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# Patterns of Property and Possession in Fielding's Fiction

James Thompson

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## Patterns of Property and Possession in Fielding's Fiction

## **Abstract**

Henry Fielding's Tom Jones (1749) tells the history of a number of lost objects which range from the foundling protagonist and his patrimony to wives, daughters, a muff, and several bank notes. The most prominent story of errant money begins with the £500 Squire Allworthy gives to Tom (p. 310). which he subsequently loses (p. 313). Black George appropriates the money (p. 314). and passes it on to Old Nightingale, in whose hands Squire Allworthy recognizes it (p. 920). and so it is presumably restored to Tom, the natural or rightful owner (p. 968). We are treated in similar detail to the fortunes of the £200 which Squire Westem gives to Sophia (p. 359). who also loses her money (p. 610). Her wallet is found by a beggar who passes it on to Tom (p. 631-35), and who, in turn, restores it to its proper owner: "I know the right Owner, and will restore it her ... the right Owner shall certainly have again all that she has lost" (p. 634)--a promise which emblematizes the narrative of lost property in the novel. Partridge, of course, repeatedly urges Tom to spend the hundred pounds (pp. 675-76, 679, 711). but Tom restores it to Sophia whole: "I hope, Madame, you will find it of the same Value, as when it was lost" (p. 731).

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations from Fielding's fiction are from the Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding, ed. Martin Battestin: Tom Jones (1975, reprinted Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983); Joseph Andrews (1967); Amelia (1983, reprinted 1984); Jonathan Wild, ed. David Nokes (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982); The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon in The Works of Henry Fielding, ed. William Ernest Henley (1902, reprinted New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), vol. XVI. Page references are to these editions.

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In good Aristotelian fashion, the peripeteia in this tale of economic wandering coincides with Allworthy's recognition of his original bills: Old Nightingale, the financier or broker, announces:

"I have the Money now in my own Hands, in five Bank Bills, which I am to lay out either in a Mortgage, or in some Purchase in the north of *England*." The Bank Bills were no sooner produced at Allworthy's Desire, than he blessed himself at the Strangeness of the Discovery. He presently told *Nightingale*, that these Bank Bills were formerly his, and then acquainted him with the whole Affair. (p. 920)

This scene is one in a long series of recognitions, of Mrs Waters, Partridge, Tom's ancestry, his goodness, each in its own way a classic anagnorisis. But this recognition of money is by far the most curious, for it is difficult to say what, exactly, is being recognized here. Is it some true identity, ownership, or value which these bills reflect or retain and which, in the economy of plot, must be revealed and recognized? How does Allworthy recognize his notes, and, moreover, why has Fielding interpolated these little tales of monetary loss and restoration? The monetary subplot in Tom Jones reflects a conservative desire to stabilize cash and paper credit, and to represent and contain currency within traditional patterns of property and possession; a desire which is determined by a specific stage in the development of money. That is to say, in a view we could characterize as "late feudal" (following Ernest Mandel), Fielding domesticates cash transactions and commodities by inscribing them in a traditionally fixed, hierarchical (and agricultural) economy, where real property is the essential model for all other types of property, especially currency.2

Another way to put this is to say that Fielding represents cash transactions in the traditional comic form of the "lost and found": objects, characters, and values are lost, temporarily separated from their rightful owners, so that the comic plot can eventually reassert order by restoring lost objects to their owners, as if possession were a transcendent relation, unaffected by the vicissitudes of time, accumulation, and profit. The

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Mandel, Late Capitalism, trans. Joris de Bres (London: Verso, 1978). Samuel L. Macey characterizes Fielding's attitude towards money as "aristocratic" (Money and the Novel: Mercenary Motivation in Defoe and his Immediate Successors [Victoria, B.C.: Sono Nis Press, 1983], p. 122.) Michael McKeon writes of "Fielding's profound distaste for monied culture" (The Origins of the English Novel [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987], p. 503).

History of Tom Jones, a Foundling opens with the discovery of a "lost" object, an infant, and the plot of the novel is concerned with the process of restoration, returning the infant to his family and thereby restoring the heir to his inheritance. But the protagonist is only one of a multitude of objects lost and found in the novel; children, estates, wives, jobs, reputations, even a kingdom follow the same lost and found pattern, in which a temporary, unworthy claimant is foiled and the object is inevitably returned to its rightful owner: nothing is finally lost in Tom Jones. Here we will focus on one representative example of this ordering pattern, the loss and restoration of money, for Fielding observes a kind of comic rule of conservation, under which it is finally impossi-

(1971), 265-86 and Martin Battestin, The Providence of Wit (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). Henry Knight Miller connects the persistence of romance form (cycle and return) with providential thematics (Henry Fielding's "Tom Jones" and the Romance Tradition [Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 1976], especially chap. 2, pp. 22-41). What appears as transhistorically romantic to Miller I argue has peculiar historic specificity, for the comic interpositions of providence work to support a late aristocratic concept of property. On the differences between Fielding's and earlier providential plots, see Leopold Damrosch, Jr, "Tom Jones and the Farewell to Providential Fiction," in Henry Fielding, Modern Critical Views, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), pp. 221-48, reprinted from God's Plot and Man's Stories (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). See also John Bender, Imagining the Penitentiary (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 186-87.

- 4 Homer O. Brown, in "Tom Jones: The Bastard of History," boundary 2 7 (1978), 201-33, observes that Tom remains a bastard and therefore ineligible to inherit the estate. He is a "genealogical aberration" (p. 207), a disruption of the dynastic narrative. Similarly, Brown sees the allegorical or metonymic function of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 in Tom Jones as "history as order" (p. 224). From Coleridge to its most classic statement in R.S. Crane ("The Plot of Tom Jones" [1950]. reprinted in Essays on the Eighteenth-Century Novel. ed. Robert D. Spector [Bloomington: Indiana University Press., 1965], pp. 92-130), the favourite word used in all sorts of descriptions of the novel and its plot is "order" or "ordered." Studies of Fielding's Doctics and significative in the whole, and is committed to showing how everything is interconnected. This narrative epistemology is reflected in the world obsocial adjunctions. "Fielding's poetics lands significative in the whole, and is committed to showing how everything is interconnected. This narrative epistemology is reflected in the world obsocial adjunctions." (Spir 236). So teo, Passa Hunter opens his discussion of Fielding's elaborate Patterns of Symmetry, with the observation that "Viewing Tom Jones is a little like viewing the eighteenth century as a whole" (Occasional Form [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 167). The fragility of this totalizing order, at least for the later Fielding, is explored by C.J. Rawson in Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal under Stress (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). Terry Castle also explores the subversion of apparent order in Amelia in Masquerade and Civilization (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 177-252. Here, I am interested in exploring both the economic dimensions of the fictional order, and the historical forces it is arrayed against.
- 5 A similar conservation or continuity is apparent in Fielding's psychology: see John S. Coolidge, "Fielding and 'Conservation of Character," in *Modern Philology* 57 (1960), 245-59. Similarly, Patricia Meyer Spacks argues that Fielding's characters are not subject to transformation: "The characters in eighteenth-century fiction show less capacity for essential change than wellike to believe is possible in life, and the limited possibilities for change they have depend upon external kinds of learning about the world outside themselves." *Imagining a Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 7

University Press, 1976), p. 7. Published by Digital Commons @ McMaster, 1990

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ble to lose anything. The story of money in *Tom Jones* is bound up with the nature of currency in the period and its inherent instability, and so we need to understand the situation of currency in eighteenth-century English society before we can understand its function in Fielding's fiction.

The monetary system in eighteenth-century England was far more unstable than anything we are accustomed to now. To conservative observers such as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Henry Fielding, this instability must have accentuated their hostility to a cash nexus, the growing dependence on short-term credit and public debt. In Pope's Epistle to Bathurst, for example, paper credit exacerbates all of the dangerously changeable, movable, fluid qualities of money, as opposed to the stability and constancy represented by land and the hereditary estate, a metonym for genealogical and possessive continuity:

Blest paper-credit! last and best supply!

That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly!

Gold imp'd by thee, can compass hardest things,

Can pocket States, can fetch or carry Kings;

A single leaf shall waft an Army o'er,

Or ship off Senates to a distant Shore;

A leaf, like Sibyl's, scattered to and fro

Our fates and fortunes, as the winds shall blow. (lines 69-76)

Pope's and Fielding's hostility must be understood in the context of the social impact of paper money in early modern Europe, the significance of which Fernand Braudel explores: "If most contemporaries found money a 'difficult cabbala to understand,' this type of money, money that was

- 6 Brian McCrea in Henry Fielding and the Politics of Mid-Eighteenth-Century England (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981) focuses on "the central role of property in Fielding's political and social writings" (p. 201), which he characterizes as Lockean: the purpose of the state is to protect property: "Fielding was unequivocal and unsparing in his defense of property" (p. 203). "His political career is understood, most truthfully, as one instance of the transformation of Whiggism from a revolutionary political philosophy that challenged royal authority to a conservative political philosophy that protected the values and interests of a property-owning elite" (p. 207).
- 7 For the history of these developments, see P.G.M. Dickson, The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit 1688-1756 (London: Macmillan, 1967).
- 8 See Earl Wasserman, Pope's Epistle to Bathurst (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, http://gen.ke.thorough.clientessing.tef.comonics.circline.poeth.

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not money at all, and this interplay of money and mere writing to a point where the two became confused, seemed not only complicated but diabolical. Such things were a constant source of amazement." More suggestively, Marc Shell explores the correlation between language and money as representation:

money, which refers to a system of tropes, is also an "internal" participant in the logical or semiological organization of language, which itself refers to a system of tropes. Whether or not a writer mentioned money or was aware of its potentially subversive role in his thinking, the new forms of metaphorization or exchanges of meaning that accompanied the new forms of economic symbolization and production were changing the meaning of meaning itself.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of this paper is not simply to identify the notes in Nightingale's hands, but rather to explore one dimension of the historicity of Fielding's discourse by focusing on his representation of money and value; that is, to connect Fielding's narrative with a particular stage in the development of money.<sup>11</sup> Tracing similar forms of representation of value through Fielding's fiction, we can discern a consistent resistance to capital.

- 9 Fernand Braudel, Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800, trans. Miriam Kochan (New York: Harper and Row, 1913), p. 358.
- 10 Marc Shell, Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the
- Medieval to the Modern Era (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 3-4.

  11 Fredric Jameson offers a suggestive model for this connection between money form and fiction: "The art-novella, then, may be governed by the experience of money, but of money at a specific moment of its historical development: the stage of commerce rather than the stage of capital proper. This is the stage Marx describes as exchange on the frontiers between two modes of production, which have not yet been subsumed under a single standard of value; so great fortunes gan be made and lost overnight, ships sink or against all expectations appear in the harbor, heroic travellers reappear with cheap goods whose scarcity in the home society lends them extraordinary worth. This is therefore an experience of money which marks the form rather than the content of narratives; these last may include rudimentary commodities and coins incidentally, but nascent Value organizes them around a conception of the Event which is formed by categories of Fortune and Providence, the wheel that turns, bringing great good luck and then dashing it, the sense of what is not yet an invisible hand guiding human destinies and endowing them with what is not yet 'success' or 'failure,' but rather the irreversibility of an unprecedented fate, which makes its bearer into the protagonist of a unique and 'memorable' story" ("The Ideology of the Text," in The Ideologies of Theory, Essays 1971-1986 [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 19881, I, 52). For other relevant studies of literature and economics, see Max Novak, Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); Walter Benn Michaels, The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); John Vernon, Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Roy R. Male, Money Talks: Published Jand Lington Camaricans Richard Marman: Manuersity of Oklahoma Press, 1981). 5

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The story of eighteenth-century English currency, in terms of both economic practice and economic theory, turns on three interrelated factors: the rapid expansion of the economy; the establishment of mechanisms for credit on which that expansion was predicated; and the shortage of government-issued currency—copper, silver, and gold coins. Until 1797 coin was the only legal tender in England, and yet a vast number of financial transactions had to be carried on by other means. Because silver fetched a higher price in the Far East and on the continent than the price established by statute for the English Mint, newly minted silver coins, and later gold and copper as well, were culled from circulation, melted down, and shipped abroad as bullion—an illegal, but profitable and therefore common practice. The long-term history of a coinage always follows an endless cycle of issue, eventual debasement from wear, clipping, and counterfeiting, leading to the necessity of large scale recoinage. In this period, however, recoinage (in 1696-98 and 1773-74, as well as the devaluation of the guinea in 1717) had little or no effect on the number of coins in circulation, precisely because the new, heavier coins were the readiest targets for melting, following Gresham's Law that "bad money drives out good." The result of such culling and melting was a severe and chronic shortage of coin of the realm throughout the century.<sup>12</sup> What coin remained in circulation was disastrously debased: in 1777, the government found that a sampling of £300 in silver, which ought to have weighed 1200 ounces, weighed 624 ounces.<sup>13</sup>

In theory, currency was based on its "intrinsick" value as precious metal, but this theory bore little or no relation to practice because the silver coinage was both severely debased and entirely inadequate to the volume of circulation. Lord Lowndes claimed in A Report containing an Essay for the Amendment of the Silver Coins (1695) that "the Moneys commonly currant are Diminished near one Half, to wit, in a Proportion something greater than that of Ten to Twenty two." Light silver "when offered in Payments, is utterly Refused, and will not Pass, and consequently doth not serve the end or Purpose for which it was made." He goes on to describe the social disruption caused by inadequate coinage, a disruption which is essentially a crisis in the concept of value:

<sup>12</sup> T.S. Ashton writes that "in 1773, coin of the realm was hardly obtainable" (An Economic History of England: The Eighteenth Century [New York: Barnes and Noble, 1955], p. 186).

<sup>13</sup> C.R. Josset, Money in Britain: A History of the Currencies of the British Isles (London: Frederick http://dregitalcommibns.mcmaster.ca/ecf/vol3/iss1/4

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In consequence of the Vitiating, Diminishing and Counterfeiting of the Currant Moneys, it is come to pass, That great Contentions do daily arise amongst the King's Subjects, in Fairs, Markets, Shops, and other Places throughout the Kingdom, about the Passing or Refusing of the same, to the disturbance of the Publick Peace; many Bargains, Doings and Dealings are totally prevented and laid aside, which lessens Trade in general; Persons before they conclude in any Bargains, are necessitated first to settle the Price or Value of the very Money they are to Receive for their Goods; and if it be in Guineas at a High Rate, or in Clipt or Bad Moneys, they set the Price of their Goods accordingly, which I think has been One great cause of Raising the Price not only of Merchandizes, but even of Edibles, and other Necessaries for the sustenance of the Common People, to their great Grievance.<sup>14</sup>

The monetary system maximized instability and as a consequence suffered chronic shortages and periodic crises, with increasing frequency towards the end of the century.15 In all senses, this was a transitional system, neither realist nor nominalist, or both realist and nominalist, based neither on bullion nor on paper money. Such contradictions are evident everywhere in the pamphlet literature, much of which argues against lowering the value of money—recoinage by way of debasement—by insisting on the "intrinsick" value of precious metal. Locke's influential argument in Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest and the Raising of the Value of Money encapsulates all the contradictions of eighteenth-century monetary theory: silver has both real and imaginary value, and intrinsic and extrinsic value. Silver coins are indistinguishable in value from an equal amount of bullion, for value is based on solely on quantity, but value is also based on quality (fineness), and both quantity and quality are in turn guaranteed by the authoritative stamp which functions as a pledge to insure its weight and fineness. In short, silver money is a physical, material object that has value, but that value is based on conventional agreement: precious metals have no real inherent value, but are accepted only by custom and contract:

<sup>14</sup> William Lowndes, A Report containing an Essay for the Amendment of the Silver Coins (London, 1695), reprinted in John R. McCulloch, ed., A Select Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on Money (1856, reprinted New York: A. M. Kelley, 1966), p. 233. Josset confirms Lowndes's picture (pp. 112-13).

<sup>15 &</sup>quot;Banking statutes do appear to have maximized instability. ... English banks remained small, with six partners or fewer, and unincorporated. Yet, in their operation (in great contrast with most continental states) no public control was exerted on the extent of their note issues, their cash ratios, their reserves, cheque transactions or expansionist credit policies. Thus, instability was maximized" (Peter Mathias, The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain Published is vilorismal Genmen of 1989) Microsoft 1990

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Now Money is necessary to all these sorts of Men as serving both for Counters and for Pledges, and so carrying with it even Reckoning, and Security, that he, that receives it, shall have the same Value for it again, of other things that he wants, whenever he pleases. The one of these it does by its Stamp and Denomination; the other by its intrinsick Value, which is its *Quantity*.

For mankind, having consented to put an imaginary Value upon gold and Silver by reason of their Durableness, Scarcity, and not being very liable to be Counterfeited, have made them by general consent the common Pledges, whereby Men are assured, in Exchange for them to receive equally valuable things to those they parted with for any quantity of these Metals. By which means it comes to pass, that the intrinsick Value regarded in these Metals made the common Barter, is nothing but the quantity which Men give or receive of them. For they having as Money no other Value, but as Pledges to procure, what one wants or desires; and they procuring what we want or desire, only by their quantity, 'tis evident, that the intrinsick Value of Silver and Gold used in commerce is nothing but their quantity.<sup>16</sup>

The inherent value of silver is a point which Locke never tires of repeating: "Silver, i.e. the quantity of pure Silver separable from the alloy, makes the real value of Money. If it does not, coin Copper with the same Stamp and denomination, and see whether it will be of the same value" (p. 145). And then, in answer to the question, why then do we not simply exchange in bullion, by weight, he answers simply that it would be inconvenient, for it is hard to tell the difference between fine and mixed silver. Despite its function as pledge, in Short Observations on a Printed Paper Intituled, For encouraging the Coining Silver Money in England, and after for keeping it here (1695), Locke dismisses the value of the stamp: "the Stamp neither does nor can take away any of the intrinsick value of the Silver, and therefore an Ounce of Coined standard Silver, must necessarily be of equal value to an Ounce of uncoined standard

<sup>16</sup> John Locke, Several Papers Relating to Money, Interest and Trade (1696, reprinted New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968), p. 31. This volume contains: Some Considerations of the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest and the Raising of the Value of Money (1691); Short Observations on a Printed Paper Intituled, For encouraging the Coining Silver Money in England, and after for keeping it here (1695); and Further Considerations concerning Raising the Value of Money. Wherein Mr. Lowndes Arguments for it in his late Report concerning "An Essay for the Amendment of the Silver Coins," are particularly Examined (second edition, 1696). Page numbers refer to this collection of pamphlets.

<sup>17 &</sup>quot;The Stamp was a Warranty of the publick, that under such denomination they should receive a piece of such weight, and such a fineness; that is, they should receive so much silver. And that is the reason why counterfeiting the Stamp is made the highest Crime, and has the weight of Treason upon it: Because the Stamp is the publick voucher of the intrinsick value" (Addenda to httsometicerations) pprice fire Star ca/ecf/vol3/iss1/4

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Silver" (p. 2). The fundamental argument here is a tautology—silver is silver: "it will always be true, that an Ounce of Silver coin'd or not coin'd, is, and eternally will be of equal value to any other Ounce of Silver" (p. 10). In 1757, eight years after Fielding's *Tom Jones* appeared, we find the same insistence on permanence and immutability of silver coins, and the same language of real, inherent and intrinsic worth in Joseph Harris's *An Essay upon Money and Coins*: "Money ... differs from all commodities in this, that, as such, its value is permanent or unalterable; that is, money being the measure of the values of all other things, and that, like all other standard measures, by its quantity only; its own value is to be deemed invariable." Along with the emphasis on immutability, we find the same hostility to paper: after a consideration of the physical properties money should have—scarcity, immutability, easy divisibility, ability to be tested for fineness, resistance to wear—he argues against experimentation with paper money:

We see that some of our plantations, make a shift without any money, properly so called; using only bits of stamped paper, of no real value. But, wherever that material, which passeth as or instead of money, hath not intrinsic value, arising from its usefulness, scarcity, and necessary expence of labour in procuring it; there, private property will be precarious; and so long as that continues to be the case, it will be next to impossible for such people, to arrive at any great degree of power and splendour.<sup>18</sup>

Yet a mere twenty years later, Adam Smith could claim that "the substitution of paper in the room of gold and silver money, replaces a very expensive instrument of commerce with one much less costly, and sometimes equally convenient. Circulation comes to be carried on by a new wheel, which costs less both to erect and to maintain [i.e., as fixed capital, which he has been examining] than the old one." When he writes of bank notes, paper and silver specie, it is to assert their fundamental equivalence: "these notes come to have the same currency as gold and silver money, from the confidence that such money can at any time be had for them." 19

The gold and silver which circulates in any country, and by means of which the produce of its land and labour is annually circulated and distributed to the proper

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Harris, An Essay upon Money and Coins Part I, 1757, reprinted in McCulloch, pp. 372 and 374.

<sup>19</sup> Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, ed. Edwin Cannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Pub978) eppb300 into all Commons @McMaster, 1990 9

consumers, is, in the same manner as the ready money of the dealer, all dead stock. It is a very valuable part of the capital of the country, which produces nothing to the country. The judicious operations of banking, by substituting paper in the room of a great part of this gold and silver, enables the country to convert a great part of this dead stock into active and productive stock; into stock which produces something into the country. The gold and silver money which circulates in any country may very properly be compared to a highway, which, while it circulates and carries to market all the grass and corn of the country, produces itself not a single pile of either. The judicious operations of banking, by providing, if I may be allowed so violent a metaphor, a sort of wagon-way through the air: enable the country to convert, as it were, a great part of its highways into good pastures and cornfields, and thereby to increase very considerably the annual produce of its land and labour. The commerce and industry of the country, however, it must be acknowledged, though they may be somewhat augmented, cannot be altogether so secure, when they are thus, as it were, suspended upon the Daedalian wings of paper money, as when they travel about upon the solid ground of gold and silver.<sup>20</sup>

There is not a simple continuum of monetary theory from Locke to Smith; rather, Locke, Harris, and Smith exemplify positions taken throughout the century. And even if Smith's view appears to be sharply divergent from those of the earlier two writers, the seeds of that view are implicit in the deep contradictions found throughout Locke's economic theory.

The suspicion and hostility to nominal or paper currency evident in Locke and Harris were shared by other writers throughout the century. But, as a consequence of the constant dearth of coin, merchants, manufacturers, bankers, and employers regularly had to resort to the use of various forms of scrip or symbolic money, from metallic tokens stamped with the emblem of a shop's guild to elaborate systems of paper money, all issued by small, private institutions.<sup>21</sup> (In order to protect the monopoly of the Bank of England, banking laws limited banks to no more than six partners.) Business was transacted in negotiable, interest-bearing securities in addition to coin of the realm.<sup>22</sup> Of the various forms of paper

20 Smith, p. 341

<sup>21</sup> As Sir Albert Feavearyear puts it in his history of English money. "Roughly speaking. paper money of all kinds in the first half of the century stayed within the sphere occupied by cheques today. Outside that sphere coin alone was used" (The Pound Sterling: A History of English Money, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963], p. 160).

<sup>22</sup> According to T.S. Ashton, "Some of these including exchequer bills, navy bills, and lottery tickets (as also the short-term obligations of the East India Company, the Bank of England, and the South Sea Company) could be used to settle accounts between individuals, and may perhaps therefore, be mought or as falling within the somewhat shadowy boundaries of 'money'" (pp.

credit—the bill of exchange, promissory note, and the cheque—bills of exchange were the most common. Bills of exchange had been used in foreign trading since the thirteenth century, but they come into use in the second half of the seventeenth century in inland trade and with third parties as the bearer.23 Many of these changes can be traced to the increased volume of commerce, and the need for new methods of payment and, in turn, new mechanisms of banking. English banking followed Italian and then Dutch innovations, starting with goldsmiths who paid interest on money deposited with them, in turn lending it to others, often the Crown, at a higher interest.24 Credit currency develops from these practices, as goldsmith's receipts eventually become negotiable notes payable to an anonymous bearer, and as goldsmiths take on what we now consider to be bankers' functions. Bank bills derive from bills of exchange: the Bank of England issued bills under their seal (their sealed bills were discontinued in 1716), and eash notes, signed by the cashier, with blanks for names and amounts. Bank notes were engraved forms with blanks for amount and bearer. Often part was drawn off, and noted on the back, but the note could still be endorsed off to a third party or discounted by a broker; that is, the broker would buy the bill before it was due at a price less than its face value. It is the bill brokers who become the first commercial bankers, discounting bills for provincial customers. By and large, money circulated from agricultural districts, through London, to manufacturing districts by means of bills of exchange, not bank notes. Country bank notes or cash notes circulated in the agricultural districts, while bills of exchange circulated in the manufacturing districts.25



To return to Henry Fielding's Tom Jones, what are the notes which All-

177-78). The transition towards "true" paper money in circulation by the end of the century (that is, as we currently understand paper money) involves the gradual purging of the interest-bearing functions of these notes (Feavearyear, pp. 117-18). As Ashton puts it, "By means of a bill, purchasing power could be transferred by one man to another under conditions of repayment plainly set forth and generally understood. Unlike the coin or bank note, the bill could be sent from place to place without danger of theft. It could pass from hand to hand without formality other than endorsement, and each person who put his name to it added to its security. Any holder could get coin or other currency by discounting it: as a security it was highly liquid" (p. 185).

- 23 Feavearyear, p. 101.
- 24 See Ernest Mandel, Marxist Economic Theory, trans. Brian Pearce (London: Merlin Press, 1962), pp. 242-70.
- 25 Feavearyear, p. 159. See pp. 161-67 for the circulation of bills of exchange. There is an excellent Publishs in by fining hts high substitution of the bills of exchange. There is an excellent Publish is by fining hts high substitution of the bills of exchange. There is an excellent Publish is by fining hts high substitution of the bills of exchange. There is an excellent Publish is by fining hts high substitution of the bills of exchange. There is an excellent Publish is by fining hts high substitution of the bills of exchange. There is an excellent Publish is by fining hts high substitution of the bills of exchange.

worthy recognizes? They are referred to at one point as "five bank bills" and as "bank bills" (p. 920), and at another point as "the 500l. Bank-Notes" (p. 968). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "banknote" and "bank bill" were used synonymously, though it is clear from the dictionary's examples that both referred to interest-bearing bills. Under "bank bill." the first definition is "bank note." and the second is "a bill drawn by one bank upon another payable at a future date, or on demand, synonymous with banker's draft."26 Allworthy's notes cannot, of course, be government-issued currency, which was not issued until well into the nineteenth century. His notes are unlikely to be a country bank's notes, for there were very few provincial banks in operation in the first half of the eighteenth century. They are unlikely to be bills of exchange, for those circulated largely in manufacturing districts, and less commonly in agricultural districts. Rather, they are more likely to be bank notes or bills drawn on a London bank. (In sending him off to make his fortune, Allworthy presumably would have given Tom his most negotiable paper.) They are unlikely to be Bank of England notes, for those circulated almost exclusively in London and not in the provinces. The best guess is that they are in the form of a cash note, from a smaller, West End bank of the sort that catered to the gentry, such as Hoare's or Child's.27

Unlike the anonymous and interchangeable paper money issued by the post-absolutist state, bills in Fielding's day would be individually identifiable as a consequence of the individualized nature of paper money in the eighteenth century, which not only held the name of the drawer and the bearer, but often a number of intermediary bearers who had endorsed it.<sup>28</sup> It is entirely possible to read the history of a bill or note in its endorsements—the various hands through which it passed. Paper money is not government issued, neither anonymous nor impersonal in

Under bank note, the definition reads as follows, "a promissory note given by a banker: formerly one payable to bearer on demand, and intended to circulate as money." Under note, we find, "a bank-note, or similar promissory note passing current as money," from 1696. Under bill, we find: "(more fully Bill of Exchange) A written order by the writer or 'drawer' to the 'drawee' (the person to whom it is addressed) to pay a certain sum on a given date to the 'drawer' or to a third person named in the bill as the 'payee."

<sup>27</sup> See Dickson, pp. 437-44, for a detailed discussion of Child's Bank, an example of private London bank catering to the aristocracy.

<sup>28</sup> Feavearyear notes that bills under £1 were prohibited in 1775: "in 1777 an Act was passed which provided that all notes of 20s, or of any amount greater than 20s. and less than £5 should specify names and place of the abode of the persons to whom or to whose order they were payable. Further, they were to bear a date not later than the date of issue and to be made payable within http://doi.org/10.110/j.intel.idays.nafiori.whithpersodrither/codd/idod@sis.std/sle negotiable" (p. 174).

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this period, but is something which can be "told" and narrated. These are identifiable, distinguishable objects whose history can be read from their surfaces, much like a novel. This fact gives a significant clue to the function of money in Fielding's fiction.<sup>29</sup> A readable bank note has obvious uses in Fielding's romance plot of discovery, a plot which asks if money can (re)make the man.



The threat of the transformative or generative power of money runs throughout Fielding's novels, particularly in the anonymity promoted by journeys, during which strangers are trusted on the strength of their money. Parson Trulliber is a prominent example of trust contingent upon cash in *Joseph Andrews*, as is the first landlady in *Tom Jones*: "this was one of those Houses where Gentlemen, to use the Language of Advertisements, meet with civil Treatment for their Money" (p. 407); those who have money are assumed to be gentlemen.<sup>30</sup> Peter Pounce in *Joseph Andrews* is Fielding's archetypal money man, the servant turned master, all by means of credit and interest. Pounce's fortune is accumulated by usury (legally defined at the time as any rate of interest above 5 per cent):

[Pounce] used to advance the Servants their Wages: not before they were due, but before they were payable; that is, perhaps, half a Year after they were due, and this at the moderate *Premiums* of fifty *per Cent*. or a little more; by which charitable Methods, together with lending Money to other People, and even to his own Master and Mistress, the honest Man had, from nothing, in few Years amassed a small Sum of ten thousand Pounds or thereabouts. (p. 38)

Old Nightingale is Peter Pounce's counterpart in *Tom Jones*: "He had indeed conversed so entirely with Money, that it may be almost doubted, whether he imagined there was any other thing really existing in the World; this at least may be certainly averred, that he firmly believed nothing else to have any real Value" (pp. 771-72). These hostile portraits of Pounce and Nightingale serve to deny the generative power of

<sup>29</sup> For an intelligent discussion of Fielding's use of detail, see Lennard Davis, Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 205 and note.

<sup>30</sup> See James Cruise, "Fielding, Authority, and the New Commercialism in Joseph Andrews," ELLH 54 (1987), 253-76 for an extended discussion of Fielding's hostility towards commercialism and Pulmi startification ligital Commons @McMaster, 1990 13

money. In like manner the money which Lady Bellaston gives Tom (p. 718) cannot change his nature even though it may temporarily transform him into a town beau. Much the same thing may be said of charity: when Tom gives money to Mr Enderson, the "highwayman" (p. 680), the money enables Enderson to live up to his natural class or station—it does not transform him into something he is not. Enderson may be said to exemplify for Fielding the worthy poor, those whose lot is improved by charity. Black George, on the contrary, exemplifies the unworthy poor, those on whom Tom's charity is wasted, leaving them in unimproved squalor. Either way, money cannot change the nature of the individual; rather the cash nexus is invariably pictured by Fielding in such a way as to deny its efficacy.

In all these scenes of exchange in *Tom Jones*, Fielding expresses a traditionally conservative hostility to the potential of liquid assets, to their dangerously enabling capacities, to which Marx later also draws attention:

Do not 1, who thanks to money am capable of all that the human heart longs for, possess all human capacities? Does not my money, therefore, transform all my incapacities into their contrary? ... The overturning and confounding of all human and natural qualities, the fraternization of impossibilities—the divine power of money—lies in its character as men's estranged, alienating and self-disposing species nature. Money is the alienated ability of mankind. That which I am unable to do as a man, and of which therefore all my essential powers are incapable, I am able to do by means of money. Money thus turns each of these powers into something which in itself it is not—turns it, that is, into its contrary.<sup>31</sup>

It is just these alchemical properties of money that Fielding is at such pains to negate, and the negation points to a curious, if not contradictory, conjunction of two languages or two stories in *Tom Jones*. As Braudel observes: "uneasiness [with new systems of bank notes and paper credit] was the beginning of the awareness of a new language. For money is a language ... it calls for and makes possible dialogues and conversations; it exists as a function of these conversations." Fielding's purpose in *Tom Jones* is to transform this new language, these new dialogues and conversations of accumulation and profit, and the transformations

<sup>31</sup> Karl Marx, The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, ed. Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1964), pp. 167-69.

which result from them, back into the old dynastic language of the stable hereditary estate.

One way to account for this fundamental difference in the representation of credit is *not* simply in terms of political affiliation, that is, by seeing Fielding as a conservative Whig, allied by family to the landed aristocracy and their agricultural interests;<sup>33</sup> rather, we need to see Fielding responding to a highly transitional or contradictory stage in the currency system and in the English economy itself. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx argues that money passes through three stages of development, in which it functions first as a measure of value, and secondly as price or a universal equivalent or medium of exchange. In the second stage, money comes to represent accumulation or treasure, that is to say, wealth itself. Finally, in the most complex system of development, money comes to be posited in exchange *per se*, not merely as the measure of accumulated wealth, but rather as a means of wealth, as capital. The following passage encapsulates the complex dialectical relation among these three successive but interrelated stages and functions of money:

Only with the Romans, Greeks, etc. does money appear unhampered in both its first two functions, as measure and as medium of circulation, and not very far developed in either. But as soon as either their trade, etc. develops, or, as in the case of the Romans, conquest brings them money in vast quantities—in short, suddenly, and at a certain stage of their economic development, money necessarily appears in its third role, and the further it develops in that role, the more the decay of their community advances. In order to function productively, money in its third role, as we have seen, must be not only the precondition but equally the result of circulation, and, as its precondition, also a moment of it, something posited by it. Among the Romans, who amassed money by stealing it, from the whole world, this was not the case. It is inherent in the simple character of money itself that it can exist as a developed moment of production only where and when wage labour exists; that in this case, far from subverting

<sup>33</sup> For a good overview of politics in Fielding, see Morris Golden, "Fielding's Politics," in Henry Fielding, Justice Observed, ed. K.G. Simpson (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1985), pp. 34-53. For McCrea, in Henry Fielding and Politics, the issue of Fielding's politics is explicitly biographical: how Fielding's family connections mediate his political position and so on. Both these studies focus on the contradictions between praxis and theory, between political patronage and association, between conservative and progressive political stances, inherent in the unstable nature of Whiggism at mid-century, issues that come out of Bertrand Goldgar's influential Walpole and the Wits (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976). Straightening out the interrelations among political service and patronage, loyalty, and ideology is a continuing project in Fielding studies. The most detailed study is Thomas R. Cleary, Henry Fielding, Political Writer Publis Wadeling District Cautier Online Mesido Pages 1990

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the social formation, it is rather a condition of its development and a driving wheel for the development of all forces of production, material and mental.<sup>34</sup>

At issue, then, is Fielding's response to and representation of a stage in the development of money, specifically capital—what Marx calls "money in process" for "capital is a not a thing but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things." In order to see this instrumentality in *Tom Jones*, we need to look at Fielding's earlier and later fiction, first *Jonathan Wild* and then *Amelia*, both narratives with considerably more economic detail than Fielding's master work.



Like many Augustan satirists, in Jonathan Wild (1743), Fielding shows his central character as a parodic or inverted capitalist. Wild and his gang are presented as capital and labour, the gang leader exploiting the labour of others. In such a scheme, money is the motor of human activity: "Having thus preconceived his scheme, he [Wild] saw nothing wanting to put it in immediate execution but that which is indeed the beginning as well as the end of all human devices: I mean money" (p. 80). Wild is a successful exploiter: as the narrator puts it, "a prig [thief] to steal with the hands of other people" (p. 168). Fielding also plays with the other dimension of capital, its capacity to make money from money, so that Wild cheats a whole series of people one after another, profiting from each of them. Theft then serves Fielding as a kind of laboratory economy, a miniaturization of an exchange system. It also serves as the ironic frustration of capitalist exchange, for theft is a zero-sum game. one in which money moves around, through various forms of thieving, cheating, and pickpocketing, but the value remains constant (as in the card-sharking scene, pp. 72-76). In this microeconomic system, thieves prey upon one another in daisy-chain fashion, all cheating one another and negating each other's effects: "Bagshot and the gentleman intending to rob each other; Mr Snap and Mr Wild the elder meditating what other creditors they could find out to charge the gentleman then in custody with; the count hoping to renew the play, and Wild, our hero, laying a design to put Bagshot out of the way, or, as the vulgar express it, to hang

<sup>34</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 223. The whole "Chapter on Money" (pp. 113-238) is relevant, particularly pp. 226-38.

<sup>35</sup> Karl Marx, Capital, 3 vols, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling http://doi.jpurkid.org.national.frubliakers.2962bff/vbff84nd.166.

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him with the first opportunity" (p. 76). Like *Tom Jones*, this narrative comically traces the return of goods to their rightful owners, though here it is Wild who plays the role of an inverted providence by orchestrating the return of possessions to their original owners: "Wild, having received from some dutiful members of the gang a valuable piece of goods, did, for a consideration somewhat short of its original price, re-convey it to the right owner" (p. 169). As a fence, Wild deals in commodities and exchange value, for stolen objects are of no use either to thief or fence: their only value lies in exchange. The perpetual frustrations of Wild present the criminal/capitalist as the essence of unproductive labour, involved in an elaborate but useless exchange system which ultimately produces no increase in value.

Many of the narrative functions of loss and recovery work in the same way here as in *Tom Jones*; the central objects purloined and eventually returned are the jewels which Wild steals from Heartfree.<sup>37</sup> In *Amelia*, the casket which Amelia gives to Booth has the function of the muff or wallet in *Tom Jones* (that is, it is both a possession and a kind of romance lovetoken). Like *Tom Jones* again, in *Amelia* the plot turns on the theft of an inheritance by a sibling. In its representations of economic exchange, *Amelia* is Fielding's most interesting novel, for it portrays a world almost totally ruled by money; Amelia's is a world where money talks and where the most basic needs and rights are denied to the poor. In *Tom Jones* we watch the movement of bills, but in *Amelia* we trace the journey of debts, in particular the climactic use of Booth's gambling debt to Trent, which is sold to the lecherous Lord (pp. 432, 438, 472, 492). In Fielding's last novel desire and justice are caught in a cash nexus, for "justice"

<sup>36</sup> Crime as unproductive labour or negation is encapsulated in Fielding's description of Newgate: "all Newgate was a complete collection of prigs, every man behind desirous to pick his neighbour's pocket, and every one was as sensible that his neighbour was as ready to pick his: so that (which is almost incredible) as great requery was daily committed within the walls of Newgate as without" (pp. 203-4). Compare this with Mrs Heartfree's conclusion: "THAT PROVIDENCE WILL SOONER OR LATER PROCURE THE FELICITY OF THE VIRTUOUS AND INNOCENT" (p. 203).

<sup>37</sup> Fielding's hostility to capital is apparent in the fact that only the disreputable know how to exploit the tricks of credit here (p. 90): the count obtains one of the jewels, sells it, raises money on that cash, which he then uses as a deposit for the rest of Heartfree's jewels—making money on money: "so he paid him the thousand pound in specie, and gave his note for two thousand eight hundred pounds more to Heartfree." They then attack Heartfree and steal the cash back from him, after which the cash is stolen by the prostitute Molly Straddle. Wild offers the jewels to Lætitia Snap, but they turn out to be paste, substituted by the Count. The jewels reappear with the Count in Africa (pp. 192-93) and are returned eventually to Heartfree (p. 203). So too, Heartfree recognizes a bank note (one of the Count's) stolen from him the previous day, just as in Tom Jones (p. 99); Heartfree endorses it over, it is stopped (because the Count has disappeared and will not make good on it) and, as the endorsee, Heartfree is held for the debt Publi shield by DigitalCommons@McMaster, 1990

is bought and sold with perjured witnesses, and bodies are for sale in prostitution; in short things are for sale here that should not be for sale, just as there is no equal access to basic human rights (as is the case with Mrs Bennet's first husband, denied burial rights by his creditors). Booth before the Justice of the Peace and in Newgate is powerless without money: injustice per se is thematized in Amelia. The negotiations with various suitors over Amelia's hand in marriage illustrate the point—precious things are to be had for money. These issues come to the fore early on when Miss Mathews announces that she has not enough money in her pocket to pay the lawyer Murphy to save her life: life itself in the form of life-saving service is available only for money.

Furthermore, money and the power it represents are inevitably exploitive here, where the rich prey upon the poor; as Dr Harrison puts it, where they "prey upon the Necessitous" (p. 355), or, as the narrator puts it, where "a Set of Leaches are permitted to suck the Blood of the Brave and Indigent; of the Widow and the Orphan" (p. 477). The narrator says of the nobleman who is promoting Booth's commission in the army in order to gain sexual access to Amelia, "This art of promising is the Oeconomy of a great Man's Pride, a sort of good Husbandry in conferring Favours, by which they receive ten-fold in Acknowledgments for every obligation, I mean among those who really intend the Service: for there are others who cheat poor Men of their Thanks, without ever designing to deserve them at all" (p. 203). Exploitation functions as a gross inversion or parody of the deference and obligation which Harold Perkin called the glue that held the Old Society together.38 When a "great man" receives "ten-fold," we can see a kind of capitalization of hierarchical obligation; similarly, the political satire at work throughout Jonathan Wild of course indicates that Robert Walpole has capitalized political patronage, turning political deference and obligation into a cash nexus. Colonel Bath, Booth says, "hath oppressed me, if I may use that Expression, with Obligations" (p. 368), while Booth defines "Obligations, as the worst kind of Debts" (p. 236).39

<sup>38</sup> Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society* (1969, reprinted London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 17-62.

<sup>39</sup> There are negative suggestions of the generative or reproductive capacity of capital, in that Booth cannot borrow money without having some to start with (p. 122). In keeping with Fielding's "late feudal" outlook, money in this novel is still part of a zero-sum game, for it changes hands by theft or misappropriation or coercion (primitive accumulation), but there is no new money produced. It is only old, familiar, known money that appears, disappears, and reappears in the https://prescriptors.ivite.org/lineary/scriptors/prescriptors/scri

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In Fielding's attack on the decadent aristocracy in Amelia, social obligation has become explicitly financial, transformed into a kind of social capital deployed to oppress the lower classes.<sup>40</sup>

In the first half of the eighteenth century Defoe recognized and celebrated money as capital, as an instrument for creating wealth, not just as wealth itself, but Fielding refuses to show the reproduction of accumulated capital in criminal hands. Black George has instructed Old Nightingale to "lay out [the £500] either in a Mortgage, or in some Purchase in the North of England" (p. 920), but Fielding has constructed his story so as to resist or repress the possibility of turning cash into capital. The notes remain inert and non-transformative, and Black George's act does not lead to accumulation but remains simple theft. Recognized and recovered by Allworthy, the notes remain safe, stable, unchanging property, much like a landed estate, suspended within the patriarchal system of continuity. The new language of money has its analogue in the language of the new form of the novel; Defoe's novels are stories of new dialogues, social mobility, and personal development, individual changes that are achieved by way of financial accumulation, profit, and class transgression. The conjunction of these two languages of real and monetary property, then, can be understood in generic terms. It has been argued that Tom Jones is a hybrid form, a comic epic in prose, a romance, a satire; its mixed form can be seen most clearly in relation to the economic base of the culture. 41 In his The Theory of the Novel Georg Lukács distinguished between the epic, which tells the history of an unchanging

<sup>40</sup> It could be argued that Fielding's obsession with prostitution in Amelia is connected with capitalization, as in the central contrast between the good wife, Amelia, who protects her virtue at all cost, and Mrs Trent. Amelia is explicitly termed Booth's "Treasure" (p. 382) compared to Colonel Bath's worthless wife or Colonel Trent's wife, who is a commodity to be traded, a prostitute. In this respect, Jonathan Wild seems very much like a satiric version of Amelia, since the central contrast is also one between honour (a nostalgic aristocratic virtue) and its commodification or capitalization, between the good wife and the whore, Mrs Heartfree and Lætitia Wild. Like Amelia, Mrs Heartfree's adventures consist of a sequence of resisting would-be rapists. For these issues of gender, see April London, "Controlling the Text: Women in Tom Jones," Studies in the Novel 19 (1987), 323-33.

<sup>41</sup> Sheldon Sacks, Fiction and the Shape of Belief (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), remains the best discussion of the variety of forms in Tom Jones. The issue of form is related to the more general matter of the historicity of his discourse, and the question of how it is inscribed in the cultural field of the 1740s and the 1750s. In other words, what do Fielding's narratives tell us about the dialectic between romance and novelistic discourse? There are at least two senses of "history" as story and reality that need to be worked out here: See John F. Tinkler, "Humanist History and the English Novel in the Eighteenth Century," Studies in Philology 85 (1988), 510–37. See also John J. Burke, Jr, "History without History: Henry Fielding's Theory of Fiction," in A Provision of Human Nature, ed. Donald Kay (University: University of Alabama Press, 1977), pp. 45–63. McKeon's Origins of the English Novel is the fullest and most successful PublishpathogesoligiFaelding/suphase (in Montance land Chovelistic discourse.

community, and the novel, which takes the outward biographical form of the history of a problematic individual. Tom Jones combines the residual with the emergent, vestiges of the epic with elements of the new form of the novel, for it concerns the story of Squire Allworthy's estate just as much as the story of the titular hero.42 From the Lukácsian point of view, the title and outward biographical form mask the fact that the true protagonist of Tom Jones is Paradise Hall.<sup>43</sup> Tom's becoming a worthy steward to the estate is but part of the larger history, the possessive and genealogical continuity represented by the dynastic estate itself.44

To the very end of his life Fielding displayed a consistent resistance to the notion of free-flowing capital. In his Introduction to The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, Fielding observed of his income as Bow Street Magistrate:

I will confess to him [the reader], that my private affairs at the beginning of the winter had but a gloomy aspect; for I had not plundered the public or the poor

- 42 Georg Lukács, The Theory of the Novel, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971). My application of Lukács is dependent upon J.M. Bernstein's excellent study of Lukács's novel theory in The Philosophy of the Novel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
- 43 The ending sentence of Tom Jones, with its emphasis on the estate and its dependents, condenses Fielding's Tory myth of genealogical continuity and economic conservatism: "And such is their Condescension, their Indulgence, and their Beneficence to those below them, that there is not a Neighbour, a Tenant, or a Servant, who doth not most gratefully bless the Day when Mr. Jones was married to his Sophia." It is no accident that in Pamela and in Sir Charles Grandison Richardson felt obligated to track the newlyweds much further before the family history could be safely and sensibly concluded. Pamela ends, not with the marriage of Pamela and Mr B or with the reconciliation of Mr B and his sister Lady Davers; instead, the whole narrative is stretched out in order to end with a triumphant return to the paternal estate. So too, Smollett's Roderick Random closes with a return to the dynastic estate and a similar show of affection, deference, and dependence by the servants. As a measure of what has changed by the end of the century, we may compare these endings with Sir Walter Scott's Waverley, where the estate returned to at the end is pitifully fragile, only recently recovered, and only partially restored.
- 44 By contrast, Defoe's novels speak a completely different economic language, and present the cash nexus, paper money, and credit in an entirely different light. Rather than being threatened by the alchemical, transformative powers of money, Defoe's characters are explicitly made rich by its properties: that is to say, for Moll, Colonel Jack, and Roxana, mastery of the credit system is the sine qua non of success in the material world. The most instructive example of paper credit in Defoe's fiction is Colonel Jack's £94 bank note, the accumulation of his early years of theft. Once Jack passes into the New World, that note loses all connection with its illicit origin; indeed the £94 note becomes a sign of Jack's gentility, surety to his new master that Jack is not, in fact, a transported criminal, but rather an innocent who has been abducted to Maryland by an unscrupulous sea captain (Daniel Defoe, The Life of Colonel Jack, ed. Samuel Holt Monk [London: Oxford University Press, 1970]). For the drawing up of the bill see pp. 76-77, and for its function in Maryland, see pp. 124-25. In short, the note in Defoe serves in all its enabling capacity, transforming Colonel Jack from a common criminal into a respectable citizen, which is exactly what Fielding prevents the £500 note from doing for Black George in

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[in his capacity as magistrate] of those sums which men, who are always ready to plunder both as much as they can, have been pleased to suspect me of taking: on the contrary, by composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars (which I blush when I say hath not been universally practised) and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about £500 a year of the dirtiest money on earth, to little more that [sic] £300. (pp. 189-90)

The taint of dirty money here is adduced from the immoral conditions of the job, the Amelia-like conditions of bribery and exploitation, and such immorality adheres to the money. Such a persistence of immorality, even after the money changes hands, is quite unlike the laundering of money that goes on in Defoe's novels where money is rootless, without meaningful genealogy, and so is always "clean." Stolen objects, such as the bank note in Colonel Jack or the watch in Moll Flanders, carry no taint of their history; giving her son a gold watch at the close of her story, Moll adds, "I did not indeed tell him that I had stole it from a Gentlewomans side, at a Meeting-House in London, that's by the way."45 In Tom Jones, Jacobite rebellions, runaway wives, daughters, rogue nephews, and the cash nexus of London<sup>46</sup> momentarily threaten the stability of landed property, but the transcendence of possession extends beyond land to cash itself in Fielding's epic, harnessing, domesticating, or declawing the threat of cash, paper credit, unbridled accumulation, and universality of exchange value—in short, early market capitalism and commodity. Those intermediate systems of sealed bills and bills of exchange, with their assertively individualized appearance, similarly can be seen as provisional mechanisms which evolved to control the treacherously fluid capacity of paper money. After anonymous Bank of England notes become legal tender in 1797, rightful possession would never again be so easily recognized or so easily restored.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

<sup>45</sup> Moll Flanders, ed. David Blewett (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 422.

<sup>46</sup> In Jane Austen's Mansfield Park (1814) Mary Crawford recites "the true London maxim, that everything is to be got with money." R.W. Chapmen, ed., The Novels of Jane Austen (London: Publifethe University Press, of Parks, of