Dressed in the trappings of a sentimental heroine : costuming Shakespeare's Juliet on the eighteenth-century English stage

DRESSED IN THE TRAPPINGS OF A SENTIMENTAL HEROINE: COSTUMING SHAKESPEARE'S JULIET ON THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH STAGE

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Abstract

The popularity of *Romeo and Juliet* in the later part of the eighteenth century has been largely attributed to David Garrick's 1748 adaptation of Shakespeare's text. Not only was Garrick's version hugely popular when it debuted, but Garrick's script has proved to be the "most enduringly successful production of the play" (Berg 1989, 30). Not only does Garrick's adaptation significantly cut down the original text, in favour of adding pantomime and dancing scenes, but the character of Juliet is substantially altered. Garrick's Juliet is clad in the trappings of a sentimental heroine and is represented in the text as an opinionated and self-motivated young woman whose actions are driven by her own desires. In this article I will explore Garrick's refashioning of Shakespeare's tragic heroine, looking specifically at how changes were made to the dialogue and choices regarding the character's costume which recast Juliet in the trappings of a sentimental heroine. Charting the transformation of Juliet both on-stage and in the socio-cultural lexicon from tragic to spirited sentimental heroine, I will examine Garrick's adaptation in conjunction with images of Juliet produced by Anthony Walker and Ignatius Joseph van den Berghe looking specifically at the role of costume in communicating Juliet's newfound sentimentality. Ultimately, this essay will pose questions about the larger significance of Garrick's Juliet and her sentimental characterisation in conjunction with discussions of women in the public sphere.

Keywords

Eighteenth-century performance, sentimentality, gender, costuming, English literature, Shakespearean drama

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EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY Britons witnessed unprecedented growth in garment production. Moving away from a small-scale domestic model toward increasing mechanization and steadily growing fabrication of clothing for the middle classes. The commercial market during this period underwent rapid changes, as apparel

and fashionable accessories were transformed from luxuries reserved for the elite classes into accessible accoutrements for much of the population. During this same period, women's participation in English drama and theatre also reached record-breaking heights. By stepping onto the stage, actresses[1] participated in a competitive economic marketplace (Nussbaum 2010, 26) where many of the period's most celebrated female performers often earned more than their male counterparts (43). Moreover, over the course of the long eighteenth century, actresses became cultural phenomena and celebrities. The success of actresses was not limited to the theatre, but rather extended to wider social trends in fashion and style. In the following pages I will explore the relationship between fashionable dress and performances of female identity, looking particularly at Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) in conjunction with David Garrick's 1748 adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Drawing together both literary and staged iterations of female identity this investigation aims to examine the popularity of sentimental expression as it was imagined on the mid-eighteenth-century stage. Structurally speaking, this exploration will be divided into two sections. In the first I will briefly chart the importance of fashionable garments in constructions of female identity, looking at how ideas of fashionability were intimately linked to notions of women's social value. Here, I will draw upon sentimental literature in my analysis looking at how sentimental expression – particularly in conjunction with Richardson's *Pamela* – offers useful insight into the complex relationship between perceived female worth and a woman's choice of dress. In the second section, I will delve into an examination of Garrick's character of Juliet in his hugely successful adaptation of Shakespeare's classic. Charting the transformation of Juliet both on-stage and in the socio-cultural lexicon from tragic to spirited sentimental heroine, I will investigate Garrick's adaptation in conjunction with images of Juliet produced by Anthony Walker, Ignatius Joseph van den Berghe and Benjamin Wilson looking specifically at the role of costume in communicating Juliet's newfound sentimentality.

Generally speaking, over the course of the period, dress and fashionable garments were increasingly linked to discussions of female participation in non-domestic activities. By mid-century, debates about appropriate women's dress drew

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[1] The notion of the "actress" as social phenomenon which I am making use of here refers to what Felicity Nussbaum describes as the "second and third generations of actresses on the English stage from 1700 until the 1780s who recognized the exchange value of their labor and their potential for self-commodification" and as a result they "demanded remuneration commensurate with their talents" (2010, 11).

considerably more attention when compared to their male counterparts. Anne Hollander notes this divergence in women's and men's fashion and suggests that whereas women's fashion became increasingly complex and variable throughout the period, male tailoring became "not just simpler" but "even more aggressively simple as feminine modes became more fanciful" (1994, 77). Expanding upon this Hollander proposes that generally speaking, "the advance of restraint as a quality of male dress may well have been hastened, spurred by the extremity of ladies' fashionable excesses" (77) and as a result, sensible men were expected to avoid unnecessary adornment of their own garments "even if they liked it on the ladies" (77). Speaking to this divide between garments for men and women, Hollander highlights the gendered associations of fashion during the period which cast women as excessive, frivolous and fanciful in stark juxtaposition to their restrained and sensible male contemporaries. Hollander's summary of eighteenth-century fashion trends also gestures toward the ways that dress came to be a crucial facet of the socio-cultural lexicon and was used as a synecdochic stand-in for the female body in discussions regarding female participation in the public sphere.

Reaching beyond the material bounds of the garments themselves, dress functioned as a central element in discussions of women's "proper" place in existing social hierarchies, and fashion became the distinct realm of female expertise. The anonymous author of *Man Superior to Woman* (1744) succinctly outlines the general association of women with fashion in his prefatory discussion of female intellect suggesting that "The more judicious part of our sex may perhaps think it dangerous to trust the *women* as judges of anything where Reason is concerned, on account of the weakness of their intellects, which seldom can reach higher than a Head-Dress" (1744, xiv). Here, the author not only dismisses women's capacity to possess reason and intellect on par with men's but does so by comparing female intellectual capacities to an implicitly superfluous fashionable accessory. In suggesting that a woman's intellect could reach no further than the height of her head-dress the author relies upon pre-existing associations of women with fashionable frivolity in order to make claims that women should be subordinate to men. The implication here is that because women cannot possibly possess reason beyond the realm of fashionable adornment their intellectual capacities are just as decorative and frivolous as their fashionable garments. Looking beyond the blatant misogyny that underpins these assertions, the author of *Man Superior to Woman* provides us with a useful starting point in this discussion as the assertions presented by the text illustrate the integral role of fashion and garments in discussions of female social participation in the eighteenth century. As the text continues, the author extends his initial metaphor proclaiming,

> If the business of the mind were nothing more than to contrive a Dress; to invent a new Fashion; to set off a bad Face; to heighten the charms of a good one; to understand the economy of a tea-table; to manage an intrigue; to conduct a Game at *Quadrille*, to lay out new plans of pleasure, pride, and luxury: the women must be owned to have a capacity not only equal, but even superior to us. (19)

Instead of focussing on a single item of clothing, in this passage the narrator extends dress beyond the material garment itself by linking both dress and fashion to other activities associated with polite femininity. Although the narrator acknowledges women's ability to surpass men in these domestic pursuits, the intellectual capacities of women are confined to the home. By linking dress, fashion and domestic pastimes to conceptions of women's intellect, the author of *Man Superior to Woman* underscores how these typically "feminine" activities allowed women to thrive within domestic parameters. Operating on the assumption that women were unfit to participate in male activities, which are implied to be all public activities not listed in the summary above, the author intends to undercut or call into question women's ability to participate more broadly in public discourse while simultaneously idealizing the role of women within the domestic sphere.[2] Moreover, in detailing the ways in which women generally excel in domestic activities like creating a new fashion, applying makeup, arranging a tea table and playing at cards, the text implicitly divorces these activities from their practical extensions in the public sphere. The narrator does not acknowledge that all the activities listed as the domain of the frivolous woman of fashion are inextricably linked to active participation in the commercial marketplace: the refreshments of the tea table must be purchased; the fabric for the dress was likely sourced and tailored by a professional; and the makeup, or its components, were acquired from a shop etc. By divorcing the activities of domestic femininity from their extensions in the commercial marketplace the text implicitly presents an idealised kind of femininity that is both superficially disconnected from and intimately connected to both domestic and commercial activities.

Literary discussions of proper social conduct for eighteenth-century women and the female body more generally were not solely limited to texts like *Man Superior to Woman*, but also formed a central aspect of the widely popular genre

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[2] Laura Mandell in *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, building upon the work of scholars like Ellen Pollak, Mary Poovey and Margaret Doody, suggests that the idealisation of women was a common facet of literature during the eighteenth century. Mandell asserts that "the representation of ideal femininity [in literary texts] serves a social or economic or political function, that the middle class defines itself around" (1999, 22).

of sentimental literature.[3] Albert J. Rivero explains that sentimental novels utilized a "common language and style" to function as "machines explicitly and self-consciously manufactured to feel with" (2019, 3). Despite the fact that some of the most well-studied sentimental novels of the period were written by male authors (e.g., Samuel Richardson, Henry Mackenzie, and Laurence Sterne), a significant number of sentimental novels published in the latter half of the eighteenth century were written by women (2019, 4) such as Frances Burney, Anne Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth, Charlotte Lennox and Charlotte Smith. Many of these texts by authors of both sexes focussed on the proper functioning of female bodies in the public sphere. John Mullan asserts that the sentimental body is more often than not a female body (1990, 61), a body whose "vocabulary is that of gestures and palpitations, sights and tears" (61). In Mullan's estimation, "the vocabulary [of sensibility] is powerful because it is not spoken (but only spoken of); it is everything that punctures or interrupts speech" (61). Similarly, Paul Goring suggests that sentimental literature reflected the concurrent "preoccupation in British culture . . . with the human body as an eloquent object, whose eloquence arises from the performance of an inscribed system of gestures and expressions" (2009, 5).[4] He explains that sentimental novels participated in a larger social discourse which was "engaged in training the body" (5) and aimed to influence the appearance and function of female bodies in public spaces. To this end, sentimental fiction introduced a new type

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[3] Rivero speaks to the tremendous popularity of sentimental fiction in his "Introduction" to *The Sentimental Novel in the Eighteenth Century* suggesting that sentimental novels "reached the height of their vogue in the 1770s and 1780s and were still popular in the 1790s," and "by century's end, sentimental novels were omnipresent in the British book market" (1).

[4] It is interesting to note that as with conduct manuals, here again in the case of sentimental fiction we run into the same paradoxical problem because as much as conduct manuals and sentimental fiction underscored the importance of female virtue and modest consumption – as integral to maintaining existing social hierarchies – these texts and their authors simultaneously relied upon these same systems of consumption and circulation that they sought to critique in order to sell copies of texts. Christopher Flint in "Speaking Objects: The Circulation of Stories in Eighteenth-Century Prose Fiction" clearly links the circulation of mid-eighteenth-century narratives to social and economic systems that emphasize the value of the text as an object of consumption (1998, 215). Similarly, John Feather in *A History of British Publishing* asserts that publishers and booksellers in the mid-to-late eighteenth century benefitted from a well-established system that despite its rapid growth was primarily stable (1989, 112). Continuing, Feather explains that in the "last quarter of the eighteenth century" the system benefitted from changing copyright laws which led to explosive growth in the reprinting of old texts (113). Not only did publishing benefit from legislative changes, but moreover from the relatively new phenomenon of self-improvement through self-education which flourished near the century's end (118). Capitalizing on these systemic changes Feather asserts that "competition was rampant in a period of massive and largely uncontrolled economic growth" (117).

of literary heroine[5] whose sentimentality was inextricably linked to the "developing signatory system of politeness" (6). Sentimental novels played an integral role in cementing socio-cultural links between emotional expression and proper behaviour for eighteenth-century women, and moreover authors like Richardson and Sterne relied upon a "language of feeling for the purpose of representing necessary social bonds" (1). Mullan suggests that particularly in Richardson's novels descriptions of female virtue were "realized in the capacity to feel and display sentiments" (1990, 61), which was "not so much spoken as displayed" (61). Sentimentality as a visual, rather than verbal, expression functioned as part of the period's preoccupation with discerning how different bodies functioned in the public sphere and highlights the commonplace practice of scrutinizing these bodies and evaluating them against an ideal code of virtuous social conduct. What Mullan underscores in his remarks is that the desire for external markers of internal moral values, like virtue, were realized in the descriptions of sentimental heroines. Furthermore, the capacity of these fictional characters to express genuine and legible emotions – through a visual vocabulary of blushes, tears and sighs – was deeply influenced by contemporary concerns about female participation in the rapidly expanding commercial marketplace. In this context, it becomes evident that alongside the perceived power of expression allocated to the sentimental heroine, her body was subjected to tremendous public scrutiny.

By focusing on the socially accepted functions of the female body outside the domestic sphere, a number of the hallmarks of virtuous femininity were subtly promoted by sentimental literature particularly in relation to discussions of middle-class consumers and working women. In Richardson's *Pamela,* concerns over the titular character's moral integrity are directly enmeshed in discussion around her clothing. Frequently, Richardson uses Pamela's garments as a means of illustrating her virtuous behaviour. For example, in a letter to her parents Pamela writes that she has been given "a suit of my late Lady's cloaths, and half a dozen of her shifts, and six fine handkerchiefs, and three of her Cambrick aprons, and four Holland ones" (1740, 11). Immediately following her description of the garments, she adds that "the Cloaths are fine silk, and too rich and too good for me, to be sure. I wish it was no Affront to him to make money of them, and sent it to you: it would do me more good. You will be full of fears, I warrant now, of some design upon me" (11).

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[5] Although this paper focusses on the role of sentimental literature in discussions about female social participation, it is important to note that the sentimental novel also advanced new male characters who functioned as sentimental or emotionally expressive bodies.

This early scene illustrates Pamela's comprehension of her own problematic social position – a poor servant who has nevertheless received a noble education – as a category that is externally communicated through her choice of garments. In noting that her "late Lady's cloathes" are "too rich and too good" for her, Richardson explicitly links her proper social function as a servant and working woman to her choice of garments. A few pages later in her parents' response to Pamela's letter they question her acceptance of the fine garments, and warn against sartorial pride: "what tho' the doubts I fill'd you with, lessen the pleasure you would have had in your Master's Kindness, yet what signify the delights that arise from a few paltry fine Cloaths, in comparison with a good Conscience?" (14). Pamela's parents go on to equate the "temptations" of fine clothes with sexual misconduct: "I tremble to think what a sad Hazard a poor Maiden of little more than Fifteen years of age stands against the temptations of this world . . . besure don't let people's telling you[,] you are pretty puff you up: for you did not make yourself, and so can have no praise due you for it. It is Virtue and Goodness only, that make the true beauty. Remember that, Pamela" (14–15). Structurally formatted in the familiar conduct manual style of epistolary parental advice, Pamela's letter to her parents and their response explicitly link discussions of Pamela's virtue to the garments she chooses to wear. Expanding upon Pamela's earlier reservations about accepting such an extravagant gift, her parent's response not only underlines the central role of garments in determining their daughter's virtue, but moreover Richardson's treatment of the common practice of rewarding servants with second-hand finery hints at a widespread "trickle-down" moral economy in which immorality and pride are bequeathed to the lower orders by their social "betters."[6]

The focus on Pamela's clothing in this section of Richardson's novel speaks to a much broader cultural discussion around the garments of working women where frivolous spending and extravagant dress was seen as a threat to the proper

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[6] The concerns of Pamela's parents reflect widespread concerns around the detrimental effects of vanity and extravagant spending particularly for eighteenth-century youth. For example, John Guyse in a sermon from 1728 reminds his congregation that "days of youth are, ordinarily, days of the greatest vanity" (10). Continuing, Guyse explains that "vain and defiling company, the pride of dress and of every new extravagant mode, merriment and jollity, cards and dice, intemperance, luxury, drunkenness, and debaucheries too often waste their precious time" (10). Guyse's concerns are similarly echoed seventy years later in Thomas Shillitoe's *To the Inhabitants of Great Britain* (1798) where he asserts that "with regard to luxury, if we take a view of the manner of life in which most inhabitants of the land indulge themselves, and particularly the trading part of this great and flourishing metropolis; such scenes of dissipation, extravagance, and wantonness appear, as are not les repugnant to the public welfare than to the dignity of the Christian name… How are the sober manners of our forefathers departed from!" (10).

functioning of social hierarchies. What comes to the forefront in discussions of sentimental modes of femininity is that instead of operating as binary opposites – as conduct manuals and moralistic tracts purported – eighteenth-century conceptions of female virtue and duplicity are indivisibly intertwined. In this sense, sentimental fiction, drawing on the foundation established by conduct manuals, called for performances of female virtue through dress and behaviour that could be easily identified (and objectified) by the male gaze. As Marlene LeGates, Tassie Gwilliam and Jennie Batchelor to varying degrees demonstrate in their work, the catch is that heroines who performed these expressions of virtue were simultaneously questioned for the veracity of their claims. Here, both virtue and duplicity are to some extent performances of expected female behaviour that cannot be entirely severed from each other. At first, the interrelated nature of virtue and duplicity seems to act as yet another patriarchal trip wire where women were expected to conform to an unattainable standard of public social conduct. However, in refusing to read virtue and duplicity as respectively representative of depth and superficiality, as we might be inclined to do, we open the door to reading these socially engrained cues in such a way that is constructive rather than reductive for women in the public sphere.

During the same decade in which Richardson's *Pamela* was published, and amidst the heyday of sentimental fiction's popularity, David Garrick premiered his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1748). Despite its success in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Shakespearean version of *Romeo and Juliet* was largely absent during the Restoration and in the first decades of the period. One of the few instances of the play's performance in this period was a short run in 1662 by D'Avenant's Company. The play was adapted by James Howard, and in order to please both audience members who desired a happy resolution and those who preferred the original's tragic ending, the script was made into a "tragi-comedy" that pursued different conclusions on alternating nights; where in one ending the lovers died tragically and on the other they survived (Berg 1989, 24). Samuel Pepys documents seeing this iteration of *Romeo and Juliet* in its first performance since the Restoration. In his *Diary* Pepys succinctly remarks that this version of *Romeo and Juliet* "is the play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life, and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do" (39). Following this lackluster performance by D'Avenant's Company, there is a brief gap in performances of the play. In the prefatory remarks of the 1961 Cambridge University Press edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, editor John Dover Wilson explains that no rendition of the original Shakespearean play was performed for over eighty years (1961, 39). Continuing, Wilson disparagingly remarks that the Shakespearean script

performed in the 1660s was "supplanted by a strange hotch-potch [sic] of garbled Shakespeare matter and new invention" (1961, 39) that he identifies as Thomas Otway's *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1679)*,* which heavily borrowed from *Romeo and Juliet.* Despite being technically correct in his assertion that no rendition of the play was performed until the 1740s, Wilson misses the mark in his dismissal of Otway's adaptation. Although not a "true" adaptation of Shakespeare's work, Otway's play drew large crowds and continued to be popular for more than fifty years. Moreover, four years before Garrick staged his adaptation, Theophilus Cibber produced a heavily revised adaptation at the Theatre in the Haymarket which debuted on 11 September 1744 (Wilson 1961, 40). Although comparably less liberal with his adaptation, Cibber's version also contained some notable changes from the original and was similarly considered a great success (Berg 1989, 27). Even after Garrick's adaptation became the predominate text for the production in 1748, these earlier adaptations remained a facet of theatrical debates in the periodical press. Ultimately, the success of *Caius Marius* and Cibber's *Romeo and Juliet* not only emphasizes the mutability of Shakespeare's original, but also highlights how the themes of *Romeo and Juliet* were tremendously popular during the period.

Much like its predecessors, Garrick's version of *Romeo and Juliet* was hugely successful when it debuted, and unlike Otway's *Caius Marius*, Garrick's script has proved to be the "most enduringly successful production of the play" (1989, 30).[7] In his adaptation, Garrick made a number of substantial changes to the text, most notably by cutting down the dialogue in favour of adding in dance numbers[8] and pantomime elements (45–46). In the context of this study, the most important alterations in Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* were those made to the character of Juliet. A review of Garrick's adaptation from *The Dramatic Censor* underscores the modifications made to Juliet, suggesting that Garrick "has taken very unusual, and very successful pains with his female character" (1770, 171). The reviewer finds this new version of Juliet to be a "most amiable lady; she is tender, affectionate and constant;

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[7] Berg continues to explain that "Garrick's text exerted enormous influence on the stage presentation of *Romeo and Juliet* for over a century and was used, with only very slight variations, as the standard text in performance until the 1840s; some of its innovations were still in use in the 1880s" (1989, 30).
[8] Playbills for Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* often note that performances of the play would include a "minuet by Juliet and the leading dancer of the company" (Stone 1978, 142). The important addition of musical elements to Garrick's adaption is highlighted by George Winchester Stone Jr. who describes the first time Romeo and Juliet meet, "they had opportunity for unfolding themselves in their growing, youthful love by pantomimic action, in a location of prominence on stage against the background of dancers and soft music" (142).

possessed of liberal sentiments and delicate feelings; rather romantic in some notions, but justifiably so from age and situation of mind" (192). Emphasized throughout the review is the ability of Garrick's Juliet to articulate her emotions and take action as an active participant in the drama: she openly expresses her affection for Romeo when they first meet (177), is impatient to be married (174), delivers a passionate soliloquy (182), has an "expressive and affecting" discussion with the Friar (184) and most importantly is given the chance to react to Romeo's death (187). Unlike Shakespeare's original text, Garrick alters the death scene in Act Five, which is described in detail by *The Dramatic Censor*:

> nature is brought to her most critical feelings at the moment Juliet awakes, and her husband's affectionate transports, forgetting what he has done [drink poison], fills the audience with a most cordial sympathy of satisfaction, which is soon dashed . . . Her behaviour after his death, catching as it were his frenzy, and passing from grief to distraction, is a masterly variation in Juliet; what follows her paying the debt of nature, is judiciously contracted into a narrow compass; indeed we will venture to affirm, that no play ever received greater advantage from alteration than this tragedy, especially in the last act; bringing Juliet to life before Romeo dies is undoubtedly a change of infinite merit. The new dying scene does Mr. Garrick great credit. (187)

Above all, what comes to the forefront in the reviewer's remarks is that Garrick's Juliet is nothing short of a sentimental heroine.

Among the forty-eight main stage productions put on at Drury Lane in 1748 (the year Garrick's adaptation debuted), *Romeo and Juliet* was the theatre's most performed piece, occupying a "12 per cent share of the overall receipts" (Ritchie 2015, 382). By November 23rd of 1749 the rights for Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* were bought by Covent Garden (Winchester Stone Jr. 1979, 160). Playing at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres in 1750, "*Romeo and Juliet* was the only show in London" (Ritchie 2015, 374). In what has subsequently been dubbed "The Battle of the Romeos" (388), Garrick played Romeo at Drury Lane in direct competition with Spranger Barry's portrayal of the same character at Covent Garden. Although this interesting moment in theatre history has been well documented by scholars and critics,[9] the majority of the coverage has focussed on the performances of Barry and Garrick as dueling Romeos. However, at the same time Garrick and Barry

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[9] Spanning a staggering 271 years, coverage of this event ranges from contemporary eighteenth-century coverage in the periodical press to Leslie Ritchie's 2015 article, "Pox on Both Your Houses: The Battle of the Romeos."

vied for success as competing Romeos, George Anne Bellamy and Susannah Cibber performed "dueling" (*Dramatic Censor* 1770, 192) versions of Juliet. Describing Bellamy and Cibbers' differing interpretations of Juliet, a review from *The Dramatic Censor* remarked that "One excelled in amorous rapture, the other called every power of distress and despair to her aid; Mrs. Bellamy was an object of love, Mrs. Cibber of admiration; Mrs. Bellamy's execution was more natural, Mrs. Cibber's more forceable" (192–93). Certainly, both women are commended for different aspects of their performance, but what comes to the forefront in this discussion of Cibber's and Bellamy's respective merits is that Juliet as a character was evolving from her traditional role as a tragic lover. Taken together, the sentimental facets of Garrick's revised text and the remarks on Bellamy's "natural" performance highlight how Juliet had been reimagined as a figure of sentimental expression.

It is not surprising, considering the popularity of Garrick's adaptation, that Juliet quickly became an integral facet of the socio-

Figure 1: "Romeo & Juliet" (1754) by Anthony Walker, etching on paper. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

cultural lexicon. From mid-century onward the character of Juliet frequently appeared in the periodical press not just in the many reviews of specific performances, although those were certainly plentiful,[10] but as a cultural touchstone in discussions

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[10] It should be noted that reviews of various iterations of *Romeo and Juliet* appear in a *considerable* number of general interest periodicals (i.e., publications that were not specifically devoted to the coverage of theatrical performances) like *The New Literary Review*, *The Bee; or Literary Weekly Intelligencer*

of sentimental expression. The cultural capital accrued by Juliet is highlighted in a letter "To the Printer of the Lady's Magazine" wherein the author, who identifies himself as a bashful and "dejected youth" (1773, 293), draws upon the associations of Juliet in a discussion of his "sincere and virtuous affection for a young lady" (293). Asking for advice from the magazine's readership in order to pursue his love interest, the writer constructs a discourse of courtship that highlights both his own morally upstanding behaviour and the virtue of his love. He implores "your fair correspondents whose hearts are susceptible to pity" to write to his "dear charmer, Juliet" (293) on his behalf. Referring to the character of Juliet in his call for relationship advice frames the narrative in terms that play into established romantic tropes which not only aims to engage readers, but moreover helps to communicate his emotional desires through the use of Juliet as an affective touchstone.
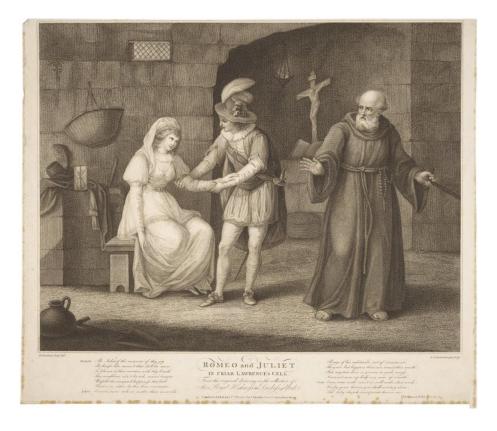

Figure 2: Ignatius Joseph van den Berghe. *Romeo and Juliet in Friar Lawrence's Cell* (London 1794). Folger Shakespeare Library: No. 29665. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

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and *The Universal Museum; or, Gentleman's and Ladies Polite Magazine of History, Politicks and Literature.*

Juliet's popularity was not limited to verbal descriptions and throughout the second half of the eighteenth century the character of Juliet was also frequently the subject of prints, engravings and paintings. Imagined by artists like Henry Bunbury, Benjamin Wilson, Francesco Bartolozzi, Anthony Walker, Robert Stands, Ignatius Joseph van den Berghe and John Opie, Juliet is similarly characterised as an eighteenth-century sentimental heroine. In two of these images, Walker's "Romeo and Juliet" (1754) and van den Berghe's "Romeo and Juliet in Friar Lawrence's Cell" (1794), both artists use Juliet's garments as external markers of her virtue and to convey genuine emotional expression (see respectively Figures 1 and 2). Walker and van den Berghe both clothe Juliet in a dress that features a natural silhouette,[11] which flows loosely around her body and is made of a light-coloured fabric. In both images, the dresses feature a modest collar, a small belt (at her natural waist) and wide gigot sleeves; all of which were elements of the widely adopted chemise-style dresses that were ubiquitously popular at the time and were considered to be the height of fashion when worn by notable aristocratic figures like Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and Marie Antoinette. In contrast to the Walker's print, the position of her body (sitting upright as opposed to draped over the corpse of Romeo) in van den Berghe's image makes the details of Juliet's garments more easily discernible. Van den Berghe adorns Juliet's dress with slim-banded ribbons at the upper arm, shoulder and at the hem of a simple decorative apron which falls over the skirt. The apron-style detailing on the skirt was a popular feature of women's daywear in the 1780s and 1790s (Edwards 2017, 61), and in combination with van den Berghe's choice of a jockey cap[12] for Juliet's headwear he constructs Juliet as both a virtuous woman donning a natural silhouette *and* a woman of fashion. Although more evident in van den Berghe's work, both artists portray Juliet as a woman decked out in the latest fashionable trends, while also associating Juliet with a more "natural" style that enabled the body to move more freely (unencumbered by heavy fabrics and stiff corsetry) and allowed for the easy discernment of bodily cues. Much like Mullan identifies for literary sentimental heroines, Juliet's sentimentality is not spoken, but rather materialized by her costume.

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[11] Lydia Edwards in *How to Read a Dress: A Guide to Changing Fashion from the 16th to 20th Century* explains that one of the most popular styles of eighteenth-century dress (particularly in the later years of the period) utilized a "natural silhouette" (2017, 64), which featured "lightweight, easy-to-launder . . . materials such as muslin, cotton, poplin, batiste and linen" (64).

[12] It is interesting to note that in addition to being one of the most popular choices for eighteenth-century women's headwear, the jockey cap is often thought to be a predecessor to the late nineteenth-century "Juliet Cap" (aptly named after Shakespeare's heroine), which remains popular today as a choice of bridalwear.

In this way, Juliet, as imagined by both van den Berghe and Walker, adopts a number of the hallmarks of sentimentality identified by Pamela's letters to her parents as every item of clothing speaks to both a knowledge of fashionable trends, while remaining firmly in the realm of modest adornment (for example, Juliet's garments speak to her social position but are not showy, they feature some decoration but are not overly embellished, etc.) In so doing the character of Juliet carefully straddles the proverbial gulf between virtuous femininity and frivolous consumption. Although we are not privy to the character's internal deliberation around her choice of garments, as we are with Pamela, what is highlighted by the similarities of Juliet's dress in each image is that an external code for identifying virtuous femininity was woven into the fabric of her garments, which allowed audiences to instantly align characters like Juliet with socially condoned values for "ideal" expressions of female identity.

Not only does Juliet's dress facilitate the viewer's ability to interpret her movements and gestures, but moreover these descriptions explicitly connect the character of Juliet to the period's most popular sentimental heroines. In Joseph Highmore's widely reproduced painting of Pamela from Richardson's novel[13] (see Appendix Image 1) she is similarly clad in a light-coloured gown with demi-gigot sleeves, a small bonnet and a bodice that emphasizes her natural waist. Although Pamela's dress bears several hallmarks of mid-century style with its modified winged cuff sleeves[14] and in the rounded silhouette of her opulent skirts which appears to be composed of at least three separate panels of fabric,[15] it is reminiscent of the gowns worn by Juliet in both van den Berghe and Walker's images. Pamela is not the only sentimental heroine clad in this white flowing style, and in fact engravings of Arabella from Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, Henrietta from Lennox's *Henrietta* and Betsy from Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* are all similarly depicted.[16] In examining the dresses of Arabella, Pamela, Henrietta and Betsy in visual images, it becomes evident that white (or light coloured) flowing

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[13] Highmore's depiction of "Pamela and Mr. B" comes from a series of 12 paintings based on Richardson's novel, which were created in a similar style to Hogarth's successful series of paintings like "A Harlot's Progress" (1732) and "Marriage A-la-Mode" (1745), and were widely distributed and copied into etchings and sketches by artists like Louis Truchy (British Museum, Curatorial Comments https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1847-0306-13).

[14] Winged cuffs are identified by Edwards as a staple of early eighteenth-century sleeves, and she notes that nearing mid-century they underwent several gradual changes that eventually gave way to longer and more flowing sleeves in lighter fabrics (Edwards 2017, 52).

[15] Multi-paneled fabric skirts were widely popular in the middle of the century and often replaced longer skirt trains that were popular in the early years of the century (Edwards 2017, 50).

[16] See Appendix Images 2, 3 and 4.

dresses, with modified gigot or gigot sleeves, modest caps and small belts emphasizing the wearer's natural waist act as a visual indicator of the character's status as a sentimental heroine. Considered alongside the depictions of these other heroines, the representation of Juliet in both van den Berghe and Walker's images directly links Juliet to a series of well-established visual markers of sentimentality, casting her as a sentimental figure.

Figure 3: "David Garrick and George Anne Bellamy in 'Romeo and Juliet' Act V, Scene iii" (1753) by Benjamin Wilson. Held by the Yale Center for British Art, No. B1975.5.29.

Perhaps the most notable link between Juliet's sentimentality in the socio-cultural lexicon and performances of the character on stage is illustrated in Benjamin Wilson's painting "David Garrick and George Anne Bellamy in Romeo and Juliet" (1753), which captured their infamous 1750 run of the performance (See Figure 3). The image depicts Bellamy (as Juliet) in the process of waking up in the Capulet's tomb much to the astonishment of Garrick (as Romeo). Curatorial staff at the Victoria & Albert Museum[17] explain that Wilson's image accurately captures the staging

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[17] For additional information, see https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O84890/david-garrick-as-romeo-and-painting-wilson-benjamin.

of the performance with the lovers situated upstage centre in the Capulet's mauso-leum. This unique glimpse into the staging of Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* functions similarly to the other illustrations of Juliet from Walker and van den Berghe; how-ever, in this instance the figure of Juliet is not solely a creation of the artist's imagi-nation but is instead directly linked to Bellamy's performance. Wilson paints Bellamy in a light flowing gown and jockey cap that emphasize the movement of her body as she rises from her resting place. Painted in the same style as the depictions of Arabella, Pamela, Henrietta, Betsy and Juliet, Bellamy is represented by Wilson in the trappings of a sentimental heroine.

Juliet's alignment with sentimentality in popular culture, when considered in conjunction with Garrick's re-imagining of the character as an opinionated and self-motivated young woman whose actions are motivated by her own desires (against the express wishes of her family), presents us with a complex character who refuses to fully comply with patriarchal expectations for female social partici-pation, but at the same time is reimagined during the eighteenth century as a senti-mental heroine. Drawing upon the cultural capital which so closely intertwined sentimental expression with virtuous femininity, Garrick is able to refashion Shakespeare's Juliet, and cloaked in the trappings of a sentimental heroine, she is able to take on a life of her own. Juliet, as initially reimagined by Garrick and rein-terpreted by Walker and Van den Berghe, becomes a dually resonate figure who straddles the gulf between acceptable and deviant iterations of female expres-sion. Taking the time to examine the relationship between sentimentality and per-formance illuminates the currents of cultural exchange between stage and page during the eighteenth century, but moreover draws our attention to the ways in which feminine expression in the public sphere was exceptionally complex and multifaceted, and encourages us to continue to challenge one-dimensional con-cepts of womanhood that seek only to perpetuate a very narrow idea of femininity.

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Appendix

Image 1: "Pamela and Mr. B. in the summer house" (1743) by Joseph Highmore, oil on canvas. © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Image 2: "Female Quixote" (1799) by W. Hawkins after T. Kirk's painting for *Cooke's Pocket Edition of Select Novels*, engraving on paper. © The Trustees of the British Museum.
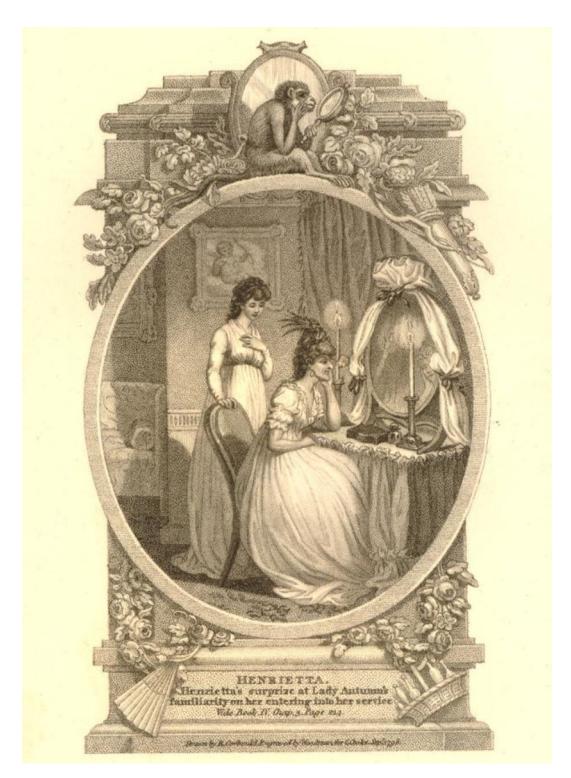
Image 3: "Henrietta" (1798) by Richard Woodman I after Richard Corbould's painting for *Cooke's Pocket Edition of Select Novels*, engraving on paper. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Image 4: "Illustrations to Haywood's 'Betsy Thoughtless,' for the *Novelists Magazine*" (1783) by James Heath, engraving on paper. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

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