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Secret servants: Household domestics and courtship in Eliza Haywood's fiction

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Secret Servants:
Household Domestics and Courtship in Eliza Haywood's Fiction

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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I dedicate this Masters Thesis to my daughter, Chloe Elizabeth Sysk.

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ABSTRACT

In Eliza Haywood's fiction, as in eighteenth-century Britain, social restrictions repress the sexual desires of upper class women and men. Therefore, the secret desires of this social class often rely on a different group: domestic servants. Sometimes acting as confidants and other times as active players in the scheming, these servants are privy to the inner secrets of the households in which they live. In Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719), *Lasselia* (1723), *Fantomina* (1725), and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), the servant class plays significant roles in the narratives.

Since the role of the servant is the central issue in my interpretation of Haywood's works, the historical background of the relationship between master and servant in the eighteenth-century is significant to my investigation. Conduct books, a popular genre of the times, were written to offer practical instruction to domestic servants. Haywood's *A Present for A Servant Maid; or the Sure Means of gaining Love and Esteem* (1743), offers a view of Haywood's own attitude toward the servant class.

In addition to her career as a writer of amorous intrigue, Haywood worked as both actress and playwright, and, because of her experience, elements of the stage can be seen in her works. I explore the influence of the theatre in Haywood's fiction and connect it to the prominent role of servants in her work.

Though Haywood demonstrates that the servants' loyalty can be bought for the highest price, they are not ruled by the same sexual passion as are their employers. This area is of particular interest to my study. I explore whether the motive of financial gain is greater than sexual desire, or whether it is an awareness that aristocrats are not truly available to the servant class that accounts for the differences in erotic responses. Additionally, I explore how servants affect Haywood's narrative by acting as agents of change and argue that the social restrictions placed on the upper class and the awareness of the sexual freedoms the servant class bring master and servant closer together.

Chapter One

Historical Background

MASTER/SERVANT RELATIONSHIP

In the eighteenth-century, servants were a significant part of English society. What has often been seen as the growth of the middle classes as a result of commercial and industrial expansion caused an accelerated growth in domestic service (Hecht 1). The number of servants a household maintained was a sign of social status; therefore, as middle class society grew more capable of hiring these workers, the upper-class felt greater pressure to enlarge the number of servants they employed. This high demand placed servants in a unique position as they became one of the largest “occupational groups in eighteenth-century England” (1). Consequently, domestic servants gained the power to be more selective in their employment, and once the households were chosen, opportunities for further control increased. In order to understand the integral part that servants play in Eliza Haywood’s fiction, it is necessary to take a detailed look at the historical background of the relationship between master and servant in the eighteenth-century.

In his seminal work *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England*, J. Jean Hecht points out that “the liberal gratuities [a servant] received from visitors and tradesmen likewise augmented his independence, for by freeing him from complete reliance on his master’s bounty they permitted him to be less mindful of his master’s wishes” (78). Rising in social status, or at the very least in wealth, became a possibility,

and “conditions [were] obtained that encouraged servants to assert themselves” (78). At times “servants were highly insubordinate,” and it was commonly believed that they “tended to exploit their places to the full” (Hecht 80). Though referred to by Hecht as exploitation, the change in servant behavior can be accounted for in part by the shift from “the old paternalistic relationship between masters and servants...to a contractual one” (Hill 5). In other words, the relationship between master and servant increasingly became that of employer and employee, allowing the servant further agency.

There is conflicting information as to what the relationships between master and servant were really like. Hecht reminds readers that “little of what servants committed to paper has survived”; therefore the bulk of his material concerning servants “derives from the employer class” and “some of it naturally reflects the prejudices of that group” (xi). Even within the accounts of employers, there are varying perspectives; however, one expectation remains consistent throughout: servants were to guard their masters’ secrets.

In *Not in Front of the Servants: A True Portrait of English Upstairs/Downstairs Life*, Frank Dawes writes that “the upper class relied on the total discretion of those who served them, a trust that was rarely misplaced” (26). Although Dawes suggests that the majority of servants were loyal to those they served, it is clear that much of society thought differently. Restricting female servants from socializing outside of the household was not only an attempt to avoid pregnancy or marriage, but also to limit the spreading of gossip (Hill 54). Dawes illustrates the lack of respect employers had for their servants’ privacy: “Employers sometimes opened letters addressed to their servants to find out if they were keeping any secrets” (14). But, perhaps the secrets they expected to discover were their own.

Hecht writes that “the average English employer was so aware of being observed and had such deference for the opinion of his servant that he regulated his conduct with him constantly in mind” (207). Servants were expected to guard their master’s secrets, “defend his good name against calumny and hostile criticism, and in general make his interests their own” (75). Domestic servants observed their masters’ actions, and contrary to Dawes’ earlier statement, often had opportunities to use the information to their advantage. Control of their master’s secrets coupled with increased opportunities for financial gain resulted in greater negotiating power and, ultimately, more freedom for the servant class.

Paula M. Humphrey’s collection of female servants’ depositions, from the records of the Court of Arches in Canterbury, demonstrates awareness that servants had an incomparable insight into the lives of their masters. Servants served as “important witnesses in matrimonial and testamentary suits” which often put them in difficult positions (53). Humphrey writes that the deposition narratives “strongly suggest that protecting one’s own reputation while gathering knowledge about others must have been central to female servants’ management of their working lives” (55). The testimonies often contradict one another and include evidence of bribery.

Relationships between master and servants varied; however, close living conditions inevitably led to intimate relationships (friendly as well as carnal) between upper-class men and women and their employees. A female servant found herself in a precarious situation if the recipient of her master’s sexual advances. Hill observes that servants were “well aware that their whole future—both economic and marital—lay in their employer’s hands” (47). If a servant became pregnant, she was often fired without a

reference that would assist her in acquiring another job, and “if her family refused to take her in, she was faced with the alternative of the workhouse or prostitution” (Dawes 40). These servants were to serve their masters and could not completely turn down their advances, yet they were aware of what they could lose if they succumbed. In *Servants: English Domestic in the Eighteenth Century*, Bridget Hill writes that a large majority of servants “were young, single girls, away from their family, their friends, and relations” (44). These circumstances added further to their vulnerability. Haywood’s conduct book, which I discuss at the end of this chapter, offers advice for avoiding these disastrous situations.

Female domestic servants were not only exposed to the desires of their masters, but sexual advances from other servants also occurred frequently. Hill comments that “it would be foolish to try to claim that all women servants were victims of men’s seduction. Many voluntarily entered into sexual liaisons” (63). Though this observation seems commonplace from a modern day perspective, a servant girl in the eighteenth-century would find it difficult to acknowledge. Servants were discouraged from having families of their own and were often more accepting of sexual liberty than those they served because of greater societal restrictions on the upper class. However, in addition to the risk of pregnancy, women suffered greater consequences when relations were exposed: “if rumours of liaisons between their male and female servants reached the ears of their employers it was usually the woman who was dismissed” (59). Neither the servant/servant relationship, nor the master/servant relationship offered a solution for a girl who found herself pregnant. The impulse to avoid public and private shame and to

avoid losing their jobs caused many servant girls to abort the child or commit infanticide (61). The predicament was without a good solution.

Clearly, sexual relationships were not unusual, and although discussed less, mistresses were also involved with male servants. Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, a satire of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, portrays Lady Booby's pursuit of her footman, Joseph. If the deposition of Frances Lamb, a servant maid, serves as an example, servant men were less chastised for their involvement with employers. After witnessing her mistress, Mrs. Weston, in bed naked with servant Frank Alchin "lying upon her," Lamb tells the court: "... [I] did soon after...talk what [I] had seen to several of the apprentices and servants in the neighborhood, and they used to laugh at Frank about lying with his mistress" (64). Lamb's statement conveys the different standards for men and women; affairs with male servants provoke laughter, while female servants who have affairs with their masters result in unemployment or worse. This disparity between male and female servants mirrors the sexual liberties allowed to upper class men and the sexual limitations placed on upper class women. Additionally, it is important to note that the number of male servants a household maintained added to a master's social standing (Hill 31). Furthermore, Lamb's deposition confirms a master's fear that servants not only observe behaviors, but also share their secrets.

Intimate relationships did not always involve sexual liaisons. For example, the job of a lady's maid, also known as a waiting-woman, was the personal attendance of her woman which involved companionship at home (Hecht 61). Despite class differences, close bonds were often created by this constant company. Hecht states "upper-class ladies sometimes invited well-bred but necessitous women to live with them so that they might

continually be provided with agreeable company (62). He adds that both parties were often “more completely involved in the relationship thus established than the terms of the contract suggested (72). As a result, these household domestics, who frequently acted as confidants, acquired unique insight into the lives of their mistresses. Ciamara and her maid Brione in Haywood’s *Love in Excess* reflect this type of relationship.

Once servants recognized their potential power, they often utilized their positions to help themselves. Hecht states that “as a member of the household, [a servant] had an unparalleled opportunity to acquire the knowledge essential to successful imitation. He could observe his master at close range; he could observe him for protracted periods” (206). Servants frequently wore the clothes their employers no longer wanted, making it more and more difficult to distinguish between the classes. Daniel Defoe’s error of kissing the hand of a servant who he confused as a member of his own status caused him much distress (Perkins 105). Some employers “sought to impose the extensive control and exact the perfect allegiance to which in theory he was entitled,” and servants were often criticized for being insubordinate (Hecht 77). As Haywood exemplifies in her work, employers could similarly observe and imitate their servants, using the servants’ manner of dress and rebellious behavior to their advantage.

HAYWOOD’S *A PRESENT FOR A SERVANT MAID*

In an attempt to manage “the servant problem,” conduct books, a popular genre of the times, were written to offer practical instruction to domestic servants. Haywood’s *A Present for A Servant Maid; or the Sure Means of gaining Love and Esteem* (1743), which consists of rules for behavior as well as instruction for shopping, cooking, and

cleaning, was one of her most popular works, going through at least seven editions in six years (Spedding 402). It is important to note that the work was later expanded and retitled, *A New Present for a Servant-Maid* (1771), fifteen years after Haywood's death. Spedding speculates that the revisions were not completed by Haywood, but rather an anonymous compiler hired by her publisher, Thomas Gardener (413). The expanded version, reduces the section titled, "Necessary Cautions and Precepts to Servant-Maids" to less than half its original size and extends the cooking section by two hundred pages (412). In this chapter, I focus on the original text, *A Present for a Servant Maid* (1743).

In the preface, Haywood states that following her advice "cannot fail of making every Mistress of a Family perfectly contented, and every Servant-Maid both happy and beloved" (4). Though the work focuses on servant behavior, Haywood repeatedly places blame on employers, beginning in the preface: "Corruption, tho' it begins at the Head, ceases not its Progress till it reaches the most inferior Parts" (4). Sub-sections which center on avoiding advances of masters, master's sons, and gentlemen lodgers, criticize men who use power to "satisfy [their] brutal Appetite" (46). Additionally, mistresses "who permit Indecency in [their] House[s]" are also culpable (49). Haywood's "present" is perhaps the rare suggestion that employers take partial responsibility for poor relationships with their servants.

"Necessary Cautions and Precepts to Servant-Maids" begins with a "Caution against bad Houses," which warns the "modest maid" to enquire into the places where she seeks employment before she is hired because in some homes "are too frequently acted such Scenes of Debauchery, as would startle even the Owners of common Brothels" (6). Haywood describes the fate of "pretty Girls who come to Town to go to

Service” only to find themselves “ensnared into the Service of the Devil” (6). The dark tale of a servant girl “who prefers the Preservation of her Virtue to all Promises can be made her,” but still cannot escape prostitution, illustrates the importance of researching the character of an employer (6). Again, she removes blame from the employees and directs it instead towards employers. Furthermore, Haywood’s advice acknowledges that servants observe, and share with other servants, the behavior of their masters and mistresses.

Haywood dedicates several sections to the spreading of gossip. In “Telling the Affairs of the Family,” her caution bears a strong resemblance to what often occurs in fiction:

Things that may seem to you Matters of perfect Indifference, may happen to prove of great importance to those concerned in them, and sometimes a single Word, inadvertently let fall, may so coincide with what has been said by others, as to give room to Prying People for Conjectures, which you are not aware of. (13)

She further advises servants “to be extremely circumspect how [they] mention [the] Humour, Circumstances, or Behavior” of their masters and mistresses (13). This warning highlights the power servants have in the telling of a story, and consequently, over their masters.

Haywood continues to stress the value of silence in subsequent sections. Under the heading “Secrets among Fellow-Servants,” she tells the young servant maid that “when any two [servants] are observed to be continually whispering, it not only raises a Jealousy in the rest, but also is apt to give your Master and Mistress a Suspicion that you are carrying on something to their Detriment” (14). “Entering into their Quarrels” and

“Giving Opinion too Freely” emphasize the importance of remaining out of employers’ affairs for interfering is “sure to incur the Displeasure of one Party, and often both” (14). Similar to her advice against telling the affairs of the family, in “Tale-Bearing,” she reminds readers that words “carry a stronger Meaning when repeated by another” (14). Haywood’s fictional servants repeatedly function as tale-bearers whose words carry the intensity she recommends avoiding.

That maintaining virtue may consume much of a servant maid’s time is apparent, beginning with the section titled “Chastity” and continuing with six pages that follow. She tells young servant girls that “going as frequently as [they] can to hear Sermons, and reading the Holy Scripture, and other good Books” will inform them of “how great the Sin is of yielding to any unlawful Sollicitations” (44). However, awareness of sin, according to Haywood, is not enough. Maids must be “strictly virtuous in rejecting all the Temptations offered...but likewise prudent in the Manner of doing it” (45). The remaining sections teach servant girls how to vary their denials “according to the different Characters of the Persons who solicit [them]” (45). In other words, she directs servant girls to perform different roles when necessary.

Haywood begins with a circumstance “which happens but too frequently”: “Temptations from your Master” (45). She notes the differences required if the master be single or married and, with her subtle humor concludes that “Greater Caution is still to be observed, if he is a Married man” (47). A servant requires great skill to deny the advances of a married man, and though Haywood does not directly state that prior subsections such as “Lying” and “Giving Opinion too Freely” must be disregarded, her advice insinuates that it is necessitous in this extreme case. If a servant finds it difficult to avoid the

persistent pursuit of her master, then she may speak freely and “give [him] Warning” (47). However, she must “be very careful not to let [her] Mistress know” (47). In this case, a servant must lie to her mistress for her own preservation.

The greatest trial of a maid-servant’s virtue ensues when tempted by a master’s son. Flattery and gifts as well as “the Offer of a Settlement for Life” or a promise of marriage, seduce servants who have avoided all other situations (48). Following the release of Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*, published three years prior, Haywood notes that “such Matches have sometimes happened”; however, “examples of this kind are very rare, and as seldom happy” (48). Haywood elaborates on the fateful results of such occurrences:

Such a Disparity of Birth, of Circumstances, and Education can produce no lasting Harmony; and where you see such Couples paired, all the Comfort they enjoy are mere outside Show; and tho’ they may wear a Face of Contentment, to blind the Eyes of the World, and keep them from prying into the Merits of their choice, their Bosoms are full of Disquiet and Repining. Suffer not, therefore, your Hearts, much less your Innocence, to be tempted with a Prospect wherein the best that can arrive is bad enough. (49).

Haywood’s warning provides insight as to why the servants in her fiction are able to refuse upper class men. She is emphatic in her advice to deny their sexual advances, and her fictional servants in *Love in Excess* avoid this fate she describes.

Haywood lists “Gentlemen Lodgers” as yet another group of men whose sexual advances servants must circumvent. Nevertheless, though servants who “give any Ear at first to the Sollicitations” or yield to the “Act of Shame” will be “accounted a Jilt” and

lose their job, this consequence is less severe than if the servant gives in to her master's son (49). Love is a factor, and servant girls who fall in love with their master's son live in despair: "Eternal Ruin; every Misery you endure rendered more severe by the Strings of Disappointment, and a too late Repentence (49). A young maid must stay in control to avoid an unhappy fate.

The first section of Haywood's conduct book concludes with a reminder of the advantages of remaining with the same family for at least eight years at which point a servant maid "will be then of a fit Age to marry" (50). Constancy, lacking in most of the male characters in Haywood's fiction, is a valuable characteristic of the domestic class. According to Haywood, servants who follow her advice, succeed in being "both valuable and happy" with their own husband and children (50), a desire that crosses class lines.

Part two of Haywood's conduct book, "Directions for a Young Woman to qualify herself for any Common Service," offers instruction for skills a servant maid will likely have to perform (51). Haywood includes advice for selecting the best quality meats, poultry, fish, cheeses, and eggs followed by basic recipes. General instruction for housekeeping—such as washing linens, removing stains, and ironing—close this section. Haywood concludes her text as she begins, by stressing the benefits of following her recommendations; however, this time with more emphasis than in the preface. She "strongly" recommends to servant maids that "a strict Observance of the several Particulars contained in [the] small Treatise...will be the *only* Means of entitling [them] to the Blessing of God, the Love and Esteem of the Families in which [they] live, and procuring to [themselves] a never-failing Source of Comfort and Satisfaction" (*emphasis mine* 76).

In his study of domestic servants, Hecht includes Haywood's work under a list of popular guides and frequently quotes Haywood's conduct book to demonstrate expected servant behavior. He writes that "Eliza Haywood praises timidity, calling it 'an Indication of your Respect for those you serve'" (Hecht 73). Haywood's fictional servants are far from timid and suffer few consequences, leaving the reader to question which behavior Haywood in fact advocates. It is difficult to establish how the average eighteenth-century reader interpreted *A Present for a Servant Maid*. One accustomed to the satirical works of Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, or, indeed, Haywood's own fiction, may have questioned Haywood's sincerity in the conduct book.

Indisputably, domestic servants were of particular importance in the lives of their employers. By observing and imitating their masters, servants gained power by blurring the social divide. Furthermore, by having their master's secrets, servants gained the advantage in the households they served. In subsequent chapters, I will investigate the relationship between servant and master in Haywood's fiction. Additionally, I will explore how servants affect Haywood's narrative by acting as agents of change. The social restrictions placed on the upper class and the awareness of the sexual freedoms of the servant class bring master and servant closer together. As a result, although a reader might first identify with the upper class protagonist(s), after a closer consideration both master and reader may also identify with the domestic servant(s).

Chapter Two

Love in Excess

Building upon George Whicher's *The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood* (1915), scholars such as Christine Blouch, Kathryn R. King, Mary Anne Schofield and Patrick Spedding have, in recent years, attempted to piece together Eliza Haywood's biographical background. Yet as King poignantly states: "The headnotes, introductions, and biographical entries that proliferated in the current flurry of interest in Haywood are filled with guesswork presenting itself as established (or nearly so) fact, the preferred qualifier ('almost certainly') lending spurious substance to speculations" ("Eliza Haywood, Savage Love, and Biographical Uncertainty" 2). However, one conclusion can be drawn with certainty: little is known about Haywood's personal life.

Most scholars agree that Haywood was born Eliza Fowler in London around 1693 and died February 25, 1756. That she was a prolific writer is indisputable, but she wrote little about her private life. It was believed that she married a cleric by the name of Valentine Haywood, but this information has been discredited. It is, however, agreed that her marriage was unsuccessful; Blouch writes that "Haywood herself would later give conflicting accounts, claiming in one document that her husband had died, and hinting elsewhere at abandonment" (9). All evidence shows that Haywood was an independent woman, a difficult achievement in her century, who dedicated much of her life to writing.

Haywood's background is rooted in the dramatic arts, as actress and playwright. She left her family's home to act in the theatre and worked with the Theatre Royal in

Dublin for three years (9). She debuted as Chloe in Thomas Shadwell's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* at Smock Alley, Dublin in 1715 (Whicher 6). After returning to England, she continued to perform with local theatre companies. Blouch notes that "although the theatre remained a first love to which Haywood returned repeatedly... success as an actress always eluded her" (9). Haywood again returned to the theatre from 1729 to 1737, when she acted in at least six plays and was author, co-author, or probable author of at least four more (10). Elwood comments on Haywood's lack of impact as an actress on the theatre: "Whether or not Mrs. Haywood's stage career meant much to the stage of her time, the stage of her time meant a great deal to Mrs. Haywood" (112). Involved in an artistic community which included Richard Savage, Henry Fielding, Aaron Hill, and William Hatchett, to name a few, Haywood participated in and was a victim of the literary sparring of the time. Though, there is evidence of an antagonistic relationship between her and Fielding, "Haywood had herself acted in many of Fielding's scandal-shop productions as a regular member of Little Haymarket company in the 1730s" (Blouch 11). In 1720, Haywood wrote: "The Stage not answering my Expectation, and the Averseness of my Relations to it, has made me turn my Genius another way" (Blouch 9). Blouch concludes that Haywood's "spectacular career as a novelist was the result" (9). Similarly, in his article "The Stage Career of Eliza Haywood," John R. Elwood notes that "it was [Haywood's] theatrical experience that contributed much to her eventual skill as a novelist. She liked the stage, and much of what we like in her later work she owed to the stage" (107). Theatre was a significant part of Haywood's life, and it is not surprising that elements of the stage can be seen in her works.

In the early stages of formation, novels often included stock characters from the stage that the viewing, and reading, audience would recognize. Elwood writes that “Haywood...must be credited with helping to bring into the novel patterns which originated on stage (115). He notes that Alderman Saving, Captain Hysom, and Mr. Chatfree, all characters from Haywood’s *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, are “of the kind one might expect in stage comedy” (113). He adds that Hysom and Chatfree are “are revealed to the reader mainly through what they say and how they say it, not by the omniscient author’s comments” (113). Although Elwood observes stage influences in Haywood’s later prose, particularly *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, I argue that her earlier works such as *Love in Excess* are also influenced by the theatre. Of particular importance to my study is the servant’s transition from stage to novel, which an examination of *Love in Excess* will highlight.

In his work *The Servant’s Hand: English Fiction from Below*, Bruce Robbins examines the narrative functions of the literary servant and notes servants had aesthetic objectives: (1) to provoke laughter; (2) to extend the protagonist’s identity by duplication, displacement, and amplification; (3) to transmit the story; (4) to intervene with the plot (41). Robbins notes the connection between the role of the servant on stage and although “more subdued,” in print (41). In *Love in Excess*, Haywood’s servants perform all four functions. Robbins does not fail to mention the “minor servants” whose functions he thoroughly describes:

... featureless and perhaps even nameless, to whom the author nevertheless chooses to give the floor at some strategic point, who emerge into ephemeral being in order to deliver messages, commit indiscretions, impart family secrets,

administer consolations, emit prophecies, make recognitions, and so forth—
through whom, in short, the business of divulging decisive information is largely
carried on. (92)

In this chapter, I explore the influence of the theatre in Haywood's fiction and connect it to the prominent role of servants in her work, including the significance of the "minor servants."

In Eliza Haywood's fiction, as in eighteenth-century Britain, women and men of the upper class are restricted by social rules of their society from expressing their desires due to the fear of losing their virtue or, worse yet, being ridiculed. Therefore, women of the upper echelon struggled with their yearnings, while men worried about their reputations. As a result, the secrets of this social class relied on a different group to confide in: domestic servants. Sometimes acting as confidants and other times as active players in the scheming, these servants are privy to the inner secrets of the households in which they live. In *Love in Excess* pages, servants, and attendants play a pivotal role in the courtship of those they serve, and upper class members disguise themselves in order to gain freedoms they otherwise would not be allowed.

One of the major concerns of upper class society was the selection of a marriage partner. Paula R. Backscheider describes marriage in the eighteenth century as "the most important event in woman's life" and the "desire of the heroine to win the hero's respect" as the "central preoccupation" in many novels of this time period (152). In Haywood's fiction, however, the women are more often preoccupied with pleasure and sexual obsession. Backscheider adds that "driven by appetite rather than motivated by tenderness and desire to please, they may seduce the man and are certainly obsessed with

thoughts of sexual enjoyment. They scheme and want to receive” (156). Servants, often witnesses to their passions, are recruited to assist with the schemes.

In her preface to an issue of *Literature Interpretation and Theory* dedicated to servants in literature, Julie Nash writes, “because of their marginal status, servant characters can often give voice to unorthodox ideas or rebellious longings without disrupting the status quo completely” (132). Just as keeping affairs private to avoid public criticism is common practice in upper class households, so is using servants to assist in fulfilling desires. Aware of the liberties which the servant class is allowed, Haywood often depicts aristocratic characters masquerading as a member of the lower class in order to act with less restraint. In *Fantomina*, the protagonist disguises herself as a servant girl in order to continue a tryst with Beauplaisir. Similarly, in *Love in Excess*, several upper class members also dress as servants to pursue their loved ones.

Although women in eighteenth-century British society were expected to marry, they were forbidden by custom, as Haywood suggests in *Love in Excess*, “to make a declaration of their thoughts” (40). Consequently, they could either wait, hoping the man they desired would notice their blushings and glances, or construct a plan. Parts one and two of *Love in Excess*, though set in Paris, conform to the customs of British society. Alovisa, a parentless co-heiress of a vast estate overcome with passion for Count D’elmont, chooses to formulate a plan, but her design to gain D’elmont cannot be executed without her “trusty servant,” Charlo (42). Alovisa’s first letter to D’elmont, which does not disclose her name, is delivered by Charlo who “performed her orders exactly” by disguising himself so as not to reveal the author of the letter and runs away before he can be interrogated (42). When her plan goes awry and D’elmont gives his

attention to Amena instead, Aloverisa asks her attendants (all witness to her misery) for Charlo and commands him to attend a masquerade ball where D'elmont is in attendance. She instructs Charlo to "listen carefully to all discourses where you hear Count D'elmont mentioned, enquire who he dances with, and above all watch what company he comes out with, and bring an exact account" (47). Charlo returns with the news that confirms Aloverisa's fears that D'elmont is with Amena, the daughter of a gentleman with a "very small estate" who has managed to maintain this "darling of his heart in all the pomp of quality" (48). In the confines of her bed chamber, Aloverisa's pain and tears, which she does not attempt to disguise, are witnessed by Charlo. Willing to serve her further, Charlo, at her request, delivers a second anonymous letter from Aloverisa to D'elmont.

As noted in chapter one, employers increasingly became more conscientious of their behavior in front of their servants. Frank Dawes summarizes the general opinion of the upper class in the title of his study of the domestic class, *Not in Front of the Servants*, and E.S. Turner's study, *What the Butler Saw: Two Hundred Fifty Years of the Servant Problem*, implies a similar sentiment. This anxiety over being observed is one of the greatest causes of what is often referred to as "the servant problem." The increase of the servant population caused by the rise of industrialization and the rise of the middle class resulted in a greater "underground" with which to contend. With more servants available to gossip and more employers to gossip about, more attention was paid to the hand servants played in damaging reputations.

Given this conscientiousness, how do we account for Aloverisa's lack of concern in front of her servants, and especially with Charlo? One possibility is that Aloverisa is too overcome by passion to concern herself with her reputation, a behavior which will repeat

itself in other characters who are ruled by obsessive love. However, another possibility is that Haywood keeps Charlo present in order to amplify Alovisa's irrational behavior by contrasting it with the servants' calm. As Robbins suggests, one narrative function of servants is to serve as a foil to their masters. Charlo's presence of mind underscores Alovisa's lack of control.

Charlo's most important role as Alovisa's "diligent spy" is creating a diversion which removes Amena from Count D'elmont's arms and sends her seeking refuge in Alovisa's home. Charlo not only creates action, but acts as narrator, informing both Alovisa and the readers. In her essay "The Story of Eliza Haywood's Novels: Caveats and Questions," Backscheider addresses Haywood's "invention of form" which "develop[s] from her blending and inventing of discourses and narrative voices" (27). She writes that the narrators "are often disguised observers, purported observers, and shocked but uninvolved citizens" (27). The narrative voices in *Love in Excess* exemplify this blending of discourses often dominated by the servant's tale which Charlo is the first to demonstrate:

...tho' I formed a thousand inventions, I found not any so plausible, as to alarm Monsieur Sanseverin's family, with an outcry of fire. Therefore I rang the bell at the fore-gate of the house, and bellowed in the most terrible accent I could possibly turn my voice to, 'Fire, fire, rise or you will all be burnt in your beds.' I had not repeated this many times, before I found the effect I wished; the noises I heard, and the lights I saw in the rooms, assured me there were no sleepers left; then I ran to the Tuilliers, designing to observe the lover's proceedings, but I

found they were apprized of the danger they were in of being discovered, and were coming to endeavour an entrance into the garden. (67-68)

This action results in Amena's being sent to a monastery and Alovisa's marriage to D'elmont. Charlo receives a monetary reward for his good service.

The use of multiple narrators can also be attributed to Haywood's theatrical background. Robbins writes that "though theater usually lacks a narrator, certain moments and devices in theatrical performance clearly offer statements that are, relatively to others, authoritative. And these tend to involve the theatrical servant" (94). He adds that "authority flows inevitably toward the informant to whom we must either listen or put the book down" (94). Haywood's masters are eager to be informed, and Robbins brings up an interesting point: a shift in power from master to servant occurs when the servant assumes the role of storyteller. Alovisa must wait in agony for Charlo to return, and Charlo controls the action between Amena and D'elmont with his "timely interruption." Like Alovisa, the reader attends to Charlo, a narrative inversion that facilitates readerly identification with the servant.

Similarly, Anaret, Amena's attendant, plays a crucial role in the romance of Amena and Count D'elmont. Anaret, whose relationship with Amena is intimate enough to give her confidence to make a plea to D'elmont on Amena's behalf, later becomes a contributor to her undoing. Amena is commanded by her father to stop receiving visits from D'elmont unless he requests permission to marry her. D'elmont receives a letter from Amena which tells him that she must "deny [her] self the honour of [his] visits, unless commanded to receive 'em by [her] father" (51). Anaret appears at D'elmont's home to relay the details of this forced separation. Anaret, like Charlo, acts as storyteller,

working to bridge the divide between the two lovers. She allows Amena's feelings to be openly voiced (a practice considered socially taboo) and acts as an outlet for Amena's sexual expression. Anaret tells D'elmont that Amena, while weeping, commanded her "to wait on him" and give "her vows of eternal love" (55). Additionally, her function is to transmit Amena's story, thereby moving the plot. In contrast, Amena, locked away, is powerless to propel her story forward.

However, Anaret's explanation of Amena's "misfortunes" carries with it a hint of falseness. Amena has displayed herself thus far in the novel as innocent of love, yet Anaret portrays her as willing to "despise every thing for [D'elmont's] love" (54). Anaret's motives become transparent when she tells D'elmont that Amena's father has ordered her to "quit his house in a few days" because she is Amena's confidant in the affair. She is in need of employment, and compensation is her goal. It is in her response to D'elmont's desire to see Amena that Anaret's performance peaks:

I wish to heaven there were a possibility of your meeting; there is nothing I would not risqué to forward it, and if your lordship can think of any way in which I may be serviceable to you, in this short time I am allowed to stay with the family, I beg you would command me." (56)

D'elmont convinced that "she really had it in her power to serve him in this occasion," gives her a purse of "Lewis-dor's" (French gold coins), and Anaret's loyalty changes (56). She professes to D'elmont that she has assured Amena of her "willingness to serve her in any command" (55), yet she, as Haywood writes, accepts the coins "to betray the honour of her whole sex" (56). Anaret promises Amena to D'elmont who in response "could not forbear kissing and embracing her with such raptures as might not have been

very pleasing to Amena, had she been witness of 'em" (57). Anaret "who had other things in her head than gallantry" is not moved and focuses on "forwarding an affair in which she proposed so much advantage, rather than in the caresses of the most accomplished gentleman in the world" (57). Anaret is pivotal in Amena's undoing.

After much persuasion from D'elmont and "with the assistance of Anaret," Amena is taken into the Tuileries, a garden, and surrenders to her lover (62). Ironically, Amena's virtue is saved by Anaret who disrupts the lovers in the garden when she notices the lights on in every room of Amena's house (64). Anaret has remained close enough to the two lovers to witness their rapture. It is Charlo who has created the diversion for Alovisa's sake, and the story is later told by him illustrating how both servant and attendant are key figures in the romance plot.

Alovisa eventually gets her way and marries D'elmont, but she does not win his heart. Because he has yet to learn of love, D'elmont marries out of ambition and to increase his brother's chance of marrying Ansellina, Amena's sister. Part two of the novel begins with the voice of the narrator:

But as human happiness is seldom of long continuance, and Alovisa placing the ultimate of her's in the possession of her charming husband, secure of that, despised all future events, 'twas time for Fortune, who long enough had smiled, now to turn her wheel, and punish the presumption that defied her power. (90)

D'elmont meets Melliora, the daughter of one of his guardians in his youth, and for the first time falls in love.

This experience of love creates a new sensitivity in D'elmont (except towards his wife), and when he receives a longing letter from Amena, which his servant delivers, he

is moved to write her back to ease her pain. Before the servant can deliver D'elmont's letter, Alovisa interferes and demands it from the servant, but he refuses until she bribes him and promises to never reveal that he has given it to her (102). Yet, when D'elmont later discovers that his letter has never reached Amena, he takes the servant "by the throat and holding his drawn sword directly to his breast, swore the moment should be his last, if he did not immediately confess the truth" (107). The servant reveals Alovisa's involvement (107). Consequently, the argument that ensues between husband and wife gives D'elmont justification to pursue Melliora. Though a servant's allegiance has proven thus far to be bought by the highest bidder, fear of death provokes the ultimate devotion. Haywood later warns servants in *A Present for a Servant Maid* to avoid entering the quarrels of their masters, for they will be "sure to incur the Displeasure of one Party, and often of both" (14). However, the servant's disobedience allows the narration to move forward.

The heated dialogue between D'elmont and Alovisa is not possible without the characters that Haywood designates minor servants. When D'elmont sends a servant to tell Alovisa he will not be sleeping at home, Alovisa sends a message with a servant in retaliation. Robbins comments that "the messenger, speaking in the name of another, is freed of responsibility for whatever verbal aggression she or he may deliver, and yet will be associated with it and perhaps also take satisfaction in it" (61). He adds that "the servant is always the messenger of absent authorities" (61). The servants are given complete access to the quarrel. Ultimately, D'elmont's pursuit of Melliora, and Alovisa's desire to witness his unfaithfulness, leads to Alovisa's accidental death as she runs towards his sword in the dark. Servants are witness to the crime scene and are ordered to

clean up the body (176). There are no secrets, but this time it proves beneficial to D'elmont who is not charged with murder.

Part three of *Love in Excess* introduces similar master/servant relationship in Italy with Ciamara and Brione. It is through Ciamara's confessional conversation with Brione that D'elmont (and the reader) discovers Ciamara's passion. Though she does not directly profess her love for him, she confides in her attendant. Acting as a receiver of the narrative is also a typical function of the servant's role in the theatre. Brione's status as an attendant appears to be higher than that of Charlo's and Anaret's. Ciamara trusts her with innermost feelings, and Brione, rather than staying silent, plays devil's advocate. She is one of the few female characters in the novel to speak poorly of D'elmont. When Ciamara describes him as "more than raptured poets feign, or fancy can invent," Brione reminds her that he returned her letters and insulted her messenger and boldly claims, "...even I should scorn so spiritless a wretch" (193). Haywood seems to be, once again, illustrating the follies of the upper class. Few women have been able to avoid the power of D'elmont, yet Brione, a member of a lower class than Ciamara, would refuse him just as Anaret ignored his embraces. Hecht writes that "upper-class ladies sometimes invited well-bred but necessitous women to live with them so that they might continually be provided with agreeable company (62). This description could explain the closeness between the two women; however, it does not explain Brione's power to resist D'elmont's charms. Unlike Anaret, Brione does not seem to be motivated by money; instead, the fear and admiration for Ciamara's family whom she serves is her motivation.

D'elmont, who has been secretly listening to Ciamara and Brione's conversation, trips on the carpet and makes a dramatic entrance, falling with "part of his body cross the

lady, and his head in Brione's lap" (196). Brione, unable to move because of D'elmont, is further involved with the affairs of her mistress. Ciamara's plan to meet D'elmont the next evening cannot occur without the "faithful" Brione who D'elmont is told will admit him into the summerhouse (197). Brione serves several functions. Her brazen responses to Ciamara's declarations of love offer an alternate perspective of the novel's hero Count D'elmont. Robbins notes that a traditional characteristic of the servant in theatre is to address the audience directly, breaking down the "fourth wall" and articulating views contrary to those of the leading characters (63). Robbins argues that "the servant is not only speaking to the master" (64). Similarly, Brione reminds readers that D'elmont is flawed. In addition, Brione's assistance with Ciamara's plan, though unsuccessful, moves the affair between Ciamara and D'elmont forward.

In addition to the primary roles of Charlo, Anaret, and Brione, other servants play significant roles in the novel. In his article "Trading Sex for Secrets in Haywood's *Love in Excess*," Scott Black states that the narrative structure of the novel is one of "timely interruptions" causing the reader to be "distracted with impatience" (216). This structure could not be maintained without the servants. Servants create a distraction, as when Anaret gains a moment to slip a note to D'elmont (51) or the page who interrupts the chaos in Alovera's home to announce the arrival of Chevalier Brillian, D'elmont's brother (74). They are messengers and confidants, but they are also agents of change, creating distractions to keep the intrigue present. They are letter carriers and witnesses to the chaotic lives of the upper class, sometimes working as their aids and other times as a comic device.

In the theatre, one role of the servant is to provoke laughter, and Haywood carries this convention into her fiction. While in Italy, a messenger “who seems to be about threescore years of age,” sent to bring D’elmont to Ciamara, provides yet another disruption as well as a humorous interlude. Haywood takes care to describe his manner of dress in detail:

...he had on a suit of cloaths, which might perhaps have been good in the days of his great grand-father, but the person who they fitted must have been five times larger about the body than him who wore them; a large broad buff belt however remedied that inconvenience, and girt them close about his waste, in which hung a fauchion, two daggers, and a sword of more than ordinary extent; the rest of his equipage was a cloak, which buttoning round his neck fell not so low as his hips, a hat, which in rainy weather kept his shoulders dry much better than an Indian umbrella, one glove, and a formidable pair of whiskers. (186)

Haywood never names this messenger, yet his physical description is provided in greater detail than any other character in the novel, even D’elmont. Haywood encourages readers to recognize this messenger as a comedic figure by repeatedly mentioning D’elmont’s reaction to his visitor. D’elmont “could scarce...forebear laughing at the figure” and could not “keep his countenance” during the messenger’s speech (187). Finally, when D’elmont refuses to visit Ciamara as the courier demands, the Count could not withstand “laughing more and more” (187). Though he offers a comedic interlude, this messenger fails his mission. D’elmont refuses his request, demonstrating his loyalty to Melliora, the woman he loves.

The freedom that the servants enjoy is often enviable and did not go unnoticed by the upper class. Servants learn the intimate details of their employers' lives and act as "household spies" (Brightwell 63). Aware of these privileges, the upper class also masquerades as attendants allowing them to participate in situations which would otherwise be impossible. Frankville, brother to Melliora, convinces D'elmont to allow him to act as his attendant in order to see Camilla, the woman he loves (243). In his own clothes, Frankville is forbidden into her home; as a servant, he is able to enter. While D'elmont is preoccupied with Ciamara's advances, Brione again does her part. Ciamara commands her to speak with D'elmont's servant (Frankville in disguise) "and get what she could out of him, of the Count's affairs," and the "faithful" Brione "sat down and began to talk to him with a great deal of freedom" (251). Ciamara shows an awareness of the knowledge to which servants have access. Frankville does not have the patience to play his part well, and holds Brione at gunpoint to force her to do as he wishes and take him to Camilla. Although seemingly fearful of her life, Brione still manages to stay in control and "all this while...had been casting about in her mind how to make the best use of this adventure with Ciamara" (254). However, Haywood does not imply that it is because of loyalty, but rather because of the power of Ciamara's family that Brione stays devoted to her mistress. In spite of Brione's attempt to foil him, because of his disguise, Frankville is able to clear the confusion between him and Camilla and ultimately gain her as his wife.

Yet, it is Violetta, Ciamara's niece, who is the most masterful in her disguise. She dresses herself as a page boy, Fidelio, in order to be near D'elmont. She sacrifices her aristocratic lifestyle as well as her family in order to live her life with him. As Fidelio,

Violetta is able to lay in the same room with him, talk to him, and tell him stories to “divert his sorrows” which stem from the loss of Melliora (271-272). They share an intimacy which would never have been allowed as unmarried, unrelated upper class man and woman. While traveling with D’elmont, Frankville, and Camilla, Violetta learns from a servant that her father has died after he discovered his daughter missing, and after her health begins to diminish, her disguise is discovered. Camilla recognizes her and reveals her name on her death bed: “This, this is Violetta...who like a page disguised has followed the too lovely count, and lost her self” (294). D’elmont does not fail to see her sacrifice and asks, “can it be possible that the admired Violetta could forsake her father, - --country, ---friends, ---foregoe her sexes pride, ---the pomp of beauty, ---gay dresses, and all the equipage of state, and grandeur, to follow in a mean disguise, a man unworthy of her thoughts” (295)? What Violetta has traded, D’elmont cannot fully grasp. He sees only that she has forfeited what upper class societal norms deem worthy. She, however, believed she would engage in an intimacy otherwise closed to her.

Although a minor character, Mademoiselle Charlotta D’Mezray, Melliora’s friend from the monastery, also disguises herself as a servant to win back the love of the Marquess D’Sanguillier to whom she was engaged (280). The “charms of Melliora” encouraged D’Sanguillier’s inconstancy, and his devotion shifted from Charlotta to Melliora (282). Melliora, still committed to Count D’elmont and to her friend Charlotta, attempts to discourage him, but D’Sanguillier sends men to abduct her in hopes of winning her love by force (283). Charlotta, suspects D’Sanguillier’s involvement in Melliora’s disappearance after reading a letter addressed to Melliora in D’Sanguillier’s hand. Charlotta leaves the monastery because, she tells Melliora, “’tis as much the hopes

of being able to be instrumental in serving you in your releasement, as the prevention of that blessing the injurious D'Saguillier aims at" (286). Charlotta came to D'Saguillier's residence and disguised "found means to be received by the house-keeper, as a servant" (287). Charlotta later informs Melliora of D'Elmont and Frankville's presence and assists Melliora to D'elmont's chamber (288).

Charlotta, still in servant guise, knocks at D'elmont's door and interrupts D'elmont and Melliora in the midst of passion just in time to prevent D'elmont from obtaining "the aim of all his wishes" (288). What Melliora wishes for, Haywood fails to tell the reader; however, "dissolved in love, and melting in his arms... [Melliora] found no words to form denials" (288). Through her transformation, Charlotta is able to confirm that her friend, Melliora, was not a willing participant in D'Saguillier's scheme, and ultimately, after changing into a bridal dress which "she had brought with her, in case any happy opportunity should arise for her to discover herself" Charlotta marries the man she loves (292).

Clearly, servants in Haywood's *Love in Excess* are significant. They act as channels of communication for those who love and those who are loved. Without Charlo, Anaret, and Brione much of Haywood's tale would be missing. The action would move at a slower pace as the women wait hoping that D'elmont or Frankville will one day notice the shiver of their hands or the glance of their eyes. Though Haywood demonstrates that servants' loyalty can be bought for the highest price, they are not ruled by the same sexual passion as are their employers. Charlo finds himself alone with Alovisa in her bed chamber, yet he seems unmoved by her beauty, only her wealth. Anaret desires

D'elmont's gold, not his caresses, and Brione's devotion is to Ciamara, a member of one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in Italy.

Additionally, servants are able to obtain more knowledge of the actions of the upper class than the upper class itself, and employers freely adopt the servants' role to gain their personal ends. Further evidence of this awareness is illustrated in Haywood's shorter fiction: *Lasselia* (1723) and *Fantomina* (1725). Haywood not only utilizes the traditional functions of the stage servants who act as transmitters of the narrative as well as interveners of the plot, but also begins to transfer these functions on to other characters, which fully comes into fruition in her work, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751).

Chapter Three

Lasselia and Fantomina

As in *Love in Excess*, influences of the theatre can also be observed in Haywood's short fiction. Haywood's works repeatedly use the strategy of masquerading, primarily as servants, for aristocratic characters to express emotions and accelerate love affairs. Additionally, without servants to deliver messages, cause interruptions, or divulge secrets, much of the action would be lost. In *Lasselia, or The Self-Abandon'd* (1723) and *Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze* (1725), servants assist with scheming, and members of the upper class disguise themselves in domestic class garb, all in the name of love.

Lasselia was originally intended to be part of a collection titled, *The Danger of Giving Way to Passion, in Five Exemplary Novels*, to include *The British Recluse*, *The Injur'd Husband*, *Idalia*, and *The Rash Resolve* (Spedding 53). The novels, however, took longer for Haywood to complete than publishers predicted, and, consequently the collection never appeared in its intended form (53-54). Instead, the novels were included in an expanded version, *The Works of Mrs Eliza Haywood; Consisting of Novels, Letters, Poems and Plays*, in 1724 (57). Spedding speculates that the five original novels, to be released separately and consecutively prior to the reissuing as a whole, were delayed in part by Haywood's interest in other genres, namely plays (53). During this time, Haywood completed two theatrical works: *Fair Captive* and *A Wife to be Lett* (53).

Lasselia, though short in length, includes numerous characters as well as an interpolated story which can momentarily cause confusion; therefore, a brief summary

will offer clarity for further discussion of the text. Lasselia, the niece of Louis XIV's mistress Madame de Montespan, lives with her aunt who not only provides her with an education but also "all those Advantages and Improvements which are necessary to accomplish a Maid of Quality for Conversation as were suitable to her Character" (107). Though, like Haywood's later heroine Betsy Thoughtless, Lasselia has "in herself rather an Aversion to Marriage, than any Inclination to it," her charms attract numerous adorers, including her aunt's lover, the King. To avoid his seduction and Madame de Montespan's wrath, Lasselia flees to the country to live with Monsieur and Mademoiselle de Valier.

While Lasselia and the de Valiers visit Madame de l'Amye, her husband Monsieur de l'Amye returns after a long absence, and when he meets Lasselia, a fatal omen appears: "three Drops of Blood fell from his Nose, which stain'd a white Handkerchief she happen'd to have in her Hand" (113). In his essay "The Eloquence of Blood in Eliza Haywood's *Lasselia*," David Oakleaf examines this moment at length, calling it both "a tragic portent and a comic symptom of unruly sexuality" (487). An affair between the Lasselia and de l'Amye soon follows, and they lived "for some Months in all the Felicity that Love, in the most elevated Degree, can afford to those who devote themselves entirely to that Passion" (*Lasselia* 131).

At this point in the narrative, Haywood provides back story by shifting to "The History of the two Mademoiselle Douxmouries" whose family has a long history with the de l'Amyes. Although arranged to marry the elder Douxmourie sister, Monsieur de l'Amye falls in love with the younger. De l'Amye's refusal to marry the elder sister creates havoc, and as a result he marries neither. The wrath of the elder Douxmourie sister, whose jealousy mirrors that of Ciamara's in *Love in Excess*, drives her towards

revenge. De l'Ameye's affair with the younger Douxmourie sister, results in childbirth and a death of Sieur Le Blessang who appears only long enough to challenge de l'Ameye to a duel and die defending the younger sister's honor. De l'Ameye briefly goes in to exile and his lover retires to a convent. Upon his return, De l'Ameye marries a young widow, the present Madam de l'Ameye.

The story of Lasselia and the Douxmourie sisters intersect when the elder sister accidentally comes upon the two lovers, Lasselia and de l'Ameye, in the midst of passion. Douxmourie arranges for de l'Ameye's wife to discover the tryst, and the tale ends with the reconciliation of the de l'Ameyes and Lasselia's admittance to a convent where she becomes "an example of Piety even to those who never had swerv'd from it" (149).

Unlike the women in *Love in Excess*, kings were not prevented by the rules of society from "mak[ing] a declaration of their thoughts" (*Love in Excess* 40); however, in *Lasselia*, Lewis XIV utilizes his groomsman, Monsieur le Brosse, in an attempt to gain Lasselia as a lover. The king, believing that Lasselia refuses his declaration of love in fear of her aunt, Madame de Montespan, sends "the Gentleman of his Bed-Chamber" to offer Lasselia "a very fine Castle near the River *Sein* for her residence" (*Lasselia* 110). Disturbed by the king's message, Lasselia "conjur'd him that brought it to return some Answer, in what manner she did not care, so it were such as would cut off all room to believe she ever could be prevail'd on to do any thing which might deserve such Bounties" (110). Similar to the power shift that occurs between Amena and her servant, Anaret, in *Love in Excess*, the king relinquishes control to his groomsman, le Brosse. Lasselia's refusal is definite, yet the method by which it is conveyed to the king is in the

hands of his messenger. Le Brosse, referred to as the king's "*Confidante*," assumes the role of storyteller, conveying both love and rejection (110).

As mentioned in chapter two, Bruce Robbins' examination of literary servants recognizes the significance of the narrative functions of "minor servants" (92). *Lasselia* provides numerous examples of these nameless servants who Haywood strategically utilizes. It is Madame de Montespan's servants, or "Spies," that inform her of Lasselia and the King's conversation in the Gallery, divulging pertinent information for the narrative's progression (*Lasselia* 110). At another pivotal moment, de l'Ameye's arrival, to his home as well as to the narrative, is announced by "a Servant running hastily into the Room" where Lasselia, Madame de l'Ameye and the de Valiers played cards, interrupting Lasselia's "Tranquility" forever more (113). Later when Madame de l'Ameye suspects her husband's infidelity, she sends a servant "whom she cou'd confide in, to watch at a distance where his Master went" (125). This intensified cautiousness reflects what was occurring historically in British society: a heightened awareness that servants not only watched their masters' behavior, but used the information to their advantage.

The upper class characters in *Lasselia* demonstrate an increased awareness of being observed by their servants. When Lasselia leaves Madame de Montespan's home to avoid the King, she does so in the evening with only one servant so that the "Place of her Retirement should be kept a Secret" (112). When Lasselia leaves her home in the country, again to avoid the King, the de Valiers "dispatch'd all the Servants, some way or another" to minimize the risk of discovery (125). Later, at the Inn "in which *de l'Ameye* had placed his belov'd *Lasselia*," "not a Servant in the House, but one, whose Fidelity the Mistress of it was secure of, knew there was any Woman lodg'd there" (143-144).

After the sudden death of their father, the Douxmourie sisters are left parentless co-heiresses of a vast estate. The younger is left a portion inferior to her sister's to be forfeited if she married de l'Amye (137). Though rejected by de l'Amye, the elder sister still desires his love and uses her servants to either attain de l'Amye or to assist her in seeking revenge. While on her way to the country "to indulge a Discontent she cou'd not have so much leisure to do at *Paris*," Douxmourie stops at the inn where Lasselia and de l'Amye carry on their affair (143). While walking with her "Woman," she stumbles upon the couple who she mistakes for thieves (143). When she realizes that it is de l'Amye with someone other than his wife, she hides herself waiting to use the opportunity to her advantage (145).

Douxmourie employs several servants to aid with her plan. From the confines of her chamber, she "order'd them to watch about the House, and bring her word of all the Motions" of de l'Amye and Lasselia (145). The "most diligent" of her servants is her footman (145), and the relationship between him and Mademoiselle Douxmourie is reminiscent of Alovera and Charlo's in *Love in Excess*. The footman assures Douxmourie that de l'Amye and Lasselia remain at the inn, and he, "having his Message given him privately," is sent by Douxmourie to tell Madam de l'Amye:

...that he belong'd to a Gentleman who had the greatest Concern imaginable for her ill Usage; and had sent to inform her, that her Husband having an Intention wholly to abandon her in a short time, of late had been very busy in disposing of some Lands, which Money he had made a Present to a young Girl, whom he was excessive fond of, that he design'd to live with her as his Wife. (145)

This fabrication, though presumably originating from Douxmourie, is relayed by the footman. The reader can only assume that he followed her commands. This example, perhaps more than any other, demonstrates the power in the servant's tale because even the reader is not privy to Douxmourie's orders. The footman is the sole source of the narrative. He "perform'd the Business he was sent about with so much Art, that [Madam de l'Amye] presently assented to the Proposal of going that moment to detect her Husband" (145). The footman moves the plot forward.

As in *Love in Excess*, upper class characters in *Lasselia* disguise themselves as members of the domestic class to gain access to the ones they desire. While Lasselia is lounging on a grassy bank, shaded with jessamins and vines, longing for de l'Amye, she is told that a messenger has brought her a letter and will deliver it only to her. The servant "who seem'd to be a Country-Fellow" hands her a letter whose handwriting Lasselia recognizes as de l'Amye's (117). When she reads de l'Amye's professions of love, she cannot hide her reaction of "alternate Joy and Shame, Surprize and Fear, and sometimes a Start of virtuous Pride and Indignation, sparkled in her Eyes" (118). Unaware that the messenger is de l'Amye "disguis'd in the Habit of a *Rustick*," Lasselia reveals her desires (118). By performing the role of servant, de l'Amye not only exposes his own feeling, but he is also able to observe Lasselia's undisguised reaction. They become vulnerable to each other, revealing their emotions. As the disguise gives way, the social constraints that confine the lovers are removed—although temporarily.

In the interpolated story of the Douxmourie sisters, Sieur Le Blessang, a man of great wealth and esteem, disguises himself as a footman to discover the truth concerning the woman he loves, the younger Douxmourie. After hearing the rumor of the younger

Douxmourie's intimacy with de l'Amye, he is persuaded by the elder sister to disguise himself, and "under the Pretence of bringing a Letter from that happy Lover [de l'Amye], he easily got Admittance into the House, where the unfortunate Lady was in her Child-Bed" (138). Le Blessang's disguise is revealed, as is the truth of Douxmourie's child with de l'Amye, which society's critical view of giving birth out of wedlock has forced her to keep secret. However, unlike de l'Amye's exposure to Lasselia, this knowledge leads to destruction: le Blessang's death and the end of the affair between de l'Amye and Douxmourie.

Fantomina shares similar patterns of concealed identities with *Love in Excess* and *Lasselia*. Originally published as part of a set of works titled *Secret Histories, Novels, and Poems*, *Fantomina* was not reprinted outside that collection until 1986 (Spedding 237). The story is of a young lady of "distinguished Birth, Beauty, Wit, and Spirit" who repeatedly disguises herself, initially out of curiosity and later to maintain the affection of Beauplaisir, yet another Haywood male characterized by inconstancy (*Fantomina* 227). Although all of her disguises are not of lower class stature, they provide examples of theatricality characteristic of Haywood's fiction.

The story opens, appropriately, at a playhouse where the protagonist observes gentlemen entertaining a woman who "might easily be known to be one of those who come there for no other Purpose than to create Acquaintance with as many as seem desirous of it," in other words a prostitute (227). Interested in discovering how a woman of this sort is addressed, she dresses "herself as near as she could in the Fashion of those Women who make sale of their Favours and set herself in the Way of being accosted as such a one" (227). Performing this role, she attracts the attention of Beauplaisir. Though

she had talked with him before, undisguised, “her quality and reputed Virtue kept him from using her with that Freedom she now expected he would do, and had discovered something in him, which had made her often think she should not be displeas’d” (228). As predicted, Beauplaisir is bold in words and behavior, and as Fantomina, the name she adopts for this role, she is “undone” (230). Because of her tears (and the manner in which her table was served at supper), he suspects that she is of a higher class standing than she pretends; however, he still offers her his “a Purse of Gold” and “ten thousand Protestations, that he would spare nothing, which his whole Estate could purchase, to procure her Content and Happiness” (231). It is in her reaction to his offer of money that her class stature is revealed.

According to Frank Dawes, many prostitutes were domestic servants who either became pregnant or were discovered by the mistress of the house to be having an affair with her husband (40). Servants were often fired if pregnant, and “without a reference, a maid stood no chance of getting another situation” and was often “faced with the alternative of the workhouse or prostitution” (40). That Fantomina is not of the domestic class is apparent when she throws the gold Beauplaisir offers her and questions, “Can all the Wealth you are possessed of, make a Reparation for my Loss of Honor” (231)? Unlike Anaret, Amena’s attendant in *Love in Excess*, Fantomina does not desire money, and unlike Anaret and Brione, she is not immune to the advances of a man.

When Beauplaisir tires of Fantomina’s charms, the protagonist disguises herself as a servant girl in order to continue the tryst with him. Her responsibilities as a country maid named Celia include “that of making the Gentleman’s Beds...and waiting on them in their Chambers” (234) allowing her access to locations forbidden to unmarried upper

class women. By wearing a “round eared Cap, a short red Petticoat and a little jacket of Grey Stuff,” garb to suit her affected position, she grants Beauplaisir permission to speak to her without the decorum characteristic of their social class. He barrages her with questions “befitting one of the Degree she appeared to be” (235) and soon he “loses the Power of containing himself...till he had ravaged all” (235). Yet, Fantomina, or in this role “Celia,” is not a victim to Beauplaisir’s forceful sexual advances; she chooses to act out the role of domestic servant to satisfy her own passion. The expected protection of the servant disguise results in intimacy between lovers of the upper class.

Fantomina is the ultimate actress, able to adjust her behavior to the demands of her roles. In her third role, that of the Widow Bloomer, she tells a “sorrowful Tale, which had been several Times interrupted by a Parenthesis of Sighs and Groans” (237). Additionally, she “counterfeited a fainting and fell motionless upon [Beauplaisir’s] Breast” (238). Haywood acknowledges Fantomina’s performing abilities:

...besides the Alteration which the change of Dress made in her, she was so admirably skilled in the Art of feigning, that she had the Power of putting on almost what Face she pleased, and knew so exactly how to form her Behaviour to the Character she represented that all the comedians at both Playhouses are infinitely short of her Performances: She could vary her very Glances, tune her Voice to Accents the most different imaginable from those in which she spoke when she appeared herself. (238)

Haywood’s description of Fantomina reads like a theatre review following an opening night show. Despite her grand performance as the Widow Bloomer, Beauplaisir once again loses interest.

Fantomina's final performance requires her to operate as playwright, director, producer, and actor. She secures a location and hires two men, "Squires of low Degree" to act as servants and assist her with her plans. She sends one to deliver a letter to Beauplaisir from Incognita, her new role, inviting him to meet her, which he accepts (242-243). Granting him everything "excepting the Sight of her Face, and Knowledge of her Name" the two enjoyed "mutual Raptures" (244). Her scheme to keep her identity concealed goes as planned, with the aid of "the two imagined Servants"; however, Beauplaisir is disappointed by her unwillingness to reveal herself (245). He tells her that "he could not submit to receive Obligations from a Lady, who thought him incapable of keeping a Secret, which she made no Difficulty of letting her Servants into" (245). Beauplaisir is vulnerable to these servants who have insight that he cannot attain; he is aware of their power. Incognita still does not reveal herself, and the performance concludes when the arrival of the young lady's mother "obliged her to put an immediate Stop to the Course of her whimsical Adventures" (246). After delivering Beauplaisir's child, the heroine of Haywood's tale is sent to a monastery in France.

Both *Lasselia* and *Fantomina* display Haywood's extensive theatrical background as well as her awareness of class differences. In *Lasselia*, as in *Love in Excess*, servants act as critical interrupters to the narratives, a function characteristic of the servant's role in theatre (Robbins 94). In *Lasselia* and *Fantomina*, Haywood again employs the strategy of disguise to advance love affairs; however, rather than concealing her identity with only domestic class garb, Fantomina performs various positions in class structure, hiring servants to assist her when necessary. Additionally, the protection provided by a difference in class disrupts as disguises are revealed, reflecting a breakdown in rigid class

structures. This decrease in the divide that bridges the upper and lower classes is a result of the increased servant population in British society. Haywood's works reflect the significance of servants in her time.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

The domestic class served important functions in eighteenth-century British society, and also on the dramatic stage, influences which are illustrated in Haywood's works. However, Haywood's servants move beyond the stock characters of the theatre and into more rounded characters, complete with names, identities, and pivotal roles. The wide-range of servants represented, as well as their centrality to the plots, demonstrates Haywood's perspective of the servant class, one that differs from Richardson's prototypical Pamela. Haywood offers dynamic servants whose inventiveness often dominates those they serve. It is recognized, and often criticized, that servants imitated their master's manner of dress and behavior, but Haywood inverts this criticism and shows that masters also imitated servants. Servants desired the wealth and extravagances their masters possessed; masters desired the secrets and sexual freedoms of their servants. Her portrayals decrease the divide between the upper and lower classes.

The historical background of the master/servant relationship as well as Haywood's published advice to servant maids creates a foundation to further understand her works. Haywood sees the place servants occupy in the household in a dynamic relationship with their masters. Furthermore, she acknowledges the frequency of the sexual relationships between lower class and upper class members of society, and dedicates a significant portion of *A Present for a Servant Maid* to the avoidance of such temptations. Because of the class difference, masters often pursued their servants with

less discrepancy than with ladies from their own class. Similarly, in Haywood's fiction, the servant costume allows the upper class member who dons the garb to chip away at the strict rules that confine behavior. Though in reverse, the fabricated class difference between the disguised and undisguised upper class members leads to uncensored conduct.

Chapter two examined how the traditional role of the servant on the dramatic stage influenced Haywood's fiction, particularly how servants function in her first novel, *Love in Excess*. Servants in the theatre acted as transmitters of the narrative, interveners of the plot, comic devices, and foils to the protagonists; though all functions are present in her work, Haywood primarily makes use of the first two. *Love in Excess* provides clear evidence of the servant dominance. Charlo, Anaret, and Brione perform and relate some of the most significant actions in the text. Readers are intrigued by the servants who demonstrate characteristics of stage tricksters. Additionally, love between the aristocrats could not be communicated without their servants.

Haywood's shorter fiction, *Lasselia* and *Fantomina*, illustrates further evidence of theatrical elements in her work. *Fantomina* plays the role of the actress extraordinaire who controls Beauplaisir's desires, as well as her own. Additionally, characters in both stories exploit the freedoms granted by disguising their class standing. The upper class characters in these texts, however, show more discretion in hiding actions from the servants than in *Love in Excess*.

As I previously mentioned, John R. Elwood credits Haywood with creating patterns in the novel that began on the stage, citing characters Alderman Saving, Captain Hysom, and Mr. Chatfree from *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* as examples (115). It is important to note that Saving, Hysom, and Chatfree are not servants, but members of

the upper class. Although servants appear in *Betsy Thoughtless*, their traditional positions in Haywood's works are altered and few are given names. Significantly, most servants in *Betsy Thoughtless* have very little insight into the lives of their employers. For example, when a correspondence is discovered between Miss Forward, Betsy's schoolmate, and a "young lad" Master Sparkish, all the servants were examined, but "none of them knew any thing of the matter" (28). Haywood adds that "it was a secret to all but Miss Betsy" (28). Betsy replaces the traditional role of servant as confidant, as Forward shares the details of her amorous intrigue with Betsy. Though the servants have no knowledge of the affair, the narrator comments that "the reader shall not remain in ignorance" (28). In *Love in Excess*, these "secrets" would have been transmitted through a servant.

Although there are a few exceptions such as Miss Prinks, Lady Mellasin's woman who is allowed access to all of her mistress' secrets, servants in *Betsy Thoughtless* are prevented from having an excess of information. When one of Betsy's admirers, Gayland, slips a love letter (without the aid of a servant) into Betsy's hands, she tells no one for fear of being judged (42-43). Furthermore, Miss Trusty, a friend of Betsy's deceased mother, communicates her concerns for Betsy to no one (36). Servants are noticeably absent.

The scant use of servants in *Betsy Thoughtless* leads to the question: who or what replaces the servant's functions in the narrative? Though Elwood identifies dramatic characters in Haywood's work, the characters he mentions do not replace the servant's function. Instead, Haywood develops minor characters of similar class stature to the protagonist(s), utilizes her narrative voice, and, perhaps as a result of the popularity of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), increases her use of the epistolary form. Though

Haywood became less submersed in the theatre as she developed as a writer, remnants of the stage remained. Without question, she contributed significantly to the novel form.

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