conscience in the Private Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

16 Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

is good to see the sometime litigant Smollett, who too often is odd man out once Fielding appears. He discusses the inefficacy of “wild justice” (the typical Smollett revenge structure) in *Roderick Random*, though *Sir Launcelot Greaves* with its trials by good and bad justices, its eponymous hero, more Robin Hood than Quixote, regarding himself as a “coadjutor to the law,” and his friend the clerk Tom Clarke, a walking law dictionary (specifically Giles Jacob’s *New Law Dictionary*), would have provided more scope and has lacked sophisticated legal exposition. Neither novel focuses very strongly on family. Zomchick is at his best in his paired chapters on *Clarissa*. I would also have liked to see Mary Wollstonecraft’s *The Wrongs of Woman* at the end, for many of those wrongs are legal, and the fragment ends with a remarkable statement of self-divorce in a courtroom and a range of fragments of possible conclusions. Alexander Welsh’s *Strong Representations: Narrative and Circumstantial Evidence in England* (1992)¹⁷ appeared too late for Zomchick to take into account. While it contains relatively little on the eighteenth-century novel—only a long chapter partly on *Tom Jones* with sections entitled “False Testimony about Jones” and “Fielding’s Management of the Evidence”—it works up to it through Burke and Bentham and away from it by looking at Maurice Morgann on the character of Falstaff. More to the point, the model developed would move, like Zomchick’s, from punishment (John Bender’s model, the penitentiary) to trial.¹⁸ The Fielding chapter is excellent, but nothing quite equals Welsh’s earlier discovery of a prosecutor in court who employed Robinson Crusoe’s discovery of a man’s footprint as an example of the legitimate use of circumstantial evidence in his attempt to convict Lizzie Borden. Welsh’s central concern brilliantly links fiction and the legal establishment of “fact.” In 1948 Mark Schorer spoke of “what we call Defoe’s method of circumstantial realism,”¹⁹ and Ian Watt made a number of analogies between realism and the law. Welsh gives us a tightly focused, deftly historicized, and precise way to speak of “novels of circumstance,” which typically establish “representations of the facts against the protagonists” before “a fuller representation exonerates them” (p. 48).

17 Alexander Welsh, *Strong Representations: Narrative and Circumstantial Evidence in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

18 See Alexander Welsh’s review of John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1988), 373–78.

19 Mark Schorer, “Technique as Discovery,” *The World We Imagine* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), p. 6.

In *The Boundaries of Fiction: History and the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* (1996),²⁰ Everett Zimmerman explicitly prefers the model of the history, that is, the “information management” of historian and historiographer, to the legal model put forward by Welsh. Zimmerman has strong grounds for his model, both in the actual titles of novels (*The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*) and in the response of such critics as Hugh Blair, who treated novels as “Fictitious History” in 1762. Zimmerman and Welsh share a good deal, including an awareness of how the central discourses that concern them secularize culture. Zimmerman foregrounds the new sceptical historiography of Hume and others, which rejects providentialists such as Bossuet. Leo Braudy had made Fielding rub shoulders with Gibbon and Hume three decades ago,²¹ but this book is not so much interested in juxtaposing, as he did, the narratives of novelists and historians. Zimmerman places historiographical thinking in the larger framework of Ancients and Moderns (with a debt here to Joseph Levine),²² and notes that the novel is on the Moderns’ side. His shrewd chapter on Swift and Richardson (rather than the more familiar Defoe as Swift’s opponent) highlights Zimmerman’s battle of the books. Originally this book was to be titled “*Historical Faith*,” a phrase drawn from a letter of Richardson. Zimmerman recognizes himself as working within the paradigm of empirical epistemology, but challengingly defines the novel as “the romance as it appears in an empiricist moment” (p. 71). With attention to Mackenzie, Sterne, Godwin, and Scott, as well as the Watt canon, he finds his “center of gravity” in “the already constituted novel of midcentury” (p. 74). In doing so he differentiates himself from McKeon’s concern for origins and Bender’s for the consequences of the novel (a logical outgrowth of the idea that it is a cultural instrument). This is a thoughtful and mature account of the novel that should not be overlooked.

In “The Heirs of Ian Watt,” I observed that Warner had dubbed McKeon’s *Origins of the English Novel* “Das Novel.” But James Thompson’s *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel*

20 Everett Zimmerman, *The Boundaries of Fiction: History and the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). See also Robert Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), which focuses on Defoe with a chapter devoted to Nashe, Deloney, Behn, and Manley, and a number of others to history and historiography.

21 Leo Braudy, *Narrative Form in History and Fiction: Hume, Fielding, Gibbon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

22 Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

(1996)²³ is the better candidate in some ways. In addition to his frequent drawing on Marx, the pages are full of quotations from Althusser, Eagleton, Jameson, Williams, Mouffe, and Laclau, among others. This is a classic Marxist study, tightly focused on money (coins, banknotes, bills of exchange), which is at the heart of the “model” of its title. It is exactly what it says, not a model of the novel, but a way to epitomize what novels value in economic terms. Thompson is valuable for his introductory considerations of what models are as knowledge and the implications of choosing them as ways of knowing. Although he is explicitly aware of the novel as instrumental, I think the project commits him from time to time to a reflection model of the novel that he would not comfortably accept. A concern with the “novel’s cultural work” (Thompson’s phrase, but equivalents pepper these books and can be found during the last decade in McKeon and Armstrong, among others) is central to his inquiry. “Fielding and Property” provides a brief account that begins freshly with *Tom Jones* as the “history of a number of lost objects”—including Tom, his father, “wives, daughters, a muff and several banknotes” (p. 132). The focus on the return of money and other objects to their rightful owners reveals Fielding’s anxieties about the instability of money. Raymond Williams gave us the key to such a reading in the *The Country and the City*: “The plot of *Tom Jones* is based on the desire to link by marriage the two largest estates in Somersetshire: the proposed marriage of Sophia Western to Blifil is conceived for this end; her marriage to Tom Jones, when he is eventually revealed as Allworthy’s true heir, achieves what had formerly, for personal reasons, been rejected.”²⁴ Thompson’s claim that from “a Lukácsian point of view ... the true protagonist of *Tom Jones* is Paradise Hall” (p. 155) replicates Williams’s clear-eyed observation. Thompson argues shrewdly that the “monetary subplots in *Tom Jones* bespeak a conservative drive to stabilize cash and paper credit, to represent and contain currency within traditional patterns of property and possession, a desire which is determined by a specific stage in the development of money” (p. 133). Perhaps Charles Johnston’s *Chrysal; or The Adventures of a Guinea* (1760) should have made more than a cameo appearance here. One central theme of Thompson and Gallagher, as well as a number of current writers, is conveyed by the subtitle of Catherine Ingrassia’s *Authorship, Commerce, and*

23 James Thompson, *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996). For a close-grained, intelligent account of money that is not concerned with models or theory, see Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women’s Fiction in England, 1790–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

24 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 61.

Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit (1998), a text that sharply brings into conjunction writing and economics.

It is surprising that a book such as Thompson's was so long in coming. One can look back to Schorer, who called attention to the dead metaphors embedding "one consistent set of values" in the novels of Jane Austen and listed money (with nearly three dozen terms) among his five controlling categories.²⁵ The structuralist project with its focus on structures of exchange going back to those of Marcel Mauss, the teacher of Lévi-Strauss, produced at its best subtle and complex readings devoted to the economics of individual literary works, as in Jacques Ehrmann.²⁶ In this way the whole action of giving and owing comes into play. (Gallagher notes the paradoxes arising from a language of exchange.) There are distinct gains from Thompson's limiting focus, including a more clear-cut differentiation of the ideologies of the novelists considered. A fuller attention to structures of exchange within these novels would repay the effort (to put it in his own coin).

Thompson's chapter "Fanny Burney and Debt" suffers only from being written in the shadow of Catherine Gallagher's chapter "Nobody's Debt: Frances Burney's Universal Obligation," which covers some of the same territory. His move to Burney and Austen is intended to elucidate the point made earlier that "the issues under discussion—money, values, subjectivity—are implicitly and explicitly gendered" (p. 156). And following Nancy Armstrong's lead on separate spheres, he deals with debt and inheritance as the domestic residue of the social world. He argues effectively that "in the domestic novel, debt is transcoded from financial to emotional discourse" (p. 159), and the lesson is control of the emotions for women as it is of finances for men (p. 167). Part of the payoff here is that Thompson is able to take issue with one currently dominant model of the novel: in *Camilla* and Burney's novels more generally, novels "supposedly constructed out of courtesy literature's obsession with the finer points of female decorum, indiscretion is far and away most often financial" (p. 164).

The move to gender distinctions is typical of the books considered here, which are often wary of drawing conclusions solely on the basis of the representations of male authors. Those devoted solely to women novelists consciously draw conclusions about women and the novel. Those about male novelists tend to draw conclusions about the novel as a whole. Homer

25 "Emma" in *The World We Imagine*, p. 62. The essay first appeared in 1959.

26 Jacques Ehrmann, "Structures of Exchange in *Cinna*," *Yale French Studies* 36–37 (1966), 169–99.

Brown's book, *Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott* (1997),²⁷ is one of the relatively few that devotes all of its readings to canonical males (Zomchick's and Zimmerman's are others, though they focus on a number of female central characters). A nineteenth-century woman critic plays a central role in the story of the novel that unfolds. And the canon itself is one of his subjects.

Institutions, long-awaited, original, and influential, provides the most searching account of the idea (or more properly ideas) of institution. It has had an underground reputation, and parts have seen print in important earlier books on the novel (Nancy Armstrong's introduction to *Desire and Domestic Fiction*,²⁸ for example). Brown is concerned, like a number of these scholars, to find an alternative to genre as a way of discussing the novel. His readings are greatly influenced by Derrida and deconstruction. The book as a whole can be taken as providing a history of Brown's engagement with the novel from the time of "The Displaced Self in the Novels of Daniel Defoe" (1971)²⁹ to his very recent work on Scott and his refinement and extension of what he means by institutions. But it is not a collection of separate pieces, though some parts of the Defoe analysis sit uneasily with the more recent work.

Brown's essay is one of the best on Defoe that we possess, and his "Tom Jones: The 'Bastard of History'" (chap. 3 of *Institutions*) is at the heart of a number of reconsiderations of that novel. For many years he has been lodging inconvenient observations in our critical consciousnesses: how Tom Jones ends up as the heir of Squire Allworthy when as a bastard he would be legally disqualified from such an inheritance is a case in point. "Sir Walter Scott and the Institution of History" focuses on Scott's rereading of Fielding as his predecessor (not in the manner of Harold Bloom, however). Although no chapter deals with a woman novelist, his work-in-progress on Jane Austen inflects the book. In a related essay that serves as prologue to an engaging collection of multi-cultural essays on the novel, Brown also considered "Why the Story of the Origin of the (English) Novel is an American Romance (If Not the Great American Novel)," an account mainly of mid-twentieth-century American theorizing.³⁰

27 Homer Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

28 Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 38.

29 Homer Brown, "The Displaced Self in the Novels of Daniel Defoe," *ELH* 38 (1971), 562–90.

30 Deidre Lynch and William Beatty Warner, eds, *Cultural Institutions of the Novel* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 11–43.

The most provocative idea in the book is that the institution of the English novel (that is, the eighteenth-century English novel) is a nineteenth-century invention, canonized by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Walter Scott, and John Dunlop, though Brown recognizes that canonization is a retrospective activity. The canon of English fiction was of course developing and shifting throughout the eighteenth century. As an older scholarship established, there were over a hundred collections or anthologies of novels, and some of these, such as Harrison's *Novelist's Library* (1782–), were highly significant, though unlike later collections they were not always rationalized through prefaces.³¹ Harrison, for example, published both English and foreign novels (in translation), a mode that gave way to solely English collections. Also, although Brown is aware of what has been called “The Scottish Invention of English Literature,” neither Blair nor James Beattie figures in his institutions of the novel, nor for that matter does Clara Reeve, who wrote one of the few long treatises on the novel in the eighteenth century.³² Blair, for example, in opposition to the French achievement in the novel, asserts that “we are not without some performances which discover the strength of the British genius. No fiction in any language was ever better supported than the *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.”³³ Here in 1762 is a superlative evaluation of Defoe in the context of nationhood of precisely the sort that interests Brown (and a number of other current scholars) in the nineteenth century. The canon of the novel evolved throughout the century, though the early nineteenth-century views stuck more firmly.

Brown's notion of bastardy in *Tom Jones* is worth investigation. There is something sinister about the bastard (who inherits only a “bend sinister”). Of course, the notion of the bastard as ill-begotten and therefore unnatural, was established long before the eighteenth century. It is most familiar in its Shakespearean form, particularly in Edmund, Gloucester's sadistic son; in the scene when Blifil plays his trump card, representing Tom as wenching and fighting while Allworthy appears to be on his deathbed, perhaps there

31 John A. Clapp, “An Eighteenth-Century Attempt at a Critical View of the Novel: The *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans*,” *PMLA* 25 (1910), 60–96.

32 *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*, ed. Robert Crawford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Brown mentions Crawford's *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) in a note. Other significant books here are Franklin E. Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study, 1750–1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) and Joseph F. Bartolomeo, *A New Species of Criticism: Eighteenth-Century Discourse on the Novel* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994).

33 Hugh Blair, “Lecture XXXVII” (“Fictitious History”), *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), originally published in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Poetry* (1762). I quote the sixth American edition (Morristown, NJ: Peter A. Johnson, 1814), p. 420.

is a remembrance of such a figure. In *King Lear* the father is made to disown his true son at the bidding of the deceitful bastard. But here it is the nephew lawfully and naturally begotten (though conceived out of wedlock) who fools his uncle concerning the bastard. Allworthy is even duped into calling Tom a “monster.”

Brown quotes Blackstone’s definitions of “bastard,” drawn from the law, as “filius nullius” (son of no one) and “filius populi” (son of the people), and notes that they support “the common notion of Tom as novelized Everyman.” At the same time he is aware that the presentation of the bastard as “at once the son of no one and the son of everyone” is a paradox that “also makes him an appropriate emblem for Fielding’s text.” One could also extend Gallagher’s idea: Tom is “nobody’s son” and therefore Nobody himself, though he turns out to be Somebody. (Since Brown’s original essay appeared a good deal earlier than Gallagher’s work, one could even argue that the son of nobody as the subject of novel theory preceded nobody’s story—a suitably topsy-turvy genealogy for historians of the novel generally and Brown in particular.) The bastard’s status had changed, however, and that change came about with the breakdown of the vast system of correspondences that were operative in Shakespeare’s day and earlier, which would have insisted upon the unnaturalness of the bastard. Edmund’s bravado in *King Lear* is meant to be seen ironically (and even he savours some of the ironies), but the bravado of Richard Savage in “The Bastard” (1728) gives way to a recognition of the pathos of his situation that is meant to be taken sympathetically, a strong shift.

While Tom Jones is a bastard, as all of the unsympathetic characters in the book are quick to remind him (and their propensity to do so is one measure of their unsympathetic natures), the title reminds us that the book is the history of a foundling. The difference between Tom as foundling and Tom as bastard provides much of the dynamics. Johnson’s *Dictionary*, which was being composed during the years Fielding was writing *Tom Jones*, defines “foundling” as “a child exposed to chance; a child found without any parent or owner.” The point of the interplay between Tom as bastard and as foundling seems to be that Tom is the rightful heir because he has earned his knowledge through experience and has experienced the social extremes of high and low. If he was brought up in the family of gentry, it was always with an awareness, hidden by the kind Allworthy but pushed at him by Blifil and his tutors, that he was not of the family. And as a bastard his position is anomalous. He is not, as in the case of Humphry Clinker, even the son of the man who would treat him as his heir. In so far as we have a social symbol, it seems to complicate McKeon’s idea of Fielding’s “conservative” ideology, for it does not simply favour the status

quo. The political implications are that the true heirs to the throne, the Stuarts, are not worthy of reigning. These at least seem to be Fielding's revolutionary principles.

Brown's American Romance argument is uncontroversial compared with Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse's argument about the American source of the English novel in *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (1992),³⁴ perhaps the most provocative among intelligent reconfigurings of the origins of the novel and the one most likely to have led to scepticism at ASECS. Their essay "The American Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Novel," now chapter 8 in the book ("Why Categories Thrive"), is a version of what that ASECS audience heard.³⁵ Briefly put, it sets up *Pamela*, given priority in Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (which, like this one, stalks the modern subject), as "the first domestic novel," and then discovers an unobserved ur-Pamela in autobiography, more specifically in captivity narrative. Like Armstrong's last book, this is concerned to give better answers to questions originally put forth by Ian Watt: "Why [should] an assault on the body of a common Englishwoman ... carry such a political and emotional charge"; why should Richardson make his "entry into the history of literature by a work which gave a more detailed account of a single intrigue than had ever been produced before?" (pp. 201, 262). The first is their recasting of Watt; the second is a direct quotation. The answer to the former question is that the genre of the captivity narrative, identified most strongly with that of Mary Rowlandson (1682, first in America, then England), combined "a modern authorial consciousness with early modern Protestant hagiography" to produce such a female subject in Richardson's first novel. The link is accomplished through a sleight of hand that has something in common with a magician's forcing technique: the earliest (male) captivity narratives of the sixteenth century "never became an important genre in and of themselves," the ones that count are those with "the possibility of going native." "Mary Rowlandson anticipated Crusoe in representing the English in the New World as an abducted body"; "the bodies so endangered were usually—though not always—female bodies"; "the exemplary captive existed for the early eighteenth-century reader as a kind of epistolary heroine, whose ability to read and write ... distinguished her from her Indian captors." "The reader of captivity narratives

34 Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

35 Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, "The American Origins of the English Novel," *American Literary History* 4 (1992), 386–410.

was always aware of the story that would have to be told were the captive to lose her English character, just as later readers were aware of the pornographic narrative that would at once develop were Pamela to let her guard down and fall prey to Mr. B.'s seduction" (pp. 203–4). The move from assertions of identity to the tortured analogy suggests what is hidden. Mary Rowlandson at the end of her narrative makes clear the distance between Pamela's plight and hers: "not one of [the Indians] ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action."³⁶ Richardson's subject is the very reverse of this situation. The Armstrong and Tennesse account of captivity narratives is compelling in its own right and the claim to generic influence, while certainly less palpable than that put forward by Warner, should not be dismissed. The general role of spiritual autobiography as a context for Richardson's novel has long been recognized. I would also place both Rowlandson and *Pamela* in the category of complaint, which has epistolary roots as far back as Ovid's *Heroides*.

Warner, the last of the ASECS triumvirate, is well aware of the work of Gallagher and Brown. He wittily and accurately shifts registers on Watt in the subtitle of his *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (1998).³⁷ Instead of a metaphoric rise, he demonstrates the strategic raising of the tone of the novel in response to its low estate and the attacks upon it, by Defoe, Fielding, and Richardson—the Watt canon. He precedes this, however, by redefining and revaluing the amorous novels of Behn, Manley, and Haywood. In doing so, he participates in one of the most noticeable developments of recent years, the assertion of value in and celebration of women's fictions, though at the same time he moves away from "heroic" authorship (p. xiii). He also performs a needed reconciliation of separate male and female canons. The males following in their wake (especially Defoe and Richardson) do not ignore or reject them, as most tend to think, but rewrite or overwrite them. The strongest case he puts forward is Richardson's *Pamela*, but his account of Defoe's *Roxana* helps to clinch the general position. Warner's own book may be taken as a rewriting of Ian Watt, a fact of which he is cognizant, and he has assimilated the work of Hunter, Gallagher, and Brown, as well as others whose books appeared earlier. His theses include the necessity of perceiving the novel as "a subset of the cultural history of print entertainments" (p. xi).

36 Mary Rowlandson, *A True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (London, 1682), p. 32.

37 William Beatty Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

This is a very clever book—too clever by half, the English might say—and comes equipped with a warning that “The full alternative story of the novel offered in *Licensing Entertainment* can only be grasped if this study is read in its entirety” (p. xv). I have so read it, and will also attest that it is full of shrewd perceptions that may or may not relate directly to the thesis, and that his playfully conveyed themes, such as the “Englishing of the novel,” are well worth the attention he requires. I will also attest to his love of anachronistic (or perhaps teleological) terminology: the “*Pamela* Media Event,” the “media virus” of novel-reading, the four canonized male authors as the “‘dream team’ of eighteenth-century fiction,” Roxana is like a “print-media junkie.” The book is full of “feed-back loops,” “ad campaigns,” “coming attractions,” and “twentieth-century public relations.” His aim is to make us see the books about which he speaks as at the origins of modern technology and marketing. In Richetti’s phrase, these novels are “entertainment machines.” Warner no longer believes that the “cultural elevation of selected novels” led to their cultural “hegemony” (p. 290n), but the nature of the mid-century consolidation is worthy of a quick look.

McKeon has claimed that the novel as we now know it derives from the contestation of progressive and conservative ideologies.³⁸ To oversimplify, Richardson and Fielding—in the two competing tellings of *Pamela* (counting the double-barrelled response of *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* as one) and then a similar contestation between *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*—initiated the novel as we know it. To take the last two, for example, we can transpose (to use the chess term) *Tom Jones* into *Clarissa* by putting Sophia at the centre of the novel instead of Tom: A young girl in her late teens finds that her wealthy father, whose favourite she has been, desires her marriage to a neighbour as a means of combining their contiguous estates and bringing more wealth into the family. She finds the chosen man repulsive morally and sexually, and, having been confined by her adamant father, escapes from his house in order to meet the man in whom she is strongly interested, despite his reputation as a rake.

I would argue, taking McKeon’s position a step farther, that the English novel achieved a formal resolution not when Swift and Defoe or Richardson and Fielding contested the ideology of the story the novel was telling, but when Eliza Haywood capitulated to the Richardson-Fielding definition of a novel in 1751 with *Betsy Thoughtless* (something Warner should notice). This was the abandonment of feminine fiction, “seductive forms” in Ros Ballaster’s formulation, that maintained its vitality for nearly three-quarters

38 Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

of a century. Shortly before *Betsy Thoughtless*, John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Lady of Pleasure* (1749) was threatened with severe punishment, and English pornography never quite repeated his example in the eighteenth century. Pornography is a significant part of this story, for if Peter Brooks is right in *Body Works: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (1993), that the body is the synecdoche for privacy, which is central to the novel, I would add that the private parts are the synecdoche of the body.³⁹

Some of Warner's claims about the later eighteenth century also need qualification. In noting that Horace Walpole says that *The Castle of Otranto* can only be taken by the modern audience as "entertainment," he misses a complication. What Walpole claims in his preface is that the modern reading audience must take as entertainment what the putative original audience took seriously, and this rift between an audience responding to the work in the "medieval" period and a contemporary audience which is encouraged to respond in a totally different and amused way demonstrates that "camp" has been a part of the Gothic novel from its inception. They may not have had the term in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but they displayed an awareness of the effects. As John Dunlop observes in *The History of Fiction*, "It has been much doubted, whether the *Castle of Otranto* was seriously or comically intended."⁴⁰ Warner's scholarship is generally very good, though unfortunately he seems unaware of that important early book for his subject, John Tinnon Taylor's *Early Opposition to the English Novel: 1760–1830*,⁴¹ especially since he appropriately pays a great deal of attention to this opposition. He may have ignored it because he stops, like Watt and McKeon, at mid-century. These are minor matters, however. This is a corrective to Watt of the first importance.

In conclusion, I return to Siskin's original, contrarian *The Work of Writing*, which focuses in only a few of its chapters on what he calls "novelism ... the now habitual subordination of writing to the novel" (p. 173). He points to the paradox that the rise in the number of novels published per year does not occur until the last decades of the eighteenth century, the years when the novel is frequently written off as a form. While my decision not to pursue subgenres keeps me from talking about models of the

39 Peter Brooks, *Body Works: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Brooks is intelligently working the veins of Ian Watt's model—privacy and individualism—in a contemporary idiom, but he focuses largely on post-eighteenth-century writing.

40 John Dunlop, *The History of Fiction* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1814), 3:382.

41 John Tinnon Taylor, *Early Opposition to the English Novel: 1760–1830* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1943).

novel of sensibility and the Gothic, the number of books devoted to the novelists of the late eighteenth century in recent years has burgeoned.⁴² Like Brown and Warner, Siskin is wary of genre and thinks of “novelism” rather as a “discursive space,” though he recognizes that novelism is not the novel. His five bulleted arguments would be worth comparing with Hunter’s list to see how far such thinking moves us from a more traditional account of the novel. To some extent this is the view from the nineteenth century, not that of Scott and Barbauld, as with Brown, but that of a scholar of Romanticism.

I think it also important to notice, given popular misconceptions and some rearguard actions in the academy, that in general the best books are well written, theoretically aware, and often focused on the political implications of the novel. By and large these newer books do not concern themselves with “quality” except as market concept or strategy, and a number of the writers would be content to call themselves, like Deidre Lynch, cultural historians. Her coeditor of *Cultural Institutions of the Novel*, Warner, calls his preface to *Licensing Entertainment* “From a Literary to a Cultural History of the Early Novel.” One may suspect that the love that dare not speak its name in recent times is the love of literature. Richetti has a very funny and sly account of his own accommodation of his earlier work to our current moment in his new introduction (1992) to his *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700–1739* (1969).⁴³ A goodly number of us today are finding ourselves the Messieurs and Mesdames Jourdain of Cultural Studies.

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42 To take sensibility alone, recent books include Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Barbara M. Benedict, *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction, 1745–1800* (New York: AMS Press, 1994); Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender, and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Nicola Watson’s *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790–1825: Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) looks towards the nineteenth century. Gay Studies pays closer attention to fiction after mid-century. Characteristic is George E. Haggerty’s intention to show “the ways in which these novels resist heteronormative values in general and articulate various forms of female-female desire.” *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1998), p. 2. His *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) devotes chapters to Walpole and Beckford. See also Lisa Moore, *Dangerous Intimacies: Toward a Sapphic History of the British Novel* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997). *Millenium Hall* is the text common to both books on the novel, and Austen also appears in both.

43 “Introduction: Twenty Years On,” *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700–1739* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. xi–xxix. Richetti’s book, *The English Novel in History 1700–1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), focuses on social change and social representation.