

Selfhood and Identity Formation
in Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* and
Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*

by

Heather Wilson

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The eighteenth century brought with it an altered general outlook and increased public attention to the personal, individual experience, accompanied by an incurred necessity to question tradition. This provided the perfect backdrop for the development of a new genre in literature, the novel. Writers experimented with philosophical theories of the self, giving these theories relevance through the intimate experiences of fictional characters.

Novels were intended as a form of leisurely entertainment, but with the power to influence moral or ethical improvement. They highlighted questions of virtue but simultaneously illustrated that public opinion controlled perceptions of virtue. This social critique becomes emphasized in novels throughout the eighteenth century. As an issue that was more traditionally definable through the female experience, many novelists focused on female central characters to engage with ideas about proper behaviour and personal improvement. Such questions were challenged by skepticism, and social concerns and traditional values were examined and critiqued alongside, or within, examples of how to better oneself.

Daniel Defoe and Eliza Haywood brought public attention to the cultural concern with acceptable public behaviour and raised questions about the strictly defined standards for conduct that differentiated a public from a private self. They emphasize that independent conceptions of oneself cannot be isolated from one's links to society. Defoe and Haywood engaged with contemporary philosophical theories of the self while critiquing tradition and social expectation to relate a more encompassing understanding of the self with its multitude of influences.

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I would like to thank my academic advisor, Dr. Pamela Perkins for her patience and invaluable guidance. Her wealth of knowledge and academic talents make her as much a role model as a mentor.

I would also like to thank my Mom, who lets me be quiet without taking offense.

For Dad,

I miss you every single day.

I continue to be guided by your love
and the example of your character.

For my Mom,

whose unfaltering belief in me
continues to always see me through.

... with much love

and appreciation

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Introduction

from the Renaissance onwards, there was a growing tendency for individual experience to replace collective tradition as the ultimate arbiter of reality; and this transition would seem to constitute an important part of the general cultural background of the rise of the novel (Watt 14-15).

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the public, as a mass, was increasingly interested in the private, intimate experiences of the individual. Ian Watt, in *The Rise of the Novel*, describes a general change in outlook from “objective, social, and public” to “subjective, individualist, and private” (199). This tendency to grant significance to the subjective account provides the perfect foundation for the growth of fiction and, consequently, the new genre of the novel not only came into being, but became immensely popular. The novel was both built on and inspired the narrative aspects of “characterization and the presentation of background,” as pertaining to fictional lives (Watt 19). Writers of novels exposed the private, subjective sentiments tied to all experiences, public and private, as they affected the individual, and thereby granted a new way of understanding one’s culture and society as well as one’s own role in it. We learn about our world from a point of view other than our own when we read how others interact with society. Novels became windows through which readers could observe how others behaved in various social circumstances, but even more importantly, narratives focused on the private consequences of social interactions, as internalized by the central character. Personal motivations behind actions, psychological pressures to behave in specific ways, and emotional consequences to all actions, including those that an individual decides to restrain, offered a now proverbial, but then conceptually new “window to the soul” of the central character. In this intimate knowledge of another’s

subjective experiences, readers might find something recognizable: a particular emotional response, a personal motivation, or an underlying internal struggle, and through responding on some level to this, a reader could gain self-awareness.

As many critics including Jerrold Seigel, Ian Watt, and Micheal McKeon, have argued, a new awareness of the “self” was being formulated at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Writers of fiction and philosophers alike began to explore private, individual experience, bringing the private into the public. The line dividing the two spheres was being transgressed, and thereby blurred, through the medium of publication. This thesis will explore some representations of the intersection of public and private, specifically in two popular and influential eighteenth-century novels which concern themselves with intimate, private details of a central character’s life. Daniel Defoe’s *Roxana* (1724) and Eliza Haywood’s *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) both explore the effects of these endless intersections between public and private on the life of an individual. Although separated by a quarter of a century, these novels each demonstrate how the self becomes divided when the demands of the public and private spheres collide within the individual. Defoe and Haywood are two of the century’s most popular novelists and thus bringing them together makes sense in terms of literary history. They were also both career writers and thus wrote much more than just novels. Later in their respective careers, at similar ages in their own lives, Defoe (born 1660) and Haywood (likely born in or around 1693) both expressed significant interest in the formation of identity, and in what way social pressures to conform to specific, conventional expectations are internalized, particularly by young women. Both writers relied on fiction in and outside of novels to illustrate that self-reflection is necessary for self-formation.

A short chapter will be dedicated to Defoe's *The Family Instructor* (1715) and Haywood's *Female Spectator* (1744-1746) to demonstrate each writer's use of fiction in genres other than the novel to engage with their shared interest in feminine conduct, before moving into a chapter on each of the novels. Because the public sphere has usually been gendered as a male space, the intersections between public and private become particularly conflicted in the case of women. Thus novels focusing on a heroine as a central character allowed writers to examine ideas of the self in a more complex manner, exploring the self in all of its complexities.

Before moving into any detailed discussion of individual works, however, it is necessary to understand the atmosphere in which eighteenth-century writers developed their fiction. A very brief overview of the social climate will lead into a discussion of some of the great philosophical thinkers of the day and their theories of the self. Fiction developed out of the perceived need to work through these theories on an individual level, to instruct readers in self-awareness and self-formation. A brief discussion of readership will be included, as novels tended to appeal to a class of readers with interests different from those of the learned or scholarly audiences of the seventeenth century, and thus novelists had to branch out from traditional methods of writing and engage with contemporary social concerns to reach this audience.

The social world in the eighteenth century seemed to be directing individuals to explore their own subjectivity, thereby promoting a new awareness of the "self". The development of a new market economy, with an increasing urbanism that was driving more and more people to live in cities, was both ignited by and further inspired this new individualist attitude. This general attitude reflected the inward, individualist thinking

that Watt argues stems, in part, from Christianity. As Watt explains, modern Christianity is a “self-conscious kind of religion” (200) that relies on private reflection and inward consideration of one’s public and private actions. The importance of diaries and travel journals as a method of self-reflection in the seventeenth century grows out of this religious impulse (Hunter 303, Stauffer 29, McKeon *Origins* 118), but while J. Paul Hunter argues that diary writing and personal writing were commonplace among the literate in the seventeenth century, “by the early eighteenth century, this intimate and precise world of privacy began to shift into the public realm” (303). The experiences of private individuals were entering the public sphere through publication.

In addition to this shift in the type of writing being produced during the course of the seventeenth century, there were also important changes in the publishing industry, which expanded, making published works more accessible to the public and more affordable (McKeon *Secret History* 50-51). This allowed reading for pleasure and relaxation to become more commonplace by the eighteenth century (Watt 53). The trend towards reading travel journals and autobiographies during this period suggests that what people were demanding was an escape from their own daily lives that simultaneously helped them understand their world on a more intimate level. The novel developed out of the autobiography, maintaining much of its form, including individual inconsistencies and imperfections that mirror how real life unfolds, but, more fundamentally, focusing on the task of “telling the story, usually at least in part from the inside, of one person’s life” (Hunter 328). Hunter suggests “that the ‘lives’ of others could provide useful examples for contemporaries struggling with an increasingly complex, increasingly urban, increasingly encroaching reality” (Hunter 313). As he explains:

we may still not understand exactly how sympathy, or empathy, or identity work in art, but the eighteenth-century novel makes it possible – and necessary – to raise such issues because the protagonists are enough like us in social, economic, and psychological possibilities that all of us – whether members of the aristocracy, or gentility, or the intelligentsia, or people of trade, or the working class – can imagine facing those contexts and circumstances. (Hunter 329).

According to Hunter, novels prompt a more intimate understanding of the social world and illustrate the effect of that world upon the individual, thereby inviting readers to reflect upon their own private experiences. Such lessons give a sense that we have basic human sentiments and concerns in common with others and, by doing so, they help shape self-awareness.

But what is a “self”? The idea of self is a contested topic, even today. However, Jerrold Seigel, in *The Idea of the Self*, usefully explains that any term used to describe the idea of selfhood, including “self”, “subject”, “identity”, “person”, “simultaneously bear[s] passive and active forms” that signify “our natural sameness” to others along with the traits or qualities that we take to define our differences and the ways in which we think that we encompass those differences (Seigel 16). Following this reasoning, the self is a thing that can be described (both by others and by the individual), and is something capable of action; there is some definable constancy, and yet this does not bar the possibility of change. An individual conceives of his or her self both according to what makes him or her the same as others and by the qualities, desires, goals, and sentiments he or she interprets as personal and unique. Self-analytical or reflective tendencies increase self-awareness, but an inclusive conception of the self also requires us to consider how we understand ourselves in relation to the “group” and how we interact

with those group members. "Groups" are those identity and social categories relevant to us, among which gender, age, and social class are the most basic. However, group membership becomes problematic as a defining aspect of identity, since it depends on "objective, social, and public" considerations and thus works against ideas of the "subjective, individualist, and private". It removes difference and uniqueness in favour of sameness and compliance. This social aspect of identity creates problems not only in defining the concept of self, but also in forming an inclusive understanding of one's own self.

As the public generally became more concerned with the private, subjective experiences of the individual, concepts of the self began to be hotly argued out by the century's most important thinkers. Seigel reviews the theories of Locke, Mandeville, Hume, and Smith, showing how all of these philosophers struggled to develop theories of the self that could encapsulate the permanency of identity and yet allow for growth, change, and modulation. Seigel describes some of the differences in the theories introduced by each of these philosophers, but argues that "none regarded the self as independent of social relations or as wholly autonomous; on the contrary, each one in some manner or another [...] saw the relational dimension as essential to the construction of stable self-existence" (166-167). However, writers of fiction, who were translating these theories into realistic versions of private, individual experience in novels, created characters who desired to change how they were publicly perceived, by altering their appearance and their public behaviours, and thereby re-defining their group memberships. Thus, novelists created characters who, for better or worse, actively tried to change the passive component of the self, thereby revealing the conflicting nature of social and

independent determinants of identity.

In its most basic sense, the passive component of the self is determined by how others perceive the individual, while the active component is how that individual defines him/her self. Being self-aware means being sensible of one's own private thoughts, emotions, and bodily feelings, but it also requires being cognizant of the institutional and cultural or societal constructs governing and restricting individual expression and behaviour. Seigel explains that Locke, who developed his theories towards the end of the seventeenth century, determined that the self is grounded in nature, in biological sensations and in the continuity of feeling and consciousness, and is thus in great part, actively determined (107). According to Seigel, Locke understood that the deeds of individuals are subject to external moral judgment, which impels individuals to adjust their behaviour to fit social expectations, and that "individual acts of appropriation are justified only because humanity as a whole could not survive without them" (106). However, Seigel's summary of Locke's theories argues that Locke believed that "as society develops, relations with others, including constituted authorities, increasingly fix the obligations and limits of the self, but the original kernel of pre-social selfhood, at once natural and reflective, survives as the underlying basis of personal identity" (107). Locke perhaps granted a more powerful active component to the self than did other philosophers of this period. As the century progresses, social determinants become more an integral part of the definition of the self.

Locke theorized that social determinants factored into an individual's consciousness and sense of responsibility for his/her actions. In Seigel's words, Locke "regarded people as powerfully shaped by the world around them, but also as free agents

in some degree from both animal need and social determination, and thus capable of determining some of their thoughts and actions on their own” (89). Locke proposed that people are capable of moral reasoning powerful enough to overrule personal feelings or desires. Thus consciousness can overrule emotion. The social basis of this capability raises the question of how one weighs and determines “self to itself” compared with “self to others”. Locke’s bimodal theory seems, by definition, to describe a self divided. He assigns a consciousness which makes “every individual be ‘to himself that which it calls *self*’” (Seigel 95) while also being accountable for moral responsibility that makes every “individual answerable for his or her life before the proper authorities, human and divine” (Seigel 95). The novel seemed to take root as a genre in its capacity for character development which, it might reasonably be argued, was seeded by Locke’s theory of the divided self. Fictional characters were created as realistic representatives of individuals struggling to find a balance between being true to the self and being conscious of complying with the expectations of others. Locke theorized that we feel an inner sense of responsibility for our actions, which is what makes them our own and what adds up to our own conception of our personal identity (Seigel 102). His goal seems to have been to make people conscious of this responsibility, to instruct them how to examine and criticize their own beliefs and opinions, thereby helping them to use their reasoning better and, concurrently, making them more self-aware (Seigel 89). This too, might be said to be the goal of novels, achieved by instructing people through the example of others.

If the novel took root in the theories of Locke, it branched out in the disruptive social theories of Mandeville. Mandeville published “The Grumbling Hive” in 1705 and then printed an expanded version, “The Fable of the Bees,” in 1714, restating and

elaborating upon an argument he clearly felt strongly about. In fact, he continued to add to the fable and republished it yet again in 1723, then 1728. He believed, like Locke, that people have private passions and interests and saw individuals as capable of reasoning themselves out of acting upon personal desires, but he theorized that acting in opposition to the passions was being false to the self and was merely performing for the public eye. He concentrates on a conception of self that was strictly dependent on “its relations to other people, here and now, not to a distant and timeless God” (Seigel 119). Mandeville suggests that the varied passions and ambitions of society’s multifarious individuals are beneficial to society and thus individuals should not be forced into conformity. He posits that ambitions traditionally thought to be driven by greed and selfishness were actually responsible for moving society forward. His ultimate claim, clearly stated in the subtitle to his controversial “The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,” was simply that the private passions and vices of individuals manifested public benefits in economy and social progress. Vices, he claims, drive a man to commit acts to “gratify any of his appetites,” while he calls virtue a “performance,” since it is “contrary to the impulse of nature” and is acted through the conquest of individual passions (Mandeville 45). His ideas were harshly criticized, but his conceptions of the self granted more importance and power to individuality than did previous theories. However, Mandeville still presumed that society plays a large role in both determining and influencing the behaviour of individuals, due to the undeniable and unavoidable importance of social relations. Thus, even the individualist philosophy of Mandeville tacitly accepts that social pressures had more influence over the individual than private passions. His theories actually grant less of an active component to the self in forming identity than

Locke's.

Even so, to Mandeville, the passions underlie all thoughts and actions of the self, whether such passions be acted upon or restrained. Mandeville believed that reason could outweigh the passions, yet he contended that "we are ever pushing our reason which way soever we feel passion to draw it, and self-love pleads to all human creatures for their different views, still furnishing every individual with arguments to justify their inclinations" (Mandeville 161). Like Locke, despite their very different outlooks, Mandeville assumes a self divided between its own wishes, thoughts, and values, and what that individual understands and internalizes from his or her society's demands. The creative openings this theory provided for novelists depicting the divided self were plentiful. Writers of fiction began to explore the advantages and disadvantages to the individual of either acting upon or repressing private desires.

Novels could take certain liberties when it came to illustrating the divided self, since the characters portrayed were fictional. Novelists could exaggerate the effect of social demands on the individual and go to extremes in illustrating how "the pressures of commercial society required [individuals] to adopt the strategic poses of actors" in order to attempt to meet those demands (Hundert 78). Here again, the ideas of Mandeville are of interest, as he focuses on the avarice of the booming commercial economy, driven forward by those who acted upon their impulsive desires. As people gravitated towards the crowded, commercial cities, they became more conscious of how they appeared to others, and more anxious to appear fashionable and in a flattering light. Mandeville emphasizes the desire for fashionable dress, numerous servants, and equipages in "The Fable of the Bees," all to create the appearance of wealth and high social standing in the

eyes of others. The perceived need to obtain such things could outweigh moral reasoning, driving people to act in ways considered morally wrong. Novelists began to expand on the Mandevillian conception that supposed vices are not all evil. They created and developed characters in intimate detail, revealing the subjective motivations behind or the sentiments attached to their actions, and thereby illustrated that an individual's actions might be considered corrupt by a society quick to judge, but may not actually come from wicked intentions. In fact, according to many of the novelists of this period, an individual's actions are always subject to being misread.

However, the subjective account that novels provided merely emphasized the social demands on individuals to maintain an appearance of virtue and respectability. E.J. Hundert aligns Mandeville's theories with those of David Hume, showing that both philosophers interpreted reason as being in constant conflict with an individual's passions or desires, and concluding that "all actions may coherently be considered in terms of the divided personality's need to establish an outward appearance for the approval of others, while attempting to satisfy its hidden impulses" (Porter 79). Thus, the philosophers contemplating the self all seem to agree that the self is divided between subjective feelings (both physiological and emotional), and internalized pressures to mold oneself to fit an expected social image. An individual reflects and weighs which pole, society or personal, to favour in a given situation. The powers of reason are implemented to decide upon appropriate actions and thus demonstrate that the active component of the self leads to a capacity for change. Hume grappled with the problem that people are constantly changing and what this meant to a definition of identity. He hypothesized that "people have some kind of free will," but that, in Seigel's words,

the liberty humans possess cannot be an ability to act in ways that are free of external determination. Free acts are those that are done without coercion, but by people whose will has been formed in a world where necessity operates everywhere. Liberty can only mean '*a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will,*' that is, in accord with the particular choices that given individuals make at particular moments (Seigel 130).

Hume thus effectually blurred the line dividing independent conceptualizations of personal identity from societal expectations, making the first dependent on the other. He did not take away our powers of reasoning per se, but he did propose that we reason according to our perception of society's will and not our own. Hume's theories, written in the late 1730's, although they did not attract a lot of attention until they were republished later in the century, suggest that as the century progressed, social constraints on behaviour were playing a more important part in the formulation of theories of identity.

Writers of fiction continued to elaborate on these contemporary theories of the self, turning theoretical concepts into subjective, albeit fictional, accounts of how individuals coped with the internal struggles to balance the competing demands of the public and private factors shaping identity. As the private pressures of being a member of public society became more of a hot topic, writers increasingly used their fiction as a medium for their own social commentary. Novels contributed to a public debate about the nature of subjectivity and about possible social pitfalls, such as favouring the appearance of virtue over actual virtue. One simply had to appear to adhere to social conventions and expectations in order to gain social approval and secure certain social memberships. By reading the subjective account of how an individual copes with the expectations to conform to the specific social standards of his or her group, it becomes

increasingly obvious how the individual is “subject” to, or subservient to and dependent on, society, its traditions, and cultural institutions. Readers witnessed individuals being privately tormented by worries about how others would interpret their behaviour. As Helene Moglen argues in *The Trauma of Gender*, as “subject and object simultaneously, the socially self-possessed individual was psychologically riven” between “the self that scrutinized and the self that was watched” (5). Reading inspired introspection and reflection, which made individuals more aware of their own interests, aims, and views, but in achieving this in part through comparison with others, individuals also became more cognizant of how they, in turn, would be perceived by those others. John Richetti argues that “eighteenth-century novelists render various sorts of intersections and infiltrations between [self and society], mutually defining relationships that dramatize an inevitable interdependence or even an inseparability between [them] that tends to nullify the distinction” (124). The novel exemplifies the collaborative *and* conflicting nature of the relationship between self and society. Rather than simply “nullify[ing] the distinction” between self and society, the eighteenth-century novel also emphasizes how an individual’s private beliefs, motivations, and desires can be in conflict with the conventional demands of society. As personal conceptions of self developed, so did comprehension of how society demanded specific behaviours that might clash with individual desires.

This clash could cause particular problems for women, as one can see by turning to the work of Dror Warhman, who argues that identity consists of two interrelated components: what makes us identifiable in certain social groupings, and what marks our individuality (xii). Gender and class represent the two most important groupings in the

eighteenth century: at that time, one was born into certain gender and class categories and thus automatically expected to conform to roles defined by those categories. Moglen points to a cultural system of acceptable and expected behaviour based on social constructs of gender, closely affiliated with class, that “helped to determine which aspects of the self would flourish and which would be suppressed. How closely one followed the “rules” could determine how one was accepted in one’s social groupings, yet this could profoundly obscure one’s conception of the self, since obedience or conformity came at the price of suppressing one’s individuality. As eighteenth-century readers became more aware of themselves, they became more attuned to how they were expected to behave, what sentiments were acceptable to display in public, what types of social relations were permissible. Gender and class play key roles in defining permissible social behaviour.

Were readers searching what they read for individuals who were models in harmony with the gender and class expectations of their society, or did readers desire examples of individuality, representing their own inner conflicts between what they privately felt and how they were supposed to behave in public? To attempt to answer this question we need to investigate who were the main readers of novels. As already noted, during the seventeenth century, the publishing industry expanded, making books more affordable and thus more accessible to a wider public (McKeon, *Secret History* 50-51). Thus increasing numbers of families in classes beneath the aristocracy would have books in their homes. The novel was reaching a far wider audience than other genres and was attracting a more socially diverse readership. The eighteenth century also saw the development of a new market economy, with an increasing urbanism. Individuals who dared to want more for themselves left their rural homes and their families to better their

own lives (Hunter 76-79). Literacy not only allowed for greater career opportunities but also made making one's way in an urban environment easier. Thus those moving to the cities contributed to the evolving, expanding middle class and a new reading public.

Hunter argues that "those most likely to learn to read were those most likely to wish to change their circumstances, to be dissatisfied with their lots, to have ambition above the station they were born into" (76). He extends this argument to suggest that novel readers were the young who "desire[d] to migrate to places associated with progress" and who "ignored classical truths and traditional values, trusting modernity, innovation, and subjectivity over received formulas and conclusions" (77). Hunter maintains that "the single largest age group of novel readers" (79) were men and women under the age of twenty-five. People in this age group are often making significant choices, particularly concerning marriage and career, that will shape the direction life will take. Novelists appealed to this market of readers, Hunter argues, by "choosing plots, characters, and situations that feature choices of life and the consequences of such choices" (79). In order to be current and to reach the forward-moving audience, authors approached their writing in a manner similar to how their readers were approaching life. Writers and readers alike branched out in new directions and trusted subjectivity as the "ultimate arbiter of reality". Hunter points out the importance of the novel's portrayal of "real-life" issues, which not only draw readers to novels, but also instigate "questions about how the world works and how other people make the structural decisions that face us all" (79). As readers critiqued the actions and motivations of the characters they read about, they became more aware of their own behaviour, what moved them, and what they valued as important, morally, ethically, and personally.

Novels built stories around individual lives and moved the story forward through the revelation of intimate details about those imagined lives. Readers were invited to “know” the characters they read about. The eighteenth-century novel engaged with moral formation of the self by providing more background to actions, as perceived by the individual in question. Reading thus provided a window on society and interpersonal relations, one that offered a voyeuristic view of private affairs. Yet at the same time as this window offered comprehensive views of others, it simultaneously reflected the reader’s sense of self, as both McKeon and Hunter suggest. Hunter argues that the novel addressed issues of privacy “in two ways: by exploring the interpretive mind bent on sorting human experience, and by seeking a didactic content for readers willing to look into their hearts and read” (Hunter 304). The moral lessons which the reader observes the character learn are presumably absorbed by the audience, stirring reflection. Seigel adds that humans are naturally reflective because

they are simultaneously corporeal and relational. Since they are both they can never be wholly one or the other; they must be able to take a certain distance from each... Reflectivity allows humans to address and in some degree deal with the tensions or conflicts between what biology demands and what social and cultural existence imposes or allows (17).

Thus we are taken back to Locke’s theories, which describe the individual weighing how to act, either upon individual, subjective feelings or desires, or by answering to what one feels responsible for presenting.

Examining the conscious decisions of fictional individuals and witnessing how their choices affect their own lives and the lives of others became the modern way of interpreting the world. Hunter discusses “the novel’s tendency to try to get all of life by poking into the crevices and letting the nooks and crannies pop open to view” (Hunter

39). Novels were now revealing a version of the private, subjective experience and granting a new way of understanding one's culture and society as well as one's own role in it. Deidre Shauna Lynch, in her study of character development in *The Economy of Character*, argues that the novel realized its generic and literary potential when "novelists figured out that what their genre did best was mirror subjectivity" (28). She suggests that as characters became more knowable, readers' ways of knowing culture was altered (27). McKeon contends that the novel "registers a cultural crisis in attitudes toward how the external social order is related to the internal, moral state of its members" (McKeon, *Origins* 20). External crisis could be reflected more readily as internal disorder in female characters than in males, since the common stereotypical perception of women at this time was as emotional, flighty individuals. Female characters provided a basic canvas, in some ways, for the creative artistry of fiction. The status of women depended upon men since either their fathers or their husbands determined their financial and social status, which in turn determined the standards for their behaviour. McKeon notes that "female publicness is obviated by these broad but explicit guidelines concerning women's participation in the public sphere" (McKeon, *Secret History* 73). Perhaps because the identity of women was so shaped by their gender and their circumstances, novelists began to focus on the female protagonist, and illustrate individuality by describing her personal desires, her private sentiments, and even her ambitions. Novelists developed female characters by revealing their realistic, subjective natures in the private sphere, illustrating how the pressures of the public sphere become internalized as a source of conflict in an individual's conception of identity. And yet, as McKeon notes, the guidelines for female public behaviour rely so much on mindless conformity for females, that the didactic goal

of fiction was to instruct readers how to conduct themselves more appropriately by portraying characters who ultimately learned from their mistakes and eventually determined a better, more suitable, course of action through their own powers of reasoning.

Although the final message of many early novels may be that one should follow the proscriptive guidelines of tradition, the methods of revealing this message could be decidedly innovative and progressive. By focusing on a young woman's independent reasoning, arising from and shaped by her own self-knowledge, novelists implied that women were capable of making independent choices that gave them a degree of self-determination. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy argues that "the novel was an important voice for the aspirations of women because it took them seriously, refusing to see them as totally subsumed in roles which made them appendages to men" (40). She asserts that novels with a woman as a central character demonstrated a concern for the "well-being of women as individuals [and] encouraged real women to consider their own lives as worthy of serious consideration and themselves as deserving of real choices" (Brophy 40). Jane Spencer adds that

however much the basic fable of the reformed heroine encouraged a message of conformity to existing patriarchal society, the working-out of her story required a concentration on female moral progress; an investigation of the woman's mind; and the conclusion that women are capable of moral growth (Spencer 143).

Where conduct books and even periodicals for women had previously been relied upon to instruct females in proper behaviour, novels now illustrated that women are capable of instructing themselves; that, given time and opportunity to privately reflect, a woman will come to a properly moral conclusion and alter her ways as necessary. Although the end

product may be the same -- that is, a woman who conforms to conventions and what is expected of her -- novels granted more agency to female characters in the process of reaching that goal.

Daniel Defoe and Eliza Haywood investigate how women's mind are shaped by social challenges and demonstrate, through their characters, possibilities for moral growth through "mistakes." Defoe, in *Roxana*, and Haywood, in *Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, challenge traditional fictional practice with female characters who recklessly ignore the explicit guidelines that govern women's public behaviour. Even so, the heroines of these novels are by no means free in their actions, and these undeniable social constraints complicate the outcome for each. The heroine of each novel is memorable for her individuality, yet even though each heroine is self-willed and self-aware, she is also increasingly aware of the expectations requiring her to conform to her expected role in society. Both Betsy and the female narrator of *Roxana* give vent to their passions and exhibit independent reasoning in determining their actions. Yet despite the proto-feminist attitudes they demonstrate, their reasoning also gives evidence of the powerful influence of social guidelines and prescriptions for acceptable behaviour. When they are at liberty to do so, both Betsy and the narrator of *Roxana* flout their society's mandates for how women of their class should behave, but ultimately they each realize that to live in their world, they must at least appear to comply with its traditions and expectations. Defoe and Haywood thus successfully illustrate the dilemmas faced by women torn between being true to themselves and being members of society.

Defoe and Haywood demonstrate through heroines that the self becomes divided because of its capacity for reflection and self-awareness. Both the narrator of *Roxana* and

Betsy struggle inwardly, since what they understand of themselves does not always meld with what they understand society's expectations are for them. The goal for both authors, it seems, is to make their self-aware heroines capable of reasoning on their own to alter their public actions so as to better fit the social expectations that they cannot escape.

Defoe's heroine narrates her history with a bleak awareness of the psychological costs of the choices she has made to her sense of identity. Her story is her reflections on her life. This intimate level of subjectivity illustrates the capacity that an individual has for moral reflection and self-awareness. However, as the narrator becomes increasingly obsessed with self-formation, it becomes clear to the reader that the self is only malleable to a point and that part of the self is unavoidably socially determined. Haywood also examines how much of the self is socially determined in *Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Like Defoe, Haywood illustrates, through her heroine, how not adhering to the conventional demands by society for suitable gender-related behaviour can be detrimental to an individual's perception of selfhood. However, the key difference is that Haywood does this with a character who manages, by good conduct or good fortune, to keep herself within the boundaries of acceptable social guidelines for her gender and class. Haywood focuses on a spirited young woman who resists complying with expectations, partly out of youthful obstinance, but also from a growing awareness that such conformity hampers the expression of individual identity.

Defoe's heroine's passions simply do not blend with the conventional role for women, and he is unable to imagine a scenario that could allow for women to adopt these new roles without destroying their overall sense of self. Haywood takes a gentler approach to finding progressive means for self-expression in her heroine. Her original

reviewers believed that she stuck to a traditional didactic approach in which the heroine underwent a positive reformation of manners. Although *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* ends with Betsy amending her manners and beliefs by her own self-reflection and *then* being rewarded with happiness, Haywood does manage to persuade her reader that Betsy maintains her individuality. Betsy never falls irrecoverably outside the boundaries for acceptable feminine behaviour, and thus she is able to unite her divided self through acknowledging and conceding to the need for social relations. The young Betsy struggles to not have to be a different person in public and in private. As she matures and her reflections start to fit more closely with conventional ideas of female morality, she alters her private, personal attitude to fit her public behaviour so that she is one in the same person publicly and privately. Despite some necessary compromises, she finds a balance that allows for a happy ending for her, whereas the narrator of *Roxana* effectively prohibits herself from reaching any similar balance or unification of the self. Both Defoe and Haywood depict a self-willed heroine who is conscious of her own desires and resolute in acting according to her own judgment. Since the heroine of each of these novels is self-aware, she appears to be an active agent “in a world available to rational comprehension and control” (Moglen 4). Both Betsy and the narrator of *Roxana* do, indeed, demonstrate the capacity to learn and reason and even modify their behaviour according to the socially instituted constructs governing public behaviour. However, their modified actions reveal the social constraints as being particularly confining to women, and thus illustrate an actual lack of agency for public behaviour. The pressures to conform to expectations, when internalized and interpreted as contrary to the individual’s desires, result in the divided self.

Witnessing the choices of others, whether fictional or not, and the results of those choices, educates readers in varieties of social behaviour and encourages more introspective and reasoned decisions. Defoe and Haywood explore in detail seemingly divergent “varieties of female subjectivity” in *Roxana* and *Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Both portray women as individuals with personal passions, desires, and strong intellectual powers. However, social expectations about suitable gender and class roles figure in the decisions these heroines make and ultimately determine whether she has overstepped the boundaries past public redemption, or can still maintain the social memberships necessary for public acceptance. Both Defoe and Haywood demonstrate alternative courses of actions that offer readers much variety to reflect on, but also invite readers to consider that options exist within both public and private behaviour for expressing individuality. As writers, Defoe and Haywood realized the potential of narrating a story with intimate private details of another's subjective experience, a style of narration that blurs the line dividing the public from the private and raises questions about the harmful effects of conforming to traditional definitions of class and gender. What is “novel” about the novel is the exposure of private lives in a public format that reached a wide-scale readership and did not just entertain, but instructed through example. By focusing on the individual or the subjective experience, the novel examined the ways in which social prohibitions come to be internalized as self-control and the ways that the self-aware individual, who is also desirous of fitting into society, increasingly becomes a self divided against itself.

Chapter One: Conduct book and periodical contribution to fiction of ideas of the self

The eighteenth-century novel focused on individual subjectivity and illustrated an individual's capacity for self-formation, but the concern with forming individuals to given social standards was longstanding. Conduct manuals were widely popular in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and, according to Ann Rosalind Jones, "appear to be based on [the] assumption [that] men and women can be *produced* ... proper instruction can fashion them into successful participants in new social settings and the etiquettes belonging to them" (41). The social framework of society, with its traditions and institutions, was prioritized over its people, who were considered malleable objects to be transformed to better fit the social standards (Jones 41). The eighteenth century marked what Ian Watt refers to as a general change in outlook from "objective, social, and public" to "subjective, individualist, and private" (199). Daniel Defoe recognized that the tendency to grant significance to subjectivity meant that the very traditional form of the conduct manual needed to be revised if it was to continue to have the positive effect on individuals that it was meant to have. He used fiction and implemented a narrative style in *The Family Instructor* (1715) to instruct his readers in suitable conduct, relying on the power of example to instigate self-reflection. He illustrated that individuals were capable of, and responsible for, their own self-formation. However, this revision from objective to subjective was incomplete since social expectations continued to weigh heavily on the individual. Carol Houlihan Flynn argues that Defoe "locates one of the central confusions of his century, the contradictory desire for freedom and limitation" (73) in his conduct manuals and his novels.

This conflict characterizes fiction in the eighteenth century, suitably beginning with the conduct manual, written with a conventional social purpose in mind, but also finding expression in periodicals and novels. Social expectations continue to act as powerful limitations on freedom of individuality, and to instruct acceptable behaviour through private forms of entertainment, conduct discourse becomes a common thread in periodicals and novels of the eighteenth century. These relied on the experiences of fictional characters to instruct their audience on specific points of either how, or how not, to behave. Flynn argues that conduct discourse “becomes a site of struggle for power, for an individuation that depends upon a suppression of free will and sexuality” (74). Thus, although the individual was increasingly the topic of attention and interest, individuality was not encouraged. Females were especially expected to conform to convention and comply with social standards for behaviour. Feminine conduct was a source of anxiety in the eighteenth century so conduct manuals, periodicals, and novels of this period were greatly interested in conduct discourse related to the female subject. Between 1744-1746, Eliza Haywood wrote and edited the *Female Spectator*, the first periodical written for women, by a woman, a work that emphasizes the era’s preoccupation with feminine conduct. It showcases a series of fictional tales and letters all meant to lead women to reflect on the appropriateness of their own behaviour. It also exemplifies the “dual message” that Flynn argues the conduct manuals deliver, that “proper behaviour must be learned [...] but that behaviour must also appear voluntary and ‘natural’” (74). In this chapter, I will examine Daniel Defoe’s and Eliza Haywood’s history of engaging in conduct discourse, particularly that related to feminine conduct, which leads to the

strong, independent-minded female characters they later depict in their respective novels, *Roxana* (1724) and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751).

Defoe wrote and edited *The Review* between 1704-1713, before turning his then developed journalistic talents to writing *The Family Instructor* (Watt 116). Defoe told his readers in a 1710 edition of *The Review* that he had “chosen a down-right plainness, and to speak home both in fact and style” because it was “more generally instructing and clear to the understanding of the people I am speaking to” (VII.39.31). Ian Watt argues that Defoe was fully aware “that as a result the educated readers might consider him clumsy and repetitive, but that Defoe believed this was a necessary concession to make his message more serviceable to a wider audience (Watt 115). Watt explains that “this compromise, between the wits and the less educated, between the belles-lettres and religious instruction, is perhaps the most important trend in eighteenth-century literature” (56). It takes into account the larger reading public that was newly expanding down from the upper classes. Defoe realized that the conduct manual could now reach a more diverse public and with the shift in general interest towards the subjective account, he understood that to appeal to this new reading public, he must be able to make moral instruction entertaining. Paula Backscheider shows how Defoe implemented a new narrative approach to writing conduct manuals, as he followed the course of a family’s interactions, tracing their dialogues and allowing for a story to unfold in a realistic manner, often through the words of the characters themselves. Backscheider explains that “Defoe departed from the usual pedantic answer or debate styles to give his readers carefully differentiated speakers and dramatic, familiar situations” (Defoe, *The Family Instructor* 5). Defoe believed that humour and satire could be instructive and that natural

repetitions inherent in conversation were “not useful only but necessary at least to preserve the Cadence of Things, and introduce the Substance of the real Story by necessary Gradations” (Defoe, *The Family Instructor* 250). Readers were instructed while being entertained. Defoe altered the conduct manual, concerning himself as much with the narration of a story, which was allowed to unfold realistically, as with the traditional purpose of offering instruction. His conduct manual is an obvious predecessor to the novel and, in many ways, foreshadows his later focus in his novels. He implemented the individual experience as “the ultimate arbiter of reality” (Watt 15), a technique that critics such as Watt have argued potentially had a more powerful effect on readers than simple moral precepts. More than teaching proper behaviour, Defoe seemed to want to instruct the individual to use reason to learn from mistakes. However, *The Family Instructor* also emphasizes Defoe’s assumption that it is the individual’s responsibility to conform to the demands of society.

The Family Instructor is quite explicit about social expectations, including those specific to gender and even more specifically, gender-related roles within the social institution of marriage. Flynn calls Defoe “an early champion of feminist ideals,” arguing that he insists upon “justice” between husband and wife (74). However, Flynn argues that Defoe simultaneously shows how women were contained, especially within marriage, by “categories of domestic use that assumed spheres of influence circumscribed by domestic necessity” (74). She explains that Defoe illustrates that familial harmony depended upon the “domestic internalization of rules” (73) that should appear “natural” and as a “voluntary submission to the good” (74). Defoe attempts to win this submission by encouraging moral growth through independent reasoning. He follows a family with a

son and daughter who become estranged from their father. The daughter liberates herself from her father's home, where strict obedience to his rules is expected, to live with her aunt's family and soon weds the aunt's stepson. Since the young heroine's father has proclaimed himself indifferent to her state, she is left to act autonomously in regards to this marriage proposal. Defoe uses this circumstance to assert an independence and strong will in the bride in question. In a dialogue between the heroine and her aunt, the niece states "I will never have [the stepson], till he and I adjust the matter *as to what* Liberty I may expect, and *what not*: for I will never marry *as I said* to be my Husband's *Cloistered Wife*, any more than I would stay at Home to be my *Father's Nun*" (336). The more conventional aunt seeks to clarify the niece's views, asking her, "I hope you would desire no unlawful unbecoming Liberties, especially when you were a Wife, and a Mistress of a Family?" (340). The niece explains her ideas more fully, responding:

I hope not Madam; *nor any unbecoming Restraints neither*; and that is the Reason of my Discourse; he may think himself willing to run the Risque of the first, but I am not willing to run the Risque of the last, for our power of acting under them will be by no Means equal (340).

The young woman stands her ground with uncommon self-assuredness. She left her father's house because she felt that his restraints were unfair, and she refuses to wed until she is solemnly promised by the groom himself that "all the Government and all the Obedience of the married State, that I have any Notion of, consists in the Dominion of Love, and the Subjection of Love" (342). Defoe seems to be advising that women be fully aware of what they may expect under the rule of a husband and, in turn, to inform the prospective groom of her own expectations.

The unnamed daughter does go on to marry her aunt's stepson and tests her husband's authority over her by incessantly partaking in all manners of social activities

which, of course, begin to interfere with her more traditional wifely duties. Eventually, in a private moment of self-reflection, she comes to feel remorse for her own obstinate pursuit of public pleasure, sadly ruminating after a heated dispute with her husband, “*how calmly and tenderly has he returned all along, without one unkind Word*” (362). The narration makes it evident that she may not have come around to this reformation of manner had her husband not repeatedly responded merely with patience to her love of “Company and mirth” (298). Had he adopted a heavy hand instead of his steadily loving manner, it is doubtful that the young bride would have meditated about the ill-effects of her actions and regretted her ways. She demonstrates the strength of her will by stubbornly refusing to reconcile with her father even after her marriage, and by repeatedly reminding her husband of his promises to respond to her actions with no violence “but that of affectionate tender perswasion, and a reasoning Importunity” (341-342). Defoe implies that she would have as strong a will with her husband as she has with her father unless treated with such tenderness that she comes to reflect and reason, fully of her own accord, on her behaviour:

Then, what have I quarrelled with him for! but for what all the Women in the Nation but I, would value a Man for (viz.) For his being sober, and virtuous, and religious... and the like; why, my own Conscience tells me that he is in the Right, and I am in the wrong... but sure never any Woman abused a Husband for being better than themselves before! (362-3).

Defoe make clear that the bride altered her ways because of her own reflections, not because she gives way to paternal or marital authority. Thus, although the bride adapts her behaviour to fit in with what is socially and morally acceptable according to traditional standards, thereby exhibiting how the self is, at least in part, socially determined, Defoe simultaneously emphasizes that to be truly effective, change must be a

result of individual reason as well as of social pressure or expectations. Jane Spencer argues that this is a work that illustrates “reform taking place in [the heroine’s] mind” (Spencer 152) and likens such narrative moments of self-knowledge to the “moral art” that Jane Austen later achieves (152).

Periodical publications such as Defoe’s critical *Review*, Addison’s and Steele’s *The Spectator*, and Haywood’s *The Female Spectator* feature journalistic, magazine-like editorials written to guide their readers to morally responsible self-formation. Haywood, like Defoe, took advantage of her medium to enlighten her readers about ways of cultivating private selves to better suit the new public world. She wrote and edited *The Female Spectator* to spark tea-table and coffee-house discussions, relying on the effect of the personal example upon her readers to prompt reasoning and reflection. She emphasizes very clearly the conduct manual presumption that proper behaviour should be learned and appear voluntary and “natural” (Flynn 74) in an editorial prelude to a story about a woman being tricked by her husband to dislike the falseness and dangers of masquerades. The editor introduces the idea that “Nature is in itself abhorrent of vice” and that “the *reflecting* mind sees the seeming diversion of masquerades for the “daring attempt to invert the very order of nature” that they really are (Haywood 16). Social pressures to conform are inherently understood to be in conflict with individual expression, but Haywood introduces a contradiction within social pressures, revealing that individuals are expected to demonstrate a fondness for modish entertainment, and yet oppose the distractions of public pleasure. Haywood seems to find the masquerade useful for conveying a displeasure of “vice” and illustrating an underlying natural affinity within individuals, for what is socially and morally acceptable. However, in inculcating young

women to dislike partaking in public entertainments such as the masquerade, which endanger one's virtue, Haywood educates women to internalize social expectations of what constitutes approvable behaviour and puts constraints on their independent choice.

In a story of a naïve country brother and sister going together to their first masquerade, Haywood dramatizes the limitations for women once they have stepped into the public realm. At the masquerade, the sister is quickly separated from her brother by throngs of costumed revellers. Confused and upset, she eventually runs to a man wearing the same habit as her brother, and believing this man to be her brother, begs him to lead her safely home. She, of course, has entrusted herself to the wrong man and finds herself with a scoundrel who rapes her before revealing his face and abandoning her.

Afterwards, in private moments of reflection, she determines that she has irreclaimably lost her virtue and cannot be a suitable wife to her would-be betrothed. She thus refuses the unconditional love of her fiancé and determines that his offer not to blame her for the loss of her virginity is too generous to withstand social pressures and the negative consequences of the labels that will be applied to her. This sad story ends with the young woman resolving in her own mind, according to her own reasoning, her course of action. It ends:

The more she found him [her fiancé] worthy of her affections in her state of innocence, the less could she support the shame of being his in the condition she now was. She told her parents that she had taken a firm resolution never to marry, and begged their permission to retire to an aunt who was married to an old clergyman, and lived in one of the most remote counties in *England*. ... not all the entreaties of her lover could prevail on her to see him; she sent him, however, a letter full of the most tender acknowledgements of his love and generosity, and with this he was obliged to be content (26).

The young woman is rational in her realization that her society will never forgive her for having been raped, and perhaps that it would even see rape, on some level, as an appropriate punishment for seeking public pleasure. Haywood depicts a woman who accepts, through the exercise of reason, the restraints that society imposes upon her gender, and discovers that she has no autonomous self. Haywood concludes that society destroys the young woman and that the only autonomy available to her is to accept that.

Haywood's story of the brother and sister going to a masquerade is similar to Defoe's focus on the brother and sister in *The Family Instructor* in that both examine the very different social attitudes to men and women. Both heroines accept their constraints and their place in society but Defoe depicts this as a positive, as the "natural" choice, whereas Haywood critiques the lack of choice for her heroine. Haywood emphasizes her heroine's private reflections to illustrate the sister's innate goodness, but also her necessary acceptance that the rapist has transformed her inner being and made her somehow less virtuous as well as physically violating her. The "natural" choice for Haywood's character is to accept that she has no choice, no independence, no autonomy. Haywood seems to fault society rather than the individual, an argument she makes quite literal in an epilogue to another story of a young countryman who submitted himself in the place of another young man ordered to go to war, for the sake of young love. The editor concludes:

The generous behaviour of country (uninstructed) *William* shows what we are able to do of ourselves. All who hear what he did, must allow it to be truly great. But if, after having so well proved the nobleness of his soul, he should degenerate and become hereafter self-interested, deceitful, or in fine, any way base, it must be owned it was the ill example of others that makes him so (48).

Haywood thus illustrates, similar to Defoe, a “natural” goodness and morality, emphasized by highlighting that this country man was “uninstructed”. She simultaneously blames society for tarnishing people’s inherent virtue by expecting them to submit to social pressures. Haywood critiques the social expectations and pressures to conform that Defoe seems to support. However, both Defoe and Haywood seem to endorse the importance of knowing and understanding the limitations that society places on the individual and the pressures that exist to transform a naturally virtuous character. The women in Defoe’s and Haywood’s stories both get tempted by public pleasures. Defoe’s heroine reflects and learns that true autonomy means accepting the social conventions that influence her individual choices, whereas Haywood’s heroine reflects and learns that her society pre-determines her acceptance, and that she is powerless to do anything but submit to those beliefs.

Because feminine behaviour was an especially contested topic, many early eighteenth-century novels were centered on female main characters. The novel, as a genre, focused on a detailed, subjective account of a central character’s private reflections and could thus depict the private struggle an individual undergoes between choosing to submit to the expectations of one’s society or finding expression for individuality. The private, or domestic sphere was typically the realm of women, and thus female characters became the focus for examining private reflections and desires. Long before the *Female Spectator*, Haywood wrote several novels that highlighted feminine desire. However, despite being one of the most popular and widely read authors in the early eighteenth century, Haywood was overlooked in studies of the rise of the novel, until fairly recently, as her work was dismissed as mere romance, unworthy of serious analysis. Clara Reeve,

an eighteenth-century writer and critic, outlined, in the form of a dialogue in her book *The Progress of Romance* (1785), the difference between romance and the novel. The participants in the dialogue discuss the “three best-known women authors of the novel’s early literary history – Aphra Behn, Delariviere Manley, and Haywood, a group sometimes called the ‘fair triumverate’” (quoted in Haywood, *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* 641), and one female character argues

The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. – The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance, in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. – The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the persons in the story, as if they were our own.

The women in this fictional dialogue apparently represent Clara Reeve’s own critical views, and notably only recognize Haywood as a novel-writer because she “‘repented’ of her early sensational fiction’ (Haywood, *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* 11) and “‘employed the latter part of her life in expatiating the offences of the former” earning her “the singular good fortune to recover a lost reputation, and the yet greater honour to atone for her errors.” They recognize *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* as her “highest pitch of excellence - ... reckoned [to be] her best novel” (Haywood, *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* 643). Regardless of whether Haywood’s earlier works of fiction describe anything ever likely to really happen, her attention to subjective feminine desire should be recognized for its contribution to the potential of fiction to increase self-awareness in a reflective reader. In her later novels, such as *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Haywood directs her attention to more detailed character development by emphasizing her heroine’s private

reflections and illustrating how contemplating one's social roles factors in to determining one's identity.

Defoe and Haywood both write their fiction with a strong narrative style that makes the reader empathize with the central character. Both writers highlight the private reflections of their heroines in order to depict how women, especially, are expected to internalize social values and submit to social expectations regardless of their own personal desires or beliefs. Defoe and Haywood both expanded their focus on the individual and their use of a narrative technique, in novels that maintained an interest in self-formation. They seem to share an interest in the developing theories of the self, which they examine not just in their didactic literature but also through the character development in novels such as *Roxana* and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Defoe explores self-formation as an independent choice in *Roxana*, illustrating the social consequences of knowingly going against what is commonly considered acceptable female behaviour. He departs from the feminine role model who voluntarily transforms her behaviour and attitude to accept her traditional role as a wife to examine the "strains that the fiction of justice [between men and women in marriage] exacts when domestic harmony and 'affective individualism' depend upon a subordination of the woman in the house" (Flynn 73). Haywood engages in the social debates regarding proper feminine behaviour through her earlier novels and her periodical, but takes on the discrepancy in gender-specific social expectations more directly midway through the century, in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, which followed the publication of her popular periodical. In this novel, Haywood also explores the consequences of acting according to one's independent wishes and disregarding what is expected of a young woman. The

plots of these two novels take very different turns but both authors engage with the ongoing social concern with feminine conduct by exploring how the social guidelines and restrictions for behaviour affect the self. Both authors focus on female subjectivity through a heroine who clearly illustrates the growing private problem of the divided self in a social world where the public and private spheres are increasingly merging.

Chapter Two: Defoe's *Roxana*

Eighteenth-century culture, we should remember, made *person* both a word for someone's physical appearance and a word for someone. It made *trait* signify a minimum unit of the stuff of personality, one of the identifying marks that set persons apart (Lynch 38).

In *Roxana*, published anonymously in 1724, Daniel Defoe probes the increasingly numerous and popular contemporary theories of the concept of the self to explore the constancy of personal identity. Presumably to maintain the fiction that this was an autobiography, Defoe did not affix his own name to this novel. However, anonymity also ensured that the public could not attach any extraneous meaning to the text from perceived knowledge about the author; readers were relied upon to extract their own meaning, and so responses to the novel were more immediate, more intimate, and more likely to generate self-reflection in the reader. The original 1728 title page implies glamour in the lifestyle in the history that follows. The original title, *Roxana: or, the Fortunate Mistress. Being a History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de Beleau*, suggests a life of extremes, complete with difficulties and rewards that ultimately ends well for the title character. "The Fortunate Mistress" is the shortened subtitle that remains, which reinforces the links between the name Roxana and ideas of exotic courtesans, and highlights the heroine's fortuitous wealth (349). Taken as such, the title has some superficial truth to it, but the narration that follows reveals a much more significant undertone of satire, and a much less favourable interpretation of the name "Roxana". In later years, and continuing into the present, the novel has been known simply as *Roxana*, thereby reducing the heroine and her life story to a negative label. The fact that the novel comes to be known by this abbreviated title amplifies its

message of the powerful social effect of naming. Although not quite an allegory, this novel does function as a warning. The title and eponym of the narrator is a name she first revels in, then comes to rue. She continually transforms her identity, eventually evolving into “Roxana,” the final step involving an Oriental costume and a dramatic performance to “win” this appellation from her admirers. However, the reader perceives the duality in meaning in the name and soon the narrator herself wishes to cast off this name and identity. John Mullan discusses, in his introduction to the 1998 Oxford World Classic edition, how Defoe repeatedly uses narrators whose “enterprising lives often require them to conceal, as well as adapt, themselves” (xvii). They change their identities and sometimes go by a different name, yet their enterprising actions eventually destroy them. The narrator of *Roxana* continuously attempts to reinvent herself but what becomes increasingly apparent to the reader and arguably to the narrator herself, is ultimately the impossibility of doing so. The narrator learns that the names she acquires for herself as a result of her actions affect her private conception of self, despite how she alters her identity, and that one’s core, private identity is not, in fact, all that changeable.

Names and naming become a key issue in this novel, making the narrator’s and author’s original anonymity all the more significant. The narrator of *Roxana* claims to avoid all proper names for various reasons, including libel, but seems to prefer to see most people around her as types, rather than as unique individuals. She equates “trait” with “person” in her description of those she has social relationships with. Mullan explains that concealing names is a way to “escape the defining circumstances of birth and upbringing” (xvii), a motivation that is clearly behind the narrator’s choice to refer to her first husband as simply “Fool”. Seventeen years before, Defoe had observed in his

Review that “a fool has something always about him that makes him intolerable; he is ever contemptible and uninterruptedly ridiculous [...] He is in good, wavering; in mischief, obstinate; in society, empty; in management, unthinking; in manners, sordid; in error, incorrigible; and in everything ridiculous” (3.19.231). Defoe’s use of the name “Fool” by the narrator in *Roxana*, might remind the reader of this definition and summarizes the type of marriage the narrator found herself in. Her use of this label avoids any incorrectly assumed positive qualities or advantages tied to the status of her husband, and thereby refutes the idea that names should signify status and be an automatic claim for respect. The narrator makes all of the men she is involved with known to her reader only by a single distinguishing character trait. She thereby reduces identity to how others perceive a person’s actions. Avoiding a personal name can also extend to attempting to nullify an individual’s history, which becomes the narrator’s goal for herself. Yet the narrator’s attempts to escape her own difficult circumstances by changing her name suggest at the same time that identity cannot be changed by changing one’s name.

She narrates her history to depict her constant struggle at self-definition and, finally, her realization that it is impossible to reinvent herself completely and independently of the judgments of those around her. In this respect, the narrator’s struggles with identity anticipate some issues later raised by the philosopher David Hume. In a discussion of Hume’s theories of the self, Terence Penelhum argues that Hume raises questions about the extent to which an individual’s past is relevant to his or her present identity. When the narrator attempts to change who she is, she anticipates Hume’s later arguments that the self is mutable and that who one was in the past might

not necessarily be relevant to the present self. The novel as a whole, however, suggests that identity is less flexible than the narrator hopes, and that who one was in the past continues to shape the future self.

Roxana investigates the idea of a mutable self on a private level and portrays the attempt to shift identities as destructive to the self. The narrator wants the self to be mutable but never seems able to convince herself that it is entirely so. Try as she may to transform her situation and elude her past, the narrator comes to realize that she has a core private self that she cannot escape or fundamentally alter. Her past identity as wife and mother is in congruence with the social values, but it is arguably when she foregoes these values that, for better or worse, she discovers her own interests and finds expression for her self-motivated passions, which differ greatly from what is expected for her gender. She develops her character through a curious mingling of freedom and possibility with suffocation and entrapment. Her re-inventions and reconceptions of self show her battling against the traditions that define and confine her and she discovers that how she conceives of her self is problematized by the conflicting nature of two opposing forces. On the one hand, she has a keen entrepreneurial aptitude and is driven by economic interests and a desire to procure and manage her own wealth. She begins her narration of her history by describing how her parents migrated to London from France in “very good Circumstances” (5), which her father secured through his own illicit mercantile dealings. She thus indicates a genetic predisposition of sorts for independently accruing wealth by whatever means. However, she is also a product of her contemporary society and, as such, has traditional attitudes ingrained within her. She grew up learning proper feminine attributes, married according to her father’s wishes, and

conventionally surrendered her assets to her “Fool” husband. Although she speaks ill of her husband, it is evident that she behaved according to the conduct expected of a wife and that she lived a life that fit her society’s conventions of virtue and honour. And yet, she introduces the reader to her original situation with an authoritative individualism that exhibits an independent mind dissatisfied with conventional expectations for conduct. She includes such comments in her relation of this part of her history as: “I did as well as I could, and held my Tongue,” and “I could enlarge here much, upon the Method I took to make my Life passable and easie” (9). She hints that she was privately unhappy living in this traditional domestic manner and that she created her own ways of pacifying her true self. After her husband abandons her and leaves her destitute, necessity impels her to alter her identity, but when she resigns herself to adopting a new identity as a “Whore for Bread”, she merely finds herself in a new battle between her individualism and necessary subjection required to live according to society’s gender- and class-specific expectations. She strives to reinvent herself as liberal-minded and not hindered by gender-specific social expectations for public identity, but her inherent and unsuppressable internalizations of her society’s traditional views and conventions disallow this. Part of the aspiration to reinvent herself is necessitated by the very traditional attitudes that prohibit it. The narrator remains conscious of not being socially accepted because of her amoral actions and endeavors to alter herself both publicly and privately to fit the expectations of others. She attempts to redefine herself as one who, because she is socially deviant and thus an “other” in her society, is more at liberty to be self-centered and self-motivated, but as this new identity prevents her from fitting in socially, it simultaneously creates an irreparable division of self.

The problem faced by Defoe's narrator might be illuminated by the ideas of Norbert Elias, who argues that civilization brought with it an increasing split "between an intimate and a public sphere" (190), dictating what was acceptable public behaviour and what was to be kept secret. He goes on to explain that this split is so internalized by individuals that it becomes a subconscious mediator of behaviour with "prohibitions supported by social sanctions [being] reproduced in the individuals as self-controls" (Elias 190). According to Elias, "however it is expressed, the social code of conduct so imprints itself in one form or another on the human being that it becomes a constituent element of his individual self" (190). Thus, even though the narrator of *Roxana* consciously decides to adopt a new lifestyle at odds with the social sanctions governing public behaviour, she is unable to live entirely freely because of her own internalization of social dictates. Although Elias relates subconscious controls specifically to regulating and restraining the expression of drives and impulses, he also concludes that this split in behaviour is a result of individual reflections that take into account "the continuous correspondence between the social structure and the structure of the personality, of the individual self" (191). The individual must find a livable balance between the personal emotions and motivations that constitute the interior self, and performing to the satisfaction of peers in accordance with the existing social structure. A definition of self includes the groups that an individual belongs to, including those of gender, class, religion, and social networks. It also takes into account how others in these groups characterize that individual. Thus, how one interacts within society and within the groups to which one belongs, partially constitutes an individual's sense of self. Those who fail to abide by the traditional standards dictated by contemporary society dissociate

themselves from whatever groups they might otherwise belong to, and thereby suffer an incomplete or disjointed conception of self.

The narrator goes from being an accepted member of her social groups to having a complete lack of affiliation due to her abnormal behaviour and unconventional choices. She describes at length the process by which she consciously changes her identity from the socially acceptable but socially helpless abandoned brewer's wife and mother of five children to being a financially secure but socially unacceptable "whore." She asserts that it is her conscious decision to alter the course of her life and transform her conception of self, mutating herself (as both she and others perceive it) into someone who no longer comfortably fits in with society. Depending on interpretation, hardships either ruin the narrator from the moment she accepts the landlord's adulterous advances or, conversely, strengthen her into a woman capable of reflecting, weighing, and choosing her actions and who becomes responsible for the course of her own life. Either way, she is changed by the severity of her trials, which she admits, "hardned my Heart against my own Flesh and Blood" (19). It is in this new inured state, separated from her children, that she accepts the advances of her landlord. She relates:

And thus in Gratitude for the Favours I receiv'd from a Man, was all Sense of Religion, and Duty to God, all Regard to Virtue and Honour, given up at once, and we were to call one another Man and Wife, who, in the Sence of the Laws, both of God and our Country, were no more than two Adulterers, in short, a Whore and a Rogue; nor, as I have said was my Conscience silent in it, tho', it seems, his was; for I sinn'd with open Eyes, and thereby had a double Guilt upon me [...] but my Circumstances were my Temptation; the Terrors behind me look'd blacker than the Terrors before me; and the dreadful Argument of wanting Bread, and being run into the horrible Distresses I was in before, master'd all my Resolution, and I gave myself up" (43-44).

In this instance, the narrator accepts the name of “whore,” making this her new identity. She argues that what she faced as abandoned mother with children she could not provide for seemed to her far more terrifying and difficult than the condemnation she will bear in relative comfort as an unvirtuous woman. Rather than pity herself for her situation and the circumstances she has been forced to accept, the narrator admits to accepting this new role with open eyes and a full understanding. As Malinda Snow points out, the narrator’s deliberative arguments to herself, and sometimes those addressed to others (such as Amy and later the Dutch merchant), stimulate and guide how the reader sees her develop and change “more particularly than raw circumstance does” (527). The narrator prepares the reader for the subsequent details of her story by a confessional prologue of sorts, declaring “I need say no more; this is enough to convince any-body that I did not think him [the landlord] my Husband, and that I had cast off all Principle, and all Modesty, and had effectually stifled Conscience” (46). This disclosure also acts to give the female narrator an authority over the ensuing events of her life. She may have found herself in an unbearably burdensome position with limited options, but she asserts her own agency by weighing her alternatives and consciously determining what course to choose. She yearns to make herself the writer and director of her own fate through her own conscious decisions, albeit by making choices which she is aware carry both social and spiritual consequences.

The narrator’s assertion of agency is complicated by what some critics, including Snow, perceive as her most vile and deliberately evil act. The narrator introduces this scene by declaring it as evidence that she “had cast off all Principle, and all Modesty, and had effectually stifled Conscience” (46). The narrator coldly describes how she takes her

maid, Amy, “fairly stript her, and then threw open the Bed, and thrust her in” (Defoe 46) with the landlord, remaining to watch while the landlord gave Amy no choice but to “let him do what he wou’d with her” (47). Snow refers to the scene as a “terrifying argument to the self” (527). She contends, “it is as if Roxana must convince herself that she is a whore” (528). A common critical reading is to view Amy as a double for the narrator in this scene; in that respect, this scene could be read as Roxana’s attempt to reinforce her own sense of herself as a whore. Equally significant though, even if the narrator were ever able to make excuses for her own sexual acts, it is as if she shuts out all possibility of forgiving herself or excusing her actions through what she does to Amy. Amy is the only person who is called by a proper name throughout the narrator’s history, a point that implies her uniquely intimate place in Roxana’s life. Referring to her by her first name might also suggest that Amy, unlike any of Roxana’s other associates, is irreducible to a single trait. In addition, although Amy is the narrator’s servant, she is also her most private confidante and the only constant in all of her changes. The narrator reveals a deeper attachment to Amy, since once she has accrued the financial resources to keep other servants, she “dress’d [Amy] like a Gentlewoman, and made her my Companion” (165). Their relationship predates the narrator’s decision to take control of her fate and lasts until her final transformation. The narrator’s and Amy’s knowledge of each other is so intimate that their histories are only complete with the other. Sinning against the one who knows the narrator perhaps better than she knows herself ensures that even should the narrator succeed in altering herself so completely as to erase her memory of who she once was, she cements a reminder of her original sin in her only constant companion, the one who holds all intimate knowledge of our modified heroine. Although the narrator

goes on to rise herself above great misfortune to prosperity, her abuse of Amy implies that she has made a decisive attempt to embrace her new identity as what she considers a sinner.

This new state of mind reflects a self-motivated and self-centered conception of identity. However, despite her best efforts, it is evident that the narrator's internalization of her society's codes for public conduct continues to determine her actions. The narrator willingly debars herself from public society when she becomes mistress to the Prince and later, presumably, to the King. In these situations as secret mistress, social isolation has its benefits. It allows for a fantasy lifestyle pregnant with possibilities for re-invention of the self without added complications of how others perceive her. James H. Maddox suggests that the narrator prefers the tenuous nature of being a mistress since it has "no legal or moral sanction" and frees her psychological energy for self-creation rather than prolonged reflection (271). To the narrator, freedom from society during her perfect seclusion is liberating in the sense that she is invisible to the public society that demands conformity to convention. She is free to define herself as she desires and live to satisfy her materialistic wants and her business-minded goals, rather than smother these with propriety. But she is only able to invent herself according to what motivates her when she is successful at concealing those passions from the outside world. The narrator attempts to divide herself by detaching how she defines herself from how others perceive her. As Helene Moglen argues, the narrator's self-alienation yields internal division (47). Even when completely isolated from society, the narrator can never escape the burdensome awareness that her society defines her desires as irrational. Although she may have been previously unhappy as a wife and mother, she enjoyed the ease of being

an accepted member of society. Now, as one who has relinquished her membership in her community when she abandoned her “virtue,” she is free to live according to her own selfish motivations, but this unhappily means forgoing all public acceptance. She must disguise who she has become or hide herself away from the public eye, since she has chosen to secure subsistence in a socially unacceptable manner.

She attempts to live for herself but cannot ultimately escape the need for social relationships. The narrator’s efforts to redefine herself and escape her past demonstrate “the fundamental incompatibility of individualism with the normative categories through which women [especially] were defined” (Moglen 20). She finds that some categories are imposed upon her which she cannot escape. Most notably, she is trapped by gender, as the traditional expectations of women in eighteenth-century society were highly constricting. Defoe cannot seem to find a way to have his heroine battle against the strict guidelines for appropriate feminine behaviour and still be considered feminine. Thus he provides her with a greater internal struggle with self-identity by giving her traditionally male motivations. Helene Moglen argues that “as Defoe applied to women a concept of social, economic, and psychological autonomy that was usually identified with men, he exposed the fundamental incompatibility of individualism with the normative categories through which women were defined” (20). However, the narrator suffers from knowing that her typically masculine pursuits will never be accepted in a woman in her society, especially one who has violated the most definitive codes for acceptable feminine behaviour. Thus, although Defoe may be criticizing the strict categorical definitions traditionally separating male and female, he also seems to reiterate the need for

conventional social expectations and the usefulness of gender categories for self-formation.

If your actions are not in accordance with social expectations, it may become necessary to decide between altering yourself to fit in or, remaining true to your own desires and privately suffering from a definition of self that cannot then include being an accepted member of society. The pressures to abide by society's definitions of class- and gender-specific concepts of suitable behaviours lead the narrator to feel obliged to remove herself physically and socially from others, but she is unable to remove herself psychologically. The narrator is ceaselessly conscious of the conclusion others will come to in regards to her, and this awareness weighs heavily on her sense of self, causing her to modify her public behaviour. Her public life becomes private and yet remains in conflict with her core private self. She is divided between personal desires and internalized social values and between social determinism and independence. Carol Houlihan Flynn argues that the narrator's "conduct becomes not that which 'ought' to be done, but that which must be done" (75). Flynn points to "the contradictions inherent in the demand for individualism and subjection" (76) and maintains that the narrator transforms her rooms and her person to achieve what she calls 'Sweet Liberty' at the cost of herself" (89), adding that "to attain independence, she feigns compliance and submission, perversely imitating the submission" (90) to societal codes. Whether the narrator consciously supports the codes of conduct her society decrees is not the point. What is evident is that her internalization of these codes dictates her public behaviour. The narrator of *Roxana* demonstrates that complete freedom from social institutions, cultural beliefs, and societal expectations of behaviour is unrealizable for anyone living within society. As Deidre

Shauna Lynch remarks about the narrator of *Roxana*, “the character she gives herself is shadowed, and challenged, by the characters others give her” (37).

It is more specifically the narrator’s personal conflict with the cultural expectations of her gender that causes her division of self, torn between her internalization of traditional values and her desire to redefine herself and to have more independence, or simply less dependence. She uses her beauty and her accomplishments as her means first to survival, and then to win attention, wealth, and comfortable subsistence from her male admirers. She subordinates herself to the men whose mistress she becomes, yet she does so in a way that authoritatively “uses” her own conventionally desirable feminine qualities as resources to achieve her goals. The feminine charms she has been educated in, partnered with her natural beauty, are merely business capital to the narrator. She is business-minded in a traditionally masculine sense but adroit enough to use the conventional expectations for her gender to obtain what she wants. The narrator is ever cognizant that her desire to accumulate wealth is an unconventional trait for a woman and especially incongruous with the traditional definition of a mother. She reveals throughout the story, with a decided lack of emotion, that she gives birth to several more children, all illegitimate. Terry Castle comments that the narrator’s non-maternal attitudes and

casual treatment, indeed rejection of her various children – eleven in all – seems to stem from more than just the shame she professes to feel when she considers the circumstances of their births. Underlying the heroine’s discussion of her childbearing is what appears to be a powerful ambivalence, even an anxiety regarding the maternal function (89).

The narrator cannot dissociate her body from its reproductive capacities, but she does renounce the traditional expectations for her gender by implying her indifference to the

children she has during her career as a whore. She emphasizes a market sensibility in valuing her beauty and sexuality rather than her role as a mother, as these assets “support[ed] my Interest” in a way that children do not (105). She makes it her “business” (105) to care for her personal wealth, not for her children.

She freely admits to this motivation when her affair with the Prince has made her rich. She is fully aware of the precariousness of her situation as a mistress and concerns herself with securing her own future. In Holland, where she goes to handle her financial assets, the narrator enters into her most Amazonian phase, referring to her supposedly unfeminine behaviour (Wharman 6). She even describes herself as talking a kind of “Amazonian language” (171) in her opposition to proposed marriage from the Dutch merchant. To a reader, the language of her argument and motives of her refusal are decidedly economic. Indeed, her non-maternal, mercantile actions have already made her independently wealthy and now necessitate that she act craftily to preserve her self-proclaimed “free agent” and “Man-Woman” business identity along with her wealth. She privately admits to the reader that her true reason for refusing the Dutch Merchant’s proposal was “tho’ I cou’d give up my Virtue, and expose myself, yet I wou’d not give up my Money”. However, because this motive “was really too gross for me to acknowledge” (147), she is forced to offer another reason, which introduces mercantile language into the consideration of the marriage contract. She tells the Merchant

that I thought a Woman was a free Agent, as well as a Man, and was born free, and cou’d she manage herself suitably, might enjoy that Liberty to as much Purpose as the Men do; that the Laws of Matrimony were indeed, otherwise...the very Nature of the Marriage-Contract was, in short, nothing but giving up Liberty, Estate, Authority, and every-thing, to the Man, and the Woman was indeed, a meer Woman ever after, that is to say, a Slave (147-148).

She rebuts all of the Dutch Merchant's more traditional arguments, reminding the reader of how helpless she found herself when her first husband abandoned her and concludes,

It is not you, *says I*, that I suspect, but the Laws of Matrimony puts the Power into your Hands; bids you do it; commands you to command; and binds me forsooth, to obey; you, that are now upon even Terms with me, and I with you, *says I*, are the next Hour set up upon the Throne, and the humble Wife plac'd at your Footstool; all the rest, all that you call Oneness and Kindness then, and a Woman is indeed, infinitely oblig'd where she meets with it; but can't help herself where it fails (151).

Indeed, she has much to lose monetarily through signing over her claims to her own wealth in a marriage contract. As the narrator unabashedly recalls, "by managing my Business thus myself, and having large Sums to do with, I became as expert in it, as any She-Merchant of them all; I had Credit in the Bank for a large Sum of Money, and Bills and Notes for much more" (131). She takes pride in the wealth that she has accumulated and in the ways that she has independently managed it. At the time of this first proposal from the Dutch merchant, the narrator's ego has been bolstered by her own keen abilities and she, not surprisingly, is seduced by the power she enjoys in Holland over her own wealth. She sees herself as master of her own wealth, a security she has garnered through her masculine business capabilities, and safeguarded by her refusal of marriage.

Defoe defeminizes the narrator by giving her economic sensibilities. He shows that a woman may have mercantile abilities and interests, but he seems unable to imagine these existing in a character who is still acceptably feminine. The narrator seems to share this way of thinking since she is able to become a businesswoman only by surrendering her socially most valued feminine asset, her sexual virtue. Thus the narrator's success in the marketplace necessitates forfeiture of any sense that she can claim feminine respectability. She seems in many ways to be a characterization of Mandeville's

ideologies of underlying passions. She has economic ambitions that are socially construed as vice because of the actions she takes to procure first her own survival, and then wealth. However, Defoe explores the conflict between virtue and private passions in a way that illustrates how the self becomes divided between which of these to act upon, according to how that self determines her own perceived need to present one over the other. Defoe progressively examines Mandeville's theory of how vice can promote economic growth in a female character, but he achieves this through his narrator's defiance of the traditional gender role and ultimately, destruction of her self. Defoe complicates vice with necessity, first for survival, then for protection against discovery, but regardless of it being the means to whatever ends, it always complicates and hurts the perception of the self. Thus Defoe's portrayal of Mandeville's theory of private vices, public benefits begs the question of "at what cost to the self?"

The narrator wants what her society forbids – freedom to control her own assets, be they monetary or distinctly personal, such as her body and her sexuality. She tries to convince herself that she can be her own definition of an independent woman in charge of her own assets and not affected by how her society views her. Taking responsibility for her actions, especially her sexual ones, is a way of claiming agency. As Paula Backscheider notes "Psychologists believe that woman's independence and superiority are most threatening when they come from physical or economic skill, and Roxana is a dazzling financial success" (257). This comment necessitates some clarification. The female narrator achieves her financial security, and then luxury, through her traditionally feminine appeal. She relies on her beauty, which she confidently refers to as her "Bait to Appetite" (75), and intuitively uses her feminine attributes to prostitute her body. She

employs traditionally acknowledged feminine traits and skills as her entrepreneurial tools. Defoe thus characterizes his heroine with what is most adored and most feared in women. Defoe complicates the narrator's independence by hinging it upon masculine business capabilities that both exploit and capitalize on her traditionally feminine assets. Watt explains that Defoe used shocking tactics such as "economic egoism" combined with social alienation to illustrate "conflicts between old and new sets of values as they are manifested in daily life" (150-151). The narrator of *Roxana* attempts to trade the old (represented by her honour and virtue) for the new (her independent merchant-oriented ideals), but finds that her self is the cost of this transaction. Thus Defoe highlights her division of self between private desires and internalized social values and between social determinism and independence. The incompatibility of these factors makes achieving true autonomy an impossibility for the narrator of *Roxana*. Her vision for herself is in sharp contrast with the psychological suffering caused by her ingrained knowledge of how others will perceive her. And yet this vision has arisen in direct consequence of the restrictive concepts of femininity in her society. The narrator of *Roxana* demonstrates how an individual who acts in discordance with the expected codes of conduct is not only forced into secretive seclusion but becomes the victim of an irreparable division of self. What further complicates matters is that she does this to herself of her own volition. She is ceaselessly aware, though, of the "grim realities" that her society will not accept any of the choices she makes or give her credit for anything she has gained. She knows that she will merely be seen for what she has sacrificed: her virtue and her children. Thus Defoe's defeminization of the narrator serves as a reminder of what is acceptable and normative feminine social behaviour.

From the moment that Roxana chooses to exploit her beauty for money, her more masculine merchant sensibilities govern her decisions. However, what remains problematic for the narrator is that the traditional expectations for her gender continue to weigh heavily on her. The narrator of *Roxana* depicts the increasing split between the intimate and public spheres since the identities she transforms into and performs sever her from the institutions and traditions that govern her society and by which she still judges her own actions. Backscheider comments that “Not only does Defoe give Roxana self-control, but he often builds in an awareness of grim realities” (260). By separating herself from conventional expectations of female behaviour, her past, and her society, the narrator achieves self-alienation alongside her accumulation of wealth. Moglen argues that Defoe is commenting that self-alienation is the cost of entrepreneurial capitalism (53), by demonstrating that social estrangement and division of the self are what facilitate the narrator’s career (44). Laura Rosenthal agrees that Defoe makes the social comment that “functioning in the marketplace demands some kind of self-division” (95). She adds that “Roxana invests much energy and derives much pleasure from the series of fantasies she creates that follow from this self-division. Tragedy strikes, however, when she tries to *resolve* her contradictions” (Rosenthal 95) by consciously revisiting her past to provide for her first children. As her evolving identities become increasingly shaped by the pursuit of fortune, she finds it increasingly necessary to completely conceal her original identity. Nonetheless, it comes back to haunt her, forcing her to realize that she can neither change her past nor run from or transform her core private self.

Albeit forced to retreat more and more into privacy, the narrator manages to live prosperously for a number of years from the time she steps off the beaten path of

typically acceptable feminine conduct. It is logical to conclude from her story that there was little hope for her or her legitimate children were she not to stray off that conventional path. Thus, her decision to sacrifice her virtue for the sake of her own survival may be considered a practical response to an impossible situation. Snow argues that the narrator's reasons for abandoning her legitimate children (and I would add her illegitimate children as well) "is more practical than tender-hearted, but it follows generally accepted morality and wisdom," adding that "her deliberative arguments to herself do not vary from social convention" (527) or accepted morality. The narrator worries about the future of her children if connected with her and thus dissociates herself from her children in order to protect them from blame as much as possible. She argues to the Prince following the birth of their first son that "his Mother's Crime [will ever] be the Son's Reproach; the Blot can never be wip'd out by the most glorious Actions" (81). The narrator later confides to Amy "how it griev'd me that I cou'd not make myself known to my own Children, or form any Acquaintances in the World" since "what will my Children say to themselves, and to one another, when they find their Mother, however rich she may be, is at best a Whore, a common Whore?" (208). Her actions in protecting her children demonstrates her awareness and internalization of her culture's traditional values and emphasizes her self-division.

Despite seemingly going into her new identity as a "Whore for Bread" without reserve and working to become a shrewd "she Merchant," the narrator brings herself back full circle to providing for the legitimate children she originally abandons. Notwithstanding the narrator's ability to redefine herself, she is clearly unable to disassociate herself from her past. Thus it becomes evident that an individual's

perception of self cannot be entirely mutable. The narrator's core private self is more than just her merchant sensibilities and materialistic desire for wealth; she is inescapably a product of her society. Furthermore, although she may not have nurturing maternal instincts, she remains both emotionally and physically unable to remove herself from her personal history as a mother, which seems aligned with the traditional belief that being a mother is central to feminine identity. The narrator illustrates that she cannot forge a new identity that completely discards all of the traditional social conceptions of her gender. She finds that her past adherence to social norms persists in troubling conflict with her newly transformed self, a point that is stressed when Defoe brings the narrator's past back to haunt her in the form of her estranged name-sake daughter, Susan. Rosenthal, in *Infamous Commerce*, argues that Defoe is exploring "the experience of suspension between wholeness" (76) in terms of the self divided between a past identity and a present, newly forged identity. Rosenthal contends that daughter Susan threatens to mend the narrator's "self-division into wholeness, and to compromise her radical individualism" (94). The narrator perceives her daughter's attempts as a threat, which betrays the precariousness of her transformed identity in her own mind. Such wholeness requires a merging of past and present into one comprehensive identity. This is problematic for the narrator, since in her mind, forsaking her original identity meant no future possibility of reclaiming anything belonging to it. Later in life, after she has accumulated considerable wealth, the narrator revisits this initial hard-cast mindset and wishes to provide anonymously for the legitimate children she abandoned, but makes it clear at the same time that she has no desire to renew any bonds as their mother. However, to add trouble to existing personal torment for the narrator, daughter Susan

desires knowledge more than financial security and actively pursues her mother.

Coincidentally, Susan has been employed in the narrator's household at the time of her notoriety as "Roxana". When the narrator learns this, she is all the more anxious to hide her true identity from Susan, since her daughter would then know her mother as a "true Roxana", that is, as a glorified prostitute. The daughter brings about the potential merging point of identities for the narrator. But the narrator desperately struggles against this, since she is aware that no such converging of non-mothering, self-motivated attitudes can exist within her society's definition of femininity, especially when a woman has been sexually active and blackened her reputation.

Indeed, the narrator takes precautions to provide for her children without revealing the source of their security not just to protect them, but also to protect herself. It is when faced with the problem of how to escape the pursuit of her daughter that the narrator most clearly depicts her divided self. She comments "What my Face might do towards betraying me, I know not, because I cou'd not see myself" (284). She exposes an incongruence between her body and mind and reveals her fear that her body reflects her private thoughts. What she labours to convince herself of in adopting her new identities may in truth vary substantially from her innermost sentiments, which her body and face may now reveal. The narrator conceives it impossible to integrate any emotional attachment to her past with the outward persona that she has created, yet she reveals an awareness of sorts of the subconscious bearing that her past identity continues to have on her. As Castle argues, the narrator "confronts in her daughter an unintegrated aspect of her own being, the aspect she has until now successfully displaced" (93). It is debatable how successful the narrator has actually been at entirely displacing her past

identity. It does seem an undeniable and uncomfortable truth that the narrator coolly abandons all of her children, legitimate and illegitimate. Yet, she makes it clear that her past remains a factor in her mind by repeatedly bringing up her husband, wondering about his present state and about her own continued marital connection to him. Her periodic chastisements of her “Fool” husband illustrate a type of continued emotional connection that make it not entirely surprising when her reaction to her daughter Susan is fraught with confusion and anxiety.

Confusion is carried over into the relation of the final part of the narrator’s history, since exact events surrounding Susan’s disappearance and the narrator’s emigration are described with some ambiguity. Yet the reader is led to understand with some certainty that Susan is murdered. Castle calls the murder of Susan “the last possible act of psychological retrenchment” adding that “the act consolidates fixation, makes integration impossible” (93). Since the narrator lets it be known that Susan shares her name, the daughter’s murder is particularly indicative of the narrator’s desperation to separate from her past identity and of her inability to do so. Rosenthal argues that the narrator “sacrifices her children to consolidate not a communal identity but her *own*” (83). But even though the narrator desires certain freedoms, and has chosen and pursued a life of her own making, she cannot escape the emotional and spiritual connection to the children she has abandoned. Castle comments that the murder of Susan at the end of the novel-modulates inevitably into a convoluted form of self-slaughter” explaining that “part of the self cannot be repressed without great damage to the whole” (93). Likewise, Moglen argues that “Roxana can rid herself of the psychic continuities of the past only with a murder that seals her own psychic destruction”(50). Although the narrator is

capable of economically improving her situation, she is never able to conceive an inclusive sense of self that allows for decisive independent action and permits her own acceptance.

She demonstrates the ability to separate her desire to fulfill her own needs from conforming to rigid social expectations. To achieve financial security for herself, she surrenders her “virtue” and “honour,” or rather walks away from these just as she does from her children, but she can never fully dissociate herself from her internalization of societal values. Personal relationships are a source of personal torment for the narrator of *Roxana*, who attempts to independently define herself, and likely ends up telling her story because of her reflections later in life about the moral impact her social relations have had on her own conception of herself. It is the narrator’s unrelenting awareness of the inward consequences of how others perceive her that cause many critics to erroneously presume that she is penitent. Many critics, including Backscheider, who quotes and agrees with George A. Starr, search for evidence that the narrator of *Roxana* writes her “spiritual autobiography” by recollecting the “crucial moments in her life that add up to missed opportunities for conversion” (Backscheider, “Roxana” 255). Conventionally and didactically, a character who has acted immorally ought to be penitent. However, this critical desire discredits the narrator’s independence, strength of will, and intellect.

Malinda Snow argues that

a result of Roxana’s deciding against the conventionally accepted choice is, ironically, a loss – or at least a burial – of part of herself, which she reserves and does not reveal. This reserve, this resistance to showing herself fully, guides Roxana’s deliberations in the concluding sections of the narrative, and it results in an estrangement from herself, an inward and spiritual estrangement. What she will not reveal, she cannot repent of (530).

Snow, like others, assumes that the narrator is penitent, that her true, buried self is conventionally devout and religious. What ought to be highlighted, however, is the narrator's independent powers of reasoning. She consciously and resolutely decides to alter the course of her life permanently when she accepts her landlord's offer. In many subsequent instances, she avoids repentance, looking back to that moment when she abandoned religious values in favour of her own subsistence. Her story begins with her detailed depiction of her careful deliberation and conscious decision to forfeit her virtue, emphasizing her full awareness of the lasting consequences. When later recalling her near-death experience on the ship with Amy, the narrator mocks "Death-bed Repentance" and "Storm-Repentance," confessing "I had only such a Repentance as a Criminal has at the Place of Execution, who is sorry, not that he has committed the Crime, as it is a Crime, but sorry *that he is to be Hang'd for it*" (129). When she later comes to regret some of the evils of her life after living in London as a "Roxana," she notes that her reflections contained "not the least Hint in all this, from what may be call'd Religion or Conscience, and far from any-thing of Repentance" (200). Agreeing to be bound in marriage and surrender her liberty and her self-accumulated wealth is the closest she gets to actual repentance, and is even arguably what she interprets as equal to penance for her sins in some ways. In her newly wedded state she begins to look back upon her life "with that Horror, and that Detestation, which is the certain Companion, if not the Forerunner, of Repentance". She admits, however, that, "I was not come to that Repentance that is rais'd from a Sence of Heaven's Goodness; I repented of the Crime, but it was of another and lower kind of Repentance, and rather mov'd by my Fears of Vengeance, than from a Sense of being spar'd from being punish'd, and landed safe after a Storm" (261).

Attempts to reconcile with herself later in life prove fruitless, since she deems it necessary to keep her original identity and the signifiers of that self (her children) completely separate from her new identity and unknown to her second husband. The past continues to haunt the narrator, making the last years of her life miserable despite the title and wealth she has gained. The narrator not only cannot merge her past and present identities into a comprehensive and inclusive version of self, she is similarly unable to create a balance between a public life and a private, domestic life. She gives up all public life and relinquishes all autonomy when she finally resolves to marry the Dutch merchant, submitting herself to the state of marriage as her husband's "Upper Servant" who "shou'd act the Servant's Part, and do every-thing to oblige my Master" (233). She marries for the opportunity it provides to change her name and her identity again, since her transformed identity has become too mingled with her past and threatens a revelation that she cannot bear. This disquiet, of course, comes when the narrator is anxious about daughter Susan's persistent pursuit. Even in the last, painful paragraph after Susan's murder though, the narrator still attests "that my Repentance seem'd to be only the Consequence of my Misery, as my Misery was of my Crime" (330). She admits to misery for all of her crimes which, arising out of having to pay for them and suffer, but never for acting against accordance with religious piety. Furthermore, she refers to the conscious decisions she made that license her transformation of identity as sacrifices, as opposed to sins. It may be that she has simply given up on salvation, believing that she forfeited that comfort when she abandoned her children and surrendered her virtue. Regardless, assuming the narrator to be penitent is to depreciate her powers of reasoning and independent choice. It also assigns a logic founded in what was traditional for novels

of the period, that religious penitence was mutually important to all members of early eighteenth-century society.

The narrator chooses not to prioritize what her society values. She transgresses her society's traditions and her gender's conventional roles to such an extent that she defies social categories. She attempts to offer her readers some understanding of her by implying that the names she refuses for herself are just as significant as the names she accepts. Although she finds her internalization of many conventional beliefs to be inconvenient and problematic to her redefinition of self, causing her to inwardly accept some names, she consistently resolutely denies others, including "penitent" and "mother". "Mother" is a name associated with the past identity that she abandoned and sacrificed. Denying this name implies her natural variance from her stereotypical gender role, suggesting that not all women are in fact mothers by nature, but it simultaneously illustrates that she has cut herself off from this possibility just as she disallows the prospect of penitence. However, the name she desires most to elude in the end is "Roxana," but she does not succeed in doing so. It has become the name that has been connected with Defoe's central character and is consistently used to describe the heroine of this novel. Critics writing about *Roxana* uniformly refer to the central character as "Roxana". This is naming the heroine by her altered identity. Although it is her conscious decision to transform her identity, and even her desire at one point to become a "Roxana," the negative connotations of this name become too burdensome and unmanageable. She altered her identity first for self-preservation, then to fulfill her ego-centred and mercantile passions. "Shrewd businesswoman" may be more suitable, or as she calls herself, "She-merchant." Entertaining whore does not adequately summarize

her true self. Referring to the narrator simply as “Roxana” defines her as her society does and does not take into account her autonomous motivations and the private self that is independent from how others see her. Referring to her as “Roxana” gives dominance to social constructions of identity over self-conceptions. Naming her in this way is furthermore unjust, as it denies the message she attempts to convey to her readers that names are incomplete markers of identity. She refuses proper names throughout her narration, choosing instead to identify those in her life according to their most dominant personal characteristics, calling her first husband “Fool” and her second husband “Honest”. She does this to deny extraneous indicators of identity, since surnames, during her time, carried with them connotations of status and privilege, but she also instructs her readers that how others perceive our actions does not add up to a fair assessment of our character. Although the narrator sees herself through the eyes of others, hers is a story of the self divided between its internalizations of social values and conventions and its attempt to maintain a core sense of selfhood. As Don Zahavi illustrates, narrative structure reveals the self and invites the reader to ask “the central who-questions: ‘Who is this?’; ‘Who did this?’; ‘Who is responsible?’” (107). Zahavi explains that “the self is the ‘who’ of the story, the one upon whom the story confers an identity” (107). Naming the self of this narration as “Roxana” is attempting to answer the ‘who’. It denies the importance of the reader asking the who-questions. Asking “who is this?” and “who is responsible?” are enlightening questions that provoke a deeper understanding of the self, of society, and of the interconnectedness of each in conception of identity. This narration reveals a divided identity, and although the name Roxana implicates both the narrator’s motives during the highlight of her “career” in London and how others come to see her, it

should not be undervalued that the narrator demonstrates that there is much more that defines her full identity.

Chapter Three: Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*

To think of early novels as providing not a rendition but an explanation of reality helps to elucidate their contemporary power (Spacks 53).

Eliza Haywood, one of the most popular novelists of the eighteenth century, takes a realistic approach to explaining her contemporary England in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) by examining the intersections between public and private spheres in the life of an individual. She relates the story of an endearingly fallible young woman, using an omniscient narrator who not only knows all of Betsy's foibles and relays each social faux-pas, but is privy to Betsy's innermost desires and private reflections. Haywood has the narrator describe Betsy's emotions and motivations in detail to provide examples of the difficulties in negotiating between public expectations and private desires. The narrator seems to make it a priority, over telling the story, to insist upon revealing and continuously defending Betsy's virtue and honourable motivations. Haywood concentrates on presenting the subjective details behind the events of the plot, and emphasizes Betsy's private reflections about her public actions. These details ultimately emphasize Betsy's capacity for independent reasoning and ability to learn and grow. Since the heroine of the novel learns from her "mistakes" and grows as a result of her own private reflections, however instigated by others, critics vary in their opinions about Haywood's underlying purpose in writing *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. The novel is always contrasted with Haywood's earlier amatory fiction, with eighteenth-century critics tending to see it as a reversal of the earlier work, while more recent readers tend to be a little more dubious about that point. Haywood's contemporaries, including Clara Reeve, praise the new didactic purpose of this novel and Haywood's later

works (Haywood 12, 643), but modern critics such as Christine Blouch highlight Haywood's "unchanged preoccupation with questions of sexual and social identity" (Haywood 12). Catherine Ingrassia argues that Haywood "simultaneously supported and critiqued the dominant ideology inscribed in social, economic, and discursive practices" (Ingrassia 109), adding that *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* "tests generic and gendered expectations as it attempts to reconstitute the experience of the novel" (Ingrassia 110). Indeed, one might argue that, in this book, Haywood is even more interested in all-encompassing questions of identity than she previously was. She merges private identity with the public realm to assess the politically and economically charged concepts of gender and social factors as they impose upon identity and constrain individuality in this novel. *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* satirizes the conventional gender-specific behaviours and illustrates the hypocrisy of the same act being completely sanctioned and even encouraged in the male sex but utterly condemned in the female sex. The novel also explores the period's multi-layered attitudes regarding marriage and the wife's role within marriage. Haywood at times appears to support traditional ideology regarding suitable behaviour for a marriageable woman, yet at the same time, she consistently undermines this approval by creating a likeable heroine with whom the reader empathizes as she tries to develop an autonomous identity.

Linda Barclay, a modern philosopher, defines autonomy as inseparable from social relations, arguing that how one decides to express oneself depends on that individual's social memberships and the types of social relations he/she is involved in. Although not contemporary with this novel, Barclay's definition is perhaps the most useful means to determine whether Betsy succeeds in forming a version of identity that

might be considered autonomous for a young woman at her time. To be autonomous, individuals must be able to integrate a sense of social responsibility with their awareness of private desires and sentiments. When one is successful at this task, Barclay argues, autonomy is possible. Barclay contends that

the difference between an autonomous person and a person who fails to be autonomous is not the difference between a person who mysteriously escapes the forces of socialization and one who does not. Both the autonomous and the nonautonomous are conditioned by the forces of society. The difference is that the autonomous person is not a passive receptacle of these forces but reflectively engages with them to participate in shaping a life for herself. (55)

She emphasizes that “our capacity for autonomy is acquired in contexts where we are dependent on others ” (57), explaining that “we need to consider *which* particular attachments to nourish, *which* particular shared values should be part of our common good” (68). We decide and choose, she explains, as a “shared task, one that we do in concert and conversation with others” showing that “we are quite compatibly both autonomous agents and deeply social selves” (68). The narrator of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* highlights Betsy’s private reflections and conversations with people whose opinions she values and trusts, such as Lady Trusty, Mr. Goodman, her brothers, Mr. Truworth, and Lady Loveit in a way that anticipates Barclay’s understanding of autonomy as dependent on our relations with others. This definition of autonomy correlates with Ian Watt’s definition of individualism; Watt argues that individualism “fostered not only the kind of private and egocentric mental life [...], but also the later stress on the importance of personal relationships which is so characteristic both of modern society and of the novel” (200). “Such relationships,” Watt contends, “may be seen as offering the individual a more conscious and selective pattern of social life to

replace the more diffuse, and as it were involuntary, social cohesions [of communal and traditional relationships]” (200). It is the necessity of these communal and traditional relationships that complicates a determination of whether Betsy truly achieves autonomy or not. She abandons rebellion to conform to what is socially expected for a marriageable young woman, thereby transforming her own identity to fit traditional social conventions. However, the narrator works hard to prove that Betsy continues to hold fast to her own beliefs and give a priority to her personal desires. Outside of a short-lived, disastrous marriage to Mr. Munden, Betsy chooses who she keeps up private relationships and a shared intimacy with. She decides for herself who she shares similar beliefs with, and thus who she wants to share her daily life and concerns with. It is this fact which perhaps suggests most strongly that Betsy does, indeed, achieve what can most closely resemble autonomy for a young woman in the mid-eighteenth century.

Betsy is the perfect medium to probe the interplay between public and private and illustrate how their endless intersections affect the individual’s perception of self. She belongs to the emerging upper middle class and lives in the city. Public outings and social rendezvous are commonplace in her life, as is what Jurgen Habermas refers to as the merging of the public and private through social visits within peoples’ homes (Habermas 45). Habermas examines the rooms designated in bourgeois homes for the reception of guests, theorizing that these “salons” do not serve the ‘house’, but ‘society’ and that the individuals who gathered there were ‘not reducible to “society”; they only entered into it’ (Habermas 46). Habermas explains that these rooms provided family members an intimate space “apparently set free from the constraint of society” but was in actuality “the seal on the truth of a private autonomy exercised in competition” with

one's social peers (46). Habermas focuses on how this liminal space corresponds to the political-economic aspects of society, but it is equally interesting to consider how individuals were impelled, even within the privacy of their own homes, to perform to social expectations. Thus the constraints of society invaded the privacy of homes. Habermas explains the merging of public and private on a grand scale, focusing on politics and economics. The novel as a genre narrows the focus of any social theory to the individual. What Haywood achieves in this novel is an intimate account of how her heroine struggles to express her individuality and not be a social puppet. Haywood illustrates the dilemma of the self divided between being true to personal beliefs and adhering to cultural traditions and societal expectations. The pressures to live according to the expectations of one's social class distort gatherings even within the privacy of a home so that the rules and expectations of society enter the salon and convert those gathering to be representatives of a group rather than autonomous selves. Society enters the thought processes and determines the actions of those gathering, thereby making the salon a public space within the domestic realm and giving society a power of governance even within the privacy of the home. Haywood sets nearly all of Betsy's misadventures within the walls of a domestic home and effectively explores one individual's attempts to integrate her social relationships and need for positive social recognition with her autonomous definition of self.

Haywood demonstrates, through the misadventures of her heroine, that even events which take place within the domestic sphere are open to public scrutiny. The social attitudes that govern the public sphere seemingly have no boundaries and invade the private, influencing the individual's consciousness and conception of identity.

Philosopher Catriona Mackenzie theorizes that individuals are “intrinsically relational because their identities or self-conceptions are constituted by elements of the social context in which they are embedded” (22). Mackenzie elaborates on the relevance of social relations by describing

two crucial ways in which social recognition is necessary for self-definition. First, it is necessary because self-knowledge is crucial to self-definition and because we achieve self-knowledge in social relationships. Self-knowledge involves knowing which aspects of one’s point of view – which desires, characteristics, traits, and so on – one identifies with; knowing what one values and cares about; and knowing how one feels and what one wants. [...] the affective, evaluative, and imaginative processes of reflection – by means of which we clarify what we value, distinguish our self-conceptions from our points of view, and so achieve self-knowledge – cannot be purely introspective. Our emotional responses to aspects of our identities such as our temperamental characteristics – responses, for example, of shame or pride – are shaped by and responsive to the estimations and responses of others. And these responses, at least in part, form the basis for our judgments about ourselves. Thus we come both to know and to define ourselves in our interactions with others. (139-140)

In addition, Mackenzie insists that “self-worth is bound up with social recognition” (140), which “involves recognition of the worth of the social group to which the agent belongs – where social groups may be defined in terms of class, racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, or religious identity or intersections of these” (141). Thus we come to understand ourselves by comparing ourselves to others, learning how we differ as individuals, and accepting how some of the general characteristics of the group apply to us. Social groupings are categories that the public sphere defines and relies on, and unavoidably affect our private understanding of our selves.

Betsy comes to know herself through her relations with others. She learns about what she values and what beliefs guide her decisions. However, she also learns that the people she interacts with only see part of her and may not look beyond her actions to

consider her values. Haywood emphasizes that part of how we perceive ourselves is dependent on what others say about us. She instructs readers to take responsibility for how their public actions will be perceived, through illustrating how Betsy comes to learn that one must not only appear virtuous, but be virtuous. However, she simultaneously uses the explanations her narrator provides in Betsy's defense to teach readers, as members of the public, to consider more than just the observable action. Dan Zahavi discusses the self as a narrative construction in *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, arguing that "who we are depends on the story we (and others) tell about ourselves" (105). He explains, "the self is the 'who' of the story, the one upon whom the story confers an identity" (107). Haywood describes identity through the narrator, thereby giving precedence to what others say about us over what we say about ourselves. Ian Watt, in *The Rise of the Novel*, argues that eighteenth-century novelists revealed character indirectly through describing their actions and directly through "specific analysis of the character's various states of mind" (121). He explains that these methods are "usually found in conjunction with a narrative structure designed to embody the character's development, and to present him with crucial moral choices which bring his whole personality into play" (121-122). Haywood uses a third-person omniscient narrator to tell Betsy's story and describe Betsy's character, as well as to instruct readers to consider the relevant background to events and to factor in people's motivations and true characters when forming opinions about them. The narrator of this novel steps beyond the function of telling the story to go to great lengths to defend Betsy's virtue and to emphasize her pure intentions behind her oftentimes misread actions. The narrator of this novel emphasizes that public opinion is a powerful thing and that we must, as individuals, take

responsibility for considering the background leading to certain events, and the intent behind the actions, in order to form a proper opinion about an individual.

Haywood opens the novel with the narrator presenting her own opinion about a commonly held perception against women, and simultaneously arguing that private or personal truths are ultimately more definitive of character than public actions. The story begins: "It was always my opinion, that fewer women were undone by love, than vanity; and that those mistakes the sex are sometimes guilty of, proceed, for the most part, rather from inadvertency, than a vicious inclination" (27). The narrator suggests to the reader that to determine properly the character of others, one should not merely judge their actions, but consider the motivation behind those actions. The narrator appeals to the reader's capacity for reasoning and illustrates the importance of forming an independent judgment by her own practice. From the very first sentence Haywood prepares the reader for a conflict between commonly shared social attitudes, and convictions founded on a knowledge of actual fact, particularly when it comes to perceptions held regarding women. The reader knows immediately that Haywood is interested in educating her audience "not in the didactic sense of the way the world should be, but in the sense of the way the world is" (Stuart 559). She opens with a common conception and shows that independent reflection may lead an individual to another conclusion. Thus, she offers a critical commentary that asks readers to think about the usual practices and attitudes of eighteenth-century society. The narrator highlights the contemporary argument against vanity in women, but what lies beneath this commentary is an invitation to assess character on the basis of motives rather than actions. The narrator draws readers in by aligning with the contemporary argument against vanity; however, she then shifts the

focus of the argument towards moral formation to imply that people should concern themselves more with improving their values and examining their beliefs, than worrying about appearances. She argues that time spent at the toilet rather than “employed in examining the heart, and what actions are most becoming of the character” (27) is time misspent. Haywood thus seems to be engaging with Mandeville’s theories, which imply that society favours perceived virtue, or the appearance of virtue, over actual morality and admirable character. Mandeville emphasizes the performance of virtue, arguing that people preoccupy themselves with altering their appearance and modifying their public behaviour “to be thought wise, brave, generous, good-natured, and endued with the virtues [they] think worth having” (Mandeville 105). Jerrold Seigel comments on Mandeville’s theory of “theatrical” self-formation to argue more favourably that perceived ideals for social behaviour were “not merely to be imitated [or feigned], but internalized, creating an organic continuity between character and behaviour [...] That the continuity was not seamless, and the process of self-making never complete, were signs that the selfhood sought was not merely contrived or staged” (Seigel 166). Haywood anticipates this goal of “organic continuity between character and behaviour” in the narrator’s opening argument that reflection and self-examination of the mind and heart are more valuable than focusing on outward appearances. The narrator of this novel implies that “due consideration” (27) will help one to not only appear virtuous, but be virtuous, which is a significantly worthier aspiration. This is Betsy’s underlying constant inclination; however, the narrator’s repeated emphasis throughout the novel that Betsy is “ignorant of her own heart” (602), highlights the importance of knowing oneself to achieve this goal.

Betsy remains ignorant of the wishes of her heart, partly because she is so bent on resisting being ruled by another, which is clearly how she understands marriage before she is forced to enter into it. She has a strong sense of self and begins by defying domesticity, and thereby refusing the limitations placed on her individuality by the conventional standards for behaviour to which she is expected to adhere. Betsy seems to equate domesticity with marriage, and she bluntly states, on several occasions, her disinclination to marry. Early in the novel, she refuses Mr. Saving and afterwards responds to his father's attack on her character:

He might have spared himself the pains, [...]his son could have informed him, how little I was inclinable to listen to any thing he said on the score of love; and I myself, if he had asked the question, would have given him the strongest assurances that words could form, that if ever I changed my condition, which heaven knows I am far from thinking on as yet, I should never be prevailed upon to do it by any merits his son was possessed of.
(55)

The reader learns many things about Betsy from this incident: that she is not ready for marriage, but more importantly, that she knows it, and that she is not afraid to express her opinions on any matter to any one. She refuses to be bullied or belittled, or even criticized, and she grants an egotistical importance to her own understanding and desires. Her reaction, on another occasion, to some fabrics being shown to her while shopping with Flora and Lady Mellasin further illustrate Betsy's independent nature. When Flora is displeased by Betsy's distaste for a fabric the mercer tells them is very fashionable, Betsy responds:

“certainly every one ought to please their own fancy in the choice of their cloaths; for my part, I shall never endure to see myself in it.” “Not when their fancy happens to differ from that of those who know better than themselves what is fit for them,” cried Miss Flora: “and, besides, have the power over them.” She spoke with so much pertness that Miss Betsy, who had a violent spirit, was highly provoked. “Power over them!” cried she,

“I do not know what you mean, Miss Flora; Mr. Goodman is one of my guardians indeed, but I don’t know why that should entitle his lady to direct me in what I shall wear.” (60-61)

Betsy initially shows her determination to rule her own actions and decide her likes and dislikes for herself according to her own beliefs and desires. The incident at the mercer follows Betsy’s decisive refusal of Mr. Saving to emphasize that appearance is secondary to her, next to prioritizing her core beliefs. The novel endorses Betsy in her determination not to be mindlessly ruled by fashion, but suggests that that independent mindedness causes problems in more important matters such as marriage. Although the twenty-first-century reader might side with Betsy, readers in both Haywood's day and our own can see that Betsy’s obstinate determination to ignore the opinions of others will only be a source of problems in her social relationships if she does not learn to compromise.

Social membership sometimes requires conforming, and this a hard pill for Betsy to swallow. She initially rebels against strict social standards that demand she be formal and controlled in public and insist she conform to cultural expectations of domestic behaviour within the private domain. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy explains, in *Women’s Lives and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel*, that Betsy’s society believes that “a daughter’s first duty is obedience and a wife’s is submissiveness, seeing women as having a claim only to relative lives lived for the benefit of others, almost always men” (238). Although Betsy is an orphan and not yet a wife, Brophy’s comment aptly wraps up the manner in which a young marriageable woman is expected to behave. Betsy resists the socially constricting “rules” that she is expected to conform to, yet eventually comes to realize that part of her own understanding of her self depends on her social

membership and public approval. She learns that even pure and honest intentions can be misconstrued and eventually comes to accept that if she is to maintain her reputation as a virtuous young woman, she must conform to the expectations of others. She learns that to consider herself, and to be considered by others to be a member of her society, she must accept and internalize some of the values of her society. She must integrate her need for social relations and for social recognition with her private desires.

Betsy begins the novel wanting to trust in her own subjective experience of things and live by her own truths. She firmly asserts to a man she perceptively reads as a libertine that “The surest guardian of my fame and peace, [...] is the little share of understanding I am mistress of, which, I hope, will always be sufficient to defend my honour in more dangerous attacks than the rude impertinencies of an idle coxcomb” (44). She is confident that she will avoid dangerous situations if she continues to let her understanding guide her actions. However, when the “coxcomb” quickly moves on to Flora to get what he wants and makes further and easier progress with Flora, Betsy sees “as in a mirror, her own late follies in those of Miss Flora... and perceived the errors of such a way of thinking and acting, in so clear a light, as had it continued, would, doubtless, have spared her those anxieties her relapse from it afterwards occasioned” (45-46). The narrator foreshadows more than just future dangers to Betsy’s virtue. Betsy sees how her initial friendly and careless behaviour could be interpreted by others, and the narrator suggests that Betsy will eventually learn, the hard way, that how she sees herself is, in fact, partially determined by how others perceive her actions. Betsy comes to face many challenges as a result of her actions and increasingly replaces her egocentric mentality with a more comprehensive self-awareness that includes the unavoidable social

memberships and the necessity for social relationships as part of her identity. She thus accedes to the realization that as a member of her society, she must internalize some of its conventions if she is not to be privately divided between public and private versions of self. She must find a way to both be virtuous and appear virtuous without changing her own beliefs. Thus, as Betsy's awkward privileging of her own youthful tendencies and naïve notions are replaced by more mature reasoning, the reader learns along with her how to maintain one's core beliefs.

Betsy believes that her reasoning reflects her true character, but she constantly finds herself struggling to not have to demonstrate what she recognizes as necessary for social approval. As much as she wants for her subjective understandings to guide her safely through life, she is forced to realize that others may misjudge her by merely observing her actions without considering her intentions. Lady Trusty's early warnings that "an innate principle of virtue is not always a sufficient guard against the many snares laid for it" (57), and that "the world is censorious, and seldom ready to put the best construction on things, so that reputation may suffer, though virtue triumphs" (58), furthers the narrator's opening arguments. Betsy learns this first-hand as her actions are repeatedly misread. For example, after attending a church service on her own, she makes the fatal decision to enjoy a solitary walk "in a place where there were always a great concourse of young sparks, who come for no other purpose than to make remarks upon the ladies." (173) She is approached by Mr. Bloomacre, a man she knows from his visits to Lady Mellasin, and soon finds herself so "very agreeably entertained" by the "wit and vivacity" of this man and his two friends, that "she never thought of going home till it grew too dark [...] so insensibly does time glide on, when accompanied with

satisfaction" (156). She never perceives herself in any danger and only becomes concerned for how she will get home safely once it has grown dark and is raining, and she cannot get a chariot. When a man who has a personal conflict with Mr. Bloomacre intervenes to "rescue" Betsy from what he insists are Mr. Bloomacre's wicked intentions, this simple solitary outing turns into a threat both to Betsy's virtue and her reputation. It ends in a confrontation between Betsy and her guardian, Mr. Goodman, over how her innocent actions could be so negatively construed by others. Betsy defends herself by arguing "that as she meant no ill, those who censured her were most in fault" (173), to which Mr. Goodman agrees, in part, but sees it as his duty to instruct that "it is not enough to be good, without behaving in such a manner as shall make others acknowledge us to be so" (174). Of course, their names signal the reliability of Lady Trusty's and Mr. Goodman's sentiments, but more than that, the omniscient narrator makes the reader privy to the public accusations against Betsy that provide due cause for her guardians' concern. We understand that Betsy would not have spent the afternoon with a man she did not trust but that she also did not know him well enough to be sure that his intentions were all honest, and she certainly knew nothing of his friends. Mr. Bloomacre does not come first thing the following morning to ensure that Betsy did get home safely, and thus some suspicion about his motives is raised for Betsy and for Mr. Goodman, who would certainly have been more alarmed than he was by Betsy's behaviour if he did not also trust Mr. Bloomacre. We see the dangers Betsy put herself in, and thus we are led to internalize the lessons that Lady Trusty and Mr. Goodman give Betsy, whereas at the point of this confrontation with Mr. Goodman, Betsy is merely "vexed, that any thing she did should be liable to censure" (174). Haywood places her reader in a more perceptive

position so as to be able to observe Betsy's errors as errors and her subjective understanding as inadequate. We see that Betsy has yet to accept that her reasoning alone is not enough to secure social approval, that others may not consider her motives, and thus she must take care that her actions demonstrate her true character.

Although Betsy's reasoning and actions are consistently portrayed to the reader in a sympathetic light, her behaviour is often harshly criticized by her friends and family. Betsy's guardian, her brothers and her potential suitor, Mr. Truworth, all realize the dangers facing a young marriageable woman who does not concern herself with her public actions, but it is arguable to a reader whether or not they are actually more concerned with how her tarnished reputation could effect their own honour (Nestor 583). Haywood implies that young women's actions, especially, are judged superficially by those who concern themselves merely with the appearance of virtue. As Moira Gatens argues,

the very same behaviours which makes a man appear well adjusted, 'attractive', and [socially] appropriate may well make a woman appear maladjusted, 'unattractive', and [socially] inappropriate. Although we may be dealing with the same type of behaviour, in the one case it is rewarded, commended, in the other punished, condemned. (30)

Haywood cleverly interweaves a social critique of the viewpoints of middle- to upper-class society by demonstrating the contradictory attitudes surrounding and comprising gender-specific behaviour. There is a clear double standard, and it is worth noticing that the very activities for which Betsy is blamed, such as socializing with Flora in the home of Frank's peers in Oxford, or simply conversing in a casual manner with members of the opposite sex, are commonplace and perfectly acceptable actions in Truworth or his friend Sir Basil, or her brothers. Truworth is a school acquaintance of

Betsy's brother, Francis. He becomes enamoured with Betsy, unbeknownst to her, during her visit to Oxford, and then follows to London to court her. He is meant to both personally define and be capable of distinguishing true virtue and worthiness of an individual, but after spending much time with Betsy, he, too becomes guilty of judging her actions without giving her motives consideration. He finds some of Betsy's thoughtless behaviour unattractive and finds himself questioning her suitability as a wife because of them. However, the narrator tells of Truworth's activities soon after the details of Betsy's considerably more innocent adventures, so that the reader questions the fairness of gender-specific guidelines for behaviour.

When a former school friend of Betsy's contacts her to become reacquainted, Betsy fails to see that this young woman, aptly named Miss Forward, has a tarnished reputation and refuses to consider that her own reputation is at risk if she is seen with her. Mr. Truworth warns Betsy how her friendship with this woman will be judged and desires her to "reflect yet farther, what they will judge of you" if she is seen in public with Miss Forward (234). He cautions that such matters concern "not only yourself, but all who have any relation to you, either by blood or affection" (233). Betsy passionately responds, "I love Miss Forward, and neither know, nor will believe, any ill of her. — Whenever I am convinced, that she is unworthy of my friendship, it must be by her own actions, not by the report of others" (232). Truworth is rightfully concerned for Betsy, albeit somewhat selfishly, but Miss Betsy is willfully determined to form an opinion for herself founded on her own experience, not hearsay. Truworth's warnings are founded in his first-hand knowledge of Miss Forward through his friendship with her lover, Sir Basil, and his advice is wise, as Betsy soon learns.

Betsy disregards Truworth's admonitions and goes out to a play with Miss Forward, where they are seen together by others. Truworth perceives Betsy's stubborn determination to learn the truth for herself as disrespect for his advice, and this incident marks a turning point in Truworth's feelings for Betsy. He finally resigns his hopes "that she would ever, at least while youth and beauty lasted, be brought to a just sensibility of the fashion in which she ought to act" (279). However Truworth's own actions might more justly be called into question. He enjoyed an evening of frivolity with Sir Basil and Miss Forward at Sir Basil's home, knowing full well that Miss Forward was Sir Basil's "lady of pleasure" (227). After breaking off with Betsy, Truworth even enters into his own illicit affair with Flora. As the narrator explains: "They passed their time, till the night was pretty far advanced, in a manner very agreeable to each other, nor parted without reciprocal assurance of renewing this tender intercourse the next day, at the same place" (312). His intentions are never meant to be understood as more than simply enjoying some immediate pleasure without attachment. Thus the hypocrisy of social standards is undeniable. Haywood illustrates this by juxtaposing how easily a woman is condemned for doing what makes a man well-rounded or well adjusted, and demonstrating that the woman might actually be more innocent.

However, Truworth does not seem entirely ignorant of the fact that his actions could warrant censure. He is sensible that his actions need to be kept private, whereas Betsy, more innocently, simply does not realize that her actions may be negatively judged, since she is often too naïve to realize that the people whom she accepts according to their own representations of themselves, like Miss Forward, might be deceiving her.

Betsy's most dangerous fault might be that she naively believes in an unambiguous version of identity that does not need to be different in public and in private.

After visiting Miss Forward in Sir Basil's home, Betsy is misjudged by Truworth's friend as a direct result of her friendship with Miss Forward. This incident illustrates that an incomplete understanding can lead to further misunderstandings and that it is not enough to be virtuous; one must also actively cultivate the appearance of virtue. The reader is made to understand that the appearance of virtue can be secured, and misunderstandings harmful to the reputation avoided, by following the guidelines for conventional behaviour. However, Haywood emphasizes Betsy's desire for agency and autonomy and implies that she must *choose* to alter her behaviour, rather than change because somebody else orders her to do so. According to Locke, reason is an individual's strongest tool in self-formation, and Haywood illustrates the process of reflection guiding reason. The narrator's continual emphasis on Betsy's private reflections highlights her capacity for reason and her capability to modify her self. As the narrator explains, in reference to Betsy's decision to end her friendship with Miss Forward:

Little care as this young lady had seemed to have taken of her reputation, it was notwithstanding very dear to her. – Honour was yet still more dear, and she could not reflect, that what she had done might call the one in question, and how near she had been to having the other irrecoverably lost, without feeling the most bitter agonies. (244)

Betsy immediately cuts all ties with the disreputable young woman, but it is not this moral action that Haywood stresses. Haywood highlights Betsy's independent reasoning and the self-reflection caused by the process of learning the truth of Miss Forward's character for herself. The goal of this novel, according to Patricia Meyer Spacks, is to

instruct “readers about the process as well as the desired consequences of learning” (75). Betsy comes to understand the value of following prescribed guidelines for behaviour and realizes that she must accept that social expectations play a significant role in determining her identity, but she learns this as a result of privately reflecting on the errors of her ways and ultimately through becoming more self-aware.

Betsy learns early on the dangers of being caught alone with men she does not know. However, overcoming her desire to rely entirely upon her own sense of what is right and wrong is a much harder lesson for her to learn. She perseveres, despite the warnings of others, in valuing her own understanding above all. Betsy resists conforming to public expectations of women, but there does seem to be a certain amount of surrender that accompanies her maturity in the end. She both recognizes and abhors the importance placed on the “appearance” of virtue over actual virtue and she clearly values “true worth” in herself as much as in others, yet does she relinquish her stance on this and succumb to the ways that her society governs women?

Haywood seems to promote an understanding of one’s personal emotions and beliefs melded with an acceptance and internalization of what society both expects and demands. This is a more practical goal of being strong enough to make decisions for oneself while still accepting that social determinants are unavoidable and social relations, necessary. Betsy simply outgrows her youthful disregard for how others interpret her. Although she has always concerned herself with others’ feelings, she comes to realize that personal actions do indeed carry unavoidable social consequences. Mr. Goodman, her brother, Francis, and Mr. Truworth all “rescue” Betsy numerous times from social disaster. The narrator describes Betsy’s private reflections after each near-disaster,

revealing a change in Betsy's attitudes from thinking herself cruelly suppressed to considering her good fortune and wondering at her own selfish and foolish behaviour. The final threat to her virtue is the last straw for her brothers, who virtually force her into marriage after they help her avoid rape and ruin. When she afterwards reflects on her very narrow and very fortunate escape, which her brothers have managed to keep from tarnishing her reputation, "so dreadful to her were the apprehensions of becoming the object of derision, that rather than endure it she would suffer any torment" (441), and thus she allows her two brothers and Lady Trusty to persuade her into marriage with Mr. Munden to protect her honour.

Betsy anticipates marriage as a form of self-torment, and thus seems to surrender, or voluntarily suppress, a part of her identity. The narrator describes Mr. Munden being most pleased at "having triumphed over so many difficulties, which had for a long time continually risen to impede his wishes" (493-494), to emphasize that Betsy is submitting, by accepting his proposal of marriage, and also notes "this, indeed, had been the very last effort of all the maiden pride and vanity of Betsy, and Mr. Munden henceforth had no reason to complain of her behaviour towards him" (492). Daniel Defoe has his narrator comment in *Roxana* (1724) that "while a woman was single, she [...] had the full Discretion of what she did [...]; that she was controul'd by none, because accountable to none, and was in Subjection to none" (148-149), but that once married, she gave herself up to be "at best, an *Upper-Servant*" (148). The narrator of *Betsy Thoughtless* echoes this statement on marriage in a passage explaining Munden's attitudes:

Mr. Munden's notions of marriage had always been extremely unfavourable to the ladies; - he considered a wife no more than an upper servant, bound to study and obey, in all things, the will of him to whom she had given her hand; - and how obsequious and submissive soever he

appeared when a lover, had fixed his resolution to render himself absolute master when he became a husband. (507)

Betsy believes that, as an unmarried young woman, the liberties that the narrator of *Roxana* describes are her prerogative, but it is the state of servitude and loss of independent determination in marriage that seems to describe the state Betsy finds herself in under the tyrannical rule of Munden. It is tempting, then, to consider Betsy “broken” by her marriage to Munden. Her spirit seems dampened, but the narrator continues to highlight Betsy’s private moments of self-reflection and to emphasize details that demonstrate that the Betsy the reader has come to know and love remains the same person, and that the changes evident post-marriage may be attributed more to maturation than submission. Legally, Betsy has no power over the couple’s financial assets and traditionally, she has no course for complaining about her husband’s treatment of her. These facts force her to awaken to the constrictive reality of her gender but do not withhold her from seeking her own methods for retaining some amount of control in the marriage and over the expression of her individuality. It is under the constraints of marriage that Betsy truly discovers her capacity for autonomy. She understands the expectations she is subject to and the legal restrictions confining her and still finds ways to express her independent will. She is forced to reflect on her situation in a way that she may discover means to express her individuality in the face of such institutional and cultural restrictions, but she more significantly discovers that her own values are not in discordance with what her society values. Betsy learns from Lady Trusty’s advice how to manipulate her husband into providing her a larger domestic budget by proving to him that it is impossible to entertain his guests according to his demands on the little he affords her. Although she cannot affect Munden’s temperament, she does learn to alter

how he treats her. Betsy simply learns that she must accept the things she cannot change, and creatively modify what she can.

The narrator assures readers that, despite adjustments Betsy willingly makes to her behaviour, her character remains unscathed, but this does not mean unchanged. Haywood draws attention to the self's capacity for change through personal growth. Betsy's trials and tribulations as a married woman illustrate the potential to learn from one's experiences while being subject to obligations to act according to certain expectations. Her actions as a married woman, both with her husband and when faced with the advances of another man, demonstrate self-command. The reader witnesses Betsy's adjustment from a flighty, self-motivated young woman to "the best of wives" (531), determined to live according to the expectations of a good wife in order to pacify her undeserving husband. Initially, Betsy performs the role of "the best of wives" in an obviously loveless marriage. However, the irony of this title is progressively lost as Betsy internalizes her gender construct and morally reforms herself to epitomize this role both inwardly and outwardly. Yet the narrator is quick to assure the reader that "she still retained some part of that gaiety and love of a variety of conversation, which had always been a predominant propensity in her nature" (532). Even when Betsy promises Lady Trusty that she will submit to her wifely duties after Munden brutally kills her beloved pet squirrel during an argument, she qualifies this by adding that she will continue to live with Mr. Munden in separate bedrooms until "a very great alteration in his behaviour shall oblige me to think I ought, in gratitude, to make some change in mine" (524). The narrator thus insists that Betsy remains true to her self, something that is further emphasized when Betsy learns of her husband's affair with her brother's mistress.

Despite having resigned herself to living as Mr. Munden's wife, when Betsy learns of her husband's infidelity, she promptly resolves to remove herself from their house, regardless of the opinions of others.

Upon making this discovery, and in the midst of personal tumult, Betsy sets her own interest aside to concern herself with the honour of her eldest brother, who is in danger of facing his own social disaster as a result of the actions of his unfaithful mistress. Betsy spurs Mr. Thoughtless to action, stating "no, it is your own honour, for which alone I am concerned, and that I think requires you should send her to a monastery" (580). Mr. Thoughtless had originally met this woman prior to her being sent off to a monastery and she happily made herself his mistress as opposed to submitting to the life of a nun. Since the woman has no home and family to return to, the most viable option is to offer to pay to send her to the monastery for which she was originally destined. This reversal of roles, as the sister attends to the honour of the brother, demonstrates that Betsy has finally come to accept that not only our own actions, but also the actions of those we have social connections with, carry social ramifications that affect us.

Betsy's actions in leaving her adulterous husband suggest the importance of finding a balance between the need for social approval and the need to live up to one's own understanding and sentiments. Haywood thus shows that Betsy continues to act on her own ideas when she sees fit, but since late in the novel she only does so for matters of true importance, she reveals a stronger sense of personal morals and convictions than she had in her obstinate youth. Haywood rewards Betsy's action of leaving her unfaithful husband by giving her friends such as Lady Loveit who fully support her decision and

proclaim, in what reads to modern readers as a proto-feminist assertion, “that though she was extremely sorry for the occasion, yet she thought if she had acted otherwise, it would have been an injustice not only to herself, but to all wives in general, by setting them an example of submitting to things required of them neither by law nor nature” (595). Shea Stuart, in “Subversive Didacticism,” argues that “Haywood’s portrait of marital discord is vivid enough to convince readers of Betsy’s position. [...] Haywood takes great care to ensure the reader’s good opinion of Betsy: she at the same time subversively criticizes common male behaviour and educates wives in their options” (572). In Betsy’s strong-willed action, Haywood highlights the importance of self-awareness and of having the desire and the courage to be true to one’s self.

Betsy’s self-willed and internally motivated agency propel her actions to the end. After she is widowed, and after the appropriate period of mourning, she accepts Mr. Truworth’s marriage proposal also without advice, albeit knowing this union would be joyfully accepted by her friends. Stuart argues unjustly that Betsy “plays by the rules of the conduct book, thoughtlessly following their trusty advice, and is finally rewarded with a ‘good man,’ yet she becomes broken in the end, a product of polite society and integrated into a patriarchal plot” (573). As always, the narrator emphasizes Betsy’s private reflections, illustrating that she no longer acts thoughtlessly. The narrator highlights Betsy’s careful consideration of her every action as a widow, proving that although Betsy does follow proper decorum for public behaviour as a widow, she only acts according to what she feels is in correspondence with her own private beliefs. Yes, Betsy does retire for her year of mourning to Lady Trusty’s library where she reads conduct books, but she also continues a private correspondence with Mr. Truworth,

remaining “proper” at all times, but also securing their mutual love and ensuring he will wait for her. She chooses to wait the socially determined proper period of mourning because she recognizes and accepts the importance of propriety. She has learned the necessity of proving her genuine virtue through her behaviour. This does not illustrate submission; it suggests an integration of social determinants with personal values in expression of self. Haywood achieves what Brophy considers that the novel as a genre helped secure, that being an improvement in “the self-image of eighteenth-century women by showing them capable of being heroines of their own stories, by admiring intelligence in women, by depicting more humane models of marriage, by condemning sexual transgressions in marriage, and by treating women as interesting and important beings in their own right (267).

Catherine Ingrassia notes that with texts such as *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Haywood “simultaneously supported and critiqued the dominant ideology inscribed in social, economic, and discursive practices” (109), adding that *Betsy Thoughtless* “tests generic and gendered expectations as it attempts to reconstitute the experience of the novel” (110). By examining the effects of traditional gender expectations on the private and public life of an individual, Haywood raises awareness of social beliefs and practices, but also promotes awareness of the ideology and understanding of the self. The idea of learning from others is a concept which the novel as a genre developed. The novel took the private lives of individuals and made them public so that others could learn from the experiences of these fictional characters. Haywood takes this one step further in *Betsy Thoughtless*, showing readers how individuals can learn from their own experiences.

The narrator takes it as her task to reveal the true identity of Miss Betsy in all of its complexities, and its ability to change. The narrator repeatedly stresses the young Betsy's "innocence" in the predicaments she finds herself in and later continuously works to demonstrate that Betsy's individuality remains, despite all the modifications to her behaviour. The result of repeatedly having her intentions misread and finding herself in misadventures and faced with potential threats to her virtue is losing her honourable suitor, Mr. Trueworth, and being forced into a disastrous marriage. Haywood thus appeals to the reader's sense of empathy while also making the heroine of this novel recognizable in her most private thoughts and sentiments. Empathy can evoke self-knowledge by stirring private reflection in the reader and thus helps the reader simultaneously learn about his/her self through reading and sympathizing with Miss Betsy.

Betsy's ongoing plight is with the conflict between the social necessity of appearing virtuous and actually being virtuous, which she is forced to realize may not be the same thing. Under the institutional constraints of marriage, Betsy finally comes to accept the role that social determinants have in contributing to her identity. She comes to accept that the desire to be deemed virtuous by others necessarily takes into account society's expectations; however, actually being virtuous demands an awareness of sentiments, motivations, and an understanding of one's social relationships. As readers witness Betsy struggle to come to terms with accepting that part of her definition of self necessarily includes how others perceive her, they learn along with Betsy that a truly independent definition of self is not only unrealistic, but impossible. Betsy learns, though her solitary reflection, to make her behaviour suit the expectations that she cannot escape.

However, her private reflections have also made her more self-aware, and have taught her the value of being true to her own beliefs and sentiments. Barclay argues that “values may well play a significant role in autonomous agency,” but they must also “to some extent be subject to the self’s autonomous scrutiny” (65). Betsy’s values are compatible with society’s values and thus, since she has managed, either by good management or good luck to avoid harm to her reputation, she is allowed to form a version of self that Barclay would consider autonomous.

Conclusion

On Saturday, May 26, 1705, Defoe published an address in his *Review* to the Gentlemen of the Clergy, emphasizing that the members of the clergy are “but Men, and the Infirmities, Frailties, and Passions of other Men, are Contingent to them, in Common to the rest” (Defoe, *Review* II.4.141). Defoe insists that “God has thought fit to commit Instruction not to the Ministration of Angels, but to Men of like Passions with our selves” (Defoe, *Review* II.4.142), arguing that the heads of social institutions, including those men with supposed supreme moral authority, are but mere individuals. He emphasizes that we are all imperfect individuals who necessarily have weaknesses and flaws, but implies that since we share common human traits and passions, we can learn from each other. Defoe’s arguments help us see how novels can build upon the subjective details of an individual account as experiences in common, that link us to others and facilitates learning from each other. Novels make the privacy of individual lives public, granting readers insight into the behaviours and sentiments of fictional characters so that a thoughtful reader or audience may learn from the mistakes others make and the examples they set. The whole point of revealing the imperfections, foibles, mishaps, misdeeds, and misadventures of imaginary characters is to ask the reader to judge the actions and motivations of those whom they read about. This type of private reflection stirs the reader to learn what he or she feels is acceptable, moral, approvable, ethical, and what is not, thereby making the reader more self-aware. Jerrold Seigel, in *The Idea of the Self*, shows that literary culture in the eighteenth century, most notably through the new genre of novels, served as a site where “the relations established between readers, characters, and authors in this correspondence constituted a ground on which the readers pursued

their self-formation” (165), arguing that “readers of sentimental novels were engaged in a solitary activity from which they expected at once release from their solitude and greater self-knowledge, in both cases because reading simultaneously offered immersion in one’s own feelings and communion with others” (165). We empathize with the character and relate on a personal level; thus, the power of example affects us on an intimate, individual level. Because reading is open to personal interpretation, the reader experiences a private sense of communion and discovers meaning in a way that is personally applicable.

Readers observed how the public actions of characters could solidify or potentially destroy their place in society, and thereby found instruction in the social consequences of a variety of actions and learned what is culturally accepted. Novels focused on the private stresses these characters endured in their efforts to be accepted, teaching readers to become more acutely aware of their own feelings. Writers experimented with contemporary theories of the self through fictional characters who provided examples through their actions that helped to shape the reader’s self-knowledge.

The conflict between society and self, or essentially the “blurring” of the two, was becoming clearer than ever as novels began placing emphasis on the individual passions and motivations of characters who were inevitably torn between their private compulsion to fulfill their own desires and feeling obligated to behave according to social expectations. This awareness sets us up as divided selves, struggling between our own private sentiments and what we have internalized as necessary for social approval. Modern philosophers still view human life “as determined by factors outside the control of individual will” (Seigel 130). Seigel argues that humans are naturally reflective and that such “reflectivity allows [us] to address and in some degree deal with the tensions or

conflicts between what biology demands and what social and cultural existence imposes or allows” (17), thereby imposing a task on the individual will to integrate this sense of social responsibility with one’s awareness of private desires and sentiments. When one is successful at this task, Linda Barclay argues, autonomy is possible. Barclay interprets autonomy as an individual’s conscious self-governing based on that individual’s understanding of social demands and expectations; that we make decisions on how to act according to our internalized understanding of how our actions will be perceived by others. Dan Zahavi agrees, arguing that “who one is depends on the values, ideals, and goals one has; it is a question of what has significance and meaning for one, and this, of course, is conditioned by the community of which one is part. Thus [...] one cannot be a self on one’s own, but only together with others” (105). Integrating social relationships into a conception of the self, however, has proven necessary but problematic for philosophers since formal ideas of the self began to be theorized.

Philosophical debates since the late seventeenth century instigated public discussions and new understandings of the self as its own thinking, feeling being while simultaneously arousing awareness about the impact of an individual’s social relations upon the formation of the self. Seigel demonstrates how Locke, Mandeville, Hume, and Smith all theorized that the self is relational. Locke believed that “the question of personal identity was a question of moral responsibility, it made each individual answerable for his or her life before the proper authorities, human and divine” (95). Seigel explains that Locke assumes that there is an actively self-referential component of identity that requires an individual reflect on personal actions and desires and compare him/herself to others. Locke theorized that individuals have a consciousness that gives to

each person two things: “a concern for what befalls him, and an awareness that his selfhood extends to all the actions that are recognizably his own” (95). Thus an individual not only has a sense of self-determination, but also feels a responsibility to act according to what is expected of him/her. According to Locke, this consciousness and reflectivity drives an individual’s reason. The power of independent reason is what Barclay, writing in the twentieth century, later claims makes it possible for us to achieve autonomy despite the influence of social determinants. She builds on Locke’s theories, hypothesizing that we individually integrate our internalizations of social demands and the expectations of others with our independent desires and decide, through our own reasoning, what action is suitable for what situation. The act of knowledgeably weighing our options and deciding how best to behave, based on our individual assessment, is what makes us autonomous. True autonomy, Barclay emphasizes, is not being free of social determinants, it is being aware of the unavoidability of these social influences and harmonizing these with our own desires. Locke anticipates this modern direction, hypothesizing, as Seigel usefully summarizes, that “as society develops, relations with others, including constituted authorities, increasingly fix the obligations and limits of the self, but the original kernel of pre-social selfhood, at once natural and reflective, survives as the underlying basis of personal identity” (107). Thus reflectivity is the basis of our reasoning and the keystone of our self-awareness.

But reason can also be driven by more selfish, egotistical concerns. Following Locke’s musings on reason, early in the eighteenth century Mandeville argues the theatricality of human behaviour, arguing that people merely publicly emulate, according to “a firm resolution of mind” whatever behaviour “the hopes of preferment” dictate

(Mandeville 86). Mandeville's theory illustrates the unavoidable pressures and dictates of social relations on the behaviour of an individual. And since our social memberships determine public and private conceptions of our identity, we are all subject to concerns, on some level, with how others see us. Mandeville takes Locke's notion that we all feel answerable for our actions in another direction, hypothesizing that this accountability is actually just a selfish desire to be seen in the best light possible by others. The theatricality that he sees as resulting from this selfish desire provides a logical application and easy transition to fiction. Nor was Mandeville the last philosopher to explore this idea. Terence Penelhum explains Hume's conception that the motive of obtaining a desired response from our social networks is the "source of our moral judgments, [and] provides us with a motive (that of duty) which is the prime source of moral conduct" (Penelhum 15). We become motivated by our perceived need for social approval and our duty to earn it. E.J. Hundert explains that 'the only mirror in which [a] person can view his character "is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with"' (Porter 80), thereby demonstrating the interdependent relationship between the self and society. It is impossible for us, as social beings and members of society to act free of external determinations, if we are to maintain our membership in that society. Seigel takes Hume's theories one step further, arguing that

Free acts are those that are done without coercion, but by people whose will has been formed in a world where necessity operates everywhere [...] Human liberty is compatible with being subject to the forces and influences that combine to make us the persons we are. What is incompatible with freedom is to have one's will determined by some other will, by some other person who constrains us to act in ways we do not ourselves choose. In that situation we are neither free nor responsible, whereas the intelligent agent who inhabits a world of cause-and-effect relations can be regarded as both. (130)

The impact of social relations on the self becomes a hot topic for philosophers and novelists alike. Novels began to build on the importance of social relations through their focus on the development of an individual mind. They made the individual the focus of detailed attention and examined how social relations affect the individual on a private level. Novels dramatized how individuals often perceive a need to adapt to conventions and how reason often gives way to social pressures.

Narrative experimentation with the individual experience allowed for greater understanding of the self, but the self cannot be understood on its own, and so novelists began to increasingly balance an incorporated critique of the attitudes that governed society at large. McKeon states that “the genre of the novel can be understood comprehensively as an early modern cultural instrument designed to confront, on the level of the narrative form and content, both intellectual and social crises simultaneously” (20). The intellectual crisis was understanding the self, while the social crisis was learning to accept and deal with the unavoidable social influences on the self. Novelists revealed and critiqued in an effort not to resolve conflict, but to render it more discernable. They experimented with variations of public behaviours and played out suppositions of how fictional characters would be socially accepted, according to the decisions those characters made. In doing so, novelists highlighted the private implications on the individual, of the social approval or disapproval a fictional character met with as a result of his/her actions, thereby illustrating society’s influence on one’s sense of self. Since readers come to know and empathize with these fictional characters, this feeling of fellowship can leave us frighteningly aware of the thin line between our actions being deemed virtuous by others, or censurable and disastrous to the reputation.

Self-command can be negatively understood as required obedience to social expectations and traditions. Both Defoe's narrator in *Roxana* and Haywood's Betsy seem to interpret the requirement for self-command as such. This understanding accepts that social pressures weigh heavily on us and involves an awareness that private desires and sentiments may be in conflict with social demands. Defoe and Haywood illustrate that the self is a dynamic and ongoing construction that is under constant revision, but also that the forces of society can be very stifling and destructive to this construction. The narrator of *Roxana* can never reach a correlation between the desires she chooses to act on, such as her egocentric economic interests, and the conventional expectations for her gender, and thus she struggles with a permanently divided self. Betsy, on the other hand, has desires more in unison with traditional attitudes and thus never experiences the extent of division that Defoe's narrator does. Despite the differences, however, they both struggle with how to grant importance to their own beliefs and express their individuality in a world that seems to want to eradicate both.

The eighteenth-century novel, indeed the novel as a genre, was built on the development of character. This focus on an individual granted significance to individuality, which Watt argues is a major accomplishment of the eighteenth-century novel, but it simultaneously required an attention to social relations. The self does not exist in isolation and thus a detailed description of a fictional self had to merge what made a character an individual with what made that individual a member of society. Thus the private and public spheres were merged within the individual, often resulting in an internal clash between individuality and conforming to expectations. Defoe's narrator removes herself from her community and attempts to be a self on her own. She,

eventually, is forced to realize that it is impossible to have a whole conception of self in isolation, that she is connected to her social relations despite her wishes or best efforts, and that it is impossible for one to conceive of a complete conception of identity without factoring in what others think. Betsy moves from wanting and trying to be a self on her own, independent of the superficial judgments of others, to uniting her personal values with those of her society. Betsy forms a version of self, in the end, that is in correlation with her society, but still maintains individuality. Thus, her version of autonomy, although perhaps not meeting today's standards of self-government, does aptly depict what we may assume with some certainty can classify as autonomy in her time.

The eighteenth-century novel conveys something about the difficulties women face in that society. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy argues that it “gained respectability in large part because it was thought that its focus on the true rather than the fantastic made it an instrument for imparting knowledge and encouraging moral improvement” (233). She explains that eighteenth-century novels “did usually depict women who would be recognizably realistic to their actual women readers. Sometimes their adventures might seem unusual, but their characters and personalities, their fears and aspirations, would have seemed to ‘exhibit life in its true state’” (267). Eighteenth-century society had many expectations for public behaviour, and these were particularly restricting to women. As the century progressed, social relations had a progressively greater impact on moral formation as social restrictions on behaviour become tighter. This is evident in what was being published. Although Jonathan Barry cautions us not to presume too much about historical culture from the published material we are left with as evidence, he does conclude that the eighteenth-century ideals for reading included a “resolutely didactic

approach” that justified “reading in terms of morals learnt and examples set” (85). Barry interests himself with women readers in particular, suggesting that women who read novels shared the ability to “read ‘against the grain’, finding meaning and inspiration for themselves even in apparently conventional ‘patriarchal’ writings, and on the pressure that women as potential consumers could put on writers to offer them material amenable to such readings” (86). Novels in the mid- to later- eighteenth century illustrate the tighter restrictions and more specific expectations for feminine behaviour. We can see how some of the social criticisms novelists raise are worked through, particularly concerning the anxiety about feminine behaviour, in their novels.

Richardson’s *Pamela* (1744), often considered the first novel, is a study in proper moral formation and conduct. However, the detailed emphasis Richardson provides into Pamela’s private reflections illustrates the significance she gives her own understanding, and the importance she grants her personal beliefs. Brophy argues that “Richardson’s heroines [...] each insist that women must give their loyalty first to themselves, to their own integrity and to their own codes of values” (238). Haywood implies the same message through her heroine, Betsy. However, Brophy qualifies this insistence by describing that “their society is not willing to allow these claims, believing instead that a daughter’s first duty is obedience and a wife’s is submissiveness” (238). Defoe and Haywood address this concern with heroines who are aware of the limitations their society imposes and struggle to find some means for self-expression amid the social restraints they know they cannot change. The sort of questions explored by Defoe and Haywood and the techniques that they use reappear in fiction later in the century. Nearing the nineteenth century, novels increasingly focused on stringent social

expectations, supposedly guiding their readers in suitable moral formation, but instructing female readers to always reflect on their actions and be true to their personal values. As we learn from Defoe's narrator and Haywood's Betsy, when an individual's personal values coincide with society's values, that individual can integrate her private sense of self with how she is socially perceived. It is this integration that Defoe's and Haywood's novels instruct readers to strive for. Their novels instruct readers in the contemporary philosophies of the self and illustrate ways in which the self and society intersect within the individual.

As the century advances and understandings of society's limitations on the self increase alongside the actual increased constraints on behaviour, novels place a stronger importance on cultivating personal values. Watt calls Jane Austen Richardson's successor in the study of moral formation (210), arguing that nineteenth-century novels typified "the sharp knowing in apartness" that distinguished personality from character and disrupted the "harmony" illustrated in earlier eighteenth-century novels (209). Novels in the nineteenth century, such as Austen's, took the emphasis off of social relations to focus minutely on personality. But as we have learned from earlier novels including Defoe's and Haywood's, personality does not exist independent of social relations and is thus not distinguishable without considering the impact of one's social relations on how that individual functions in public and private. Thus, this reading of Defoe's *Roxana* and Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* not only helps provide an understanding of the kinds of issues women faced in the eighteenth century with correlating their private sense of self with how they were socially perceived, but also

proves very useful for reading novels that follow, into the nineteenth century and even today.

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