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Impersonation in Daniel Defoe's Feminocentric Novels❖

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ABSTRACT

In response to the consumer revolution, the post-Restoration English society was rather tolerant and took a relatively laissez-faire attitude towards the inevitable class competition and "social emulation," despite sumptuary laws still *de jure* administering the relation between social status and dress. Among other commodities, clothing is expedient to promote one's social status, and instrumental in narrowing social distance and the showing of social distinctions (or impersonating social status).

Under this social context of consumer boom and vestimentary transgression, Daniel Defoe's interest in consumerism and commodities carries over into *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders*. This essay argues that Moll and Roxana do not rely on money alone for their survival and autonomy, but rather on assuming different identities through impersonation, which becomes the shared paradigm of constructing the public life of the female protagonists in the novels.

Through assuming different identities, the heroines not only weave their interpersonal and social relationships, but are also able to avert danger and violence on crime-ridden streets. Moll's impersonation, which traverses class and gender boundaries, enables her to rise above the poverty line and enjoy a long and successful career as a thief. As a variant of Moll, Roxana also resolves her problems through changes of clothes. The centerpieces of her engagement are Turkish dress and Quakeress' clothing that crisscross race and religion.

As a necessity for survival, impersonation divulges Defoe's gender bias and narratorial limit, as Moll and Roxana are subjected to familial and social deprivations, which make impossible female individualism in Defoe's fictional reality. In spite of Defoe's misrepresentation of gender issues, impersonation motivates the unprotected heroines to steer their respective courses of life. Through the freedom of dress, class/gender/religious/racial mobility overcomes authorial bias

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and limit, and widens the limited avenues to empowerment open to women.

KEY WORDS: impersonation, Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, *Roxana*, conduct books

狄福《羅珊娜》與《富蘭德》二書中的變裝

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摘　要

十七世紀末葉，英國社會消費主義興起，「社會仿效」由上而下的文化流通模式，刺激大眾消費。社會仿效的風潮帶動社會競爭、拉近階層距離，而衣服儼然成為社會仿效與消弭階級藩籬的最佳利器。在這時空背景下，狄福的小說《羅珊娜》與《富蘭德》應運而生。富蘭德的變裝突破階級與性別的限制，她變身僕人、乞丐、寡婦、貴婦、男人，以賣淫盜竊致富。而羅珊娜也靠扮裝掙脫經濟與家庭困境，她穿著土耳其洋裝與貴格會服，不論遊走於上流社會或避世絕俗於巷弄間，兩者皆游刃有餘。

不過，狄福筆下兩位女主人翁的易裝乃迫於生存的必然與無奈。這種生存的必然暴露狄福論述的偏頗與囹圄。相較於其奉幸福婚姻為圭臬的道德書，富蘭德與羅珊娜的處境顯得困窘與尷尬。狄福論述上的邏輯缺口，驗證了路易・阿爾杜塞的說法：道德書中的意識形態與小說現實之間永遠有條不可跨越的鴻溝。由於家庭與社會空間的雙重壓縮，小說中女主角的刻劃突顯狄福論述的侷限與矛盾，而扮裝適時提供小說敘述瓶頸的解套。固然如此，羅珊娜與富蘭德藉由易裝，隱姓埋名，改換階級、性別、教派、種族，並自由遷移於都市叢林間。因此，羅珊娜與富蘭德的變裝除了具有建構女性經濟主體、拓展女性生存空間的時代意義外，更儼然成為解構

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社會階級的良方策略。

關鍵詞：變裝、狄福、《羅珊娜》、《富蘭德》、道德書

During the late seventeenth century, early capitalist London became the world trade center. The increase in the income of the working classes, the number of wives and children joining the labor force, and the spending of the middle and higher ranks all jointly developed the capital's commercial capacity. Along with advanced marketing control and guidance, and renovated commercial advertisements and techniques, the emerging consumer demand during late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England gave rise to a change from a fashion which was royal in origin to that which was directly aimed at the mass consumer market.

In response to this consumer revolution, post-Restoration English society was rather tolerant and took a relatively laissez-faire attitude towards the inevitable class competition and "social emulation," in spite of the fact that sumptuary laws still administered the relation between social status and dress.[1] In "The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England," Neil McKendrick particularly points out this phenomenon of "social emulation" (25) in the spending of the lower ranks. Highlighting the domestic servant class, consisting mainly of women, having ready access to the consuming behavior of their "superiors" (22): the middle and upper classes, McKendrick vividly describes this phenomenon of vertical social mobility of emulation and imitation from below:

> In England where there was a constant restless striving to clamber from one rank to the next, and where possessions, and especially clothes, both symbolized and signaled each step in the social promotion, the economic potentialities of such social needs could, if properly harnessed, be immense. (20-21)

Clothing, as accented above, is expedient to promote one's social status, and instrumental in, what Harold Perkin observes, "the narrowing of social

[1] Richard Sennett probes the causes of the impoverishment of civil lives in modern industrial society. His critique on the enforcement and administration of sumptuary laws in chapter four, "Public Roles," is particularly illuminating and helps shape my argument of the present essay. Because of Elizabethan proclamations of sumptuary laws in the sixteenth century, the relation between social status and dress had been strictly coded. At the turn of the eighteenth century, even as the old hierarchy started to cave in, the complicated sumptuary laws continued to distinguish all social statuses and occupations by "a set of 'appropriate' clothes, and forbade people of any one station from wearing the clothes of people in another rank" (65). But the irony is, according to Sennett, "very few arrests were made for violation of the sumptuary laws" (66).

distance" (66).

Making a similar case for the commodity, clothing, in the following chapter, "Commercialization of Fashion," McKendrick specifies further: "Dress was the most public manifestation of the blurring of class division" (53). With a stronger spending ability and an easier access to fashionable commodities, notably clothes, servant girls and women mediated and channeled headlong this "downward spread of fashion" (54). As a result, impersonation not only reduced "social distance," but effectively wore off social distinctions.

Under this social context of consumer boom and vestimentary transgression, Daniel Defoe's obsession with consumerism and commodities carries over into *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders*. Against the social background of late seventeenth-century England, Defoe portrays the lives of two unprotected women-turned prostitutes and criminals, Moll and Roxana—the former was born in London prison, Newgate; the latter, in Poictiers of Huguenot parents, and fleeing Catholic persecution, settled with her parents in England around 1683.

At the beginning of their stories, Roxana's life seems to take the same contour as that of her predecessor, Moll, as these young protagonists are both deprived of a proper marriage and left unprotected on their own. While Roxana's first husband dissipates all the money, and runs away, leaving her with five children, Moll's first forced marriage terminates abruptly after a span of five years, with the young heroine widowed and left with two children. They are both left to make ends meet and are acutely aware of the link between money and survival.

Mastery over Circumstances

Eighteenth-century critics Mona Scheurermann and others[2] attach importance to money, among other contemporary central concerns, such as "courtship and marriage, decorum and social graces, virginity and reputation"

[2] For the discussions of women and money in Defoe's feminocentric novels, see Lois Chaber, "Matriarchal Mirror: Women and Capital in *Moll Flanders*," *PMLA* 97 (1982); Ann Louise Kibbie, "Monstrous Generation: The Birth of Capital in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*," *PMLA* 10 (1995); Samuel Macey, *Money and the Novel* (Victoria: Sono Nis P, 1983); Maximillian Novak, *Realism, Myth, and History in Defoe's Fiction* (Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1984); Katharine Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1982).

(311) of eighteenth-century English novels. For a female character in an eighteenth-century novel, Scheuermann puts forward on top of anything else that "having money of her own is seen as virtually the only way that a woman can be both safe and independent" (311). [3] Indeed, English eighteenth-century novelists—Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Jane Austen, among others—all show the reader that women must find some way to support themselves within a precarious, patriarchal society that conventionally confines their means of living.

Although Defoe's heroines are in desperate need of money, this essay argues that Moll and Roxana do not rely on financial support alone, but rather on shifting their identities through impersonation for their security and autonomy. Beset and afflicted by poverty and destitution, Moll deplores her "desolate" state of being "without Cloaths" (8), aside from friendship and assistance. Later, at the height of her career, clothing continues to be a vital indicator of Moll's wealth and possessions. As she wallows in wealth out of thievery, Moll gloats over the stolen goods of illegal operations: "I had 700 l. by me in Money, besides Cloaths, Rings, some Plate, and two gold Watches" (253). Even her sudden downfall is attributed to stealing "two Pieces of flower'd Silks, such as they call Brocaded Silk, very rich" (272). As much as Moll, Roxana also deems clothing as an index of measuring economic success and social ascendancy. Having on her hands "five several Morning dresses," and "several Parcels of fine Linnen, and of Lace" from the French Prince (71), Roxana even craves for more to emulate the Queen of France with another gift of three suits of clothes, "figur'd with Gold, and another with Silver, and another of Crimson" (70).

John J. Richetti states that Roxana, as well as Moll before her, "has her literary roots in a tradition of the assertive lower-class woman, the *picara*, the courtesan-whore, and the counterfeit-lady" (194). In the narratives, both Moll and Roxana cannot but "counterfeit" their identities, because they are not only "courtesan-whores," but also criminals: While Moll's crimes have

[3] Scheuermann points out the relation between women and money and extensively discusses this thematic concern in Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria*, Jane Austen's *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, as well as Henry Fielding's *Shamela*. Scheuermann stresses that the capability of handling money or "financial management" is particularly vital for female characters against a "societal structure" which is inimical to them.

gone unpunished, Roxana imputes her eventual "Misery" to "Crime" (330). In contrast to Defoe's other male title characters, Captain Singleton, Colonel Jack, and Robinson Crusoe, who recover their moral strength during repentance, Roxana and Moll keep committing the same crimes and sins, which Gary Hentzi ascribes to the necessity of life. Hentzi reviews these feminocentric novels that "necessity was regarded as a motivation so strong that it took precedence over the prohibitions of virtue" (178). Thus, while Moll cannot but "Cast off all Remorse and Repentance," as "every hit look'd towards another" (207), Roxana harks back to her "six and twenty Years of Wickedness, without the least Signals of Remorse; without any Signs of Repentance" (188).

In spite of occasional moments of critical reflections in life, the heroines' moral judgments always give way to material temptations.[4] Addressing the reader, the two first-person protagonist narrators recount their individual masteries over circumstances. Arnold Weinstein attaches Moll's success to her "cunning and creativity (disguise is, by definition, creative)" (149). Everett Zimmerman also makes a similar note on Roxana: "She uses costume not only for utilitarian purposes—disguise and hypocrisy—but also to create a new, although temporary, self" (161). As both heroines only admit their evil to themselves and thus have to do everything in their power to conceal their identities and criminalities, they achieve this balance between interior and exterior life by putting on different disguises and assuming different roles, to shove aside their social marginalization and put up a bold front against the force of circumstance.

Defoe highlights this incompatibility between inner and outer self of Roxana and Moll. The former is in dire need to create new, exterior identities, as she consistently and continuously confesses to her readers her identity as a

[4] Roxana constructs an opposition between feeling and judgment. Throughout the novel, her critical reflections on her criminal conduct evidence the irreconcilability between her inner world and reality, between moral judgment and criminal actions. Her moral principle is inapplicable, and the novel ends in Roxana's inability to repent, because her claim of repentance is simply the inevitable consequence of logical reasoning. As she concludes, "I was brought so low again, that my Repentance seem'd to be only the Consequence of my Misery, as my Misery was of my Crime" (330). Characterizing Roxana, Defoe seems to contrast her impenitence with Moll's repentance, as Moll and her Lancashire husband finally "resolve to spend the Remainder of our Years in sincere Penitence, for the wicked Lives we have lived" (343). In fact, Moll's moral conscience, comparable to Roxana, only exists briefly, as she always has "an evil Counsellor within," "the same wicked Impulse" to incite her to "go out again and seek for what might happen" (193).

"Protestant whore," which she desperately wants to evade and abandon. But the presence of Roxana's daughter threatens to make impossible her shifting of identities.[5] Similarly, the latter also detaches herself from others during her criminal career, reserving the private part of herself from the governess, and disguising her gender, while working with her male partner. With great caution and reserve, Moll goes through a multiplicity of disguises, much more than Roxana, and eventually prevails as a master-thief. This shifting of identities through impersonation has become the shared paradigm of constructing the public life of the female protagonists in *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders*.

Two Functions of Clothing

In "Popular Dress," Daniel Roche defines clothing as "costume" and enumerates its two contradictory functions:

> In Paris everyone knew the clothes appropriate to each condition, but at the same time costume made possible a game whose rules varied with the individual and the occasion. If it was primarily a question of conforming to a scale of conventions, it was also possible to escape from the burden of appearances. (160-61)

According to Roche, the distinctions in dress, or "a scale of conventions," are applied to stratify different ranks in the social hierarchy. But, dress codes, as a contradiction in terms, also offer means to "escape from the burden of appearances."

In line with Roche's argument, Richard Sennett also contributes a similar notion: "By the first principle people visualized clothes as matters of contrivance, decoration, and convention, with the body serving as a

[5] Throughout the narrative, Roxana maintains her equilibrium of life by censuring her wicked past privately and publicly impersonating her identity. But starting from the last third of the narrative, Roxana's daughter Susan adamantly and obstinately shadows Roxana "*like a Hound*, she had had a hot Scent" (317), disrupting Roxana's inner equilibrium as the mother fears her secret past will be made public. Susan's pertinacious pursuit panics Roxana to the extent that she "was brought to the Point of Destruction" by "this impertinent Girl" (296). Zimmerman also links Susan with Roxana's life: "To acknowledge this daughter is to acknowledge her past, to make it public, to fix it" (164). As all the attempted evasions fail, there is nothing Roxana can do to resolve this dilemma, so this threat of disclosure must be done away with.

mannequin rather than an expressive, living creature" (64-65). Sennett's materialistic view, in "Public Roles," also flips over the other side of the coin of Roche's definition of clothing. He contends that dressing the body as "a mannequin" paradoxically offers people, especially the underprivileged ones, like Moll and Roxana, a golden opportunity to break free from their assigned "appearances" and thus affect new identities as they want to. As Sennett ruminates,

> Theoretically, you could go to jail for imitating another person's bodily appearance; practically, you need have had no fear by 1700 of doing so. People in very large cities had little means of telling whether the dress of a stranger on the street was an accurate reflection of his of her standing in the society. . . . (66)

Given that sumptuary laws in England were lax and seldom enforced, McKendrick also accords that "sumptuary laws will always intensify the desire of some of those legally deprived in the way to wear the banned material" (40). For Roxana and Moll, the former expresses her individuality through her dress code and refuses to be labeled as a mere "mannequin," while the latter, though adroit at impersonations, snubs cross-dressing and beggar's rags.

Moll's Multiple Disguises

This essay is concerned with the antithetical function of clothing, which helps the deprived and "underprivileged" Moll and Roxana assume new identities and sustain their respective psychic equilibriums. In *Moll Flanders*, the heroine's "many overt disguises" make it possible to maintain the balance between her interior criminality and her exterior mercuriality. As Richetti summarizes, "Moll's criminal career is a matter of many overt disguises" (129), in that she puts on and throws off a variety of clothes: dressing as a gentlewoman, a porter's wife, a wealthy widow, a beggar woman, a servant, and even a man.[6] Despite once being mistaken and falsely accused of

[6] Richetti analyzes Moll dialectically. He theorizes that Moll moves toward "a dialectic between self and other which has as its end a covert but triumphant assertion of the self" (96). The eponymous novel shows how the female protagonist gradually becomes autonomous and extricates herself from desperate circumstances. In other words, the "desperate circumstances" in the narrative dialectically help Moll's triumph and autonomy to materialize. As Richetti points out at the end of his essay,

thievery, she later dresses like a wealthy widow and, with sartorial finery, wins the lawsuit, with a compensation of "150 l. and a Suit of black silk Coaths" (252).

Moll keeps dressing up for diverse identities, until she "grew the greatest Artist of my [her] time" (214). It seems that Moll is disposed to adapting her guile to any new situation, as she recalls that "generally I took up new Figures, and contriv'd to appear in new Shapes every time I went abroad" (262). However, Moll's vestimentary versatility has its limits, even though Moll step by step gains her ascendancy over her fellow thieves and finally becomes "the richest of the Trade in *England*" (253). Perhaps, except for "Mens Cloths" (214) and "Beggar's dress" (254), Moll has almost demonstrated an insuperable talent for the craft and lives up to the name of "the greatest Artist of my [her] time."

But just after this fit of self-glorification, at the flip of a page, Moll *ex tempore* bursts into complaint about the "clumsiness" of men's clothing to the extent that she has trouble balancing, as she claims herself to be "so Nimble, so Ready, so Dexterous" by nature. For the heroine, cross-gender clothing is "so contrary to Nature; and as I did every thing Clumsily, so I had neither the success, or the easiness of Escape that I had before, and I resolv'd to leave it off" (215). Though skilled and very adaptable, Moll displays a peculiar sense of value. She is conventional as to abhor incest; she is also gender- and class-conscious as to avoid men's and beggar's clothing. But she doesn't look askance at other social inhibitions, such as thievery, bigamy, prostitution, and abandoning children.

Zimmerman is right by associating one of Moll's sartorial predispositions with sexuality: "Moll retains a crude sense of the natural throughout her career: she avoids incest, and prefers not to wear men's clothes" (85). Eva Maria Stadler also makes a similar interpretation of Moll's cross-dressing in "Feminist Explorations of Literary Space": "While class-based dress codes are socially or culturally determined, gendered-based dress codes seem to her and perhaps to Defoe 'natural'" (25). In their essays, both Zimmerman and Stadler bring the issue of the gender-based dress code to

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Moll's "attractiveness stems from her function: to assert and enact the possibility of survival and prosperity in the face of impossibly limiting and even destructive circumstances" (144). Thus, it is the dialectical interplay between the "limiting," "destructive circumstances" and the protagonist's countermeasures of continuous impersonations that bolster the structure of the narrative.

bear upon that of incest. But it is questionable that both categorize only "Mens Cloths" and incest as unnatural, while neglectful of Moll's repulsion of another disguise: the beggar's clothing.

In fact, "Mens Cloths" (214), along with incest, are not the only things that "appear to worry Moll," as Stadler and Zimmerman both point out. Moll particularly finds the beggar's rags "Ominous and Threatening" (254), perhaps more repulsive and unnatural than men's clothes, as the beggars's rags for Moll are "the most uneasie Disguise," more than anything else in the world. She dislikes walking "in the coursest and most despicable Rags," because she "naturally abhorr'd Dirt and Rags" and she has always been keen to be "Tite" and "Cleanly" since childhood (253). Thus, it is debatable to claim that Moll's dress code is gender-based, as proposed by Stadler. Perhaps, Moll's sartorial code is more class-based than gender-based, as she once emphasizes "I lov'd nothing in the World better than fine Clothes" (112).

Roxana's Sartorial Expressions of Individualism

Comparable to Moll, Roxana also relies heavily on disguises,[7] if not more than Moll, and though not more than Moll, assumes different identities, most notably as that of a "Mahometan" (175) and a Quakeress. Before the flashback of Roxana's story, the preface to *Roxana* already sets the tone of the narrative: if the history of Roxana is not "as Beautiful as the Lady herself is reported to be," the "Relator," rather than "the Lady herself," has to account for the poor rendering: "it must be from the Defect of his Performance; dressing up the Story in worse Cloaths than the Lady" (1). As the rhetoric heralds, Roxana's story, like Moll's, will revolve around the issue of clothing.

Laura Brown accentuates this notion in "Amazons and Africans": "Everything in this narrative is dressed, including any claims to moral improvement, but it is Roxana's dressing that directs all others" (147). But in her book chapter, Brown turns her attention predominantly to "the discursive relation between gender and empire" (135), and foregrounds "the scapegoating of women" (16), the role women play in the "discursive" construction of the British Empire. It stands to reason that the

[7] At one moment, Roxana is dressed in the rags of a deprived mother, or the black mourning clothes of a widow; at another, planning to seduce her landlord, she dons a white dress to signify her genteel status. Still on another occasion, she dresses herself in the jewels of a princess.

colonially-charged Turkish dress is chosen and singled out as the only "centerpiece" by Brown in the career of Roxana's "self-merchandising" (146).[8]

But if readers choose not to confine themselves to the colonial context, they would find that not only the Turkish dress but also the Quakeress' clothing which Roxana later adopts for disguise, resolves the heroine's problem through changes of dress codes. Claire Hughes, in "The Fatal Dress: Daniel Defoe's *Roxana*," remarks: "With the various guises that she puts on, Roxana recognizes and mimics the values they represent, believing they be discarded like collars, cuffs, and shifts" (17). Emulating her predecessor, Moll, Roxana also balances her assumption of external identities against internal condemnation of her moral wickedness, in order to conceal her secret history and maintain her psychic equilibrium.[9]

The Turkish dress is instrumental for Roxana to reach the summit of the social ladder. Despite self-prostituting, Roxana aspires to be "the Queen of Whores" (82), actively and tirelessly engaging in socially aspiring activities, and repeating to herself: "nothing less than being Mistress to the King himself (161) and "nothing less than the KING himself was in my Eye" (172). Her ambition later materializes as she becomes "monstrous rich" (171) and her Turkish costume and dance successfully seduce none other than the king himself. This exotic dress turns out to be a unique sign of Roxana's individuality, making her the center of attention "all over the Court End of Town" (176). Notably, in the second "Masquerade," while the heroine

[8] Laura Brown considers that eighteenth-century critics, such as Daniel Roche, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, and Richard Sennett, overlook the issue of gender at the service of empire and imperialism, but place predominant emphasis on female clothing and adornment in relation to social hierarchy and material culture. Brown highlights the relation between women and empire/imperialism in *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (1993), which argues "the outfitting of the English female body" in the "dress of the exotic" is the dimension of a "powerful motif of female dressing that characterizes eighteenth-century imperialist ideology" (148).

[9] Susan's persistent pursuit for Roxana's true identity threatens to disrupt the heroine's equilibrium of life. If the knowledge of her concealed identity and wicked past is espied by someone other than herself and Amy, the exposure of her secret will disturb her stable public appearance. It follows that Susan is no exception and has to be kept in the dark, because the knowledge of Roxana's motherhood will destroy the protagonist's carefully constructed public life. Perhaps except for the Quaker, Amy is the only one allowed into Roxana's private life. Roxana describes her as "the Skin to my Back" (25), for Amy knows her mistress' "weakest Part" (231). Besides sharing Roxana's conscience, Amy even takes part in her mistress' desire, as Roxana once insists that "my Maid should be a Whore too." In fact, the saying "like Mistress, like Maid" perfectly portrays their relationship (83). To Roxana, Amy is not so much an agent as a proxy, not so much a substitute as an alter ego.

dances in her Turkish dress and adornment, "Roxana," the popular generic name for the oriental queens in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century drama, has been so firmly fixed upon her "as if I [Roxana] had been Christen'd" (176). The heroine is so overwhelmingly hailed and acclaimed that this secular investiture is figuratively compared to and identified with Christian baptism.

Although the Turkish dress fashions Roxana's uniqueness and conjures up the image of "Mahometan," her suitors will never mistake her for a colonized Turkish woman, because Roxana "had a Christian Face," and "cou'd dance like a Christian" (175). Indeed, Roxana's "Christian Face" and her Christian dance outshine other courtesans who "really acted to the Life the barbarous Country whence they came" (179). Instead of following the traditional Turkish dancing steps and movements, Roxana adapts the indigenous Turkish dance by adroitly removing the Turkish/"barbarous" element and insinuating "the *French* Behaviour under the *Mahometan* Dress" to the gentlemen's favor, as she proudly recalls that "it was every way as new, and pleas'd much better, indeed" (179).

In "*Roxana*: Nature, Knowledge, and Power," Richetti reviews Roxana's talent for choreography: "Roxana pleases by combining the strange with the familiar, the Turkish with the French, demonstrating the power she has over those categories by creating a new thing which exists only in her imagination" (201). Through Roxana's creative imagination, "the strange," "barbarous," and "the Turkish" are thus disciplined and domesticated by "the familiar" and "the French" as not to steal the limelight of the colonizer's "Christian Face" and Christian dance. Brown would interpret that Roxana's design not only retains colonial superiority but also reinforces the established racial hierarchy. But in terms of Roxana's creativity, the colonized dress and dance are here integrated and individualized to Roxana's advantage. Not only do they enable the heroine to maintain the social prominence she needs, but also, as Stadler theorizes, are turned into "a discourse of individualist empowerment, stool in the (fictitious) ascendancy of women" (22).

Roxana's gift for individualizing the dress code is further evidenced in her art of assuming the role of a Quakeress. To avoid too much public exposure, as her fame as Mahometan is on everyone's tongue across the town, Roxana decides to go to the other extreme by taking herself out of the public eye and ensconcing herself in the private realm. As the Turkish dance and

dress threaten to expose her motherhood, Roxana chooses to "put myself into some Figure of Life, in which I might not be scandalous to my own Family, and be afraid to make myself known to my own Children, who were my own Flesh and Blood" (206). Impersonating a proper lady, she puts on the Quaker's dress for disguise in order to "shift" her "Being" and "transform" herself "into a new Shape" (208-9).

Given this desperate need for the concealment of her shameful past and her grave fear of exposure by Susan, Zimmerman reasons Roxana's need to migrate across the spectrum from one extreme to the other: "The Quaker's appearance of gravity, her refusal to lie outrightly, her unwillingness to see evil—all give Roxana the appearance of moral health" (170). But in spite of Roxana's wish to hide, she once again becomes the focus of attention. Not only does she become indistinguishable from what she imitates, but, as she proudly recalls, "there was not a QUAKER in the Town look'd less like a Counterfeit than I did" (213). Rather than like "a mannequin" (65) as Sennett defines the human body, the heroine's dress codes, whether exotic or religious, have contrarily turned Roxana into "an expressive, living creature" and "a discourse of individualist empowerment" that refuses to be labeled and pinned down by the codes of dressing.

Discrimination against Female Protagonists

By means of impersonation, Moll and Roxana seem to be molded as female versions of eighteenth-century *homo economicus* to rival Defoe's eponymous male protagonists—Singleton, Jack, and Crusoe. But unlike their male counterparts, Moll and Roxana are neither privileged to be washed ashore on an uninhabited island, nor graced with a place elsewhere to start their careers and achieve their economic prosperity.[10] On the contrary, they

[10] Moll is first deported to Virginia as a thief, and her first visit ends up as an incestuous disaster. Many years later, though Moll is privileged to set her foot in Virginia once again, as a prudent planter, not a thief, the presence of her grown-up son Humphrey not only suggests the inseparability of Moll's familial bonds from her economic autonomy, but also impairs her domesticity with a perverted, incestuous overtone, which disgusts her and forces her to leave Virginia on her first visit. After their meeting, Moll at once wishes that "I had not brought my Lancashire Husband from England at all" (335). Even though Moll retracts her wish and reiterates that "I lov'd my Lancashire Husband entirely" (335), the fact that her wish for the absence of the beloved Lancashire husband and her attachment to her incestuous child still gives a sense of uncertainty about Moll's future roles as a wife and mother.

are always bound to familial ties.[11] But no matter how inextricably Moll and Roxana are entangled by their families, they are further deprived of their conventional roles to play, both as a proper wife and a good mother.[12] In other words, the protagonists' misrepresented versions of familial bonds—subjecting them to the violations of domestic stability and stripping them of the conventional female roles to play—persist in gripping and haunting them to the extent that male individualism cannot lend itself to the female protagonists.

Helen Moglen comments that "Moll reproduces the family through distorted versions of the wife and mother" (37); she further explicates that Moll "acts as a daughter in perverse relationships with several older women" (37). Indeed, Moll's familial relations with her "good Motherly Nurse," "good old Governess," and biological mother/mother-in-law are unconventional, or "perverse," in Moglen's term. But her role as a daughter may not be altogether unstereotypical. Except for the governess, who "educates her in the strategies of thievery" (37), the motherly nurse takes great care of Moll, while her biological mother/mother-in-law is so conventional that she bemoans Moll's incestuous marriage.

While Moll's connection with Mother Midnight may be both morally improper and sexually offensive, Roxana's childhood story is all too brief and fleeting before she is promptly sold on the marriage market, barely at the age of sixteen. Denied the opportunity to play the role of a conventional woman, both Moll and Roxana are further put under the constant trials of patriarchal society and exposed to the ever-present menaces of masculine manipulation.

Considering this "sex-gender system" of *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders* "intolerable," Moglen critiques caustically on these twin female narratives,

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[11] Although Defoe's major novels are recounted from a retrospective point of view: the narrator comments on his or her former self, the moral and narrative patterns in *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders* are different from those in their masculinocentric counterparts: *Captain Singleton*, *Colonel Jack*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Unlike these male protagonists, Moll and Roxana can neither disavow their affective and sexual needs that Crusoe conveniently replaces with substitutes, nor can they dismiss familial bonds, as their male counterparts easily can. As a result, domestic problems keep returning to manipulate their emotional ups-and-downs and threaten to subvert their autonomy.

[12] Distorting Moll's and Roxana's conventional roles in the narratives, Defoe further subjects their dispossessed femininity to the trials of masculine individualism. Their perverted domestic relations pose constant threats to upset their autonomies. Helen Moglen's observation is insightful, as she points out Defoe's "inability to think beyond the values of the emerging sex-gender system limited the possibilities of his representation" (20). In fact, the heroines' double deprivations, familial and social, expose Defoe's narratorial contradictions, which bring to light the impossibility of female individualism in Defoe's fictional reality.

"For women, there is not world elsewhere: no desert island, no place beyond society. But the domesticity that binds women to society also deprives them of choice, of agency, and therefore of a story" (37). Indeed these two female protagonists are so brutally bereaved of a "choice," "agency," or even "story" of their own in their respective narratives to the extent that they are—as Arnold Weinstein states, "incognito" (145)—concealed under a disguised or assumed identity. While Moll requests her readers to "give me leave to speak of myself under that name till I dare own who I have been, as well as who I am" (7), Roxana is drained through and through by her conflict between desire for connection and fear of disclosure. In other words, Defoe's representation of Moll and Roxana brings out of the closet his narratorial contradiction: while modeling the heroines on male socioeconomic individualism, the frequent interruptions of familial ties challenge their autonomy and undercut their individualist status.

Defoe's Narratorial Contradiction and Inconsistency

Both feminocentric novels expose the authorial bias and narratorial limit of Defoe's representation that ideologically distinguishes female characters from their male counterparts in terms of their slanted domesticity and individualism. On one hand, the accounts of Moll and Roxana divulge Defoe's gender discrimination. On the other hand, the perverted and prejudiced representations of female protagonists in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* provide a microscopic view for further reviewing Defoe's representation of gender issues in other narratives.

It would ring ever more ironical, if readers compare side by side Defoe's feminocentric novels with his conduct books. Narratorial contradiction and inconsistency would readily come to the fore. Defoe's conduct manuals—*Conjugal Lewdness*, *The Family Instructor*, and *Religious Courtship*—aim to establish a code of conduct that prioritizes domestic harmony. These conduct manuals strive to establish a paradigm of familial harmony, on the basis of reciprocity. However, Defoe's high-principled intent lacks the discursive consistency, as the conduct code is contradicted by its domestic exemplars, which fall out with the established rules and turn out to stress either domestic difficulties or domestic fights over dominance between husband and wife.

In the first chapter of *Conjugal Lewdness*, Defoe solemnly defines the nature of matrimony: "Upon the whole, the Matrimonial Duty is all reciprocal; 'tis founded in Love, 'tis performed in the heighth of Affection. . ." (27). However, his conduct discourse is neither supportive, nor consistent in *The*

Family Instructor and *Religious Courtship*, the exemplifications of which go against this ideological imperative in *Conjugal Lewdness*. Defoe's inculcation of "Love," and "mutual Affection" (27) in *Conjugal Lewdness*, gives way to the split between matrimonial equality and subordination, as rendered in the domestic stories in *The Family Instructor* and *Religious Courtship*. While the struggle for domestic authority ends up disciplining the insubordinate wife in the former, in the latter, the youngest, wisest sister is skeptical all along about the truthfulness of mutual subordination. That is, the messages underlying these stories run counter to its tenet, as manifested at the beginning of *Conjugal Lewdness*. In light of it, Carol Houlihan Flynn remarks aptly: "While espousing his domestic ideals, Defoe wrote almost endlessly about domestic difficulties" (73). Indeed, Moll's and Roxana's matrimonies exemplify and testify to the negative and worst side of marriage, as Defoe describes in *Conjugal Lewdness* that marriage is either the "Center to which all the lesser Delights of life tend, as a Point in the Circle" or a "kind of Hell in miniature" (96, 103).

The narratorial contradiction and inconsistency between "domestic ideals" and "domestic difficulties" first bring to light the "imaginary" relationship between ideal and reality, and between the conduct manuals and their ideological exemplars. Louis Althusser theorizes very lucidly the fundamentals of this relationship:

> all ideology represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion . . . the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live. (165)

In line with Althusser's argument, Defoe's domestic stories present the "necessarily imaginary distortion" of the conduct code, while *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, the fictional realities, move further away from the conduct code, but ever closer to "the real relations in which they [Moll and Roxana] live." The feminocentric novels not only further negate the ideal state of harmony, promised and propagated by the ideological code, but the instabilities of the fictional realities, which Moll and Roxana inhabit, push the heroines into an unprotected, inimical world.

Conclusion

Defoe's fictional realities—Moll Flanders and Roxana—represent the conduct code in its double "imaginary distortion." For one thing, Defoe's ideological exemplars in the conduct manuals already call his ideal state of domestic harmony into question. For another, while the insubordinate wife and skeptical daughter in the conduct manuals are safely ensconced in their domestic harbors, Moll and Roxana are contrarily ditched in the streets. The high-minded matrimony Defoe expounds as "a State, not a Circumstance of Life" (343) in Conjugal Lewdness is deflated and contrasted by the eponymous heroines' circumstantial way of life, after Moll's first husband suddenly goes bankrupt and dies, and Roxana's mysteriously wanders off somewhere. Thus, the idealized state of matrimony in Conjugal Lewdness as "a chast and modest Scheme of living" (343), is parodied and contradicted by Moll Flanders and Roxana in their unchaste and immodest ways of life. The double "imaginary distortion" of Defoe's family ideal forces the protagonists to remain anonymous and they cannot but counterfeit their identities. Given the distorted domesticity and dispossessed individualism, impersonation, as Hentzi suggests, becomes the necessity for survival, as both Moll and Roxana are "driven . . . to the Gates of Destruction, Soul and Body" (*Moll* 151).

Yet, for all that Defoe's narratorial bias and limit may take the wind out of the heroines' sails, the unprotected protagonists can still steer their courses of life by way of impersonation. Moll's and Roxana's impersonations, crisscrossing the lines of gender, class, religion, and race, act as a protective screen. It enables cross-gender and -class Moll, and cross-race and -religion Roxana to move in crowds among people of all ranks, high and low, haves and have-nots. Their various vestimentary expressions constitute an envelope that veils or unveils the female body, and become a tool in the survival of women. Both Moll's and Roxana's sartorial transgressions point to the anonymity and fluidity of an urban world in transition, where they can assume any identity and go any place their appearances allow. Through the freedom of dress in Defoe's feminocentric novels, class/gender/religious/racial mobility overcomes the authorial bias and narratorial limit, and widens the limited avenues to social empowerment open to women.

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