

**England in Prison Tropes:
Carceral Narratives in English Novels of the Long Eighteenth Century**

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Abbreviations:

E: *Evelina*

FQ: *The Female Quixote*

MF: *Moll Flanders*

P: *Pamela*

PP: *Pride and Prejudice*

RC: *Robinson Crusoe*

Chapter 1 Introduction

“*England is a Prison*” (Winstanley 116).¹ While commending England’s political shift from royal supremacy to parliamentary constitutionalism, Gerrard Winstanley uses this striking metaphor to criticise the hierarchical structures that survived King Charles I’s execution. According to Winstanley, clergymen, aristocrats and lawyers continue to oppress or imprison the lower classes after the victory of the English Parliament, denying them access to common lands and hampering their pursuit of universal equality. But is Winstanley as a lower-class Englishman really as powerless as he claims to be? Figuratively delineating the predicaments of landless people, Winstanley demands prominent politicians of the English nation to keep their promises and perform their duties. The fact that this prison-like nation trope is part of his attempt to recount his own arrests highlights its narrative effect: as the English nation is compared to the literal prison that threatens to destroy Winstanley’s life, the private experience of an individual Englishman becomes an epitome of the English people’s quest for freedom. While penal institutions convey symbolic implications in all ages and on all lands, prisons in eighteenth-century England, a nation whose isolation from the European continent has contributed to both its political stability and its political reforms, are of particular significance to political, social as well as literary studies. Like the seashores of the English nation that confine the English people within a narrow island but also shelter them from foreign invasions, the narratively constructed spaces of English prisons, literally or figuratively speaking, both constrict and liberate, both oppress and protect, their inhabitants.

Based on the theories of prison reforms and prison metaphors, I examine the fictional representations of prison-like nations in English novels of the long eighteenth century, referring to various works of this time but using four novels as major examples: Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* (1722), Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740), Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* (1752) and Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). By examining how prisons or prison-like spaces are figuratively represented in the selected novels, how the English nation is represented through carceral tropes and how different narrative strategies resonate with the spaces of prison-like nations, I aim to explore the repeated encounters between carceral, national and narrative forms. Just as various prison-related concepts, from the womb to the cage, shed light on the power structures of the English nation from capricious absolute authority to mutual disciplinary supervision, different novelistic strategies, from autobiographical to

¹ In this dissertation, all the italics in quotations are in the original.

epistolary narration, blend with prison-nation tropes to construct a highly dynamic figurative network of carceral England.

1.1 Academic Discourses on Nation, Narration and Prison

Encompassing the geographical territories of the English island, the political policies of state governance and the sociocultural practices of individual inhabitants, English national spaces have triggered numerous debates during and after the long eighteenth century, when the novel as a new genre emerged among a series of turbulent historical events. The encounters between national spaces and narrative strategies are further complicated by the fictional representations of carceral spaces, spaces that literally confine criminal offenders, figuratively constrain social deviants and formally blend with the hierarchies of the English nation.

The conceptualisation of the nation has never stopped inspiring debates in the fields of political and social sciences, with the so-called modernist scholars and their opponents providing different perspectives for my study of nationhood. In his landmark monograph *Imagined Communities* (2006 [1983]), Benedict Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign,” thus emphasising its constructed nature, geographical boundaries, political democratisation and “deep, horizontal comradeship” (6, 7). Based on this definition, Anderson traces the ‘birth’ of nations and nationalism to the late eighteenth century, when the decline in religious fervour, the corrosion of absolute monarchy and the development of printing technology together paved the way for the creation of the nation-state as a modern political regime (4–46). This understanding of the nation as a product of modernity is shared by many other scholars. Reviewing the works of Karl W. Deutsch (1966), Ernest Gellner (1983), John Breuilly (1985) and Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Anthony D. Smith uses five key terms to summarise their “modernist conception of the nation”: “territoriality, legal standardization, participation, mass culture and education, sovereignty, and so on” (2008: 13). As researchers like A. D. Smith, Adrian Hastings (1997), Andrew Escobedo (2010) and Lotte Jensen (2016) have repeatedly pointed out, although such a definition of the nation as a standardised and centralised community of politically self-conscious citizens helps cast light on the state politics of ideological manipulation and democratic participation, it is not only blatantly inattentive to nonpolitical national forces, but also unnecessarily restrictive for historians interested in eras before the nineteenth century or countries outside Western Europe. In his introduction to *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha argues that “the ambivalent figure of the nation” should be understood “as a system of cultural signification, as the representation of social *life* rather

than the discipline of social *polity*” (1990: 1–2).² Apart from its political policies and ideological movements, the cultural, literary, social, ethnic and religious factors of nationhood also deserve scholarly attention.

As a reaction against the exclusively political perspective of the so-called modernists, the cultural or ethnic approach to nationhood has inspired me to explore the nonpolitical elements of the “imagined community.” Unconvinced by the modernist association of nationalism with political participation only, Hastings distinguishes the nation from the nation-state and nationalism: while the nation is a “self-conscious community [...] identified by a literature of its own,” the nation-state is an idealised organisation “whose people are not seen simply as ‘subjects’ of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs” (1997: 3). Nationalism, meanwhile, refers to “the belief that one’s own ethnic or national tradition is especially valuable and needs to be defended at almost any cost through creation or extension of its own nation-state” (Hastings 4).³ The differences between nations, nation-states and nationalism are especially important here, since my analysis of the nation is concerned with but far from limited to the political pursuit of state sovereignty (nation-states) or the ideological spread of patriotic enthusiasm (nationalism). Rather, issues spanning from royal or parliamentary decisions to literary or cultural traditions are all regarded as potentially relevant to the nation, although this nation might not meet all the standards of a modern nation-state. Also rejecting the modernist definition, A. D. Smith offers an alternative conceptual framework in *The Cultural Foundations of Nations* (2008). Having questioned whether the

² Eighteenth-century colonial practices of the British Empire have long been popular topics for historical research. Gail D. MacLeitch’s *Imperial Entanglements* (2011), for example, uncovers how the Iroquois became increasingly “entangled within a burgeoning mercantile British Empire” around the time of the Seven Years’ War (3). Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose’s *At Home with the Empire* (2006) explores “the impact of the British Empire on the metropole between the late eighteenth century and the present” (1). Linda Colley’s *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* (2002) focuses on those Britons who experienced confinement outside Europe during the expansion of the British Empire. Eliga H. Gould examines in *The Persistence of Empire* (2000) public opinions on the British side of the Atlantic about political issues leading up to the American Revolution.

³ Also criticising the modernists’ exclusive focus on the political realm, Escobedo proposes to “distinguish early-modern *nationhood* (the experience and expression of national belonging) from modern *nationalism* (the direct translation of national identity into political policy)” (2010: 206). The distinction between individual experiences and general policies is unquestionably important, but not all nation-related forces create a sense of national identity or belonging, while the sense of national belonging often contributes to the construction of nationalism despite its seemingly nonpolitical nature. For example, a derogative representation of a certain nation in contrast to its more positively represented neighbours expresses emotional detachment from the nation rather than attachment to it, but this effect does not prevent it from being a relevant comment on nationhood. Likewise, representations of a nation by foreigners can also affect the construction of nationhood – in positive or negative ways – although the foreigners do not belong to the nation themselves.

standard of “mass participation” can be historically evaluated or whether it can be met at all even in some twentieth-century countries (6), A. D. Smith argues that the modernist research on “institutions” in their “economic, political, and legal forms” “is too restrictive, and needs to include any set of role relationships based on patterned normative and cultural expectations” (8). According to A. D. Smith, the nation is “at one and the same time an analytic category based on general social processes and a historical form of human community characterized by a cultural and/or a political collective identity,” thus requiring both a “transhistorical ideal” definition of nationhood and a historically situated account of its specific hallmarks (19). Using the nation “as a descriptive term” for the “historical manifestations of [...] a human community,” A. D. Smith finds elements of nationhood in the literature, law, art, architecture, traditions, mythologies as well as hierarchical structures of ancient eras (18, 23). This cultural analysis of national elements, if not fully developed nation-states, inspires me to examine not only how the political system of the English nation functions or where its ideological foundation lies, but also which literary, cultural, social and political factors are associated with the formation, perception or representation of nationhood. Also using the concept of the nation descriptively, I go beyond the scopes of national policies and national identities to explore the political and nonpolitical, public and private, elements of English nationhood.

Drawing on modernists’ research to understand the political aspect of nationhood, on Hastings’s definitions to distinguish nations from nation-states and on A. D. Smith’s two-level framework to identify nation-related cultural factors, I detect ancient as well as modern features of nationhood in both its political and its nonpolitical realms. Despite his innovative perspective, the binary structure that A. D. Smith establishes does not go unchallenged. Jensen, for instance, complains that A. D. Smith’s summary of “the dichotomy between modernists and traditionalists” also perpetuates this dichotomy to the extent that “no scholar in the field of nationalism studies can escape the obligation to situate himself within the proposed schemes” (2016: 11). Although I agree with Jensen that “the idea of a watershed between premodern and modern forms of nation-building” does not always hold water and that “culture and politics are hardly ever entirely separate spheres,” I refrain from a complete erasure of the distinction between premodern and modern national elements (14, 15). Even though the expression of nationalistic emotions and the idea of democratic rule existed long before the French Revolution, the nationwide institutionalised systems of official citizenship, public education, social welfare and political election still reveal aspects of the nation that are undeniably different from the early localised attempts at poor relief or the royalist belief in the divine right of kings. Acknowledging both changes and continuities in the history of the nation, I consider

modern and premodern features of nationhood as politically different but historically related features of a broad concept.

Unsurprisingly, questions about origins, components and key features of the nation constitute a popular topic in eighteenth-century English studies. Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that England in this era can already be considered a proper nation. Based on the works of Benedict Anderson and others, A. D. Cousins and Geoffrey Payne contend that, “geographically defined, sovereign, and variously imagined into possession of its own identity,” England after 1648 was “decidedly a nation,” although the major elements of this nation had to go through significant changes during the subsequent events of the English Civil Wars, the Stuart Restoration, the Glorious Revolution, the Hanoverian dynasty, the Jacobite rebellions and the American as well as French Revolutions (2015: 2). Similarly, Anna Suranyi also argues that early modern England already emerged as “a unified, but bounded, multitude with shared interests, values, and experiences” (2008: 43). Preoccupied with this bounded piece of land, researchers like Adrian Hastings (1997), Liah Greenfeld (1992), Gerald Newman (1987) and Krishan Kumar (2003) trace the emergence of English nationalism respectively to the tenth, sixteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ironically, however, the disagreements between them indicate exactly how different approaches to nationhood can lead to radically different conclusions and thus how problematic it is to reduce the construction of the English national system to one particular time, place or event. With its well-guarded geographical territories, generally stable political system and deeply influential cultural heritage, the elements of English nationhood were manifest in multiple aspects during the long eighteenth century.

Since most scholars agree about the early emergence of the English nation (if not nationalism), an overview of its major hallmarks is necessary for any attempt to understand its concrete manifestations in the long eighteenth century. Following Benedict Anderson’s definition of nationhood, Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (2003 [1992]) analyses British identity in the context of the Protestant faith, economic growth, colonial expansion, monarchical influence and military conflicts. Viewing “Great Britain as an invented nation superimposed, if only for a while, onto much older alignments and loyalties,” Colley analyses Britons’ self-redefinition during their encounters with the non-British:

They defined themselves as Protestants struggling for survival against the world’s foremost Catholic power. They defined themselves against the French as they imagined them to be, superstitious, militarist, decadent and unfree. And, increasingly as the wars went on, they defined themselves in contrast to the colonial peoples they conquered, peoples who were manifestly alien in terms of culture, religion and colour. (5)

It is, of course, rather oversimplifying to attribute the increasing unification of a nation primarily to its confrontations with antagonistic foreign cultures, but for my study, Colley's detailed historical documentation helps demonstrate how literary allusions to the Catholic faith, Jacobite rebellions, Scottish traditions, Continental Europe and non-Christian colonies can be read as comments on the English nation itself, while the operation of Parliament, the development of trade, the growth of the militia, the upholding of constitutional liberty and the expansion of the printing market altogether constructed a sense of nationhood from within. Because of the close associations between the British and English national identities, Colley's commentaries on the invention of Great Britain also shed light on the various dimensions of English nationhood.⁴ But whereas Colley's research encompasses various types of national elements, my study remains focused on those that are narratively depicted in English novels, thus requiring a particularly literary approach to the notion of nationhood. In *Reading the Nation in English Literature*, Elizabeth Sauer and Julia M. Wright view the nation as "a discursive, literary construction that is debated across diverse high culture and popular culture genres" (2010: 5). Supported by the achievements of social and political scientists, I treat the English nation as a narrative construct that can be found in the fictional representations of political issues, cultural customs, social hierarchies, gender relationships and personal experiences.

As nationhood is partly constructed through widely-read fictional representations of political and cultural practices, there is a strong connection between the English nation and the English novel. Bringing the nation-novel connection to the fore, John Owen Havard explores in *Disaffected Parties* (2019) how political concerns, or unconcern, reshape well-known literary works of the long eighteenth century, while Fiona Price demonstrates in *Reinventing Liberty* (2016) how historical novels rewrite the constitutional past of the British nation in response to its troubled present. Karen Lacey examines in *A Class Apart* the evolution of the "military man" figure in prose fiction from "a non-national archetype" to "a member of a nationalised profession" (2016: 1), while Patrick Parrinder's *Nation and Novel* associates the

⁴ Since I concentrate on the English nation in my research, the frictions between what is British and what is English are treated here as relevant historical context rather than any central issue. The British identity and its controversial relationship with Englishness have been widely discussed. Michael Gardiner examines in *The Constitution of English Literature* the tension between "territorial England" and a controversial "UK nationalism" (2013: 8). Ian Bradley lists "the Empire, the monarchy, Protestantism and the parliamentary union of England, Wales and Scotland" as "the four historic pillars of British identity" (2007: 3). Other important works about Britain include Philip Schwyzer's *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (2004), Keith Robbins's *Great Britain* (1998) and Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber's *Conquest and Union* (1995).

“development of the [novel] form from the earliest times to the twenty-first century” with the “changes in national consciousness in successive epochs” (2006: 6). More than twenty years after its publication, Franco Moretti’s illustration of novelistic plots on the maps of nations still sparks intriguing discussions (1998). As a matter of fact, this intrinsic link between fictional narratives and national issues has already been addressed, albeit mostly tacitly, by well-received theories about the history of the novel. In Michael McKeon’s *The Origins of the English Novel* (2002 [1987]), the shift in the novels’ epistemological foundation (from an unconditional belief in narrative truthfulness to an empirical pursuit of such truthfulness to a profound doubt about its possibility) is juxtaposed with the restructuring of the English nation (from the absolute superiority of the aristocracy to a radical champion of the self-made man to the conservative values of the landed Tories). Ian Watt discerns a similar intertwining between the novelistic form and the English nation, attributing the rise of “formal realism” as a philosophically based narrative style to the rise of the so-called middle class, a group of people who have exercised a growing influence on national politics (1957: 32). As Ingrid Horrocks (2017), Louise Curran (2016), Henry Power (2015), Ros Ballaster (2015), John Richetti (1999), J. Paul Hunter (1990) and Michael McKeon have all noted, the novel’s incorporation of various genres, including romance, satire, epic, lyric, allegory, private letters and journalistic reports, have significant sociopolitical, hence national, implications. Likewise, the literary traditions of autobiographical and epistolary writing that eighteenth-century novelists frequently follow also disclose how an adventurous journey across geographical boundaries and the communal practice of exchanging gossipy letters both participate in the political, social and cultural process of nation formation.

Eighteenth-century novels do not only represent elements of nationhood in the public domain, however; the private lives of individual characters also contribute to the discourses of nationhood. Melissa J. Ganz, for instance, examines in *Public Vows* (2019) how novelistic depictions of individual marriages participated in nationwide debates about marriage law in eighteenth-century England, while Lisa O’Connell reveals in *The Origins of the English Marriage Plot* (2019) how political structures behind England’s marriage law of 1753 reconstructed the plots of eighteenth-century novels. While Roger E. Moore analyses in *Jane Austen and the Reformation* (2016) the connections between homes, abbeys and England’s religious history, Cousins and Payne (2015) underline the interactions between the national home(land) and the domestic home in literary writings of the long eighteenth century. Proposing to “displace the nation-state from its privileged status as the imagined community par excellence,” Evan Gottlieb and Juliet Shields’s *Representing Place in British Literature*

and Culture rejects the common categorisation of local, national and transnational spheres (2013: 3). In a way that is particularly useful to my research, Gottlieb and Shields's discussions about the translocal highlight the prevalence of national structures in local or regional sceneries. In a more systematic manner, McKeon emphasises in *The Secret History of Domesticity* the power of the private realm to internalise public matters as early modern English fiction accomplished a "movement from domestication to domesticity" (2005: xxiii), while Helen Thompson's *Ingenuous Subjection* (2005) applies the Lockean notion of free compliance in terms of national governance to an analysis of female agency in marital choices. Similarly, the analysis of private issues and domestic spheres occupies a considerable portion of my study, with the core components of the English nation detected not only in the royal court or the militia regiment, but also in the everyday gossip of genteel ladies and the petty thefts on London streets. With elements of nationhood found in the public places of the court, the Parliament and the army, as well as in the private places of houses, gardens and bedrooms, the concept of the English nation brings its own spatiality to the fore.

Present in both public and private realms, temporally ambivalent and socially abstract, the concept of nationhood can be more concretely clarified through spatial theories. Academic publications on space have proliferated in the last forty years, covering a wide range of topics from the spaces of postmodern societies (Michel de Certeau 1984; David Harvey 1989; Fredric Jameson 1991) and the spatialisation of gender relations (Gillian Rose 1993; Doreen Massey 2001 [1994]) to spatial models of literary history (Franco Moretti 2005) and geocritical analysis of literary works (Bertrand Westphal 2011). More recently, informative volumes such as Robert T. Tally's *Spatiality* (2013) and his Routledge handbook (2017) offer an extensive overview of spatial studies. Widely known for his declaration that "(social) space is a (social) product," Henri Lefebvre theorises the different dimensions of social space through a "perceived-conceived-lived triad (in spatial terms: spatial practice, representations of space, representational spaces)" (1991: 30, 40). Inspired by this triad, Edward Soja conjures the term "Thirdspace" to better explicate his "rebalanced trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality," referring to "an-Other form of spatial awareness [...] that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends well beyond them in scope, substance, and meaning" (1996: 10–11). Based on these theories, Lefebvre's in particular, I have developed a notion of national spaces that incorporates three closely interrelated layers of meaning: the geographical territory of England bordered by Scotland, Wales as well as the sea, the imagined concept of England constructed by political or literary writers and the symbolic places of England appropriated by its individual inhabitants. Based on this notion, national spaces

encompass not only the English island as a whole, but also any specific corner of this island that accommodates what scholars like A. D. Smith and Linda Colley have identified as cultural components of the nation. Therefore, the domestic place of the dining hall and the local place of the urban street can both become national spaces when they exhibit nation-related features.

Based on previous narratological discussions about the narration of spaces and the spatiality of narratives, I analyse the frequent encounters between national spaces and narrative structures in the selected novels of the long eighteenth century. As early as 1978, Seymour Chatman's distinction between "story-space" as "a mental construct" of the fictional world and "discourse-space" as the "*focus of spatial attention*" raises two important space-related issues: cognitive processing of verbal narration and narrative depictions of particular places (101–102). Departing from Nelson Goodman's philosophical work *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978), David Herman concentrates on the cognitive aspect and explores the four key "procedures specific to narrative ways of worldmaking": "situatedness, event sequencing, worldmaking/world disruption, and what it's like" (2009: 77). In this cognitive study, Herman defines "storyworlds" as "global mental representations enabling interpreters to frame inferences about the situations, characters, and occurrences either explicitly mentioned in or implied by a narrative text or discourse," namely about "who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what manner" (72–73). In other words, storyworlds refer not to any real setting that a story describes but to the narratively based mental construct of a complete world with its own time, space and causal events. Signifying a cognitive product shaped simultaneously by the reader and the text, the term 'storyworld' is especially helpful for my analysis of *The Female Quixote*, in which the quixotic protagonist constructs her own version of reality based on the romances she reads and allows the spatiotemporal world she mentally constructs to influence the equally fictional world she lives in. The encounter between different worlds in Lennox's novel recalls Marie-Laure Ryan and Alice Bell's discussion of "fictional worlds," "alternative worlds" and "possible worlds" (2019: 1–43). However, while Herman focuses more on the cognitive processes of worldmaking and Ryan or Bell on the philosophical questions behind it, I am primarily interested in the interactions between narrative arrangements and spatial structures. Andrew Thacker argues that students of literature "should reconnect the representational spaces in literary texts not only to the material spaces they depict, but also reverse the movement, and understand how social spaces dialogically help fashion the literary *forms* of texts" (2017: 34).⁵

⁵ The question of how literary works are composed, distributed and received differently in different regions, interesting as it is, lies completely beyond the scope of my research.

While individual characters' adventurous crossings of spatial borders echo the linear progression of autobiographical narratives, the rapid spread of neighbourly gossip in communal spaces relies on the communicative function of epistolary writing. In eighteenth-century novelistic representations of the English nation, absolutist or contractual spaces are represented through the autobiographical or epistolary forms of fictional narration. These spatial and literary forms shed light on nation-related issues through their constant interactions with each other.

In the blending of national and narrative forms, fictional writings frequently draw on the representations of incarceration to expose the hierarchical governance of national communities. The messages that prisons convey about their nation-states have been meticulously analysed by political scientists in the field of American studies. While Marie Gottschalk (2016) and Stephen Dillon (2018) directly include the phrase "Prison State" in their book titles to emphasise the connections between prison policies and state politics, similar publications on the so-called carceral state or prison nation include those by Sara M. Benson (2019), Reuben Jonathan Miller and Forrest Stuart (2017), Beth E. Richie (2012), Loïc Wacquant (2009), Marie Gottschalk (2006) and Dylan Rodriguez (2006).⁶ In her 2020 "Review of Carceral State Studies and Application," Kayla Marie Martensen describes research on "the Carceral State" as "an exploration of how carceral logic and carceral control expand beyond the prison, and is [sic] in fact embedded in the social fabric of the United States" (1). What scholars have noticed about the connections between nations and prisons in the political system of contemporary United States can also be found in British or European history. If Michel Foucault's study of punitive methods in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) associates the organisation of prison spaces with the operation of national regimes, John Bender's *Imagining the Penitentiary* (1987) further explores the interactions between national orders, carceral traditions and narrative techniques. The role that imprisonment plays in the process of nation-building is stressed by Colley, whose *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (2002) reestimates the imperial history of the British Empire through a provocative reading of captivity narratives, while Jason Haslam and Julia M. Wright's edited volume *Captivating Subjects* (2005) exposes the development of Western nation-states through the practices of confinement during the long nineteenth century. While Colley, Haslam and Wright are primarily interested in national issues in their analysis of captivity, historians specialising in eighteenth-century prisons also notice the presence of

⁶ Other research on the political, social and cultural implications of penal institutions has been conducted by scholars like Michael Welch (2022) and Dominique Moran (2015).

national elements in the penal institutions they examine. Michael Ignatieff's *A Just Measure of Pain* (1978) attaches great importance to the influence of politicians, Parliament and national policies in its documentation of penitentiary reform, while *The Oxford History of the Prison* (1995), a collective work on penal practices in different ages and different countries, illustrates how the punishment of transgressive behaviour reflects the functioning of the national mechanism. Departing from the classical view of prison histories as a linear progression from old prisons to new penitentiaries, I read the theories of Foucault and Bender not as attempts to trace the historical development of prison designs but as historically based research on two important carceral elements: random transformation and mutual observation. Prevalent in the spaces of English prisons as well as English nations, these two elements mark the constant blending of incarceration and nationhood in their closely related power structures. In narrative representations of social hierarchies, the absolutist structures of national spaces mirror the capricious arrangements of carceral spaces, just as the normative surveillance of communities recalls the disciplinary practices of penitentiaries.

Apart from their close connection with political regimes, prisons also play a crucial role in narratives about criminal, legal, penal and psychological issues. Research on narrative representations of incarceration has proliferated in the past forty years. In her interdisciplinary work *Romantic Outlaws, Beloved Prisons* (1996), law scholar Martha Grace Duncan takes a psychoanalytic approach to favourable depictions of imprisonment in fictional and nonfictional narratives. Exploring the institutional as well as individual aspects of criminality and punishment, Monika Fludernik and Greta Olson's edited volume *In the Grip of the Law* (2004) examines legal systems in trials and individual experiences in prisons as they are delineated in literary works. Based on an analysis of literary as well as nonliterary texts, Caleb Smith's *The Prison and the American Imagination* (2009) reveals how the US society expects the penitentiary structure to both destroy and redeem its prisoners. Whereas the research interest of these three publications demonstrates an extremely broad temporal or spatial scope, other academic writings on crimes and prisons concentrate on specific historical eras in specific countries. Lincoln B. Faller's *Turned to Account* (1987), for example, scrutinises the two major narrative patterns of late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century criminal biographies, while Hal Gladfelder's *Criminality and Narrative in Eighteenth-Century England* (2001) explicates how the narration of criminal deeds challenged the power of legal regulations as law replaced religion to become the predominant institution of social control. Zooming in on incarceration instead of criminality, Victor Brombert's *The Romantic Prison* (1978) analyses French Romantics' perceptions of prisons as sites of both oppression and liberation. Sean C.

Grass's *The Self in the Cell* (2003) illustrates how solitary confinement in Victorian prisons gave rise to novelistic delineations of private psychological activities, whereas Jan Alber and Frank Lauterbach's *Stones of Law, Bricks of Shame* (2009) looks in the opposite direction and stresses the influence of prison literature on Victorian society. Exploring the ideological shifts in attitudes towards penal practices, Jan Alber's *Narrating the Prison* (2007) examines (metaphorical) depictions of imprisonment in nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels and films, while Michael J. Mulryan and Denis D. Grélé's edited volume *Eighteenth-Century Escape Tales* (2016) addresses the imagery of prison escapees in French literature as well as their changing social implications. Among all the diverse approaches to the topic of confinement, I choose to focus on the narration of carceral spaces in eighteenth-century English novels, scrutinising Pamela's letters about her domestic confinement in *Pamela* as well as Arabella's allusions to romantic prisons in *The Female Quixote*, the almost analogical portrayal of Newgate and England in *Moll Flanders* as well as the seemingly absent prisons and nations in *Pride and Prejudice*. Through an analysis of nation- and prison-related tropes, I examine the political, economic, legal and cultural patterns that those national and carceral spaces reflect, incorporate or reconstruct.

Although efforts have been made to further divide prison research in narrative studies into separate trends, the diverse topics of previous publications – from law to gender and so on – are actually closely intertwined with each other. In his review of prison studies, Alber notices a shift of focus from “the dialectical relationship between physical incarceration and mental flight” to the connection of “narrative structures [...] to structural attributes of the penitentiary and/or the idea of panoptic vision” (9). Alber's references to prison structures in experience and prison structures in narration indicate the prevalence of carceral elements in both thematic and narrative dimensions of literary works, thus underlining the interactions between forms on diverse levels and in diverse realms. Ironically, the formal encounters between thematic events and narrative techniques, as well as between social arrangements and artistic effects, also blur the boundary between Alber's two research focuses, urging scholars to address all different forms with equal attention, hence the increasing popularity of Caroline Levine's new formalist approach. As to the representations of crime in literature, another distinction is made by Gladfelder between research on “the institutions of law” and that on “the experience of the outlaw,” namely between critical examinations of carceral systems that exercise control and those of individual prisoners who suffer in isolation (8). However, since any delineation of individual lives inevitably comments on the institutional organisation of the prison, while discussions about prison designs are more or less based on empirical experiments, no research

on “the outlaw” can completely avoid the mention of “law” or vice versa. The discrepancy between the individual and the system leads to the question of gender difference. Although I agree with Alber that stories of women’s imprisonment often “focus on the exploitation of women by the patriarchal system,” I am not convinced that “they require a different analytical framework” that separates them from male prisoners (9).⁷ Since men from different classes or women from different families also face vastly different challenges in their lives, characters with their unique social status, gender roles, family relationships and personality traits have to be analysed together with other characters if they are to be analysed at all. I will therefore juxtapose works written by and about both men and women, acknowledging both the distinctive predicament of women characters in a patriarchal regime and the common tropes that prevail in the representations of imprisonment.

Among the discussions of incarceration, the term prison is often figuratively used, referring both to the concrete building that confines criminals and to the abstract feeling of social or psychological constriction. Nina Auerbach’s collection of essays on women’s resistance, for example, is provocatively titled *Romantic Imprisonment* (1985), while Fredric Jameson names his critique of structuralism *The Prison-House of Language* (1972). Such figurative expressions also prevail in literary depictions of physical confinement or emotional suffocation, thus requiring an incorporation of metaphor theories into prison research. Departing from the traditional notion of metaphors as a product of aesthetic creativity, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s groundbreaking work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) emphasises the fundamentally metaphorical nature of language and thought, while the model of conceptual blending that Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner develop in *The Way We Think* (2002) offers a theoretical framework for the study of figurations in general. The contributions of cognitive linguistics to the understanding of metaphors have been intensely debated and gradually accepted by literary and cultural scholars, as can be seen in the edited volumes of *Metaphors*

⁷ The imprisonment of women has been a particularly popular research topic among scholars. Examples include Susan Dewey and Tonia St. Germain (2017), Linda Moore and Phil Scraton (2014), Andrea M. Leverentz (2014), Jill A. McCorkel (2013), Suvarna Cherukuri (2008), Candace Kruttschnitt and Rosemary Gartner (2005), Pat Carlen and Anne Worrall (2004), Barbara H. Zaitzow and Jim Thomas (2003), Sandy Cook and Susanne Davies (1999), etc. In her recent book about prison metaphors, Fludernik identifies “seven types of female imprisonment: (1) that of women who are actually incarcerated [...]; (2) confinement in the home or in domesticity [...]; (3) in marriage [...]; (4) hysteria or insanity as ‘typically female’ conditions; (5) the metaphorical imprisonment of women under social, patriarchal, and religious constraints [...]; (6) their confinement in femininity and the female body as such [...]; (7) women artists’ gender-related disadvantage” (2019: 532). In eighteenth-century novels, the literal and figurative confinement of women is represented through both common and unique tropes, drawing attention to various aspects of social stratification and patriarchal domination.

Shaping Culture and Theory (2009) and *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory* (2011). Among the various introductions to metaphor studies written by David Punter (2007), Zoltán Kövecses (2010), L. David Ritchie (2013) and Denis Donoghue (2014), all under the title of *Metaphor*, Raymond W. Gibbs lists “neural, linguistic, psychological, and cultural forces” in the formations and functions of metaphors, stressing the inevitable interdisciplinarity of the topic (2008: 5). Similarly, Beate Hampe proposes “to bridge the cognition-discourse divide” between the two major theoretical trends in metaphor research that explore, respectively, the questions of “what metaphor *is*” and “what it *does*” (2017: 4). Focused on the cognitive trend, Kövecses’s 2020 book summarises the current achievements of conceptual metaphor theories and raises thirteen questions that still require further clarification. Despite all the imperfections of conceptual metaphor theories, they offer theoretical terms that are both broad enough to cover the major components of figurative representations and practical enough to facilitate a fruitful discussion of figurative implications. Drawing on those cognitive studies, Monika Fludernik’s comprehensive survey of prison metaphors explicates the mutual projection between prisons and prison-related concepts from the world and the cage to home, love and even life (1999; 2004; 2005; 2009; 2017; 2019). If David Herman theorises the cognitive practice of “mapping words onto worlds” in the act of reading, conceptual metaphor theorists investigate the cognitive mapping of concepts in figurative language and thought (71). Inspired by the model of conceptual blending, I examine how the forms of prisons, nations and narration interact with each other in the various tropes of eighteenth-century English novels – in other words, how the concepts of the womb, the cage, the prison, the nation and the narrative structure blend together into a dynamic network of figurations.

In my study of prose fiction, the figurative depictions of carceral spaces inside and outside the actual prison require a broad definition of imprisonment, which should encompass both the confinement of criminal offenders and the predicament of social deviants. Based on the circumstances of “imprisonment in a state-run facility (following legal arrest),” Fludernik defines incarceration as “a combination of the four factors: restraint of movement, confinement/containment, loss of autonomy, and coercion” (2019: 5, 9). This definition can be applied to both literal and figurative prisons: while in a literal prison setting those four factors indicate the use of heavy fetters, the image of locked doors, the governance by prison authorities and the coercive implementation of their rules, in a figurative prison these hallmarks may refer to the figurative prisoners’ inability to act, move or speak according to their free will because of the constrictive norms of their physical and social environment, be it the house, the community or life in general (Fludernik 2019: 5–11). In a literal or figurative prison, the

material circumstances of fetters and doors, together with the cultural practices of punishment and normalisation, draw attention to the diverse dimensions of its spaces. Referring again to Lefebvre's three layers of space, I consider prison spaces as comprising the physical space of prison cells, the idealistic space of prison designs and the symbolic space in which prisoners live. This broad conceptualisation of incarceration inevitably recalls the equally elusive notion of deviance, since the sense of restriction often results from a wish to deviate from dominant social norms. According to Erich Goode,

Sociologists define "deviant" behavior or "deviance" as *acts, beliefs, and characteristics that violate major social norms and attract, or are likely to attract, condemnation, stigma, social isolation, censure, and/or punishment by relevant audiences [...]*. Again, what is considered deviant varies from one audience, social circle, or collectivity to another. (4)⁸

In other words, deviance refers to the physical, verbal or mental violations of legal, moral or customary standards, frequently inducing a public or private punishment of the deviant in the form of literal (penal institutions) or figurative ("*social isolation*" and "*censure*") confinement. Because the perception of what is deviant easily changes over time or across space, deviant behaviour, along with the imprisonment it causes, has to be analysed together with the narrative constructions of social norms in the storyworlds of the specific novels. By analysing both the literal incarceration of criminal deviants and the figurative incarceration of social deviants, I will examine which characteristics of imprisonment are highlighted in the selected novels, through which narrative strategies and to what narrative effects. In the blending of social, spatial and narrative forms, the absolutist or contractual spaces of carceral England are represented through the various techniques of (auto)biographical or epistolary narration.

⁸ The sociological questions of how social norms are formed, when these norms change, why certain violations of these norms escape punishment and how deviant behaviour is divided into different categories from different perspectives are all very important topics for research, but they are beyond the scope of this study.

1.2 England in Prison Tropes: Research Aims and Chapter Structure

Departing from existing scholarship, I argue that the novelistic delineations of literal or figurative prisons, with their practices of random transformation or mutual observation, resonate with the absolutist or contractual spaces of the English nation. By depicting womb-like and cage-like prison-nation tropes through such narrative forms as fictional (auto)biography and epistolary writing, English novels in the long eighteenth century, from Defoe's *Moll Flanders* to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, bring about highly dynamic formal encounters between carceral arrangements, national structures and narrative strategies.

The analytical part of this dissertation is divided into two main chapters, exploring in each chapter one specific type of carceral and national spaces unfolded through related narrative strategies. The study of each novel, further divided into three subsections, focuses on three main topics – the prison-like nation trope, the effects of this trope and the narrative forms that resonate with this trope – whereas the chapter conclusions highlight the interactions between the womb and cage tropes in carceral, national and narrative forms. The third chapter examines how transformative adventures in womb-like prisons and nations are represented through the (auto)biographical forms of Defoe's and Lennox's works. While *Moll Flanders* combines the literary traditions of spiritual autobiography and criminal biography in its portrayal of a thief-turned-gentlewoman, *The Female Quixote* centres on Arabella's strenuous efforts to get her own romantic biography written. While prisoners in *Moll Flanders* acquire new social status by physically crossing the borders of Newgate and Newgate-like England, thus destabilising the absolute hierarchy of capriciously governed spaces, romance readers in *The Female Quixote* escape from Lennox's storyworld of contractual, patriarchal England by adventuring into the romantic storyworld of foreign monarchs and thus fictionally crossing the national boundaries within which they are physically confined. During its encounters with womb-like prisons, the English nation is depicted as either absolutist or contractual, though always patriarchal, with its inhabitants randomly undergoing death- or rebirth-like changes in the physical or fictional act of travelling. The fourth chapter analyses how the (re)writing and (re)reading of letters in Richardson's and Austen's novels construct a cage-like national panopticon of mutual observation. While Pamela refers to the trope of the cage herself in her depiction of her domestic prisons, genteel characters in *Pride and Prejudice* are mostly confined within their local communities because of infrastructural, financial and social restrictions. As domestic, local and national structures blend with each other in these two novels, diligent observers impose constrictive norms on each other as well as on themselves in the contractual spaces of panoptic England. This disciplinary practice of mutual reformation

and self-supervision, further encouraged by the literary activity of epistolary exchanges, brings about a normalising reconstruction of English national spaces.

Through a careful selection of primary texts, I depart from chronological approaches to literary and cultural history by recognising similarities between novels which are traditionally classified into different periods and thus pairing Defoe with Lennox and Richardson with Austen. Although my chapter structure is mainly built on a juxtaposition of carceral forms and narrative forms, it does not indicate any fixed connection between these formal elements. A biography, for example, can also convey a sense of surveillance by drawing attention to the meticulous practices of observation and documentation, while epistolary exchanges between communal members may describe the capricious behaviour of their unchallengeable authorities. Boundary-crossing adventures can be found in Sally Godfrey's transatlantic voyage in *Pamela*, just as disciplinary reconstructions of reality are evident in Arabella's final denunciation of romances. Furthermore, overlaps exist between the womb-like and cage-like carceral spaces, since prisoners in a cage might shift between the roles of a docile bird and a wild beast, thus using the cage as a womb for their sudden metamorphoses (Fludernik 2019: 302).⁹ Highly aware that prison reforms or political reforms have never ended and that diverse prison models have coexisted in all stages of human civilisations, I by no means suggest any chronological development in the history of penal institutions, national regimes or English literature. Rather, I examine, on both the thematic and narrative levels, the functions of two influential types of carceral spaces frequently found in the figurative representations of prison-like nations, namely the capriciously regulated spaces of random transformation and the disciplinarily normalised spaces of mutual observation. While any definitive categorisation or summarisation of carceral tropes or novelistic forms is not only unachievable but also unnecessary, an analysis of their dynamic interactions, with each other as well as with other related spaces, tropes and narrative strategies, helps shed light on eighteenth-century narrative constructions of the prison-like English nation.

One question that I constantly face during my research is how to distinguish narrative representations of the national from those of the regional and the international. My answer is that regional, national and international elements often intermingle with and impact each other in the storyworlds of eighteenth-century novels, making it very difficult to establish any clear boundary between such fluid spheres. In my study of prison-nation tropes, I concentrate on issues that have distinctly national implications, from the journey between different countries

⁹ These carceral tropes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.3.

to the presence of militia officers. Although these issues might also reveal the organisation of local communities or a change in colonial policies, their participation in the construction of English national and carceral spaces remains my primary focus. In this study of national spaces, I avoid the highly fluid concept of national identity not only because this concept would evoke (unnecessarily for the current purpose) controversial discussions about the psychological and ideological factors in the process of identity formation, but also because the lens of space offers a more interesting glimpse into the interactions between the nation, the prison and the narration. I therefore focus on the figurative representations of national spaces instead of how the characters identify themselves as English or non-English based on their ethnic, religious, political or cultural backgrounds. In the analysis of *The Female Quixote*, for example, Arabella's contradictory perception of herself as both a heroine of French romances and an heiress in mid-eighteenth-century England is interpreted as her fictional travelling between the determinedly foreign storyworld she constructs based on her romance reading and the determinedly English storyworld that Lennox's readers construct based on the quixotic novel. The irrelevance of identity issues to my current study has also induced me to avoid colonial literature in my selection of primary texts. Since numerous insightful studies have already been conducted on the complicated relationships between the British Empire and its overseas colonies, and since the works of authors living outside England require a different approach to the questions of nation formation and national governance, I restrict my attention to novelists who write about womb-like prisons, cage-like prisons and prison-like nations inside the English borders.

Chapter 2 Theorising the Representations of Prison-Like England in Narrative Fiction

Based on previous studies of prison histories, national regimes and prison metaphors, I take a new formalist approach to the interactions between carceral, national and narrative forms in novels of the long eighteenth century. By representing domestically structured and capriciously organised carceral spaces, womb-like prison tropes underline the unsystematic governance of the English nation by an absolutist social order, the crossing of whose boundaries induce a random transformation in the traveller's social standing. In contrast, cage-like prison tropes, evocative of panoptic spaces in which the perpetual functioning of disciplinary surveillance brings about a meticulously planned reformation of individual criminals, highlight the normalising effects of social decorum in those national spaces whose contractual inhabitants constantly observe each other. Through a critical application of the conceptual blending theory, I explore the blending between carceral and national structures as well as between literary and social practices in the fictional portrayal of prison-like England. As the various forms of literary tropes, social arrangements and narrative strategies are analysed on an equal basis, the concepts of the womb, the cage, the prison, the nation and the narration together construct a dynamic network of figurative representations.

2.1 Prison Reforms: Random Transformation and Mutual Observation

Although the fictional representations of prison spaces do not always correspond with the historical realities of their contemporary age, it cannot be denied that literary imaginations are often influenced by existing prison structures as they in turn influence the future constructions of penal institutions. While traditional prison studies tend to divide prison designs into old and new prisons, with the former domestically arranged under the absolute authority of capricious jailors and the latter systematically organised under the normalising power of disciplinary surveillance, the continuity in prison history and the disparity between different regions indicate that such a clear distinction can only exist in theory. Taking into account the diversity of carceral arrangements before and during the long eighteenth century, I regard what scholars have summarised as the two opposite effects of imprisonment – random transformation and mutual observation – as two features of carceral experiences that are often figuratively represented in parallel with other features.

Scholarship on the history of the English prison often distinguishes old prisons built before the Penitentiary Act of 1779 from new penitentiaries designed by reformers after, describing the former as domestically structured societies. In his description of some old debtors' prisons, the famous prison visitor John Howard claims to "have seen chair-makers,

shoe-makers, &c. employed in their several trades; preserving their habit of industry; contributing to the support of their families; and lightening the burthen that by their imprisonment falls on the respective parishes” (47). Despite their incarceration, these prisoners could not only meet their customers and families on a daily basis, but also exert an impact on the economic well-being of the surrounding neighbourhoods, participating in the running of the parish in a way that was not fundamentally different from a free man’s role in his domestic, local as well as national surroundings. This close contact with the external society was not a special privilege of incarcerated debtors only. According to Ignatieff, although there were regulations in eighteenth-century prisons about who should wear chains, receive visitors or live outside the prison, many jailers chose not to distinguish criminals, debtors and minor offenders from each other (30–31). Instead, they determined what privileges a certain prisoner could or could not enjoy on an entirely economic basis, “exact[ing] fees for putting prisoners in irons, for taking them off, for ‘first locking up,’ for copies of all legal papers from court, for privileges such as a featherbed in place of boards or the cold stone floor, and finally for discharge upon acquittal or termination of sentence” (Ignatieff 36). In other words, prison authorities in eighteenth-century England were often preoccupied with how to profit financially from the prisoners’ daily needs rather than how to punish their deviant behaviour. Commenting on the commercial transactions between the jailer and the prisoner, Bender compares the former to “a lord of the manor collecting rents from tenants” in a “domestically organized” space (14, 13). Moving freely among people of diverse professions and purchasing various services regardless of the severity of their crimes, most eighteenth-century prisoners stayed in close contact with their family, their parish and their nation at large.

In this network of domestic, economic and political factors, the loosely regulated life that prisoners enjoyed was based on their absolute submission to the jailers’ capricious authority. On the one hand, the staff of old prisons were highly influential in the carceral spaces, selling to or withholding from prisoners almost all the necessities of everyday life according to their own personal preferences. Ignatieff describes the pre-penitentiary carceral structure as “arbitrary, personal, and capricious” because “[t]he authority of the keeper was exercised largely without supervision or scrutiny from the outside,” with “[t]he hours of rising and locking up, the program of work, the ironing and punishment of prisoners, as well as the cleansing of the prison [...] all left to the discretion of the keepers and their servants” (35–36). As a result, the operation of the prison, from time arrangement to punitive practices, was largely controlled by the jailers’ uncontrolled caprice, leaving its prisoners extremely vulnerable to the random decisions of others. On the other hand, however, Ignatieff also points out that, because

of the shortage of keepers and turnkeys, they “had to share power, or at least reach an accommodation, with various inmate communities” (38). Under no obligation to “patrol the corridors, supervise the day yards, inspect the sleeping rooms, or march the felons about to prayers or exercise,” most jailers were content with their economic profits and allowed an “[i]nternal order” to be “enforced chiefly by the inmate subcultures themselves” (Ignatieff 38–39). The jailers’ indifference to the inmates’ deviant conduct in corridors or yards, together with a blatant inattention to their spiritual or physical conditions, indicates that inmates in old prisons could live an unregulated life as long as they obeyed the basic rules of spatial, temporal and economic restrictions. Since these prisoners obtained the opportunity to act freely in an unscrutinised space by paying due respect to the authorities, Bender views them as “a largely unsupervised population within the guarded boundaries,” describing the prison that confined them as “[s]tructurally articulate, yet unpenetrated by systematic governance or precisely formulated rules” (19, 33). In this unsystematically governed carceral structure, the unchecked continuity of the prisoners’ deviant behaviour despite the absolute power of capricious jailers mirrored the random change of the prisoners’ fate as they stepped into or departed from the prison.

In addition to the prisoners’ unpunished deviance within the prison spaces, their act of crossing the prison boundaries also initiated a random transformation in their social status without necessarily correcting their criminal tendencies. Apart from economic concerns, the loose governance of traditional prisons was also due to the role of confinement as lodging rather than punishment in the early modern punitive system. Having investigated the historical composition of prisoners, Ignatieff concludes that “the prison before 1775 was more a place of confinement for debtors and those passing through the mills of justice than a place of punishment” (28). Howard also explains that prisons were “designed [...] for the *safe custody* of the accused to the time of trial; and of convicts till a legal sentence be executed upon them” (38). When the accused or the convicts left the prison, therefore, they headed either for the court, where they would be pronounced innocent or guilty, or for the gallows, where they would be hanged or saved at the last moment. Emphasising the caprice of the judicial procedure, Ignatieff claims that, despite the seeming severity of the “Bloody Code,” “the application of penalties was flexible indeed, allowing a large measure of play for judicial discretion, executive clemency in response to appeals for mercy, or exemplary displays of terror” (17). Going one step further, Bender argues that

Randomness was one of the rules in the old prisons: the squalor, the disease, the possibility of escape, the periodic jail deliveries voted by Parliament; the chance that

your creditors might relent, the courts miscarry, the judges commute death to transportation, your patrons gain a reprieve, your friends revive your corpse after hanging. (27)

If the prisoners' entrance into the prison could be a journey from life to death because of the jailers' random decisions regarding the infrequency of cleaning or the high price of food, political, judicial, social, familial and personal issues altogether determined if the prisoners' exit from the prison led them to a shameful execution or a second chance. In the latter case, the leniency of the court or the support from their friends offered the prisoners the opportunity of a new life after their brush with death. This sudden change in their living conditions signified a transformation more in the prisoners' social status than in their moral codes, however. As Bender puts it, "liminality does not posit change in personality but change in status; it fosters the outlook appropriate to a new social standing" (27). The random management of old prisons echoed the random transformation of their prisoners, who remained disturbingly deviant within the carceral boundaries and experienced social metamorphoses upon their sudden entrance or departure.

In sharp contrast to the commerce and caprice of traditional carceral spaces, the penitentiary designs that eighteenth-century prison reformers proposed prioritised solitary incarceration, individual reformation and disciplinary observation. In his proposal for a new prison structure, Howard argues that criminals should be arranged to sleep in single cells because "[s]olitude and silence are favourable to reflection; and may possibly lead them to repentance" (43). Examining the penitentiary reformers' enthusiastic discussions on how to bring about the inmates' repentance through a manipulation of their prison experiences, Bender suggests that in the eighteenth century, incarceration gradually became a part of punishment rather than a preparation for it: "Punishment – previously the simple binary pronouncement 'innocent/guilty,' followed by its consequence 'life/death' – was reformed into a programmatic course of events with the end of shaping personality according to controlled principles" (35). When prisons were designed not only to accommodate the inmates but also to reshape them, this radical change in the aim of confinement also changed the entire organisation of penal institutions, with the reformed carceral spaces "contrived as the physical setting [...] of criminal reformation" (Bender 23). A well-known product of the penitentiary reform is the Gloucester Prison, built by George Onesiphorus Paul several years after the Penitentiary Act. Delving into Paul's experimental implementation of the penitentiary design, Ignatieff uses its "medical rituals" to demonstrate how the reformation of the inmates' identity was achieved through a careful control of the minutest details:

On entry, convicts at Gloucester were stripped naked, probed and examined by a doctor, and then bathed, shaved, and uniformed. This purification rite cleansed them of vermin and filth, but it also stripped them of those marks of identity that defined them as persons. Offenders' individualities were recast in the ghostly sameness of cropped hair and institutional clothing. (101)

By forcing the newcomers to go through the same ritual, wear the same uniforms and adopt the same clean appearance, the disciplines of the penitentiary endeavoured to reform the prisoners through a reformation of their outward looks and personal habits. In contrast to old prisoners' close contact with the surrounding society, inmates at Gloucester, confined in their solitary cells both by day and by night, were only allowed to engage in physical exercise once every day under the supervision of the staff and receive visits from their families once every half a year (Ignatieff 102). The separation of the criminals from their social circles, together with the imposition of a rigid schedule on their everyday life, constituted a crucial part of their reformation. While the practice of solitary imprisonment separated the inmates from the possibly deviant opinions of their families or friends, the disciplinary control of their appearance and behaviour reshaped them into law-abiding citizens by erasing their own deviant tendencies.

Another example of disciplinary surveillance can be found in Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, a carceral model that exerts a reformatory impact on both its prisoners and its prison staff. With its circular structure, separate cells and central tower, the panopticon illustrates visually how the constant presence of the inspector's gaze controls the prisoners' behaviour. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explicates how the panoptic structure produces bodies of "docility-utility" through "the gentle efficiency of total surveillance" (1979: 137, 249). According to Bentham, "the *centrality* of the inspector's situation" in the panopticon and his capability of "*seeing without being seen*" create an illusion of his "*apparent omnipresence*" (43, 45). Such an illusion leaves the prisoners in "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power," since the perpetually observed criminals gradually internalise the disciplinary rules that are imposed on them (Foucault 1979: 201). The inmates in the cells are not the only ones affected by the reformatory power of continuous observation, however. As Foucault has demonstrated, the staff members of the panopticon work under the observation of the central inspector, whose work is in turn scrutinised by random visitors from outside (1979: 204–207). As individuals in the panopticon, constantly supervised by others, also begin to supervise each other and eventually become their own supervisors, Bentham answers "the old question of who guards the guards" with a model of

“[o]mnipresent inspection, of everyone, by everyone” (Ignatieff 78). Bentham’s wish to discipline both the prisoners and the prison staff is by no means an exception in penitentiary reform; many other reformers have also recognised the necessity of training the jailers. As Ignatieff notes, “[h]alf of the new rules that [Howard] proposed were directed against trafficking, verbal abuse, fee taking, or physical acts of cruelty by staff. They also laid out a sequence of custodial tasks, inspection tours, roll calls, bed checks, and night patrols” (77). Convinced that “discipline is best exercised by those who already bear its brand,” George Onesiphorus Paul even attempted to employ military officers who were “capable of assuming a frigidly self-controlled institutional demeanor” (Ignatieff 104). As the disciplinary reformation of the prisoners developed into the disciplinary reformation of the prison staff and thus extended beyond the carceral boundaries, the penitentiary structure came to embody not only the reformers’ wish to reeducate the deviants, but also the general functioning of the society itself.

The significance of Bentham’s design in the history of penitentiary reform or in the representations of prison experiences is undeniable despite his failure to actualise his panopticon dream. Because the panopticon model is very seldom put into reality, scholars like Fludernik have proposed a “downgrading of the panopticon as the key image for the prison and of surveillance as the most basic property of the penitentiary” (2019: 17). But the absence of precisely panoptic buildings in the architectural history of imprisonment does not necessarily negate the influence of Bentham’s thoughts on prison administrators. Repeatedly presented to powerful politicians, fiercely debated, often rejected but frequently mentioned, the panopticon project was deeply embedded in the political, legal and penal development of the late eighteenth century. When the impact of Enlightenment thinking on Bentham and his successive impact on English political as well as penal systems are all taken into consideration, it cannot be surprising that Foucault identifies the panopticon as “the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form” rather than merely “a dream building” (1979: 205). Similarly, Ignatieff argues that although the original Benthamite model is economically motivated and contractually run, “the affinities between the penitentiaries and the Panopticon are more important than their differences,” with the latter serving as “a symbolic caricature of the characteristic features of disciplinary thinking” (113). As an idealised structure of disciplinary surveillance, the panopticon model thus offers an epitomic picture of power relationships in the spaces of actual penitentiaries as well as penitentiary-like societies.

Although this concise but by no means comprehensive overview of eighteenth-century prison reform seems to indicate an abrupt change in prison structures, carceral history is too

complicated to be summarised by a linear account. Research in penalty has repeatedly shown that elements of the penitentiary already prevailed in Western carceral institutions long before the Penitentiary Act. Examining the various punitive methods of early modern Europe, Pieter Spierenburg claims that “far from representing a radical change in the penal system, the proliferation of penitentiaries in Europe after 1800 was the product of gradual developments during the preceding centuries” (64). More specifically, Ignatieff regards “the Elizabethan bridewell or house of correction” as the “earliest forerunner of the penitentiary” because its “use of confinement as a coercive education” already entailed “the idea of recasting the character of the deviant by means of discipline” (11). On the other hand, Fludernik points out that “the old prison continued to exist well into the middle of the nineteenth century” in spite of the arduous work of penitentiary reformers (2019: 13). Despite the obvious differences between the prisons of the mid-eighteenth century and those built one hundred years later, Randall McGowen warns that “focusing too insistently on this vast transformation will only produce reductionist explanations of penal reform” (79). Even Foucault himself, the scholar who has probably contributed the most to the popularisation of the panoptic concept, acknowledges that “[p]rison ‘reform’ is virtually contemporary with the prison itself” (1979: 234). Because the structures and functions of prison spaces have never stopped changing from the medieval era to the modern times, and because there are significant differences between the prisons of different regions, I refrain from any chronological categorisation of prison designs. Instead, the features of traditional eighteenth-century prisons that Howard and others have documented – domestic structures, capricious absolutism and random transformation – and the notions that the penitentiary reformers have fervently advocated – disciplinary supervision, individual reformation and mutual observation – are regarded as two distinct but interwoven groups of carceral elements, each of which may be found in any specific prison built before or after the 1770s.

2.2 Prison-Like England: Absolute Monarchy and Contractual Governance

In parallel with the deceptive account of penal reform from old prisons to new penitentiaries, previous scholarship in political history tells a similarly phrased story about the reform of the English national regime from absolute monarchy to contractual governance. Almost counterintuitively, the English nation, with all its emphasis on liberty in the age of Enlightenment, is frequently juxtaposed with the confining spaces of the English prison in the storyworlds of eighteenth-century novels. As the arrangements of national and penal institutions reflect and impact each other, the nation and the prison blend together in the figurative representations of constantly changing power structures.

The classical approach to the modernisation of the English nation describes a fundamental reform in its political principles from the tyrannical doctrine of royal absolutism to the contract theory of civil rights. According to Peter DeGabriele,

one of the most prominent ways in which to think of eighteenth-century political culture, especially in the British context, is as the historical moment at which the authoritative reason characteristic of sovereign power began to be replaced by the communication between rational individuals interacting in the public sphere. (xvii)

Built on Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere, this interpretation of the Enlightenment era highlights the decline of the monarchical authority, the emergence of the bourgeois individual as well as the role that John Locke and his contract theory played in the political reformation of the English regime (DeGabriele xxvi). Within this scholarly tradition, McKeon elaborates in *The Secret History of Domesticity* "the devolution or downward mobility of absolutism [...] in the complex historical relationship between royal absolutism and the institution of absolute private property," thus recognising a gradual transformation of the English nation from a state which upheld the power of the king to one that protected the rights of its citizens (2005: 16). In other words, the shift in eighteenth-century English politics signals a shift from the domestically structured domination by the English monarchs to the contractually defined rights of the English people.

Frequently drawing upon domestic relations to justify itself, the traditional system of royal absolutism juxtaposed the rightful rule of monarchs or aristocrats with that of patriarchs. According to McKeon, the royalist stance in seventeenth-century England "entailed an analogy between the state and the family that legitimated each institution by associating it with the 'naturalness' of the other," thus "enjoin[ing] upon subjects a subordination to the magistrate analogous to that of family members to the male head of the household" (2005: 11). This juxtaposition of national governance, aristocratic rule and domestic regulation – or what

McKeon calls “royal absolutism” and “patriarchalist absolutism” – is prevalent in the writings of Restoration politicians (2005: 16, 15). In his infamous defence of absolute monarchy, published in 1680 and revealingly titled *Patriarcha*, Robert Filmer connects “the Natural Rights of a Father with those of a King”: “as the Father over one Family, so the King as Father over many Families extends his care to preserve, feed, cloth, instruct and defend the whole Commonwealth” (24). In Filmer’s opinion, therefore, the monarch is naturally entitled to exercise absolute power over his country just as the patriarch is naturally authorised to control the fate of his supposedly inferior family members. Put into practice, such absolutist doctrines that compare kingship to fatherhood induced royalists to interpret the events of the English nation as struggles in the domestic sphere. As McKeon sketches out,

the history of the royal house of Stuart must have appeared to many a century-long allegory of family crisis: the desertion and murder of the husband-father, Charles I; the widowhood of the wife-mother, England; the belated return of the eldest son, Charles II; the rivalry of fatally defective heirs (the imperious younger son, the Duke of York; his bastard nephew, the Duke of Monmouth); the futile effort to extend the line through James II; the anomalous rule of the mother, Anne; and the conveyance of the estate to Hanoverian interlopers. (2005: 113–114)

As national and domestic issues became analogous to each other, royalist and paternalist ideologies combined two different power relationships into one absolutist hierarchical system. By juxtaposing the sovereign power of English monarchs with the patriarchal power of English men, Filmer and his royalist supporters constructed a national mechanism in which the king of a nation, the lord of an estate and the father of a family exercise analogous authority over their own dominions.

Fiercely criticised by Enlightenment thinkers like Locke, Filmer’s biblical justification of the patriarchal king’s divine power gradually gave way to discussions about the rights and duties of individual subjects. The modernisation of the English national mechanism in both political and nonpolitical domains is summarised by what McKeon terms the “downward mobility of absolutism, which begins (speaking schematically, not chronologically) with the separation out of state from civil society and which transports ‘public’ authority from greater to lesser spheres: paradigmatically, from the political to the economic, from the economic to the domestic, from the domestic to the female, the subjective, and the sexual” (2005: 323). According to McKeon, therefore, the subjects of eighteenth-century England were increasingly capable of defending their political voices, proprietary rights, marriage choices and personal identities from royal or aristocratic interventions, while more and more untitled politicians

found a way to participate in the governance of the English nation. The power of the subjects to shape the policies of their nation is supported by Locke's contract theory, which explicates how "individuals agree to relinquish some of the liberties enjoyed in the state of nature in order to secure and preserve their properties" (McKeon 2005: 12). Having disputed Filmer's claim that the biblical Adam enjoys divinely-granted patriarchal authority over mankind, Locke argues in his *Two Treatises of Government* that "all men are naturally in [...] a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions [...] within the bounds of the law of nature" (101). Convinced of the equality of mankind in front of the law, Locke considers the government as a product of consent: "The natural liberty of man is to [...] be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it" (109–110). This advocacy of "natural liberty" and contractual governance defies the traditional notion of absolute monarchy, foreshadowing the gradual democratisation of the English nation in the following centuries. As McKeon puts it, the increasingly wide reception of Locke's philosophy during the age of Enlightenment paralleled the growing popularity of "collective disembodiment or detachment, a model of political authority diametrically opposed to the principles of personal embodiment that [...] characterize both the royal doctrine of the king's two bodies and the unmediated reciprocity of lordship and service in feudal sociopolitical relations" (2005: 12). As the royalist belief in the king's two bodies was gradually replaced by the contractual existence of individual bodies, the personal bonds between kings and subjects or between lords and tenants slowly lost their strength in the abstract transfer of power from the individual to the state. Situated in an era when the emphasis on rationality undermined the attention to divinity, the spaces of eighteenth-century England were repeatedly reshaped by conflictive notions about national governance.

Any attempt to reduce history to a progressive model would inevitably turn out to be futile, however: just as no sudden rupture can be discerned in the architectural history of English prisons, the English nation has experienced no abrupt metamorphosis despite all the political and social reforms inside and outside Parliament. As J. G. A. Pocock points out, political debates before and after the Glorious Revolution often opted to reference not contemporary theory but English history, with "the ancient constitution" recognised as "a conservative and legalist version of the contract, a sanction [...] by which the doctrines of election and deposition might be justified" (231). By "ranking 1688 with 1066, 1215 and 1628 in the list of dates on which the ancient and fundamental law had been solemnly reasserted by the nation," these writings demonstrate that "law and parliament [...] could be discovered early

in Saxon times and had survived the Conquest, and that certain principles of liberty, deriving from the Saxon forefathers, had animated the English in their resistance to absolute monarchy alike in the thirteenth century” (Pocock 232). The seventeenth-century attempts to prove the continuous presence of contractual principles in the history of the English nation are confirmed by Hastings’s twentieth-century conclusion that “England presents the prototype of both a nation and a nation-state [...] already in Saxon times by the end of the tenth century” (4–5). Such arguments suggest that the modern elements of nationhood from contractual equality to democratic participation were not completely absent in England before the English Civil Wars, recalling again Jensen’s rejection of “the idea of a watershed between premodern and modern forms of nation-building” (14). Looking in the opposite direction, DeGabriele perceives “a continuing concern for, and anxiety about, sovereign power in the eighteenth century,” an age “often associated with the rise of the liberal individual and with the triumph of the mercantile middle class” (xvii, xiv). According to Colley, although the notion of absolute monarchy was widely out of favour in eighteenth-century England, significant inequality still persisted between English people with and without land: “Denunciation of the landed classes as a discrete group, as distinct from assaults on an individual monarch, minister or party group, had appeared occasionally [...] in the 1760s and ‘70s. But only from the 1780s did this kind of criticism enter the mainstream of political discourse” (2003: 152). Unsurprisingly, the lingering power of kings, lords and squires, together with a persisting fascination with absolutist ideologies, defies any definitive account of the ‘birth’ of a modern nation-state. Since the impact of monarchical power and contract theory coexisted in eighteenth-century England, the various types of national regimes should be viewed as distinct but related components of a heterogeneous community rather than the two ends of a chronological development.

As a critical part of the political system and a crucial topic in many political debates, prisons have had a remarkable influence on the governance of the English nation. In the introduction to *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales*, Howard attributes his career as a prison reformer to his devotion to the English nation: “To the pursuit of it I was prompted by the sorrows of the sufferers, and love to my country. [...] The attention of Parliament to the subject led me to conclude that some additional labour would not be lost; and I extended my plan” (4). By incarcerating those criminal deviants who pose a threat to the stability of their society, prisons play such a central role in the legal and judicial domains that their inefficiency would inevitably affect the welfare of the entire nation. Focused on US and European captivity narratives of the long nineteenth century, Haslam and Wright’s collection explores “the ways in which captivity has aided the formation of both the modern nation state and its concomitant

subjectivities” (4). By concentrating on the issues of nationalism, citizenship and imperial expansion, however, their analysis of the nation-prison connection is largely guided by the modernist understanding of nationhood and thus mainly concerned with its political aspects. Heading in the opposite direction, Colley studies in *Captives* (2002) the writings of those Britons who experienced confinement outside Europe during the expansion of the British Empire and thus gives her attention primarily to historical events on the other continents rather than on the English island. In contrast, I concentrate on how narrative representations of incarceration resonate with both political and cultural elements of nationhood within the English nation and among the English people. Scholars in the field of prison studies have also recognised the links between the penal institutions and the national spaces in which they are located. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, for example, state that “to expose the fundamental norms of a society, often so fundamental as to remain hidden and unarticulated, it was useful to investigate the fate of those who openly violated the norms,” namely prisoners whose deviant conduct disrupted the smooth running of the national regime (viii). The close relationship between carceral structures and national mechanisms, widely discussed by researchers in both political and penal histories, is more methodically theorised by Foucault and Bender.

By associating old and new prison structures with traditional and modern national regimes, the arguments of Foucault and Bender, though not perfectly convincing in chronological terms, underline several hallmarks of carceral and national spaces that coexisted in eighteenth-century England. Through the example of Robert-François Damiens’s painful death, Foucault demonstrates how traditional public executions “give a spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance and excess,” symbolising “the physical strength of the sovereign beating down upon the body of his adversary and mastering it” (1979: 49). As Foucault points out, if the highly ritualised executions of rebellious criminals embody the monarch’s absolute authority over his subjects, the meticulously arranged disciplinary practices in modern penitentiaries epitomise the normalising effect of perpetual surveillance in a middle-class social order. Therefore, the shift in the penal system from the fearful spectacle of bodily torture to the effective reformation of deviant bodies corresponds to a shift in national governance from the doctrine of royal supremacy to the mutual supervision between individual (proto)citizens. Foucault’s juxtaposition of national and carceral systems is further supported by historical research in prison history. McGowen, for instance, points out that “in the drama of the gallows [...] secular authority invoked the image of divine sanction to perfect human justice” (80), while Spierenburg describes public executions as “a theater of righteousness and repentance”

that “bolstered the power of monarchs and magistrates and made it concretely visible” (55). Describing the prison as “a state within a state,” Ignatieff reveals how “Whig radicals [...] integrated prison reform into a general attack on the administrative and political structure of the *ancien regime*” (35, 63). On the one hand, Filmer’s analogy of national and familial relationships recalls the domestically arranged prisons prevalent in the early modern era and beyond. On the other hand, Locke evokes the panoptic practice of mutual observation by claiming that the basic “right of punishing is in every body” when the natural law is violated (104), and that “if he that judges, judges amiss in his own, or any other case,” “the rest of mankind” can also punish him (106). Just as the (proto)citizens of a contractual nation pass judgment on the government through their granting or withdrawal of consent, the obedience or disobedience of the prisoners in a panoptic architecture demonstrates the success or failure of the jailers’ work. The equal rights of individual citizens in a Lockean society therefore mirror the mutual supervision that inmates and jailers impose on each other in a panopticon. Because of their dependence on and similarity to each other, the carceral structures of traditional or panoptic prisons make critical comments on the national spaces of eighteenth-century England.

This connection between prison reform and national reform is also noticed by Bender, who associates old and new carceral systems respectively with the aristocratic and bourgeois social order. According to Bender, the capriciously organised spaces of old prisons embodied the aristocrats’ “traditional paternalistic control over the lower social orders,” allowing “classless liberty” within their boundaries in exchange for the absoluteness of their superiority (28). In other words, just as the order of royal absolutism juxtaposed the family with the state, thus imposing a similar power structure upon the relationships between a king and his subjects, a lord and his tenants as well as a father and his children, the traditional carceral system was also domestically arranged, with the jailer resembling the image of a king or a lord, the prison spaces resembling his territory and the prisoners his subjects. In contrast, the penitentiary system of disciplinary reformation “explicitly reached toward all three goals, maintenance of order within a largely urban labor force, salvation of the soul, and rationalization of personality,” thus primarily benefiting the so-called middle class, “those small property holders, businessmen, merchants, and professionals who lived on the whole outside the realm of values, tacitly shared by patrician and plebeian alike” (Bender 31). As the rule by the aristocracy gave way to the control of the labour force, the omnipresent gaze in the penitentiary came to symbolise the omnipresence of disciplinary norms in the everyday life of the English middle class. Since, as I have repeatedly pointed out, such a neat picture of chronological progress does not always hold water, the theories of Foucault and Bender should be read not as attempts

to trace the historical development of penal or national mechanisms but as historically based research on the important elements that many carceral and national spaces share: random transformation under absolute authority in a domestic structure and disciplinary reformation through the constant functioning of mutual supervision.

2.3 Prison Tropes: The Blending of the Womb, the Cage, the Prison and the Nation

If the random transformations of boundary-crossing travellers under absolute authority evoke the figurative concept of the motherly womb, the disciplinary practices of mutual observation in contractually governed societies recall the panoptic functions of a transparent cage. Among the tropes of womb-like prisons, cage-like prisons and prison-like nations, the concepts of rebirth, death, mutual gaze, confinement and community blend into a highly dynamic figurative network that prevails in the fictional representations of carceral and national spaces.

Although penal institutions tend to be associated with oppression and misery in real-life situations, prison tropes, tempered by the creative imagination of literary works, do not necessarily convey negative images of confinement. In his study of French Romanticism, Brombert notes that “[t]he place of enclosure and suffering is also conceived of as the protected and protective space, the locus of reverie and freedom” (5). Caleb Smith also identifies in literary representations of the American prisoner “two starkly opposed figures: a reflecting, self-governing soul and a cadaverous, dehumanized body,” thus discerning both positive and negative attitudes towards the practices of incarceration (6). Contrary to Fludernik’s conclusion that “the majority of literal and metaphorical prison scenarios in literature do not allow for much hope” and that what little hope they allow for “often centres on life after death,” the novels that are examined in the following chapters offer numerous instances of the prisoners’ hope – not only for upward social mobility through prison escape but also for greater social influence within carceral boundaries (2019: 11, 10). Just as Moll Flanders foresees in Newgate her prosperous life on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Pamela relies on the panoptic space of Mr B’s houses to exercise her disciplinary power. Building her arguments on an analysis of fictional as well as nonfictional texts, Duncan situates “the affirmative images of prison” in the broader context of “cultural archetypes (such as the dialectically related polarities of death and rebirth, suffering and redemption)” (3). The highly figurative language that this scholar in criminal and juvenile law uses in her interdisciplinary study of prison narratives anticipates the bold statement that Fludernik and Olson make in their collaborative introduction to *In the Grip of the Law*: “Ultimately, imprisonment is always at least partly metaphorical since the very act of shutting somebody up or away participates in the concept of the container (IN/OUT) as extensively described in recent metaphor theory” (xxx). Focused on figurative representations of prison spaces in eighteenth-century novels, I pay particular attention to two carceral tropes that feature prominently in the depictions of the English nation: the womb-like prison and the cage-like prison.

Often compared to the womb, the prison as an enclosed space of both restriction and security evokes the concepts of home, rebirth and liminal borders. Absurd as it might seem at first sight to compare the cold and restrictive prison cell to the warm and protective motherly womb, the space of confinement can both deprive its inhabitants of freedom and separate them from danger. Having emphasised “the overall ambivalence between protection and threat inherent in enclosure or containment,” Fludernik further argues that the “fundamental carceral ambivalence echoes the traditional womb/tomb syndrome, in which the baby is perceived as both safely harboured in the mother’s protective enclosure and imprisoned in a dark (though nourishing) dungeon from which it will emerge only at birth into light, sound, and motion” (2019: 232). This “womb/tomb syndrome” associates the prison both with the soothing effect of “home-making” and with the Christian belief in resurrection (Fludernik 2019: 232).¹⁰ While confinement creates a sense of homely security for the confined, the menace of death or darkness also invokes the hope of being reborn through the crossing of boundaries – either of the prison cell or of the mother’s body. This view of the womb trope is supported by the novels and prison memoirs that Duncan analyses, in which prison spaces, by feeding and sheltering the criminals, “come to stand for a nurturing mother or a matrix of spiritual rebirth” (2). The link between prison, motherhood and liminal boundaries recalls Bender’s description of traditional prison structures: the domestically arranged carceral system offers the prisoners a relatively unsupervised space within the prison walls and enables an immediate transformation of their social status upon their departure in a similar way in which a child enjoys the safe space of the mother’s womb and then comes to birth by leaving the mother’s body. Tellingly, Bender uses the term “rebirth” to describe this sudden change in the prisoners’ social status in contrast to the minutely planned, long-lasting process of “reform” they would go through in a penitentiary (34). As Fludernik notes, “the container metaphor functionalizes the enclosing circumference of the container [...] as a typically liminal borderline between inside and outside,” thus attaching symbolic significance to the crossing of this borderline (2019: 25).¹¹ Associated with the concepts of motherly care, spatial limitation and risky childbirth, the womb trope therefore highlights the presence of domestic relationships, the paradoxical effects of boundaries and the opportunity for random transformation in the carceral spaces.

¹⁰ For religious analyses of rebirth in the womb-like prison metaphor, see Fludernik (2019: 34) and Duncan (36).

¹¹ For different ways of applying Victor Turner’s notion of liminal rites of passage to an analysis of carceral practices, see Fludernik (2019: 35–37), Duncan (35) and Bender (26–28).

Another metaphor of imprisonment that Fludernik analyses in detail is the cage trope, which indicates the reformatory impact of disciplinary observation on prisoners and jailers alike. Although, according to Fludernik, the cage itself is seldom used in English penal institutions, it is frequently referred to in figurative portrayals of restrictive situations (2019: 32). Among those figurative representations, Fludernik has identified two major patterns – “the bird in the (golden) cage” and “the beast in the cage” – both of which can express a series of sentiments “from despair and listlessness to anger, frustration and suicidal madness” (2019: 302). Interestingly, Fludernik’s comparison of the bird and the beast captured in an artificially built cage recalls the classification of women into two reductionist figures in a patriarchal society – ‘the angel in the house’ and ‘the madwoman in the attic’ – thus associating the prisoner’s submission to or rebellion against the power of the cage with conformity to or deviation from social norms (Patmore; Gilbert and Gubar). Once the link is established between the animal in the cage and the woman in a hostile environment, the cage trope comes to reflect the reformatory effect of disciplinary practices, with parrots trained to say what their captors deem appropriate and canaries bred to embody the fashion of the privileged classes. There is, of course, no clear-cut distinction between the “bird” and the “beast” categories: just as a fragile bird can also show the fierce emotions of a violent beast, women (as well as men in my study) may shift swiftly between stances of obedience and resistance in the face of oppressive social codes. The cage-like prison as an extreme form of the penitentiary is also commented on by Fludernik, but she restricts the penal use of the cage to modern American penitentiaries only, describing them as “a cruel refinement of the Benthamite panoptic surveillance model” with “complete denial of privacy” (2019: 32). As for the carceral spaces of early modern England, Fludernik underlines the functions of the bars instead, contrasting the bars and the cage based on the direction of the scrutinous gaze: “bars were predominantly treated from the perspective of the prisoner behind them looking out, rather than that of the penetrating gaze of the warder” (2019: 32). However, the inability of the bars to obstruct the view of either the captive or the captor inevitably ensures the simultaneous presence of multiple gazes: both the jailer’s gaze which imposes disciplinary rules on the prisoner and the prisoner’s gaze which scrutinises the jailer’s behaviour, both the curious gaze of the crowd which mocks the deviants and the rebellious gaze of the criminals who defy social norms. With an emphasis on mutual observation, I do not distinguish the figurative implications of the bars from those of the cage, treating them instead as symbolic items that epitomise the transparency of prison boundaries. The close resemblance between the visibility of the encaged animal and that of the confined deviant even induces Foucault himself to describe the panopticon as “a cruel, ingenious cage”

that controls the behaviour of everyone involved (1979: 205). Although the bird-in-the-cage trope is more often associated with the predicament of genteel women, I wish to explore how both men and women find ways to negotiate for authority within the cage-like spaces of constrictive normality.

These figurations of imprisonment can be better examined with the help of metaphor theories, which have shifted from an emphasis on individual creativity to the mapping of source-target projection to the notion of conceptual blending. In her introduction to *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory*, Fludernik summarises the critical turns in metaphor studies from I. A. Richards's search "for the essential common denominator of a 'ground' between vehicle and tenor" to early cognitive metaphor theorists' investigation into "the projection of features from source domain to target domain" to the conceptual integration model, which "allows for a functional transfer of the generic pattern which can be traced in both source and target domains and results in a blending of these" (2011: 4). Claiming that metaphors are a crucial part of the "ordinary conceptual system" rather than "a device of the poetic imagination" (3), Lakoff and Johnson's groundbreaking work *Metaphors We Live By* analyses the key "metaphorical concepts" that dominate everyday language and thought (17). Among all the "structural" and "orientational metaphors" that Lakoff and Johnson study (14), one important concept is that of "a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation" (29).¹² Applying this theorisation of spatial metaphors to the study of prison spaces, Fludernik examines "the container metaphor (INSIDE/OUT) and its specific carceral manifestations in the symbolic functionalization of walls, bars, doors, and windows" (2019: 24). As a typical container, the prison is a clearly defined space within whose walls the jailers may exercise either capricious authority or disciplinary power, while the prisoners' entrance or escape through its doors or windows causes a significant change in their social standing. Moreover, the captives' act of gazing from within the container through the bars into the outside world also conveys their sentiment of hope or hopelessness, thus revealing the social and emotional

¹² Conceptual metaphor theorist Kövecses "makes a distinction between linguistic metaphors, i.e., linguistic expressions used metaphorically, and conceptual metaphors, i.e., certain conceptual patterns we rely on in our daily living, to think about aspects of the world" (2020: 6). In literary texts, however, this categorisation is often unconvincing or insufficient for the analysis of symbolic representations. For example, a simple reference to tartan in eighteenth-century literature initiates the cognitive mapping process through an evocation of concepts like the Scottish Highlands, Jacobite rebellions and traditional culture, but this process does not necessarily make the word 'tartan' itself metaphorical; nor can the blending of tartans and Jacobites be summarised by any simple universal schema. In my analysis of prose fiction, therefore, I refrain from distinguishing what a structuralist might call 'the signifier' from 'the signified,' but treat them as inextricable components of figurative representations.

implications of spatial arrangements. Despite Lakoff and Johnson's achievements, metaphorical thinking cannot be fully explained by a short list of universal schemata or a unidirectional projection from the source to the target domain. Since mental activities can never be free from the influence of contextual knowledge, and since metaphorical language signifies all the central and contextual concepts involved, many metaphors are the product of mutual projection between multiple domains rather than a mere clarification of any single target. As Fludernik, Donald C. Freeman and Margaret H. Freeman put it, Lakoff and Johnson's "two-space model [...] did not in itself account for the insights of other theories of metaphor that posited a 'third' concept shared by both source and target domains" (389). This shortcoming is skilfully tackled by later conceptual metaphor theorists, whose more comprehensive model helps illustrate the figurative interactions between carceral and national spaces in eighteenth-century narrative fiction.

As a revised version of the projection model, Fauconnier and Turner's notion of multiple blends offers a convenient theoretical framework within which the womb-like prison, cage-like prison and prison-like nation tropes can be systematically analysed. Departing from the controversial scheme of "analogical projection," in which "a base or source domain is mapped onto a target so that inferences easily available in the source are exported to the target" (2002: 35), Fauconnier and Turner explicate the unconscious functioning of the human mind through "the network model of conceptual integration" or "conceptual blending" (2002: 40, 37). In their blending scheme, two parallel "input spaces" replace the source and target domains of earlier theories, while "the structure that inputs seem to share is captured in a generic space" (2002: 47). As the "structure from two input mental spaces is projected to a new space" in the process of blending, the new blended space may "contain generic structure captured in the generic space but also [...] more specific structure," even "structure that is impossible for the inputs" (2002: 47). In other words, the product of the blending may contain elements that the two inputs commonly possess as well as elements which do not directly exist in either of them but are created in the process of integration. In the example of Winstanley's metaphor, "*England is a Prison*," England as one input is a nation ruled by an aristocratic minority even after the execution of King Charles I (116). The prison as the other input is a place of confinement designed to punish criminals or enclose deviants. The generic pattern of the two inputs therefore contains such elements as injustice (in the lower classes' continued lack of land and Winstanley's arrest because of his protests against it), oppression (of the landless English people and the inmates in penal institutions), hierarchical relationships (between lords and commoners as well as between jailors and prisoners), rebellions against hierarchies (through

the Civil War against Charles I and the Diggers' activism on common land) and, of course, geographical borders. As a result, the product of their blending indicates a hierarchical national space that oppresses its residents and confines them within its borders but also allows for resistance and accommodates deviance from social norms. In the process of blending, this short metaphor evokes relevant concepts, from authority and justice to the rightful rebellion against oppression, which in turn evoke even more concepts in the political and legal areas, such as absolutist rule, contract theory, constitutionalism, various penal measures as well as mutual supervision between the governors and the governed. As a result, several central notions and numerous contextual implications blend into an enormous figurative network that characterises Winstanley's prison-like England. As Fauconnier and Turner put it, the "cross-space mappings between inputs" and the "selective projection" from the inputs to the blend constitute a "minimal template" for the "multiple blend network," which is "a dynamic operation over any number of mental spaces that moreover can apply repeatedly, its outputs becoming inputs for further blending" (2002: 279). Broadly applicable in the study of figurative representations, the model of the multiple blend network helps explain the constant interactions between prisons, nations and other relevant concepts.

The multiple blend network that I focus on in my research consists of four major inputs: the womb, the cage, the prison and the nation. In the womb-like prison trope, one input is the womb in which the baby enjoys motherly care and from which it will come to the world as a newborn child or a stillborn corpse. The other input is of course the prison. Among all the characteristics of incarceration, those that can form a generic pattern with the womb present the prison as an enclosed place whose loose regulations allow the prisoner to live in a domestically ordered system and whose walls the prisoner will leave in the near future, heading for either life in freedom or death on the gallows. The generic space accordingly contains images of a family in which the children remain completely subordinated to the will of their parents, as well as a journey to life or death through boundary-crossing movements. Through a selective projection, the blend in this trope contains the domestically ordered spaces of the prison, the absolute authority of capricious parents and the transformative act of crossing carceral boundaries. In the cage-like prison trope, one input is the cage in which the bird, gazed at by the captors and trained to behave properly, also gazes at the captors in return and embodies the fashion of elegant society that they need to follow. In the other input, the cage-related features of the prison present a panoptic space in which the inmates, as both the observers and the observed, reflect the (in)effectiveness of the jailers' work through the (im)propriety of their own conduct. The generic space constitutes the continuous practice of mutual observation,

while the blend conveys the notion of a panopticon in which disciplinary rules are imposed upon the prisoner and the jailer alike through the permanent operation of mutual supervision. Up till now, the blends have remained the products of two inputs only. When the concept of the national spaces also participates in the projection, however, the interactions between these figurative elements produce a network of multiple blends. When the input of the womb-like prison is projected, the blend contains the doctrine of absolute monarchy which juxtaposes the king's authority over his subjects with the lord's over his tenants, the father's over his children and the jailer's over his inmates. Unable to impose systematic control over the larger population, however, capricious royals, aristocrats, patriarchs and prison authorities have to tolerate transgressive acts within and across the borders of their territories. When the input of the cage-like prison is projected, the blend contains the implementation of systematic surveillance which disciplines the behaviour of individual inhabitants through the practices of mutual observation and mutual reformation. Since "the inputs can be modified by reverse mapping from the blend," the figurative representations of prison-like England can shed light on both the spaces of the English nation and the operation of the English prison just as the mutual projections between the prison, the womb and the cage offer a better glimpse into not only the possible effects of incarceration, but also the religious notion of resurrection and the social practice of surveillance (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 49).

Although, for the sake of clarity, I have summarised the historical contexts and figurative depictions of eighteenth-century carceral and national spaces in the form of several paired concepts, such binary systems are evidently too reductionist for a critical analysis of literature or reality, in which seemingly opposite structures share similarities and seemingly analogical ones contain differences. First of all, there should be no definitive pairing between carceral tropes and carceral structures. Although the concept of the womb shares many similarities with the absolutist carceral spaces, this does not exclude the possibility of rebirth-like transformations in a penitentiary. Caleb Smith, for instance, claims that "the poetics of the penitentiary – developed by reformers, theorists, and literary artists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – were organized around a narrative of rebirth" (6). Fludernik also argues that "in the reformatory orthodoxy of the penitentiary [...] the prisoner himself undergoes a crucial personal rebirth" (2019: 36–37). While the amount of scholarly attention that this topic has attracted indicates that rebirth, namely transformation in the prisoners' social status, is a central theme in the carceral setting, the conflictive voices of these critics cast doubt upon any fixed link between prison tropes and historical periods. Just as the features of the womb can be found in prisons built both before and after the Penitentiary Act, the cage, or the

bars as its variant form, prevails in carceral tropes from the early modern era to the Victorian age despite the absence of literal encaging in the English prisons. This phenomenon of “anachronism” is also stressed by Fludernik, who states that “literary prisons mostly did not reflect contemporary conditions of incarceration but often reproduced and elaborated on literary models which have been in use since antiquity” (2019: 592, 4). Just as the binary oppositions of old prisons versus new penitentiaries or absolute monarchy versus contract theory have been extensively refuted, no analogical pairing of old prisons with womb tropes or new penitentiaries with cage tropes can go unchallenged. I refrain accordingly from any definitive pairing of concepts into oppositions or analogies, treating them instead as specific phenomena in specific circumstances. Similarly, there is no general agreement on how to classify prison metaphors. Alber divides them into three main categories: “metaphors of imprisonment (PRISON IS X),” “the ‘prison-as-world’ simile” and “proper prison metaphors (X IS PRISON)” (3). Fludernik, on the other hand, recognises two different patterns in metaphors of incarceration: “the PRISON IS X pattern” “in which the prison serves as target domain of the metaphor” and the “X IS A PRISON” pattern “in which prison serves as a source domain” (2019: 46). But in many metaphors or tropes, especially those that occur repeatedly in fiction or have symbolic implications, the distinction between source and target domains is not always easy to grasp. In my study, the prison serves primarily as the source domain when the blending sheds light on the absolutist or disciplinary order of the English national spaces, but it becomes the target domain when the same blending projects back onto the carceral structure and illustrates its operation through nation-related elements like social stratification or communal spying. In *Moll Flanders*, for instance, Newgate is depicted as a nation-like institution in which trades are conducted and prayers are said, but the depiction of the Newgate Prison also comments on prison-like Restoration England with its royal supremacy and loose boundaries. For this reason, I avoid any general categorisation of figurative expressions but concentrate rather on two carceral tropes: the womb-like prison and the cage-like prison. Intimately interwoven with issues of national governance, the two tropes frequently trigger multidirectional projections in a multiple blend network of prisons, nations and narration.

2.4 A New Formalist Approach to Prison-Nation Tropes

Building on the ongoing discussions about conceptual metaphor theories as well as their applications in literary studies, I take a new formalist approach to the figurative representations of imprisonment in eighteenth-century novels, where various carceral, national and narrative forms interact with each other in the figurative blending of the womb, the cage, the prison and the nation.

Although their initial inattention to aesthetic effects and contextual matters has received widespread criticism from literary critics, conceptual metaphor theories provide a valuable perspective for interdisciplinary research. In his analysis of literary metaphors, Bo Pettersson criticises cognitive linguists' tendency to "reduce much of the literary work to surface manifestations of cognitive metaphors," stressing that "the complexity and specificity of literature" also affects the interpretation of figurative language (94). Similarly, Benjamin Biebuyck and Gunther Martens claim that cognitive mapping does not fully explain the "ambiguity" of some literary metaphors, that "the initial tension between the two [inputs] irrevocably remains in force throughout the metaphorical processing and that no mapping occurs at all" (59, 60). While Biebuyck and Martens question not only the explanatory potential of the mapping model but also its most basic validity, Ansgar Nünning, Herbert Grabes and Sibylle Baumbach propose to regard metaphors "as subtle epistemological, conceptual, and cultural tools that are imbued with a wide range of cognitive, emotional, and ideological connotations" (xii). Their wish to examine the cultural roles of metaphors through a critical application of cognitive theories underlines the increasing interdisciplinarity of metaphor research, hence echoing Gibbs's summary that "metaphor arises from the interaction of brains, bodies, languages, and culture" (4). Likewise, Kövecses also points out that "metaphors can derive from the body, cultural specificities, and also the more general context," thus requiring a comprehensive examination of various factors on physical, cultural and contextual levels (2020: 11). These efforts to facilitate communications between different disciplines have had a remarkable impact on recent metaphor studies. Despite all the apparent incompatibilities between cognitive theories and literary studies, blending is viewed by more and more literary critics as a very useful concept when combined with adequate attention to textual, intertextual and contextual forces. Listing the challenges that conceptual metaphor theories still face in the 2020s, Kövecses concludes that the following controversial issues still need further clarification: the (non)existence of "literal meaning" (2020: 19), the difference between metaphor and metonymy, "the discourse functions of metaphorical expressions," "the context of metaphor production" and the occurrence of "metaphorical creativity" (2020: 20). Although

the topics of “literal meaning” and “metaphor production” lie beyond the scope of my research, the literary texts that I analyse complement linguistic scholarship with their “metaphorical creativity,” while their fictional representations of carceral spaces shed light on the various functions of figurative language. Since the conceptual blending model illustrates both metaphors and metonymies, two closely related figures of speech that frequently overlap each other, I have decided to focus on prison-nation tropes in general rather than any specific category of figurative expressions.

Applying the framework of conceptual blending to figurative language in general, I take into consideration the textual and contextual uniqueness of every individual case as I examine the interactions of prison-related tropes with each other, with other tropes, with narrative strategies as well as with cultural forces. Pettersson’s analysis of extended metaphors “in relation to other tropes and text-types” indicates how genres, styles and narrative strategies also influence the cognitive processing of metaphors, but his juxtaposition of various figurative expressions raises another issue of debate: although typical metaphors can be easily distinguished from other figures of speech, the boundaries between different tropes do not always remain stable (95). Fludernik notes multiple occasions when “carceral metaphors resort to a lexicon of metonyms that imply imprisonment through typical correlates of confinement: fetters, chains, walls, and bars” or when “novels or plays that do not have an actual prison setting may imply – through a series of scenes that metaphorically describe elaborated situations of confinement – that the whole world is a kind of prison, as does Richardson’s *Clarissa*” (2019: 596). In Biebuyck and Martens’s “instance of ongoing rhetorical negotiation in the figurative network,” “[w]hat at first seemed to be a metaphor (e.g. ‘eyes’ for spectacles) may well turn out to be a metonymy (spectacles as an aid for eyesight) or synecdoche (‘eyes’ as part of autonomously acting creatures) later on, only to regain some of its metaphorical quality in the end” (64). Likewise, it is not absolutely clear whether Charlotte Lennox’s parallel depictions of Arabella’s intellectual confinement in her father’s country castle and the romance heroines’ physical imprisonment by the male villains constitute a metaphor, an allusion, an analogy, a symbolic arrangement or a cultural critique. As boundaries between various figures of speech collapse in the rich language of literary texts, it is especially fruitful to draw on Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending theory, which addresses “counterfactuals, framings, categorizations, metonymies, metaphors, and so on” as “consequences of the same basic human ability for double-scope blending” (2008: 54). Occasionally overgeneralising as it might be, their notion of figurative thinking provides a graspable perspective from which the frequently overlapping tropes in literature can be effectively analysed in the same theoretical

framework and hence their common rhetorical effects systematically revealed. In this study, I address the issue of figuration with its broad range of meaning, from linguistic figures of speech in single sentences to symbolic narrative structures of the whole novel to culturally suggestive items in the novelistic plot. Since most of my primary texts do not directly discuss national issues, most of the tropes analysed in the following chapters are actually blended figurative concepts rather than conspicuous metaphorical expressions.

My emphasis on the cultural or contextual elements of literary tropes is also supported by several other interdisciplinary trends in literary criticism. Discontent with New Critics' characterisation of literary works as harmonious texts isolated from their spatiotemporal context, leading new historicists Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt describe their research interests as "the fascination with the particular, the wide-ranging curiosity, the refusal of universal aesthetic norms, and the resistance to formulating an overarching theoretical program" (6). As universalist assumptions about the forms and functions of abstract structures are gradually replaced by meticulous investigations into the distinctive features of particular historical periods, Gallagher and Greenblatt's "notion of culture as text [...] expands the range of objects available to be read and interpreted," situating canonical works of literature in the larger context of their contemporary noncanonical as well as nonliterary writings (9). This new historicist perspective justifies my juxtaposition of political discussions about prison reforms and figurative representations of prison spaces, of novels appreciated by their contemporary elites and novels regarded as a piece of popular literature. My simultaneous attention to the political and literary aspects of eighteenth-century novels displays a dual interest in culture and narration, thus recalling the principles of cultural narratologies. Amidst the popularity of new historicism, postclassical narratologists have long endeavoured to integrate a cultural perspective into their narrative theories. In her famous article "From Cultural Studies to Cultural Analysis," Mieke Bal claims that "narrative is [...] a cultural force" that attracts scholarly attention from various disciplines because of its ability to reflect and reshape people's understanding of the world (34). Criticising the lack of communication between historiographical and narratological scholars, Ansgar Nünning explicates the "intersections between narrative(s) and culture(s), and between the interdisciplinary fields known as narratology and the study of culture" (146). Delving into "the ways in which narrative forms function as a way of worldmaking, i.e. a cognitive force in its own right which is involved in the actual generation of attitudes, discourses, ideologies, hierarchies of norms and values, and structures of feeling and thinking" (160), what Nünning terms "cultural and historical narratology" "explores both the narrativity of cultures and the culturality of narratives," namely

how narratives both construct and are constructed by the cultures they encounter (161). While, as Fludernik (2019: 52–59) and Alber (1–2) point out, English novelists both conform to and depart from the contemporary realities of prison experiences in their depictions of imprisonment, the ways they tell their stories reflect as well as reform their readers' opinions about the penal institution. The complicated relationship between fictional narratives about incarceration and cultural attitudes towards it results in the constant encounters between narrative strategies and social structures, inviting an even more radical erasure of the boundaries between literary and sociopolitical topics.

By analysing narrative strategies and social structures under the same concept of forms, I draw on the terminology of new formalism to discuss the dynamic interactions between my three key topics: the prison, the nation and the narration. Despite Gallagher and Greenblatt's rejection of "an overarching theoretical program" (6), in Caroline Levine's opinion many new historicists still speak largely within the binary structure of text and context, "drawing from close reading methods to understand the literary forms, while using historical research methods to analyze sociopolitical experience" (1). By regarding the aesthetic effects of literary works and the social circumstances they reflect or resist as two distinct research topics and adopting different theoretical terms in their analysis of each topic, they inevitably place literature and society into a hierarchical relationship, with either literature actively constructing social norms or society actively influencing literary works (Levine 12). In order to further defy this binary way of thinking, Levine argues in *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* that "[l]iterary forms and social formations are equally real in their capacity to organize materials, and equally *unreal* in being artificial, contingent constraints" (14). By viewing "sociopolitical life as itself composed of a plurality of different forms, from narrative to marriage and from bureaucracy to racism" (14), Levine replaces the traditional hierarchy between supposedly fictional literature and supposedly factual society with "a definition of form that is much broader than its ordinary usage in literary studies": "Form [...] will mean all shapes and configurations, all ordering principles, all patterns of repetition and difference" (3). According to this extremely broad definition, one of the very few requirements a pattern must meet in order to become a form is its relative independence from and long-term existence beyond its immediate historical realities: "forms are not [mere] outgrowths of social conditions; they do not belong to certain times and places" (Levine 12). Following the same logic, Levine explains how her study of literary forms differs from traditional scholarship on literary genres: just as genres signify "customary constellations of elements into historically recognizable groupings of artistic objects," "forms are organizations or arrangements that afford repetition and portability across materials and

contexts” (14). This distinction between form and genre notably broadens the focus of my research. Although *Moll Flanders* does not belong to the narrowly-defined genre of criminal biography or *Pride and Prejudice* to the epistolary novel, the narrative forms of criminal biography and epistolary fiction actively interact with the nonliterary forms of carceral and national arrangements in these two novels. Offering new insights into the random or causal consequences of formal encounters, Levine’s new formalist approach sheds light on the interactions between prison regulations, national governance and narrative strategies. Encouraged by the new formalist trend, I juxtapose carceral spaces with narrative techniques and historical occurrences with figurative descriptions, looking for the two important forms of prison-related tropes – the womb-like prison and the cage-like prison – not only in the plots of the English novels, but also in the narrative arrangements through which the stories are told.

Examining “the strange encounter between two or more forms that sometimes reroutes intention and ideology” (18), Levine herself has written about the great diversity of forms that a prison comprises:

The cell itself is a straightforward enough form: it encloses bodies within surrounding walls. But the prison always activates other forms as well: prisoners are subjected to temporal patterns [...]; educational trajectories; and the length of the prison term itself. They take part in networks that operate not only within a given prison, but also reach outside the confines of prison walls [...]. And at the same time [...] they are also subjected to numerous painful hierarchies, ranked according to the status of their crimes and their gender and sexual identities. [...] And one surprisingly literary form has occasionally cut short the time of a prison term: a story of remorse or redemption can sometimes prompt a pardon. (8)

While “temporal patterns” and “educational trajectories” are often adopted by penitentiaries to reform deviant behaviour, the unofficial networks among fellow prisoners or with friends outside the prison play a crucial role in loosely controlled traditional prisons. Since penal institutions strengthen national governance by punishing deviance and depend on national resources for their daily operation, prisons and nations are deeply entangled with the governmental policies, social issues and historical changes of their time. As the various forms of penal practices encounter the diverse forms of national structures, their overlaps or clashes expose the specific arrangements of each form, draw attention to the contrast between different forms and even produce new forms based on this dynamic encounter. Finally, literary forms such as conversion narratives or prison memoirs not only delineate carceral and national forms but also reconstruct them, either by gaining the prisoner a lifesaving “pardon” or by changing

the society's attitude towards their power structures. As Nünning puts it, in a cultural-narratological or new formalist study, "formal techniques are not just analysed as structural features of a text, but as narrative modes which are highly semanticised and engaged in the process of cultural construction" (167). By following Levine's broad conceptualisation of forms in my analyses of fictional representations, I examine the various elements of penal institutions, national mechanisms and narrative strategies. As the figurative concepts of the womb, the cage, the prison and the nation encounter each other in the novelistic storyworlds of the long eighteenth century, the carceral form of random transformation or mutual observation interacts with the national form of absolutist or contractual governance as well as the narrative form of (auto)biographical or epistolary storytelling. While the formal emphasis on individual transformation in (auto)biographical writings echoes the formal encouragement of boundary-crossing movements in womb-like carceral and national spaces, the documentation and evaluation of others' behaviour through an exchange of epistolary texts mirror the disciplinary practices of mutual observation and reformation in cage-like communities.

Chapter 3 Womb-like Prisons: (Auto)Biographies of Boundary-Crossing Adventurers

3.1 (Auto)Biographical Transformations of Incarcerated Adventurers

While the womb-like carceral form encourages random transformations in the prisoners' social status through their boundary-crossing adventures, the autobiographical or biographical narrative form, with its eighteenth-century conventions, depicts such transformative adventures as a progression through exciting events to (anti)climactic endings. As the representations of absolutist spaces draw attention to the analogy or opposition between carceral and national structures, the various forms of the prison, the nation and the narrative blend together into a figurative network of confinement, hierarchy, destabilisation and escape.

Both the experience of literal incarceration and the perception of social restriction are often a result of deviance, the punishment of which is a crucial part of national governance. Defined by Goode as "*acts, beliefs, and characteristics that violate major social norms and attract [...] isolation, censure, and/or punishment,*" deviant behaviour in eighteenth-century English novels encompasses a range of physical or mental activities from a blatant rebellion against legal requirements to a religious disapproval of Protestant values, from a bold disobedience to social superiors to a subtle defiance of gender expectations (4). While the direct commitment of theft, burglary, adultery or incest can result in the physical incarceration and execution of the criminal offender, the emotional dissatisfaction with dominant social norms and the impossibility to escape from them together trigger a feeling of suffocation that is often compared to the state of being imprisoned. Besides, the standard for normality and deviance is different in different eras or places, for different classes or communities and even from different individual perspectives. While Moll Flanders is able to travel twice across the Atlantic Ocean, Arabella's mere wish to visit Turkey is already deemed improper. There can therefore be no definitive list of deviant behaviour; rather, the nation's recognition of and attitude towards deviance has to be examined in the specific circumstances of the specific novel. Shedding light on the efforts of the national mechanism to defend norms, construct hierarchies and punish deviance, the figurative representations of carceral spaces blend the concept of the prison with that of the nation.

When prison spaces tolerate random transformations under capricious absolute authority, they further evoke the concept of the womb, with the prisoner's adventures across carceral and national borders resembling the baby's entrance into the world as a newborn child or a stillborn corpse. Among all the literary traditions that eighteenth-century novelists draw on, the narrative strategies of fictional (auto)biography frequently capture the physical or mental act of transformative adventure, leading to repeated formal encounters between storytelling and

society. According to Carolyn A. Barros, a common impression among readers is that a traditional “autobiography presents the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of individuals who have undergone transformations of some kind” (1). By describing the protagonist’s transformation as “a significant mutation in the characteristic qualities and societal relationships,” Barros emphasises the connection between womb-like spaces that encourage rebirth-like changes and autobiographical writings that depict life-changing adventures (2). Although the prose fiction I analyse does not constitute the life writings of historically real persons, the (auto)biographical form it incorporates into the novel genre still shows a similar effect.¹³ Representing the exciting life of individual protagonists in a challenging social environment, the narrative forms of fictional autobiography and biography encounter the spatial forms of womb-like prisons and prison-like nations in a multiple blend network of penal practices, social issues and storytelling strategies.

One well-known eighteenth-century novel that represents the rebirth-like transformations of adventurous boundary-crossers in the form of a fictional autobiography is Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. In this novel, the isolated island on which Crusoe spends twenty-eight years of his life is simultaneously his prison, his nation and his home. Frustrated by loneliness and hardship, Crusoe repeatedly draws on carceral tropes to express his despair, comparing the island to a desolate prison and the ocean to the prison border that separates him from hope and humanity: “I was a Prisoner lock’d up with the Eternal Bars and Bolts of the Ocean, in an uninhabited Wilderness, without Redemption” (RC 96). After the arrival of other men, however, this depressive prison is compared to a nation under absolute monarchy, with the original prisoner transformed from a desperate castaway into a triumphant king: “it was a merry Reflection which I frequently made, How like a King I look’d. First of all, the whole Country was my own meer Property; so that I had an undoubted Right of Dominion. 2dly, My People were perfectly subjected: I was absolute Lord and Law-giver” (RC 203). Parallel to the radical

¹³ In her introduction to autobiography, Linda Anderson mentions not only the new critical emphasis on “the crucial link between author, narrator and protagonist” in autobiographies, namely the nonfictional nature of the works, but also the poststructuralist belief that these writings “produce fictions or figures in place of the self-knowledge they seek” (2, 13). However, the controversies around the fictionality of autobiographical narration become irrelevant in my analysis of fictional autobiography, for which the overlaps between “narrator and protagonist” are viewed as a defining feature. Because I concentrate on the specific (auto)biographical forms that eighteenth-century novelists use in their fictional writing, what Linda Anderson lists as the key themes of critical debate in the study of the autobiographical genre – “autonomy, self-realization, authenticity and transcendence” – are also not central to my research (4). Instead, detailed analyses of how the narrative forms of spiritual autobiography, criminal biography and historical biography are incorporated into the novelistic writings of Defoe and Lennox are conducted in the last section of each subchapter.

changes in his social status, with Crusoe successively taking the positions of a middle-class son, a penniless exile and an almighty monarch, he also undergoes a rebirth-like process of religious awakening. Having experienced a frightening earthquake, a heavy storm and a serious illness, Crusoe has a nightmare, reads the Bible and repents his past sins: “This was the first Time that [...] I pray’d with a Sense of my Condition, and with a true Scripture View of Hope founded on the Encouragement of the Word of God” (RC 83). In this religious episode, the prison-like, nation-like island also resembles a womb, with Crusoe entering its spaces as an almost dead sinner and departing from it as a reborn convert. The social and spiritual rebirth of the protagonist associates the island with notions of motherhood and home, with Crusoe repeatedly describing his cave as “Home” (RC 64, 73, 82, 88, 95, 105, 120). Since the same capitalised word “Home” is also used to refer to England, the figurative network blends the concepts of the prison, the nation, the womb and the domestic realm (RC 241, 254, 256). The transformative effect of the carceral and national spaces is represented in the form of autobiographical writing, whose usual emphasis on climactic metamorphosis further highlights the construction of an absolutist nation based on mental reconstructions of selfhood and physical adventures around the world. Producing new meanings through a network of highly suggestive tropes, formal encounters take place among the random events on the carceral island, the hierarchical structure of the English nation, the arbitrary transformations of the boundary-crossing adventurers and the narrative focus of the autobiographical tradition.

Similar to Crusoe’s transformative adventures to and from his nation-like prison, Moll Flanders, another protagonist in Defoe’s fiction, undergoes death- or rebirth-like changes during her entrances into and departures from the capriciously arranged spaces of Newgate and Newgate-like England. While the narrative structure of spiritual autobiography underlines the significance as well as randomness of Moll’s metamorphoses, the literary tradition of criminal biography further confronts the absolute hierarchy of the English nation. In contrast to Moll’s extraordinary physical mobility, the protagonist of Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* is physically confined to her patriarchal home in patriarchal England and can only change her standing through imaginary adventures between different fictional storyworlds. As Arabella inverts power relationships by travelling into the storyworld of romances and reinterpreting daily events in the romantic way, she brings about an encounter between the carceral form of capricious, absolute control, the national form of contractual, patriarchal governance and the narrative forms of romance, history as well as biography. In the following sections, I will first examine the blending of the womb, the prison and the nation in these two novels, then analyse the random transformations in individual social status during boundary-crossing adventures

and finally discuss the interactions between (auto)biographical narrative forms and prison-like national forms.

3.2 Destabilising Journeys across Newgate-Like England: Spiritual and Criminal Autobiography in Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*

Capricious Authority in Newgate-Like England

Closely associated with the concepts of home, birth and motherhood, womb-like carceral spaces in *Moll Flanders* tend to tolerate deviant financial transactions that do not blatantly defy the absolute authority of the prison officials. Mirroring the parallel existence of control and caprice in Newgate, the political order of social stratification and the domestic order of patriarchal domination that govern the spaces of the English nation also acquiesce in the economically motivated violations of social norms. As the prison, the womb and the nation blend together into spaces of capricious governance, both literal and figurative prisoners gain easy opportunities of random transformation through the crossing of carceral and national boundaries.

Associated with the concepts of home and motherhood, Newgate overshadows the entire novel of *Moll Flanders*, constituting both a domestic setting for Moll's birth and a prelude to her final domestic felicity. Not only does the title of the novel deliberately point out that its protagonist is born in Newgate, its opening sentence also mentions Newgate in an explanation of Moll Flanders's name:

My True Name is so well known in the Records, or Registers at *Newgate*, and in the *Old-Bailey*, and there are some things of such Consequence still depending there, relating to my particular Conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my Name, or the Account of my Family to this Work; (MF 43)

By associating Newgate with both Moll's criminal "Conduct" and her "Family" history, this statement raises readerly interest in the familial ties of incarcerated criminals. The importance of Newgate in Moll's family background is stressed again when her "Teacher" in theft is imprisoned there: "the place gave me so much Horror, reflecting that it was the place of my unhappy Birth, and of my Mother's Misfortunes" (MF 268, 269). Repeatedly referred to by the first-person narrator, the complicated roles that Newgate plays in her family is best summarised by Moll's revelation to her biological mother in Virginia that Moll "was no other, nor more or less than her own Child, *her Daughter* born of her Body in *Newgate*; the same that had sav'd her from the Gallows by being in her Belly" (MF 144). As Moll obtains for her mother the right to stay seven months longer in Newgate than the court originally allows by being in her mother's "Belly," both the "Body" of the mother and the space of Newgate provide a temporary home for the baby, thus blending the concept of the womb with that of the prison. This womb-

like prison trope is further evoked by Moll's search for a new home on the American Continent. Focused on Defoe's frequent "reliance on the device of re-discovered family," Ian A. Bell claims that "Newgate as a symbolic terminus acts as a recurrent feature" in Moll's turbulent life, facilitating her final construction of a happy household by enabling her "reunion" with her biological mother (who leaves her sufficient wealth in Virginia) and her "re-encounter" with her favourite husband (who accompanies her on the voyage to this faraway colony) (163). Recognising the heavy influence of the prison on Moll's domestic relationships, Payne describes Newgate as "a home-space that literalizes the prison motif" (120). Intricately connected to home, birth and motherhood, Newgate in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* bears multiple resemblances to the concept of the womb.

The blending of the prison and the womb, a concept highly evocative of home or household, illustrates not only the influence of Newgate on domestic arrangements, but also the perception of domestic relationships as incarcerating. According to David Blewett, "[t]he image that Moll uses more than any other is that of the snare," an image that symbolises the incarcerating power of structures, domestic ones in particular (20). When the elder brother in Colchester seduces Moll, he is said to draw on "that unhappy Snare to all Women," namely flattering compliments that inflate their vanity, in his attempt "to catch a Woman in his Net as a Partridge" (MF 57). The almost stereotypical comparison of the seduced maidservant to a bird in the net signifies the constrictive effects of a domestic hierarchy that leaves the financially dependent, morally imprudent woman physically as well as psychologically powerless in front of her male lover. This hierarchy is partly inverted in Moll's subsequent marriage with Robin, whose mother "look'd upon [Moll] as a kind of a Snare to [her] Son" (MF 93). If Robin's family regards Moll as a low-status woman whose lack of fortune limits Robin's future prospects, Moll also feels imprisoned by her marriage to a man she does not love, forced by social expectations to "go to Church, like a Bear to the Stake" (MF 100). Although Moll's simile of the bear contradicts her former bird-like docility or fragility, the constrictive image of matrimony persists in her mention of the "Stake" to which the bear is chained.¹⁴ As the relationships between married as well as unmarried couples impose restrictions on both men and women, the blending of carceral and domestic spaces exposes the confining effect of the Colchester household by repeatedly evoking the notions of prison-like homes and home-like prisons. Blewett describes the plot of *Moll Flanders* as "a series of traps,

¹⁴ For a discussion of the prison-like marriage trope in cartoons as well as literary texts, see Fludernik's "The Metaphorics and Metonymics of Carcerality" (2005: 226–244).

from the nasty surprises of fortune and the snares of the Devil to Newgate itself, a powerful image of entrapment that awaits Moll all her life” (21). In this multiple blend network of prostitution, marriage, home and confinement, the prison-like domestic structures that accumulate in Moll’s narrative and culminate in Newgate bring to the fore the constraining hierarchical order of womb-like spaces.

Like the total subjection of an unborn baby to the control of the womb as well as its complete reliance on nourishment from outside, prisoners in Newgate live under the absolute authority of those officials who represent the English nation or the English monarch. According to John Howard’s report, the cells in Newgate “for condemned malefactors” have “a window double grated, near three feet by one and a half” and “doors [...] four inches thick,” while the “strong stone wall is lined all round each cell with planks, studded with broad-headed nails” (152). Symbolic of the power of the English law, the narrow windows, thick walls, cold nails and dark rooms create a suffocating atmosphere in Newgate, giving the inmates an acute sense of their own triviality. Sent to Newgate for the theft of two pieces of silk, Moll exclaims in dismay at the depressive sight of this notorious prison: “that horrid Place! my very Blood chills at the mention of its Name” (MF 348). Responsible respectively for arresting offenders and committing them to prisons, constables and magistrates in Stuart England embody the rule of the king in their treatment of prospective inmates. When the mercer rudely demands Moll’s release after mistaking her for a thief and delivering her to a constable, the constable insists on taking the mercer to the magistrate and stresses the authority that the king bestows on him: “I think I am civil to you in not commanding or charging you in the King’s Name to go with me, and charging every Man I see, that passes your Door, to aid and assist me in carrying you by Force, this you cannot but know I have power to do” (MF 316). The constable’s capability of “charging every Man [...] to aid and assist” him “in the King’s Name” recalls Foucault’s argument that the staff of the state symbolically strengthen the supremacy of the monarch by publicly punishing commoners by force (Foucault 1979: 49). Although this specific mercer is not committed to Newgate, his experience offers a good example of how the fates of many English criminals are sealed by the decisions of constables and the judgments of magistrates. The powerful commands of officials, along with the daunting architecture of prisons, indicate the subordinate position of most prisoners in Defoe’s England.

The royal support behind the officials’ conduct does not necessarily ensure the legitimacy of their decisions, however. Instead, it often gives rise to uncontrolled caprice in law enforcement just as the baby’s absolute dependence on the womb also indicates its defencelessness in the case of ill treatment. For example, Moll hints at what could happen when

the constable did not adhere to his principles: “The Mercer was very high with the Constable at first; but the Constable happening to be not a hir’d Officer, but a good, Substantial kind of Man, [...] stood to his Business” (MF 315–316). As Blewett explains, “hired deputies, who took the place of those citizens who wanted to avoid serving as constables, had a reputation for ignorance and corruption” (449). Since the mechanism of monarchical sovereignty cannot prevent its ignorant or corrupt officers from making unjust decisions, offenders may face a wide range of consequences after their arrest, from a brutal beating by the furious crowd to an unreasonable sentence to prolonged imprisonment. If arrests often take place chaotically in Defoe’s novel, the English courts also do not appear much less capricious, punishing different kinds of crimes with the same measure. One of Moll’s fellow thieves, captured despite the fact that she has not stolen anything herself but only received a stolen bundle from Moll, is sentenced to transportation because she cannot find her accomplice (MF 290). In contrast, Moll’s Lancashire husband Jemy, a highwayman who has “committed so many Robberies, that *Hind*, or *Whitney*, or the *Golden Farmer* were Fools to him,” is also transported to Virginia (MF 357). The fact that the assistant of a petty thief receives the same penalty as a dangerous robber highlights the absurdity of the English judicial system. As Lois A. Chaber puts it, “the incongruity between crime and punishment catches our attention,” disclosing “the problematic nature of [...] arbitrary laws for theft, smuggling, fraud, and so on” (215). If the “arbitrary” decisions that judges make on the severity of punishment undermine the justice of the English court, the even more controversial permissions that jailers grant to certain prisoners expose blatant inconsistencies in their prison management. During her incarceration, Moll mentions “one of those they called the *Night-Flyers* [...] who by Connivance was admitted to go Abroad every Evening” (MF 408). The unjustifiable privileges that the prison staff of Newgate randomly grant draw attention to the notoriously lame operation of the entire penal system. As a result, the capricious practices of some constables, judges and jailers, noted by both Ignatieff (15–43) and Bender (11–40) in their studies of English prisons, underscore the absence of systematic regulations in Defoe’s womb-like carceral spaces.

In the loosely controlled spaces of Newgate, authorities frequently grant or deny privileges based on purely economic concerns. Despite his numerous crimes, Jemy gains access “into the Press-Yard, having given Money to the Head-Master of the Prison, to be allow’d the liberty of that better Part of the Prison” (MF 356). Obviously, this “Head-Master” attaches more importance to his own financial prosperity than to the disciplinarily proper treatment of criminals in carceral spaces. Similarly, Moll as an old offender has “obtain’d the Favour by the help of Money, nothing being to be done in that Place without it, not to be kept in the

Condemn'd Hole," namely the place for condemned criminals awaiting execution (MF 367). Apart from paying the prison staff for better living conditions, Moll also gives her fellow inmates garnish in order to avoid personal embarrassment or physical bullying – a notorious prison custom analysed in detail by Fludernik (2019: 35), Ignatieff (39) and Bender (30): "they flouted me with my Dejections, welcom'd me to the Place, wish'd me Joy, bid me have a good Heart, not to be cast down [...]; then call'd for Brandy, and drank to me; but put it all up to my Score" (MF 350). Incarcerated for their illegal actions, mostly thefts, robberies and murders, the prisoners not only refuse to seriously meditate on their past wrongdoings, but also grab money from newcomers by compelling them through coaxing and threats to pay for the drinks. Based on his analyses of economic dealings in Newgate, Joseph F. Bartolomeo points out that "the physical comfort" which affluent prisoners easily purchase signals "a distinction founded on neither morality nor social class, but on material wealth" (458). Chaber argues likewise that because of "the institutionalized bribery and graft of its petit bourgeois officials, prison status depends purely on cash" (216). As prison officials abuse their absolute authority over carceral spaces for their own financial profits, an internal hierarchy among Newgate prisoners is constructed on an entirely economic basis, with neither the jailers nor the criminals heeding social norms in their everyday transactions.

With everyday services provided according to the inmates' financial circumstances, it is far from surprising that the carceral spaces of Newgate accommodate shocking instances of depraved behaviour. On the morning of the execution, "a dismal groaning and crying was heard from the Condemn'd Hole" while other prisoners express their condolences in different ways: "some cried for them; some huzza'd, and wish'd them a good Journey; some damn'd and curst those that had brought them to it [...]; many pitting them; and some few, but very few praying for them" (MF 369). Despite the presence of clergymen both inside the prison and during the execution, the criminals who are to be executed are preoccupied with their "dismal groaning" while those who remain in prison curse the authorities instead of criticising the offenders. The prisoners who reflect on the religious aspects of the convicts' punishment are, in contrast, only "very few." During Moll's first visit to Virginia, her mother claims that "there are more Thieves and Rogues made by that one Prison of *Newgate*, than by all the Clubs and Societies of Villains in the Nation; 'tis that cursed Place [...] that half Peoples this Colony" (MF 135).¹⁵ On her own entrance into Newgate, Moll describes in more detail how this single prison accommodates so

¹⁵ According to Guilhamet, this description of Newgate by Moll's mother is "an indictment of the British justice system" which unwisely wastes "the potential of the transported felons" (122).

many criminal deeds that it resembles the “cursed Place” of hell: “the hellish Noise, the Roaring, Swearing and Clamour, the Stench and Nastiness, and all the dreadful croud of Afflicting things that I saw there; joyn’d together to make the Place seem an Emblem of Hell itself” (MF 135, 349). The loud noise of mannerless swearing, along with the nasty stink of filth, can easily interrupt any moral or religious reflections that Newgate’s tiny group of sincere penitents wish to engage in. Even the ordinary of the prison, a clergyman who should present himself as the paragon of piety, is found “drunk with Brandy and Spirits by Noon” after preaching “Confession and Repentance” to Moll (MF 353).¹⁶ Situated in a largely unsupervised place where considerations about propriety are almost totally absent, prisoners gradually become “as impudently Cheerful and Merry in their Misery, as they were when out of it” (MF 351). Allowing its inmates to follow the same lifestyle that they have led outside the prison on condition that they conform to the jailers’ basic requirements from the purchase of everyday services to the limitations on physical movement, Newgate is a miniature of English society instead of a factory of criminal reformation.

Among other analogical elements in *Moll Flanders*, the analogy between Newgate and England is particularly interesting, drawing attention to the multiple blends of the womb, the prison and the nation.¹⁷ According to “the general Notion” of imprisoned highwaymen, both executions “at the Gallows” and transportation to “the Woods and Wildernesses of *America*” entail a “Passage into another State,” with the former “much more tolerable” than the latter despite all the humiliations of a public execution (MF 380–381). In their aversion to transportation, the highwaymen compare the boundary-crossing journey from the prison to the gallows with that from England to America, associating both carceral and national borders with the division between life and death. As the concepts of incarceration and nationhood blend with each other, Defoe’s explicit depiction of the English prison invites literary critics to examine his implicit depiction of the English nation. Exploring the novelistic portrayal of nationhood in *Moll Flanders*, Scarlet Bowen claims that the commercially successful protagonist “comes to define and carry out Defoe’s most prized mercantilist tenets, particularly those advocating the use of wealth for national [...] benefit” (25). Leon Guilhamet also states that Defoe’s “major

¹⁶ Commenting on the highly controversial conduct of this clergyman, Faller adds that “[n]early twenty years before *Moll Flanders* was published, Defoe had attacked the Newgate ordinary for offering assurances of salvation on too easy terms” (1987: 196).

¹⁷ As Faller points out, analogical elements can also be found between the life of the London banker and that of Moll’s other husbands: “He dies after five years and two children just as Robin did, falling into bankruptcy just as the linen-draper did, and succumbing to an immobilizing despair just as her brother did” (1993: 121).

fiction [...] consists of autobiographical accounts of the lives of English men and women during the years of Stuart rule [...], which helped to form British culture in the early eighteenth century” (15). Going one step further, Parrinder argues that “[f]amily genealogies in the English novel are often loaded with cultural meaning, conveying a hint [...] of national allegory through their links to the [...] traumatic episodes of English history” (33).¹⁸ Specifically speaking, the year 1683 that Moll signs at the end of the novel prompts Melissa Mowry to observe that “Moll’s life spans some of the most tumultuous years in England’s history, including the years of civil war and Interregnum,” which “suggests a crude parallel between her life and the life of the nation” (99). This “crude parallel” exists not only between individual and national histories but also between national and carceral structures because Moll’s extraordinary experience also integrates the functions of the English prison into the multiple blend network. Situated in a turbulent era of wars, reforms and restoration, Moll is born in Newgate, England around the year 1613, after which she leaves her birthplace, first only Newgate and then the entire English island, in pursuit of a better life. Both of these boundary-crossing journeys turn out to be disastrous, however, with Moll the toddler joining a group of “Gypsies” and Moll the woman marrying her own biological brother (MF 45). Her return to England leads to a perilous career in crime which eventually brings about her second entrance into Newgate. Through her second exit from Newgate and England, Moll miraculously acquires the social status of a rich landowner after her narrow escape from death. On the structural level at least, Moll’s entrances into and departures from the carceral spaces of Newgate and the national spaces of England draw a parallel between the roles of the prison and the nation in the vicissitudes of her life. In her research on Restoration London, Cynthia Wall perceives the streets in *Moll Flanders* as “avenues of pursuit and concealment, spaces both liminal and destinal, offering escape and threatening betrayal;” in summary, “for Moll all roads lead [...] to Newgate” (143). As liminality and mobility prevail in the spaces of the English nation, providing both oppression and protection, both opportunity and menace, England shares with Newgate the womb-like features of absolute authority, loose governance and random transformation.

The absolute authority of the English royalty is most blatantly manifest in the practices of corporal punishment. From the perspective of criminal punishment, the proud statement that

¹⁸ Emphasising the importance of English nationhood in Defoe’s novels set in the Stuart dynasty, Parrinder points out that, distinct from the type of British identity that Colley discerns after “the union of England and Scotland in 1707,” “it is Englishness, not Britishness, that is stressed in Defoe’s works and in the literary characterizations of his contemporaries” (63).

Moll's mother makes about the success of Virginian residents ironically hints at the extensive influence of the English law even on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean: "many a *Newgate Bird* becomes a great Man, and we have [...] several Justices of the Peace, Officers of the Train Bands, and Magistrates of the Towns they live in, that have been burnt in the Hand" (MF 134). Despite their successful careers in the judicial field, the transported criminals will bear the mark of their past offences for the rest of their lives, a mark that is imprinted on their bodies to signify their rulers' eternal superiority. In his study of the penal system, Foucault interprets "the physical cruelty of the penalties imposed by the law" as "a policy of terror: to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign" (1979: 49). The power of the sovereign is also defended by the brutal scenes of public executions. In order to dissuade Jemy from staying in Newgate, Moll convinces him that "the Infamy of a publick Execution" is "certainly a greater pressure upon the Spirits of a Gentleman, than any of the Mortifications that he could meet with Abroad" (MF 381). When the mortification of being hanged in public is deemed insufficient for the crime committed, such as in the more serious cases of "Coiners of Money," female offenders are "burnt to Death at a Stake" (MF 327). The embarrassment that criminals inevitably encounter during either their execution or their transportation reminds them as well as the audience of their vulnerability in front of national authorities, just as the dreadful sentences that counterfeiters receive demonstrate in a dramatic way the disastrous consequence of high treason. As the penal practices of branding, burning and public hanging consolidate the rule of the English king, the connection between the prison and the nation is strengthened by their common structure of absolutism.

The magnificently defended monarchical supremacy is further supported by a strict system of social stratification, in which the plebeians have very few opportunities for upward social mobility. Irritated by Moll's steadfast refusal to become a servant, the old nurse in Colchester rebukes her for her obstinacy, taking for granted that a low-born child can never achieve the status of a gentlewoman no matter how hard she works: "is the Girl mad? what, would you be a Gentlewoman? [...] and pray how will you come to be a Gentlewoman? what, will you do it by your Fingers Ends?" (MF 48). Regarding Moll's aspiration to gentility as the unreasonable fancy of a naïve child, the nurse relates this conversation to the mayor's family, who show "Mirth enough among them" at the tale, all assuming that a penniless orphan has no chance to achieve such an ambition (MF 49). Moll's childish rebellion against the widely accepted social hierarchy comes to an abrupt end at the death of her kind nurse, which "made such an Impression upon [her], that [she] did not want now to be a Gentlewoman, but was very willing to be a Servant, and that any kind of Servant they thought fit to have [her] be" (MF 55).

This humble decision to work as “any kind of Servant,” though inevitable in her current helpless situation, puts Moll at the mercy of her benefactress’s family. Benevolent as they usually are, the young ladies in the family notably change their attitudes towards Moll after noticing their brother’s affection for her and have almost dismissed her in their attempt to thwart this scandalous marriage (MF 72–73). Their mother also strongly disapproves Robin’s love for a servant, reproaching him “in a very mournful Tone”: “then there’s one Son lost;” “Why but Child, [...] she is a Beggar” (MF 87–88). Obviously, this charitable family have no wish to relinquish their superiority over the recipient of their charity, requiring instead a stable maintenance of the hierarchical order.¹⁹ Ellen Pollak interprets Moll’s narration of her Colchester adolescence as both a disclosure of “her earlier childish ignorance of social codes and prevailing gender asymmetries” and a criticism of such prevalent “asymmetries” in English society (140). Repeatedly commented on by theorists from Filmer to McKeon (2005: 11–16, 110–161), the mutual justification of social and gender structures, or royal and patriarchal absolutism, is also captured by Defoe in his depiction of Stuart England.

Entangled with the absolute rule of the English monarch, patriarchal domination places severe restrictions on women’s domestic and economic activities. The inferior status of women in the hierarchical structures of Defoe’s England is well summarised by Colley in *Britons*: “Stripped by marriage of a separate identity and autonomous property, a woman could not by definition be a citizen and could never look to possess political rights” (238). Reduced to a source of income by fortune-hunters and offered very limited marital choices because of international warfare, one daughter of the Colchester family bitterly laments women’s inferior position in the marriage market: “the Market is against our Sex just now; and if a young Woman have Beauty, Birth, Breeding, Wit, Sense, Manners, Modesty, and all these to an Extream; yet if she have not Money, she’s no Body [...]; the Men play the Game all into their own Hands” (MF 58). Grabbing money through matrimony, those greedy men who define the rules in the “Game” of courtship practically forbid rich but defenceless women from rejecting a proposal or enquiring into their suitors’ reputation: “the Women had lost the Privilege of saying No, that it was a Favour now for a Woman to have THE QUESTION ask’d, and if any young Lady had so much Arrogance as to Counterfeit a Negative, she never had the Opportunity given her of denying twice” (MF 112). Having examined the particular case of Moll’s friend in Redriff,

¹⁹ According to Bowen, “it is [Moll’s] reproduction of the traditional patrician/plebeian social structure that rewards her with social advancement through marriage” because Moll’s agreement with the Colchester mother that a servant should not marry a gentleman eventually wins her the respect of Robin’s family (30).

who is reproached by her suitor for making enquiries about him in the neighbourhood, Srividhya Swaminathan concludes that “the widow is a victim of patriarchal restrictions that rigidly define the acceptable modes of behaviour for women” (203). In contrast to the passive consent that most Englishwomen give in exchange for an economically stable married life, Robin is able to marry whomever he loves in defiance of his parents’ objections, ensuring Moll “that he was now in a Way to live, being bred to the Law, and he did not fear Maintaining [her], agreeable to what [she] should expect” (MF 70). Later, he also confidently announces to his elder brother: “I will never please my Pocket in Marrying, and not please my Fancy” (MF 77). Pollak (144), Swaminathan (194) and Chaber (220) have all noted the prevalence of gender inequality in the economic domain of Defoe’s England, with men learning and practising a wide diversity of professions but women only a few unprofitable or illegal ones. Having achieved financial independence through a professional training that is easily accessible to affluent men but not to women, Robin has considerably more marital choices than his sisters can ever have even though as the younger son he can expect little inheritance from his father. The remarkable advantages that men enjoy over women are commented on by Moll herself when the Bath gentleman abandons her after his sudden illness: “to be Friendless is the worst Condition [...] that a Woman can be reduc’d to: *I say a Woman*, because ’tis evident Men can be their own Advisers, and their own Directors, and know how to work themselves out of Difficulties and into Business better than Women” (MF 181). Women’s general unfamiliarity with “Business” aggravates their dependence on men, restricting their opportunities in the same way that the plebeians’ lack of access to state politics restricts their influence on national policies.²⁰ Emphasising “the masculine power of the English state,” Christopher Flynn finds the “complex web of commerce” that commodifies the female body “analogous to the one Defoe pictures in the *Atlas* as occurring between England” and its colonies (20). The constrictive effects of England’s domestic and economic hierarchies are figuratively exposed when Moll describes “the fear of not being Marry’d at all, and of that frightful State of Life, call’d *an old Maid*” as “the Woman’s Snare” – a carceral trope that links the predicaments of women to the confinement of criminals and thus the governance of nations (MF 121, 122). For lower-class English women, therefore, royal or aristocratic authority on the national level and patriarchal control on the domestic or economic level blend together into a prison-like social structure.

²⁰ For a different interpretation of this quotation and a comment on women’s social networks, see Swaminathan (196). Besides, Chaber claims that “Defoe comments implicitly on this male appropriation of property” through Moll’s appeal to the London banker for financial advice (217).

Like the jailers of Newgate, the patricians and fathers in Defoe's England attach more importance to economic transactions than to the punishment of deviance when they exercise their absolute authority. After Moll discloses the illegal storage of Flanders lace to a customs officer, the officer seems more preoccupied with his own financial interest than with the strict enforcement of the law, feeling "overjoy'd with his Prize," promising Moll her "due Share of the Reward" and even giving her a chance to steal some of the lace (MF 276). As Chaber puts it, "the theft of smuggled lace [...] exposes the hidden links among various sectors of society," with the officer as a defender of the English economy and Moll as a member of the plebeian class cooperating with each other to achieve the greatest commercial success for both (214). When the elder brother in the Colchester family "put[s] five guineas into [Moll's] hand" after kissing her freely, Moll admits to be "more confounded with the Money than [she] was before with the Love" (MF 62). The elder brother's sexual conquest of Moll, facilitated more by his material wealth than by his personal charm, establishes "an association between money and sexual desire that continues throughout her narrative" (Kibbie 1995: 1026). The influence that money has on Moll's sexual desire becomes even more evident in her subsequent negotiations with men. When the Bath gentleman is reported to be on the brink of death, Moll's initial reaction is "to see an end of [her] Prosperity" and to congratulate herself on having "play'd the good Housewife" (MF 174). After keeping Moll for six years, this generous lover is cherished by Moll more as a guarantee of her economic security than as an object of her genuine affection. Her apparent unconcern about the health of her most intimate companion induces John C. Murray to underline "Moll's emotional detachment from her acquaintances, family, and suitors [...] demonstrated by the calculating manner in which she reduces each relationship to a financial gain or loss" (51). The equation of interpersonal relationships with financial dealings reaches its climax in Mother Midnight's list of fees for a secret lying-in, which charges unmarried mothers economically rather than morally for their practices of prostitution (MF 223–224). Despite the unethical nature of "her Business," this cunning midwife successfully circumvents the English law on settlement rights and poor relief by giving "Security to the Parish in General Terms to secure them from any Charge" of the newborn babies (MF 221, 222).²¹ Economically oriented and morally indifferent, the parish officials obviously do not care much about the fate of those babies as long as they do not need to pay for their living

²¹ According to Blewett, "the church wardens and parish overseers could apply to two local Justices of the Peace for a warrant of removal by which a poor and unmarried pregnant woman would be returned to the parish in which she was deemed to have a 'settlement' (usually the place of her birth or the place from which she had come)" (441). The customers of Mother Midnight are allowed to stay in London, however, because of her agreement with the parish officials.

expenses. As patrician and patriarchal authorities tolerate financial transactions that defy legal or social norms, numerous questionable activities take place in the prison-like spaces of the English nation.

Mirroring the hardened depravity of Newgate prisoners, ordinary residents in England frequently break away from social expectations in their daily conduct. During her criminal career, Moll has experienced two fire incidents. At the first incident, she steals the most valuable possessions of the family whose house is devastated by fire, unwilling to “make any Restitution” despite her acute awareness of “the inhumanity of this Action” (MF 272). Although Moll might count as an exceptionally unscrupulous thief, her encounter with another thief on her departure from the burning house suggests that such merciless exploitations of unfortunate neighbours are common practices in Defoe’s London rather than a rare exception of innovative criminality. At the second fire incident, however, Defoe’s shrewd protagonist becomes the victim of such neighbourly mercilessness, hit by a falling feather-bed before she reaches the house, left “neglected a good while” by the frantic crowd and offered help only when people wish “to remove the Bed out of the way” (MF 291). This general absence of care starts a vicious circle when the poor become too hopeless to perform their duties properly, carelessly ignoring the kindness of their benefactors or the expectations of their families. In the Mint, for instance, Moll has seen desperate debtors “who were reduc’d some Degrees below being Ruin’d; whose Families were Objects of their own Terror and other Peoples Charity; yet while a Penny lasted, nay, even beyond it, endeavouring to drown their Sorrow in their Wickedness; [...] and Sinning on, as a Remedy for Sin past” (MF 109). Spending what little money they have on alcohol to gratify their own appetite rather than on bread to ensure their children’s survival, these irresponsible men present an image of sensual dissipation as they play the double roles of the downtrodden plebeians in English society and the patriarchal heads of their individual families.

The widespread toleration of deviant behaviour, by the clergy and the royalty as well as by the people they govern, results in the prevalence of uncontrolled chaos beneath the surface of England’s restrictive social hierarchy. When Moll half-heartedly protests against a private wedding “in an Inn, and at Night,” the minister in Brickhill replies nonchalantly: “I assure you your Marriage will be as firm here as in the Church; [...] as for the time of Day it does not at all weigh in this Case; our Princes are married in their Chambers, and at Eight or Ten a Clock at Night” (MF 245). As Blewett explains, “[o]ne of the reasons for the frequency of private marriages was the existence of large numbers of unbeneficed clergymen, who were willing to earn money [...] by performing illegal marriages” (443). Justifying his controversial conduct

through the deviant example of the “Princes,” the Brickill minister associates Christian clergymen’s unscrupulous pursuit of financial prosperity with English noblemen’s questionable marriages in domestic spheres. The questionable deeds of those men who exercise religious, political and patriarchal power in England, accepted and even manipulated by the commoners of the nation, lead to a strange combination of absolute rule and chaotic dealings, epitomised by the simultaneously orderly and disorderly house of Mother Midnight. Within four months, this midwife “had no less than Twelve Ladies of Pleasure brought to Bed within Doors, and [...] Two and Thirty, or thereabouts, under her Conduct without Doors,” at the same time prohibiting “the least indecency in the House” by forbidding men from visiting their mistresses without company (MF 229). In what Moll calls “a strange Testimony of the growing Vice of the Age,” therefore, the business of prostitution and the birth of illegitimate children are tolerated as long as the public appearance of the midwife’s house remains morally decent. The parallel existence of virtue and vice in England, or rather in the whole world, is ruthlessly satirised by Defoe’s 1701 poem *The True-Born Englishman*:

Wherever God erects a House of Prayer,
The Devil always builds a Chapel there:
And ’twill be found upon Examination,
The latter has the largest Congregation; (3)

The juxtaposition of God and the devil in Defoe’s poem summarises the social order that he depicts in the novel, with the English monarch, as head of both the church and the state, acquiescing in the prevalence of deviant conduct that stays within certain legal boundaries.

The prison-like England trope, with England being both the birthplace of Defoe’s protagonist and a place of capricious authority, is further strengthened by the blending of the womb and the tomb at the end of the novel. Moll’s final return to England after her financial success in Virginia and Maryland has triggered multiple debates among literary critics. After detailing the extraordinary prosperity of her plantations, Moll finishes her story with another unexpected adventure: “we are now grown Old: I am come back to *England*, [...] where we resolve to spend the Remainder of our Years in sincere Penitence, for the wicked Lives we have lived” (MF 427). Rejecting any oversimplified opinion about the benefits of transportation, Bartolomeo perceives in Moll’s final voyage to England “a resolution that seems to provide ideological closure at the expense of formal integrity” (462). Guilhamet, on the other hand, regards Moll’s second voyage to England as the end of her transatlantic “exile,” which resembles the “period of hardship tantamount to captivity” that Adam and Eve endure as a result of “their transgression” (121). Concentrating on the issue of nationhood, Elizabeth

Maddock Dillon interprets the ending of the novel as “a stabilizing national narrative that enables a return on investment: Moll’s investment in commercial and autonomous adventure is finally secured when she is located as married (and thus gendered) to an English man (and thus nationalized/racialized)” (251). From another perspective, Amit Yahav-Brown views Moll’s second departure from Newgate as a “symbolic self-reconstitution – at the site of her birth and under the same predicament of transportation as that of her mother,” while her return to England “underscores the significance of the rights-bearing status of political membership for anyone born under English jurisdiction – be they poor, female, or felons” (37). The arguments of Yahav-Brown and Guilhamet emphasise respectively the two roles that England plays in Moll’s life: the motherly place of her birth, a womb however unpleasant it is, and the destined place of her death, a tomb of her own choice. This “womb/tomb syndrome” is repeatedly mentioned by Fludernik, who argues that “[t]he typical carceral tomb imagery evidently shows a strong affinity with the structure of liminality, as does the theological trope of spiritual rebirth” (2019: 232, 35). If the womb-like prison signifies “a prelude to birth, reformation, and renewal,” the tomb also conveys “Christian typology’s positive connotations of [...] a liminal space that prepares the believer for eventual resurrection” (Fludernik 2019: 623, 34). By associating England with not only Moll’s birth but also her death, therefore, the ending of *Moll Flanders* comprises a blending of the womb, the tomb, the prison and the English nation. Allowing birth or rebirth through the crossing of boundaries, such as the body of the mother, the gate to eternal life, the walls of Newgate and the waters around England, prison or prison-like spaces in *Moll Flanders* provide transgressive adventurers with random chances of social transformation.

Random Transformations through Physical Journeys

From journeys within England to voyages across the Atlantic, the acts of travelling often trigger changes in the social circumstances of Defoe’s characters, with the former contributing to the concealment of individual identities and the latter leading to transformations in social standing. The unsystematic governance of English society as well as English borders, mirrored by the chaotic chambers and loose boundaries of womb-like Newgate, allows Defoe’s adventurers to achieve new status through physical journeys across or beyond their prison-like nation.

Defoe’s extensive depictions of physical travelling are frequently associated with his delineations of social mobility. Gary Hentzi, for example, points out that Defoe’s protagonists generally “cover a good part of the social spectrum in the course of their adventures” (176),

while Chris Ewers lists the purposes of these adventures in more detail: “to find their proper class status, to raise a fortune, to find a partner, to take a holiday, to gain knowledge, to improve health, to seek adventure, or to find a home” (31). In what Mowry terms Moll Flanders’s “Odyssey” from Colchester to Virginia (111), Gladfelder notices an English orphan’s “social dislocation and dependency: she wanders as a child from one home, one social class, one repertoire of possibilities, to another,” demonstrating on the way “both her vulnerability to seduction (not only sexual) and her freedom, the contradictory but twin aspects of her married and criminal life” (116). The vast extent of Moll’s geographical and social mobility is summarised by Kate Loveman’s statement that “Moll occupies multiple roles – servant, fake aristocrat, tradesman’s wife, bankrupt, gentlewoman, prostitute, thief, colonist, condemned prisoner, transportee, and planter – and [...] visits assorted locations including Colchester, London, Lancashire, Suffolk, and Virginia” (7). The adventurer’s easy adoption of contradictory identities during, or rather through, her physical journeys recalls Defoe’s mocking definition of “Englishmen” in *The True-Born Englishman*:

Norwegian Pirates, Buccaneering Danes,
Whose Red-hair’d Offspring ev’ry where remains.
Who join’d with Norman-French, compound the Breed
From whence your True-Born Englishmen proceed. (6)

Just as the forefathers of the English people came from foreign lands such as Norway, Denmark and France, constructing a new nation for their descendants through their adventurous voyages, Moll also travels extensively in search of higher social standing. Defoe’s vision of a “miscegenated and pluralistic” English nation, in other words a collection of loosely governed, prison-like spaces that accommodate both proper and improper deeds, inevitably encourages blatant transgressions of its hierarchical structures (Parrinder 67).²² Whereas short journeys on the English island can help Moll conceal her past identities and forge new ones, a fundamental transformation in her social status only occurs when she crosses the boundaries of her literal as well as figurative prisons and faces the random consequences of death or rebirth.

Similar to Moll’s free movement in Newgate from the condemned hole to her solitary chamber, her travelling between the different places of England also enhances her social mobility in the hierarchical order. Despite the improvement of transportation infrastructure during the eighteenth century, Moll appears much more mobile in Defoe’s seventeenth-century

²² In *Nation and Novel*, Parrinder quotes another stanza of Defoe’s *The True-Born Englishman* to illustrate Defoe’s vision of England: “Multicultural and multi-ethnic England stands in stark contrast to its weaker and ethnically purer neighbours, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales” (67).

England than Austen's heroines over one hundred years later.²³ In order to conceal her affair with Jemy from the London banker, for instance, Moll deliberately takes the coach from London to Cheshire and meets the banker on her journey back to London, thus feigning the appearance of a respectable woman returning from her stay in Lancashire (MF 239–240). Similarly, Moll escapes to Dunstable after the arrest of her male accomplice, temporarily reconstructing her identity from a notorious thief evading justice into a concerned wife waiting for her husband (MF 286–287). The adoption of new social roles can even be achieved through a short journey within London. In order not to repay her debt after the linen-draper's bankruptcy, Moll "took Lodgings in a very private Place, drest [...] up in the Habit of a Widow, and call'd [herself] Mrs. *Flanders*" (MF 108). By moving from the home that her creditors know to "a very private Place" in the Mint, Moll dodges all her responsibilities from the past, makes new acquaintances under a new name and even pretends to be a widow in her hunting for a rich husband. Her husband-hunting endeavours result in even more movements around London, first from the Mint to Redriff and then from the country to her friend's new home (MF 111–124). Through such cleverly-planned geographical relocations, Moll successfully commits "the Fraud of *passing for a Fortune without Money*" (MF 131). Moll's ability to disguise her social identities through physical movements culminates in her criminal career, when she "contriv'd to appear in new Shapes every time [she] went abroad," presenting herself in the different images of a beggar, a servant, a widow and a lady during her visits to different places (MF 336).²⁴ Commenting on Moll's different dress styles on different errands, Wall argues that "[t]he streets offer Moll escape not only in the way they physically invite her to disappear into dark alleys and obscure courtyards, but also in the spaces they provide her [...] with personal disguise and psychological concealment" (144). As geographical relocations enable Moll to repeatedly disentangle herself from her previous crimes or duties, her travelling within Newgate-like England facilitates her adoptions of new, though mostly fake, social status.

²³ For a detailed study of the improvement of transportation infrastructure in eighteenth-century Britain, see Ewers (1–3).

²⁴ Similar to my summary of the plot, Wall lists Moll's forged identities as "a wealthy gentlewoman with her own gold watches tempting thieves; a maidservant; a man; a beggar" (144). Chloe Wigston Smith states likewise that "[r]anging from widows and servants to ladies and shoppers, Moll's disguises reflect the fully developed range of social positions she inhabits" (84). In her research on the role of clothes in Moll's life, C. W. Smith emphasises Moll's reliance on "clothing as a practical instrument to navigate the streets of London," sometimes under "the disguises that allow her to project different identities and that support her work as a pickpocket" (84). Besides, Murray points out that by wearing different clothes and using different names, "Moll resists inscription and circulation of her assumed identities amongst the criminal and privileged classes" (54).

The short journeys inside the English borders tend to disguise Moll's actual circumstances instead of transforming them, however, since the forged identities she adopts during these journeys induce no fundamental change in her financial or social standing. The extravagant journey that Moll and her linen-draper husband take to Oxford offers a good example for the temporary concealment of identities that physical movements can induce. While the tour from London to Oxford allows the imprudent couple to momentarily enjoy the aristocratic lifestyle of "a Lord" and a "Countess," the respect they receive at the university can neither solve their middle-class predicaments in London nor save them from their future bankruptcy (MF 105).²⁵ Similarly, by giving birth to an illegitimate son in Bath rather than Colchester or Redruff, Moll not only conceals her past marriages but also feigns good "Reputation," treated kindly by the deceived parishioners under the title of "Lady *Cleave*, and [...] assisted in [her] Travail by three or four of the best Citizens Wives of *Bath*" (MF 169). Nevertheless, the forged gentility that Moll enjoys during the several months of her pregnancy does not change the adulterous nature of her relationship with the Bath gentleman or her inevitable fate of being discarded by him afterwards. The absence of fundamental change in Moll's short excursions is most manifest in her unpleasant attempt at cross-dressing. When she tries to commit thefts in masculine clothes, Moll complains that "it was impossible to be so Nimble, so Ready, so Dexterous at these things, in a Dress so contrary to Nature" (MF 281). According to Chloe Wigston Smith, Moll's aversion to cross-dressing is particularly strange because "her discomfort stands in contrast to the convention that male garments were freer and less restrictive than women's stiff stays and wide skirts" (88). Based on Moll's narration, Swaminathan even draws the inference that "Defoe is not a proponent of such cross-dressing" despite its pragmatic value (204). Although her masculine disguise ensures her narrow escape from justice after her partner's arrest, Moll highlights the failure of her cross-dressing attempt to transform her gender identity by insisting on her "Nature" as a woman (MF 281). Just as Moll cannot change the verdict of her sentence through a movement within Newgate from the convicts' cell to a private quarter, the transformation in social status and the defiance of gender expectations can seldom be achieved through a tour within the English island.

Different from these ineffective journeys, Moll's crossings of the borders of both Newgate and England frequently bring about death- or rebirth-like changes in her social status. Although Moll's first crossing of both carceral and national boundaries takes place at her birth,

²⁵ In his analysis of the Oxford episode, Richetti argues that "Moll's success in the marriage market and in the criminal trade depends upon her ability to inhabit in convincing fashion a middle-class identity" or even "pretend to be aristocrats" (2005: 246).

through which she simultaneously enters Newgate, England and the world at large, her social integration into the English nation occurs at a later stage. According to Yahav-Brown, “Moll finds herself outside English society” both as an abandoned orphan in Newgate and as a child among homeless “*Gypsies*” (32; MF 45). This sense of dissociation only vanishes when her brave attempt at “negotiating her own entry into English society” results in her incorporation into the Colchester community (Yahav-Brown 32). Because of the discrepancy between Moll’s physical and social “entry” into England, social factors should also be taken into consideration when her carceral and national experiences are compared. Moll’s first entrance into Newgate coincides with her birth into the world, thus signifying the genesis of a new life despite the criminal offences of her mother. Similarly, her first entrance into England, physically brought about by her biological birth in Newgate but socially actualised only when she leaves the “*Gypsies*” and settles down in Colchester, wins her a comfortable position in the parish despite her illegitimate birth: “tho’ I was not a Parish Charge upon this or that part of the Town by Law, yet [...] Compassion mov’d the Magistrates of the Town to order some Care to be taken of me, and I became one of their own, as much as if I had been born in the Place” (MF 45). This social birth in English society after her physical birth in the English territory culminates in the adoption of Moll by a motherly figure. By repeatedly describing her nurse as a “good Motherly Nurse,” a “good Motherly Creature” and “a meer Mother,” Moll underlines the womb-like features of the English national spaces that she both physically and socially enters through a rejection of her previous foreign companions (MF 47, 49, 52). Her entrance into this womb-like space initiates her early life of respectability, stability and even gentility, “brought up as Mannerly and as Genteelly as if [she] had been at the Dancing School” (MF 46). Just as Moll’s first crossing of the Newgate borders signals the birth of a new life, her crossing of the social boundaries between foreign vagabonds and English parishes transforms an illegitimate child into a genteel maidservant.

In contrast to Moll’s entry into Newgate-like England, her first departure from the carceral and national spaces leads to a death-like change in her social standing. Just as Moll’s exit from Newgate leads her away from English communities into the hands of “*Gypsies*,” her first voyage from England to Virginia also damages all her previous endeavours at social climbing. Immediately after her crossing of the English national borders, Moll experiences “a terrible passage, frighted twice with dreadful Storms, and once with what was still more terrible, [...] a Pyrate, who came on board and took away almost all [their] Provisions” (MF 132–133). The physical danger and material dispossession that Moll faces on the Atlantic Ocean are followed by familial disaster and moral depravity in the form of unintentional incest, as this

boundary-crossing journey brings her into the household of her biological mother and half-brother. Upon the shocking discovery of this incestuous relationship, Moll condemns it as “the worst sort of Whoredom,” complaining that “all [her] seeming Prosperity wore off and ended in Misery and Destruction” (MF 138). By transforming her economic “Prosperity” on the plantation and social respectability as a plantation owner’s wife into the “Misery and Destruction” of a financially insecure, legally unmarried woman, Moll’s involuntary practice of incest, disclosed through her transatlantic travelling, has a devastating impact on her life. This impact deprives her of not only material comforts but also familial ties, prompting her to inform her brother “that he neither was [her] lawful Husband, nor they [her] lawful Children” (MF 142). The sudden collapse of her previous economic and social achievements, together with the irrevocable ruin of her domestic felicity, associates the disastrous outcome of Moll’s adventure with death itself. While Moll’s brother accuses Moll of having “given him a mortal Wound with [her] Tongue” in her revelation of their consanguinity, Moll openly uses the word “Death” in her description of her own sentiments (MF 142, 151). The close link between incest and death is commented on by Thomas Grant Olsen, who argues that “[i]ncest threatens symbolic death for the characters and the narrative” (476).²⁶ Similarly, Bartolomeo also points out that Moll’s “first narrative of colonial settlement has little of the celebratory tone and copious detail of the second,” with the spaces outside England “represent[ing] a place of peril and not of promise” (461). While Moll’s movement from Newgate to the “*Gypsies*” results in her isolation from English society, her first attempt to leave the English island brings about a death-like disaster in her economic, social, familial and moral status.

This death-like effect of boundary-crossing adventures can also be found in Moll’s second entries into Newgate and England. In his analysis of Moll’s “status as a liminal passenger” in Newgate, Bender points out that “Moll describes life in prison as a death of her old self” (45). On her arrival in Newgate, Moll repeatedly evokes the notion of death, fully convinced that “now [she] was to Expiate all [her] Offences at the Gallows, that [she] was now to give satisfaction to Justice with [her] Blood, and that [she] was come to the last Hour of [her] Life” (MF 349). The death-related metonymic expressions from “the Gallows” to “Blood” draw attention to the transformation of Moll from a wealthy woman into a death-row convict upon her second entrance into Newgate. More straightforward references to the prospect of

²⁶ Approaching Defoe’s depiction of incest from an economic perspective, Bowen compares the act of incest to the “economic insularity” of “stockjobbing,” which “simply shifted wealth from one person to another rather than bringing in new wealth from abroad or creating new manufacturing” (34). In this interpretation, the practices of both marital and financial “incest” would eventually hit a dead end because of their failure to create something new.

death prevail in the subsequent pages: “I had Death as it were in view, and thought of nothing Night and Day, but of Gibbets and Halters, evil Spirits and Devils” (MF 353). Again, the imageries of “Gibbets” and “Devils” which daily occupy Moll’s thoughts in prison associate the spaces of Newgate with the concept of hell, thus representing her second crossing of Newgate’s geographical borders as a symbolic journey from life to death. This physical and figurative journey quickly exerts a psychological effect on Moll’s mind: “a certain strange Lethargy of Soul possess’d me; I had no Trouble, no Apprehensions, no Sorrow about me, [...] my Senses, my Reason, nay, my Conscience were all a-sleep” (MF 355). Immersed in the hellish surroundings of Newgate, Moll gradually progresses from shock at her capture and fear for her punishment to unconcern for her own fate and indifference to her past sins. According to Richetti, “Newgate produces in Moll is [sic] a numbness, a lack of self-consciousness” which “negates everything that Moll has come to stand for in her narrative thus far, surpassing in its erasure of will and purpose even the descent years before into criminality” (2005: 254). If the death sentence that Moll receives from the judges is intended to ensure her physical demise and the hellish imageries that she evokes in her narrative serve to symbolise this bleak future, her gradual loss of emotions in Newgate indicates her psychological death as a result of incarceration. Moll’s second entry into the hellish spaces of Newgate therefore initiates a metamorphosis in her life from a criminal of extraordinary financial success to a convict awaiting physical as well as psychological dissolution.

In parallel with her second arrival in Newgate, Moll’s return to England after her escape from the incestuous marriage triggers a death-like transformation in her social status. The parallel between the prison and the nation is hinted at when Moll describes Bath, the city in which she settles down after her transatlantic voyage, as “a Place of Gallantry enough; Expensive, and full of Snares” (MF 156). Resembling the snares which deprive the captives of their ability to move freely and their connections with the outside world, the prison-like spaces of the English nation restrict the movements of Defoe’s adventurous protagonist with devastating bad weather and severe career restrictions. After another series of storms on the sea, Moll finds herself “reduc’d to between two or three Hundred Pounds in the whole” and “entirely without Friends, nay, even so much as without Acquaintance, for [...] it was absolutely necessary not to revive former Acquaintances” (MF 156). In contrast to her integration into the Colchester community, where she is allowed to earn a living, Moll’s second entry into England intensifies her isolation from genteel society and legal careers instead of alleviating it. Left both materially and socially desolate after her border-crossing journey, Moll draws on the death trope again to emphasise the evaporation of all her previous economic or

social achievements, lamenting that her extravagant lifestyle in Bath with “no settl’d Income [...] was but a certain kind of *bleeding to Death*” (MF 157). Although, as critics like Joshua Gass (119) and Guilhamet (126) point out, Moll frequently compares the Governess to her “Mother” during her second stay in England, thus evoking the concepts of womb, home and motherhood, she experiences this time a decade-long process of suffocating deterioration that associates her womb-like surroundings with notions of stillbirth rather than rebirth (MF 231, 401). The absence of sufficient wealth or social networks drives Moll first into the practice of adultery with the Bath gentleman, then into that of bigamy with the London banker and finally into that of felony with the motherly Governess who, unlike the genteel nurse in Colchester, engages Moll in profitable but illegal professions.²⁷ This deterioration of Moll’s social respectability continues until her narrow escape from the gallows, which leads to her second departure from both Newgate and England.

During her second departure from carceral and national spaces, Moll’s voyage from a prison in England to a plantation in Virginia transforms her from an infamous convict to a successful landowner. According to Bowen, “Moll may be said to pursue middle-class gentility” throughout her life but achieves this status only near the end of the novel (31). Her desire for upward social mobility already manifests itself in her childhood years when she openly expresses her wish to become a “Gentlewoman” rather than a maidservant, although her understanding of the term differs significantly from the Colchester community’s interpretation: “all I understood by being a Gentlewoman, was to be able to Work for myself, and get enough to keep me without that terrible Bug-bear *going to Service*, whereas they meant to live Great, Rich, and High” (MF 50).²⁸ In the end, she attains both financial independence (the ability to work for herself) and social respectability (“to live Great, Rich, and High”) through another crossing of the carceral and national borders.²⁹ In her account of the wealthy life that she and her criminal husband lead in America, Moll highlights the transformation of their financial status after their transatlantic voyage, “reflecting how much better that was, not than *Newgate*

²⁷ According to Mowry, “Moll’s final transformation into a thief correlates roughly with the Interregnum,” a period of extreme instability in the history of the English nation (109). The individual history of Moll’s social deterioration forms therefore a rough parallel with the national history of political turmoil. As for discussions about when exactly Moll’s commitment of bigamy begins, see Loveman (15–18) and Bowen (31).

²⁸ For an analysis of the multiple ironies in Moll’s wish to become a “Gentlewoman,” see Ian A. Bell (159–160).

²⁹ Echoing McKeon’s discussions of the “progressive ideology” in eighteenth-century novels (2002: 153), Guilhamet argues that “Moll is structuring a new vocabulary influenced by Whig ideas,” which “foreshadows Defoe’s attempt to redefine [...] the true gentleman in terms of learning rather than inheritance” (117).

only, but than the most prosperous of [their] Circumstances in the wicked Trade that [they] had been both carrying on” (MF 415). Moll’s almost miraculous transgression of class boundaries near the end of the novel has been a popular topic among literary scholars. According to Bartolomeo, for example, despite the fact that Moll is originally transported as an indentured servant, “her conspicuous success after her arrival in America” enhances her standing so much that she tends to “draw no distinction between English servants who labour for a contracted period and African slaves in bondage for life” (458). Examining Moll’s rise from a transportee to a landowner, Chloe Wigston Smith notes that while in America Defoe’s protagonist “imports the traditions of the English upper classes, ensuring that Jemy embodies the image of the wealthy landowner” in her purchase of clothes, servants and land (91). In summary, Moll’s second crossing of the carceral and national boundaries brings about a fundamental change in her financial and social circumstances, realising her childhood dream of prosperity and gentility on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

The metamorphosis of Moll’s social and financial situation is accompanied by a radical change in her domestic and emotional status. Moll’s extraordinary commercial achievements after her boundary-crossing adventure are accelerated by her rediscovery of familial ties and thus the transformation of her domestic relationships, with Moll joining the landowning class through a reunion with her son and the inheritance of her mother’s plantation (MF 406). Her acquisition of wealth and her improvement in social status are accompanied by an unusual display of motherly affection at the first sight of her grown-up son:

let any Mother of Children that reads this consider it, and but think with what anguish of Mind I restrain’d myself; what yearnings of Soul I had in me to embrace him, and weep over him; [...] When he went from me I stood gazing and trembling, and looking after him as long as I could see him; then [...] lying on my Face wept, and kiss’d the Ground that he had set his Foot on. (MF 404)

Cured of her prison-induced “Lethargy” by her second transatlantic adventure (MF 355), Moll emphasises her “anguish of Mind” and “yearnings of Soul” in this unexpected encounter with her long-lost child, using an almost sentimental language that remarkably differs from her matter-of-fact narrative style (MF 404). Her ardent expression of motherly love in the almost pious gesture of kissing the ground also indicates that she is emotionally liberated from the death-like state of psychological “numbness” (Richetti 2005: 254). As the direct consequences of her second voyage to America, Moll’s renewed marriage with Jemy, convenient reencounter with Humphry and timely inheritance of her mother’s estate together ensure what E. M. Dillon calls “her successful accumulation of property and social relations (husband, mother, son)”

(251).³⁰ As the forms of class status, domestic relationships and spatial movements interact with each other, Moll's boundary-crossing journey leads to a radical change in her financial, social, familial as well as emotional circumstances.

If the change in Moll's social status disrupts the hierarchical order of the English nation, the inversion of her domestic relationships signals a transformation in her gender roles, defying the norms of femininity that severely restrict women's career. Whereas in England Moll is forced into adultery and theft by the dire need of money because most of the legitimate professions in the bank, the army or the church are inaccessible to women, in America she not only participates in plantation business, but also demonstrates far greater competence than her former and current husbands.³¹ While Humphry rejoices over the visit of his physically and mentally healthy mother, he describes his father as "old and infirm both in Body and Mind," "very Fretful, and Passionate, almost Blind, and capable of nothing" (MF 417). Moll's slightly triumphant tone here draws attention to the fundamental change in her relationship with her brother-husband who, once powerful enough to confine her physically and ruin her socially, is now "capable of nothing" in front of his still vivacious sister. Moll's superiority over men is also manifest in her interactions with Jemy. Recounting her assiduous work as planter in Maryland, Moll contrasts her own competence with Jemy's incompetence: "he was bred a Gentleman, and by Consequence was not only unacquainted, but indolent, and when we did Settle, would much rather go out into the Woods with his Gun, which they call there Hunting, and which is the ordinary Work of the *Indians*, and which they do as Servants" (MF 411). No longer compelled to seek financial support from men, Moll deviates from the norms of female submission by ridiculing Jemy's ignorance as well as indolence and reducing his hobby to the work of "Servants." According to Bartolomeo, when Moll becomes a member of the landed gentry while Jemy's "aristocratic pretensions [...] identify him with the colonial servant class [...], the customary gender roles are reversed, [and] Jemy becomes a decorative appendage" (458–459). Similarly, Guilhamet calls Jemy "something of a 'trophy' husband, not worth a great deal as a manager" (131). Murray also claims that Moll "explores the boundaries of

³⁰ According to E. M. Dillon, the happy ending of Moll's life story conveys "a firm sense of her national identity" because it coincides "with her return to England and thus to the national space that property and social relations entitle her to comfortably inhabit" (251).

³¹ The improvement of Moll's domestic authority during her time on the American continent is noted by Ganz: "Whereas Moll relies upon her brother-husband, Humphrey, when she first settles in America, she now leads Jemy to the New World. She decides where they will live and how they will survive. Moll's own savings prove crucial in enabling them to begin their lives anew. [...] Defoe offers this union as an appropriately reconstituted marriage" (2005: 180–181). For a different interpretation of Moll's previous reliance on men in financial spheres, see David Wallace Spielman (81).

gender identity and transgresses their limits” in her efforts “to assert a sense of economic individualism” (43). Moll’s transgressions of gender norms as a result of her boundary-crossing adventure recall Bender’s comments on Jack Sheppard’s “brilliantly contrived flights from Newgate when he walked out in female disguise” (14). In stark contrast to her previous failure at cross-dressing in London, Moll’s second escape from Newgate and England is accompanied by a rebirth-like metamorphosis in her gender role, a case of social “cross-dressing” reminiscent of Sheppard’s physical practice of it.

Moll’s adventurous transformations are compared to rebirth by both Defoe’s narrator and his critics, highlighting the womb-like features of the carceral and national spaces. The concept of rebirth is indirectly referred to by Moll herself when she envisions her life with Jemy in America: “we should look back on all our past Disasters with infinite Satisfaction, when we should consider that our Enemies should entirely forget us, and that we should live as new People in a new World, no Body having any thing to say to us, or we to them” (MF 383).³² By dodging all the responsibilities of her criminal offences through her cleverly-manoeuvred departure from England, Moll completely reconstructs her individual identities and develops a new career on the American plantations. Calling Moll “a middle-class Miranda exclaiming over ‘new people in a new world,’” Chaber underlines America’s “capitalist dream of unlimited mobility and growth”: “if in England respectable men proved thieves, in America thieves can become honest citizens” (222).³³ The “unlimited mobility” that transportees enjoy outside England transforms some of them from poor criminals unwanted by their native country into rich planters unchained from their former selves. Commenting on Moll’s sudden metamorphosis, Guilhamet describes her escape from Newgate as “the occasion for a new life, a circumstance foreshadowed earlier by her mother’s transportation and transformation” (128).

³² For an analysis of Defoe’s attitude towards emigration in his representations of “new People in a new World,” see Bartolomeo (455–470).

³³ Bowen interprets Moll’s relationship to the English nation from a different perspective, regarding her “commitment to colonization in the Americas as a way to restore the English economy” (44). According to Bowen’s argument, Moll and her transported husband first “buy English goods to barter and plant with in Virginia and Maryland” and then “return to England, dutifully – in mercantilist terms – bringing their wealth back home to the mother country” (44). Colley, on the other hand, explicates both the early colonists’ close ties to their home country and their considerable distance from it: “The majority of American colonists [...] dressed like Britons back home, purchased British manufactured goods, read books printed in the main in London, spoke English and [...] retained intact many of the folk ways, family ways, and sex ways of their place of origin. [...] But they were also very different, set apart by their experiences as emigrants and pioneers in a completely different landscape, not to mention by 3,000 miles of water” (134). Despite Moll’s apparent attachment to England, therefore, she remains outside the English national borders, geographically as well as socially, when she accumulates a fortune on the American plantations.

Richetti argues similarly that “she claims nothing less than a newly-developed personality” after her voyage to America (2005: 256). Moll’s acquisition of a new personality, new income and new class status during what Chloe Wigston Smith calls “her transformation from thief to businesswoman” integrates the concept of the womb into Defoe’s figurative representations of Newgate-like England (91). As a result, both Bender (46) and Blewett (17) choose the term “rebirth” to describe Moll’s release from the hell-like prison. In contrast to her first American journey, Moll’s second voyage across the Atlantic Ocean enables her to be reborn from the suffocating wombs of Newgate and England into the unlimited possibilities of the New World.

Similar rebirth-like transformations through boundary-crossing movements also occur randomly in the lives of Defoe’s minor characters, who adopt new social identities after international journeys without reforming their deviant behaviour. Moll’s draper-husband, for instance, dodges the legal consequences of his extravagant lifestyle after he has “found means to break out of the Bailiff’s House that Night or the next, and got over into *France*” (MF 107). By departing from the bailiff’s house and the English nation, this shrewd draper gets rid of his old identity as an imprisoned debtor and enjoys regained freedom in another country. Similarly, the rebirth-like changes that Moll’s mother and her fellow transportees experience after their departure from England is best summarised by her own proud statement that “many a *Newgate* Bird becomes a great Man” (MF 134). Again, the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean transforms former thieves and prostitutes from degraded criminals in Newgate into influential officials in the colonies. Even the tell-tale scars on their hands change from an ugly sign of eternal shame to a common feature among many American residents (MF 134). Another transformation in social status is achieved by the Governess through a shorter journey: by crossing the boundary between England and Ireland, this skilful thief not only escapes the fate of being transported but also starts a new profession as “Midwife and Procureess” (MF 279). Like the inmates’ departure from traditional eighteenth-century prisons, however, the adventurers’ rebirth through boundary-crossing movements signals a random change in their social positions but not in their deviant behaviour. Although the draper walks freely in France and the Governess in Ireland, no gesture of repentance is mentioned in the narrative. Instead, the Governess continues her practice of theft and even acquires more criminal skills. Moll’s mother, despite Moll’s claim that she has become “a very Pious sober and religious Woman” in the colony, reminisces about her past crimes with pleasure rather than penitence: “I look back on them with a particular Satisfaction, as they have been a means to bring me to this place” (MF137, 136). Just as a voluntary or forced voyage away from England does not prevent former prisoners from using the criminal skills or wealth that they have accumulated there, the adventurous

crossing of carceral and national boundaries offers these prisoners mobility in the social hierarchy but not reformation of their behaviour.

Likewise, Moll's attainment of rebirth through a second departure from Newgate and Newgate-like England also signifies a transformation in her standing without any normalisation of her conduct. Stressing Moll's secular rather than spiritual success at the end of the novel, Bender points out that Defoe "uses the language of penitence and redemption to trace a salvation that is equally well comprehended in terms of mercantile economics" (47). Watt goes even further to argue that Moll's "remorse and penitence are not supported by the action or even by any sense of real psychological change," with their credibility severely undermined by her unscrupulous conduct in America (128).³⁴ During her transatlantic voyage, Moll obtains numerous privileges for herself and Jemy by bribing the boatswain with stolen money (MF 394). Despite her previous declarations of sincere repentance in Newgate, Moll does not scruple to defy the normative expectations of her society again almost immediately after her release from prison and purchases material comforts with her illegally gained wealth. Her claim to the boatswain that she and Jemy are "Persons of a differing Character from the wretched Crew" of criminal transportees cannot be more ironic because both of them are extraordinarily notorious offenders (MF 394). Noticing Moll's deviant transactions with sailors on board, Bartolomeo emphasises "her use of the proceeds of her criminal career to secure a comfortable passage for herself and Jemy" (457). Likewise, Gladfelder observes that "she still seems much the same person she has always been: scared off from criminality but not from the self-interested calculation of goods and hazards" (124). Moll's rebirth in social status, achieved through questionable transactions and unscrupulous calculations, marks therefore no significant improvement in her moral integrity. Her continued violation of social norms becomes even more evident in her reunion with her son, when she gives him a stolen gold watch as a present: "I desir'd he would now and then kiss it for my sake; *I did not indeed tell him* that I had stole it from a Gentlewomans side" (MF 422). Moll's use of stolen goods as a

³⁴ In his analysis of Whig culture in Defoe's writing, Guilhamet regards Moll's economic success as both prerequisite and conducive to her religious awakening: "The time and opportunity for repentance are precisely what wealth can buy. Unrelieved poverty [...] raises the risk of resorting to crime. But once a certain competence is achieved, a useful repentance can begin. [...] It is characteristic of Whig culture to conflate a spiritual end with a materialistic motive. The acquisition of wealth (not wealth in excess) makes the higher aspiration a reality" (17). From another perspective, Bowen also recognises some change in Moll's personality and argues that "she transforms into someone who thinks of her obligations to others" even though "she remains loyal to her criminal network," thus never betraying Jemy's deadly secrets to the English court (42). Nevertheless, this gesture of loyalty to a notorious robber is morally dubious at best and thus cannot qualify as a sign of personality reform.

token of motherly affection prompts Richetti to claim that “the joke is grotesquely coherent,” representing Moll as “more than simply a reformed criminal” (2005: 240). Moll’s indifference to normative constrictions in her post-prison life highlights the absence of disciplinary reformation in her prison experience, thus limiting the extent of her transformation to mere social ascent through the acquisition of land.

The comments of Defoe’s fictional editor on Moll’s unreformed behaviour draw attention to the interactions between various formal elements in this fictional autobiography. The presence of an editor in *Moll Flanders* hints at the possible revisions that Moll’s original draft has undergone before it reaches the reading public. In the preface, the editor mentions his strenuous efforts to modify the unrepentant voice of the autobiographical narrator: “she is made to tell her own Tale in modester Words than she told it at first; the Copy which came first to Hand, having been written in Language more like one still in *Newgate*, than one grown Penitent and Humble” (MF 37). In his analysis of this statement, Gladfelder points out that “[t]he roughness and immodesty of Moll’s language, which calls on Defoe as editor to [...] *alter, finish, garble, wrap* [...] the ancient, Newgate-debauched original, [...] cast[s] doubt on the truth of her repentance” (115). The necessity for an editorial rewriting of Moll’s own account of her criminal practices, in which she talks “more like one still in *Newgate*,” ironically brings to the fore Moll’s continued violation of social norms even after her supposed religious enlightenment and successful entry into the landed class (MF 37). The deviant behaviour of Defoe’s protagonist after her release from prison induces critics like Yahav-Brown to question “the authenticity of Moll’s conversion, even though her narrative conforms to the formal structure of spiritual autobiography” (37). The blending of different narrative traditions from the conventional form of spiritual autobiography to the scandalous tales of criminal biography enhances the strength of Moll’s rebellion against the royal and patriarchal authorities of the English nation.

Autobiographical Destabilisation of Royal, Patriarchal Absolutism

The various narrative strategies that *Moll Flanders* draws on to depict the death- or rebirth-like transformations of boundary-crossing adventurers interact with the royal and patriarchal rule of Defoe’s Newgate-like England. As the two hallmarks of womb-like spaces, random metamorphosis and capricious governance, are highlighted by the literary traditions of spiritual autobiography and criminal biography, the encounters between spatial and narrative forms destabilise the absolute authority of monarchs and patriarchs.

Defoe's *Moll Flanders* incorporates various narrative forms into its representations of prison-like national spaces. In her study of novels set in colonial America, E. M. Dillon underlines "the link between the political form of the nation and the literary genre of the novel" as well as the important roles that "issues of family formation" play in novelistic depictions of nationhood (235, 236). As the womb that epitomises family formation blends with the nation and the novel in a complex network of diverse political and literary elements, Defoe's representations of marriage, prostitution and individual transformation shed light on England's national mechanism through a combination of different narrative strategies. In their attempts to identify the various generic forms that Defoe's fictional autobiography draws on, Loveman detects "rogue tales," "spiritual biography," "city comedy" and "topical essays" (8), while Chloe Wigston Smith names "crime writing, such as trial sessions, biographies and last confessions" (93–94). Stressing the formal ambiguity of Defoe's work, Blewett suggests possible origins of its narrative structure in a series of questions: "Is it a picaresque novel? A fictional version of the Puritan spiritual autobiography? A bourgeois romance or an anti-romance? A work of irony?" (18). According to Gass, "the various literary genres [...] that organize *Moll Flanders*" include "criminal biography, conversion narrative, picaresque (or the English understanding of that form), advice column, allegory, [...] religious allegory, casuistry, and the intensely self-absorbed first-person perspective of spiritual autobiography" (112). Reading *Moll Flanders* as "a compilation or permutation of the criminal biography, the confessional, and the pamphlet on social policy, with occasional interventions of pornography, scandal sheet anecdote, and transportation tale," Ian A. Bell underlines how Moll the narrator appears to actively "shape the presentation of adventures" instead of simply "getting the story told" (158).³⁵ Through a creative blending of conventional narrative forms, among which spiritual autobiography and criminal biography have received wide scholarly attention, the narrator actively shapes her story to strengthen her voice, gain readerly sympathy and make subtle comments on the national spaces in which she dwells.

The rebirth of Defoe's boundary-crossing travellers inevitably brings to the fore the connection between the personal story of a thief-turned-gentlewoman and the narrative conventions of spiritual autobiography. George A. Starr famously argues that *Moll Flanders* bears remarkable resemblances to spiritual autobiographies on both thematic and structural levels. Thematically speaking, "a number of everyday articles and affairs took on definite

³⁵ For an in-depth analysis of how "Defoe increasingly exploits the dramatic possibilities of first-person narrative," see Ian A. Bell (165).

spiritual connotations through constant figurative use” in conventional spiritual autobiographies, with the act of “wayfaring” frequently epitomising the protagonist’s quest for redemption (Starr 23).³⁶ The “thematic coherence” of this quest, which reveals “the protagonist’s inward vicissitudes [...] either of growth or decay,” compensates for the “narrative incoherence” of many spiritual autobiographies in terms of structure, which are usually composed of “random episodes” that lead up to the final conversion (Starr 126). According to Starr, Moll’s lifelong wayfaring, physically between England and Virginia or spiritually between sin and salvation, consists of recurrent “false repentances” that “provide one thematic link between outwardly diverse episodes” and form an “implicit contrast with real repentance” (138). The pattern of half-hearted attempts at conversion culminating in a serious one can be easily discerned in Moll’s narrative. After marrying the London banker, for example, Moll claims to have “landed in a safe Harbour, after the Stormy Voyage of Life past was at an end; [...] wept over the Remembrance of past Follies, and [...] flatter’d [her] self that [she] had sincerely repented” (MF 251). Five pages later, however, Moll rejects the illusory impression that her lifelong quest for salvation reaches its end through several drops of insincere tears.³⁷ Her practices of theft after the unexpected bankruptcy and death of her London husband indicate how vulnerable her supposed penitence is in the face of poverty: “I had liv’d a sober, grave, retir’d Life for several Years, but now I should be driven by the dreadful Necessity of my Circumstances to the Gates of Destruction” (MF 256). Moll’s uncommon reference to an allegorical image here, “the Gates of Destruction,” is highly reminiscent of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, thus infusing a religious spirit into her narrative. The role of religion in Moll’s life becomes much more crucial during her second stay in Newgate. At the place of her birth, Moll progresses from a sheer “fear of Death” to “a sincere regret for the wicked Life” she has lived (MF 353). Shocked by Jemy’s sudden arrival and guided by the minister’s persuasive preaching, Moll claims (credibly or not) to have “perfectly chang’d, and become another Body,” perceiving “a most humble Penitent serious kind of Joy” when her death sentence is changed to transportation (MF 357, 370). This spiritual change that Moll undergoes, triggered by the prospect of a boundary-crossing adventure, comprises subtle criticism of the English nation.

As the form of spiritual autobiography encounters that of English society, the fact that Moll’s rebirth-like acquisition of new status occurs through a departure from England exposes

³⁶ For another discussion of the “life-as-a-journey” trope in *Moll Flanders*, see Ewers (3).

³⁷ Starr interprets “Moll’s tearful sentimentality” as “no more than a feminine trait included for the sake of realism” (137).

the lack of equality in this strictly stratified nation. Moll's childhood ambition to become a "Gentlewoman," eventually actualised in America, goes through several setbacks in the earlier periods of her life (MF 50). When Robin's sudden death liberates Moll from her loveless marriage, she strives to satisfy her "Fancy to a Gentleman" by marrying "this *Land-water-thing* call'd, a *Gentleman-Tradesman*" who "should look as if he was set on to his Sword" (MF 104-105).³⁸ This reckless attempt at upward social mobility turns out to be disastrous, however, as the mere appearance of gentility without correspondent financial support cannot pay the debts that this extravagant couple quickly accumulates. As Richetti summarises, "seduced by a dream of social advancement" and ignorant of "the dangers of crossing class boundaries," Moll gives up her comfortable life "as a middle-class matron in Colchester" and "marries a feckless tradesman whose gallant appearance and lavish habits captivate her" (2005: 245). This blatant rebellion against the hierarchical order of the English nation is swiftly punished by a decline in Moll's social position from a middle-class wife to a homeless debtor. By comparing her desire for upper-class status to "the very Snare, which [she] laid for [her] self," Moll evokes the concept of the prison in her apparent self-criticism but implies simultaneously that the incarcerating domestic and social arrangements of hierarchical England scarcely leave her any chance to realise her own ambitions (MF 104). In a similar manner, Moll's quest for gentility also brings her into an incestuous relationship with her half-brother and a misjudged marriage with a highwayman in Lancashire. The severe punishment of her boundary-crossing endeavours only ends when she crosses the very borders of the English nation and purchases land in America. Moll's final success as a geographical as well as social boundary-crosser after her repeated failures catches readerly attention especially because of the narrative form of spiritual autobiography that Defoe's novel incorporates. As the convention of spiritual autobiography frames the divergent episodes of *Moll Flanders* in a structure that inevitably celebrates the narrator's climactic rebirth, readers tend to react positively to Moll's social transformation near the end of the novel and negatively to the national hierarchy that has obstructed this transformation. As Gass points out, the "source genres" of Moll's narrative offer "social criticism" by guiding the readers' emotional response to certain issues (114). The fact that Moll's climactic rebirth can only occur outside English borders, a fact highlighted by the spiritual autobiographical form of her narrative, reveals how England's absolutist social stratification denies its residents crucial opportunities of self-improvement.

³⁸ For an analysis of Moll's "method of identification" when it comes to "one person who has the qualities associated with two distinct social roles or types," such as in the case of her "Gentleman-Tradesman" husband, see Mary Butler (386).

The novel further defies the absolute hierarchy of the English nation when the absence of spiritual change in Moll's social rebirth mocks the judgment of its sovereign authorities. One notable distinction between the climactic transformation of Defoe's narrator and that of typical spiritual autobiographers lies in their respective emphasis on secular and spiritual improvement. In a highly ironic imitation of the newly converted, Moll claims "to look with great Thankfulness to the Hand of Providence, which had done such wonders for" her despite all her grave sins (MF 420). The religious piety of this declaration is doubtful at best, since Moll makes it immediately after learning that the plantation her mother leaves her will yield her an annual income of around £100. By recognising "the Hand of Providence" in economic profits rather than religious awakening even after her supposed conversion, Moll reminds her readers that her repentance in Newgate does not bring about any fundamental improvement in her behaviour or personality and therefore cannot fully justify the change of her verdict from death to transportation. The last-minute change of her sentence owes largely to the minister's active intervention on her behalf: "he had obtain'd a favourable Report from the Recorder to the Secretary of State in my particular Case, and in short that he had brought me a Reprieve" (MF 368). According to Gabriel Cervantes, this legal process usually involves the church, the court and the monarch:

as a legal historical fact this process entailed the following events: the Minister directly or by proxy discusses Moll's case with a Judge who in turn drafted and submitted a memorial to the King through the Secretary of State's office. Containing a description of the circumstances of the case, such communications usually recommended that the condemned person receive Royal Mercy in the form of a conditional pardon or a reprieve. (326)

Since the judge's "memorial" of Moll's criminal case must be heavily influenced by the minister's belief in her conversion and since the English king grants his "Royal Mercy" on the basis of this favourable memorial, England's religious, judicial and royal authorities are all deceived by this official narrative of repentance and redemption, a narrative that probably draws on the same form of spiritual autobiography that Moll herself incorporates into her own story. The barely mentioned official account of Moll's spiritual transformation, embedded in Moll's own narration of her secular transformation, defies the absolute authorities of the English nation by deceiving them about their unreformed criminals, hindering their pursuit of justice and undermining their maintenance of hierarchy. In this way, the narrative form of spiritual autobiography that Defoe's narrator draws on both in her negotiations with law and in

her act of storytelling destabilises the absolute rule of the English monarch through a manipulation of his religious, judicial and carceral institutions.

The failure of the English nation to uphold judicial justice is further ridiculed by its criminal's defiant behaviour in the face of its monarchs. Long before her imprisonment in Newgate, Moll already promises her readers an enforcement of justice by the English government: "harden'd by Success, and resolving to go on, I fell into the Snare in which I was appointed to meet with my last Reward for this kind of Life" (MF 273). By comparing her criminal career to a "Snare" that leads her to a certain destination, Moll represents a figurative prison space that might induce either death or rebirth. However, neither this figurative prison in England nor the literal one of Newgate manages to issue the "last Reward" that Moll's crimes deserve. Not only do the English royals permit her to obtain mercy through an untruthful account of last-minute conversion, but they also fail to punish her practice of theft right under their noses:

on a sudden I saw a great Clutter in the Place, and all the People, Shop-keepers as well as others, standing up, and staring [...]; and they said the Queen was coming; [...] the Shop-keeper and her Maid were so taken up with looking to see who was a coming, and what Shop they would go to, that I found means to slip a Paper of Lace into my Pocket, and come clear off with it, so the Lady Millener paid dear enough for her gaping after the Queen. (MF 329)

In this episode, Moll mocks the absolute supremacy of English monarchs by not only committing crimes in the queen's presence but also misusing the awe that the queen sparks among commoners. The mockery is particularly disturbing because she takes advantage of other commoners' respect for monarchy to achieve her goal, thus challenging the authority of the entire hierarchical structure. The loss that the shopkeeper and her maid suffer as a consequence of their obsession with royalty will probably keep their excitement in check next time the queen shows up. In a similar episode, the chaos which the king's arrival triggers offers Moll enough shelter so that she can steal a gold watch from an aristocratic girl:

on a sudden we see the Guards come, and the Crowd ran to see the King go by to the Parliament-House. [...] I help'd my Lady to stand upon the edge of the Boards on the side of the *Mall*, that she might be high enough to see; [...] during which, I took care to convey the gold Watch so clean away from the Lady *Betty*, that she never felt it (MF 331)

Before the king who embodies sovereignty, the parliament that passes laws and the guards who maintain order, Moll injures the proprietary right of an aristocrat without being punished at all. In the context of such audacious criminality, Moll's successful crossing of the English border,

a success celebrated by the narrative form of spiritual autobiography, exposes the inability of the nation to enforce proper control on its law-breakers.

If Moll's escape from punishment challenges the authority of England's royalty, her violation of gender norms through her climactic rebirth defies its patriarchal power structure. The climax of Moll's fictional autobiography highlights not only her attainment of social prestige but also her transgression of gender roles, thus challenging those patriarchal norms that define female propriety.³⁹ Far more competent in plantation management than her "trophy" husband, Moll describes her kindness to Jemy in a patronising tone and reverses their gender relationship in her purchase of goods (Guilhamet 131):

I took especial care to buy for him all those things that I knew he delighted to have; as two good long Wigs, two silver hilted Swords, three or four fine Fowling peices [sic], a fine Saddle with Holsters and Pistols very handsome, with a Scarlet Cloak; [...] as for my self, I wanted very little of Cloths or Linnen, being very well furnished before: The rest of my Cargo consisted in Iron-Work of all sorts, Harness for Horses, Tools, Cloaths for Servants [...] and whole Peices also, to make up for Servants. (MF 424–425)

Comparing the useless decorations like wigs or swords that Moll buys for Jemy with the useful instruments that she buys for herself, Chloe Wigston Smith notices "a direct inversion of the fashionable shopkeepers' wives whom Defoe censures" (92). Women in the long eighteenth century were often associated with "Cloths or Linnen" because affluent women spent much on fashionable clothes while poor women regarded needlework as one of the few respectable professions they were allowed to practise. In Moll's shopping list, however, clothes are bought for either her husband or her servants, whereas her own cargo contains practical stuff usually categorised as tools for masculine labour. This transformative reversal of gender roles can be read as a rebellion against the patriarchal authority that restricts most English women and that Moll's half-brother imposes on her after her first boundary-crossing voyage. With "no legal Claim to any of his Effects," Moll is particularly perturbed when her brother-husband threatens to "put [her] under Cure; *that is to say, into a Madhouse*" (MF 146, 140). According to Blewett, the widely accepted "privileges of the husband" in late-seventeenth-century England encompassed "the right to deprive the wife of her liberty in cases of gross misbehaviour, a right that would have been upheld in the courts" (437). Chaber notes likewise that "Moll is both financially dependent on her spouse and legally subject to his prohibition on traveling abroad,

³⁹ One of the most classical analyses of female propriety in patriarchal societies can be found in Mary Poovey's 1984 work *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, which examines the fictional as well as nonfictional writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen.

to incarceration for madness on his word, and even to his physical violence” (217). Moll’s reference to madness, a concept that in Foucauldian theories illustrates how societies label and control deviant behaviour, stresses the inferior position of women in a patriarchal household (Foucault 1965: 58). Denied the right to own family property, English women are remarkably vulnerable to the disciplinary manipulation of their husbands. These setbacks are both overcome, however, by Moll’s rebirth in her second visit to Virginia. Again, by marking the moment of rebirth as the triumphant moment of the entire story, spiritual autobiography as one of the framing narrative structures of *Moll Flanders* highlights its heroine’s final triumph over patriarchal power.

As another narrative form that frames Defoe’s depiction of prison-like England, criminal biography presents the vicissitudes of Moll’s life as a series of thrilling episodes that expose the social problems of the English nation. Predicting possible readerly responses to her supposed Newgate conversion, Moll mentions the two distinct narrative strategies that organise her story: “It would be a severe Satyr on such, to say they do not relish the Repentance as much as they do the Crime; and that they had rather the History were a compleat Tragedy, as it was very likely to have been” (MF 369). While spiritual autobiography attaches great importance to “the Repentance” of a former sinner, criminal biography arouses readerly interest through exciting accounts of “the Crime” itself. Such a blending of two different narrative traditions is also noted by Gass, who points out that

criminal biographies traditionally necessitate a final punishment and conversion narratives a final redemption. *Moll Flanders* perversely attempts to include both possibilities (in Newgate and America) [...]. It is also important to recognize that generic dissonance in itself can create social criticism when it destabilizes the ideological implications of forms. (122)

In *Moll Flanders*, “social criticism” is created by not only “generic dissonance” but also generic similarity. Whereas spiritual autobiography and criminal biography require two contradictory types of ending, thus casting doubt on the sincerity of Moll’s conversion as well as the fairness of the English judicial system, these two narrative conventions both support a structure of loosely connected episodes, hence allowing Moll to traverse vastly different spaces of England from genteel Colchester to criminal London. According to Faller, criminal biography at Defoe’s time usually follows two popular “schemes”: “serious criminal biography” “seeks to reintegrate the criminal into the social and moral order” by “digest[ing] whatever cruelties he may have committed,” whereas “criminal rogue biography” appears “disjunctive and ambivalent, [...] presenting a fractured, etiolated, absurd, and often frankly fictitious version

of his life and character” (1987: 194, 200). While Moll’s birth in and return to Newgate signal an authorial endeavour to integrate her back into the absolutist national order through explanation and punishment of her crimes, the disjunctive style of the story helps present a whole scale of deviant behaviour, from vaguely immoral deeds to downright illegal conduct.⁴⁰ The protagonist’s inability to realise her social ambitions within the English borders induces her to develop a criminal career, while the crimes that Moll feels compelled to commit serve as criticisms of the specific circumstances which bring about her fall. The socially reflective, narratively disjunctive representations of Moll’s crimes, from prostitution and bigamy to incest and theft, offer therefore crucial insights into the predicaments of servants, widows, debtors and orphans in the prison-like hierarchical structure of the English nation.

The loose structure of criminal biography mirrors the loose structure of English national mechanism, in which capricious authorities fail to take good care of the ordinary people. In one of the most analysed paragraphs of *Moll Flanders*, Moll hints at the social cause of her depravity through a comparison of England and France:

I have been told, that in one of our Neighbour Nations, [...] they have on Order from the King, that when any Criminal is condemn’d, [...] if they leave any Children, [...] they are immediately taken into the Care of the Government, and put into an Hospital call’d the *House of Orphans*, where they are Bred up, Cloath’d, Fed, Taught, and when fit to go out, are plac’d out to Trades, or to Services, so as to be well able to provide for themselves by an honest industrious Behaviour. (MF 43–44)

Critics like Chaber (214), Yahav-Brown (32–39), Guilhamet (115) and Bowen (27) have all read Moll’s reference to France as a scathing comment on the English government: by praising the poor-relief policies of the French king, Moll criticises the English welfare system which leaves her, the innocent baby of a convicted thief, alone in a strictly stratified social order with neither money nor skills for an “honest” profession. In other words, the failure of England’s national structures to offer Moll the orphan sufficient food or a useful education is accountable for the criminal offences of Moll the adult. Examining Defoe’s view on governmental duties, Yahav-Brown argues that in Defoe’s opinion “citizenship represents the political community’s obligation to guarantee for all members [...] a set of inalienable benefits” and that “England’s failure to provide material sustenance for the infant Moll amounts to a positive infringement

⁴⁰ According to Loveman, Defoe adds “variety” to the traditional form of criminal biography “by deferring Moll’s fall into a blatantly criminal lifestyle, thereby allowing her to run through a range of social stations” (14).

of this child's rights" (26, 33).⁴¹ By exploring the social reasons behind Moll's deviant conduct, the narrative form of what Faller terms the serious criminal biography exposes the failure of the English nation to shelter its orphaned children.

When the conduct of the adventurous protagonist becomes increasingly deviant in the fashion of "criminal rogue biography," the absence of institutional support is repeatedly cited as the cause of her deviant activities (Faller 1987: 200). When Moll deceives her half-brother about the real amount of her fortune during his honourable courtship, she justifies her dishonesty by mentioning her dire financial situation as a discarded woman: "I often reflected on my self, how doubly criminal it was to deceive such a Man; but that Necessity, which press'd me to a Settlement suitable to my Condition, was my Authority for it" (MF 126). Later in Hammersmith, she uses the same reason to excuse her sexual relationship with a married man: "I had the terrible prospect of Poverty and Starving which lay on me as a frightful Spectre" (MF 172). After the absence of proper poor-relief policies compels Moll into deceit, bigamy, incest and prostitution, the absolutist hierarchy of the English nation which denies impoverished people like Moll decent vocational trainings finally (mis)guides her into a long-term criminal career. Lamenting her addiction to theft despite the growth of her wealth, Moll draws on prison tropes to illustrate her psychological state: "as Poverty brought me into the Mire, so Avarice kept me in [...] Thus I that was once in the Devil's Clutches, was held fast there as with a Charm, and had no Power to go without the Circle, till I was ingulph'd in Labyrinths of Trouble too great to get out at all" (MF 268). If Moll's poverty at the beginning of her criminal career is a result of England's absolutist hierarchical structure, her insatiable greed for wealth is at least partly due to the insecurity she feels in such a ruthless governmental system. By comparing her poverty to "the Mire" and her greed to "the Devil's Clutches," Moll associates the key reason behind her deplorable financial and mental state, namely the English nation, with prison-related concepts. Defoe's representations of the connection between policy-induced poverty and consequent moral degradation lead Guilhamet to conclude that "criminal behavior arose in some measure from society's failure to provide adequate opportunities for the poor to support themselves and to rise in the world" (13). Bowen also states that "Defoe highlights the quandary of the laboring poor, as they are faced, on the one hand, with an enervated moral economy, devoid of paternalist protection, and, on the other, the impossibility of independently earning a living wage in a corrupt, post-bubble economy" (27). As Moll's

⁴¹ In *An Essay upon Projects*, Defoe proposes to establish a pension-office that provides medical as well as financial support for old, sick, injured and disabled English people (146–148). For an analysis of Defoe's "insurance scheme [...] for widows," see Ganz (2005: 180).

various transgressions are episodically narrated in the style of criminal rogue biography, England's paternalistic control of its low-born residents in a prison-like way without "paternalistic protection" of them is shown to be responsible for these residents' law-defying actions.

This criticism of the prison-like English nation becomes even sharper when the criminal-biography-style delineation of Moll's financial difficulties demonstrates women's severe disadvantages in a patriarchal system. The causal link between women's inferior positions in English society and their criminal tendencies is repeatedly emphasised by critics like Gass (116) and Swaminathan (190–199). Having laughed at Moll's childish wish to become a gentlewoman, the kind nurse in Colchester also ridicules the notion of female self-reliance through needlework: "Poor Child! it won't keep you, [...] it will hardly keep you in Victuals" (MF 48). Early on in the novel, Moll's nurse already implies that the lack of socially acceptable means to achieve economic independence compels many impoverished women to follow deviant paths. This argument is further developed as Moll finds either an illegal marriage or a criminal career her only chances to prosper. According to Ganz, by depicting Moll's bigamous marriages with her half-brother, the London banker and Jemy, "Defoe criticizes the law for failing to recognize that Moll is, for all intents and purposes, a widow" after being abandoned by her draper-husband (2005: 180).⁴² Bowen also argues that "Moll's experience of spousal desertion and her practice of common-law marriages, separations, cohabitations, and (bigamous) remarriages locate her more within a plebeian" community who, unable to "afford the legal fees or church ceremonies," have no choice but to ignore the law (31). Because the English legal system denies her the right to marry again, Moll is forced to commit bigamy repeatedly in her lifelong struggle for survival. Stressing the impossibility of legally circumventing this dilemma, Moll makes one of her well-known statements on the predicaments of deserted women: "I was a Widow bewitched, I had a Husband, and no Husband, and I could not pretend to Marry again, tho' I knew well enough my Husband would never see *England* any more, if he liv'd fifty Years" (MF 108). As the English government unreasonably refuses to recognise that an abandoned woman has de facto "no Husband" and thus needs to finance her living expenses by entering a profession or marrying again, the readers of *Moll Flanders* tend to sympathise with its deviant protagonist rather than its rigid society.

⁴² According to Ganz, "Defoe criticizes the canon law practice of recognizing the exchange of unsolemnized and unwitnessed vows" as well as "the canon law rule that absolutely prohibits a deserted wife from remarrying" (2005: 159). Because of the problematic regulations in the English legal system, Moll is prohibited from claiming Robin's elder brother as her lawful husband despite his vows and from legally marrying again after the draper's bankruptcy despite his desertion (Ganz 2005: 157–182).

As a result, Moll's repeated practices of bigamy as a consequence of this dead-end situation subtly criticise the power structure of the English nation that incarcerates deserted wives in their non-existent marriages.

Apart from criticising England's patriarchal structure, the narrative representations of the desperate circumstances that drive Moll into criminality also justify her deviance from the patriarchal norms of proper femininity. After successfully helping her friend in Redriff marry the young captain, Moll not only proudly defends her use of lies to advance women's interests in the marriage market, but she also accuses the male sex of immorality in response to their patriarchal domination:

Nothing is more certain than that the Ladies always gain of the Men by keeping their Ground, and letting their pretended Lovers see they can Resent being slighted, and that they are not afraid of saying No. [...] [T]he Disadvantage of the Women is a terrible Scandal upon the Men, and it lyes here, and here only; *Namely*, that the Age is so Wicked, and the Sex so Debauch'd, that in short the Number of such Men, as an honest Woman ought to meddle with, is small indeed. (MF 120)

By encouraging women to behave confidently and reject inferior matches, Defoe's deviant protagonist advocates gender equality in a patriarchal nation. Her emphasis on the general corruption of men rather than the desperate husband-hunting efforts of women also challenges the legitimacy of men's authority by calling their moral integrity into question. Moll expresses her disdain of men even more poignantly when she steals the purse from a drunken baronet after having sex with him:

Would such Gentlemen but consider the contemptible Thoughts which the very Women they are concern'd with, in such Cases as these, have of them, it wou'd be a surfeit to them: As I said above, they value not the Pleasure, they are rais'd by no Inclination to the Man, the passive Jade thinks of no Pleasure but the Money. (MF 296)

In this practice of theft and prostitution, the traditional gender stereotypes of rational men at work and irrational women at home are reversed, with men reduced to slaves of sensual desire and women profiting economically in an emotionless, professional manner. As Swaminathan puts it, in women's pursuit of wealth instead of sex, "[t]he survival instinct operates within the structure of female networks and ultimately succeeds in subverting patriarchal power" (199).⁴³

⁴³ Chaber examines Moll's female network in the form of her three "mothers," with Moll's violation of patriarchal norms under motherly guidance further evoking the trope of the womb (212–226). In a counterargument, John Rietz claims that "Moll's reaffirmation of patriarchal rule comes when [...] her career is thus brought to an end. In prison, she is reunited with her husband Jemy and is born a second time in Newgate, this time to a life of legitimacy and under a figure of masculine authority" (188).

The female criminals' rebellion against patriarchal domination is best exemplified by the Governess's shady business which, according to Gass, "effects a leveling operation, countering the negative social and economic consequences of illegal pregnancy by offering anonymity and material aid" (117). By enabling prostitutes and mistresses to evade the punishment of their sexual transgressions, the Governess defies the constrictive norms of feminine chastity in an absolutist patriarchal system. Portrayed in both the reflexive and exhilarating style of criminal biography, the deviant acts of Defoe's adventurous women characters destabilise the power structure of the English nation both in and out of matrimony.

Among all the deviant acts that *Moll Flanders* depicts, the practice of incest offers a good example of how domestic criminality undermines the absolutist structure of the English nation. If Moll's bigamous marriages challenge the law of patriarchal England, her incestuous relationship with her half-brother inverts its entire hierarchical order. The patriarchal concerns behind the widespread disapproval of incest are clarified by critics like Pollak, who claims that "the incest prohibition [...] is designed to ensure the circulation of women as sexual objects and reproducers among men" (152).⁴⁴ By marrying her close kin, Moll interrupts therefore the systematic "circulation" of the female body between different households and refuses to be men's reproductive tool. During her second stay in America, she also disrupts the norms of agnatic primogeniture by inheriting her mother's property, disregarding her half-brother's feelings and even appointing the child of this incestuous marriage as her steward. Refuting E. M. Dillon's (250) or Pollak's (152) argument that Moll's denunciation of her third marriage signifies her rejection of incest and hence her submission to patriarchal rule, Ann Louise Kibbie points out that despite the death-like change that Moll undergoes during her first stay in America, she suffers from no severe punishment in the long run: "Moll's incest becomes the model for capitalist increase. [...] The woman whose life was shattered by the discovery that she was an 'unnatural mother' reclaims her son and her peace" (1995: 1028). Facilitating the prosperity of Moll's capitalist business rather than that of the paternal lineage, her incestuous activities reshape the hierarchical structure of her domestic relationships. Situated in a multiple

Rietz's view of Jemy as "a figure of masculine authority" does not go unchallenged, however. Ganz, for instance, points out that "[r]ather than reaffirm patriarchal authority, as John Rietz suggests, Defoe endorses such equitable inventions that protect a wife's property and that enable her to attain a degree of autonomy in her marriage" with Jemy in America (2005: 181).

⁴⁴ From a highly metaphorical perspective, Olsen compares "the rules that govern kinship and grammar," thus associating incest, a disruption of normative kinship, with "the (mis)use of language" (467). Defining incest in a stricter way, Faller points out that Moll's marriage with Robin is already incestuous because she continues to be in love with Robin's elder brother and regards herself as the elder brother's wife (1993: 119).

blend network of womb-related carceral and national tropes, Moll's illegal but successful reconstruction of family ties in defiance of patriarchal norms signals a rebellious reaction to the absolutist doctrines of prison-like England.

If the narrative form of spiritual autobiography highlights Moll's rebirth-like transformation through the crossing of carceral and national boundaries, the conventions of criminal biography draw attention to her deviant behaviour both before and after her transatlantic voyage. In this formal encounter between loosely governed Newgate, capriciously absolutist England and various storytelling strategies, the concepts of the womb, the prison, the nation and the narrative blend together into a highly dynamic figurative network of random adventures. As Moll recounts her extraordinary experience on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the hilarious outcomes of her random adventures also expose the romantic elements in Defoe's novel. The unexpected rebirth of the protagonist, a climactic episode in spiritual autobiography and a formal departure from criminal biography, resembles the miraculous occurrence of improbable events in conventional romances, while the episodic structure of the two generic traditions mirrors the loose organisation of romance narratives.⁴⁵ Commenting on Defoe's juxtaposition of criminal and amatory affairs, Ian A. Bell notices the prevalence of romantic elements – exciting adventures, selfless love, prolonged pursuit of the goal and eventual happy ending – in *Moll Flanders*:

If in her criminal adventures, Moll is predatory, in her amatory ones she is a helpless victim. [...] The narrative effect of the split is that, while the main narrative movement is towards triumph, that triumph may be suddenly impeded by some romantic liaison. The eventual triumph is guaranteed by the complacent tone of the telling, but delay and disturbance, arising mostly from abrupt affairs of the heart, form the main narrative substance. (161)

When Jemy returns to Chester again several hours after his abrupt departure, Moll relates a supernatural incident that frequently occurs in romances: "I told him how I had pass'd my time, and how loud I had call'd him to *come back* again; he told me he heard me very plain upon *Delamere Forest*, at a Place about 12 Miles off" (MF 211). In sharp contrast to Moll's usually cold and calculating personality, this hyperbolic depiction of passionate love resembles the strong attachment that lovers in seventeenth-century French romances develop towards each other based on an extremely short acquaintance. Moll's unexplained affection for this particular

⁴⁵ According to Fuchs, romance includes such typical elements as "idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity" (9). The narrative form of romance will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 3.3.

husband even induces her to obstruct the constable's pursuit of the three highwaymen and thus ensure Jemy's safety at the risk of her own (MF 247–249). The coincidental reencounter of the two adventurers in Brickill constitutes another typical strategy of the romance form, in which lovers are often reunited in highly improbable circumstances.⁴⁶ Apart from devoted love and miraculous rescue, Blewett also detects other “elements of romance, such as the child stolen by gypsies who finds her true parents, the longing for gentility and the achieving of it, and the incest theme” (22).⁴⁷ Recognising “the logic of romance (divine truth revealed in events of mythic dimension)” in Moll's discovery of her origins or incest with her brother, E. M. Dillon goes one step further to argue that the traces “of romance within the novel” as “violations of national space make evident the structural (and seemingly divine or mythic) limits of the probable and serve as the enabling exceptions of the imagined community of the nation-state” (251). In other words, the narrative form of romance enables Moll to achieve the social transformation that England's absolutist structure prohibits. While Defoe's protagonist defies the normative control of the womb-like English nation through her physical adventures across the ocean, Arabella in Lennox's *The Female Quixote* can only transgress the “limits of the probable” through a fictional adventure into romantic storyworlds.

⁴⁶ The highly coincidental and thus improbable nature of this encounter is also noted by Faller, who claims that “Jemy, in fact, reappears with surprising suddenness [...] on three separate occasions. Two of these are amazingly coincidental, thus her spying him outside the window just after she's married her honest citizen and at just the right moment to save his life, and thus also their being both confined in the same prison at the same time and both for a first offence” (1993: 118). In a similar vein, Richetti states that “Moll's story like all of Defoe's fictions combines the deeply familiar textures of everyday existence with a set of improbable coincidences and lucky chances” (2005: 236).

⁴⁷ Similarly, by interpreting the Governess as “an evil, mind-reading witch,” Gass discerns in *Moll Flanders* the patterns of “fairy tale or truncated and parodied romance” (121).

3.3 Fictional Escapes from Anti-Romantic England: Romance and Biography in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*

Romantic Prisoners in Anti-Romantic England

In *The Female Quixote*, the romantic castle that confines Arabella's family recalls the episodes of literal and figurative incarceration in the French romances that she inherits, reads and retells. Represented as womb-like spaces of royal supremacy, female authority, capricious decisions and easy escapes, prisons related to or depicted in romances embody an absolutist national structure under female leadership, forming a marked contrast to the contractual governance and patriarchal norms of Lennox's eighteenth-century England. In the blending of domestic, figurative and national prisons, romantic prisoners – characters in French romances who are imprisoned by their conquerors or lovers as well as characters in *The Female Quixote* who are imprisoned by their romantic notions – frequently cross the carceral borders to initiate a random transformation in their social status.

Although no penal institution literally appears in the eighteenth-century setting of *The Female Quixote*, the country castle of the marquis is frequently compared to a domestic prison. Infuriated by his undeserved banishment from the court and disillusioned with human nature in general, the marquis has “resolved to quit all Society whatever, and devote the rest of his Life to Solitude and Privacy,” confining himself in “a Castle he had in a very remote Province of the Kingdom” (FQ 5). If the remote location of the castle distances the marquis from his old acquaintances in London, his own arrogant demeanour effectively alienates him from his rural neighbours: “his Pride and extreme Reserve rendered him so wholly inaccessible to the Country Gentry about him, that none ever presumed to solicit his Acquaintance” (FQ 6). Both geographically and socially isolated from the outside world, the marquis transforms his splendid home into a luxurious prison, at the same time imposing this practice of solitary incarceration upon his immediate families. While the marquis's retreat into the castle is completely voluntary, his wife is forced into “a Solitude which she found very disagreeable”: “After a very short Courtship, he married her, and in a few Weeks carried his new Bride into the Country, from whence he absolutely resolved never to Return” (FQ 7, 6).⁴⁸ In a novel that is preoccupied with seventeenth-century French romances, the words “carried” and “absolutely” recall those romantic episodes in which helpless heroines are forcibly carried away by their

⁴⁸ Malina also notices “the repression of the mother” in this episode, pointing out that “the patriarch did not allow her to engage in activities she might have preferred” (279).

tyrannical suitors, inducing Margaret Anne Doody to claim that “Arabella’s mother (in some sense abducted and imprisoned) is not consulted as to plan of life, or even choice of décor” (2008: xx). Such figurative representations of the marquis’s family as semi-prisoners become more prominent in the depictions of Arabella’s early life. Comparing the marquis’s castle to a prison from which Arabella needs to be liberated by a lover, Hervey’s friend suggests that “[t]he poor Girl [...] has been kept in Confinement so long, that I believe it would not be difficult to persuade her to free herself by Marriage” (FQ 9). Despite his miscalculation of Arabella’s emotional state, this comment from a neighbour offers a glimpse into the monotonous life of the marquis’s daughter who, “wholly secluded from the World,” has “no other Diversion, but ranging like a Nymph through Gardens [...] in which she was inclosed” (FQ 7). Enclosed physically in her father’s estates and socially by his arrogance, Arabella even needs his “Permission [...] to attend Divine Service at the Church,” a permission that her father only “sometimes” grants (FQ 8). During one of her quixotic blunders, Arabella herself refers to the castle as a potential prison: “But who can assure me [...] that I shall not, by returning home, enter voluntarily into my Prison?” (FQ 106). Although her suspicions about Glanville’s conspiracy with Edward are totally misplaced, they do indicate the restrictive effects of her childhood home.

Born and brought up in the romantic atmosphere of this prison-like castle, Arabella embraces her mother’s romantic notions like a baby getting nourishment from the mother’s womb. Blending together the concepts of the prison, home and inheritance, Debra Malina recognises a crucial link between the mother and the daughter in Arabella’s act of reading romances: “Having lost her mother at an early age, Arabella can only retrieve her female heritage in the form of the French romances the Marchioness left behind her” and finds in them “[t]he legacy of a life spent in confinement” (278). By calling the romantic stories that the marchioness’s books narrate a maternal “legacy,” Malina represents Arabella’s romantic beliefs as spiritual wealth transferred from the mother to the child, with the castle in which the mother’s books are stored resembling a womb that provides nourishment for the baby. Similarly, Carolyn Steedman states that “the house (the proto-gothic castle) is stuffed with [...] a mother’s legacy to an orphaned daughter,” constituting a womb-like space that surrounds its young resident with the items and ideas of an older generation (317). Simultaneously a domestic prison and a heritage site, the castle not only accommodates the thick volumes of French romances, but also epitomises the romantic tradition in its design:

The most laborious Endeavours of Art had been used to make it appear like the beautiful Product of wild, uncultivated Nature. But if this Epitome of *Arcadia* could boast of only

artless and simple Beauties, the Inside of the Castle was adorned with a Magnificence suitable to the Dignity and immense Riches of the Owner. (FQ 6)

Combining the idyllic landscape of “uncultivated Nature” with the magnificent style of aristocratic life, the castle evokes the literary conventions of pastoral and heroic romances, both of which depart from the immediate reality of contemporary society to construct an idealistic notion of human existence.⁴⁹ Viewing the marquis’s secluded castle and late marriage as a sign of “egotistical romanticism,” Doody argues that “Arabella [...] survives the experience of childhood entrapment in her father’s pastoral creation” by “mak[ing] a fantasy of her own” (2008: xx). Entrapped in a romantic prison, Arabella reads the stories of other prisoners in her mother’s romance volumes and creates even more images of incarceration through her discussions of romantic plots. As the imprisoned reader identifies herself with the imprisoned characters portrayed in her mother’s “legacy,” carceral tropes in different storyworlds blend into a multi-layered network of wombs, homes and romantic prisons.

Very few scholars have paid serious attention to the literal prisons in those romantic stories that Arabella and Sir George repeatedly tell, but these transformative prisons have a crucial impact on her quixotic interpretations of everyday events. In her allusions to the works of Madeleine de Scudéry and la Calprenède, Arabella mentions numerous cases of arbitrary incarceration and unexpected escapes, from Artamenes’s experience as “a Prisoner in his Enemy’s Camp” to Candace’s palace as “the Place of her Confinement” (FQ 73, 106). The most detailed delineation of imprisonment in a romantic style can be found in Sir George’s narration of his non-existent adventures, during which he is twice imprisoned and rescued. In this fictional autobiography, the prisons that Sir George describes exhibit many hallmarks of the traditional English prison that Ignatieff (15–43) and Bender (11–40) have studied: the influence of domestic, social and economic relations, the capricious absolute authority of the jailors as well as the easy crossing of prison borders by prisoners and visitors alike. Sir George is first imprisoned by Sydimiris to avenge her brother’s defeat and then released by the same lady because of a sudden surge of love she feels for him. To rescue his lover, he allows Sydimiris’s brother to imprison him again and is rescued by Sydimiris a second time through her marriage to another man (FQ 221–236). In this episode of random incarceration and liberation, the noble siblings exercise absolute authority over their prisoner’s destiny. Before

⁴⁹ Martin identifies the marquis’s garden as distinctly English because of “its ability to disguise its artifice by seeming to be real,” which poses “an implicit contrast to the studied artfulness of French landscape (and romances?)” (53). However, allusions to Arcadia are also common in the pastoral writings of mainland Europe, so the castle as an “Epitome of *Arcadia*” is formally associated with the pastoral tradition on both sides of the English Channel.

Sydimiris falls in love, she threatens “to sacrifice [Sir George] to [her brother’s] Ghost” (FQ 224). After falling in love, she sets him free “by presenting a sufficient Reward to [his] Guard, inducing them to favour [his] Escape” (FQ 226). Her brother Marcomire also follows his own capricious wishes, sending Sir George “into the worst Dungeon” and releasing him only after his sister’s marriage (FQ 234). While the prison borders are loosely controlled by guards who receive bribes and betray their bribers’ secrets, the crossing of these borders might lead to either life or death. After his first entrance into the prison, Sir George is brought back from the brink of death and “restored [...] to Health” under Sydimiris’s care, starting a new life as Sydimiris’s ardent admirer (FQ 222). After his second escape, however, he loses his consciousness at the news of Sydimiris’s marriage and confines himself later in a tomb-like cave “dug at the Side of a Rock, the Entrance to it thick set with Bushes” (FQ 239). Chaotically organised and capriciously governed, the prisons in romantic stories blend with Arabella’s romantic prison-like home into a figurative network of womb-tomb tropes – tropes that signify boundary-crossers’ random transformations between life and death.

Another important element in the blending of incarceration and transformation is the figurative prison in romantic representations. In his conversation with Sydimiris, Sir George blends the concepts of love, war and the prison, juxtaposing his love for a woman with his imprisonment by his opponent:

in delivering me from your Brother’s Fetters, you have cast me into your own, and that I am more a Prisoner than ever, but a Prisoner to so lovely a Conqueror, that I do not wish to break my Chains, and prefer the sweet and glorious Captivity I am in, to all the Crowns in the World. (FQ 230)

The juxtaposition between the incarceration of war captives and the influence of romantic love underlines the powerful but pleasant restrictions that love places on the lover’s thought and conduct. In love’s “sweet and glorious Captivity,” a typical hero in seventeenth-century French romances obeys the orders of his beloved lady, remains loyal to her throughout his life and distances himself socially from other women. As Fludernik puts it, in narratives about “chivalric love,” “the male lover assumes the female position of powerlessness” while his “positive emotions associated with love are translated into voluntary bondage to the beloved” (2019: 467).⁵⁰ The common image of romance heroes in “voluntary bondage” is frequently referred to by Arabella, who expects eighteenth-century Englishmen to take the same “position of powerlessness” during the courtship. Therefore, she reproaches Glanville for being “the

⁵⁰ For an extensive analysis of the prison-like love trope, see Fludernik (2019: 466–531).

most disobedient of all, that ever wore the Fetters of Love” simply because he remains seriously ill after she commands him to recover (FQ 136). Advising Charlotte Glanville to be discreet in her interactions with men, Arabella warns her: “you will give Fetters to more Persons than one To-day; but remember, [...] while you are taking away the Liberty of others, to have a special Care of your own” (FQ 91). In Arabella’s blending of fetters and emotions, love is represented as a figurative prison that absolutely controls the physical as well as mental activities of male suitors, sharing the same absolutist principle with the literal prisons in Arabella’s romances and the prison-like castle of Arabella’s father.

Similar to the hierarchical structures in *Moll Flanders*, individual captors in the literal and figurative prisons of *The Female Quixote* wield absolute authority over their captives. Just as Sydimiris’s brother exercises unrestricted power over Sir George despite the latter’s moral superiority, Arabella emphasises “the Right [Artamenes] had of disposing of his Prisoner, and [...] sacrificing his Life to his just and reasonable Vengeance” (FQ 303). Her belief that de Scudéry’s prince can rightfully murder any enemy that he has defeated in battles hints at the prisoners’ complete subjection to their jailors’ will in French romances. The romance heroes’ physical control of their captured rivals echoes the romance heroines’ figurative subjugation of their captivated lovers, with Arabella repeatedly calling her influence upon her suitors “an absolute Empire” and denying them the right to disobey her in any possible way (FQ 138). Enraged by Glanville’s bold declaration of love, Arabella arrogantly restricts Glanville’s physical mobility by forbidding him from staying in her region:

I absolutely insist upon your repairing, in the only manner you are able, the Affront you have put upon me; which is, by never appearing before me again. If you think proper to confine me to my Chamber, by continuing here any longer, you will add Disobedience to the Crime by which you have already mortally offended *Arabella*. (FQ 33)

Interestingly, Arabella represents herself as a potential prisoner under her suitor’s persecution but simultaneously shows full confidence in her sovereign power to banish said suitor, juxtaposing her own confinement in a prison-like home with Glanville’s submission to his prison-like love. In the encounter of two different tropes, with Arabella powerlessly incarcerated in the former but powerfully incarcerating others in the latter, the authoritative voice she adopts in her letter indicates her firm belief in the truthfulness of the second trope. Although women are often physically imprisoned in Arabella’s romances, they figuratively imprison their prisoners through romantic love, thus metamorphosing from virtue under oppression into jailors in power. In this blending of various figurative expressions, women in

Arabella's romances often act as absolute rulers of carceral spaces despite their lack of bodily strength.

Different from *Moll Flanders*, the absolutist structure often empowers women instead of men in Arabella's representations of prison spaces, with the fates of literal and figurative prisoners arbitrarily determined by women's personal desire. Citing Juba's promise to conquer lands for his beloved Cleopatra, Arabella juxtaposes the effect of love with the practice of slavery: "Love requires a more unlimited Obedience from its Slaves, than any other Monarch can expect from his Subjects; an Obedience which is circumscrib'd by no Laws whatever, and dependent upon nothing but itself" (FQ 321). If the blending of love and enslavement indicates that the beloved woman can freely grant or deny her suitor the right to live or die, the contrast between absolute authority and the rule of law further underlines the absence of any legal constraint on the woman's decision.⁵¹ As Patricia Meyer Spacks summarises, in Arabella's retelling of French romances "women absolutely control male destinies. [...] At her order or at the sight of her displeasure he must gladly die; if she commands him to live he will overcome any disease to do so" (533). Penetrating all the layers of human life from international warfare to individual health, women's domination over the prison of love also randomly changes the outcome of others' imprisonment. According to Arabella's (inaccurate) recollection, Mandana "obtained the Liberty of great Numbers of [Jews] from *Cyrus*, who had taken them Captives, and could deny her nothing she asked" (FQ 88). In this episode, Mandana's absolute command initiates a sudden change in her lover Cyrus, who in his turn exercises absolute power over the inhabitants of his prison. The capricious decisions of the two lovers bring about a rebirth-like transformation of war captives into free people. Such border-crossing movements also occur without the permission of prison authorities. For example, Arabella relates how Melisinth, "taken Captive with the King her Father," "set[s] Fire to the Palace" in an act of revenge and miraculously "escapes the Flames" afterwards (FQ 282). Resembling the baby's precarious exit from its mother's womb, these permitted prison departures or secret prison escapes lead to a random result of death or rebirth. As royal families imprison their opponents, get imprisoned by them, escape from their prisons and allow their opponents to escape, domestic and national interests repeatedly interact with each other in the womb-like spaces of romantic prisons.

⁵¹ Although women characters wield enormous power in seventeenth-century French romances, the patriarchal norms of female chastity, feminine elegance and unwavering obedience to fathers or husbands still prevail in such writings. As Fuchs points out, "the emphasis on the extreme idealization of the heroine, in particular, never wavers. Whether as shepherdess or as exotic queen, the heroine of these romances defends her virtue and observes the finer rules of etiquette" (102).

In her delineations of capricious female authority and random individual transformation, Arabella blends the family, the nation and the womb-like carceral spaces. However absurd Arabella's arrogant attempt to banish Glanville might appear, banishment has literally happened to her father, hence Rachel Carnell's reference to him as "a banished former royal favorite" (266). Having "held the most honourable Employments under the Crown, disposed of all Places of Profit as he pleased, presided at the Council, and in a manner governed the whole Kingdom," the marquis is portrayed as a figure who rules the entire nation with almost unlimited authority (FQ 5).⁵² The loss of this supreme position, regarded by the marquis as an "undeserved Disgrace," prompts him to confine his family in a remote romantic prison, thus establishing a connection between conspiracies in the London court and incidents in his carceral home (FQ 5). As Parrinder points out, "[f]amily genealogies in the English novel are often loaded with cultural meaning, conveying a hint [...] of national allegory through their links to" national history (33). The connection between the family and the nation is stressed by Arabella when, convinced of Edward's intention to imprison her, she escapes her castle at night and appeals to a stranger for help: "I am pursued by a Person whom, for very urgent Reasons, I desire to avoid. I conjure you, therefore, in the Name of her you love best, to protect me; and may you be crowned with the Enjoyment of all your Wishes" (FQ 99). By mentioning the stranger's lover in her request for protection, Arabella seems to indicate that her current predicament is of a domestic kind. However, she uses the word "crown" at the same time, implying through her figurative language that the future of a nation may be determined by a woman's family issues. The expression of crowning a man with happiness recalls Arabella's favourite phrase, the "Empire of Love," combining the trope of prison-like love with that of nation-like love (FQ 320). This juxtaposition of tropes establishes an analogy between the structure of the prison and that of the nation, with women enjoying monarchical supremacy in incarcerating love relationships.

The prison-like nation trope prevails in Arabella's retelling of French romances, highlighting women's sovereign power over her suitors and subjects in the womb-like spaces of her national territories. Stressing the "analogy between the state and the family," McKeon argues that "the *roman à clef* domesticates state politics through the 'sexual politics' of amatory intrigue and erotic romance" (2005: 11, 472). Although the ancient kingdoms that de Scudéry

⁵² According to Carnell, Lennox represents the marquis "not only as the consummate insider but as one who may have abused his privileges and even usurped the legitimate monarch's right to govern the kingdom" (265). His tendency to abuse what authority he can exercise is also evident in his inconsiderate confinement of his wife and daughter, thus further associating his influence on the English nation with his behaviour in the domestic household.

and la Calprenède depict in their romances do not necessarily meet the standards of a modern nation-state, most of them already demonstrate the key features of early nationhood. Defining “the nation as a form of community characterized by a cultural and/or political identity,” Anthony D. Smith points out that modern societies regard “the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the city-states of ancient Athens and Sparta [...] as models of nationhood and drew from them certain resources” like “texts, rituals, symbols, and artifacts [...] for the collective cultural identity of nations” (22, 23). Full of grand ceremonies, symbolic gestures and artistic statues, the kingdoms and cities that Arabella mentally reconstructs based on her romance reading fit well into A. D. Smith’s descriptive framework of nationhood. Therefore, Arabella’s references to royal marriages and territorial invasions should also be read as subtle comments on national structures. In her paraphrased version of Artaban’s speech, for example, the conquest of a nation is mentioned as a prerequisite for his marriage with Elisa: “if a Crown be all that I want to make me worthy of you, tell me what Kingdom in the World you choose to reign in, and I will lay it at your Feet” (FQ 152). This declaration not only underlines Artaban’s absolute submission to Elisa during the courtship, but it also associates the princess’s influence on her lover with her power over a nation. Under the “Chains” of love, Artaban imposes his own role as Elisa’s prisoner on the residents of the nation he plans to conquer, promising Elisa supreme authority over both himself and their future subjects (FQ 152). Combining the structures of prisons, nations and love relationships, the multiple blend network represents Elisa as a royal leader whose capricious decision has a tremendous effect on her literal and figurative prisoners, with the former transformed from free people into war captives and the latter from pursuer to husband. Through the intertwined tropes of womb-like prisons, prison-like love and prison-like nations, Arabella constructs a romance-based national order that is fundamentally different from the nation she literally lives in.

The stark contrast between the national structure in Arabella’s romance stories and that in Lennox’s eighteenth-century storyworld is commented on by many characters within the novel. The Countess, for instance, criticises the womb-like structure of capricious monarchical rule and random individual transformation from the perspective of a modern Englishwoman. In Arabella’s French romance, Oroondates relentlessly betrays his own kingdom and kills his own people on behalf of the Persian princess (FQ 328–329). Referring to this episode, the Countess condemns his absolute obedience to an enemy’s daughter as immoral as well as irresponsible: “Such are the Actions which immortalize the Heroes of Romance [...]. Yet judging of them as Christians, we shall find them impious and base, and directly opposite to our present Notions of moral and relative Duties” (FQ 329). The discrepancy between

Oroondates's sense of princely duty and an eighteenth-century notion of it is also highlighted by the dialogues between Lennox's quixotic protagonist and her down-to-earth uncle. In one of her characteristic speeches about the close links between individual love and national war, Arabella describes how "the greatest Conquerors, and Heroes of invincible Valour, reason with the most exact and scrupulous Nicety upon Love and Beauty; the Superiority of fair and brown Hair [is] controverted by Warriors, with as much Eagerness as they dispute for Victory in the Field" (FQ 150). Unconvinced of such connections between domestic and political issues, Sir Charles replies with the contemptuous attitude of an eighteenth-century English soldier: "such insignificant Fellows, who could wrangle about the Colour of their Mistresses Hair, would be the first to turn their Backs upon the Enemy in Battle" (FQ 150). If Arabella establishes a connection between love and war, representing them as of equal importance to the nation, Sir Charles firmly locates the former in the private, feminine realm and the latter in the public, masculine sphere, regarding them as mutually exclusive of each other.⁵³ Not only do wars play very different roles in romantic and eighteenth-century nations, but they are also mostly absent from the territory of the English island, thus triggering Arabella's lamentation over a general lack of combative spirit in her surroundings: "How would so many glorious Battles have been fought, [...] if the Men, sunk in Sloth and Effeminacy, had continually follow'd the Sound of a Fiddle, saunter'd in Publick Walks, or tattled over a Tea-table" (FQ 280). By implying that her contemporary Englishmen appear much less aggressive than the warriors of ancient empires, Arabella confirms the general impression of many historians. According to Colley, England before the Seven Years' War has "been popularly perceived as a trading empire, as the beneficent creation of a liberty-loving and commercial people, and thus quite different from the Roman and Spanish empires, bloodily and insecurely raised on conquest" (2003: 102). The endeavours of the English people to distance their own practices of colonial trade from the bloody expansion of other empires signal a crude distinction between the self and the other in their common perceptions.

Although Arabella refers to many different nations in her retelling of romance stories, a binary structure of English versus non-English prevails in the other characters' reaction to her quixotic notions, further reinforcing the contrast between national spaces in romances and those

⁵³ In *The Secret History of Domesticity*, McKeon offers a detailed analysis of "the movement from relations of distinction to relations of separation" in "the public-private dyad," illustrating "the devolution or downward mobility of absolutism, which begins (speaking schematically, not chronologically) with the separation out of state from civil society and which transports 'public' authority from greater to lesser spheres: paradigmatically, from the political to the economic, from the economic to the domestic, from the domestic to the female, the subjective, and the sexual" (2005: 323).

in eighteenth-century England. When Arabella mentions the Thessalians' strict prohibition of killing storks, Sir Charles first assumes that this could only happen "[a]mong the *Indians* of *America*" and then confuses "the *Great Mogul's* Country" with "the Grand Signor's Dominions," labelling them as places "where the People are all Pagans [...] and worship the Devil" (FQ 260). Even Glanville, with his superior geographical knowledge, dismisses Arabella's travel plan with a condescending smile: "Dear Cousin, [...] what Chance, in the Name of Wonder, should take you into *Turky*, at so great a Distance from your own Country?" (FQ 260). Sir Charles's confusion of the American continents, the Indian subcontinent and the Ottoman Empire conveys an ignorant but widespread notion of all faraway nations as the 'other' nations, with almost all the nations or nation-like organisations in Arabella's romances falling into the vague category of the non-English. According to Ruth Mack, "Sir Charles [...] comically, absurdly, misses the elaborate account of cultural difference that Arabella's explanation provides," rejecting the lessons of cultural diversity that Arabella learns from de Scudéry's romances and insisting that "all difference seems to amount to the same thing" (206). Despite his better acquaintance with "cultural difference," Glanville views Arabella's almost scholarly fascination with other nations as charming but useless because of their long distance from England. This indifference towards anything outside England is more strongly expressed by Glanville's shallow sister, Charlotte, who satirises Arabella's romantic rhetoric by entreating her to speak "in plain *English*" (FQ 182). Charlotte's sweeping categorisation of everything eccentric or incomprehensible as non-English signifies a distinct separation between the self and the other in her perception of nationhood. When Arabella uses the romance of Cleonice to justify her own wish to visit Sir George at his bedside, therefore, Charlotte retorts: "What signifies what Foreigners do? I shall never form my Conduct, upon the Example of Outlandish People; what is common enough in their Countries, would be very particular here" (FQ 184). Despite Charlotte's intellectual superficiality, her statement does make sense here because it attributes the apparently peculiar behaviour of "Foreigners" to the different cultural customs of their nations. As Mack points out, characters like Charlotte Glanville tend to equate "a romance heroine" with a "foreigner" in their interpretations of the world (202). Through their indiscriminate categorisation of romantic nations as non-English nations, these characters draw attention to the key structural differences between nations in romantic storyworlds and the nation of Lennox's England.

In contrast to absolute monarchy in French romances, the contractually governed English nation places significant limitations on the power of its monarchs. During her visit to the British

court in London, Arabella notices the English royals' remarkable lack of "Grandeur and Magnificence," traits that signal the absolute supremacy of monarchs in French romances:

As her Romances had long familiariz'd her Thoughts to Objects of Grandeur and Magnificence, she was not so much struck as might have been expected [...]. Nor was she a little disappointed to find that among the Men she saw none whose Appearance came up to her Ideas of the Air and Port of an *Artaban*, *Oroondates*, or *Juba*; or any of the Ladies, who did not in her Opinion, fall short of the Perfections of *Elisa*, *Mandana*, *Statira*, &c. (FQ 333)

Whereas in French romances the supernatural strength of princes and the perfect manners of princesses justify their absolute authority over their low-born subjects, English royals are represented as ordinary humans with only limited impact on governmental policies. The English kings' gradual loss of splendid appearance is confirmed by Colley's historical research: "whereas Henry VIII had been able to hunt game, or women, or heretics out of more than twenty great houses scattered throughout England, Charles II returned in 1660 to only seven," leaving none of his successors "able or willing to concentrate on one architectural project that might embody royal grandeur in stone, marble or statuary to remotely the same degree as Versailles in France, or the Winter Palace in St Petersburg" (2003: 197). The relatively plain architecture of English royal palaces symbolises the decline of their residents' influence in comparison with the divine status of their extravagant ancestors or the centralised rule of their European counterparts.⁵⁴ The limitations on royal influence lead to greater equality between monarchs and commoners, with the English kings obeying the same laws that govern their people. When Arabella suggests that a man of royal origin is destined to conquer nations no matter how impoverished his family becomes, Sir Charles reproves her overly idealistic worldview: "Is it such an easy Matter, think you, to conquer Kingdoms, that you can flatter a young Man, who has neither Fleets nor Armies, with such strange Hopes?" (FQ 210). Whereas in Arabella's romances national defence depends entirely on the improbable victories of a single prince, eighteenth-century English spaces encompass diverse elements from

⁵⁴ According to Colley, the French monarchs possessed sufficient material and human resources to become the national centre of fashion, whereas in many circumstances the British monarchs had little more privilege than the ordinary people: "there were 10,000 [courtiers, artists and servants] living in Versailles by the 1740s – within the confines of the royal palace, thereby compelling fashionable society to revolve around the inclinations and pursuits of the monarch [...]. British court society was [...] on a much smaller scale. [...] Whenever George II or George III wanted to see an opera or a play, for example, they had to leave St James's or Buckingham House and visit the London theatres, just like the rest of the public did" (2003: 199).

parliamentary regulations and royal interventions to civil societies and armed forces. Accordingly, Arabella's enthusiastic commendation of Artaban's supreme caprice in "deciding the Fates of Empires by a single Word" invites the Countess's counterargument from an eighteenth-century perspective: "The same Actions which made a Man a Hero in those Times, would constitute him a Murderer in These – And the same Steps which led him to a Throne Then, would infallibly conduct him to a Scaffold Now" (FQ 210, 328). The juxtapositions of the hero and the murderer as well as the throne and the scaffold indicate eighteenth-century England's rejection of any individual supremacy, with the romance hero sent to the same scaffold that is used to punish common people. As the same legal rules are imposed on all social ranks of the English nation, characters in the eighteenth-century storyworld of *The Female Quixote* enjoy relative equality in a contractual order.

Granted contractual rights in the system of constitutional monarchy, the English characters in Lennox's novel are sometimes able to defy the traditional stratification of social ranks. Challenging Arabella's belief in "the independent Sovereignty of Love" as well as her "Authority for banishing [Selvin] from his native Country," Glanville argues that Arabella and her suitor are "both restrain'd by the Laws under whose Sanction [they] live" (FQ 320–321). By rejecting absolute monarchy and embracing the rule of law, Glanville emphasises the contractual coexistence of eighteenth-century English people who consent to be governed by the same regulations. As Locke points out in his *Two Treatises*, "being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions" (102). In other words, Arabella can neither force Selvin to die nor banish him from England because she has no influence over his "life" or "liberty." Based on Locke's social contract theory, Thompson notes that Glanville's attempt to correct Arabella's misperceptions "advances an anti-romantic vision of the contractarian person [...] by teaching her post-absolutist physics" (160). Exercising their basic rights in the national spaces of eighteenth-century England, Lennox's characters sometimes adopt a rebellious attitude towards their social superiors. Interpreting Arabella's contemptuous rejection of his love as "her Disdain to admit the Addresses of any Person, whose Quality was inferior to hers," Glanville openly demonstrates his anger at social hierarchy instead of meekly accepting her refusal: "wholly engrossed by his Resentment of the Usage he had received from her, he resolved to set out for *London* the next Day without seeing the Marquis" (FQ 37). By punishing what he takes to be aristocratic arrogance with similar impoliteness, Glanville ensures that people with and without titles are treated on an equal basis. Furthermore, although Miss Groves is blamed for "in all things affect[ing] an Equality with" "the Duke's Daughters," the fact that the duke marries her rich

widowed mother despite her low origins already hints at the fluidity of class categories (FQ 71). Miss Groves herself also disproves any absolute distinction between social ranks by winning the admiration of a monarch: “The King was particularly struck with her; and declared to those about him, that Miss *Groves* was the finest Woman at Court. The Ladies, however, [...] said [...] it was her Resemblance to the *unwieldy German* Ladies that made her so much admired by his Majesty” (FQ 74). In the dissolution of royal absolutism, not only is the English king sexually attracted to a woman significantly below his rank, but the king himself is closely scrutinised by his people and criticised when he prefers female rebellion to the commonly celebrated trait of female submission. When his behaviour does not conform to the contractually defined norms of the English nation, even the monarch can be classified as a foreigner and thus excluded from the English community.⁵⁵

While the concept of social contract frees many Englishmen from the prison-like national order of absolute monarchy, patriarchal structures still prevail in Lennox’s representations of eighteenth-century England. In a brief conversation with Glanville, the marquis offers “to bestow [Arabella] upon him, together with all his Estates,” allowing Glanville “but a few Weeks to court her” (FQ 30, 31). Highly reminiscent of his own short courtship of the late marchioness, the marquis’s decision on his daughter’s marriage equates Arabella with the private property of “his Estates,” both of which he can freely “bestow” on another man. Therefore, despite Arabella’s quixotic tendencies, it is not totally unreasonable of her to call her father’s decision “a tyrannical Exertion of parental Authority,” an authority that supports “the secret Machinations of a Lover [...] either by obliging her to marry him, or by making her a Prisoner” (FQ 35). While the comparison of a father to a tyrant recalls the analogy between royal and patriarchal absolutism, the word “Prisoner” underlines the restrictive effect that the mutual wishes of a father and a future husband can have on an unwilling woman. According to Thompson, “[t]he novel thus activates the analogy of family and state [...]. By representing women unable to animate Locke’s articulation of contractarian virtue, the novel explores the liabilities of a political modernity which does not consistently extend to the domestic sphere” (9). In contrast to Englishmen’s contractual relationships with the royal and aristocratic classes,

⁵⁵ Steedman approaches the constitutional or contractual organisation of the English nation from the perspective of the servant class, “tracing England’s constitutional past in a development from barbarism to a state of modern refinement in which the majority of the population had escaped conditions of general servitude” (321). This approach leads to the same conclusion that England in *The Female Quixote* is represented as a contractually regulated nation.

Englishwomen still live in a largely absolutist space of patriarchal domination.⁵⁶ The blending of the nation, prison and home recurs when the marquis reproaches Arabella for banishing Glanville from the castle: “I desire to know, interrupted the Marquis, For what Crime it was you took the Liberty to banish him from my House?” (FQ 39). The possessive adjective “my” confirms Arabella’s perception of her home as a potential prison because in a patriarchal distribution of social resources the house only belongs to the father. Whereas the father may “desire to know” any private exchange between other residents under his roof, the daughter’s act of sending away an offensive guest is viewed as inappropriate “Liberty.” Although Arabella’s rude behaviour towards Glanville is unquestionably inappropriate, her emphasis on her father’s “absolute” authority in her letter to Glanville is also not entirely groundless: “it is in Obedience to my Father’s absolute Commands, that you receive this Mandate” (FQ 40). This domestic dispute induces Deborah Ross to conclude that “Arabella’s father is a tyrant not only in her disordered fancy, but in ‘fact,’ or deed” (1991: 103). In the blending of absolute monarchy and patriarchy, English daughters in Lennox’s novel are sometimes represented as figurative prisoners of sovereign power despite their contractually structured society.

Arabella’s aristocratic status also does not completely exempt her from the patriarchal norms that seriously constrain women’s behaviour in eighteenth-century England. Although Arabella’s complaints about her father’s tyrannical commands shed light on common predicaments of eighteenth-century women, a critical analysis of *The Female Quixote* should not be guided by the perceptions of a quixotic character who frequently overinterprets or misinterprets incidents. Despite his sometimes-aggressive behaviour, the marquis is far from a complete tyrant, appointing Sir Charles as his daughter’s guardian only after “having first asked her if she was willing it should be so” (FQ 59). Despite his wish for a family alliance of both blood and property, Arabella will only lose “one Third of his Estate” if she refuses to marry Glanville (FQ 64). As Thompson phrases it, “Arabella exercises feminine choice that is, at best, two-thirds free” (166). Although Arabella’s aristocratic status and rich inheritance provide her with both the financial leisure to read romances and the social resources to make blunders, she still daily faces the normative scrutiny of English society. The eighteenth-century codes of

⁵⁶ In her analysis of eighteenth-century women’s inability to give genuine consent, Thompson claims that John Locke’s theorisation of “post-patriarchal wives” is different from “Robert Filmer’s royalist patriarchalist analogy of absolute monarchs and Adamic heads of families” because of the former’s emphasis on women’s inalienable right to life (4). Nevertheless, this minor development does not ensure any real gender equality in Lockean England: “Even though the marriage contract admits a wife’s ‘peculiar’ property, she is – with the exception of her claim upon her ‘Life’ – *herself* among the property which her husband claims the natural power ‘to order.’ A wife’s legitimately peculiar possessions do not, therefore, effectively preclude the likeness of husbands and absolute monarchs” (Thompson 5).

proper femininity are repeatedly stressed by minor women characters during their conversations with Arabella. In her account of Miss Groves's scandalous life, Mrs Morris censures Miss Groves's habit of "riding about the Country, leaping over Hedges and Ditches, exposing her fair Face to the Injuries of the Sun and Wind; and, by those coarse Exercises, contracting a masculine and robust Air not becoming her Sex" (FQ 71). In other words, in Lennox's English storyworld, horse-riding is widely viewed as "coarse Exercises" for genteel women and a "robust Air" is deemed improper for them. For this reason, Miss Glanville finds Thalestris "such a terrible Woman" simply because "she must be a very masculine Sort of Creature" (FQ 125).⁵⁷ The confinement of women's actions to a narrow sphere that is socially defined as feminine strengthens the patriarchal control of English national spaces, leaving women, like in *Moll Flanders*, very few opportunities to participate in political activities. Impressed by Arabella's eloquent speech, Sir Charles exclaims that "if she had been a Man, she would have made a great Figure in Parliament, and that her Speeches might have come perhaps to be printed in time" (FQ 311). As Sharon Smith Palo points out, "the powerful influence of Arabella's speech and her capacity for intellectual discourse stretch beyond the feminine ideal and lead others, particularly Sir Charles, to gender her speech as masculine" (227). However, the subjunctive mood in Sir Charles's praise gives it a sly touch of irony, implying that as a woman Arabella can neither participate in parliamentary politics nor get her speeches printed no matter how talented she is.⁵⁸ In Lennox's representations of eighteenth-century England, even women characters from privileged classes are confined physically as well as socially to a normative realm of feminine propriety.

Confronted with the stark contrast between absolute female authority in romantic nations and contractual but patriarchal structures in Lennox's England, Arabella adventures from the latter into the former in her quest for self-realisation. In one of her famous speeches, Arabella stresses the differences between what she reads and what she experiences: "Since the World is so degenerate in its Customs from what it was formerly, [...] I am extremely happy in having lived in a Solitude which has not yet exposed me to the Mortification of being a Witness to

⁵⁷ Marshall detects in the stories of Miss Groves, the Amazons and the London prostitute Lucy the common features of "cross-dressing" as well as "sexual and gender transgression" (110). Examining Lucy's cross-dressing farce in detail, Schmid argues that, similar to *Moll Flanders*, *The Female Quixote* advocates the notion that "gender differences are somehow innate and visually discoverable regardless of costume or custom" (29).

⁵⁸ Also noticing the subjunctive mood of the sentence, Spacks interprets it in an opposite way and claims that "[t]his possibility, even couched in the subjunctive, epitomizes the revolutionary potential of Arabella's fantasies" (540). The mere "potential" of an individual woman, however, does not significantly change the hierarchical structure of her society.

Manners I cannot approve” (FQ 28). Convinced that French romances represent realities of a bygone era, Arabella exalts the physical and social isolation that her father’s prison-like castle imposes on her, thanking it for protecting her from the mortifying manners of her contemporary age. As Mack puts it, “Arabella seems to be committed to her perspective not as though it is the only reality [...] but as though it is the better reality” (193). Her stubborn adherence to what she believes to be “the better reality” induces Sir Charles to denounce her repetitive allusions to highly improbable romantic episodes: “they are to be found nowhere else, except in your Imagination, which, I am sorry to see, is filled with such *Whimsies*” (FQ 63). The strong oppositions between Arabella’s romantic imaginations and Lennox’s novelistic England have attracted the attention of numerous critics. Deborah Ross, for instance, claims that “the novel contains two worlds: one drawn from romance, and one from reality” (1991: 105). Catherine A. Craft states similarly that in *The Female Quixote* “[r]omance offers a vision exactly opposite to reality” (836). Mary Patricia Martin, on the other hand, argues that “romance is opposed not to truth, but to the novel” (53), and Anna Uddén stresses the rivalries between two different genres of prose fiction in Lennox’s writing: “Arabella [...] is caught in a ‘romance’ empire in which she is a law unto herself – until overpowered by a fictive world with greater mimetic claims” (444). Interpreting the oppositions as a generic encounter between romance and history, Nicole Horejsi rejects Arabella’s argument that she follows the rules of past eras: “There can be no nostalgia for a classical past that never existed, and can only exist, in modernity, through the medium of romance; traditional political and military history would render Arabella, no less than Julia or Cleopatra, a scandalous figure at the margins of history” (111–112). From her perspective of cultural differences, Mack views Lennox’s romantic and pragmatic characters as “actors from two worlds who, though they participate in a single narrative, perceive the action as occurring in two separate realities” (201). Sometimes interpreted as a tension between fact and fiction and sometimes as one between different generic traditions, the oppositions between the romantic spaces that Arabella constructs and the eighteenth-century English nation that Lennox represents are actually dynamic encounters between two different storyworlds.

As the romantically and realistically constructed national spaces form two distinct storyworlds in *The Female Quixote*, random entries into the womb-like, prison-like storyworld of French romances bring about a death- or rebirth-like change in the social status of fictional adventurers. Despite what Anna K. Sagal calls “her encyclopaedic memory for grandiose love stories and tragic wars,” Arabella’s allusions to French romances are frequently hyperbolic or inaccurate (148). Apart from misrepresenting Mandana’s plea for the Jewish people or Cylenia’s presence during Berenice’s imprisonment, Arabella also twists romantic plots to

serve her own purposes (FQ 88, 93). As Palo puts it, when “neither romance nor eighteenth-century customs provide her with a precedent she finds satisfying,” Arabella tends “to negotiate between the customs of eighteenth-century society and the world of romance and to think and act in a way that rises above the conventions of both” (220). Selectively retold and reshaped by Arabella, the romantic episodes that *The Female Quixote* alludes to construct a fictional space that does not absolutely correspond to the original French volumes. The spaces that Arabella literally lives in, on the other hand, are also the narrative constructions of Charlotte Lennox the novelist rather than the historically real spaces of eighteenth-century England. To offer a more accurate analysis of Arabella’s adventurous activities, therefore, I adopt here David Herman’s conceptualisation of the storyworld: “configuring narrative worlds entails mapping discourse cues onto WHAT, WHERE, and WHEN dimensions of a mentally configured storyworld – dimensions whose interplay accounts for the ontological make-up and spatiotemporal profile of the world in question” (71).⁵⁹ While Herman is more interested in the cognitive process of narrative worldmaking, namely how a storyworld is constructed through the interactions between the reader and the text, I focus more on the product of this cognitive process. In other words, I examine how the storyworld that Lennox’s protagonist mentally constructs based on her reading of French romances is verbally represented to the other characters in the novel as well as how this storyworld interacts with the storyworld of eighteenth-century England that the readers of *The Female Quixote* construct based on Lennox’s own representations. More precise than such vague terms as “worlds” or “realities,” the concept of the storyworld sheds light on the two major types of fictional spaces in Lennox’s novel, the romantic spaces of domestically arranged, absolutely controlled prison-like nations, and the novelistic spaces of contractually governed but patriarchally structured eighteenth-century England. By retelling romantic stories of ancient women warriors, Arabella adventures from the anti-romantic spaces of eighteenth-century England into her own romantic storyworld, in which the multiple tropes of womb-like prisons, prison-like home, prison-like love and prison-like nations blend into a network of figurations about absolute female authority and rebirth-like transformations.

⁵⁹ As early as 2008, Uddén already uses the word “storyworld” in her analysis of *The Female Quixote*: “Charlotte Lennox’s novel toys with the comings and goings in this vestibule; its main illusory effect is not psychological verisimilitude but the merging of the storyworld with the actual world” (455). However, the mid-eighteenth-century world in Lennox’s novel is strictly speaking not really “the actual world” but also a storyworld that Lennox’s readers mentally construct through the act of novel reading.

Random Transformations through Fictional Journeys

While characters in *Moll Flanders* experience metamorphoses by physically crossing the borders of Newgate-like England, random transformations occur in *The Female Quixote* through fictional adventures from the storyworld of Lennox's novel into the storyworld of Arabella's romances. Resembling the romantic war captives who achieve death or rebirth through a sudden entry into or exit from their womb-like prisons, the quixotic protagonist, together with other more worldly characters, acquires new social status in the prison-like storyworld of absolute female authority.

Lennox's often ironic use of the word "adventure" indicates the constrictive effects of social norms in eighteenth-century England, the majority of whose residents, women in particular, have little chance to visit nations outside the British Isles. In her attempt to disillusion Arabella about romantic miracles, the Countess lists various physical adventures that are common in French romances but excluded from normative England:

Princesses wandering thro' the World by Land and Sea in mean Disguises, carry'd away violently out of their Father's Dominions by insolent Lovers – Some discover'd sleeping in Forests, other Shipwreck'd on desolate Islands, confin'd in Castles, bound in Chariots, and even struggling amidst the tempestuous Waves of the Sea (FQ 326)

Though not a princess, Moll Flanders has undertaken some of these adventures, walking in the streets of London "in mean Disguises," experiencing near-shipwrecks on a stormy sea and encountering pirates on the Atlantic Ocean. Deemed both improbable and inappropriate by Lennox's English society, however, these physical journeys with their transformative effects are no longer accessible to her women characters in mid-eighteenth-century England. Having stressed the "free and licentious" connotations of the word "adventure," the Countess offers an autobiographical account of her life:

when I tell you [...] that I was born and christen'd, had a useful and proper Education, receiv'd the Addresses of my Lord – through the Recommendation of my Parents, and marry'd him with their Consents and my own Inclination; and that since we have liv'd in great Harmony together, I have told you all the material Passages of my Life, which upon Enquiry you will find differ very little from those of other Women of the same Rank, who have a moderate Share of Sense, Prudence and Virtue. (FQ 327)⁶⁰

⁶⁰ S. Cailey Hall examines the different connotations of the word "adventure" from a generic perspective, viewing the misunderstandings between Arabella and other women characters as a "clash between the lexicons of romance and scandalous memoirs" (89).

According to Jane Spencer, this tedious narration of an uneventful life imposes on Arabella the principles of “silence, anonymity, and the end of the story – or rather, no story at all” (1986: 190). Craft also notes that “England in 1752 is neither the time nor the place for herstory” (837). The eventless progression from noble birth to useful education to harmonious matrimony hardly allows any room for extraordinary adventures, leaving aristocratic women in their aristocratic status and forbidding any metamorphosis that might destabilise the hierarchical order of the English nation. The severe restrictions on women’s physical and social mobility give Lennox’s England a prison-like feature, with genteel women literally confined within the borders of its geographical territory and figuratively incarcerated within the boundaries of its decorous norms.

Denied the chance of physically crossing national boundaries, characters in *The Female Quixote* deviate from the norms of the English nation through fictional adventures into a mentally-constructed, womb-like storyworld. Exasperated by the tedious conversations of the fashionable society in Bath, Arabella expresses her discontent with this physical and social imprisonment:

What room, I pray you, does a Lady give for high and noble Adventures, who consumes her Days in Dressing, Dancing, listening to Songs, and ranging the Walks with People as thoughtless as herself? How mean and contemptible a Figure must a Life spent in such idle Amusements make in History? Or rather, are not such Persons always buried in Oblivion, and can any Pen be found who would condescend to record such inconsiderable Actions? (FQ 279)

The phrase “buried in Oblivion” evokes the trope of the tomb, implying that the petty activities of “Dressing, Dancing, listening to Songs” and vicious gossiping construct a suffocating space of death-like meaninglessness in genteel England, a space particularly frustrating for ambitious characters who strive for eternal life through historical documentation. Closely associated with the concepts of the womb and the prison, the tomb trope conveys Arabella’s desire for a transformative escape from her confinement in death-like oblivion. Since the opportunities for physical adventures are denied her, Arabella, along with other likeminded characters, can only achieve individual transformations through an adventurous crossing of fictional boundaries, namely boundaries between the tomb-like storyworld of Lennox’s England and the womb-like storyworld of romantic nations. The prison-like features of fictional storyworlds are noticed by Amit Yahav, who emphasises “the potential interminability of aesthetic absorption” that “may arrest, entrap, and thus interfere with one’s ability to function in a society” (165). If the storyworld of French romances tends to “arrest” and “entrap” their dedicated readers, the

storyworld of *The Female Quixote* also isolates the English people from non-English elements by discrediting romantic stories as well as romantic values. While both storyworlds imprison their inhabitants with their geographical borders and social norms, only in romantic spaces can Arabella find a “Pen” that is willing to “record” her actions. As Craft points out, “only her deviations from the norm established for women allow her to be interesting enough to write about” (835). Arabella’s fictional journey – or what Uddén calls her “path of relocation” through her “access to and exit from this alternative world” of romances – leads to the random results of death- or rebirth-like changes, thus transforming her trivial life into an exciting story (451). By “transforming servants and writing-masters into nobility,” Arabella’s adventures across the incarcerating boundaries of different storyworlds also bring about her own random metamorphoses in social as well as moral dimensions (Zimmerman 377).

Resembling the romantic prisoners’ random crossing of carceral borders, some of Arabella’s fictional journeys into the storyworld of female glory transform her from an obscure woman in patriarchal England into an influential heroine in romantic society. Followed by highwaymen on their journey to Bath, Glanville and the servants can only solve the problem through a bloody fight, whereas Arabella manages to ensure their safety by treating the robbers as chivalric rescuers who “come to fight for [the ladies’] Deliverance”: “The Highwaymen, who were near enough to hear *Arabella’s* Voice, though they could not distinguish her Words, gazed on her with great Surprise [...] and galloped away as fast as they were able” (FQ 258). By travelling into her own romantic storyworld and reacting to ordinary incidents in a romantic style, Arabella successfully imposes her will on her potential enemies and changes their original plan despite her absurd conduct of mistaking criminals for knights. Arabella’s empowerment by romance is noted by numerous scholars.⁶¹ Her ability to affect the decisions of others through a fictional adventure into romance is most manifest in her relationship with Glanville, whose behaviour becomes increasingly romantic in the novel.⁶² Spencer, for

⁶¹ Arabella’s acquisition of authority through romance is already very well-researched. Craft, for instance, claims that “Arabella’s imitation of heroines gives her power to speak and to control: she demands absolute fidelity, extensive service, and thorough obedience from the men around her, and she receives it” (834). Similarly, Doody points out that romance enables Arabella to “take upon herself the power to control the movements and behaviour of others” (2008: xxv). Analysing Arabella’s creative power in the novel, Malina acknowledges her “limited success in transforming her social circle into a facsimile of the world she reads it as” (279). Scott Paul Gordon also stresses Arabella’s crucial impact on the development of the plot: “Whether because she approximates an absolute monarch or a freak show, Arabella firmly ‘controuls’ this text” (505).

⁶² Echoing Doody’s argument that “[a]cquaintance with Arabella itself forms young Glanville’s one inescapably ‘romantic’ experience” (2008: xxvii), Deborah Ross notes that Glanville has gradually become “‘violent and hasty’ enough to be the romantic lover he pretends to be to humor Arabella in volume two” (1987: 458).

example, observes that through her fictional adventures Arabella “turns Glanville’s courtship into something closer to the long-term devotion required in romance than to the business-like few weeks projected by her father” (1986: 190). Aaron R. Hanlon also emphasises “Arabella’s ability to ensnare supporting characters into her imaginative world” (82). Claiming that “there is nothing at so great a Distance from true and heroick Virtue, as that Indifference which obliges some People to [...] neither entertain great Desires of Glory, nor Fear of Infamy,” Arabella defines romantic heroism as the opposite of moral indifference (FQ 310). In other words, contrary to the standards of genteel behaviour, she advocates violent demonstrations of a “vehement [...] Temper” through brutal bloodshed (FQ 310). Discarding his initially playful attitude as the story progresses, Glanville gradually conforms to the heroic expectations of Arabella’s romantic storyworld, drawn by her manipulative love into a similar boundary-crossing journey. After Arabella fictionally transforms Hervey from an ordinary gentleman into a treacherous ravisher, Glanville follows Arabella’s understanding of chivalric honour by avenging verbal offences through dangerous fights: “Mr. *Glanville*, transported with Rage at this Insolence, hit him such a Blow with the But-End of his Whip, that it stunned him for a Moment” (FQ 157). By guiding her suitors into the storyworld of romance, therefore, Arabella obtains the authority that the absolutist structures of romantic spaces offer her and occupies the supreme position of the royal captor while her lover-prisoners thoughtlessly sacrifice each other’s life to support her glory. What the Doctor rightly condemns as romance heroines’ “dreadful Worship of human Sacrifices” is almost literally staged in Glanville’s duel with Sir George near the end of the novel (FQ 380). The climactic scene of the duel, with Glanville the hero “running like a Madman [...] actuated by an irresistible Fury” and Sir George the villain repenting his conspiracies in the face of death, demonstrates Arabella’s power to transform lovers into madmen and villains into penitents (FQ 357). Having transformed herself from a powerless heiress into a powerful heroine through her crossing of fictional boundaries, Arabella also transforms others’ behaviour by ensnaring, or incarcerating, them in the storyworld she mentally constructs.

Apart from absolute authority, Arabella’s fictional adventures also win her absolute respect from time to time, transforming her from the target of mockery to that of admiration. Dressed in the style of Princess Julia, Arabella undertakes a fictional journey in the assembly-room of Bath, obstinately following the fashion of her romantic storyworld rather than that of eighteenth-century England. This fictional adventure elevates her above the scorn of the Bath society in spite of her physical situatedness in the English nation, transforming their nasty jests into a “respectful Silence”: “Scarce had the first tumultuous Whisper escap’d the Lips of each

Individual, when they found themselves aw'd to Respect by that irresistable Charm in the Person of *Arabella*, which commanded Reverence and Love from all who beheld her" (FQ 272).⁶³ For a representation of her worldly English characters, Lennox's choice of words here is highly evocative of the romantic tradition, with Arabella's charm described as "irresistible" and the feeling of "Reverence and Love" forcefully "commanded" from everyone else. The word "command" especially recalls the prison-like love trope in Arabella's retelling of romantic stories, hinting at her power to give absolute commands in the Bath circle. Adopting the role of a royal princess, Arabella changes through her boundary-crossing movement from a pathetic laughingstock into a sovereign figure who inherently deserves others' respect. As Palo puts it, through her adventure into romance, Arabella "brings about something of a transformation (though perhaps a temporary one) of this space" (224). The transformative effect of Arabella's fictional journey is also noticed by Martin (57) as she examines how Arabella's recitation of Euridamia's "speech upon raillery" receives genuine applause among her English audience (FQ 267–269). This allusion to de Scudéry's *Artemenes* also prompts Sagal to declare that "Arabella's good qualities are explicitly connected to her romance-reading habit" (146–147). Either through a direct recitation of romantic texts or through a practical actualisation of their textual messages, Arabella gains the respect of a society in which her solemn merits are largely missing. In front of her eccentric behaviour, even the London prostitute is "mov'd to respect by the Dignity of her Appearance" and "thank'd her, with an Accent full of Regard and Submission" (FQ 336). In a nation generally unimpressed by unnecessary grandeur or absolute hierarchy, the extraordinary "Regard and Submission" that Arabella frequently receives draw attention to the impact of her fictional journeys upon her social situation.

Gaining authority and winning respect, Arabella's boundary-crossing movements transform her from a quixotic madwoman into a morally superior protagonist. According to Palo, "Lennox represents Arabella as morally and intellectually superior to the other female characters in the novel, and she clearly illustrates that this superiority is not in *spite* of the heroine's romance reading, but *because* of it" (205). The superiority of Arabella's moral education through her reading of romances is easily discernible in her differences from Charlotte Glanville. Whereas Charlotte, "fond of Beauty in none of her own Sex but herself,

⁶³ Juxtaposing Lennox's worldly readers with "the company at Bath," Martin points out that like the Bath society "we are often [...] brought up short by Arabella's evident superiority, as her knowledge, judgment, and taste are contrasted with the ignorance, vanity, and superficiality of the world around her" (54).

[...] was extremely disappointed at finding [Arabella] so handsome,” Arabella is able to sincerely praise Charlotte thanks to the lessons she has learned from “the Heroines, who knew not what Envy or Emulation meant” (FQ 80). By confining her within the spaces of absolute glory, the romantic storyworld that Arabella constructs shelters her from the immoral traits of selfishness, jealousy, hypocrisy and snobbery. Even when her fictional travelling brings her into the ludicrous blunder of mistaking Hervey for a ravisher, the different reactions of the two characters highlight Arabella’s moral superiority despite her unacceptable behaviour. While Hervey immediately escapes from the region,

fearing this ridiculous Adventure would be soon made public, and himself exposed to the Sneers of his Country Acquaintance, [...] *Arabella*, in order to be completely generous, a Quality for which all the Heroines are famous, laid a Command upon her two Attendants not to mention what had passed, giving them, at the same time, Money to secure their Secrecy; (FQ 21)

Surrounded by gossip communities like the ladies in Bath, Hervey is justifiable in his dread for public derision. Removed from English society, however, Arabella imitates the noble generosity of romance heroines, concealing from others her glorious triumph over her ravisher and even bribing the servants in order to protect her enemy’s reputation. In the heat of her dispute with the Doctor, Arabella herself refers to the moral codes she has constructed on the basis of her romance reading: “From these Books [...] I have learnt not to recede from the Conditions I have granted, and shall not therefore censure the Licence of your Language, which glances from the Books upon the Readers” (FQ 374). Arabella’s immersion in the romantic storyworld teaches her to adhere to promises and principles, a moral lesson which encourages both her steadfast belief in quixotic notions and her generous decision to forgive the Doctor’s insult. Cultivated by her frequent adventures into the romantic storyworld, Arabella’s quixotic qualities often result in her rebirth-like displays of moral superiority among the mid-eighteenth-century residents of the English nation.⁶⁴

Mirroring the uncertain results of romantic prisoners’ escapes, Arabella’s crossing of fictional boundaries sometimes reduces her to a speechless imitator of others’ behaviour. Early

⁶⁴ Scholars also notice other moral qualities that Arabella learns from romance or romance reading. Ellen Gardiner, for instance, argues that “the romance has actually taught Arabella superior critical judgment” (4), and Sagal explores how the experience of romance reading improves Arabella’s “critical ability to negotiate multiple texts in search of knowledge” (146). Gordon claims that Lennox defends the “romance values” of “disinterestedness” in *The Female Quixote* (500), while Martin discerns in Arabella’s genuine concern for Sir George’s life “a sympathy of imagination and a nobility of spirit preferable to the self-interested pettiness in which others indulge” (56).

in the novel, Arabella's physical confinement in a romantic castle already evokes the "womb/tomb syndrome" that Fludernik (2019: 232) extensively analyses, giving Hervey "an inconceivable Surprise at the strange Humour of the Marquis, who buried so beautiful a Creature in Obscurity" (FQ 9). The castle, together with the romantic storyworld that Arabella mentally constructs during her secluded life there, is represented as a tomb that "buried" her alive "in Obscurity." This figurative blending of imprisonment, death, romance and insignificance foreshadows the disastrous consequences of some of her fictional entries into romance. When such a fictional entry convinces Arabella of Edward's plan to abduct her, her physical escape from the castle into unknown fields constitutes one of her most ill-judged acts in the whole novel, causing her to fall into "a Swoon" after "happening to stumble over a Stump of a Tree" (FQ 95). The death-like state of the swoon is further emphasised by the narrator's subsequent references to "that fatal Stump" as well as to Lucy's fear that Arabella might "perish" (FQ 95). The narrator's repeated evocations of death suggest that Arabella's adventure into romance in the Edward episode leads to a death-like transformation of her physical as well as social status. If her bodily injuries only temporarily affect her health, her extremely incautious act of travelling with a stranger at night poses a threat to both her personal safety and her social reputation. This reckless adherence to romantic traditions recurs in Arabella's climactic plunge into the Thames, which leaves her "senseless, and to all Appearance dead" (FQ 363). The direct use of the word "dead" draws attention to the random results of Arabella's boundary-crossing journeys, with some of them winning her absolute authority and unquestioning respect while others causing her corporal demise and social ruin. According to David Marshall, "this experience functions as the symbolic death and rebirth that is the typical climax of a narrative of conversion" (122). Despite its enormous difference from Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, *The Female Quixote* also represents adventures into and out of womb-like spaces that arbitrarily bring about the adventurer's rebirth or death.

The death-like effect of Arabella's boundary-crossing journeys extends far beyond the physical level, with the quixotic protagonist frequently losing her sense of selfhood in her blind imitation of romance heroines. Before Arabella plunges into the Thames, she delivers a heroic speech in the romantic style:

The Action we have it in our Power to perform will immortalize our Fame, and raise us to a Pitch of Glory equal to that of the renown'd *Clelia* herself.

Like her, we may expect Statues erected to our Honour: Like her, be propos'd as Patterns to Heroines in ensuing Ages: And like her, perhaps, meet with Sceptres and Crowns for our Reward. (FQ 363)

According to Marshall, what Arabella believes to be a courageous defence of her virtue is actually “a replay of the act that Clelia ‘perform’d’ in a plot that has become a script that governs Arabella’s life. [...] With its repeated ‘Like her ... Like her ... And like her ...,’ Arabella’s speech emphasizes that her will to power (and fame) is essentially a will to imitate” (123). Apart from bringing her to a death-like state, Arabella’s decision to imitate Clelia also casts doubt on the authenticity of her desire.⁶⁵ During some boundary-crossing journeys, Arabella’s repeated emphasis on imitation undermines the independence of her individual self by representing her actions as a mere product of unquestioning mimesis. Having received a love letter from Hervey, Arabella suppresses her own desire to read it during her imitation of romance heroines: “she traversed the Chamber in great seeming Irresolution, often stealing a Glance to the Letter, which she had a strong Inclination to open; but, searching the Records of her Memory for a Precedent, and not finding [any], she reiterated her Commands to *Lucy* to carry it back” (FQ 13). Her acts of “often stealing a Glance to the Letter” expose the natural curiosity of a young woman born in eighteenth-century England, where, despite its patriarchal structures, no social code forbids women from reading love letters. Through her fictional adventure into the romantic storyworld, however, Arabella deprives herself of the right to follow her own will, metamorphosing from a strong-minded aristocratic lady into a meek imitator of others’ behaviour. Her habit of mimesis is accountable for many of her misjudgements, such as her decision to visit Sir George in his bed chamber: “she having reflected, that *Amalazontha*, whose Example, in order to avoid the Censure of future Ages, she was resolved exactly to follow, did not write to *Ambiomer*, but paid him a Visit, she resolved to do the like” (FQ 181). If Arabella’s assumption that Sir George is dying of unrequited love is only a ridiculous notion, a strict imitation of Amalazontha’s bedside visit would irreparably ruin her social reputation. During some of her fictional adventures, Arabella’s thoughtless imitation of romance heroines represses her desire instead of fulfilling it, seriously distracting her from her original goal.

Encouraged by her adventures into romance, Arabella’s imitations of fictional characters further undermine her independent judgment by subjecting her most basic perceptions of reality to the reconstructive power of language.⁶⁶ In an imitation of romance heroines, Arabella forces

⁶⁵ Based on the publications of Rey Chow and René Girard, Hanlon examines the mimetic nature of desires in *The Female Quixote* (77–96). Schmid also analyses how Arabella “both desires and imitates” “the male gaze” in the novel (22).

⁶⁶ In her analysis of Sir George’s highly romantic but blatantly inaccurate description of Arabella’s eye colour, Thompson argues similarly that “the text absorbed by Arabella as a child determines the truth

herself to dislike Glanville despite her irrepressible fondness of him simply because no “Lady in Romance ever married the Man that was chose for her”: “In those Cases the Remonstrances of a Parent are called Persecutions; obstinate Resistance, Constancy and Courage; and an Aptitude to dislike the Person proposed to them, a noble Freedom of Mind which disdains to love or hate by the Caprice of others” (FQ 27). Compelled by the romantic rules of her womb-like storyworld to act against her free will, Arabella allows the language of romance to reconstruct her sense of reality, with all parental interventions, just or unjust, categorised as “Persecutions” and all rebellious spirits, justifiable or unjustifiable, equated with “Constancy and Courage.” By rejecting “the Caprice of others” through an equally capricious transformation of her own emotions, Arabella actually loses the ability “to love or hate.” Her absolute submission to the romantic language becomes even more obvious in her conversation with Glanville after the Edward episode. Despite her inner reluctance to part with Glanville, Arabella announces his second banishment “in the Language of *Cleopatra*” after unreasonably suspecting him of conspiracy with Edward (FQ 116). Irritated by her endless citation of romances, Glanville protests: “I have no Patience with that rigorous Gipsy, whose Example you follow so exactly, to my Sorrow: Speak in your own Language, I beseech you” (FQ 116). Arabella, however, persists in her imitation of Cleopatra in both language and conduct, even relying on Cleopatra’s speech to express her own “Thoughts”: “notwithstanding your unjust Prohibitions, I shall make use of the Language of that incomparable Lady, to tell you my Thoughts” (FQ 116). Strictly controlled by romantic conventions in her speech and behaviour, Arabella relinquishes the right to “[s]peak in [her] own Language” during her adventurous quest for absolute authority. Her failure to judge the situation independently or communicate with others effectively causes another farcical quarrel with Glanville near the end of the novel, with Arabella talking incomprehensibly in the romantic style after meeting Sir George’s actress: “Ask the inconstant *Ariamenes* [...] the Offence of the ungrateful *Glanville*. The Betrayer of *Cynecia* can best answer that Question to the Deceiver of *Arabella*” (FQ 351). In a rare footnote, Lennox explains that “[t]his Enigmatical Way of speaking upon such Occasions, is of great Use in the voluminous *French* Romances, since the Doubt and Confusion it is the Cause of [...] gives Rise to a great Number of succeeding Mistakes, and consequently Adventures” (FQ 351). Since Glanville has not heard the fictitious story of Princess Cynecia, it is extremely difficult for him to infer that Ariamenes is supposed to be his own name. Although Arabella’s

of even the most irreducibly material thing, her own body, subordinating it to a ‘Stile’ that renders ‘indifferent’ the egregious discrepancy of black and blue” (153).

“Enigmatical” speech does bring about new romantic adventures, these adventures lead directly to Glanville’s almost fatal duel with Sir George and her own almost fatal plunge into the Thames. With her life and reality reconstructed by the language of romance, Arabella experiences death-like transformations in some of her fictional journeys, losing the basic ability to follow her own wishes or express her genuine feelings.

Similar to Arabella’s random metamorphoses between death and rebirth, Lucy is also arbitrarily transformed from an insignificant servant into an influential confidant during her adventures from contractual England into Arabella’s romantic storyworld. By “tracing England’s constitutional past in a development from barbarism to a state of modern refinement,” Steedman views the change of “the master-servant relationship” in the eighteenth century as a shift from absolute control to contractual agreement, with Lucy epitomising “the great cusp of status and contract that the domestic servant has been taken to represent” (321).⁶⁷ Lucy’s frequent displays of complete submission to Arabella’s wishes, especially during Arabella’s fictional journeys into the romantic storyworld, also trigger her own adventures from the English storyworld of social “contract” to the romantic one of absolute “status.” In contrast to contractual England, the absolutist space of romances expects from Lucy a kind of subordination that, to cite her own words, equals “Slavery” (FQ 122). Ironically, however, Lucy’s unquestioning obedience to her mistress grants her the authority that she seldom has in the spaces of the English nation. By accompanying Arabella in her fictional adventures, Lucy undergoes a metamorphosis from an ordinary maidservant employed by an aristocratic family into a trustworthy confidant privy to all her mistress’s secrets. When Arabella suspects someone of falling in love with her, she, “after the Example of her Heroines, [...] call[s] her favourite Woman; or, to use her own Language, her, ‘in whom she confided her most secret Thoughts’” (FQ 10). Thus, the boundary-crossing journey from England into romance transforms a simple-minded country girl into Arabella’s “favourite Woman,” granting Lucy free access to all her lady’s potentially scandalous “Thoughts.” During the same adventure, the possibility of Lucy being bribed by Arabella’s supposed lovers is first mentioned by Arabella and then actualised by Hervey, with Lucy elevated far above the status of a common servant: “*Lucy*, to whom this Speech first gave a Hint of what she ought to expect from her Lady’s Lovers, finding herself of more Importance than she imagined, was so pleased at the Prospect

⁶⁷ Steedman illustrates in detail how Lucy simultaneously conforms to the traditional and modern standards of a domestic servant: “She has been with Arabella since her mistress’s babyhood and sometimes appears as ‘My Woman,’ a traditional servant attached to a mistress through bonds of fealty and vassalage. But then, like any girl of the 1750s [...], she got herself hired at some point, and several times refers to the terms of her hiring, when she actively ‘went to Service’” (325).

which opened to her” (FQ 11). This “Prospect” of enhanced influence is only possible in the romantic storyworld, where the heroines’ confidants are treated with great respect by both the supreme heroines and their captivated lovers. Arabella’s reliance on Lucy in the romantic manner also allows Lucy to show her rebellious spirit in front of her social superiors. Not only does she freely insult the steward by calling him “a Rogue” (FQ 94), but she also accuses her mistress of being “the most hard-heartedest Lady” and wishes Arabella to be daily haunted by the “Spirits” of her dead lovers (FQ 175). By crossing the borders between romance and anti-romantic England, Lucy demonstrates a rebirth-like change in her social status through an unexpected acquisition of extraordinary influence.

Like Arabella’s fictional journeys, Lucy’s boundary-crossing adventures sometimes also have an injurious impact on her individual selfhood, reducing her to an incomprehensible imitator of her mistress’s speech. Exploring “the complex intersection of gender and class concerns,” Hanlon stresses the profoundly unequal power relationship between Arabella and Lucy, with “the servant mimicking the quixote as a stand-in or a double within the quixotic fantasy” (78). Lucy’s role as the “double” of a romance heroine but without her sovereign authority jeopardises her individual voice during the fictional journeys. In her failed attempt to convey Arabella’s message to Tinsel, Lucy’s precise imitation of Arabella’s speech and manners deprives her of the ability to express herself correctly: “Sir, said *Lucy* adapting the Solemnity of her Lady’s Accent – My Lady bad me say, that she will grant – No, that she consents to grant you a short Dience” (FQ 299). By first fastidiously replacing the verb “will” with the more formal expression “consents to” and then unconsciously mispronouncing the word “audience” as “Dience,” Lucy reveals that she does not master the romantic language that she endeavours to speak. Her obsessive mimesis of a language style to which she is totally unaccustomed distracts her from the content of the message. The detrimental effect of Lucy’s boundary-crossing adventure on her capability of self-expression is also manifest in the Selvin episode, in which Lucy accompanies Arabella again in her adventurous journey towards romantic authority. Imitating Arabella’s absurd conviction that Selvin has fainted after hearing his banishment, Lucy misrepresents Arabella’s message in her endeavour to speak in the romantic style: “I came, Sir, said *Lucy*, repeating her Lady’s Words, to see in what Condition Mr. *Selvin* is in, and to give him all the Solation in my Power” (FQ 315). If Lucy’s mispronunciation of “consolation” as “Solation” can still be interpreted as Lennox’s joke at the expense of the uneducated poor, her speech to Glanville openly deviates from the proper behaviour of the servant class: “My Lady [...] bid me tell you, Traitor —” (FQ 350). In this – again failed – recitation of Arabella’s speech, Lucy represents Arabella’s view as her own and

directly calls Glanville a “Traitor” as if it were her own belief. As Lucy meaninglessly repeats small parts of Arabella’s speeches and thoughtlessly permits Arabella’s quixotic assumptions to occupy her mind, this maidservant loses her ability to talk and judge during her fictional journeys into romance, while the political implications of the word “Traitor” again draws attention to the blending of love, nationhood, England and non-English romance.

As the only character in *The Female Quixote* who both narrates and designs fictional autobiographies, Sir George experiences both almost fatal incidents and social or moral rebirth after his entry into the romantic storyworld. By narrating a fictitious autobiography, Sir George constructs another storyworld based on the conventions of French romances, a storyworld in which Kent is a separate nation and the Bellmours are royal descendants: “my Father [...] quietly beheld the Kingdom of *Kent* in the Possession of other Masters, while he contented himself with the Improvement of that small Pittance of Ground, which was all that the unhappy Prince *Veridomer*, my Grandfather, was able to bequeath to him” (FQ 210). Narratively departing from the spaces of constitutional England, Sir George forges royal family origins for himself and hence acquires new social status in his romantically structured storyworld.⁶⁸ This capricious transformation of Sir George’s standing attracts the attention of Sir Charles, whose derisive comment underlines the differences between his own perceptions of eighteenth-century England and Sir George’s representations of romantic spaces: “Will you new-christen your Grandfather [...]? I knew honest Sir *Edward Bellmour* very well, [...] but I believe no Person in *Kent* ever gave him the Title of Prince *Veridomer*” (FQ 210). The word “new-christen” emphasises the rebirth-like feature of Sir George’s change during his fictional crossing of spatial boundaries, while “the Title of Prince” hints at the absolute authority that Sir George expects to obtain through this fictional rebirth. As Arabella accompanies Sir George in his boundary-crossing journey and fully accepts the absolutist principles of the romantic storyworld, his supposed royal origin significantly enhances her respect for him: “it raises Sir *George* greatly in my Esteem, to hear he is descended from Kings; for, truly, a Royal Extraction does infinitely set off noble and valiant Actions, and inspires only lofty and generous Sentiments” (FQ 209). In a space where “noble and valiant Actions” as well as “lofty and generous Sentiments” are linked not to the person’s moral integrity or good education but to his birth only, Sir George metamorphoses from a deceitful villain into a sovereign knight. If Sir George’s autobiographical account eventually induces Arabella to banish him from her

⁶⁸ Sir George’s familiarity with and reliance on the literary tradition of romance are commented on by Ellen Gardiner (2) and Doody (2008: xxvii).

surroundings, his composition of Princess Cynecia's autobiography, narrated to Arabella by a hired actress, brings about his transformation on the moral level after almost causing his death. In his attempt to smear Glanville with another romantic story, Sir George becomes a victim to both his own wicked scheme and Glanville's romantic passion. As his second entry into romance devastates his prospects of an advantageous marriage, damages his already precarious reputation and even threatens his physical existence in the English storyworld, the possibility of an early death exerts a transformative impact on his moral codes: "the Fear of Death produc'd its usual Effects, and made him extremely concern'd for the Errors of his past Life, and very desirous of attoning for them if possible" (FQ 360). As the only autobiographer in the novel, Sir George faces the random consequences of social advancement, physical dissolution and moral transformation during his fictional adventures.

Boundary-crossing adventures between the storyworld of the English nation and that of non-English romances are also conducted by other minor characters in *The Female Quixote*, triggering death- or rebirth-like changes in their social status. By moving from the London court into the protective boundaries of his romantic castle, the marquis seems to be reborn after the end of his political career: "behaving rather like a Man who had resigned, than been dismissed from his Posts, he imagined he triumphed sufficiently over the Malice of his Enemies, while he seemed to be wholly insensible of the Effects it produced" (FQ 5).⁶⁹ According to Doody, the marquis "is a slave to imagination," imprisoned but also empowered by "a fantasy of power born of frustration" (2008: xx). By escaping from his shameful loss of power into a storyworld he mentally constructs, the marquis imaginarily transforms himself from a dismissed employee into a triumphant philosopher. The same journey into what Doody calls the marquis's "sulky Arcadia" brings the young marchioness to an untimely death, however, as her entrance into the romantic spaces of the castle and the books results in a tedious life as well as a fatal childbirth (2008: xx; FQ 6). This blending of the tomb and the womb during the marchioness's fictional adventures into romance echoes the Countess's motherly care for Arabella later in the novel. During her visit to Arabella, the Countess obtains the latter's "Esteem" by delivering a speech in the romantic style: "The Favour I have receiv'd from Fortune [...] in bringing me to the Happiness of your Acquaintance, charming *Arabella*, is so great, that I may rationally expect some terrible Misfortune will befall me" (FQ 329, 325). Although the Countess's deliberate entry into Arabella's romantic storyworld wins her the

⁶⁹ Similarly, Hammond and Regan also claim that "the heroine's quixotism is partly inherited from her father, a 'grave and melancholy' man who, sickened by the machiavellian quality of court life, has retired to a country 'Castle'" (149).

respect of the quixotic protagonist and thus the opportunity to appear in this quixotic novel, this fictional adventure also foreshadows her sudden disappearance from Lennox's plot. As the "terrible Misfortune" that the Countess mentions in the hyperbolic style of romantic language actualises in "her Mother's Indisposition," the language of romance reconstructs the material reality of another female character who seeks authority in its capricious storyworld, forcing her into a death-like disappearance from Lennox's fiction (FQ 325, 330). Because the transformative adventures that Lennox's characters undertake guide them into a fictional space that appears completely different from eighteenth-century England, they are frequently described as escapes from contemporary reality. Brean Hammond and Shaun Regan call Arabella's quixotism "a form of imaginative escapism" (149). Palo discerns in romantic conventions "the means by which the heroine escapes the limitations" of a "narrow and uneventful existence" (208). Examining the functions of romance in *The Female Quixote*, Deborah Ross argues that "it provided an imaginative escape from [...] an emotionally dreary life" (1991: 3). Similarly, Spencer stresses that "it offered escape from male-dominated reality through a fantasy of female power" (1986: 184). As characters repeatedly cross the fictional boundaries between two opposite structures – capriciously organised, absolutely controlled romantic nations and contractually but patriarchally governed eighteenth-century England – the narrative forms of romance and biography facilitate fictional escapes during their dynamic encounters with English national spaces.

Biographical Escapes from Contractual, Patriarchal England

Despite Lennox's satirical commentaries, romance as a narrative form prevails in her seemingly realistic novel, facilitating transformative adventures into womb-like spaces, rewriting male-centred histories through biographical narration and constructing a storyworld that is both antagonistic to and better than the contractual, patriarchal English nation.

Although I have already analysed the features and functions of the romantic storyworld which, as a mental construct within *The Female Quixote*, can be best examined through a textual analysis of the novel, I have not yet focused on Lennox's use of romance as a narrative form in general. Contrary to Doody's statement that *The Female Quixote* marks the "exact date signaling the new Realism's usurpation of the major realms of prose fiction," numerous critics have illustrated how Lennox's apparently realist novel draws on the narrative strategies of the romance form (1996: 288). As early as 1991, Deborah Ross already declares that "*The Female Quixote* is a romance, and Arabella, the quixote, is a romance heroine" (95). Similarly, Craft argues that Lennox's novel "recounts the adventures of a lady who ends in a love-match very

much like those of the stories which are interpolated into her own" (837). Dorothee Birke also points out that in many occasions "*The Female Quixote* itself copies the style of Arabella's French romances" (225). While the fictional spaces of romantic nations as specific mental constructs of Lennox's characters can be best approached through an analysis of those characters' verbal or behavioural representations of their own imaginations, romance as a narrative form requires a more general definition. In her Routledge handbook on romance, Barbara Fuchs delineates it "as a literary and textual *strategy*," "a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi, including idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity" (9). Through this broad definition, Fuchs proposes "to address the occurrence of romance within texts that are clearly classified as some other genre," thus recalling the new formalist understanding of narrative structures as forms that, unlike conventionally classified, spatiotemporally situated genres, resonate with the social as well as aesthetic forms of different times and spaces (9). In her new formalist research, Levine defines genres "as customary constellations of elements into historically recognizable groupings of artistic objects," and forms as "organizations or arrangements that afford repetition and portability across materials and contexts" (14). Set in the social context of mid-eighteenth-century England as well as in the literary context of realist fiction, *The Female Quixote* contains all the elements of romance that Fuchs has listed.

Filled with the narrative arrangements of "idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity," *The Female Quixote* draws heavily on the form of romance in its depictions of carceral and national spaces (Fuchs 9). Lennox's idealisation of her protagonist in the style of French romances has already received sufficient scholarly attention. At the very beginning of the novel, Arabella is portrayed as an epitome of exterior and interior perfection: "Nature had indeed given her a most charming Face, a Shape easy and delicate, a sweet and insinuating Voice, and an Air so full of Dignity and Grace, as drew the Admiration of all that saw her" (FQ 6–7). Examining the "superlatives" in this "initial account of Arabella," Martin points out that "Arabella is always treated like a heroine, her beauty, character, and understanding repeatedly described in the most extravagant terms" (53). While her "most charming Face," together with an "easy and delicate" figure, enhances the attraction of her physical appearance, the adjectives "sweet and insinuating" refer both to the pleasant quality of her voice and to the endearing personality that her speeches demonstrate. Arabella's dignified and graceful demeanour signals on the other hand her inner confidence and elegance,

drawing, hyperbolically phrased, “the Admiration of all that saw her.”⁷⁰ While such idealising descriptions prevail in the novel, the marvellous is most blatantly manifest in the frequent coincidences that confirm Arabella’s wildly unrealistic expectations, encourage her further adventures and thus postpone the happy-ever-after ending of conventional matrimony. In the Edward episode, for instance, Margaret Dalziel notes that Arabella’s sudden disappearance in the country fields follows a typical romance strategy: “Nothing is more common in the romances than for a person, left wounded or supposedly dead, to have disappeared by the time the rescue party arrives” (396). This unexpected turn of events triggers Arabella’s fictional wandering into her prison-like romantic storyworld on both thematic and narrative levels, causing a significant delay in the development of her love relationship with Glanville. Narrative delay is also engendered by obscured identity near the end of the novel. As Deborah Ross summarises, in the interpolated story of Cynecia, Lennox “has an actress disguised as a princess recite the romance of her life, in which she meets a prince, who recites the romance of his life” (1987: 458). While the actress’s forged identity eventually causes Arabella’s most drastic imitation of romance heroines and thus again postpones the ending of the novel, the impact of this interpolated piece of romance is reinforced by the disguises, intrigues and chivalric dispositions of Lennox’s English characters. With Sir George appearing under “the Disguise of a Horseman’s Coat” and Charlotte Glanville hidden behind Arabella’s veil, the traitorous designs of Arabella’s maid Deborah and the fiery passion of her lover Glanville together bring about the brutal duel that typically happens in romances (FQ 364). According to Marshall, “as heroines appear in disguise while heroes clash with their rivals in love,” “[i]mpersonation and mistaken identity lead to a nearly fatal sword fight,” recalling “the forms of romance” that generate unexpected conflicts (114–115). Supported by miraculous occurrences and fake identities, the seemingly endless fictional wandering of an idealised protagonist draws attention to the interactions between the womb-like carceral spaces whose boundaries she often crosses and the narrative form of romance that represents as well as facilitates her boundary-crossing movements.

The romance strategies of narrative delays, endless adventures and random coincidences reinforce the womb-like qualities of Arabella’s incarcerating storyworld and hence its crucial difference from contractual England. Zak Watson claims that the romance form “relies on the mystery of desire, the deferral of its satisfaction [and] even of its articulation” rather than on

⁷⁰ Dalziel also emphasises the resemblance between Lennox’s portrayal of Arabella and the romance writers’ representations of their heroines: “Heroines of romance unite a graceful indifference to their appearance with exquisite beauty and perfect taste in dress” (394).

any “moment of resolution,” leaving its “plot [...] free to wander from event to event” (34). Arabella’s idealistic indifference to pragmatic benefits such as money or title enables her to actively seek out adventurous events in her unadventurous neighbourhood, prompting her to frequently cross the boundaries between storyworlds without any specific purpose. Unguided by any clearly-set goal, the fictional journeys in *The Female Quixote* bring about random consequences of rebirth- or death-like changes on the transformative borders of romantic spaces, in which Arabella and her fellow quixotic imitators voluntarily confine themselves in exchange for an absolutist social structure. As movements inside the romantic storyworld form no linear progression towards a final destination and movements across its borders follow no strict rule of causal sequence, the capricious spaces of romances and the loose control of their boundaries intensify the blending of this prison-like storyworld with the concept of the womb. Repeatedly recalling the uncertain results of childbirth, Arabella’s metamorphoses into either influential commanders or speechless imitators trigger most of the important incidents in Lennox’s novel and cause the repeated delay of its conclusion. Accordingly, narrative delay as a romance strategy in *The Female Quixote* is both induced by and sheds light on the womb-like features of its embedded storyworld. Through its emphasis on transformations, the womb trope inevitably draws attention to the contrast between spaces inside and outside the womb. As Fuchs points out, romance writers’ “nostalgic evocation of other times and places [...] challenges our understanding of romance as a socially conservative form” because “[t]hrough the lens of nostalgia, the past can pose a significant challenge to the present” (7). Arabella’s construction of a romantic storyworld that is temporally and spatially remote from her contemporary society not only offers a different version of social practices but also challenges the norms of the English nation. For example, as hierarchical structures on both sides of the womb encounter each other during Arabella’s fictional wandering, Lennox’s narrator invites different interpretations by referring to Sir Charles as the “Knight” (FQ 60, 219, 316). Whereas the word “knight” only indicates Sir Charles’s social status as a baronet in mid-eighteenth-century England, for Arabella it entails the entire system of chivalric codes. Prevalent in the novel and highlighted by romance strategies, such contrasts between storyworlds inevitably comment on the spaces of the English nation.

As romance strategies facilitate transformative adventures, the storyworld of French romances is frequently represented as superior to that of contractual England. In order to justify her fictional escape into the romantic storyworld, Arabella criticises mid-eighteenth-century English society by comparing it with fictional societies of another time and space: “the World is not more virtuous now than it was in their Days, and there is good Reason to believe it is not

much wiser” (FQ 45). This understatement about the inferiority of her contemporary age is repeatedly confirmed by the moral integrity that Arabella demonstrates during her adventures into romantic spaces and the genuine respect she gains from her English acquaintances. As Fuchs puts it, “Arabella’s departure from custom actually improves her: though she is melodramatic and self-aggrandizing, she is also far more charitable and serious than the ladies whom she meets once she enters society” (116). Depicted through the romance strategies of idealisation, aimless wandering and narrative delay, the episodes of Arabella’s fictional travelling highlight the suffocating monotony and moral corruption of Lennox’s England. According to Jonathan Lamb, in *The Female Quixote* the romance form functions “as the bulwark of an ideal self” that upholds “individual glory” over contractual banality (282). In one of Sir George’s fictional adventures, the milkmaid Dolly Acorn speaks in the tradition of idealised romance heroines: “I am no Divinity, [...] and therefore your Adorations are misplaced” (FQ 215). Dolly’s modest answer to Sir George’s declaration of love wins Sir Charles’s approval because of its stark contrast to the unjustified arrogance of many English ladies: “Very few Town Ladies would have disclaimed the Title of Goddess, if their Lovers had thought proper to bestow it upon them. I am mightily pleased with the Girl for her Ingenuity” (FQ 215). Again, the fictional adventures of quixotic characters place the storyworlds of romance and England on the opposite sides of a binary structure, disclosing the mediocrity of the latter by stressing the splendour of the former. As Hammond and Regan point out, “*The Female Quixote* thus demonstrated that the contemporary sphere [...] was, in reality, a frivolous culture of merely superficial gentility – a culture that was, in effect, all entertainment and no instruction” (155). By constructing a better storyworld that provides its morally sound characters with absolute authority, the narrative strategies of romance subtly criticise the contractual, banal existence of fashionable England in *The Female Quixote*.

This social criticism is particularly associated with English nationhood because the womb-like storyworld that romance strategies construct accommodates distinctly anti-English elements. Examining “how literary texts participate in England’s definition of itself as a modern society,” Mack argues that in Lennox’s novel “this national self-conception is limited, defined by exclusion and driven toward homogeneity, a problem that the quixote story makes visible by setting two different genres, two distinct literary worlds, side by side” (195). The encounters between the “worlds” – or rather forms – of French romances and eighteenth-century England most evidently participate in the conceptualisation of the English nation in the pump-room of Bath, where Arabella is identified by the fashionable society as “a Foreigner,” “a Scots Lady” or “a Spanish Nun”: “Some of the wiser Sort took her for a Foreigner; others,

of still more Sagacity, supposed her a *Scots* Lady, covered with her Plaid; and a third Sort, infinitely wiser than either, concluded she was a *Spanish* Nun, that had escaped from a Convent, and had not yet quitted her Veil” (FQ 263). As Mack points out, the dressing style of romance heroines that Arabella adopts in her fictional wandering is associated with the Scottish tartan and the Catholic veil, two cultural or religious items that defy the norms of Protestant England (202–203).⁷¹ According to Colley, “many eighteenth-century Englishmen [...] regarded the Scots as poor and pushy relations, unwilling to pay their full share of taxation, yet constantly demanding access to English resources in terms of trade and jobs” (2003: 13). Set at a time when the English-Scottish relationship is impaired by long-standing disputes about economic and political policies, the connection between romantic customs and Scottish costumes distances the former from the English national spaces, underlining the anti-English qualities of Arabella’s romantic storyworld. As Arabella’s romantic appearance with its distinctly anti-English associations brings the entire Bath community into respectful silence (another typical idealisation of the protagonist), criticisms of English society should also be recognised as criticisms of the English nation.

Evoked by one of Arabella’s romance-style adventures into her womb-like storyworld, Scottish traditions recall the Jacobite Rebellions in the English history, thus further strengthening the anti-English qualities of this idealised storyworld. Apart from their economic disputes, Mack also attributes the antagonistic sentiments between England and Scotland to Scottish Highlanders’ support of the Jacobite cause, observing that “the disintegration of Highland society took a dramatic turn for the worse in the wake of the failed Jacobite rebellion of 1745” (202). As Mack points out, the misrecognition of Arabella’s veil as a plaid, a traditional Highland dress widely banned by the Dress Act of 1746, establishes a link between the romantic storyworld she adventures into and the Jacobite doctrines that England determinedly rejects (202–203). This link between romantic heroism and Jacobite pursuits sheds new light on Arabella’s quest for personal glory in defiance of national governance. Refuting Charlotte Glanville’s claim that heroes in romances are “Murderers” who should not

⁷¹ According to Mack, the Scottish culture with its Jacobite politics and the Catholic religion with its medieval past are both associated with romantic conventions: “the term ‘Foreigner’ is explicated through two examples – the Scots lady and the Spanish nun – that begin by suggesting a familiar opposition (history vs. romance) but in fact work together to reveal something about how the term ‘romance’ is constructed” (202–203). By associating Arabella’s veil with the imagery of colonised women, Felicity A. Nussbaum claims that “[t]he English nation came to represent its eighteenth-century woman as happier than women of the past, happier than the ‘savage,’ and happiest as a mother” (1). For Mack, however, this alliance between Arabella and colonised women “obscures Lennox’s depiction of the drama of Arabella’s misrecognition” in Bath (200).

“escape the Gallows,” Arabella liberates characters in romantic spaces from the restrictions of the modern law (FQ 127, 128). Guided by the romantic principle that “[t]he Law has no Power over Heroes,” Arabella justifies Artaban’s acts of “tumbling Kings from their Thrones” and “chang[ing] the Laurels of his former Friends into Chains” (FQ 128). In this juxtaposition of national “Thrones” and carceral “Chains,” the capricious transformations of monarchs into prisoners pose a significant challenge to the contractual maintenance of the English national order. Situated in the historical era of the eighteenth century and connected with the traditional costume of Scottish Highlands, romance heroes’ easy destabilisation of national hierarchies and their paradoxically absolute authority as new rulers recall the Jacobites’ attempts to tumble the Hanoverian kings from their English throne as well as their belief in the divine right of monarchs.⁷² The romance strategies of wandering and idealisation facilitate Arabella’s frequent entries into romantic spaces and moral approval of romantic values – values which support the military activities of England’s most dangerous enemy. Noticing the interactions between literary and political forms, Doody detects “a political dimension” in the generic shift from the romance to the novel: while romance narratives are filled with “such engaging mythical historical plots as those offered by the too-romantic cause of the Jacobites,” realist novels “operate as a subtle censorship, favouring the renewed recognition of and obedience to the powers already in place” (2008: xviii).⁷³ If the English characters’ general aversion to romances displays an “obedience to the powers already in place,” their adventurous escapes into a storyworld that sympathises with the Jacobite practices of military conquest and absolute rule signal the fictional travellers’ disapproval of English national governance despite their physical immobility.

By further blending the political enemies of the English nation with its religious opponents, romance strategies in *The Female Quixote* represent fictional escapes into a foreign storyworld as subtle rejections of the English norms. Arabella’s foreign appearance in Bath triggers speculations about not only Scottish dresses but also Catholic practices. Recognised

⁷² As Carnell observes in her analysis of the countess’s political views, discussions about wars, thrones and gallows “may allude to the many Jacobite leaders who were executed for their role in the Rising of 1745” (267).

⁷³ From another perspective, Fuchs also argues that “by the turn of the eighteenth century the reaction against” romances “was sometimes couched in terms of national difference” (104). According to Fuchs, following the “strategy for promoting a national, modern production,” previous scholarship on the history of English literature “erases all those predecessors in realism, such as *Don Quixote*, the picaresque, domestic drama, recent French antecedents, as well as older narrative fiction, to claim eighteenth-century England as the birthplace of the novel and the locus of romance’s long-overdue humbling” (106).

by Mack as “a standard character in a romance,” the image of the Spanish nun indicates Arabella’s deviance from Protestantism, another crucial trait of the English nation (202). Stressing “[t]he absolute centrality of Protestantism to British religious experience,” Colley illustrates how the nation’s prolonged wars with European Catholics or colonised non-Christians enhance the importance of the Protestant faith for the British or English people:

In these circumstances of regular *and violent* contact with peoples who could so easily be seen as representing the Other, Protestantism was able to become a unifying and distinguishing bond as never before. [...] And an uncompromising Protestantism was the foundation on which their [British] state was explicitly and unapologetically based. (2003: 18)

Through its blending with Catholic Spain, therefore, Arabella’s romantic appearance embodies not only an escape from England’s religion, but also a rebellion against the English culture and a challenge to its state politics. Exploring how the Scottish, Jacobite and Catholic implications of romances together construct the opposite side of contractual English life, Carnell discerns in the anti-romantic sentiments of Lennox’s English characters important traces of “a Whig and Protestant ideology consistent with Linda Colley’s description of emerging eighteenth-century British identity, which was defined in part by what it was not: not French, not Catholic, and not Jacobite” (255). The conceptualisation of the English nation based on its multiple opposites is also noted by Wendy Motooka, who recognises a widespread trend in English publications to identify quixotes “as proponents of undesirable political upheaval” and thus a “great threat to English peace” (262–263).⁷⁴ The blending of anti-English elements from Highland culture and Catholic faith to Jacobite pursuits and absolute monarchy in Arabella’s romantic storyworld indicates that its fictional spaces are culturally, religiously and politically deviant from the English national norms. Having observed one of Arabella’s deviant habits, Charlotte Glanville laments “that it was a Pity there were not such Things as Protestant Nunneries; giving it as her Opinion, that her Cousin ought to be confin’d in one of those Places” (FQ 314). While the nun-like appearance of Lennox’s protagonist alienates her from Protestant England, Charlotte’s proposal to use nunneries as prisons draws attention to the incarcerating effect of the Catholic spaces in which Arabella is fictionally “confin’d.” In such binary structures of Scotland versus England, Jacobitism versus Constitutionalism and Catholicism

⁷⁴ According to Motooka, “[r]eligious enthusiasts, blamed for the English Civil Wars,” Jacobite fighters, defeated by the Hanoverian troops, and even Robert Filmer, the author of the royalist publication *Patriarcha*, are all “dubbed quixotic” by their opponents (262–263).

versus Protestantism, Arabella's escapes into the romantic storyworld and others' praises of her moral superiority signal a rejection of and departure from English national spaces.

Apart from romance strategies, the incorporation of the biographical form into *The Female Quixote* also defies the norms of the English nation, undermining its contractual and patriarchal structures with the rewritten histories of ancient nations. Arabella's misinterpretation of French romances as factual histories or biographies has been noted by various scholars, but what message does her quixotic error convey about the English national spaces?⁷⁵ To justify her fictional adventures into the romantic storyworld, Arabella treats the volumes of French romances as biographical writings that complement and contradict the classical works of Greek and Roman historians:

But for *Scudery*, we had still thought the inimitable Poetess *Sappho* to be a loose Wanton, whose Verses breathed nothing but unchaste and irregular Fires: On the contrary, she was so remarkably chaste, that she would never even consent to marry; [...] The prodigious Acts of Valour, which he has recounted of those accomplished Princes, have never been equalled by the Heroes, of either the *Greek* or *Roman* Historians: How poor and insignificant are the Actions of their Warriors to *Scudery*'s, where one of those admirable Heroes would put whole Armies into Terror, and with his single Arm oppose a Legion! (FQ 62)⁷⁶

In this formal encounter between romance narratives and classical histories, what Englishmen regard as the infamous conduct of "a loose Wanton" is transformed into the glorious adventures of a chaste woman, while the realistic achievements of Greek and Roman generals are outdone by the supernatural strength of romance heroes. If the glorification of unchaste women figures resists the patriarchal norms of eighteenth-century England, the celebration of individual princes' supreme power subtly mocks the banal life of ordinary Englishmen. Citing Benedict Anderson's notion of the nation as an 'imagined community' whose inhabitants learn about each other's existence through such simultaneous acts as newspaper reading, Mack views Arabella's quixotic reading habit as a challenge to the forging of nationhood: "Anderson's account suggests a striking possibility: the resistance to national consciousness that might be offered through a character who does not read as others do" (209). Under Mack's poststructuralist assumption that "all truth is textual truth," there is no essentially right or wrong

⁷⁵ The formal encounters between romance and history in Lennox's quixotic story are researched by Lamb (282), Carnell (267), Gordon (510), Sagal (149), etc.

⁷⁶ For other comments on Arabella's retelling of Sappho's story, see Horejsi (98).

way of reading narrative texts but only different interpretations of them (197).⁷⁷ By reading the same texts in a different way and interpreting romantic stories as biographical accounts, Arabella distances herself from contemporary English readers and rewrites the ancient histories on which the English nationhood is partly based.

If the treatment of romance narratives as historical biographies only indirectly satirises the depressive banality of most contractual Englishmen, it poses a particularly serious challenge to their patriarchal authority. The crucial role that the biographical form plays in Arabella's rebellions against her patriarchal society prompts Craft to argue that "her retellings of historical events put women at the centre and offer them more important roles than they actually had" (833). After a detailed analysis of how Arabella and Lennox's Englishmen narrate the stories of Sappho, Cleopatra, Clelia and the Amazons in diametrically opposite ways, Horejsi concludes that "romances [...] furnish the heroine with an alternative historiographic model that allows her, at once, to expand the canon of classical history and to celebrate a feminocentric republic of letters" (90). By interpreting romantic stories of female glory as truthful biographies of ancient women, Arabella rewrites the Greek and Roman histories that her male acquaintances unquestioningly accept as true.⁷⁸ If Selvin, the pedantic historian in the novel who proudly claims to "read no Authors, but the Antients," expresses the common opinion of eighteenth-century Englishmen when he calls Princess Julia "the most abandon'd Prostitute in *Rome*," Arabella's enthusiastic defence of Julia's reputation defies this patriarchal tradition of vilifying powerful women (FQ 267, 273). Likewise, offended by Sir Charles's statement that no man would "offer a Woman the Command of an Army," Arabella cites the example of the Amazonian Queen, Thalestris, rejecting the patriarchal structure in both ancient history and modern England through a canonisation of romances: "will you contradict a Fact

⁷⁷ According to Mack, "Arabella's claim is that the contest for truth must be fought between texts, not between a text and the natural world. [...] In suggesting that all truth is textual truth, Lennox demonstrates a kind of 'epistemological self-consciousness' or 'formal self-consciousness' by [...] recalling the examples of McKeon's extreme skeptics" (197). The textuality of history is also emphasised by Spencer, who argues that the so-called common knowledge about the past "proceeds from a kind of history-making that, in its reduction of woman to a (degraded) sexual function, reveals itself as just as much a product of a masculine desire for power and control as Arabella's history-making is a product of such a feminine desire" (1994: 337–338).

⁷⁸ Departing from feminist approaches, Mack examines the classical and romance versions of history from the perspective of cultural diversity and interprets their contradictory accounts as a product of different self-positioning rather than a rivalry for gender superiority: "Lennox, then, offers neither the supposedly neutral account of historical progress we might expect from Enlightenment, nor the feminist history that is made via the successful attribution of feminine agency. Against both she provides an example of the limitations of the conception of individual agency per se" (210).

attested by the greatest Historians that ever were?" (FQ 205).⁷⁹ Misrepresented as factual biographies "attested by the greatest Historians," the romantic stories of powerful heroines invite their readers to reexamine gender relationships in the context of eighteenth-century England by constructing a storyworld of female authority. This blending of biographical and romance forms also disrupts the hierarchical structure of what Spencer has "summarized in two equations: one, that history = based on reliable documentary evidence = true = masculine; and the other, that fiction = based on unreliable imagination and/or romance sources = false = feminine" (1994: 319). By combining the generic traditions of the two equations in one single narrative form, romantic biography, either factual or fictional, dismantles the association of masculinity with rational truth and femininity with sensational lies. Triggered by a blending of various forms, this dissolution of gender hierarchies reveals how quixotic references to biographical narration defy the patriarchal arrangements of eighteenth-century England.

In Lennox's quixotic story, the biographical form appears not only in Arabella's misinterpretations of French romances as authentic biographies, but also in her wish to get her own biography written, thus defending women's rights to be the protagonists or narrators of prose writing. Regarding the romantic stories of noble heroines as historical accounts of powerful women, Arabella repeatedly endeavours to get her own unremarkable life rewritten into a similarly exciting biography. When Lucy refuses to be the narrator of Arabella's biography, stressing her inability to "make a History" out of their monotonous country life, Arabella emphasises the value of her quixotic experiences despite her frequent misjudgements: "There is no Occasion [...] for you to make a History: There are Accidents enough in my Life to afford Matter for a long one" (FQ 121). If Arabella's dream could come true, a biographical representation of her imagined romantic adventures would inevitably celebrate her individual female authority in defiance of the contractual, patriarchal English norms. And even though her quixotic desire for eternal fame is somewhat misled, *The Female Quixote* as a fictional biography of Arabella the adventurer at least to some extent confirms her confident belief that a woman's life does deserve wide readerly attention. Based on the episode of Miss Groves, in which Arabella transforms the maidservant's "malicious gossip" into a noble biography, Uddén

⁷⁹ Examining the dismissive attitude that Englishmen like Sir Charles show towards romance heroines, Spencer laments that "[f]or all their historically-minded insistence on the changing nature of human custom, these men cannot grasp the possibility that customs might ever have been so radically unlike the ones they know as to allow women an important place in history" (1994: 337). Similarly, Zimmerman notes that "Arabella's acceptance of the expanded romance versions of the myth as literal history is of course foolish, yet Sir Charles's unwillingness to consider the possibility of some substratum of truth in the story is also a remarkably unsubtle view of history and of fiction" (378).

examines the quixotic protagonist's capability of "turning non-narratable banality into a plot" and thus strengthening women's central roles in personal or national histories (445). Apart from defending female protagonists' right to occupy the centre of narratives, Arabella also disputes the common masculinisation of serious writing in eighteenth-century England through her obsession with her own, albeit fictional, biography. When Lucy protests that the documentation of histories "is only fit for Clerks, and such Sort of People, that are very learned," Arabella rejects this association of historical research with male elites: "You are learned enough for that Purpose" (FQ 121). Her suggestion that an undereducated maidservant should also be qualified for the task of biographical narration defies Enlightenment Englishmen's widespread sense of their own superiority in the field of empirical history.⁸⁰

Just as the literary forms of spiritual autobiography and criminal biography interact with the political forms of royal and patriarchal absolutism in *Moll Flanders*, in *The Female Quixote* the interactions between romance, biography and history construct a storyworld that confronts the contractual and patriarchal forms of the English nation. Everett Zimmerman's comment on the eighteenth-century novel's "appropriation of history and biography (including autobiography)" recalls the incorporation of (auto)biographical forms into the fictional works of Defoe and Lennox (369). In contrast to *Moll Flanders*'s confident autobiographical voice, Arabella's decision to hide behind a biographical narrator is explained by Sir George's awkward justification of his complacent self-presentation: "to the end I may faithfully recount my History, I am under a Necessity of repeating Things, which, haply, may seem too advantageous for a Man to say of himself: Therefore I indeed greatly approve of the Custom [...] of a 'Squire," namely a third-person narrator who can boast about the protagonists' heroic merits without appearing vain or arrogant (FQ 223). Arabella's desire for a third-person narrative that celebrates the individual authority of travelling or storytelling women, despite all Lennox's satirical tendencies, is actualised by the publication of *The Female Quixote*. The title of its last chapter – "In which the History is concluded" – alludes to the biographical form of the novel by metareferentially representing it as the authentic history of an aristocratic woman's love life (FQ 382). As Arabella's vision of women telling stories about women comes true, the

⁸⁰ From another perspective, Uddén points out that Arabella's attempt to teach Lucy the 'correct' style of storytelling recalls the eighteenth-century practices of literary criticism: "As she demands that her simple-minded maid produce an interesting narrative through a spontaneous relation of facts without the mediation of art, her wide-eyed acceptance of the formula 'truth through sincerity' exposes not only her naivety but also the formula itself. Such scenes read like parodic distortions of critical norms – the terms on which critics received and interpreted women's novels" (451).

blending of biographical, historical and romantic forms consolidates Arabella's central position in the novel as well as the sometimes-didactic voice of Lennox's female narrator.

In their figurative representations of Arabella's fictional adventures across national boundaries, the blended forms of romance and biography also shed light on the didactic ending of Lennox's novel. Arabella's reformation by the Doctor has been interpreted by critics as either a death- or a rebirth-like change. Whereas Carnell (264), Horejsi (92), Marshall (112), Martin (45), Palo (227), Sagal (140) and Zimmerman (373) read it as the elimination of romantic elements from Arabella's life and hence Arabella's final departure from her romantic storyworld, Watson proposes to "read *The Female Quixote*'s turn from the romance to the novel as a way to end Arabella's erring [...] by supplying her desire with a tangible goal" (36).⁸¹ In contrast, some critics detect no radical change in Arabella's approach to literary texts at the end of the novel. Thompson, for instance, "read[s] *The Female Quixote* not as the stark opposition of romance and novel but as a revelation of the continued reliance of the latter upon the political resources of the former" (168–169). Motooka also argues that "Arabella's sentimental conversion leaves intact the naïve, essentialist assumptions of her reading practice" (257). Summarising traditional as well as feminist interpretations of *The Female Quixote*, Spacks lists two equally convincing ways to understand Lennox's ending: "The clergyman hears a story of a foolish girl, her mind o'erthrown by fiction; he reforms her. I read a story of a social critic able to show wisdom in folly, and of her ultimate defeat" (542). This moral ambiguity leads Birke to claim that "the penultimate chapter [...] features aspects which support either kind of reading" (227). Although Arabella's romantic storyworld sometimes appears morally superior to the English national spaces, the Doctor also has good reasons to complain that romances "teach Women to expect not only Worship, but the dreadful Worship of human Sacrifices" (FQ 380). As this brief review of previous scholarship shows, Arabella's return from the storyworld of Clelia's glorious action to the spaces of eighteenth-century England causes both a lamentable decline in her influence over male suitors and a crucial improvement in her knowledge about modern society. Whether destructive or necessary, this transformative experience is by no means the end of Arabella's fictional wandering. If it is still not romantic enough to end the story with the protagonist's marriage, the narrator's exaggeration of her matrimonial felicity in the concluding paragraph of the novel determinedly

⁸¹ Stressing the abrupt change of Arabella's social and emotional circumstances in the penultimate chapter, Palo calls "Arabella's 'cure' at the hands of the learned divine" "an altogether different type of transformation" (227). Focused on the power relationships between men and women, Sagal claims that Lennox's "most famous novel, *The Female Quixote* (1752), offers subversive possibilities in women's romance-reading practices, masked within an intentionally unsatisfying patriarchal conclusion" (140).

follows the narrative tradition of romance: “[Sir George and Charlotte Glanville] were privileged to join Fortunes, Equipages, Titles, and Expence; while Mr. *Glanville* and *Arabella* were united, as well in these, as in every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind” (FQ 383).⁸² The hyperbolic expression – “every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind” – draws attention to the presence of the romance form even after Arabella’s denunciation of the romantic plots, initiating another narrative adventure into romances on both thematic and structural levels. Thematically constructing storyworlds of absolute authority and narratively combining the strategies of romance with those of biography, *The Female Quixote* preserves its escapist attitude towards the contractual, patriarchal norms of the English nation till its very last sentence.

⁸² Analysing Lennox’s language in the concluding paragraphs of *The Female Quixote*, Watson stresses the continued presence of romance strategies at the end of the novel: “Gone is the haughty opinion Arabella has of herself before her conversion, but the circuitous language of courtly romance and its emphasis on intangible qualities are still present in the passage” (43).

3.4 Conclusion

Whereas in *Moll Flanders* both the carceral spaces of Newgate and the national spaces of England demonstrate womb-like structures of royal and patriarchal absolutism, in *The Female Quixote* the romantic prisons of absolute female authority confront a contractual but patriarchal English nation. While Moll's social status undergoes random death- or rebirth-like changes during her physical crossing of the boundaries of Newgate and England, Arabella fictionally escapes into her own romantic storyworld in pursuit of glorious transformations. The carceral and national forms in Defoe's and Lennox's novels encounter various narrative forms of autobiographical or biographical narration. Just as the narrative strategies of spiritual autobiography and criminal biography destabilise Defoe's chaotic England by highlighting its lack of judicial justice, spiritual influence or social welfare, the conventions of romance and biography challenge Lennox's banal England with a fictional history of politically powerful, morally superior women warriors.

Although in this chapter I primarily focused on the womb-like prison trope, the cage-like prison trope is by no means absent in the two selected novels. In her new formalist research on formal encounters, Levine stresses that "forms [...] add up to a complex environment composed of multiple and conflicting modes of organization – forms arranging and containing us, yes, but also competing and colliding and rerouting one another" (16). In *Moll Flanders*, the carceral forms of the womb and the cage compete and collide with each other as various tropes related to the cage occur in Moll's account of her social transformations. When the elder brother in Colchester seduces Moll, he is said to draw on "that unhappy Snare to all Women," namely their vanity, in his attempt "to catch a Woman in his Net as a Partridge" (MF 57). This almost stereotypical comparison of the seduced maidservant to a bird in the net recalls Fludernik's argument about two major patterns in the cage-like prison trope: "the bird in the (golden) cage" and "the beast in the cage" (2019: 302). If the comparison of vanity to the "Snare" hints that women are perpetually concerned about and easily influenced by others' opinions about them, the metaphor of the net further underlines that the captivated woman is constantly observed and manipulated by her seducer. While Moll's affair with the elder brother imposes unpleasant restrictions on her life, she feels equally imprisoned by her marriage to the younger brother, forced to "go to Church, like a Bear to the Stake" (MF 100). By comparing herself to a beast fettered and placed under the scrutinising gazes of a curious crowd, Moll emphasises her inability to follow her own free will against the expectations of the Colchester community. The influence of communal supervision on individual actions also plays a crucial role in Moll's scheme to help her deserted London friend:

whereas she had been told by several People, that he had reported among the Ladies that he had left her, and pretended to give the Advantage of the Negative to himself; she should take care to have it well spread among the Women, which she could not fail of an Opportunity to do in a Neighbourhood, so addicted to Family News, as that she liv'd in was, that she had enquired into his Circumstances, and found he was not the Man as to Estate he pretended to be (MF 114)

In this system of communal gossip, Moll's friend first obtains information about her suitor's conduct from her judgmental neighbours and then induces said neighbours to censure her suitor instead of her by spreading a different narrative through the same channel. Situated in a panoptic society "so addicted to Family News," this woman uses the disciplinary power of neighbourly supervision to educate her suitor and reforms his arrogant attitude before marrying him in the end.⁸³ Either as captured birds in sexual relationships or as disciplined members of judgmental communities, characters in *Moll Flanders* also experience cage-like carceral arrangements in their womb-like, Newgate-like England.

The cage-like prison trope can also be found in the fictional editor's rewriting of Moll Flanders's autobiographical narrative. In his analysis of the interactions between the penitentiary and the novel, Bender notices the encounter between womb-like and cage-like carceral forms in *Moll Flanders*: "Defoe's fictional representation of the old prisons implied the conception of a new kind of imprisonment structured narratively along the lines of the realistic, consciousness-centered novel," in other words the conception of a disciplinary penitentiary based on narrative reconstructions of identity and reality (43). According to the preface to Defoe's novel, Moll's apparently authentic account of her life is actually rewritten by a fictional editor, who in his turn predicts the reactions of his reader-observers in the process of rewriting:

the original of this Story is put into new Words, and the stile of the famous Lady we here speak of is a little alter'd, particularly she is made to tell her own Tale in modester Words than she told it at first; [...] When a Woman debauch'd from her Youth [...] comes to give an Account of all her vicious Practises, [...] an Author must be hard put to it to wrap it up so clean, as not to give room, especially for vicious Readers to turn it to his Disadvantage. (MF 37–38)

⁸³ Similarly, Bowen analyses Moll's success in "mobilizing the gossip mill" in this London episode (32). From a different perspective, Loveman examines Moll's "manipulation of 'the Chat of the Tea table' [...] as part of the complicated codes of 'the visit' that came to dominate the sociability practised by the gentry and the middling sort" (22).

Anticipating the possible feedback of “vicious Readers” and feeling obliged to reshape the text in conformity with such readers’ normative expectations, Defoe’s fictional editor disciplines Moll’s deviant behaviour and language through a reformation of her self-representation. Ian A. Bell calls this narrative arrangement “the intrusions of a censoring editor” (157) and Pollak “a drama of editorial insecurity” (146), stressing together the roles of the editor as both the observer and the observed.⁸⁴ As the judgmental gazes of imagined readers discipline Moll’s life by triggering an editorial reformation of her autobiography, Defoe’s novel accommodates the panoptic structures of cage-like carceral spaces in addition to capricious governance and transformative adventures.

The practices of mutual reformation through mutual observation also prevail in *The Female Quixote*, with panoptic structures penetrating both thematic and narrative arrangements of Lennox’s novel. As one important meeting place of the English aristocracy and gentry, the assembly room in Bath is a social panopticon of disciplinary inspection: “Strangers are here most strictly criticized, and every new Object affords a delicious Feast of Raillery and Scandal” (FQ 262). Once “strictly criticized” as deviant newcomers, the Bath visitors who have now integrated into the fashionable society impose the same decorous rules on new strangers and observe their deviation from etiquette as critically as they have themselves been observed. This practice of panoptic surveillance is equally powerful in Arabella’s country garden, with Glanville protesting unsuccessfully against the constant presence of her maidservants: “What Necessity is there for always having so many Witnesses of our Conversation?” (FQ 31). Just as the visitors of Bath must carefully check their own behaviour under the diligent gazes of other visitors, Glanville is restricted by various codes of polite “Conversation” in front of “so many Witnesses.” Stressing Arabella’s tendency to make decisions not based on her own free will but on (romantic or English) social expectations, Thomas H. Schmid points out that “she views the world viewing *her*” and allows the gaze of others to shape her actions (22). Whereas on the thematic level the carceral cage trope exists primarily in the normative restrictions and reformations of characters’ behaviour, its presence in the narrative structure of Lennox’s novel can be discerned in her comments on reading and the reader. In her dedication to the novel, Lennox already mentions “[t]he Dread which a Writer feels of the public Censure; the still greater Dread of Neglect; and the eager Wish for Support and Protection” (FQ 3). The author’s perpetual concern about her reader’s judgement develops into repeated references to the readership in her chapter titles, with Book I Chapter IX summarised as an episode “In which a

⁸⁴ For other analyses of Defoe’s fictional editor in the preface, see Gladfelder (115) and Olsen (468).

Lover is severely punished for Faults which the Reader never would have discovered,” Book I Chapter X as “several Incidents, in which the Reader is expected to be extremely interested,” and Book II Chapter VI “Containing what a judicious Reader will hardly approve” (FQ 30, 35, 77).⁸⁵ According to Birke, among “a total of ninety-two intertitles in *The Female Quixote*, nineteen feature explicit references to the reader or the act of reception,” “negotiate the relations between author and reader and reflect on the functions of fictional reading” (224, 212). Similarly, S. Cailey Hall argues that “[c]hapter titles [...] represent the most intimate paratextual exchange between author and reader” (91).⁸⁶ These comments on reading and readers recall the mutual observation between the jailer and the prisoner in a panoptic space, with the observed author gazing back at the observing reader and gazing at herself in her practices of self-reflection or self-reference. While the author is pressured into writing her novel in pursuit of her reader’s approval, anxiously imagining her observant reader’s surprise, curiosity or displeasure, she also observes her potential readership and endeavours to improve the reader through her morally reformatory writing. The mutual observation between the writer and the reader, together with that between various communal members within the novel, exposes the cage-like structure of Lennox’s panoptic England.

The cage-like prison form is also visible in references to madness in Lennox’s novel. Because of her frequent fictional escapes into the romantic storyworld, Arabella is repeatedly accused of being mad by her family and friends. While the marquis views her as “certainly distracted” during one of her quixotic adventures, Charlotte Glanville believes her to be “mad” because of her inconsiderate treatment of Glanville during his illness (FQ 55, 133). Hervey describes her as “the most fantastical Creature that ever lived, [...] fit for a Madhouse,” and even Glanville calls her “mad” when she freely speaks to a London prostitute (FQ 157, 336).⁸⁷

⁸⁵ The relationships between the narrator, the (implied) author and the (implied) reader have been a popular topic among narratological studies. I refer here not to the real eighteenth-century readers of Lennox’s novel but to “the implied reader” in her text, which is, according to Wolfgang Iser, “a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him” (38, 34).

⁸⁶ Refusing to identify the voice in Lennox’s chapter titles as either the narrator or the author, S. Cailey Hall points out that “the intertitle voice [...] distinctly differs from the matter-of-fact narrator initially encountered in the text” but instead “creates a virtual community with the reader and with the heroines of the romances that shaped *The Female Quixote*” (93, 94). The multiple narrative voices in Lennox’s novel, though interesting, lie beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁸⁷ In their more positive interpretations of madness in Lennox’s quixotic novel, Gordon states that “female madness serves to *preserve*, not to banish, romance” (501) while Motooka finds the “method to Arabella’s madness [...] strikingly similar to the empiricist epistemology employed by her ‘rational’ companions” (260). Horejsi, on the other hand, claims that “*The Female Quixote* [...] entertains the prospect of confining her to a madhouse where her multiplicity of perspectives will no longer threaten to reveal the high price, for women and other outsiders, of traditional histories” (112).

According to Foucault, “the madman” is incarcerated and disciplined in the seventeenth and eighteenth century “because he crosses the frontiers of bourgeois order” (1965: 58). This normative punishment of boundary-crossing movements, evident in the English characters’ censorious rejection of Arabella’s romantic notions, culminates in Sir Charles’s demand for her “Reformation” by Glanville (FQ 64). As Schmid puts it, in the panoptic system of disciplinary reformation, “Arabella must [...] learn to trade [...] her plot of female ambition for a plot of feminine submission,” namely her quest for extraordinary glory for an existence of eventless propriety (21). The restrictive codes of proper behaviour, codes that disciplinary observers impose both on others and on themselves, constitute central elements of a panoptic community, in which, according to the Doctor in *The Female Quixote*,

the Order of the World is so established, that all human Affairs proceed in a regular Method, and very little Opportunity is left for Sallies or Hazards, for Assault or Rescue; but the Brave and the Coward, the Sprightly and the Dull, suffer themselves to be carried alike down the Stream of Custom. (FQ 379)

Along this anti-adventurous, anti-romantic “Stream of Custom,” boundary-crossing journeys into womb-like spaces no longer trigger random transformations in social status, whereas the mutual observation between figurative prisoners constricts, disciplines and reforms their daily behaviour in their cage-like national communities of panoptic surveillance.

Chapter 4 Cage-Like Prisons: Letters between Observed Observers

4.1 Epistolary Exchanges between Captivated Observers

Echoing the prison-like love trope in Arabella's romantic language, Mr B in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* describes Pamela Andrews's beauty as her "insnaring Loveliness" (P 197). When Mr Andrews complains about his daughter's suffering as "a severe Prisoner" in Lincolnshire, Mr B refers to the concept of incarceration again in his reply: "Well, that's all over now, Goodman *Andrews* [...]; for now the sweet Girl has taken me Prisoner; and, in a few Days, I shall put on the pleasantest Fetters that ever Man wore" (P 291–292). By representing his love for Pamela as imprisoning and his approaching marriage with her as "Fetters," Mr B recalls the figurative depictions of absolute female authority in Arabella's romantic narratives, in which royal women easily cross carceral borders in their improbable adventures and exercise unchallenged power over their suitors as well as their subjects. Richardson's heroine, however, is a maidservant who neither enjoys supreme status nor undertakes boundary-crossing journeys. Incarcerated by the man who is captivated by her charms, Pamela actively participates in the disciplinary practices of mutual supervision instead of openly defying it. In this way, she constructs prison-like national spaces that discourage capricious transformations of individual identity and advocate contractual adherence to social norms.⁸⁸ As the common expectations of chastity, honesty, proper manners and graceful looks restrict the daily activities of genteel communities in both *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice*, the national structures that uphold these norms evoke the cage-like prison trope through both direct allusions and indirect implications.

As social norms confine the actions of aristocrats and commoners alike, the carceral form of the cage blends with the national form of contractual governance, with their panoptic features reflected and reinforced by the epistolary practices of letter writing and letter reading. In her analysis of cages and bars, Fludernik argues that in such spaces "the carceral experience is crucially determined by the power of the gaze," both "the controlling and disciplinary gaze of the warders or guards targeting the prisoner" and "the prisoner behind them looking out" (2019: 22, 32). Although Fludernik distinguishes the cage from the bar in her study of prison metaphors, the two closely related concepts both blend with the design of the panopticon, with Fludernik calling the cage "a cruel refinement of the Benthamite panoptic surveillance model" (2019: 32) and Foucault naming the panopticon "a cruel, ingenious cage" (1979: 205). Composed of bars that do not obstruct the view of prisoners or jailers, a cage-like prison allows

⁸⁸ In Chapter 3.1, I analysed Goode's definition of deviance as the violation of social norms and emphasised that social norms, which vary from novel to novel, have to be examined in the context of every individual case.

the jailers to constantly supervise the prisoners' behaviour and punish their deviance whenever it occurs, while the prisoners are also encouraged to gaze back at the jailers, examine their conformity to carceral regulations and pass judgment on any violation of rules on the jailers' part. Frequently evoked in the depictions of figurative incarceration, the trope of the cage represents the panoptic exchange of reformatory gazes between fellow supervisors who impose the norms of propriety on each other as well as on themselves. Although the imagery of the cage is not directly referred to in *Pride and Prejudice*, cage-like panoptic spaces of mutual observation can be found in almost all the encounters within Austen's novel. Facilitating the typical activities of panoptic spaces, from perpetual observation to disciplinary reformation, epistolary narratives play a central role in both *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice*. In their study of epistolary literature, Maria Löschnigg and Rebekka Schuh argue that "[t]he presence of an intradiegetic addressee [...] is [...] the most important defining feature of epistolary fiction, distinguishing it from diary fiction but also from other first-person narratives such as fictional autobiography" (19). Dwelling on the functions of this addressee, namely the letter reader, Janet Gurkin Altman stresses that "[t]he epistolary form is unique in making the reader (narratee) almost as important an agent in the narrative as the writer (narrator). [...] The letter writer simultaneously seeks to affect his reader and is affected by him" (88). As the letter writer reforms the letter reader through their epistolary exchange of information and is simultaneously reformed by the constant presence of the reader's gaze, the acts of letter writing and letter reading mirror the panoptic practices of documentation, observation, judgment and reformation. While *Pamela* as a typical epistolary novel captures the blending of epistolary narration and panoptic operation, the epistolary form also has a crucial impact on *Pride and Prejudice* by actively participating in the disciplinary process of individual and communal reformation in Austen's genteel England.

Well known for its representations of panoptic England through a series of letters, Frances Burney's *Evelina* blends the carceral form of cage-like prisons with the national form of disciplinary surveillance as well as the literary form of epistolary narration. Reluctantly allowing Evelina to accompany her grandmother in London, Arthur Villars writes to his young ward about the constrictive impact of social norms: "alas, my dear child, we are the slaves of custom, [...] and dare not stem the torrent of an opposing world, even though our judgements condemn our compliance! however, since the die is cast, we must endeavour to make the best of it" (E 193). If Moll and Arabella "stem the torrent of an opposing world" by physically or fictionally crossing the boundaries of those English national spaces that hamper their ambition, be it to become a gentlewoman or to enjoy absolute authority, Villars feels compelled to remain

within the boundaries of “custom” and complies with the normative expectations of English society despite his strong disapproval of Evelina’s second London journey. The phrase “slaves of custom” underlines the figurative imprisonment of English people by those decorous norms that restrict individual actions, discipline uncommon wishes, punish deviant tendencies and reform rebellious personalities. The panoptic practice of disciplinary supervision is most evident in the acts of letter writing and letter reading. While Evelina captivates Lord Orville’s heart and is captivated by his ideal manners, she also reforms her own behaviour under his critical gaze, documents his reactions minutely in her letters and encourages herself as well as her letter reader to pass judgment on this nobleman.⁸⁹ As fellow observers are captivated by the object of their disciplinary gazes and vice versa, the prisoners of this epistolarily constructed social panopticon impose the codes of propriety not only on their supervised supervisors, but also on their own deeds and sentiments. In his previous letter, Villars attributes his detestation of Madame Duval to her deviance from English social norms, thus internalising the same rules of decorum that have forced him to accept Madame Duval’s proposal against his will: “The violence and vulgarity of this woman, her total ignorance of propriety, the family to which she is related, and the company she is likely to keep, are objections [...] to her having the charge of this dear child” (E 193). Notably, while Villars’s criticism of Madame Duval’s manners draws attention to the constant operation of disciplinary surveillance among the English gentry, the mention of her French companion as one source of her impropriety associates non-English influences with social deviance. In *Evelina*, almost all the major deviant actions or their consequences are located outside England, with Evelina’s mother deceived by Sir John Belmont in France, her illegitimate half-brother brought up in Scotland, her fake sister confined in a convent in Paris and her grandmother married again in France. If Madame Duval, with her French accent, French husband and French lover, epitomises the opposite of English etiquette, Sir John Belmont’s repentance of his dissolute life in France after his return to England further highlights the connection between normative propriety and English nationhood. As the English nation blends with panoptic operation in the epistolary supervision of individual behaviour, letter writers and letter readers thus reconstruct their cage-like national spaces by exposing, punishing, excluding or reforming deviance.

Resembling Arthur Villars’s decision “to make the best of” his figurative imprisonment by national norms, characters in *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice* negotiate for power in cage-

⁸⁹ McKeon examines in detail the act of letter reading in *Evelina*, arguing that “Burney juxtaposes [...] the actual reading of letters with the virtual reading of people” (2005: 702).

like England despite, or through, their adherence to and internalisation of disciplinary rules (E 193). With the captivated lovers gazing back at their observant captors, fellow discipliners reform each other, reform themselves and reform the entire national community through their epistolary practices of mutual supervision.

4.2 Domestic Rewriting of National Prisons: Epistolary Conduct Literature in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*

Domestic Prisons as National Spaces

Under the disciplinary impact of carceral surveillance, Mr B's cage-like houses in Bedfordshire and Lincolnshire blend with the primarily contractual structures of the English nation, undermining the influence of absolute authority, upholding the practice of free consent and excluding blatant deviance from their normatively governed realms. In the figurative network of the cage, the prison, the house and the nation, individual inhabitants experience no randomly initiated transformation through boundary-crossing adventures but strictly controlled reformation through mutual supervision.

Allowing its inhabitants little power or privacy under Mr B's domestic authority, the Bedfordshire house resembles a cage-like prison for Richardson's persecuted protagonist. When summoned by Mr B into Lady B's dressing-room, Pamela evokes the bird-in-the-cage trope that Fludernik (2019: 302) has extensively analysed:

Don't your Heart ake for me? – I am sure mine flutter'd about like a Bird in a Cage new caught. O *Pamela*, said I to my self, why art thou so foolish and fearful! Thou hast done no harm! what, if thou fearest an unjust Judge, when thou art innocent, wouldst thou do before a just one, if thou wert guilty? (P 33–34)

As a figurative description of Pamela's fast-beating heart, the bird simile reveals her agitation in front of Mr B's groundless accusations, hinting at her futile attempts to evade her master's constrictive commands. As Karen Lipsedge explains in her comment on Pamela's language, "Pamela's use of the 'bird in a cage' trope in Letter xvi to describe her sense of entrapment and fear [...] underlines the connection between her lack of domestic privacy and her lack of power and control over her domestic space, letters and body" (305–306). In a cage whose bars offer its inhabitant no shelter from prying observers, the captor's supervising gaze compels the captive into helpless submission by penetrating the most private spheres of the latter's life. The steady presence of close observation – first mentioned in Pamela's earlier complaint that she is "watch'd, and such-like, very narrowly" – is here figuratively represented through the trope of the cage (P 22). Built on the implications of the captor's gaze, the subsequent metaphor of "an unjust Judge" associates Mr B's power in his own household with judicial authority in penal institutions, further highlighting the prison-like features of his Bedfordshire estate. Later, the jail is explicitly referred to by Pamela in one of her replies to Mr B's domestic manoeuvres: "you are a Justice of Peace, and may send me to Gaol, if you please, and bring me to a Tryal

for my Life!” (P 58).⁹⁰ As Mr B’s roles in the family and the court blend with each other, his endeavour to control his servant mirrors his ability to imprison a criminal. The integration of figurative concepts from the cage to the court into the domestic quarrels between Pamela and Mr B draws attention to the influence of the master’s penetrating gaze in the prison-like spaces of his estate.

The blending of the cage, the prison and the Bedfordshire house is further strengthened by repeated mentions of captivity and escape. Interestingly, the prison-like love trope that Lennox’s protagonist frequently alludes to in *The Female Quixote* also occurs in Richardson’s *Pamela*, but whereas Arabella draws on the trope to emphasise how the male lover is affected by his romantic passion, Mr B’s love inspires him to entrap his beloved through dishonourable designs. Having been kissed twice by Mr B, Pamela is determined “to beware of the third Time, for fear he should lay his Snares surer” (P 39). In the context of love and marriage, the word “Snares” signifies both Mr B’s attempts to seduce Pamela and the sexual relationship he yearns for, thus connecting domestic arrangements with carceral structures. Similarly, Mr B’s efforts to prevent Pamela’s departure from Bedfordshire are called “his Clutches” and “a Trap,” with both his house and his love depicted as incarcerating for the virtuous maidservant (P 88). Alarmed by this domestic trap, Pamela’s parents urge her to leave Bedfordshire after the summer-house kiss, using the verb “flee” to stress the carceral effect of Mr B’s estate: “we would have you flee this evil Great House and Man” (P 27). According to Kibbie, “the house itself is not only animated by the word ‘evil,’ but seems to take priority over B. himself as a threat to Pamela. The ‘evil great house’ stands as a physical representation of all the danger that B.’s abstract ‘estate,’ his power and wealth, holds for Pamela” (1991: 564). The prioritisation of the perilous place over its treacherous owner highlights the spatially restrictive impact of this domestic structure, foregrounding the multiple blend network of cage-like, prison-like home. Later in the novel, Pamela expresses her own wish to be “safe from this House,” a house she must escape to avoid physical confinement in her lover’s mansion or figurative confinement by his sexual desire (P 82). Noting the figurative implications of houses in Richardson’s *Pamela*, Kibbie claims that “[t]his symbol of the evil estate becomes even

⁹⁰ Pamela’s protest that “her oppressor is also the man in whom the administration of justice is locally vested” induces Keymer to juxtapose Mr B’s domination of his private estates with Robert Walpole’s manipulation of the English political system: “the vulturous judge of *Pamela*, Mr B. himself, seems very much the embodiment of Walpole’s oligarchy. [...] He is a legislator, a member of Parliament, and the passage in which Pamela hears talk of his imminent peerage firmly identifies the style of voting for which, in the patronage system that kept Walpole in office for two decades, he is on the point of being rewarded” (xix). Furthermore, McKeon explicates how Mr B’s position as justice affects his relationship with Pamela in the seduction scenes (2002: 369).

more explicit when Pamela is kidnapped and held a prisoner in B.'s Lincolnshire house" (1991: 564). In Lincolnshire, the domestic building that incarcerates Pamela demonstrates various hallmarks of the panopticon from solitary imprisonment to disciplinary surveillance.

Pamela's allusions to cage-like incarceration increase considerably in the Lincolnshire episodes, drawing attention to the similarities between Mr B's Lincolnshire mansion and the penitentiary structure. According to Bender, the architectural design of penitentiaries "reminded all who would enter, or even pass by, of the power of confinement to alter the spirit through material representation" (21). Pamela's portrayal of the Lincolnshire house stresses exactly the architectural display of its geographical isolation and reformatory impact: "we enter'd the Court-yard of this handsome, large, old, and lonely Mansion, that looks made for Solitude and Mischief [...] by its Appearance, with all its brown nodding Horrors of lofty Elms and Pines about it; And here, said I to myself, I fear, is to be the Scene of my Ruin" (P 108–109).⁹¹ Just as the separated cells and central tower of a panoptic building signal the disciplinary aims of the prison, the "Solitude and Mischief" that Mr B's mansion conveys are interpreted by Pamela as an anticipation of her "Ruin," namely a radical change in her physical or social status. Unlike the random transformations of Moll Flanders's standing, however, Pamela's change is brought about by the persistent presence of disciplinary gazes in a cage-like space. After Pamela repeatedly represents herself as the "Prisoner" of Mr B and Mrs Jewkes (P 123, 138), her modified version of Psalm 137 echoes the bird-in-the-cage trope that she has previously evoked in Bedfordshire:

*Then she to whom I Prisoner was,
Said to me tauntingly,
Now chear your Heart, and sing a Song,
And tune your Mind to Joy. (P 141)*

As the concepts of the prisoner and the singer blend with each other, the modified psalm inevitably recalls the imagery of an elegant canary trained to sing cheerfully before the members of privileged society. By comparing herself to an encaged bird that is forced to adopt an appearance of grace and joy, Richardson's rebellious protagonist hints at her jailer's strict control of her behaviour and even of her mood.

The practices of disciplinary surveillance in Mr B's Lincolnshire house further reinforce

⁹¹ Kibbie emphasises the uncommon pictoriality of this passage in Richardson's novel and associates Pamela's delineation of the Lincolnshire landscape with "the literary conventions of the sublime": "This passage is unlike any other in Pamela. Although its heroine's eye for detail is evident throughout her narrative, nowhere else does she exercise her descriptive powers on such a grand, pictorial scale" (1991: 565, 564).

its figurative blending with the cage-like prison. Pamela's frustration with her jailers' blatant attempts to alter her moods and manners is easily perceivable in the rhetorical questions that she sends to Mr B:

If you mean honourably, why, Sir, [...] is it necessary to imprison me, to convince me of it? And why must I be close watch'd and attended, hinder'd from stirring out, from speaking to any body, from going so much as to Church to pray for you, who have been till of late so generous a Benefactor to me? (P 139)

According to Pamela, her confinement in Lincolnshire severely restricts her privacy, mobility and contact with others, thus resembling the penitentiaries whose solitary cells and meticulous rules Ignatieff has comprehensively documented (80–113). Identifying in the spatial organisation of the Lincolnshire house a “panoptical conception of authority,” Nancy Armstrong associates Mr B with Bentham's visually-concealed but constantly-present inspector: “Mr. B is significantly invisible in person, but he is omnipresent in the form of vigilant surrogates who do little else but watch Pamela's every move and intercept most of her letters” (1987: 122). The “omnipresent” gaze of the prison authorities, be it Mr B or Mrs Jewkes, highlights the cage-like features of the Lincolnshire mansion. Like the disciplinary reformation of solitary criminals or encaged birds, Mrs Jewkes strives to change Pamela's attitude towards Mr B's sexual harassment by isolating her from other servants and scrutinising her daily conduct (P 126). To justify the constrictions that Pamela is forced to endure, Mrs Jewkes confesses to “have a Letter of Instructions” from Mr B that dictates not only the extent of Pamela's physical and social activities but also Mrs Jewkes's manners towards Pamela (P 110). Dutifully obeying Mr B's orders, Mrs Jewkes offers or denies Pamela her shoes as a consequence of her (dis)obedience, and even “ties the two Keys [...] about her Wrist, when she goes to Bed” (P 114, 111).⁹² If the systematic offer or denial of shoes recalls Ignatieff's commentaries on the connection between clothes and identity in the Gloucester Penitentiary (101), Mr B's instructions that control the behaviour of both Pamela and Mrs Jewkes answer what Ignatieff calls “the old question of who guards the guards” (78). As the jailer disciplines her prisoner according to Mr B's regulations and is in her turn disciplined by the same regulations, the perpetual operation of disciplinary supervision gives Pamela the impression that she is “watch'd in all [her] Steps” (P 99). This impression also induces both McKeon (2005:

⁹² Fludernik's comment on “[t]he double function of the door – shutting out danger and shutting the prisoner in” – in Richardson's *Clarissa* also sheds light on Pamela's obsession with the keys of her bedroom door (2019: 28). Both signifying the possibility of sexual penetration and offering a shelter from such intrusions, the domestic prisons in Richardson's novels simultaneously confine, endanger and protect their inhabitants.

647) and Gwilliam (114) to regard “surveillance” as a central theme in Richardson’s novel. As a crucial function of cage-like prisons that ensures the prisoner’s constant adherence to disciplinary rules, surveillance recalls Mr B’s metaphorical reference to the judicial court after he accidentally obtains Pamela’s letters: “Now, *Pamela*, you come upon your Trial” (P 230). With the impact of panoptic surveillance ironically strengthened by the prisoner’s detailed documentation of her everyday life, Mr B is able to investigate into her most secret thoughts and actions. Apart from underlining the disciplinary effect of Mr B’s critical gaze, however, the judicial metaphor also associates the private issues of love and marriage with the public domain of state governance.

The imprisonment of a chaste maidservant in her libertine master’s cage-like mansions is frequently depicted through nation-related concepts, with domestic and national spaces blended together in the figurative network of cage-like prisons, prison-like houses and home-like nations. Exploring the multiple overlaps between public and private matters, Christopher Flint argues that “the problem of class relations is always allied with the government of families” in *Pamela* (489). Similarly, Armstrong acknowledges Richardson’s capability of “representing relationships within the traditional country house as a struggle between competing interest groups” in the English nation (1987: 121). Irritated by the Bedfordshire servants’ repeated pleas for Pamela’s freedom, Mr B complains that “the *artful Creature* is enough to corrupt a Nation by her seeming Innocence and Simplicity,” and that “this Girl has made a Party of the whole House in her Favour against me” (P 162, 65). As Armstrong puts it, Richardson “uses turns of phrase that openly acknowledge the political dimension of sexual conflict” (1987: 121). By comparing his household to “a Nation” and the solidarity among his domestic servants to the formation of a political party, Mr B associates the private conversations of a fifteen-year-old girl with the public negotiations between English politicians.⁹³ Building on these references to the English nation, Mr B interprets Pamela’s letter-writing activities as the commitment of treason: “So, *Pamela*, we have seized, it seems, your treasonable Papers?” (P 228). Like Pamela’s figurative corruption of a nation, the adjective “treasonable” equates Pamela’s rejection of her master’s sexual advances with the rebellion against a monarch’s absolute authority, blending domestic and national issues in the confrontation between masculine desire and female chastity.⁹⁴ During this conflict, Pamela demonstrates her rebellious spirit in both

⁹³ In his analysis of these two quotations, Keymer stresses Pamela’s role as “a dangerous focus of opposition” in the political discussions about constitutional monarchy (xx). McKeon also cites Mr B’s descriptions of Pamela to emphasise her rebellious spirit (2005: 641).

⁹⁴ For other analyses of the term “treasonable,” see Keymer (xix) and McKeon (2005: 641; 2002: 369).

private and public domains by turning the tropes of national politics into criticisms of Mr B's deviant behaviour. The derogatory phrases that she draws on to describe Mr B's power, from "lawless Tyranny" to "sad Tyranny," question the legitimacy of a tyrant's reign and thus challenge the supreme power that Mr B's nation-related tropes grant him (P 166, 234).⁹⁵ As Mr B's capricious imprisonment of his maidservant comes under attack, Pamela's use of political tropes denies monarchs absolute authority over their subjects, basing a king's right to govern on the moral integrity of his governance. Earlier in the novel, Pamela already implies to Mr B that kings should also be restricted by the normative codes of English society: "I will tell you, if you was a King, and said to me as you have done, that you are no Gentleman" (P 69–70). In other words, a king's royal status does not necessarily guarantee his gentlemanly manners, and the deviation of a king from social norms deserves as much reproach as that of a commoner.⁹⁶ Examining this quotation from the perspective of political theories, Julian Jimenez Heffernan detects in Pamela's tropes about kings and masters an ideological tension between Filmer's absolutist doctrine and Locke's contract theory (37).⁹⁷ As Richardson's representations of domestic conflicts raise doubts about the rightfulness of monarchical supremacy, the prison-like domestic houses in his storyworld subtly reflect the organisation of English national spaces.

The depictions of domestic prisons as national spaces subtly comment on the political development of eighteenth-century England, with the trope of the cage indicative of a primarily contractual structure despite some absolutist traditions. Regarding Mr B and Pamela as epitomes of aristocratic and bourgeois social values, Parrinder recognises in *Pamela* "the so-called 'national marriage plot', in which an alliance between families bears a weight of political symbolism implying the resolution of contraries" (32).⁹⁸ Similarly, McKeon addresses "the texture of metaphorical politics in which Richardson embeds the conflict between Pamela and Mr. B," who embody respectively "the opposite corners of industrious 'virtue' and corrupt,

⁹⁵ Heffernan examines the political and generic implications of Pamela's references to tyranny in detail: "A vocabulary of right, property, liberty, freedom, tyranny, law, consent, confederation, defense, resistance, treason, and torture gradually insinuates itself, providing a semblance of political substratum to the wicked pastoral romance unfolding above" (37). For other analyses of the word "Tyranny" in *Pamela*, see Keymer (xx), Thompson (98) and McKeon (2005: 640; 2002: 369).

⁹⁶ For McKeon's study of the controversial relationship between "birth and worth," namely between family origins and individual value, see *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (131–175).

⁹⁷ According to Heffernan, Pamela's comparison of Mr B to a tyrant recalls Filmer's absolutist notion of royal power as "commanding authority immune to law," while she herself "voices a Miltonian and Lockean political conviction" that all humans are equal in front of universal law (37).

⁹⁸ More specifically, Parrinder argues that "[f]amily genealogies in the English novel are often loaded with cultural meaning, conveying a hint – and sometimes far more than a hint – of national allegory through their links to the Civil War and other traumatic episodes of English history" (33).

aristocratic ‘honor’” (2005: 640; 2002: 366). The largely “metaphorical” nature of Richardson’s political messages invites diverse interpretations of his intention, with different critics establishing different analogies between fictional characters in *Pamela* and historical figures in the eighteenth century. Morris Golden, for example, reads *Pamela* as an almost allegorical story about “Walpole’s rise and fall” as well as the “reigning but disunited royal family” of Hanoverian monarchs (313), whereas O’Connell discerns in Richardson’s writing “a High Church Anglican outreach project designed to disseminate practical Christianity and moral reform in resistance to Whiggish secularism” (2010: 33). The heated debate over how – or whether – Richardson’s domestic story comments on royal families, Whig politicians or religious doctrines indicates the complexity of *Pamela*’s political position. Recognising both Whig and Tory elements in *Pamela*, Doody argues that “[t]here is something in the novel that speaks out against power structures, both of the old regime and of the new” (1990: 119). Armstrong also claims that Pamela’s cross-class “marriage calls into being a concept of political authority that is neither Tory nor Whig” (1987: 132). As Heffernan points out, the plot of *Pamela* does not unequivocally support Jacobite, Tory or Whig ideology (38).⁹⁹ However, although Richardson does not support any specific political party in his literary career, the national structures of absolute monarchy and contractual governance do encounter each other in his domestic novel, complementing the figurative network of cage-like houses with political elements of eighteenth-century England.

Although the principle of royal or aristocratic absolutism has a lingering impact on the national spaces of Richardson’s *Pamela*, it is severely undermined by the cross-class marriage between Mr B and his maidservant. In the episode of Mr Williams’s imprisonment, the clergyman’s financial reliance on the landowner enhances the latter’s arbitrary authority over the former: “it is three fifty Pounds, he gave him, as he thought, as a Salary for three Years that he has been with him. But there was no Agreement between them; and he absolutely depended on my Master’s Favour” (P 197). Compared with the sum of money that Mr B promises Pamela as his mistress (500 guineas plus an annual income of 250 pounds), Mr Williams’s unofficial “Salary” exposes the broad gap between the financial status of different classes (P 189).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ In his article on *Pamela*, Heffernan claims that “[t]he one political logic that appears to articulate the plot is the barbarity-civility dialectic” (38). However, the concepts that he terms “barbarity” and “civility” are very similar to the principles of absolutist and contractual governance that Jacobites and Whigs respectively advocate. Focusing more on social reform than on party politics, Flint explicates how “Pamela’s history, while it registers the exhilaration of class ascent, also stresses the anxieties accompanying radical change” (489).

¹⁰⁰ In an article on the Anglican Church, Stewart analyses “[t]he clerical poverty which renders Williams so powerless” and describes the financial dilemmas of Anglican clergymen in eighteenth-century

Nevertheless, such a trivial debt can still result in the debtor's incarceration if his benefactor sues him out of caprice. In what O'Connell terms "a brutally effective display of secular lordly power," Mr B wilfully disregards the welfare of his vulnerable friend in his selfish pursuit of sexual gratification (2010: 33). Typical of the nobility's indifference to the commoners' predicaments, Sir Simon's reaction to Pamela's imprisonment in Lincolnshire also discloses the inherent sense of superiority that the upper classes feel over their social inferiors: "Why, what is all this, my Dear, but that the 'Squire our Neighbour has a mind to his Mother's Waiting-maid? And if he takes care she wants for nothing, I don't see any great Injury will be done her. He hurts no Family by this" (P 134). Obviously, in Sir Simon's opinion of family honour and female chastity, the Andrews do not even qualify as a "Family" and hence, Pamela's bodily safety does not deserve his concern. Seemingly accepting the argument of upper-class superiority, Pamela voluntarily alienates herself from the aristocratic discourse of honour but writes instead about her honesty: "My Honesty (I am poor and lowly, and am not intitled to call it *Honour*) was in Danger" (P 217). By introducing the concept of honesty into the discussion of honour, Pamela destabilises the traditional hierarchy of aristocratic honour over lower-class obscurity and evaluates the behaviour of all social classes based on their adherence to or deviance from eighteenth-century norms such as honesty or virtue. According to Kibbie's study of Pamela's social position, "Sir Simon's reference to 'family' points up one of the central conflicts in the novel," hinting that Mr B's "desire for her will require that he revise aristocratic notions of family along with aristocratic notions of honor" (1991: 565). As the marriage between Mr B and Pamela narrows the distance between aristocratic and common families, Pamela's redefinition of honour and honesty in defiance of absolute hierarchies also affects gender relations in the novel.

Similar to the controversial principle of aristocratic superiority, the legitimacy of patriarchal absolutism does not remain unquestioned in the cage-like spaces of Richardson's *Pamela*. Rejecting Lady Davers's claim that his marriage to Pamela degrades his social rank, Mr B cites the example of James II and Anne Hyde to prove that the low origins of his wife do not affect his own high standing: "when a Duke marries a private Person, is he not still her Head, by virtue of being her Husband? But, when a Lady descends to marry a Groom, is not that Groom her Head, as her Husband?" (P 422). By indicating that James II secures his sovereign status by being metaphorically the "Head" of his wife, Mr B's allusion to the royal

England: "Non-residence and pluralism – the holding of more than one living – were consequences of clerical poverty, and these too left the clergy open to criticism for pastoral neglect. The cleric without an adequate income could be forced into other occupations, such as farming or teaching" (39).

family consolidates the analogy between monarchs' power over their commoners and husbands' control of their wives. Noticing the interactions between national and familial issues in Anne Hyde's marriage, Golden calls its controversies the "domestic royal squabbles" of the Stuart House (314), while Heffernan dismisses Mr B's comparison of himself to a king as "the tardy expression of an entrenched assumption" that is not only refuted by his maidservant, but also reused for the opposite purpose (37). When Pamela arrives late at Sir Simon's house because of her imprisonment by Lady Davers, Miss Darnford rebukes Mr B for his unreasonable dissatisfaction with Pamela's manners: "did I not tell you, Stately-ones, that something must have happen'd? But O these Tyrants! these Men!" (P 399). Again, the juxtaposition of kings and husbands creates an analogy between royal and patriarchal authority, while the negative connotations of "Tyrants" hint at the illegitimacy of such authority when the heads of nations and families – or "Stately-ones" – expand their power beyond a widely accepted limit. Mr B is himself aware of the limits of his domestic reign, assuring Pamela through another tyranny metaphor that he will remain within the bounds of husbandly propriety: "I hope I shan't be a very tyrannical Husband to you" (P 443). When he does attempt to impose "tyrannical" rules on Pamela several pages later, Pamela's letter adopts a satirical tone that is markedly unusual after her marriage: "That if the Husband be *set* upon a wrong Thing, she must not dispute with him, but do it, and expostulate afterwards. [...] *This would bear a smart Debate, I fancy, in a Parliament of Women*" (P 450). According to McKeon, to expose the absurdity of Mr B's expectations "Pamela saucily invokes one of the most radically suggestive conceits of the revolutionary years" (2005: 641). As the national institution that legally restricts the power of English monarchs, the parliament embodies a constitutional relationship between the ruler and the ruled. By using a political concept to defy her husband's demand for absolute domestic submission, Pamela blends domestic and national hierarchies in her advocacy of contractual equality.

In reaction to the absolutist doctrine of domestic and national governance, Pamela imposes contractual limitations on the behaviour of aristocrats and patriarchs as well as commoners and women, placing all of them under the surveillance of a cage-like society. After the summer-house kiss, Pamela attributes her rebellion against Mr B to the sexual harassment she has experienced: "Well may I forget that I am your Servant, when you forget what belongs to a Master" (P 23). According to Pamela, therefore, Mr B's adherence to the decorum of English society is a prerequisite for the influence he exercises inside and outside his household, an influence he has automatically forfeited by transgressing the boundaries of genteel

propriety.¹⁰¹ As Heffernan puts it, by regarding the master's proper manners as a precondition for his servant's willing submission, Pamela brings "new contractual theories of the polity" into Mr B's "semifeudal principles of servitude, maintenance, and command inspired by a declining absolutist ideology" (28). Instead of unconditionally serving the male head of a wealthy family, Richardson's lower-class protagonist establishes a contractual relationship with her capricious master, liberating herself from the obligations of servanthood whenever this master violates the codes of mutual respect. In Locke's contract theory, "all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal," with all levels of the social hierarchy equally restrained by the commonly accepted rules of normative conduct (Locke 101). This notion of mutual restraint is also applicable to aristocratic women. Affronted by Lady Davers's insolence, Pamela resorts to this contractual principle to justify her own insolent retorts: "if you would have me keep my Distance, you will not forget your own Degree" (P 382). Again, Pamela accuses Lady Davers of deviating from the contractual agreement between different social classes, considering herself obliged to respect only those better-born people who also uphold the "Degree" of a higher standing. By forcing both the powerful and the powerless to obey certain normative codes, the contractual arrangement of the national structure creates at least a certain extent of equality among the English people.

The contractual structure that restricts the behaviour of Richardson's masters and servants ensures a relatively equal relationship between different classes, granting every social member the right to supervise the others. Surprisingly, the notion of class equality is most eloquently brought forth by Richardson's apparently libertine male protagonist at the card game of Whist: "I have always [...] consider'd Whist as an *English* Game in its Original [...]. For, by the Ace, I have always thought the Laws of the Land denoted; and, as the Ace is above the King or Queen, and wins them; I think the Law should be thought so too" (P 405). By calling Whist "an *English* Game," Mr B associates the domestic playing of card games with the political governance of the English nation, while his statement that "the Law" should rule over "the King or Queen" contradicts all the absolutist beliefs he has previously voiced.¹⁰² By

¹⁰¹ According to Booker, Pamela's insistence that people from all walks of life should conform to the normative rules of their respective social classes consolidates the traditional hierarchy of English society: "Pamela's boldness is a protest in favor of restoring a conservative social order. Throughout the novel, Pamela insists on what she claims is a social imperative: each person must be content to remain in and fulfill his or her function or character" (50). Pamela's conservative values are especially evident after her marriage into the upper class, but despite all her conservatism, the restriction she imposes on aristocratic authority already supports the Lockean notion of a social contract.

¹⁰² In his analysis of Mr B's comment on the game, Howard D. Weinbrot emphasises the "husband-wife-nation relationship central in *Pamela*," calling Pamela's resistance "the Lockean freedom to

“translating the change in sexual relations into political terms,” Richardson’s *Pamela* explicates the political contract (law) between the English monarchs and the English people through the sexual contract (marriage) between Mr B and his maidservant (Armstrong 1987: 132). With both monarchs and commoners compelled to be law-abiding citizens, the alleged supremacy of the law weakens the royalist hierarchy of kings over subjects, causing Heffernan to identify in Mr B’s speech “the novel’s constitutionalist credo” (30). The figuratively articulated tenets of constitutional monarchy and universal equality are well summarised by Locke’s claim in *Two Treatises* that “all men are naturally in [...] a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature” (101). In other words, every individual in the English nation enjoys the same basic rights and endures the same necessary restrictions, attaining various positions in the national structure through a consensual assignment of duties. This contractual vision of all social classes as fundamentally equal in front of the natural law supports Pamela’s radical declaration of her personal value in a letter to Mr Williams: “my Soul is of equal Importance with the Soul of a Princess; though my Quality is inferior to that of the meanest Slave” (P 158). Often linked to religious concepts like God or “Soul” in Pamela’s pious language, the social norms that define propriety have a constrictive impact on the actions of servants and princesses alike. The freedom of equal citizens to choose which law to obey or which lord to serve requires willing consent on both sides before any social contract can possibly come into effect.

Contractual equality inevitably requires mutual consent before any change can take place in this cage-like space, equipping domestic supervisors with the political right to accept or reject a proposal within the boundaries of propriety. The notion of free consent attracts particular attention during Pamela’s imprisonment in Lincolnshire, where her physical confinement contrasts sharply with her verbal liberty to resist Mr B’s advances. Refusing to meet Mr B personally, Pamela draws on the political theory of mutual consent to defend her sexual freedom: “Whatever you have to propose, whatever you intend by me, let my Assent be that of a free Person” (P 139).¹⁰³ In a seduction story reminiscent of Moll Flanders’s experience in the Colchester family, Mr B’s need of Pamela’s “free” “Assent” seriously undermines the authority he exercises over his servants and tenants. Pamela’s emphasis on her consent resonates with Locke’s definition of “natural liberty”: “The liberty of man, in society, is to be

defend herself,” Mr B a “former absolutist,” and his commentary “his political allegory of the English card game whist” (312).

¹⁰³ In a slightly different interpretation of this quotation, Thompson regards Pamela’s freely-given consent as a gesture that would fundamentally change Mr B’s role in the love relationship (98).

under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth” (109–110). In the blending of domestic and political issues, the contractual organisation of a Lockean commonwealth sheds light on Pamela’s steady resistance to sexual and social oppression. A similar obsession with consent also influences Mr B’s treatment of Pamela. In his proposals, Mr B tries to lure her with extremely generous monetary compensations instead of coercing her physically into an undesired affair: “Now, *Pamela*, will you see by this, what a Value I set upon the Free-will of a Person already in my Power” (P 190). According to McKeon, “the proposals soberly imitate the concerns of a formal contract aimed primarily at the satisfaction of financial convenience,” with the chastity of a maidservant traded for the prospect of her financial prosperity (2002: 372).¹⁰⁴ Also noticing Mr B’s economic estimation of Pamela’s moral worth but stressing her full right to accept or reject such estimations, Armstrong argues that “[i]n allowing her the grounds for negotiating such a contract, [...] he modifies the presupposition of all previous contracts, namely, that the male defined and valorized the female as a form of currency in an exchange among men” (1987: 112). If the existence of contractual proposals already indicates the decline of masculine power, Pamela’s firm rejection of them reveals the undamaged strength of her “Free-will” despite all Mr B’s domestic and judicial manipulations (P 190). During the attempted rape in Lincolnshire, Mr B appears more preoccupied with procuring Pamela’s sexual consent than with sex itself: “I must say one Word to you, *Pamela*; it is this: You see, now you are in my Power! [...] if you resolve not to comply with my Proposals, I will not lose this Opportunity: If you do, I will yet leave you” (P 203). The rapist’s willingness to relinquish his rare opportunity of sexual gratification in exchange for Pamela’s consent shows the essentially contractual nature of their relationship.¹⁰⁵ Equipping Pamela with verbal authority despite her bodily vulnerability, the political concepts of contract, equality and free consent frame interpersonal relationships on public as well as private levels.

The contractual relationship of cage-like supervision is further consolidated by the

¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Arlene Fish Wilner also claims that the proposals entail “both the form and the language of contractual agreements,” namely “a business agreement, reflecting middle-class values, including the financial protection of the party most at risk in entering the agreement, and requiring the concurrence of both parties before the relationship can be presumed to have attained legal status” (553, 555).

¹⁰⁵ Examining this quotation from a different perspective, Armstrong illustrates how Pamela is represented as an abstract symbol of powerful language that cannot be physically conquered or raped: “Richardson stages a scene of rape that transforms an erotic and permeable body into a self-enclosed body of words. Mr. B’s repeated failures suggest that Pamela cannot be raped because she is nothing but words” (1987: 116). In his interpretation of bodies and words, McKeon equates “sexual violation” with “forced knowledge,” claiming that “sex serves an epistemological end that lies beyond itself” in Richardson’s novel (2005: 650).

recognition of individual property, another nation-related Lockean concept that prevails in Richardson's domestic story. Situating *Pamela* in "the process of transition in society whereby traditional bonds of paternalism and deference were being superseded by cruder economic ties," A. D. Harvey emphasises Pamela's right to terminate her "employment": "Her position as a servant in a country house places her in something *like* a position of feudal dependence, but she nevertheless takes for granted that she has a right to resign her employment and return to her parents whenever she chooses to do so" (108). Despite all Mr B's efforts to threaten Pamela into absolute obedience, Pamela is fully aware of her contractual rights as an independent individual. Refuting Mrs Jewkes's absolutist claim that Mr B fully possesses his servants and that her evasion of his sexual advances robs him of his rightful possession, Pamela asserts her independence through a simile of theft: "are you afraid I should [...] commit a Robbery upon my Master? [...] how came I to be his Property? What Right has he in me, but such as a Thief may plead to stolen Goods?" (P 126). By comparing Mr B to "a Thief" who steals Pamela from herself, Pamela represents her body as her own "Property" and her imprisonment as a violation of her proprietary rights.¹⁰⁶ In opposition to the paternalistic expectation of absolute servitude, Pamela's belief in what Kibbie defines as her "self-possession" (1991: 565) is, according to Thomas Keymer, highly reminiscent of "the appropriation of Lockean terms in Mary Astell's roughly contemporaneous analyses of sexual politics" (viii). The figurative explanation of a contractual husband-wife or master-servant relationship through the Lockean concept of property merges domestic, economic and political domains, exhibiting Mr B's household as a national space in which everyone should have full control over his or her own body. Viewing this national space as a "uniquely English character of" Richardson's novel, A. D. Harvey emphasises its critical role "in the evolution in England of the notion of the essential equality of individuals whatever the difference of their social and economic status" (105). The view of servanthood as an economic product of consensual transaction rather than the inevitable result of absolute hierarchy also dissuades Pamela from keeping Mr B's presents: "if I would not do the good Gentleman's Work, why should I take his Wages?" (P 79). Just as servants earn their salary through domestic work, mistresses receive their "Wages" through sexual work, and both are free to decide whether they wish to exchange physical work for financial rewards. As human connections become a site of property exchange, the dwellers on Mr B's estates and the

¹⁰⁶ Kibbie interprets the "stolen property" in the thief simile as either Pamela herself or her female "virtue" (1991: 565, 562). Finding Pamela's notion of proprietary rights not so modern as the other critics do, Bowen states that "she echoes not only Locke, but also a distilled Lockean tenet that by 1740 had achieved the status of an English birthright. Pamela's 'virtue' is rewarded [...] because she adheres to customary relations between the upper and lower orders" (64).

inhabitants of the English nation negotiate with each other as equal citizens rather than kings or subjects.

As the contractual principles of law, equality, mutual consent and proprietary rights apply indiscriminately to the inhabitants of English national spaces, rebirth-like transformations through the crossing of carceral and national boundaries take place only in the extreme cases of minor characters. When Pamela learns about Mr Williams's impending imprisonment, she suggests that he should "flee the Country, and not be thrown into Gaol: This will answer [her] Master's End as well; for it will as effectually hinder him from assisting [her], as if he was in a Prison" (P 166). As the borders of the debtors' prison and those of the English nation share the common function of precluding Mr Williams's intervention in Mr B's affairs, the crossing of carceral boundaries is equated with a departure from England. Unlike in *Moll Flanders*, however, Mr Williams's successful exit from the prison does not bring about any fundamental change in his social status, with his entire career still relying on Mr B's generosity. Another boundary-crossing journey that resembles Moll Flanders's adventures is Sally Godfrey's voyage to Jamaica after a life-threatening childbirth:

she suffer'd so much in Childbed, that nobody expected her Life; and this, when she was up, made such an Impression upon her, that she dreaded nothing so much as the Thoughts of returning to her former Fault; [...] [she] embarked, with her Companions, at *Gravesend*, and so sailed to *Jamaica*; where she is since well and happily marry'd; passing, to her Husband, for a young Widow (P 482)

If the childbirth that almost results in Sally's death symbolises the end of her past deviant life, her travelling across the English borders gives her the new identity of "a young Widow," transforming Mr B's uncherished mistress into a respectable wife.¹⁰⁷ While the elements of birth, death and rebirth coincide in the metamorphosis of a fallen woman, Albert Rivero recognises multiple elements of imprisonment in Sally's experience: "When Sally Godfrey's belly grows beyond prescribed boundaries, she must be confined, a prisoner of her body as well as of the ideological assumptions of her society" (43–44). If the social codes of female chastity restrict Sally's movement, her name "'Sally,' with its connotation of breaking of restraints," signals a transgressive defiance of carceral constrictions (Rivero 35). Besides, as Rivero points out, the name "Gravesend" that marks the start of Sally's transformative journey is highly

¹⁰⁷ More pessimistic about Sally's situation in Jamaica, Rivero argues that "[t]here is nothing agreeable about Sally Godfrey's fate. The presumably 'happy' 'poor Lady' – in Pamela's own oxymoron – sails away to inhabit a narrative limbo, dead to her child, living with a husband happily unaware of her shameful secret" (46).

“evocative” of the death trope, thus forging a figurative network of death, rebirth and liminal boundaries (45). Pamela’s claim that Sally had to “try a new Fortune, in a new World” also resonates strongly with Moll Flanders’s envisioning of herself “as new People in a new World,” stressing the traveller’s random acquisition of new social status after an adventurous voyage across the ocean (P 483, MF 383). However, although the blending of birth, death, imprisonment and boundary-crossing movement evokes the trope of the miraculous womb, Sally remains a marginal character in Richardson’s novel and serves primarily as what Tassie Gwilliam calls “the monitory example of what Pamela might have become” (119). In contrast to Sally’s lucky rebirth on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the central characters of *Pamela* remain within the boundaries of their prison-like nation.

While Sally Godfrey is physically expelled from the English territory because of her sexual transgression, many other violations of social norms are verbally labelled as non-English in Richardson’s *Pamela*, with deviant elements excluded from the normalised spaces of the English nation. Despite Sally’s successful new life in Jamaica, the fact that she, unlike Moll Flanders, does not return to England reveals her continued exclusion from the normative community of eighteenth-century England. Even the “little Negro Boy” her husband sends to her daughter is “taken ill of the Small-pox, and died in a Month after he was landed” (P 486). Since the boy is a foreigner sent to serve the daughter of a deviant Englishwoman, his death immediately after his arrival in England symbolises the hostile attitude of the nation towards foreign cultures and deviant deeds, in other words towards whatever violates its own social norms.¹⁰⁸ The connection between what is not English and what is deviant is also manifest in Pamela’s portrayal of Monsieur Colbrand as “the most hideous Monster”: “He bow’d, and put on his foreign Grimaces, and seem’d to bless himself! and, in broken *English*, told me, I was happy in de Affections of de vinest Gentleman in de Varld!” (P 166). By exaggerating Colbrand’s “foreign Grimaces” and “broken *English*,” Pamela emphasises the non-Englishness of Mr B’s accomplice in her illegal imprisonment. The way in which Pamela intentionally misspells Colbrand’s speech in imitation of his foreign accent also draws attention to the impropriety of this speech according to the English standards, implying that the capricious master is far from the finest gentleman in the world but instead a deviant pursuer of sexual gratification. According to Bowen, Colbrand’s name alludes to the Danish giant whom Guy of Warwick slays in defence of King Athelstan, further linking Mr B’s supporter to anti-English

¹⁰⁸ From a different perspective, Laura J. Rosenthal interprets the boy as a symbolic double of Sally Godfrey’s daughter, with “her daughter representing a renewal of youth and purity, and the slave absorbing all the possibilities of physical labor” (251).

forces (58). Noting the hyperbolic defamation of Mr B's Swiss friend, Sheila C. Conboy observes that "Pamela's description of Mr. Colbrand [...] elaborates her panic about phallic penetration and her denial of sexuality" (88). By visualising the threats to her chastity through the dreadful appearance of a foreigner, Pamela hints at her own conformity to the English notion of feminine propriety. The blending of foreignness and deviance exposes the tendency of Richardson's England to either shut transgressive elements out of its territory or label them as non-English, while the English people in the English national spaces are expected to obey the common rules of their society.

Unlike those minor characters who are dissociated from England as a result of their deviant tendency, Pamela appears incapable of boundary-crossing movements, negotiating for authority within the limits of her domestic and national prisons. Calling Pamela "a rebel [...]" whose resistance is passive at best," Keymer complains that "she passes up her earliest opportunities to leave Mr B.'s Bedfordshire house so that she can first finish flowering his waistcoat. In the confusingly gendered world of the Lincolnshire house, she drops her most promising bid for escape on glimpsing "two poor Cows"' (vii). Having mistaken cows for bulls in her first attempt to leave the Lincolnshire house, Pamela admits her inability to escape from her domestic prison despite its oppressive function of constant surveillance: "I find I am not fit to think of my Escape: For I shall be as much frightened at the first strange Man that I meet with" (P 153). As Conboy argues, "her fear of phallic attack has impaired her vision, rendering her unable to effect the escape she desires" (88). The threat of deviant elements outside her narrowly-watched prison, primarily in the form of a "phallic attack" on female chastity, reinforces Pamela's fear for every "strange Man" she might encounter beyond carceral boundaries. From this perspective, the adjective "strange" refers not only to Pamela's unfamiliarity with the imagined man, but also to his probable deviance from well-known norms. Later, when Pamela manages to "get out between the two Bars of the Window," this bold endeavour ends with a weak lament for her immobility: "no Escape for poor *Pamela*!" (P 168, 171). With the "Bars" being another subtle reference to the cage trope, Pamela's repeated failures in prison escapes suggest that she prefers the security that a highly-normalised, cage-like space guarantees to the opportunities that a loosely-governed, womb-like space can provide. Her emotional attachment to her Lincolnshire prison becomes more evident when she is set free by Mr B: "I think I was loth to leave the House" (P 244); "I have made an Escape, to be more a Prisoner!" (P 248). Analysing Pamela's paradoxical mood, Patricia Mckee notes the absence of change in Pamela's life before and after her departure from Lincolnshire: "The recognition of love doesn't clearly make much difference to Pamela; [...] she cannot tell the

difference, finally, even between her imprisonment and her freedom” (646).¹⁰⁹ If Pamela’s reluctance to “leave the House” discloses her secret longing for enclosed spaces under disciplinary surveillance, her unchanged role as “a Prisoner” after her successful “Escape” from Lincolnshire implies that the entire English nation stands under the influence of such surveillance (P 248). As both domestic and national spaces exhibit cage-like forms, Pamela’s imprisonment does not end with the return of her physical liberty. Even after her marriage into the B family, she refers to her “Prisoner” status multiple times during Lady Davers’s visit, stressing that her authority as a wealthy wife is curtailed by the aristocrats’ antagonistic attitude towards cross-class social mobility (P 384, 386, 400). Negotiating for authority within the bounds of English social norms and under the observation of other English people, Pamela and her fellow prisoners impose disciplinary rules on each other through the practice of mutual observation.

Disciplinary Reformation through Mutual Observation

Situated in the cage-like spaces of domestic and national surveillance, Richardson’s characters diligently observe each other’s behaviour and impose the restrictive rules of propriety on those around them. Constantly disciplined by the critical gazes of their fellow observers, the observed undergo a reformation that does not change their social status in the English nation while their own gazes reform the deviance of others in the same manner.

Mr B’s judgmental observation of Pamela’s life and writing is a most conspicuous example of disciplinary supervision in cage-like domestic spaces. Having closely examined Pamela’s interactions with other servants, other servants’ attitudes toward her as well as her written communications with her parents, Mr B openly announces the result of his observation:

your Behaviour before honest *Longman* [...] has quite charm’d me. [...] All the Servants, from the highest to the lowest, doat upon you, instead of envying you; and look upon you in so superior a Light, as speaks what you ought to be. I have seen more of your Letters than you imagine, [...] and am quite overcome with your charming manner of Writing, so free, so easy, and so much above your Sex (P 84)

¹⁰⁹ According to Mckee, *Pamela* “is unwilling to allow impositions, either those of one character on another or those of one event on another, to be final or determinant. Thus the novel proceeds as a repetition of exchanges that evade rather than effect possession” (624). In other words, Pamela’s story constitutes a series of disciplinary practices that exert reformatory impacts on both the discipliners and the disciplined. The long-lasting process of reformation brings about no sudden or absolute change of status.

Facilitated by the cage-like absence of individual privacy, Mr B's unhindered supervision of Pamela extends from her protection of her master's reputation in front of Mr Longman to the praises she receives from Mrs Jervis. Based on the respect that the other servants show for Pamela, Mr B infers that the object of his observation "ought to" be offered a "superior" social position. His gaze also moves from human objects to written texts as he perceives Pamela's superiority over most Englishwomen through an analysis of her writing style. The result of Mr B's investigation is not always so positive, however. On another occasion, he explains the other servants' affection for Pamela from a completely different perspective, dismissing Pamela's popularity with the statement that "fair Looks hide many a Fault, where a Person has the Art to behave obligingly" (P 72). By interpreting Pamela's moral integrity as an "Art" of disguise and the other servants' admiration of her as the product of her skilful performance, Mr B represents Pamela as a cheater who, though as deviant as he is, successfully deceives her observers in the surveillance system. In addition to this malicious interpretation of Pamela's personality, Jessica Leiman also highlights Mr B's "systematic demonization of Pamela's writing," which "persistently associates it with sexual promiscuity" (235). Although Pamela frequently strives to justify herself in her own narrative, the injurious comments that Mr B makes on her person and her letters have a visible effect on her self-perception: "The bad Names, *Fool's Plaything*, *artful Creature*, *painted Bauble*, *Gewgaw*, *speaking Picture*, are hard things for your poor *Pamela*; and I began to think, whether I was not indeed a very naughty Body, and had not done vile Things" (P 164). Discomposed by Mr B's judgmental gaze, Pamela expresses her concern about the easy reshaping of her identity in a panoptic structure and resists the reformatory power of observation through the practice of letter writing. Without the absolute authority of romantic monarchs, however, Mr B cannot prohibit her writing activities in the contractual spaces of his cage-like home. Just as his determined portrayal of Pamela as deviant disturbs her mental tranquillity, Mr B is equally perturbed by Pamela's ruthless documentation of his own improper conduct.

While Mr B supervises Pamela's behaviour, Pamela also extensively documents his proper and improper deeds, gazing back at her observer in the latter's prison-like houses. According to Heffernan, "the writing of *Pamela* is shaped by a strong behavioral concern. [...] The novel's underlying scheme depends largely on a pattern of cross-espionage whereby Pamela and Mr. B vie in examining and predicting each other's manners" (40–41). Following the "pattern of cross-espionage," Pamela writes down all the details of Mr B's actions that she has carefully watched while Mr B evaluates Pamela's conformity to normative rules by obsessively looking at her and reading her letters. One of Pamela's lengthy accounts of Mr B's

deviant manners mingles her narration of the event with her comments on it:

He then took me in his Arms, and presently push'd me from him. Mrs. *Jervis*, said he, take the little Witch from me; I can neither bear, nor forbear her! (Strange Words these!) – But stay, you shan't go! – Yet begone! – No, come back again.

I thought he was mad, for my Share; for he knew not what he would have. [...]

He sat down, and look'd at me, and look'd as silly as such a poor Girl as I (P 57)

Apart from the trivial but improper acts of pulling and pushing his maidservant, Mr B's self-contradictory commands that Pamela should come or leave are also recorded verbatim, followed by her critical commentaries on their abnormality. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Foucault argues in *Madness and Civilization* that “the madman [...] crosses the frontiers of bourgeois order of his own accord, and alienates himself outside the sacred limits of its ethic,” embodying instead “a liberty raging in the monstrous forms of animality” (58, 83). By accusing Mr B of being “mad,” Pamela represents him as an irrational animal beyond the control of the normalising cage, and his sexual passion an unacceptable deviance from the norms of the English social order. In addition to this hint at madness, Pamela also calls Mr B “Strange” and “silly,” embedding her judgments in her narration and censuring his violations of decorum whenever they occur. The repetition of the verb “look'd” also highlights the practice of mutual observation: while Mr B looks at Pamela, she looks back and even evaluates the (im)propriety of his looks. The exchange of critical gazes between Richardson's two protagonists culminates in Mr B's reading of Pamela's letters, through which he observes in detail how she observes him. Irritated by Pamela's relentless denunciation of his deviant behaviour but unable to justify his deviance, Mr B summarises the first half of Richardson's novel in an angry protest against her judgment: “she has written Letters [...] in which she makes herself an Angel of Light, and me, her kind Master and Benefactor, a Devil incarnate!” (P 36). In the domestic spaces of mutual surveillance, neither of the lovers can avoid being constantly observed and examined by those around them.

During his interactions with Pamela, Mr B is also under the surveillance of other observers in the domestic and national spaces of Richardson's novel. Echoing Heffernan's comment on “cross-espionage” (41), Mr B complains about the widespread practice of constant observation in his close surroundings: “I have Spies upon me where-ever I go, and whatever I do” (P 329). Although he refers to Lady Davers's servants in this case, his protest also reflects the general conditions of his public and private life. Even before Mr B reveals his sexual passion for Pamela, the latter already predicts the detrimental effect of his improper desire on his public image: “such a Thing would ruin his Credit as well as mine [...]: For, to be sure, he

may expect one of the best Ladies in the Land” (P 17). According to Pamela, therefore, Mr B’s transgressive affair with his maidservant would be observed and judged not only by the lower-class victim herself, but also by all the upper-class ladies in England, inducing them to punish his deviance through a rejection of his future courtships. Infuriated by Pamela’s revelation of the summer-house kiss to Mrs Jervis and her parents, Mr B expresses his concern about others’ judgment in a rhetorical question: “And so I am to be exposed, am I, [...] *in* my House, and *out* of my House, to the whole World, by such a Sawcebox as you?” (P 31).¹¹⁰ His emphasis on the spread of the news both inside and outside his household indicates the presence of observers in both domestic and national spaces, all of whom would criticise his irresponsible harassment of a virtuous maidservant. Mr B’s almost obsessive attention to his endangered “Reputation” in similar situations signals the heavy influence of social surveillance on his thoughts and actions, with his capricious wishes firmly suppressed by the threat of public censure (P 30, 36, 47, 65, 190). In the cage-like spaces of Richardson’s *Pamela*, what Kerry C. Larson calls “B’s fear of exposure” and “disquiet over a sullied reputation” is certainly not groundless (129). Even his loyal housekeeper, Mrs Jervis, freely relates to Pamela the inference she draws from her observation of him: “ever since you consulted me, I have used my utmost Endeavours to divert him from his wicked Purposes; and he has promised fair; but, to say all in a Word, he doats upon you; and I begin to see it is not in his Power to help it” (P 61). This short passage contains not only Mrs Jervis’s documentation of Mr B’s speech (“he has promised fair”), but also her condemnation of his sexual desire (“wicked Purposes”) and her speculation about his private sentiments (“he doats upon you”). The fact that “it is not in his Power to help it” is indeed literally “seen” by this insightful supervisor because she reaches the conclusion solely by observing Mr B’s reactions. Initially intimidated by such penetrating gazes but gradually growing rebellious against them, Mr B declares to Pamela his determination to face the criticisms that their cross-class marriage will receive: “I will now defy the sawcy, busy Censurers of the World, and bid them know your Excellence, and my Happiness, before they, with unhallow’d Lips, presume to judge of my Actions, and your Merit!” (P 265). This portrayal of the “Censurers” as “sawcy, busy” and “unhallow’d” captures the hallmarks of Richardson’s critical observers, who are incredibly diligent in their spread of gossip and often impertinent in their comments. And despite his seemingly contemptuous attitude towards these observers, Mr B remains deeply worried about their unfavourable

¹¹⁰ Stressing “B’s wish to remain anonymous throughout the story,” Larson points out that “[f]or B, to be named is in effect to be ‘exposed’” (128).

judgments, warning Pamela about the difficulties in winning their respect: “a Woman shines not forth to the Publick as a Man; and the World sees not your Excellencies and Perfections” (P 261). In order to convince the English “Publick” of his wife’s “Excellencies and Perfections” and therefore the propriety of his unconventional marriage, Mr B deliberately brings Pamela to those disciplinary observers whose gazes have placed normative bonds on his own behaviour.

Dramatically presented by Mr B to his acquaintances as a paragon of propriety, Pamela uses the cage-like system of constant observation as a means to enhance her own reputation in contractual England. As Altman points out, after obtaining Mr B’s affection “Pamela must undergo the trials of being presented to a society that is dubious about her social station and her motives for marrying B” (105). In other words, she draws on the “trials” of neighbourly evaluation to justify the unusual elevation of her social status.¹¹¹ When Mr B invites his Lincolnshire neighbours to his house right before the wedding, he openly communicates to Pamela his purpose of introducing her into genteel society: “I would preface our Nuptials [...] with the good Opinion of these Gentry of your Merits, and to see you, and your sweet Manner, will be enough for that Purpose” (P 272). To defend his cross-class marriage before the English gentry, Mr B makes Pamela the new target of their critical gaze, expecting them to form a “good Opinion” of her personality when they “see [her] sweet Manner.” Because of this dramatic arrangement, Chloe Wigston Smith claims that “Mr. B stages Pamela’s ‘entrance’ into society as a theatrical affair” (45), while Gwilliam notes that “Mr. B begins to treat Pamela as a spectacle for other people’s voyeurism and admiration” after his own reformation (126). Chloe Wigston Smith’s metaphor of the theatre and Gwilliam’s reference to “voyeurism” both underline the cage-like structure of Mr B’s house, with Pamela intentionally exposed to the meticulous evaluation of nosy neighbours.¹¹² Since neither Mr B nor his curious visitors conceal their purpose of examining Pamela’s traits, Pamela is acutely aware of the others’ observation, constantly feeling the necessity to justify her newly-acquired upper-class status. Analysing Richardson’s lengthy delineations of such neighbourly examinations, McKeon discerns an authorial wish to celebrate the protagonist’s merits through the voices of minor characters: “The visual display of Pamela – to Mr. B., to her fellow servants, to the rural gentry – is a vital means by which Richardson tests and confirms the propriety of her social elevation”

¹¹¹ Similarly, Harol claims that “Pamela’s virtue, so unexpectedly extravagant for a servant girl, must be produced and proven for a sceptical audience that includes Mr B. and the reader. Pamela’s epistolary accounts of her heroic attempts to preserve her virginity produce evidence about her interiority and thus allow readers to evaluate her ‘virtue’” (198).

¹¹² As Larson puts it, “if B and Richardson fear the exposure of their names, Pamela, who is forever addressing herself in the third person, thrives on such exposure” (139).

(2005: 653). According to McKeon, as Pamela's conscientious observers from Mr B and his aristocratic sister to their servants and acquaintances all approve of Pamela's uncommon "elevation" into the upper class, the positive conclusion of mass surveillance "confirms the propriety" of this seemingly improper event. Through a subtle manipulation of the critical gaze, therefore, Pamela uses her observers' positive feedback to justify her and Mr B's marital choice.

By observing the observers in her cage-like surroundings, Pamela enhances the credibility of her own merits through a clever documentation and manipulation of others' appreciative gazes. Early in the novel, Pamela sends her mother an extremely detailed account of the compliments she receives, prefaced by an assertion of her unaltered modesty: "I hope I shan't be so proud as to forget myself. Yet there is a secret Pleasure one has to hear one's self prais'd" (P 15). In a society where the mutual supervision between its inhabitants constitutes a crucial force in its organisation, the conclusions supervisors draw about each other's daily actions provide important information on the (im)propriety of those actions, and those inhabitants who are positively evaluated by all their supervisors are most likely to embody the central norms of this society, hence Pamela's "secret Pleasure" to hear herself widely praised. If Lady Davers's description of Pamela as "the prettiest Wench she ever saw in her Life" is expected to prove Pamela's external beauty, "Mr. *Longman*'s Esteem" for her even after she is dismissed indicates the strength of her inner virtue (P 16, 50). Likewise, Mr B's praise of Pamela in front of the Bedfordshire gentry despite her rejection of his sexual advances shows even more convincingly how excellent this young maidservant is: "I think her greatest Excellence is, that she is humble, and courteous, and faithful, and makes all her Fellow-servants love her; [...] and you know, Ladies, she is a Woman of Discernment" (P 51).¹¹³ The qualities of humbleness, politeness and loyalty ensure that Pamela will be an obedient wife, while her extraordinary intelligence and grace foreshadow her later elevation into the privileged classes. Through a diligent documentation of her supervisors' positive feedback, Pamela transforms the oppression of constant surveillance into an opportunity for self-advertisement, and herself as a frightened bird in the cage into an elegant display of proper behaviour. As Armstrong puts it, "[b]ecause she spends her time not only observing but also representing herself and others, [...] she seizes the power of surveillance as her own" (1987: 124). Fully conscious of the utility of others' favourable judgments, Pamela even invites Mrs Jervis to examine her personal possessions after she packs her "three Parcels," proving her sexual and proprietary integrity by

¹¹³ Curran stresses Pamela's heavy dependence on Mr B's praise: "It is Pamela's 'Master's Views upon her' that give her character 'Consequence' and the matter of her letters 'Importance'" (19).

convincing Mrs Jervis of it: “tho’ I know you don’t doubt my Honesty, I beg you will look over my poor Matters, and let every one have what belongs to them; for [...] I am resolv’d to take with me only what I can properly call my own” (P 77). This almost theatrical performance, with Mr B secretly observing them, demonstrates the social influence of mutual surveillance: while Pamela’s exhibition of her parcels convinces Mrs Jervis of her “Honesty,” Mrs Jervis’s unconditional trust in Pamela’s words convinces Mr B of this maidservant’s trustworthiness. As Pamela’s observation of her supervisors teaches her the benefits of being observed, she voluntarily disciplines her own actions in the cage-like spaces of eighteenth-century England.

Disciplined by the daily exchange of critical gazes, Pamela also learns to supervise her own behaviour in compliance with domestic and national norms. While writing letters to her parents, Pamela proposes to read her own narratives in the future:

it may be some little Pleasure to me, may-hap, to read them myself, when I am come to you, to remind me what I have gone thro’, and how great God’s Goodness has been to me (which, I hope, will rather strengthen my good Resolutions, that I may not hereafter, from my bad Conduct, have Reason to condemn myself from my own Hand, as it were) (P 44)

Anticipating the critical gaze of her future self, Pamela refrains from “bad Conduct” – namely, deviant conduct – so that she will not have to “condemn [herself] from [her] own Hand” later in life.¹¹⁴ Envisioning the “Pleasure” of examining her own past deeds, Pamela is determined that her deeds should always conform to the norms of English society and even fill herself with pride. As Conboy puts it, “Richardson helped shape a fiction of woman that [...] determined the ways in which women read even their own lives” (95). The expectation of self-criticism urges Pamela to constantly scrutinise her manners based on the decorum of eighteenth-century England and avoid any transgressive action that might cause regret or shame in the future. The habit of self-scrutiny also leads Pamela to examine herself from the perspective of others. When Pamela plans to leave Bedfordshire, she imagines the poor villagers’ reaction to her luxurious clothes: “People would have said, (for poor Folks are envious, as well as rich) See there Goody *Andrews’s* Daughter, turn’d home from her fine Place! What a tawdry Figure she makes! And how well that Garb becomes her poor Parents Circumstances!” (P 44–45). Having studied the “poor Folks” and found them “envious,” Pamela examines her own image in Lady B’s clothes according to the taste of those envious observers and finds her expensive “Garb” a possible

¹¹⁴ Based on her analysis of this quotation, Altman points out that Pamela always “writes her letters to be read and reread,” primarily by “her parents and her future self” (104).

sign of unjustified arrogance. As Chloe Wigston Smith notes, Pamela's "extensive portrait of the villagers' misinterpretations" indicates that the protagonist, "aware of the ability of dress to relay incorrect impressions of her status," disciplines her appearance accordingly to prevent such impressions (40). Her subsequent purchase of plain cloth in conformity with the dress code of her lower-class status signals the disciplinary effect of her self-observation, with her everyday deeds constricted not only by the curious gazes of others but also by her own internalised sense of normality.¹¹⁵ Pamela's tendency to adopt others' perspectives even extends to a literal shift in point of view, with Pamela observing her own body as a bystander. Having run away from Mr B's sexual harassment, Pamela describes her appearance from Mr B's perspective: "I fell into a Fit with my Fright and Terror, and there I lay, till he, as I suppose, looking through the Key-hole, spy'd me lying all along upon the Floor, stretch'd out at my Length" (P 32). Noticing the change of perspective between Pamela and Mr B in this scene, Gwilliam stresses that "she represents the gaze of the man watching her, and represents her body under that gaze," "prostrated and unconscious" (120). By imagining what Mr B has "spy'd" "through the Key-hole," Pamela observes both herself and her observer even during her unconsciousness. Similarly, when she is about to be raped in Lincolnshire, Pamela suddenly distances herself from her own danger to evaluate her voice from a third-person perspective: "I scream'd out in such a manner, as never any body heard the like" (P 203). In an episode of extreme personal peril, the almost absurd mention of what "any body" might or might not have heard draws attention to Pamela's unceasing scrutiny of her own behaviour from others' point of view. As Larson rightly concludes, "Pamela is endlessly putting herself in mind of herself" (139). Her obsessive supervision of her own conduct in both trivial and life-threatening situations signifies her internalisation of disciplinary norms in the national and domestic spaces of constant surveillance.

As diligent supervisors internalise the disciplinary rules of cage-like England, they form an intricate network of mutual observation. One group of observers in *Pamela* that is directly

¹¹⁵ Emphasising the function of Pamela's plain clothes as a reaction to others' observation rather than a preparation for hard labour, Rosenthal claims that "Pamela enjoys them in theatrical terms rather than practical ones" (248). Besides, based on Patricia C. Brückmann's calculation, in her purchase of new clothes "Pamela has spent, conservatively, about one pound fifteen and one, or nearly half her yearly wages as a servant" (206). In other words, her supposedly plain clothes are actually not plain at all in financial terms but only look plainer than Lady B's silk ones. According to Conboy, however, Pamela's obsession with clothes advocates the "notion that clothing is an indicator of the wearer's internal worth, and [...] that the individual is responsible for acting out the role that he or she dresses for" (84). Similarly, Booker stresses that "the only purchases Pamela makes herself are goods that are perfectly suited to her working-class position. She makes these purchases in order to protect the virtue that her master threatens" (48).

related to the penal institution consists of Mr B, Mr Williams, Mrs Jewkes and Sir Simon. In his furious letter to Mrs Jewkes, Mr B summarises Mr Williams's conduct during Pamela's imprisonment in Lincolnshire:

As to that *College Novice Williams*, [...] I have order'd Mr. *Shorter*, my Attorney, to throw him instantly into Gaol [...]; for I know all his rascally Practices; besides what you write me of his perfidious Intrigue with that Girl, and his acknowledged Contrivances for her Escape [...] (to say nothing of his disgraceful Practices against me, in Sir *Simon Darnford's* Family; of which Sir *Simon* himself has inform'd me) (P 162)

According to this account, Mr Williams judges Mr B's confinement of Pamela according to Pamela's own evaluation of it, finds it improper and decides to punish him by separating him from his beloved woman. Sir Simon listens to Mr Williams's relation of Mr B's deviance, finds Mr Williams's betrayal of his benefactor even more deviant and reports it to said benefactor. Simultaneously, Mrs Jewkes also spies on Mr Williams, documents his plots and sends her discoveries to Mr B. As the recipient of all this information, Mr B judges Mr Williams's actions based on the others' observation of him, is enraged by Mr Williams's disapproval of Pamela's domestic imprisonment and punishes Mr Williams by sending him to a literal prison. In this episode of literal and figurative prisons, the exchange of gazes becomes a rivalry for authority, with Mr B triumphing over Mr Williams due to the support of other diligent observers. With absolutist doctrines no longer dominant in the English nation, its inhabitants live under the normalising power of decorum, punished by their observant neighbours when they fail to meet the common standards. The fear of the neighbours' judgment also disciplines Pamela's father, who warns Pamela against sexual transgressions in frighteningly cruel words: "we had rather see you all cover'd with Rags, and even follow you to the Church-yard, than have it said, a Child of ours prefer'd worldly Conveniencies to her Virtue" (P 14). Although this sounds like an ordinary moral lesson for young women, the phrase "have it said" signifies not Mr Andrews's anxiety about religious salvation but his dread of others' comments. For Mr Andrews, therefore, it is more horrifying to be the target of social ridicule than to suffer from poverty or death. In the domestic and national spaces of contractual equality, self-appointed supervisors participate in the governance of their society by imposing the codes of decorum on each other and evaluating each other's conformity to the restrictive codes.

As Richardson's characters diligently supervise each other in the domestic and national system of contractual equality, their practices of mutual observation bring about subtle reformations of figurative prisoners without any transgression of carceral or national boundaries. Regarding Pamela as the epitome of proper behaviour, scholars like Flint have

noticed the absence of development in this character: “Because Richardson intends her to be a paragon, the ‘exemplar’ of her sex, there can be little actual change or revelation of personality” (505). However, even Flint detects a “moral transformation” of Richardson’s protagonist “when, during her failed escape from the Lincolnshire house, she contemplates suicide by the pond” (501). Conboy notes likewise “the importance of Pamela’s near suicide for her own spiritual growth and for the future of the novel’s world” (83). Pamela herself also emphasises the extraordinary effect of this experience in her letter to her parents: “your poor *Pamela* has escap’d from an Enemy worse than any she ever met with; an Enemy she never thought of before; and was hardly able to stand against. I mean, the Weakness and Presumption, both in one, of her own Mind” (P 170). As Pamela learns to reject the idea of suicide despite her dreadful imprisonment in Lincolnshire, she shows a new determination not to escape from the oppressive presence of constant surveillance but to integrate herself into this cage-like system. Her preference for life in prison rather than death in freedom signals the reformatory impact of disciplinary supervision, which teaches her the utter impropriety of boundary-crossing escapes and which she has so well internalised that she even congratulates herself on her obedience to it. With Pamela’s attempted escape from her Lincolnshire prison embodying her free choice of death, this episode almost evokes the womb-like prison trope, especially when the usually impious Mrs Jewkes assumes that Pamela “must be carry’d away, as St. *Peter* was out of Prison, by some Angel” (P 175). However, Pamela’s spiritual reformation reinforces her attachment to her domestic prison instead of facilitating her escape, with the tamed protagonist voluntarily imploring her re-incarceration: “let the Maids carry me up to my Prison” (P177). As the internalisation of normative rules teaches the normalised inmate to celebrate her voluntary obedience, Pamela demonstrates how the power of a cage-like space gradually reforms the acts and beliefs of its inhabitants.

Just as Pamela’s spiritual development does not involve any boundary-crossing movement, her seemingly transformative marriage to Mr B intensifies the confining effect of disciplinary reformation instead of liberating her from it. On her wedding day, Pamela seems to hint at a transformation of the carceral spaces by the elevation of her social status: “What a different Aspect every thing in and about this House bears now, to my thinking, to what it once had! The Garden, the Pond, the Alcove, the Elm-walk. But, Oh! my Prison is become my Palace”

(P 349).¹¹⁶ However, Hannah Chaskin views Pamela's narrative after the wedding as a smooth continuation of her previous letters rather than any new story about a new life:

Pamela highlights the formal continuity [...] by initially counting the days after Mr. B reforms in the same way she counted days when he had her imprisoned, so that each journal entry is labeled 'the [nth] day of my bondage/distress/happiness' (145, 167, 367). [...] Even the house in which Pamela was imprisoned in Mr. B's amatory days fails to be redefined by the new genre: [...] Mr. B's sister, Lady Davers, traps Pamela in the house once again (79)

As the forms of Pamela's journal entries and personal circumstances all remain largely unvaried, her marriage to Mr B fails to free her from the constrictive impact of disciplinary surveillance. In fact, the notion of normative reformation is openly celebrated after her wedding ceremony, with Pamela urging Mr B to further discipline her behaviour: "what Comfort do you give me, that, instead of my being in Danger of being insnared by the high Condition to which your Goodness has exalted me, you make me hope, that I shall be confirm'd and improv'd by you" (P 351). Having compared her newly acquired "high Condition" to a space that ensnares its inhabitants, namely a figurative prison similar to the physical one in Lincolnshire, Pamela expresses her delight at being judged by her husband, "confirm'd" by him when she behaves properly and "improv'd" by him when she appears deviant. With references to disciplinary practices, this prison trope reveals that Pamela's marriage constitutes a new prison in which she joyfully succumbs to the reformatory power of domestic surveillance. Downgrading the importance of Pamela's marriage in the prolonged process of her social elevation, Will Pritchard rejects the popular opinion that Pamela's wedding initiates her into a completely new identity: "many readers have wished the novel ended here. Pamela, however, gives a reason why she should write on and why we should read on for 150 more pages" (530).¹¹⁷ And one good reason for her continued writing is that the operation of disciplinary reformation, by every observer and of every observer, does not end with any single event.

¹¹⁶ Focused on the public-private dichotomy, McKeon argues that in Richardson's *Pamela* "domestic coverture is double-edged, a palace that is also a prison and a privacy that encloses its own version of publicity" (2005: 658).

¹¹⁷ According to Pritchard, one crucial reason why the wedding does not bring about any abrupt transformation in Pamela's status is that at the wedding ceremony "Pamela has experienced only a partial change of condition; she is a wife but still a virgin" (530). Apart from virginity, however, a continuous sense of imprisonment also prevails in Pamela's life both before and after her marriage. As Altman puts it, "[t]he novel does not end here, however (although many critics think it should have). Even after marriage to B, Pamela must undergo the trials of being presented to a society that is dubious about her social station and her motives for marrying B" (105).

Similarly set in the prison-like Lincolnshire house but more evident than Pamela's changes, Mr B's reformation also takes place under the disciplinary effect of mutual observation. When Pamela leaves Lincolnshire, Mr B evokes the death trope in his letter to her: "as I had already look'd upon you as mine; and you have so soon got rid of your first Husband, so you will not refuse, to my Memory, the Decency that every common Person observes, to pay a Twelve-month's Compliment, tho' but a mere Compliment, to my Ashes" (P 247). The word "Ashes," with the implication of widowhood, compares the lovers' separation to the man's death. Although this expression is metaphorically intended, Mr B almost literally dies because of Pamela's absence, as he later confesses to her: "Life is no Life without you! If you had refused me, [...] I should have had a severe Fit of it, I believe; for I was taken very oddly, and knew not what to make of myself" (P 255). By claiming that "Life is no Life without [Pamela]," Mr B divides his life into three periods, from his libertine quest for Pamela's body to his death-like state without her to his happy marriage with her. The notion of rebirth that this reference to death already suggests is further confirmed by Mr B's declaration of love: "I love you with a purer Flame than ever I knew in my whole Life! A Flame, to which I was a Stranger, and which commenced for you in the Garden" (P 265). Mr B's acquisition of a passion that has never occurred in his previous life brings about a radical change in his attitude towards marriage, home and social status, inducing a former rake to marry his maidservant in defiance of his friends' censures. Confronted with Mr B's completely new mentality, Lady Davers expresses her surprise to Pamela in a satirical exclamation: "What, my Brother already turn'd *Puritan*! [...] Thou hast done Wonders in a little time: Thou hast not only made a Rake a Husband; but thou hast made a Rake a Preacher!" (P 424). According to Lady Davers, therefore, Mr B has reformed from an impious libertine interested only in his sexual gratifications to a faithful husband devoted to his family's spiritual improvement, in other words from a deviant aristocrat to a normalised Englishman.¹¹⁸ In contrast to Moll Flanders's adventurous voyages, however, the physical immobility of Richardson's two protagonists in their life-changing situations signals a new relationship between prisons and changes. If the elevation of Pamela's social position is ensured by her willing return to cage-like prisons and her eager submission to the power of mutual observation, Mr B's moral improvement has "commenced [...] in the Garden" of his Lincolnshire house through an exchange of critical gazes with Pamela (P 265).

¹¹⁸ For an extensive analysis of Lady Davers's famous exclamation, see Wilner's article "'Thou Hast Made a Rake a Preacher': Beauty and the Beast in Richardson's *Pamela*." For other analyses of Mr B's "reformation," see Bowen (73), Bowlby (240), Chaskin (84), Han (533), Heffernan (41), Kibbie (1991: 567), etc.

Investigating the cause of Mr B's reformation, Flint points out that "[h]e is led to see himself in a radically different way once he observes his actions as reflected through Pamela's script" (502). Conboy argues likewise that "it is only after he has read Pamela's letters and journal that Mr. B. can perceive their situation from her perspective. Her views cause him first to review his actions and then to submit to her imaginative reconstruction of experience" (83). Reformed by his observation of how Pamela observes him, Mr B is disciplined by the normative practices of mutual supervision within the carceral boundaries, with his apparently sudden rebirth being in reality the long-term effect of Pamela's diligent documentation. In the cage-like spaces of Richardson's *Pamela*, an "imaginative reconstruction of experience" involves the meticulous application of disciplinary norms rather than any random transformation of individual status, and the reformation of literal or figurative prisoners takes place without any transgression of the carceral borders.

As domestic and national spaces blend with each other in Richardson's *Pamela*, the disciplinary power of mutual observation also normalises the behaviour of other English inhabitants and eventually reforms the norms of the entire nation. Apart from Mr B, the minor characters in *Pamela* are also reformed by their surveillance of Pamela's normative behaviour, either through a direct observation of her actions or through a reading of her letters. The extremely licentious Mr Martin, who "has had three Lyings-in [...] in his House, in three Months past," is one of the reformed neighbours in Richardson's novel (P 70). To Mr B's half-joking remark that his own marital "Happiness may reform another Rake," Mr Martin replies emphatically that he is "more than half reform'd already" (P 490). While Mr Martin becomes disciplined through his observation of Pamela's decorous manners, Lady Davers is reformed first by Pamela's generous offer of help in the face of Mr B's indignation and then by Pamela's written documentation of her imprisoned life.¹¹⁹ Initially infuriated by her brother's cross-class marriage, Lady Davers agrees to amend her aristocratic prejudices through both direct and indirect observation: "There is such a noble Simplicity in thy Story, such an honest Artlesness in thy Mind, and such a sweet Humility in thy Deportment, notwithstanding thy present Station, that I believe I shall be forced to love thee, whether I will or not" (P 456). While Lady Davers's direct observation in Lincolnshire convinces her of the respectability of her sister-in-law's

¹¹⁹ For critical comments on how the reconstructive power of Pamela's letters brings about Lady Davers's moral reformation, see Conboy (93–94) and Degooey (685–686). Conboy, for instance, claims that in Lady Davers's case "Pamela's language becomes the force that completes the transformation of an individual" (93). Degooey also points out that "Lady Davers is moved to accept her natural goodness only after she has distanced herself from Pamela and has borrowed and read all of her papers" (685).

“Deportment” and therefore the propriety of her brother’s marriage, her reading about Pamela’s steady resistance to sexual and financial temptations teaches her to value personal traits more than birth status. With her notion of aristocratic absolutism gradually reshaped into contractual beliefs, Lady Davers’s change of mind highlights the broad extent of disciplinary reformation. As Gwilliam puts it, Lady Davers “replays in miniature B’s conversion to Pamela-worship,” epitomising the process of self-reconstruction that Pamela’s observers and readers experience (118). Exploring the disciplinary power of Pamela’s exemplary performance, Flint lists the achievements of her normalising influence: “causing Mr. B. to repent, persuading Lady Davers to behave more reasonably, transforming Mrs. Jewkes into a pious penitent, domesticating the savage Lord Swynford, correcting Polly Barlow, and demonstrating to all the proper management of a household” (509).¹²⁰ In the exchange of critical gazes, inhabitants of the English nation, both inside and outside Richardson’s storyworld, force Pamela to obey social norms by relentlessly observing her actions. Simultaneously, they feel compelled to adopt equally proper manners in front of their own political or domestic supervisors. In the contractual relationships of mutual supervision, the supervisors in English society form, to borrow Ignatieff’s description of panoptic spaces, a national network of “[o]mnipresent inspection, of everyone, by everyone” (78). As all the members of this panoptic network impose disciplinary rules on each other as well as on themselves, they not only improve their own daily conduct but also amend the imperfections of their social conventions.

Epistolary Rewriting of National Prisons

Documenting the disciplinary practices of mutual observation and mutual reformation, the literary form of Richardson’s *Pamela* blends with the cage-like form of its national spaces. As the private functions of epistolary writing and the public functions of conduct literature evoke the concept of panoptic surveillance, Pamela’s didactic letters reform the social structure of the English nation and are simultaneously reshaped by the normalising influence of her English readers.

Among the various generic traditions that Richardson’s *Pamela* incorporates, the literary forms of epistolary writing and conduct literature blend most conspicuously with the cage-like

¹²⁰ Altman makes a similar comment on the wide influence of Pamela’s story on characters in Richardson’s novel: “Pamela’s letters again become the instruments of conversion, of an entire society this time – including the proud Lady Davers – who soften upon reading about her virtuous resistance and even ask Pamela to continue writing letters” (106). However, as I have already pointed out in the previous paragraphs, the change in Richardson’s characters is more often a gradual change in behaviour than any abrupt event of “conversion” or spatial movement across borders.

spaces of the English nation. While Keymer emphasises *Pamela*'s "proximity to scandal fiction" (xxii), John Sung Han lists the other literary conventions Richardson draws on in his composition: "the amatory, the seduction, and the roman à clef narratives" (529). Examining the ruptures and continuities in Richardson's narrative style, Chaskin argues that "the first half of *Pamela* reads like amatory fiction, geared toward didacticism, while the second half is a courtship plot wrapped in the trappings of a conduct book," and that "the epistolary form in and of itself underlines the troubling continuity across the two genres of *Pamela*" (70–71, 79). In other words, the love relationship in Mr B's household, maintained through either "amatory" seduction or serious "courtship," is continuously represented in the didactic tone of "a conduct book" and through the narrative form of letter writing. Noticing the combination of epistolary narration and conduct literature, Armstrong claims that Pamela's text "resembles an instruction book" in its disciplinary impact on Mr B:

Because she spends her time not only observing but also representing herself and others, [...] she seizes the power of surveillance as her own. In other words, as soon as the assault on her body has settled into this form of voyeurism, then her victory over such oppression requires only a shift in the direction and dynamics of gazing. [...] Her letters display her capability for self-regulation and his corresponding need for her supervision. (1987: 124)

Through a manipulative portrayal of disciplinary gazes, Pamela's letters take advantage of social "surveillance" or "voyeurism" by actively presenting a paragon of propriety to the curious observers and educating them to imitate this paragon. As a meticulous documentation of Pamela's "self-regulation" and an advocacy for similar internalisations of normative codes, the letters that comprise Richardson's novel perform the functions of conduct literature by blending with the panoptic structure of a cage-like society.

The narrative form of epistolary fiction and the carceral form of panoptic surveillance blend with each other in their common invasion of individual privacy. Commending the epistolary form of *Pamela*, Jean Baptiste de Freval writes in his own letter to Richardson that Pamela's "Letters [are] written under the immediate Impression of every Circumstance which occasioned them, and that to those who had a Right to know the fair Writer's most secret Thoughts" (5). De Freval's comment on Pamela's "immediate Impression of every Circumstance" represents a popular opinion about epistolary fiction among eighteenth-century readers, with letters widely regarded as a documentation of the letter writer's everchanging

feelings about ordinary matters.¹²¹ Written on a daily – sometimes even hourly – basis, Pamela’s letters penetrate into the most trivial moments of her private experience and capture her tiny reactions to every specific incident. Noticing the astounding length of her letters, Pamela acknowledges her emotional addiction to epistolary writing: “I have got such a Knack of writing, that, when I am by myself, I cannot sit without a Pen in my Hand” (P 342). This epistolary fervour is further highlighted by Mr B’s praise of Pamela’s “prodigious Memory,” with which she meticulously records all the “pretty Tricks and Artifices” that she has performed during her imprisonment (P 300). As the protagonist cannot refrain from narrating all the details of her literal and figurative incarceration, her lengthy letters inevitably reveal her secret moods as well as her public deeds. When Mr B discovers her Lincolnshire letters, Pamela laments the disclosure of “all [her] private Thoughts of him, and all [her] Secrets,” whereas Mr B congratulates himself on the insight he will gain through the reading of said letters: “I more desire to see them, because they are your Sentiments at *the Time*, and because they were *not* written for my Perusal” (P 226, 277). Since Mr B’s discovery of the letters is not expected by the letter writer, Pamela has not included or excluded any content based on his personal preferences, authentically documenting her emotions at each specific moment. Mr B’s attitude towards Pamela’s story-telling habit is much less appreciative, however, when what he calls “her Letter-writing of all the Secrets of [his] Family” exposes his own private life to public censure and leaves him equally vulnerable to the power of neighbourly surveillance (P 72). The letter writer’s invasion into individual privacy – both her own privacy and the privacy of those around her – is summarised by Corrinne Harol in a vivid simile: “Pamela’s journal renders her – like the body on the dissecting table – completely ‘open,’ making her virtue available to rigorous examination, with a plausible pretence to objectivity” (208). As a written record of significant as well as petty occurrences in the cage-like spaces of Richardson’s England, Pamela’s letters are empowered by the system of mutual observation to invade, document and expose the private realms of everybody’s life.

Apart from the subtle invasion of privacy, the close connections between Pamela’s letters and her material surroundings draw attention to the letters’ dependence on and reformation of material reality, thus further associating epistolary writing with disciplinary panopticons. Before her journey to Lincolnshire, Pamela gives an extremely detailed account of how Mr Longman provides material support for her writing activities: “He [...] gave me three Pens,

¹²¹ As McKeon points out in his theorisation of the history of the English novel, “[t]he claim to historicity in *Pamela* (1740) is inextricable from its epistolary form,” which disguises the fictional text as “a documentary history” (2002: 357).

some Wafers, a Stick of Wax, and twelve Sheets of Paper” (P 50). If Pamela’s counting of pens and paper indicates the inevitable reliance of epistolary texts on material tools, her later decision to hide the letters beneath her clothes further consolidates the link between textual and material issues, almost forcing Mr B to “strip [his] pretty *Pamela*” in search for the letters (P 235).¹²² Because Pamela’s letters and clothes are closely tied to each other, scholars compare Mr B’s acquisition of the former to “sublimated rape,” “symbolic rape” or “sexual violation” (Flint 498; Leiman 240; McKeon 2005: 650).¹²³ With the reading of epistolary texts equated with the penetration of female bodies, Larson emphasises the role of Pamela’s “letters as a physical reality” in Richardson’s cage-like England: “One recalls the exceptional amount of concern expended over the simple security of her writings; where they are to be concealed, how they are almost uncovered, how they are to be delivered, exchanged, returned, etc” (139–140). In the blending of epistolary writing and material reality, Pamela’s attempt to minutely document the composition, concealment, discovery and delivery of her letters highlights not only the letters’ inevitable reliance on physical materials, but also their active interactions with them. Just as the disciplinary arrangements of a panoptic prison determine the most material aspects of the inmates’ life from food supply to cleaning duties, Pamela’s disciplinary letters also reshape the material reality of her domestic prisons. The reformatory impact of epistolary writing on the spaces of Mr B’s mansions is most manifest during Mr B’s act of letter reading: “When he came, as I suppose, to the Place where I mention’d the Bricks falling upon me, he got up, and walk’d to the Door, and look’d upon the broken Part of the Wall” (P 240). As Kibbie points out, Mr B treats “her text as a way of reimagining his material estate (he employs her account as a kind of map of his own property” (1991: 567). Likewise, Flint argues that by mapping the settings of Pamela’s narrative onto actual places in his surroundings, “B tries to

¹²² Based on this episode, Degooyer emphasises the blending of the body, the mind and the text in Pamela’s concealment of her letters: “For Pamela to enter into the mind of readers, her body must be covered by textual writings. This happens quite literally when she stitches her letters into her undergarments to prevent them from being found and read by Mr. B” (685). Similarly, Conboy also associates Mr B’s attempt to undress Pamela with his acquisition of her writing: “his threat of disrobing her parallels his voyeuristic perusal of her letters” (91–92). By comparing Mrs Jewkes to a midwife, Erickson establishes an analogy between Mrs Jewkes’s effort “to deliver Pamela of the secret body of letters which the girl sews to her underclothes” and Mrs Jewkes’s duty “to deliver Pamela herself up to Mr. B. for the purpose of sexual consummation” (500). Gwilliam even concludes that Pamela’s “letters [...] create a kind of paper pregnancy” through their key functions in her life (126).

¹²³ In their analyses of the negotiations between Mr B and Pamela about her letters, all three critics associate the abstract value that Pamela’s letters embody with the physical state of her female body. Flint claims that “B shows himself more interested in her language than her body though both are inextricably linked at this point” (498). Leiman argues that “his invasive and illicit reading violates the purity of her text” (240). McKeon concludes that “in this novel sexual violation sounds very close to forced knowledge” (2005: 650).

materialize Pamela's 'history' by uniting the written and the living subject" (502). The connection between "the written and the living subject" facilitates the reconstruction of the latter by the former, with Mr B starting to regard the wall and the pond as dangerous places that have caused Pamela intense suffering. Composed of and connected with physical materials, Pamela's intrusive letters reshape the material reality of her prison in the same way that disciplinary rules reconstruct the most basic elements of prisoners' lives.

As the activities of letter writing and letter reading mirror the cage-like spaces of panoptic observation, the epistolary form enables Pamela's original readers within the storyworld of Richardson's novel to exercise reformatory influences on her personal narrative. Contradicting some critics' identification of Pamela's letters as a journal, in other words a private writing for no particular reader, Altman stresses Pamela's repeated hints at the existence of an audience: "Although one can often question whether Pamela's letters to her parents are really letters and not merely a personal diary, particularly during her imprisonment by B, Pamela repeatedly emphasizes that she writes her letters to be read and reread" (104).¹²⁴ Pamela's composition of the letters for the purpose of being read is most evident when she directly addresses her parents. When imprisoned in the Lincolnshire house and cut off from her family, Pamela presumes nonetheless that her letters will eventually reach their intended readers: "O join with me, my dear Parents! [...] I will every Day now write my sad State; and some way, perhaps, may be open'd to send the melancholy Scribble to you" (P 99). Even during her isolation from the outside world, Pamela still regards her writings as communicative letters prepared for her parents rather than secret diaries kept out of others' reach. As Pamela spares no effort "to send the melancholy Scribble" out of her prison, she inevitably imagines her readers' possible expectations and allows such imaginations to discipline her writing. One example of how Pamela's letters are reshaped by her prospective readers can be found in her comment on and reply to Mr Williams's proposal. In the letter to her parents, Pamela confesses her aversion to marrying Mr Williams even though such a marriage would liberate her from her Lincolnshire prison: "I want now more than ever your Blessing and Direction. But after all, I have no Mind to marry. [...] I cannot, methinks, hear of being a Wife" (P 142). Whereas Pamela attaches great importance to her parents' "Direction" when said parents are expected to read her writing, her message to Mr Williams emphasises in contrast his right to marry out of love rather than out of necessity: "you ought not to accept of such an involuntary Compliance, as mine would

¹²⁴ Harol, for example, lays great emphasis on the formal changes in Richardson's epistolary novel, claiming that "the epistemological quandary over Pamela's virtue is marked by a generic shift, from letters to journal" (208).

be, were I, upon the last Necessity, to yield to your very generous Proposal. I [...] shall not, on your account principally, think of the Honour you propose for me" (P 143). As Pamela bases her rejection on different grounds in front of different readers, her strong statement that she cannot even "hear of being a Wife" is replaced by a hypocritical remark that she discourages Mr Williams "on [his] account principally." By disguising her subjective dislike of Mr Williams's proposal as an objective concern for his happiness, Pamela reshapes her epistolary writing in order to better please her readers.

Under the reformatory effect of readerly surveillance, Pamela's letters follow the disciplinary rules that she expects her prospective readership to uphold. After rejecting Mr B's proposal, for instance, she "took a Copy of this for [her parents'] Perusal," prefaced by her wish for positive feedback: "I hope my Conduct shall be approved of by you" (P 193). Her desire for her readers' approval indicates the disciplinary effect of the readers' supervision, with Pamela's private letters also restricted by the social codes of decorum. Apart from her parents, Pamela herself is also a potential reader of her letters and thus an important source of the normalising power. In an account of her prison experience, Pamela envisions how her future self would read the stories of her past conduct: "if God will favour my Escape with my Innocence, [...] with what Pleasure shall I read them afterwards!" (P 113). Having internalised the English norms of female "Innocence," the future Pamela can only reflect on her previous life with "Pleasure" when the current Pamela adheres to those constrictive rules in her narrative. Under the surveillance of her future self, Pamela is compelled to uphold the principles of propriety both in her deeds and in her letters. As Altman concludes, "her reader-consciousness is none other than consciousness of a moral monitor, be it future self or parents, who shape her writing to the extent that they influence the actions that she writes about" (104). Confined by her "reader-consciousness" within the boundaries of propriety, Pamela's epistolary text frequently undergoes the process of disciplinary reformation. This readerly influence brings about a notable change in both the content and the style of Pamela's letters when she expects Mr B to read her entire narrative. Contrasting Pamela's rebellious representations of Mr B's improper conduct with the banal account of her married life, Leiman stresses the thematic as well as stylistic differences between Pamela's letters written against Mr B and her letters written for him: "The engagement that signals the reformation of her 'naughty Master' [...] finds Pamela abruptly reforming her 'sawcy Journal,' as she redirects her verbal energies towards maintaining household accounts and recording prescriptions for her own domestic conduct" (245). Similarly, Armstrong notices a reformation of Pamela's epistolary style before and after her marriage, claiming that "Pamela's writing waxes suddenly stuffy, static, and both

patronizing and obsequious” once the reformed Mr B becomes one of her prospective readers (1987: 124). Mr B’s readerly power to reform Pamela’s writing is confirmed by Pamela herself when he demands to read her letters: “I can neither write so free, nor with any Face, what must be for your Perusal” (P 239–240). Just as she refrains from revealing to Mr Williams her repugnance to his proposal, Pamela feels uneasy about disclosing her personal emotions to a domineering master. As an inevitable consequence of the epistolary form, Pamela’s wish to meet the normative expectations of her prospective readers extensively reforms her narrative text.

In the blending of panoptic and epistolary forms, the reformation of Pamela’s letters by Richardson’s other characters mirrors his own normative revisions of the fictional letters under the scrutiny of his contemporary readers. Noting Richardson’s repeated revision of his epistolary novel in response to contemporary criticisms, Curran stresses “how sensitive Richardson was in the face of these criticisms about Pamela’s style and status: he changed many of Pamela’s colloquialisms in later editions” (19).¹²⁵ Analysing in detail the systematic removal of colloquial expressions that highlight Pamela’s identity as a servant and therefore the unconventionality of her marriage, Keymer also claims that “by superimposing defensive revision on the original version, the *Pamela* of 1801 incorporates within itself [...] a history of its own reception [...]. Linguistic markers of Pamela’s lowness [...] are studiously elevated, so weakening the first edition’s acute sense of social disparity” (xxxix). According to Keymer (xvii), Pamela’s vernacular expressions like “a Clog upon my dear Parents,” “wrapt close in Paper” or “curchee and cry” are all rephrased in conformity with the standards of elegant English, with the astounding impropriety of a maidservant’s cross-class marriage gradually erased by the improvement of her language (P 11, 12, 13). As Richardson repeatedly revises his work to justify his protagonist’s extraordinary social mobility, the fictional letters that comprise this popular novel undergo a stylistic reformation under the disciplinary gazes of their eighteenth-century readers. In addition to the elevation of Pamela’s writing style, the plot of this epistolary novel also experiences disciplinary reformation in the process of readerly review and authorial revision. As Pritchard points out, the indirect depiction of “marital sex” in the first edition of *Pamela* vanishes completely in the last one, in which “Mr. B. escorts Pamela to her chamber, departs, and seemingly never returns” on their wedding night (535). Confronted

¹²⁵ Apart from analysing Richardson’s repeated revisions of *Pamela*, Curran further points out that “[t]he semi-pathological nature of Richardson’s editorial activity suggests that his writing was pulling in two directions: on the one hand he wanted a plain directness of style that would, as Defoe had hoped, be clear to all, and on the other he was straining to elevate his language in such a way that he would garner greater respect for the novel as an emergent prose form” (33).

with critical doubts about the respectability of his protagonist or his novel, Richardson improves the former's casual speech and reduces the latter's sexual allusions to ensure their absolute adherence to decorum. As the power of readerly surveillance, culminating in Henry Fielding's sarcastic portrayal of Shamela, disciplines the plot and tone of Richardson's work, *Pamela* recalls Foucault's description of how jailors in a panopticon are supervised by visitors from outside while they supervise the prisoners (Foucault 1979: 204–207). With Pamela's narrative gradually reshaped on multiple levels by eighteenth-century readers, the epistolary form of Richardson's novel resembles the panoptic prison whose design undergoes various reconstructions to more efficiently discipline people inside as well as outside.

Repeatedly reshaped by the disciplinary gazes of English readers, Richardson's epistolary novel also supervises its supervisors all over England by forcing them to follow the norms it represents.¹²⁶ Through the voice of a fictional editor, Richardson explains that one of the aims of his novel is “to Instruct, and Improve the Minds of the YOUTH” by “set[ting] forth in the most exemplary Lights, the Parental, the Filial, and the Social Duties, and that from low to high Life” (P 3). In other words, by depicting examples of perfect manners in both low and high social standing, *Pamela* is intended to teach its readers how to be a proper parent, child and member of English society. The power of *Pamela* to “Instruct” and “Improve” its readers leads Aaron Hill to claim, in a letter prefaced to the second edition of Richardson's novel, that “a gradual moral Sunshine, of un-austere and compassionate *Virtue*, shall break out upon the *World*, from this TRIFLE” (507). The metaphor of virtue as “moral Sunshine,” though almost ludicrous in its hyperbolic tone, underlines the broad scope of *Pamela*'s reformatory power by comparing the spread of its instructive codes to the omnipresence of sunlight. The immense popularity of Richardson's novel in eighteenth-century England is documented by critics like James Grantham Turner, who describes how “[t]he novel inspired a tidal wave of texts and objects, a riot of consumeristic exploitation” (71).¹²⁷ While Hill and Turner celebrate *Pamela*'s

¹²⁶ While focusing on the episode of Sally Godfrey, Rivero offers a summary of the writer-reader relationship that the epistolary form constructs: “Every act of reading entails an act of judgment. [...] For Richardson, the act of reading is seldom solitary. It is done in community, by readers whose ethical responses are both to be sought and to be directed” (32). In other words, while the writerly desire for readerly approval disciplines the writing process, the written work can also discipline the moral reactions of the reader.

¹²⁷ Turner offers a detailed description of this “tidal wave of texts and objects” by imagining a typical day of eighteenth-century Pamela fans: “recent critics compare Pamela to modern industrial products like Superman or Minnie Mouse. A keen Pamela hunter in the 1740s could buy the novel in large or small format, with or without Francis Hayman's engravings and Richardson's sequel, plus *The Life of Pamela*, *The Celebrated Pamela*, *Pamela in High Life*, *Pamela, or Virtue Triumphant*, *Shamela Andrews*, *Pamela Censured*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Pamela, or the Fair Impostor*, *The True Anti-Pamela*, and *Anti-Pamela, or Feign'd Innocence Detected* [...]. She could visit two Pamela wax-works, drop in

excellent reception and profound influence in eighteenth-century England, O'Connell emphasises Richardson's reliance on "the implied national readership for Pamela's letters" to reform moral values on a large scale (2010: 35). As *Pamela* responds to the readerly scrutiny it endures with equally critical gazes, the wide readership that reforms the few deviant elements of the novel also ensures the nationwide impact of this disciplinary work. In the process of mutual reformation, the interactions between Richardson's novel and his English readers resemble those between Pamela and her neighbourly readers.¹²⁸ Exploring the reformatory effects of the epistolary novel, Altman explains how the disciplinary influence of Pamela's personal letters gradually extends from her own family to the entire nation:

The movement from the first half to the second half of Richardson's novel is the movement from the privacy of the prison and the tête-à-tête to the world of society and the salon, the movement from private reading to publication. [...] If B's reading of Pamela's papers puts an end to her first period of trials, the reading by B's society puts an end to her second period, and it is only fitting that the reading by that wider circle – the external public – should put an end to Richardson's novel. (105–106)

While Mr B's reading of Pamela's letters reforms him from a selfish libertine into a responsible husband, the same letter-reading activity reforms his aristocratic family and friends from arrogant absolutists to appreciative observers. As "the external public" of Richardson's England are expected to be similarly disciplined into normative conformity, the reformatory power of Pamela's epistolary text extends from the immediate surroundings of her domestic prison to the national spaces of prison-like England.

In its advocacy of distinctly English social norms, *Pamela* reinforces the connections between English nationhood and epistolary narration through hostile reflections on French literary traditions. The link between Richardson's novel and the English nation attracts attention almost immediately after its publication, with de Freval endorsing a uniquely English literary convention in his extravagant praise of *Pamela*:

Little Book, charming Pamela! [...] thou mayst give an Example of Purity to the Writers of a neighbouring Nation; which now shall have an Opportunity to receive *English*

on Joseph Highmore's studio to see his twelve Pamela paintings and buy the set of his engravings, then see David Garrick in *Pamela, a Comedy*. [...] The day would end in Vaux-hall Gardens, sitting in front of Hayman's Pamela murals, cooling herself with the Pamela fan, and opening a magazine to read 'Remarks on Pamela, by a Prude'" (71).

¹²⁸ In her analysis of Pamela's indebtedness to the ballad tradition, Bowen argues that "she wants to *write* her own narrative and thus reform the manners and morals of the gentry and – as a device of Richardson's – the literary marketplace as a whole" (67).

Bullion in Exchange for its own Dross, which has so long passed current among us in Pieces abounding with all the Levities of its volatile Inhabitants. (6)

By comparing *Pamela* to “*English Bullion*” and French romances to “*Dross*,” de Freval recognises in *Pamela* a unique style that distinguishes it from the voluminous works of French literature and advertises this style as symbolic of English moral codes. As “an Example of Purity,” *Pamela* is expected to signify the superiority of English propriety over “the Levities of [France’s] volatile Inhabitants,” reinforcing England’s influence through a worldwide advertisement of its decorous rules. Based on the positive reviews of Richardson’s novel, O’Connell identifies in *Pamela* “the form of a plain anti-French Englishness,” claiming that its “pre-publication puff is characteristic of the nationalist lexicon in which Richardson’s fiction was first canonised” (2017: 319). Associating *Pamela*’s nationalistic implications with English ballads, Bowen regards the “patriotic claims” in its prefaces both “as a testament to Richardson’s elevation of the English realist novel over the Continental romance tradition” and as an attempt “to ennoble England’s popular culture as a foil to Continental-crazed high culture” (54). According to O’Connell and Bowen, therefore, *Pamela* arouses nationalistic or patriotic sentiments among eighteenth-century English readers by representing the literary tradition of realism and the cultural conventions of commoners as epitomic of the English nation and superior to foreign customs. Another comparison of English and French traditions is made within the novel of *Pamela* when Mr Williams prefers Pamela’s English letters to his own French book in a dialogue with Mr B: “Mine, Sir, [...] is a very beautiful Piece of *French*: But your *English* has no Equal” (P 305). According to Bowen, Richardson’s “simple, untutored, deferential Pamela embodies the desirability of Englishness itself,” and her nationwide popularity signals “the victory of several types of writing exemplified in his novel, sincere over satirical, nonclassical over classical, English over French, nonelite over elite” (77). By connecting Pamela’s letters with the English language and Pamela’s merits with the English norms, Richardson establishes a tie between his epistolary work and the English nation. In the alliance of the novel and the nation, his celebration of Pamela’s unaffected speech in contrast to the elitist tastes of French writers not only enhances England’s national reputation, but also offers a new conception of what England should be.¹²⁹

In the figurative network of panoptic, epistolary and national forms, *Pamela* rewrites the normative structures of eighteenth-century England through a further blending with conduct

¹²⁹ The connections between Richardson’s epistolary novel and the English nation have also been approached from other perspectives. Golden, for example, associates Mr B’s scrutiny of Pamela’s letters with “the security problem posed by the endemic Jacobite threat” (318).

literature. With Pamela's behaviour labelled as simultaneously the paragon of propriety and the opposite of foreignness, Richardson's representations of her social and literary practices as distinctly English also redefine the normative principles of the English nation, encouraging its inhabitants to imitate the protagonist he portrays instead of any other patrician or plebeian figure in English literature. While his nationalistic celebration of Pamela's epistolary writing associates England with the simple style of personal letters in contrast to classical or elite tastes, Richardson's strenuous explication of social norms through the unconventional story of a servant-turned-gentlewoman inevitably reforms any absolutist doctrine that prohibits Pamela's upward social mobility. As Golden states, "Richardson is using his fable to provide an ideal polity," "a new compact, between the throne and the English people" (319). In order to construct "an ideal polity" that protects both contractual equality and social stability, Richardson criticises current practices that deviate from his expectations, depicts exemplary deeds that illustrate his ideals and provides his readers with lengthy lists of practical instructions. *Pamela's* resemblance to conduct books has been noted by numerous scholars. Among other critics' comments on *Pamela's* similarity to or departure from conduct books (e.g., Chaskin 70–79 and Gwilliam 119), Armstrong complains about Richardson's "catalogues of household duties and lists of do's and do not's for prospective housewives; several of these passages in the novel could have been taken directly from any one of a number of conduct books" (1987: 124). By using textual forms prevalent in eighteenth-century conduct literature, from "catalogues" and "lists" to the tedious preaching of female chastity, Richardson tries to restrict both men's libertine impulses and women's sexual activities, both aristocrats' absolute authority and servants' transgressive tendencies. If the panoptic structure of mutual observation is most manifest in the epistolary exchanges between writers and readers, it is further reinforced by a conduct-book-style summary of the disciplinary rules that dominate this structure. As a result, the narrative forms of Richardson's novel blend into a cage-like network that rewrites the norms of eighteenth-century England.

In the cage-like spaces of nationwide supervision, Richardson combines the literary forms of epistolary fiction and conduct books to reform the marital relationships in English households. Noting the numerous instructions for household issues in *Pamela*, Chaskin emphasises Richardson's ambition to regulate the proper behaviour of husbands and wives: "His stated goal was to produce literature that would reshape gender and sexual norms and impose a strict sense of moral virtue on his readers" (73). Apart from Richardson's epistolary depictions of his protagonist as a perfect example of wifely submission, Pamela's letters also

minutely record Mr B's strict rules for Pamela's domestic appearance in contrast to the deviant practices of many genteel Englishwomen:

I need not, I hope, say, that I would have you diligently preserve this sweet Appearance: Let no thwarting Accident, no cross Fortune, [...] deprive this sweet Face of this its principal Grace: And when any thing unpleasing happens, in a quarter of an Hour, at farthest, begin to mistrust yourself, and apply to your Glass; and if you see a Gloom arising, or arisen, banish it instantly, smooth your dear Countenance, resume your former Composure; (P 370)

By requiring Pamela to "preserve this sweet Appearance," Mr B implies that it is a wife's duty to always look cheerful no matter what her current mood is. Even in the face of misfortunes, the ideal English wife is expected to overcome her negative emotions within "a quarter of an Hour," supervise her own face with the help of a mirror and reform her improper facial expressions till she becomes nothing more than a placid model of perfect manners. If Mr B's disciplinary reduction of English wives to emotionless actresses mirrors the panoptic reformation of deviant prisoners into compliant subjects, Pamela's grateful reception of her husband's instructions epitomises the code of wifely submission that Richardson wishes to impose on English women in general: "I thank'd him for these kind Rules, and generous Assurances; [...] And I am glad of the Method I have taken of making a Journal of all that passes" (P 448). While the "kind Rules" of wifely behaviour are intended to educate not only Pamela but also Richardson's women readers, Pamela's mention of her "Journal" underlines the blending of personal letters and conduct books in this didactic explication of domestic norms. Richardson's norms do not only apply to wives, however. While Mr B governs Pamela's moods and appearances, Pamela also examines the propriety of his governing principles. Among the 48 rules for domestic decorum that Pamela dutifully documents, the last one demands equally proper manners from English husbands: "That a Husband who expects all this, is to be incapable of returning Insult for Obligation, or Evil for Good; and ought not to abridge her of any Privilege of her Sex" (P 451). In other words, husbands and wives should live in a contractual relationship of mutual surveillance. Only when both partners adhere to the mannerly codes that they impose on each other can the goal of marital felicity be achieved. The spouses' equal sharing of obligations and benefits is stressed by Pamela's sly comment on the 48th rule: "I think this last Rule crowns the rest, and makes them all very tolerable" (P 451). By reminding his nationwide readership that a wife endures the restrictions of propriety only when her husband also behaves properly, Richardson attempts to reconstruct domestic structures in the realm of entire England through an epistolary documentation of conduct-book

instructions.

Similar to the blending of domestic and national spaces within the storyworld of *Pamela*, Richardson's endeavours to rewrite the domestic norms of eighteenth-century England are accompanied by similar conduct-book-style rewritings of the national hierarchy. In a conversation with Mr Williams, Mr B criticises the uncontrolled extravagance of the privileged classes: "We Fellows of Fortune [...] take sometimes a little more Liberty with the World than we ought to do; wantoning [...] in the Sun-beams of a dangerous Affluence, and cannot think of confining ourselves to the common Paths" (P 282). Through an allusion to the prison trope, Mr B condemns the widespread deviance from "common" norms that wealth gives rise to, imposing "confining" rules of decorum on English aristocrats despite their high standing. Later in the novel, he proposes to reform the daily activities of high-born people: "they too generally act in such a manner, as if they seem'd to think it the Privilege of Birth and Fortune, to turn Day into Night, and Night into Day, and are seldom stirring till 'tis time to sit down to Dinner; and so all the good old Family Rules are revers'd" (P 368). By denying the aristocracy or gentry the "Privilege" to deviate from "Family Rules," Mr B resembles the inspector of a penitentiary who arranges the private life of his prisoners based on a strict schedule. In his subsequent planning of trivial tasks, Mr B names the exact time of the day when his family should sleep, eat, meet each other or be alone, further recalling the disciplinary rules of a well-governed penitentiary (P 368–369). Examining the "rational order" that Mr B's marriage brings to his estate, Armstrong argues that his fixed timetable "dramatizes nothing else so much as the total reorganization of leisure time toward which the conduct books also aspired" (1987: 126). The reformatory effect of Mr B's rules, in accordance with the usual aim of conduct literature, extends beyond his own household because he also reforms his guests into normative compliance:

when we are resolved to stick to these old-fashion'd Rules, as near as we can, we shall make our Visitors conform to them too, [...] and, after a while, they will say, [...] There is no putting him out of his Byass. He is a regular Piece of Clockwork [...] And who knows, my Dear, but we may revive the good old Fashion in our Neighbourhood, by this means? (P 369)

If the "Clockwork" metaphor further strengthens the connection between Mr B's house and the strictly-monitored penitentiary, his disciplinary interactions with his neighbours draw attention

to the broad impact of his prison-like home.¹³⁰ In Mr B's envisioning of his future domestic as well as social life, he delineates in a conduct-book tone how the disciplinary "Rules" that he imposes on himself and his family will gradually reform his entire "Neighbourhood." The spread of normative behaviour from domestic to neighbourly spaces within the storyworld of *Pamela* mirrors Richardson's intended reformation of genteel England through the portrayal of imitable examples. Through the epistolary narration of a didactic story, Richardson's *Pamela* strives to teach high-born English people its own codes of propriety in the fashion of eighteenth-century conduct literature.

Richardson's conduct-book rewriting of English national spaces is not restricted to disciplining the landowning classes, however, with *Pamela* clearly outlining the bounds of proper servantly manners as well. As the fictional letters of a servant-turned-gentlewoman who is preoccupied with always acting properly, *Pamela* inevitably addresses the issue of transgressive servantly behaviour, another popular topic in eighteenth-century conduct books. Examining Richardson's detailed depictions of Pamela's clothes, Kristina Booker clarifies how a servant's luxurious dressing style can be a sign of rebellion against traditional English hierarchy: "Conduct literature is full of warnings against and criticisms of domestic servants who buy silk ribbons and lace caps [...]. The problem with a servant copying her mistress's hairstyle or cap was the perceived emulative motive: the ambition to raise herself out of her social position to equal or supersede that of her mistress" (44). Similarly, Gwilliam notes an "eighteenth-century fear [...] that women servants, in wearing the cast-off clothes of their mistresses, were becoming indistinguishable from their mistresses" (116). As both Bowen (63) and Carol Stewart (46) point out, in the contractual relationship that *Pamela* strives to establish between masters and servants, the principle of equality ensures the impact of disciplinary surveillance on all social classes without erasing the distinctions between them. Therefore, the norms that Richardson's novel advocates require English servants to remain content with their servant status as long as their masters comply with the codes of propriety.¹³¹ Exemplifying the

¹³⁰ In his interpretation of Mr B as "decidedly a 'modernized' aristocrat," McKeon also cites this clockwork metaphor to emphasise the industriousness of this wealthy landowner (2002: 365–366).

¹³¹ Based on her analysis of the ballad form, Bowen argues that Pamela, like other protagonists of English ballads, advocates "a very particularized idea of merit derived from customary social relations, entailing 'knowing one's place' in the social hierarchy" (63). In other words, as long as the inhabitants of cage-like England obey the contractual rules of normative behaviour, Pamela's notion of "merit" consolidates class distinction instead of undermining it. Similarly, Stewart notes that "Pamela is a servant who values order [...]. If Pamela's resistance to B.'s sexual demands makes her, in his eyes at least, a rebel, she actually fulfils her role as an upholder of social order [...] by preserving her chastity" (46).

principle of servantly obedience, Pamela regards the luxuries that Lady B has given her not as her own rightful property but as the token of her employment: “Those Things there of my Lady’s, I can have no Claim to, so as to take them away; for she gave them me, supposing I was to wear them in her Service” (P 79). As a model servant whose merits Richardson encourages his servant readers to imitate, Pamela demonstrates no desire to elevate her own standing through the possession of expensive items, discarding them without any hesitation the moment she leaves her employer. As Booker puts it, “Pamela’s personal clothing choices restore the ideal social hierarchy, linking her moral virtue with a desire for fixed social categories” (47). In Richardson’s rewritten version of English class stratification, the “social categories” of masters and servants or aristocrats and commoners should remain stable as long as each category strictly adheres to its respective decorous codes under nationwide surveillance. While masters refrain from irrational tempers or libertine desires, servants should also perform the duties of their positions and repress any wish to transgress class boundaries.

In the blending of domestic, national, panoptic, epistolary and didactic forms, Richardson rewrites the norms of eighteenth-century England to create a cage-like structure of contractual equality, in which all inhabitants conform to the rules of their own social status while imposing similar rules of propriety on their fellow prisoners. As figurative prisoners discipline each other through the act of mutual observation, they reconstruct the English nation into spaces of self-supervision and self-reformation. The phenomenon of meticulously controlled individual reformation is also captured by other novels in the long eighteenth century. Rachel Bowlby, for instance, claims that “*Pamela*’s Mr B. and *Pride and Prejudice*’s Mr Darcy each declare themselves, in remarkably similar terms, to have been reformed or refashioned” (241). In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, the physical and social confinement of observed observers evokes the cage-like prison trope, while the rereading of disciplinary letters both mirrors and strengthens England’s panoptic structure of constant supervision.

4.3 Communal Rereading of Panoptic England: Epitomic Letter Perusal in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Panoptic England with Deviant Militias

Figurative incarceration of Austen's characters prevails in *Pride and Prejudice* despite the absence of literal prison walls. Under constant panoptic surveillance, the physical immobility of Austen's characters as a result of infrastructural and financial limitations is intensified by the social restrictions of class hierarchies and communal norms. As a prison-like, cage-like community of contractual equality, the English nation upholds the disciplinary power of decorous codes rather than any absolute authority in its genteel society, whereas transgressive movements on physical, social and gender levels are tolerated in the deviant spaces of militia regiments.

Hindered both by public infrastructure and by financial circumstances from travelling too far, characters in *Pride and Prejudice* are physically confined to their local neighbourhoods despite the absence of any visible prison wall. Irritated by Austen's focus on domestic issues among the gentry, Charlotte Brontë finds in *Pride and Prejudice* "a carefully-fenced, highly cultivated garden with neat borders and delicate flowers," as well as "ladies and gentlemen in their elegant but confined houses" (99). The prison trope that Brontë evokes through phrases like "carefully-fenced," "neat borders" and "confined houses" indicates that Austen's genteel characters cannot move freely in the open spaces, underlining the incarcerating effect of country estates in *Pride and Prejudice*. This notable sense of confinement invites literary critics to examine the exact scope of Austen's spatial setting.¹³² Moretti, for instance, highlights the geographical "pattern [...] of exclusion" in her writings: "No Ireland; no Scotland; no Wales; no Cornwall [...]; only England" (1998: 13), with "places [...] separated by a day, or more, of very uncomfortable travel" (1998: 14). With travelling being both expensive and exhausting in long-eighteenth-century England, most of Austen's characters cannot leave their home without risking censure or cost or both. When Jane falls ill at Netherfield, Elizabeth faces serious challenges in her endeavour to visit Jane: "the carriage was not to be had; and as she was no horse-woman, walking was her only alternative" (PP 35). Elizabeth's decision to undertake

¹³² Throughout the nineteenth century, Austen as well as her critics used various metaphorical expressions to stress the spatial limitations of her stories. According to Anne Toner, the nest and ivory metaphors convey different messages about her works: "While in the nineteenth century, the nest articulated the domestic limitations of Austen's subject matter, the little bit of ivory has come to represent global interactions at the most significant ethical scale, illuminating a historical background of colonial trade, luxury consumerism and animal exploitation" (24).

this three-mile walk receives vehement criticism from her own mother: “How can you be so silly [...] as to think of such a thing, in all this dirt! You will not be fit to be seen when you get there” (PP 35). Even Mr Darcy, despite his increasing admiration of Elizabeth, cherishes “doubt as to the occasion’s justifying her coming so far alone” (PP 36).¹³³ Apparently, absent carriages are supposed to confine a genteel woman within the house on a rainy day, whereas her act of walking outside is widely perceived as unjustifiable, “silly” and not “fit to be seen.” As Jenny Davidson points out, “in an age before paved roads and where class decorum prescribed certain sorts of footwear and prohibited others, muddy country roads would have in any case rendered walking nearly impossible for many months of the year” (122). The combination of unpaved roads, unsuited shoes, dirty clothes and frequent rains imposes severe physical restrictions on Austen’s women characters, while the cost of carriages and servants hinders them from travelling even on well-built roads. When Darcy claims at Hunsford Parsonage that Charlotte Collins is “settled within so easy a distance of her own family and friends,” Elizabeth protests that “Mr. and Mrs. Collins have a comfortable income, but not such a one as will allow of frequent journeys” (PP 201).¹³⁴ In other words, even relatively well-off families in Austen’s age cannot afford frequent long-distance travelling, staying within the boundaries of their local neighbourhoods for most part of the year. In *Pride and Prejudice*, unpaved roads, unfit clothes, unpleasant weather and insufficient income all discourage its characters from either walking alone in the open air or sitting for days in an uncomfortable carriage.

The physical immobility of Austen’s characters is further aggravated by strict social codes about travelling during the long eighteenth century, with members of the gentry constantly restricted by disciplinary norms. Even when Charlotte Collins’s family and friends manage to pay for the costs of a journey between Hertfordshire and Kent, the rules of decorum

¹³³ Based on Darcy’s reaction to Elizabeth’s solitary walk, Chandler describes common attitudes towards women’s physical movement during the long eighteenth century: “rapid, immoderate movement, especially when unescorted, is both alluring and perturbing. Hence, when [...] Elizabeth hikes over fields, jumps over stiles, and springs over puddles, her very energy in doing so at once heightens her value and renders her suspect in Darcy’s eyes” (43–44). Referring to the same episode in the novel, Murphy stresses “the association of female walking with sexual transgression” in Austen’s society (130), while Doody points out the symbolic implications of mud on Elizabeth’s way to Netherfield: “in crossing wet fields and puddles she has shown herself amphibious, a denizen of the sexual marshland, a sexual being” (1996: 332).

¹³⁴ As Rogers points out, “Darcy exaggerates the convenience of Charlotte’s new home. Even with recent improvements on the main arteries, it was still a laborious journey from Kent to Hertfordshire” (502). On the other hand, Brown emphasises the varying degrees of difficulty that different genders and classes face in terms of travelling: “men are far freer to move than women, though any impulsive movement bodes ill; even exercise is prescribed and regulated” (267–268).

pose new challenges to the newly-wed couple. Before Elizabeth's departure from Kent, Lady Catherine demands that a servant should accompany the visitors on their way home: "Mrs. Collins, you must send a servant with them. [...] I cannot bear the idea of two young women travelling post by themselves. It is highly improper" (PP 234–235). Her emphasis on propriety indicates that apart from the basic expenses of horses and carriages, genteel women are also expected to prove their respectability through the constant presence of servants both at home and on the road. This widespread belief that respectable women should never be alone outside also explains Miss Bingley's contemptuous comment on Elizabeth's three-mile walk from Longbourn to Netherfield: "To walk three miles, or four miles, or five miles, or whatever it is, above her ankles in dirt, and alone, quite alone! [...] It seems to me to shew an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most country town indifference to decorum" (PP 39). According to the constrictive norms of Austen's society, young women who are exuberant enough to overcome the challenges of bad roads and bad weather should also meet the standards of decorous behaviour by always remaining within the sight of others. As a result, the already imprisoning circumstances of poor infrastructure and financial difficulties are complemented by the restrictive codes of propriety, restraining even healthy, affluent women from freely moving beyond the boundaries of their estates. Another example of how women characters in *Pride and Prejudice* are physically imprisoned by the etiquette of their society is mentioned by Susan C. Greenfield in her analysis of its opening chapter: "Since men control both their own – and their female relatives' – bodily movements, the Bennet women can meet Mr. Bingley only if Mr. Bennet visits first and arranges their introduction" (342). In this episode, it is not only the distance between Longbourn and Netherfield that prevents the Bennet sisters from visiting Mr Bingley. The social norm that requires a formal introduction consolidates the five sisters' physical confinement at home. When Darcy comes to Longbourn near the end of the novel, several metres between the card tables is already sufficient to restrict Elizabeth's movement despite her ardent wish to talk to him: "They were confined for the evening at different tables" (PP 378). As Olivia Murphy puts it, "[e]ven when the geographical distance that has separated the lovers for much of the novel's time frame is reduced to a few feet in a drawing room, the etiquette governing genteel hospitality prevents them from communicating openly, if at all" (138). Throughout the novel, physical and social restrictions confine members of the local gentry, women in particular, to the familiar spaces of their country houses.

Because of their physical as well as social incarceration, the daily activities of Austen's characters take place within the narrow boundaries of genteel propriety. An example of physical and social confinement can be found in Charlotte Lucas's decision to marry Mr

Collins despite his evident stupidity. Charlotte's pragmatic attitude towards marriage already reveals how disciplinary domestication of genteel women significantly narrows down their possible career paths: "Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune" (PP 138). Since decorum dictates that "well-educated young women" learn painting and music instead of any practical profession, most gentlewomen in Austen's England do not have the opportunity of achieving financial independence through vocation or trade. As a result, Charlotte, like many other clergymen's wives, is confined to the trivial issues of the domestic sphere, focused on "[h]er home and her house-keeping, her parish and her poultry" in the years of her married life (PP 239–240).¹³⁵ Examining the incarcerating power of disciplinary norms, Alice Chandler argues that Austen "tends to restrain the individual drives, particularly the sexual drives, within the confines of reasoned behavior and punishes those who too far exceed its limits" (44). Davidson also claims that the rules of propriety play a crucial role in *Pride and Prejudice* despite their apparent triviality: "In the moral framework of Austen's novels, concern for the proprieties – for reputation, broadly conceived – is not the mark of shallowness but rather an appropriate acknowledgment of the obligations of sociability" (75). Perpetually concerned about whether their own conduct meets the standards of decorum, Austen's characters are figuratively imprisoned by the invisible walls of social expectations. This prison trope, subtly prevalent throughout the novel, is verbally referred to when etiquette almost compels Bingley and Jane into joining unpleasant conversations. As the lovers hastily leave Longbourn to evade the obligation of entertaining unwanted visitors, the narrator uses the word "confinement" to describe the prison-like duties of a sociable host: "Bingley instantly prevailed on Miss Bennet to avoid the confinement of such an intrusion, and walk away with him into the shrubbery" (PP 389). Physically imprisoned by badly-built roads and socially imprisoned by genteel norms, characters in *Pride and Prejudice* are frequently represented through prison tropes despite the absence of carceral institutions.

The imprisoning effect of constrictive norms also enhances the social immobility of Austen's characters, who very rarely experience the transformative change in social status that Moll Flanders repeatedly undergoes. Affronted by Lady Catherine's demand that she should

¹³⁵ Commenting on Charlotte's marriage, LeRoy W. Smith laments that "she sharply limits her aspirations; confined within the conjugal sphere, she exemplifies the woman restricted by traditional marriage" (90). Although Moe emphasises the integrity of "female subjectivities whose self-cultivation takes the form of perseverance, self-discipline, and the daily practice of living in accordance with social practices that do not appear germane to liberation," her interpretation of Charlotte as an expert of "self-discipline" also highlights the limitations of her social activities (1082).

not accept Darcy's proposal, Elizabeth uses a prison trope to protest against the restrictions placed on Darcy: "If Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice?" (PP 394). While Elizabeth defends Darcy's right to marry for love, Lady Catherine cites social norms that confine Darcy's marriage choice: "Because honour, decorum, prudence, nay, interest, forbid it" (PP 394). If "honour" and "decorum" define what should be done to make a positive impression in a society, "prudence" demands that certain behaviour should be avoided in order to protect one's reputation. In other words, Lady Catherine uses expressions that signify the normative codes of a judgmental society to justify her figurative imprisonment of Darcy in his choice of a wife.¹³⁶ Even Darcy, despite his increasing love for Elizabeth, disapproves of Bingley's respect for the elder Bennet sisters' personal merits despite their lower social status. When Bingley generously defends Elizabeth and Jane from his sisters' snobbish ridicule – "If they had uncles enough to fill *all* Cheapside, [...] it would not make them one jot less agreeable" – Darcy retorts: "But it must very materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world" (PP 40).¹³⁷ Because of the Gardiners' involvement in trade, the Bennet sisters belong to a lower class category than the long-established gentry, largely excluded from the networks of prominent men and from the possibility of random metamorphosis.

The incarceration of Austen's characters within their class boundaries also prevents the complete transformation of those few families who have achieved upward social mobility. Austen's narrator introduces the Bingley sisters in an unmistakably ironic tone: "They were of a respectable family in the north of England; a circumstance more deeply impressed on their memories than that their brother's fortune and their own had been acquired by trade" (PP 16). In her analysis of social classes in Austen's novels, Juliet McMaster clarifies the negative implications of trade among the English gentry: "Trade represents new money, and money, like wine, isn't considered quite respectable until it has aged a little" (123). Even though the

¹³⁶ This notion of prison-like class boundaries is also to some extent accepted by Elizabeth, who upholds the hierarchical structure of genteel England even in her rejection of Lady Catherine's aristocratic arrogance: "He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal" (PP 395). Pointing out the conservative implications of this statement, Davidson underlines Elizabeth's willing embrace of existing power relations despite her rebellious spirit: "it is important that she too accepts the idea that there is such a thing as a 'gentleman' and a genteel class. [...] Elizabeth is not altogether disavowing birth as a criterion of worth" (68).

¹³⁷ Although Darcy eventually overcomes his pride and marries Elizabeth, his marriage does not necessarily signal any extraordinary disruption of the existing hierarchy. According to Rogers, "Darcy's readiness to take as his bride a woman much his inferior in status cannot be regarded as a revolutionary gesture. For three hundred years male aristocrats had been entering into wedlock with girls from a lower rank in society" (lxxiii).

Bingley siblings have already rented Netherfield and in this way become a member of the landed gentry, their leisurely life as landowners is constantly overshadowed by their deceased father's participation in trade. With solid boundaries established between different social groups, any attempt at a transformative entry into superior classes is hampered by the society's prison-like norms of social immobility. Presented to the readers in an equally ironic way, the Lucas family offers a similar instance of failed social metamorphosis. As Pat Rogers points out, despite his fervent wish to get rid of his merchant past and join the rank of the landed gentry, Sir William Lucas's decision to name his newly-purchased house "Lucas Lodge" exposes his difference from long-established genteel families: "the new name is both self-regarding and faintly vulgar as a modern attempt to ape the nomenclature of historic houses, where a 'lodge' would normally refer to a hunting lodge. It is the kind of house-name adopted by London merchants retiring to the country" (470). Through her deliberate mention of "Lucas Lodge," Austen's narrator hints at the inferior standing of the Lucas family despite their acquisition of a title, gently mocking many tradesmen's hope that their wealth alone can immediately transform them into members of a superior social category (PP 19). Marshall Brown summarises the rarity of social "mobility" in Austen's novels: "Class boundaries are universally recognized and firmly in place [...]; there is commerce but no manufacturing, nor even so much as a bakery to transform raw materials in a public setting" (267). With transformative experiences largely excluded from *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen's genteel characters are confined within the boundaries of their social groups and expected to behave accordingly.

As Austen's characters are primarily confined within the geographical and normative boundaries of local communities, communal structures function as prison-like spaces that shape the daily conduct of their inhabitants. *Pride and Prejudice* boasts one of the most famous opening sentences in the history of English literature:

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. (PP 3)

While Rogers claims that "the opening formula lightly parodies the use of generalised assertions at the start of moralistic essays" (461), Austen's narrator quickly points out herself that her generalising statement on "universally acknowledged" truth only reflects the self-centred wish "of the surrounding families" (PP 3), thus leading William Deresiewicz to call

the opening sentence “a mock aphorism” (503). According to Rachel M. Brownstein, Austen’s famous first paragraph suggests that “the universal acceptance of this idea may make it operatively true” despite its multiple “logical holes” (50).¹³⁸ In Austen’s ironic representation of a social group’s illogical attitude towards wealthy bachelors, the Hertfordshire community reshapes the individual wishes of its members into a commonly accepted belief, advertises this belief as universal truth and even “make[s] it operatively true” through Darcy’s and Bingley’s marriages at the end of the novel. Underlining Austen’s focus on general communities rather than individual protagonists in the first few chapters of *Pride and Prejudice*, Deresiewicz stresses the influence of those communities on individual decisions: “What is presented in these first scenes is more than anything the story of a community: of communal expectations, communal conventions, communal activities. These pressures drive Mrs. Bennet, and consequently the rest of her family, into the actions that occupy the novel’s first chapters” (503–504). In other words, the opening chapters of *Pride and Prejudice* depict how the disciplinary norms of local communities shape the desires and deeds of their inhabitants, determining when or how they should meet a new neighbour just as the Gloucester Penitentiary regulates when or how its prisoners can receive visitors (Ignatieff 102). As Austen’s characters are physically incapable of frequently leaving the geographical territories of their local communities and socially accustomed to accepting the normative expectations that those communities uphold, the community as a geographically enclosed, cage-like structure becomes the primary setting of their multileveled incarceration.

With geographical boundaries and disciplinary rules, local communities evoke the cage-like prison trope in their constant practice of panoptic surveillance. Darcy’s first public appearance in Hertfordshire triggers the disciplinary operation of the local community:

Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year [...], till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; (PP 10)

¹³⁸ Exploring the implications of Austen’s first paragraph, Brownstein argues that “that sentence is full of logical holes: a truth universally *acknowledged* is probably less than true; and the real truth is not that single men want wives [...] but that poor young women need husbands” (50). Approaching this paragraph from an epistemological perspective, Susan C. Greenfield also emphasises the deceptive nature of this statement: “most of Elizabeth’s neighbors suffer from the contrasting and deluded belief that they can know the object world” (338). Similarly, Bonaparte points out that this “famous opening sentence [...] immediately introduces the question of truth, however only to interrogate it by the irony of its tone” (142).

As Deresiewicz puts it, in this episode “the community itself steps forward, through a kind of disembodied collective consciousness, to engage in acts of observation and judgment that set the course of the rest of the narrative” (504). In other words, Austen’s phrases like “the attention of the room” and “the tide of his popularity” draw attention to the judgmental “collective consciousness” of the Hertfordshire community, which decides for all its members who should be praised and who should be criticised. The rumours about Darcy’s income, “in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance,” highlight the community’s speedy access to detailed information about its members’ financial situation as well as its tendency to adjust its attitude based on this information. The snobbish communal decision to like Darcy because of his wealth changes quickly, however, as Darcy’s conduct fails to meet the standards of decorum. The passive voice – “he was discovered to be proud” – signifies another collective judgment that the community passes on the rich newcomer.¹³⁹ However rich Darcy is, he is equally confined by the disciplinary norms of propriety and punished for every transgressive act. Another example of communal judgment can be found in the general reaction to Wickham’s elopement with Lydia:

All Meryton seemed striving to blacken the man, who, but three months before, had been almost an angel of light. He was declared to be in debt to every tradesman in the place [...]. Every body declared that he was the wickedest young man in the world; and every body began to find out, that they had always distrusted the appearance of his goodness. (PP 325)

Again, phrases that refer to a collective voice – “All Meryton” and “every body” – indicate how the local community ruthlessly punishes Wickham’s sexual transgression despite its previous admiration of his amiable temper. The passive expression that Wickham “was declared to be in debt” further underlines the collective power of the community to disclose anyone’s economic circumstances and punish his improper conduct through public censure. Having examined the disciplinary impact of Austen’s communities, Deresiewicz concludes that “what we find, in sum, is a large group of people all minding each other’s business and all passing each other’s secrets back and forth all the time” (515). Recalling the Foucauldian notion of “the gentle efficiency of total surveillance,” communities in *Pride and Prejudice* deprive their members of basic individual privacy and impose decorous rules on their financial, social as well as sexual activities (Foucault 1979: 249).

¹³⁹ For another analysis of this quotation as well as other similar expressions in *Pride and Prejudice*, see Deresiewicz (504–505).

Functioning in a similar way as the local community in Hertfordshire, the English nation as an ‘imagined community’ has a concealed but crucial presence in the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*. When Mr Collins mentions Miss De Bourgh, Mrs Bennet’s first reaction is to resort to the royal court for a trustworthy documentation of aristocratic women: “Has she been presented? I do not remember her name among the ladies at court” (PP 75). This instinctive reliance on the court as a source of information reveals the Hertfordshire population’s knowledge about their national structure and trust in its surveillance capability. As Moretti points out, the developments of communication and transportation tools in late-eighteenth-century England “literally drag human beings out of the local dimension, and throw them into a much larger one” (1998: 17). According to Benedict Anderson, this consciousness of others’ existence beyond one’s own immediate time and place engenders “[t]he idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time” and thus contributes to “the birth of the imagined community of the nation” (26, 24). In other words, through Mrs Bennet’s reference to the court, Austen captures the Hertfordshire residents’ widespread awareness that strangers living in unvisited regions of the English island from Kent to Derbyshire belong to the same information-sharing national community. As this consciousness affects the daily behaviour of Austen’s characters, their private activities inevitably convey political messages about the governance of the English nation. McKeon, for instance, recognises the political relevance of Austen’s apparently domestic novel: “Austen internalizes [Napoleon’s] wars within the bounds of family life,” with national discussions about “tyranny and the liberties of the subject [...] decisively [...] woven into the fabric of the private realm” (2005: 693). Similarly, Gary Kelly explores the blending of domestic, national and international issues in Austen’s storyworlds: “The novels’ homes implicitly form networks synecdochic of nation and empire in a global contest of modernization reaching its crisis” (2015: 220). Through the frequent interactions between domestic and national forms, familial and regional incidents become a miniature of national governance in *Pride and Prejudice*, with the seemingly trivial topics of neighbourly visits and country estates being not only the primary concerns of Austen’s local communities, but also an important element in her national community.

The blending of domestic, local and national structures occurs repeatedly in *Pride and Prejudice*, with cage-like local communities being an epitome of English national spaces. Domestic habits are associated with political stances in Austen’s scathing representation of Mr Hurst: “as for Mr. Hurst, by whom Elizabeth sat, he was an indolent man, who lived only to eat, drink, and play at cards, who when he found her prefer a plain dish to a ragout, had nothing

to say to her” (PP 38). Revealingly, Mr Hurst’s unpleasant traits in domestic settings – indolence, ignorance, dullness and tastelessness – are linked to his preference for French dishes rather than English ones. In this representation of personal and national inclinations, the Hursts’ failure to achieve conjugal happiness in contrast to Elizabeth’s final success in marrying a benevolent as well as intelligent man signals a subtle rejection of foreign elements in normative England. Elizabeth’s visit to Pemberley as a tourist is, according to Linda Troost, another important example of national structures embedded in private households: “The aristocrat’s country seat was not simply a home; it was his principal source of income [...]. A visit to a great house, therefore, was a way of seeing England’s economic power and a way to come in contact with its political leaders” (479).¹⁴⁰ The publicity of Darcy’s economic status among both Pemberley visitors and Meryton residents draws attention to the analogy between national tourism and communal surveillance. As Colley points out, tourism within England becomes increasingly popular after the breakout of the French Revolution, giving rise to a half-patriotic, half-pragmatic notion that “privately owned country houses and their contents are part of Britain’s *national heritage*” (2003: 177).¹⁴¹ While the touristic sightseeing at wealthy country estates carries an almost nationalistic message about the superiority of the English nation over its French counterpart, the visitors’ access to minute details of the landowner’s life recalls the panoptic practice of disciplinary surveillance. This intrusion into private spheres, first undertaken by gossipers of the Hertfordshire community and then strengthened by a nationalistic interest in prominent English houses, underlines the panoptic arrangement of the English national community.

As a destination of national tourism and a symbol of national governance, Pemberley comprises cage-like spaces of perpetual documentation and disciplinary judgment. In the gallery of Pemberley, Mrs Reynolds introduces the portraits of the Darcy family to the tourists and simultaneously passes disciplinary judgments on the persons portrayed, claiming that

¹⁴⁰ Similarly, Roe also stresses the link between country houses like Pemberley and the English nation in the context of the French Revolution: “Country houses and mansions were the most visible symbols of aristocratic power in the English countryside, and the possession and maintenance of such a property expressed the continuity and stability of rule. That such a house could be mismanaged, or fall into the wrong hands, might be a matter of anxiety – especially so at a time when a French invasion was feared to be imminent” (360).

¹⁴¹ Based on the British history, Linda Colley examines the rise of inland tourism in the context of the French Revolution: “By the time of Waterloo, a generation of patrician Britons had grown up for whom Continental Europe was more a cockpit for battle, and a landscape of revolutionary subversion, than a fashionable playground and cultural shrine. Out of necessity, therefore, as well as for reasons of prudence and patriotic choice, members of the ruling order were encouraged to seek out new forms of cultural expression that were unquestionably British” (2003: 167).

Wickham “has turned out very wild” and that there is “none so handsome” as Mr Darcy (PP 273, 274).¹⁴² Even Wickham, in his defamation of Darcy, cites the history of Pemberley to enhance the credibility of his own narrative: “the greatest part of our youth was passed together; inmates of the same house, sharing the same amusements, objects of the same parental care” (PP 90). While the phrase “inmates of the same house” faintly recalls the prison-like home trope, the obsession of the Pemberley household with their family history resembles the meticulous documentation of prisoners’ behaviour in disciplinary penitentiaries, with the prisoners’ daily activities perpetually recorded, judged and punished when necessary. During a conversation at Netherfield, Darcy admits that he “cannot forget the follies and vices of others” (PP 63). This desire to document and discipline others’ “follies and vices,” together with Darcy’s financial as well as political authority over his Derbyshire community, consolidates a social order that upholds norms and forbids deviances. Echoing Mrs Reynolds’s descriptions of Mr Darcy as “sweetest tempered, most generous-hearted,” “the best landlord, and the best master,” Mrs Gardiner’s acquaintances in Lambton contribute to the disciplinary operation of their panoptic community with their own voluntary documentation of others’ behaviour: “It was acknowledged [...] that he was a liberal man, and did much good among the poor. With respect to Wickham, [...] it was yet a well known fact that, on his quitting Derbyshire, he had left many debts behind him, which Mr. Darcy afterwards discharged” (PP 275, 276, 292). Again, the passive voice – “It was acknowledged” – signifies a communal act of passing judgment, while the community’s praise of Darcy’s generosity in contrast to Wickham’s unreliability indicates a collective preference for the former. Commenting on how the Derbyshire community uses the documentation of past behaviour to discipline its current society, Tim Fulford argues that “the settled network of information [...] provide[s] a reliable social order that, if used responsibly, is also a moral order” (171). Further illustrating the features of this “moral order,” Davidson emphasises the panoptic feature of the Derbyshire community with its strictly-regulated norms: “The estate of Pemberley represents a set of values that are profoundly custodial, [...] an almost fantastically appealing vision of a social order that is well-governed and benevolent rather than precarious and chaotic” (xi). With the daily activities of its inhabitants closely documented and any attempt at deviance collectively punished, Pemberley as an epitome of English national governance constitutes a panoptic social structure of mutual judgment and mutual control.

¹⁴² Examining the episode of the Pemberley gallery, Roberts argues that “Darcy was part of a family tradition and he connected, through his ancestors, to the very building and grounds of Pemberley; he was part of a continuity that was architectural, familial and social” (48).

In the panoptic spaces of Austen's England, no individual character enjoys any absolute authority over the others, with all members of the national community contractually restricted by its social as well as legal rules. The absolute power of aristocrats and patriarchs that prevails in the storyworlds of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* or Arabella's French romances no longer exists under the disciplinary surveillance of Austen's contractual England. Citing the depreciating depiction of Lady Catherine and Mr Bennet, Felicia Bonaparte points out that *Pride and Prejudice* "rejects the idea of authority, [...] attacking, almost systematically, virtually every conventional site – parents, social standing, clerics – held in eighteenth-century culture, by traditionalists at least, as the venue of authority" (146). In spite of being an aristocrat, Lady Catherine never enjoys the degree of unquestioning respect that Arabella's noble ladies do. Wickham's description of her personality as "dictatorial and insolent" is later confirmed by Elizabeth's personal impression that Lady Catherine talks "in so authoritative a tone, as marked her self-importance" (PP 94, 183). As monarchs and aristocrats are also compelled to obey the same decorous rules that regulate the behaviour of commoners, Lady Catherine as the "dictatorial" owner of Rosings is no longer justified by royal absolutism but accused of insolence, with her supposed authority frequently challenged by visitors like Elizabeth and acquaintances like Wickham. Austen's obvious aversion to this aristocratic woman leads McKeon to conclude that "[t]he figure of Lady Catherine de Bourgh alone reminds us that the novel holds no brief for aristocratic ideology and its dogma that birth is worth" (2005: 714). Instead, all members in a disciplinary community, high- or low-born, must practise the same set of etiquette to prove their "worth" and are deemed deviant when they do not do so. As a result, Elizabeth blames Darcy for not having "behaved in a more gentleman-like manner" in his first marriage proposal (PP 215), while Mr Gardiner, "a man who lived by trade, and within view of his own warehouses," can be "a sensible, gentleman-like man" despite his widely-shunned profession (PP 158). Similar to the aristocrats' submission to normative control, Austen's patriarchs also do not enjoy any privilege that is above the English law. Mr Bennet, the husband and father of the Bennet family, is not exempt from the legal entailment of his estate or the social expectations of proper parental behaviour. Elizabeth, for instance, has "never been blind to the impropriety of her father's behaviour as a husband," namely "that continual breach of conjugal obligation and decorum which, in exposing his wife to the contempt of her own children, was so highly reprehensible" (PP 262–263).¹⁴³ In *Pride and*

¹⁴³ In her analysis of this quotation, Todd focuses on how Darcy's letter brings Elizabeth to notice her father's faults (70). Criticising Mr Bennet's improper treatment of his family, Doody summarises his multiple deviances from parental norms: "If Mrs Bennet tries to irritate herself and others, Mr Bennet

Prejudice, husbands and parents are subject to the critical judgment of their own children, arousing contempt within their own families and among the wider neighbourhood when they deviate from the commonly accepted codes of “obligation and decorum.” With lords and fathers enjoying no absolute superiority over their social inferiors, the national spaces of Austen’s England uphold a contractual structure of mutual judgment and universal norm.

Deviating from the contractual norms of Austen’s genteel England, the militia in *Pride and Prejudice* as a marginal but significant space of the English nation recalls the capricious arrangements of womb-like prisons. Despite its marginal presence in Austen’s novel, the militia has attracted scholarly attention because of its importance in English national politics. According to Warren Roberts, as England’s national reaction to Napoleon’s threat, “soldiers who became part of a vastly larger wartime army after 1793, and were billeted most heavily in Southern England, made their presence felt in *Pride and Prejudice*” (96). Similarly, Nicholas Roe notes that “[i]n *Pride and Prejudice* [...] we are always aware of the presence of the army [...] to protect against a French invasion and also to suppress domestic discontent” (360–361). The crucial role that the militia plays in the control of English national spaces, either to shield them from foreign intrusions or to prevent them from falling into disorder, indicates the close connection between the governance of the nation and that of its army.¹⁴⁴ Instead of upholding the disciplinary norms of genteel England, however, the militia regiments constitute enclosed spaces that encourage physical demonstrations of capricious authority, random transformations of individual identities and frequent movements across loosely-guarded boundaries. The militia’s reliance on physical demonstrations of authority is most manifest in Catherine and Lydia’s seemingly harmless repetition of neighbourly gossip: “Much had been done, and much had been said in the regiment since the preceding Wednesday; several of the officers had dined lately with their uncle, a private had been flogged, and it had actually been hinted that Colonel Forster was going to be married” (PP 67). According to Fulford, the practice of corporal punishment in militia regiments associates these regiments with tyrannical rule: “The floggings were symbolic of a government that was all too similar to the despotic Napoleonic regime across the channel” (166). In his analysis of public executions as an extreme example of

is unduly sedative as well as sedentary. In not saving anything for his children’s future but indulging in occasional wishful thinking, Mr Bennet has been in his own way as imprudent as his daughter Lydia, and as unimaginative as Mary and Kitty” (2001: 84).

¹⁴⁴ Stressing the increasing nationalisation of military figures in literary texts of the eighteenth century, Lacey examines “representations of the military man in British and French fiction as he evolves from embodying a non-national archetype (warrior, knight, noble) to becoming a member of a nationalised profession (officer, soldier, sailor) in the decades leading to the emergence of the popular mass army” (1).

corporal punishment, Foucault describes them as “a spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance and excess; [...] an emphatic affirmation of power and of its intrinsic superiority” (1979: 49). Symbolising “the physical strength of the sovereign beating down upon the body of his adversary and mastering it,” the act of flogging both signifies and strengthens the absolute authority of militia officers within the confined spaces of chaotic regiments (Foucault 1979: 49). The militias’ heavy reliance on powerful spectacles can also be discerned in the Bennet sisters’ obsession with the officers’ uniform, with Catherine and Lydia constantly searching for men “in a scarlet coat” (PP 71). As Colley points out, British officers extensively draw on the extraordinary appearance of their clothes to impress both domestic and foreign audience: “Never before or since have British military uniforms been so impractically gorgeous, so brilliant in colour, so richly ornamented or so closely or cunningly tailored. [...] Uniforms were the embodiment of authority, but they also denoted service to the nation” (2003: 186–187).¹⁴⁵ Ruled by tyrannical officers who demonstrate their absolute power through physical torture and spectacular uniforms, militia regiments in Austen’s novel resemble the loosely-regulated womb-like prisons of eighteenth-century England.

The militia officers’ frequent crossing of geographical and social boundaries recalls the random transformations of Moll Flanders’s identities during her adventures across national and carceral borders. As Colley puts it, “[m]ilitia regiments [...] were always moved around from one part of the island to another,” frequently crossing regional and national borders to protect English territories from possible French invasions or “to suppress the anti-militia riots in Scotland” (2003: 313). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Wickham as a member first of the militia and then of the regular army moves from London to Meryton to Brighton to Newcastle, remaining “unsettled in the extreme” throughout his life (PP 429). His physical movements enable him to undergo social rebirth multiple times in the novel, allowing him to escape the punishment of his past deviance and adopt completely new identities in new local communities. After reading Darcy’s letter, Elizabeth reflects on the power of the militia to randomly transform Wickham’s social status:

She had never heard of him before his entrance into the ——shire Militia, in which he had engaged at the persuasion of the young man, who, on meeting him accidentally in town, had there renewed a slight acquaintance. Of his former way of life, nothing had been known in Hertfordshire but what he told himself. (PP 228)

¹⁴⁵ In a similar vein, Fulford also emphasises the impractical but impressive design of militia uniforms: “Despite the alarm about a possible French invasion, the militia impressed the public more as a spectacle than as a fighting force” (155).

Elizabeth's reflections highlight what Fulford calls "the everyday social mobility offered by the new militia, the ability to escape one's past locale and reputation" (170). By travelling from Pemberley to Meryton, Wickham enters a community that is as panoptic as the one in Derbyshire but that is unaware of his previous disobedience to decorum. Even Denny, the militia officer who introduces Wickham into the regiment, knows so little about him that Wickham is free to forge a personal history of innocent victimhood. As a result, the militia can offer no concrete information about Wickham's whereabouts after his elopement with Lydia, thus hindering the Hertfordshire community from punishing his current deviance: "It was not known that Wickham had a single relation, with whom he kept up any connection, and it was certain that he had no near one living" (PP 328).¹⁴⁶ When Wickham and Lydia have ruined their reputation through their highly improper conduct in Brighton, Mr Gardiner approves of the couple's decision to leave southern England in pursuit of another social transformation: "It is an advantage to have it so far from this part of the kingdom. [...] I hope among different people, where they may each have a character to preserve, they will both be more prudent" (PP 345). Just as Wickham remains unpunished for his endeavour to seduce Georgiana Darcy, he is allowed to develop a new "character" "among different people" in Newcastle despite his unscrupulous seduction of Lydia Bennet. His journeys as a military figure from the Midlands to southern England and finally to the north or even to Scotland enable him to capriciously change his identity, history and standing. Commenting on the militia officers' "social mobility enjoyed by very few in eighteenth-century England," Fulford concludes that for "a soldier posted away from his home district," "his previous self and his social status were covered by his gaudy regimental dress" (157). This social metamorphosis through a simple change of geographical location and outward appearance resembles the boundary-crossing movements of loosely-governed prisoners. As deviant soldiers like Wickham repeatedly enter new communities to get rid of their unpleasant past, the militia regiments constitute an enclosed national space that resembles womb-like carceral structures.

The prison-like spaces of militia regiments encourage the random transformations of not only their soldiers' social standing but also their gender identities, further evoking the trope of the womb in contrast to the English community outside the regiments. Lydia's narration of her seemingly innocent pranks exposes the fluidity of gender boundaries in the Meryton militia:

¹⁴⁶ This episode is also examined by Fulford, who emphasises the incompetence of the militia regiment to discipline its soldiers: "Even his commanding officer appears to lack the kind of knowledge necessary to judge him until it is too late: Colonel Forster is left looking in vain for information about an officer who has absconded – hardly a reassuring picture of military efficiency or of the judgment of men that was expected of a senior officer" (170).

“We dressed up Chamberlayne in woman’s clothes, on purpose to pass for a lady [...]; and you cannot imagine how well he looked! When Denny, and Wickham, and Pratt, and two or three more of the men came in, they did not know him in the least” (PP 245). In this episode, Fulford discerns “a feminization of the military: dressed in women’s clothes, Chamberlayne symbolizes a militia in which soldiers act like girls, and girls have them under their command” (172). While soldiers like Chamberlayne must obey the capricious orders of Colonel Forster and his friend Lydia, be it about military training or cross-dressing, he is free to transgress the decorous boundaries of proper masculinity or femininity, adopting a new gender role in front of his other acquaintances through a simple change of clothes.¹⁴⁷ This combination of absolute authority and random metamorphosis highlights the differences between the loose regulation of England’s militia regiments and the panoptic control of its genteel communities, with two distinct types of national spaces encountering each other in Austen’s storyworld. With impressive appearance but little discipline, the military structures in late-eighteenth-century England transform Wickham from an unscrupulous opportunist into an attractive suitor, Lydia from a ruined girl into a respectable wife and Chamberlayne from man into woman. Having entered and left the militia in Brighton, about to join the regular army in Newcastle, Lydia Wickham offends her family with her unaltered deviance from decorous codes: “Lydia was Lydia still; untamed, unabashed, wild, noisy, and fearless” (PP 348). In contrast to Lydia’s change of status without change of manners, the protagonists of Austen’s novel must reform their behaviour under the disciplinary surveillance of genteel England before they can achieve any substantial improvement in social standing. As epitomes of panoptic England, communities in Hertfordshire and Derbyshire encourage their members to observe, judge, restrict and reshape each other.

Mutual Observation in an Imperfect Community

As neighbourly gossip and local gatherings facilitate the process of mutual reformation through mutual observation in the cage-like community of genteel England, Austen’s imperfect characters suffer from others’ disciplinary gazes, internalise decorous norms and discipline their discipliners with the same set of normative codes.

¹⁴⁷ Roe also views the crossing-dressing episode as an indication of the militia’s departure from social norms: “The riotous behaviour in *Pride and Prejudice* when Lydia assists in the cross-dressing of a soldier provides a hint of the kind of ‘debauchery’ Keats may have had in mind” in his criticism of Britain’s military politics (361).

The communal practice of disciplinary observation depends heavily on the spread of neighbourly gossip, which both exposes the neighbours' most private secrets and passes judgment on their daily activities. The Hertfordshire community obtains information about Bingley's origins, wealth and conduct even before his arrival at Netherfield, with Mrs Bennet claiming to Mr Bennet: "Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately" (PP 3). While Bingley's original home in "the north of England" hints at possible sources of his "large fortune," the fact that he travels "in a chaise and four" and rents the estate "immediately" after a short visit confirms the rumour about his wealth. In this episode, the rest of the Bennet family learns about Mr Bingley's financial situation from Mrs Bennet, who learns about it through her gossip with Mrs Long, who in her turn must have received all the details about Bingley's arrival from either Mr Morris himself or his acquaintances. In this chain of communal communication, new and old neighbours act under constant surveillance as Mrs Long documents the exact time and manner of Bingley's arrival while the Bennet family draws their own conclusions based on Mrs Long's report on the newcomer as well as their own observation of Mrs Long. Similarly, Elizabeth and Jane cannot arrive at or depart from Netherfield without being noticed by their relatives:

Mrs. Philips [...] was eagerly expressing her surprise at their sudden return home, which, as their own carriage had not fetched them, she should have known nothing about, if she had not happened to see Mr. Jones's shop boy in the street, who had told her that they were not to send any more draughts to Netherfield because the Miss Bennets were come away (PP 81–82)

Even though the Bennet sisters have not travelled in their own carriage, it still becomes widely known in the neighbourhood that Jane has caught a cold at Bingley's home, received medical care there and returned to Longbourn in Bingley's carriage. The Meryton community, from Jane's own aunt to a "shop boy," watches the conduct of the young lovers, exchanges information about the delivery of medication and speculates about the possibility of a future marriage between the two. As Brownstein puts it, Austen's characters "depend for their lives on what the neighbours say about them, spend their time exchanging gossip or 'news' about one another, and quite reasonably feel themselves to be (in the words of Henry Tilney of *Northanger Abbey*) 'surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies'" (34). Living under the gaze of these "voluntary spies" and joining the practice of communal espionage themselves,

the genteel men and women in *Pride and Prejudice* actively consolidate the panoptic structure of their society through their participation in everyday gossip.

As one of the major settings of communal gossip, neighbourly visits facilitate the practice of mutual observation among the inhabitants of cage-like England. During her visit at Netherfield, Mrs Bennet is observed by the Bingleys while she relates her own observation of the Lucases: “Charlotte [...] would go home. I fancy she was wanted about the mince pies. For my part, Mr. Bingley, *I* always keep servants that can do their own work; [...] the Lucases are very good sort of girls, I assure you. It is a pity they are not handsome!” (PP 48). Through this short speech, Mrs Bennet conveys the factual information that her own daughters do not help in the kitchen whereas the Lucas children do, as well as her subjective opinion about the Lucas girls’ lack of beauty. While she discloses the private habits of neighbourly households to the new members of the Hertfordshire community, these newcomers pass judgment on the impropriety of her obsession with gossip: “Mrs. Bennet and her daughters then departed, and Elizabeth returned instantly to Jane, leaving her own and her relations’ behaviour to the remarks of the two ladies and Mr. Darcy” (PP 50). In this practice of mutual observation, Mrs Bennet’s endeavour to strengthen Mr Bingley’s preference for Jane and his prejudice against Charlotte draws attention to her malicious documentation of the Lucases’ faults, inviting other observers in her community to punish her own deviance from the decorum of neighbourly goodwill. Another interaction between disciplinary observers takes place during neighbourly visits in Kent:

Very few days passed in which Mr. Collins did not walk to Rosings, [...] and till Elizabeth recollected that there might be other family livings to be disposed of, she could not understand the sacrifice of so many hours. Now and then, they were honoured with a call from her Ladyship [...]. She examined into their employments, looked at their work, [...] found fault with the arrangement of the furniture, or detected the housemaid in negligence; (PP 190)

As Lady Catherine and Mr Collins visit each other frequently, the former supervises the latter’s behaviour both in the public parish and in his domestic house, while the latter speculates about the former’s possible decisions concerning her “other family livings.” While Lady Catherine disciplines the entire Collins family down to their unnamed servants, Elizabeth as another visitor of the household observes the arrogance of the aristocrat, the snobbishness of the clergyman, their negotiations with each other and the operation of the whole parish.

Another national space that encourages the exchange of disciplinary gazes is the regular assemblies in Austen’s cage-like English community. While both Rogers (464) and LeRoy W.

Smith (88) mention how marriageable women are observed and evaluated by single men at local balls, Deresiewicz underlines women characters' chance of "passing judgment on [young gentlemen] as well, and not only on their breeding or income, but also on their character, intelligence, and education" (517).¹⁴⁸ This practice of mutual surveillance is manifest in Mrs Bennet's account of Mr Bingley's first public appearance in Hertfordshire, in which she meticulously documents the Bingleys' dancing partners, casual comments and expensive clothes (PP 13). While Mrs Bennet closely examines "the lace upon Mrs. Hurst's gown," Bingley and his friends also discuss the result of their judgmental observation: "Bingley had never met with pleasanter people or prettier girls in his life [...]. Darcy, on the contrary, had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion [...]. Mrs. Hurst and her sister allowed it to be so" (PP 13, 17–18). Just as the residents of Longbourn and Netherfield draw conclusions about each other based on their exchange of critical gazes, Austen's representation of their different reactions to the same ball invites her reader to evaluate their personalities and criticise their deviances, be it Mrs Bennet's snobbishness, Mr Darcy's pride or the Bingley sisters' arrogance. Another communal documentation of the same ball occurs on the next day as Charlotte relates to the Bennet family her "overhearings" of Mr Bingley's conversation: "Mr. Robinson's asking him how he liked our Meryton assemblies, and whether he did not think there were a great many pretty women in the room, and *which* he thought the prettiest? and his answering immediately to the last question – Oh! the eldest Miss Bennet beyond a doubt" (PP 20). As Bingley judges the beauty of the Meryton women and Robinson watches him making this judgment, Charlotte discerns his affection for Jane and discloses her discovery to the Bennets, who may in their turn examine the propriety of Charlotte's eavesdropping or Bingley's comments. As public assemblies facilitate the operation of panoptic surveillance by encouraging the exchange of judgmental gazes, even the private feelings of a new neighbour do not escape the diligent observation of Austen's community.

The practice of mutual supervision culminates in the disciplinary act of laughter, which punishes deviance from English social norms with communal contempt. Mr Bennet is well known for one of his controversial rhetorical questions in the novel: "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?" (PP 403). Although critics like Mary Poovey dismiss Mr Bennet's worldview as "a moral vacuum" (198), Brownstein argues that "Mr. Bennet's question reflects with striking accuracy the world of *Pride and*

¹⁴⁸ Specifically speaking, Rogers claims that "assemblies [...] afforded one of the best ways for young ladies to shine in society" (464). LeRoy W. Smith states likewise that "[e]vents like the balls at Meryton and the party at Sir William Lucas's provide showcases for eligible young women" (88).

Prejudice, in which social interactions are the substance of life” (33).¹⁴⁹ While Mr Bennet summarises a major part of the “social interactions” in his panoptic community through his reference to laughter, Elizabeth specifies the appropriate targets of such laughter early in the novel: “I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies *do* divert me, I own, and I laugh at them” (PP 62). In other words, those who adhere to the etiquette of English society should not be punished by the practice of neighbourly surveillance, whereas whimsical departures from communal norms deserve general ridicule.¹⁵⁰ As Christine Ross puts it, the communal members’ “dress, manners, and behavior are immediately regulated by this inborn sense of propriety. The experience of [themselves] as the target of laughter prompted by impropriety is a natural means of punishing transgressions” (101). Laughed at by their neighbours when they transgress the boundaries of genteel propriety, characters in Austen’s novel pay enormous attention to their manners in order to avoid communal mockery. Likewise, by supervising their neighbours’ acts in return and laughing at any deviance the neighbours display, the disciplined impose upon their discipliners a similar pressure to always behave decorously. This mechanism of mutual discipline strongly resembles the exchange of gazes between people inside and outside a cage-like prison, recalling Fludernik’s remark that “the carceral experience is crucially determined by the power of the gaze, specifically the controlling and disciplinary gaze of the warders or guards targeting the prisoner” (2019: 22). In *Pride and Prejudice*, this “disciplinary gaze” is present in almost every conversation, triggering censorious laughter when deviance is detected. Having mocked the indecorous behaviour of her acquaintances, Elizabeth also laughs at her own rude rejection of Darcy’s first proposal: “Elizabeth coloured and laughed as she replied, ‘Yes, you know enough of my *frankness* to believe me capable of *that*. After abusing you so abominably to your face, I could have no scruple in abusing you to all your relations’” (PP 407). Regretting her former criticism of Darcy in front of his relatives as well as her thoughtless dismissal of his first proposal, Elizabeth does not exempt her own folly from derision. While laughing at others’ deviant

¹⁴⁹ In her justification of Mr Bennet’s deeds, Brownstein argues that “he behaved more reasonably than not when he refused to lock up his wild daughter, silenced his doltish one, teased Elizabeth for a silly infatuation, and, years before, chose the detached pleasures of ‘the true philosopher’ over more foolish or vicious occupations when his pretty wife proved silly” (33). Todd, on the other hand, claims that in *Pride and Prejudice* “the malevolence of gossip is defanged by the astringent acceptance that” mocking laughter among neighbours constitutes the essence of life (61).

¹⁵⁰ From a different perspective, Brownstein also emphasises the importance of laughing at the proper target and only at the proper target: “Unlike Miss Bingley and Lydia, Elizabeth is not moved to laughter by gross deviations from arbitrary standards or norms. ‘Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies,’ are what delight her” (55).

manners, Elizabeth also accepts that she herself can become the target of such disciplinary mockery any time in her life.

Living in a cage-like national community, characters in *Pride and Prejudice* are often aware of the disciplinary gazes of their fellow prisoners. Closely observed by Darcy at a local assembly, Elizabeth hints at her awareness of his gaze through a provocative question: “Did not you think, Mr. Darcy, that I expressed myself uncommonly well just now, when I was teasing Colonel Forster to give us a ball at Meryton?” (PP 26). By asking for Darcy’s opinion about her conversation with Colonel Forster, Elizabeth not only exposes Darcy’s secret observation of her behaviour, but also speculates about how he would evaluate her speech. In this interaction between Austen’s two protagonists, the observed heroine gazes back at her observer with full consciousness of his attention and evaluates his possible evaluation of her conduct. During her visit at Pemberley, Elizabeth is also painfully conscious of others’ nosy gazes at Darcy and herself: “she saw that the suspicions of the whole party were awakened against them, and that there was scarcely an eye which did not watch his behaviour when he first came into the room” (PP 297). While Darcy’s friends carefully “watch his behaviour” to confirm their “suspicions” about his love for Elizabeth, the word “saw” implies that, as one of the observed, Elizabeth notices their acts of surveillance and behaves accordingly. Her familiarity with communal surveillance even induces her to take its constant presence for granted and impose disciplinary rules on her own family. When Jane falls in love with Bingley, Elizabeth automatically assumes that the lovers’ conduct is minutely watched by the surrounding community and rejoices that “Jane united with great strength of feeling, a composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner, which would guard her from the suspicions of the impertinent” (PP 23). Again, the word “suspicions” signifies the disciplinary judgment that Austen’s genteel community would pass on any improper display of sexual passion. Even before “the impertinent” do it, however, Elizabeth’s knowledge about her observant neighbours already prompts her to judge Jane’s appearance herself based on the norms of decorum. Similarly, Elizabeth’s consciousness of the others’ gazes also prevents her from visiting Meryton immediately after her return from Kent: “Lydia was urgent with the rest of the girls to walk to Meryton and see how everybody went on; but Elizabeth steadily opposed the scheme. It should not be said, that the Miss Bennets could not be at home half a day before they were in pursuit of the officers” (PP 246). Expecting her neighbours to see her in Meryton and punish her deviance from feminine modesty with censorious comments, Elizabeth restricts her physical and social activities based on her understanding of decorum. As Austen’s characters endeavour to avoid communal censure, their awareness of panoptic surveillance

induces them to discipline their own actions before their observers can discern any deviance in their conduct.

Acutely aware of the judgmental gazes of other communal members, Austen's characters voluntarily discipline themselves in accordance with the decorous norms of genteel England. During the Bennet sisters' reunion at an inn after Elizabeth's return from Kent, the two elder sisters promptly send away the waiter when Lydia claims that she has "some news [...] about a certain person that [they] all like": "Jane and Elizabeth looked at each other, and the waiter was told that he need not stay. Lydia laughed, and said, 'Aye, that is just like your formality and discretion'" (PP 243). Suspecting that the "certain person" must be a militia officer and that Lydia's use of the word "like" might carry the improper hint of affection or flirtation, the better-disciplined sisters take measures to prevent the waiter from observing Lydia's deviant manners and spreading rumours about her on that basis. What Lydia calls "formality and discretion" actually signals a self-conscious effort to uphold the etiquette of the English gentry or at least conceal one's own deviance from such etiquette. This perpetual anxiety about public exposure can also be discerned in Elizabeth's reaction to Jane's account of Lydia's elopement. After hearing that Mr Bennet "could not speak a word for full ten minutes" upon receiving the news and that Mrs Bennet "was taken ill immediately," Elizabeth expresses no concern over her parents' health but exclaims instead: "Oh! Jane, [...] was there a servant belonging to [this house], who did not know the whole story before the end of the day?" (PP 322). When Lydia's deed transgresses the strictest boundaries of proper feminine behaviour, Elizabeth's fear for communal censure immediately directs her attention to the possible gazes and gossip of domestic servants. Observed by their neighbours in public places and by their servants inside the house, Austen's characters appear unable to evade the panoptic surveillance of their community. With full awareness of this disciplinary power, Elizabeth bitterly anticipates the communal denunciation that her family will have to endure as a consequence of Lydia's transgression: "under such a misfortune as this, one cannot see too little of one's neighbours. Assistance is impossible; condolence, insufferable. Let them triumph over us at a distance, and be satisfied" (PP 323). Perceiving criticism in all her acquaintances' gazes, Elizabeth finds their visit in the name of "condolence" "insufferable" and expects them to punish her family's deviance through a celebration of their own better adherence to social norms. As characters like Elizabeth attach so much importance to decorum that they voluntarily use the communal gaze to punish their own deviance as well as the deviance of their family circles, they internalise the disciplinary rules that they both fear and support.

In their self-conscious efforts to meet the expectations of their communal supervisors, Austen's genteel characters internalise the constrictive codes of cage-like England, even feeling embarrassed about others' deviance from normality. At the Netherfield ball, for example, Elizabeth feels ashamed and miserable because of Collins's weird behaviour: "Mr. Collins, awkward and solemn, apologising instead of attending, and often moving wrong without being aware of it, gave her all the shame and misery which a disagreeable partner for a couple of dances can give" (PP 101). Having internalised the decorous codes of public balls, Elizabeth not only judges her own dancing according to these codes, but also punishes herself emotionally when her "disagreeable partner" ignores them. When Collins rudely starts a conversation with Darcy at the same ball, Elizabeth observes Darcy's reaction closely, agonising over Darcy's disapproval of Collins's impropriety even though she herself has done nothing improper: "with a low bow he left her to attack Mr. Darcy, whose reception of his advances she eagerly watched, and whose astonishment at being so addressed was very evident. [...] It vexed her to see him expose himself to such a man" (PP 109–110). In this episode, Darcy observes and judges Collins's self-important behaviour while Elizabeth watches Darcy's judgment, judges his reaction based on genteel norms and feels embarrassed about Darcy's witness of Collins's absurdity. Similarly, Elizabeth feels embarrassed when Mary Bennet's vanity is witnessed by the entire Netherfield assembly:

Elizabeth's eyes were fixed on her with most painful sensations; and she watched her progress through the several stanzas with an impatience which was very ill rewarded at their close; [...] Elizabeth was in agonies. She looked at Jane, to see how she bore it; but Jane was very composedly talking to Bingley. She looked at his two sisters, and saw them making signs of derision at each other (PP 112)

In this short episode, verbs like "watched" and "looked" repeatedly draw attention to the communal practice of mutual observation. As communal members like the Bingley sisters observe and deride Mary's excessive desire for public attention, Elizabeth examines the diverse attitudes of her neighbours and feels tormented by her sister's improper vanity. Again, the codes of proper feminine manners that Elizabeth has internalised discipline her sentiments even when she has done nothing wrong. As Davidson points out, despite Elizabeth's unconventionally rebellious spirit, "the discomfort of seeing her younger sisters, her mother and even (painfully) her father display their ill breeding in public is acute" (65).¹⁵¹ The fact

¹⁵¹ For another analysis of Elizabeth's embarrassment by her family at the Netherfield ball, see Davidson (65–66).

that the misbehaviour of others can cause Elizabeth “acute” embarrassment indicates her profound internalisation of decorous norms, which discipline her emotions, her thoughts and even her body.

The emotional rejection of their own as well as others’ deviance from communal norms even triggers physical reactions among Austen’s well-disciplined characters. Examining “the blush of embarrassment” that Austen repeatedly depicts in her novel, Mary Ann O’Farrell argues that the Bennet sisters’ blushing as a bodily reaction to others’ deviant behaviour signifies their internalisation of disciplinary social norms: “It seems rather that the bodies of Jane and Elizabeth are written by Austen as thoroughly socialized bodies, bodies so schooled in their obligations that these bodies respond to circumstantial pressure” (129). This disciplinary schooling of the body is most manifest in Elizabeth’s blushes when her mother talks improperly or impolitely in front of Darcy: “‘Indeed, Mama, you are mistaken,’ said Elizabeth, blushing for her mother” (PP 47). “Elizabeth blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation. She could not help frequently glancing her eye at Mr. Darcy, though every glance convinced her of what she dreaded” (PP 112). While Mrs Bennet remains unconscious of her own deviance from etiquette, Elizabeth reacts to such public demonstrations of her mother’s undisciplined crudeness not only with emotional “shame and vexation,” but also with physical signs of unease. Having internalised the decorous codes of her community on behavioural, emotional as well as physical levels, Elizabeth expects her acquaintances to exhibit similar conformity to communal norms. During her visit in Hunsford, Elizabeth not only punishes Collins’s improper conduct with her silent contempt, but also expects visible signs of embarrassment from his well-behaving wife: “When Mr. Collins said any thing of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed, [...] she involuntarily turned her eye on Charlotte. Once or twice she could discern a faint blush” (PP 177). Even Charlotte, the pragmatic woman who regards matrimony as a convenient guarantee of material affluence, cannot avoid the communal normalisation of her body and blushes for the extraordinary stupidity of her husband. In this bodily and mannerly well-disciplined community, the failure to blush at transgressions is itself treated as a gesture of transgression. The unashamed appearance of the Wickham couple after their disastrous elopement and hastened wedding faces censure among the better-normalised Bennet sisters: “Elizabeth [...] sat down, resolving within herself, to draw no limits in future to the impudence of an impudent man. *She* blushed, and Jane blushed; but the cheeks of the two who caused their confusion, suffered no variation of colour” (PP 349). After a deed that induces the embarrassed blushes of many others, to show “no variation of colour” constitutes a bold refusal to internalise restrictive communal norms, an open display of deviance that is

named “impudence” by the centre of genteel England. As O’Farrell puts it, “Austen’s use of the blush facilitates the real work of manners: including the body in social order and teaching it to behave itself in public” (127). With both bodies and feelings, both speeches and acts strictly disciplined by the communal norms of genteel propriety, Austen’s characters undergo processes of individual reformation in their cage-like English nation.

As both the discipliner and the disciplined in Austen’s panoptic England, Elizabeth experiences a gradual reformation of her personality under both her community’s and her own critical observation. After reading Darcy’s letter about Wickham’s past, Elizabeth feels again the acute sense of embarrassment that she usually feels about any transgression of social norms: “She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. – Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd” (PP 230). The sudden realisation that she has been displaying the socially censured traits of blindness, partiality, prejudice and absurdity in front of the entire Hertfordshire community gives Elizabeth immense shame, an emotional product of normative discipline that accompanies Austen’s protagonist throughout the novel. In addition to lamenting her past deviance from moral standards, Elizabeth also stresses the improvement of her self-understanding after reading Darcy’s letter: “Till this moment, I never knew myself” (PP 230).¹⁵² The cruciality of this improvement induces LeRoy W. Smith to claim that “Elizabeth undergoes a significant growth and change” in this episode, finally getting to know herself with the help of Darcy’s letter (92). However, this “significant growth” is by no means similar to the rebirth-like metamorphosis that Moll Flanders experiences, since the reformation of Austen’s protagonist does not occur randomly on one single site but progresses slowly under the minute control of her panoptic community. As Janet Todd puts it, “the moment is not the end of a journey into self-knowledge but rather a stage in a process of viewing herself” (64). Deresiewicz also argues that “Austen sketches an arc of error and correction and error, an upward curve of self-knowledge and maturation that we are meant to see as extending beyond the end of the novel” (529). On this “upward curve of self-knowledge and maturation,” Elizabeth learns first to evaluate Darcy’s conduct without any prejudice, then to love him and finally to respect him even without any prospect of marrying him. After she reforms her opinion of Darcy and Wickham based on the former’s letter, Elizabeth is at first “still full of indignation” because of Darcy’s arrogant

¹⁵² For other analyses of Elizabeth’s self-reflection after her reception of Darcy’s letter, see McKeon (2005: 700–702), Deresiewicz (528–529), Bray (129), Soni (371–372), Suzuki (68–70), etc. Bray, for instance, claims similarly that Elizabeth “eventually comes to a complete reassessment of her past feelings concerning Darcy and Wickham” after reading and rereading Darcy’s letter (129).

wording and does not “for a moment repent her refusal, or feel the slightest inclination ever to see him again” (PP 235, 236). In other words, although Elizabeth is mortified by her improper behaviour towards Darcy, she refuses to acknowledge any possibility of her falling in love with him. Only at her first sight of Pemberley does she recognise the social distance between her family and Darcy’s, thus starting to value the affection of someone much higher in the hierarchical order: “at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!” (PP 271). Her growing respect for social status, a trait communally promoted by the snobbish gentry of Austen’s England, intensifies her unconscious love for the owner of Pemberley, whereas her disgraced situation after Lydia’s elopement discloses the presence of this love to her: “never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain” (PP 306). While the disciplinary mechanism of the genteel community punishes Elizabeth for her sister’s deviance and forces the protagonist to face her true feelings for Darcy, she gradually learns to admire his merits even if he does not love her anymore: “For herself she was humbled; but she was proud of him. Proud that in a cause of compassion and honour, he had been able to get the better of himself” (PP 361). Finally, Elizabeth is reformed enough to value the qualities of “compassion and honour” in an unselfish way, qualities that her English community greatly celebrates. Only after this prolonged and painful process of reformation can she become the “mistress of Pemberley.”

While Elizabeth is reformed by Darcy’s disciplinary judgment, Darcy also undergoes a strenuous process of reformation under Elizabeth’s close observation. Impressed by Darcy’s change throughout the novel, Sarah Wootton exclaims: “Not even *Jane Eyre*, with its shocking mutilation of masculinity, is quite as successful as *Pride and Prejudice* in reforming the hero” (36). This successful “reformation” of the male protagonist through Elizabeth’s “scornful rejection of his first proposal” upholds, according to Spencer, the contractual principle that “being a gentleman is a matter of behaviour, not merely of social standing” (1986: 171). Armstrong also argues that the reformation of Darcy’s manners results in “a subtle synthesis [...] that attaches traditional signs of class to the morality of the social contract” (2005: 47–48). In other words, Elizabeth’s disciplinary punishment of Darcy’s arrogance denies him any absolute authority in a panoptic society of mutual observation and hence compels him to pay more attention to his observers’ opinions. Near the end of the novel, Darcy recalls how Elizabeth’s denunciation of his deviance brings about a gradual improvement of his behaviour: “The recollection of what I then said, of my conduct, my manners, my expressions during the whole of it, is now, and has been many months, inexpressibly painful to me [...]; – though it was some time, I confess, before I was reasonable enough to allow their justice” (PP 408).

Reminded by Elizabeth of their contractual equality under the communal rules of decorum, Darcy gradually recognises the impropriety of his sense of self-importance, rejecting his former belief in an inherent superiority of the upper classes. Like Elizabeth's disciplinary reformation, Darcy's change also does not take place immediately but requires "some time" for self-reflection (PP 408). When he is unexpectedly reunited with Elizabeth at Pemberley, Darcy's consciousness of being observed and evaluated urges him to show the widely appreciated traits of generosity, politeness and readiness to improve oneself: "My object *then* [...] was to shew you, by every civility in my power, that I was not so mean as to resent the past; and I hoped to obtain your forgiveness, to lessen your ill opinion, by letting you see that your reproofs had been attended to" (PP 410).¹⁵³ In other words, his wish to convince a critical observer of his genteel propriety accelerates the reformation of his everyday habits and eventually creates the ideal gentleman who marries Austen's brilliant heroine. Just as his previous deviance from social norms is condemned by the observant protagonist, Darcy's subsequent adherence to those decorous codes is watched by the same observer and rewarded with communal approbation. When Darcy visits Elizabeth at Lambton, he purposefully allows his pleasant manners to be observed by Elizabeth as well as her relatives and obtains in return an opportunity to evaluate their attitude towards him:

whenever she did catch a glimpse, she saw an expression of general complaisance, and in all that he said, she heard an accent so far removed from hauteur or disdain of his companions, [...] the difference, the change was so great, and struck so forcibly on her mind, that she could hardly restrain her astonishment from being visible. (PP 290)

Through the acts of looking and listening, Elizabeth evaluates Darcy based on the norms of gentlemanly manners, approving his current "complaisance" and disapproving his previous "hauteur." Aware of being observed, Darcy uses his decorous amiability to win the approval of his audience, whose reaction to his change (with Elizabeth's "astonishment" being almost "visible") he also intensively watches. Willingly reforming himself under the observation of a disciplinary community, Darcy subtly manipulates the gazes of his supervisors to achieve his own goal, namely to win Elizabeth's heart.

Though easily reformed by the judgments of other communal members, Austen's characters are by no means powerless in their cage-like national spaces, actively manipulating the gazes of their fellow observers to achieve their furtive purposes. A manipulation of disciplinary gazes takes place when Elizabeth plays the piano at Rosings in front of Darcy who,

¹⁵³ For a slightly different analysis of this episode, see McKeon (2005: 699).

moving with his usual deliberation towards the piano forte, stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance. Elizabeth saw what he was doing, and at the first convenient pause, turned to him with an arch smile, and said,

"You mean to frighten me, Mr. Darcy, by coming in all this state to hear me? But I will not be alarmed though your sister *does* play so well." (PP 195)

In this episode, Darcy as the initial observer attempts to optimise his surveillance by gaining "a full view of the fair performer's countenance," a view that enables him to evaluate Elizabeth's performance more comprehensively. However, Elizabeth as the object of his observation openly comments on his gaze, anticipates his possible judgment and denies him any disciplinary power over her. By declaring that she "will not be alarmed" by Darcy's wish to evaluate her performance, Elizabeth not only undermines the panoptic effect of communal supervision but even turns the site of surveillance into an opportunity to advertise her extraordinary personality. While in Kent Elizabeth increases Darcy's affection for her through an active confrontation with his disciplinary gaze, later at Pemberley she literally manipulates the gaze of his portrait during her re-examination of their past relationship: "as she stood before the canvas, on which he was represented, and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression" (PP 277).¹⁵⁴ According to Brownstein, Elizabeth "examines [Darcy's portrait] at leisure from a position of strength, activating its gaze by her own" during their encounter (53). Although only Darcy's eyes are directly mentioned in this narrative, it is Elizabeth who decides what they should see. By actively "fix[ing] his eyes upon herself," Elizabeth controls the direction of Darcy's gaze as she reexamines her own judgement of his deeds and forms a better opinion about his manners. By commenting on and even controlling the gazes of their fellow discipliners, members of Austen's panoptic English community actively participate in the practice of mutual observation and even take advantage of it to achieve their own purposes.

¹⁵⁴ In her analysis of this episode, Todd detects human agency in Darcy's portrait: "Instead simply of contemplating the portrait, Elizabeth gives it agency, making it fix its 'eyes upon herself'" (66). However, the subject in Austen's sentence is Elizabeth instead of Darcy's portrait. It is Elizabeth who carries out the action of fixing Darcy's painted eyes on herself and it is also Elizabeth who determines every detail of this imaginary gaze. In their comments on the same episode, Alexander Bove argues that Darcy's "portrait, with its representational immediacy, is more successful at sustaining the bourgeois illusion: credit and value of character" (661), while Armstrong concludes that "Elizabeth indeed rereads the signs of the class above hers as anchored, in Darcy's case, to qualities within the man that allow her to recalculate his worth in terms of bourgeois morality" (2005: 46).

By manipulating the observer's gaze, communal members in *Pride and Prejudice* draw on the practice of disciplinary surveillance as an instrument to attract attention. Knowing Caroline Bingley's wish to capture his attention, Darcy discloses her furtive motive for walking with Elizabeth in the Netherfield drawing-room: "you are conscious that your figures appear to the greatest advantage in walking; [...] I can admire you much better as I sit by the fire" (PP 62). As Murphy points out, Caroline Bingley's "walking was chiefly for purposes of social, economic, and sexual display, a performance of dress and deportment that demanded an audience" (132).¹⁵⁵ While Darcy underlines his power as her audience by hinting at his current attempt to assess her figure, Miss Bingley eagerly plays the role of the observed and even encourages his evaluation because she enjoys the special attention that Darcy's gaze automatically brings her. Therefore, although Murphy is not entirely wrong to claim that "Miss Bingley walks as an object, not as an agent," the object of Darcy's observation exercises her own agency by actively initiating the practice of disciplinary supervision and manipulating it to her advantage (133). Equally skilful in her manipulation of communal surveillance, Charlotte Lucas explains how a woman can find a husband through shrewd performance: "There is so much of gratitude or vanity in almost every attachment, that it is not safe to leave any to itself. [...] In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better shew *more* affection than she feels" (PP 24). By showing "*more* affection than she feels" for Collins, Charlotte uses his observation of her behaviour as an opportunity to gratify his "vanity" and in this way achieves financial security through an advantageous marriage. As Melina Moe puts it, "Charlotte's future is not less meaningful because she is limited to performing well within her chosen constrained environment" (1094–1095). Instead, it "points toward the possibility of human flourishing in situations of restraint and of attaching significance to self-discipline and to submission to social expectations" (Moe 1099). By following the "social expectations" about genteel women, either during their search for a husband or in their married life afterwards, Charlotte demonstrates how the inmates of a social panopticon can be restricted by the mechanism of disciplinary surveillance but at the same time manoeuvre this mechanism to their own advantage. By accepting the rules of communal supervision and achieving success within the bounds of decorum, Austen's characters actively interact with their panoptic surroundings to reach their furtive aims.

¹⁵⁵ Examining Austen's depiction of the act of walking in *Pride and Prejudice*, Sandra Dinter argues that walking "appears as a mild but harmless form of female rebellion and emancipated courtship in a coherent pastoral landscape" (105).

As both the observer and the observed, the reformer and the reformed, the manipulator and the manipulated, Austen's characters are the imperfect but improvable residents of cage-like England. As Darcy and Elizabeth discuss the possible faults of their personalities at Netherfield, the former makes a general statement about human fallibility: "There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome" (PP 63). Although Elizabeth only reacts playfully to Darcy's claim at the moment, the two lovers gradually recognise their respective follies and reform their behaviour under others' observation. According to Spencer, as fellow discipliners in a panoptic community, "Darcy and Elizabeth are equals, and each has something to teach the other" (1986: 172). This moral equality is not limited to the protagonists only, with almost all the main characters in *Pride and Prejudice* displaying their flaws under communal surveillance and revealing the flaws of others at the same time. Austen's representation of universal imperfection has attracted the attention of numerous scholars. Poovey, for example, notes that "*Pride and Prejudice* depicts a world riven by ethical relativity [and] mocks any pretense to absolute moral standards" (194). Christine Ross stresses likewise that "[n]o character or couple constitutes an unequivocal position of efficacious correctness" in Austen's novel (99). As Elizabeth learns to overcome her prejudices and Darcy his pride, Jane slowly comes to understand Caroline Bingley's treachery and Charles Bingley Jane's love (PP 425).¹⁵⁶ Even Kitty "became, by proper attention and management, less irritable, less ignorant, and less insipid," while Mary turns from her empty philosophy to her concrete household (PP 428). As the characters improve themselves under the influence of their disciplinary community, the panoptic mechanism turns out to be imperfect itself. Neighbourly gossip, a crucial medium for the documentation of past conduct, is represented as unreliable at the very beginning of the novel.¹⁵⁷ When Mrs Bennet expresses her fear that Bingley will not settle down at Netherfield, "Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball; and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly" (PP 10). In his detailed analysis of this episode, Deresiewicz emphasises the unreliability of communal rumours as a source of

¹⁵⁶ Underlining the absence of any absolute authority in *Pride and Prejudice*, Christine Ross examines in detail the flaws of Elizabeth, Darcy, Jane, Bingley as well as Mary and reveals the limitations of any "textbook discourse" (99–102).

¹⁵⁷ Similarly, Bonaparte notices the unreliability of "what Austen calls 'second-hand intelligence'": "In the form of rumor, gossip, and the general opinion, it becomes in *Pride and Prejudice* a chorus transmitting misinformation" (155). However, while Bonaparte stresses that "Austen distrusts it," communal communication in *Pride and Prejudice* is represented as an imperfect but functional network of panoptic surveillance that achieves its disciplinary effect despite its multiple faults (155).

information: “Scrupulousness of report is not a great concern in this community, nor is scrupulousness of observation” (505). With the community and its members demonstrating multiple flaws, Austen portrays genteel England as an imperfect panopticon filled with imperfect inmates, whose individual reformation also brings about a disciplinary improvement of their national community.¹⁵⁸

Communal Reformation through Letter Rereading

Blending with the carceral form of the cage-like panopticon and the national form of normatively controlled England, the epistolary form in *Pride and Prejudice* reinforces the disciplinary power of Austen’s genteel community through the mutual supervision between letter writers and letter readers. As epistolary exchanges come to epitomise the panoptic structure of communal surveillance, Elizabeth’s rereading of Darcy’s letter encourages a critical re-examination of the English nation, with her choice of Darcy’s Pemberley rather than Wickham’s militia signalling a preference for the national spaces of mutual reformation over those of random transformation.

Although, unlike *Pamela*, *Pride and Prejudice* is not an epistolary novel in its final version, letters still play a crucial role in Austen’s narrative. Emphasising Austen’s reliance on letters in her predominantly third-person narration, Vivasvan Soni argues that “[t]he importance of the epistolary form [...] should certainly not be underestimated” (373). In *Pride and Prejudice*, epistolary texts play a major role in its plot development as well as its narrative effect.¹⁵⁹ Underlining women’s inability to travel as a result of infrastructural conditions and social restrictions, Davidson explains how the confinement of genteel women greatly enhances the value of letters for them: “Both in Austen’s fiction and in her life, [...] letters were often nearly everything, not least because a woman of modest means was unlikely to have independent control over her movements” (1). The importance of letters for the Bennet household is most evident after Lydia’s elopement when the whole family desperately waits for news from London: “The arrival of letters was the first grand object of every morning’s impatience. Through letters, whatever of good or bad was to be told, would be communicated” (PP 326). Unable to look for Lydia themselves, the Bennet women depend entirely on letters to learn about Lydia’s adherence to or deviance from feminine propriety. Analysing *Pride and*

¹⁵⁸ For scholarly analyses of the imperfections at the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, see Rogers (540) and Brown (272).

¹⁵⁹ Both Bray (124–125) and Davidson (18–19) count the letters in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* in great detail to emphasise the importance of the epistolary form for her novel.

Prejudice as “a novel initially written in the epistolary style,” Bonaparte argues that Darcy’s letter to Elizabeth, “so centrally placed, functions [...] as a turning point in the progress of events” (141). Similarly, Davidson claims that “Elizabeth’s reading of the letter – and the feelings and thoughts she experiences in its aftermath – constitutes the novel’s emotional fulcrum” (16). After rejecting Darcy’s proposal out of pride and prejudice, Elizabeth is guided into self-examination and self-reformation by Darcy’s epistolary narration of Wickham’s past. Preoccupied with the family secrets that this letter relates, Elizabeth does not even wish to meet Colonel Fitzwilliam anymore, whose conversation she usually greatly enjoys: “Elizabeth could but just *affect* concern in missing him; she really rejoiced at it. Colonel Fitzwilliam was no longer an object. She could think only of her letter” (PP 232). Noticing the power of letters to reveal secrets, Joe Bray stresses the disciplinary effect that epistolary texts have on their writers and readers alike:

although Austen did turn away from the epistolary form some time around late 1797 [...], letters remain central to her art. [...] Careful letter-readers in Austen’s novels can learn a great deal about the character of the letter-writer, at the same time as being prompted into an examination of their own minds. (131)

Collecting subtle information about their writers’ personality, conveying such implications to their readers and simultaneously forcing these readers into self-examination or self-discipline, letters significantly contribute to the communal structure of panoptic surveillance in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Recording and spreading private information among disciplinary observers, letters serve as a medium for the panoptic documentation of deviant behaviour in cage-like England. The details of Lydia’s elopement with Wickham are almost entirely documented through letters. While all the other Bennets are shocked by the sudden news of the lovers’ disappearance, Kitty has already learnt from “Lydia’s last letter” about “their being in love with each other, many weeks” (PP 320). This brief reference to Lydia’s letter implies that, however imprudent Lydia’s decision is, she earnestly believes herself to be in love. In her letter to Mrs Forster, she also mentions her love for Wickham and her plan to marry him in Scotland: “I am going to Gretna Green, and if you cannot guess with who, I shall think you a simpleton, for there is but one man in the world I love” (PP 321). After reading this letter, Elizabeth both bemoans Lydia’s heedless transgression of feminine propriety and emphasises her original intention to get married: “What a letter is this, to be written at such a moment. But at least it shews, that *she* was serious in the object of her journey. Whatever he might afterwards persuade her to, it was not on her side a *scheme* of infamy” (PP 322). Although Lydia’s abrupt London journey is not

directly represented by the narrator, her letters offer the readers a glimpse into the process of her seduction. While her careless language exposes her undisciplined boldness, her excitement about Gretna Green, a place famous for clandestine marriages, indicates that her wild temper has not led her to disregard all the social expectations of feminine chastity and that Wickham is at least partly responsible for her subsequent “infamy.”¹⁶⁰ Additionally, the fact that Lydia’s letter to Mrs Forster is eventually read by the entire Bennet family signals the panoptic effect of epistolary writing in Austen’s novel. As Davidson points out, “the communal nature, in this period, of a letter’s audience – it is rarely written exclusively for the attention of the person whose name features as addressee – is very striking” (4).¹⁶¹ As letters are shared and examined by an entire community instead of one single reader, all the secret emotions that a private letter conveys may be exposed to familial perusal and even communal censure. Written not long after Lydia’s elopement, Mr Collins’s letter shows how epistolary exchanges document the scandals of neighbours, spread information about them and invite communal condemnation as a disciplinary punishment:

I feel myself called upon [...] to condole with you on the grievous affliction you are now suffering under, of which we were yesterday informed by a letter from Hertfordshire. [...] And it is the more to be lamented, because [...] this licentiousness of behaviour in your daughter, has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence [...]. Howsoever that may be, you are grievously to be pitied, in which opinion I am not only joined by Mrs. Collins, but likewise by lady Catherine and her daughter, to whom I have related the affair. (PP 327)

After “a letter from Hertfordshire” informs the Collins about Lydia’s outrageous defiance of social norms, Collins condemns both Lydia’s “licentiousness of behaviour” and her parents’ “faulty degree of indulgence” in his letter to Mr Bennet. He even further spreads this information to Lady Catherine’s family and then sends her censorious comments almost verbatim by letter to the very people she has commented on (PP 327).¹⁶² By documenting the

¹⁶⁰ According to Rogers, “the Marriage Act of 1753 [...] tightened the law, in an effort to cut down on illicit marriages [...]. However, the measure did not extend to Scotland, which was specifically excluded by section XVIII of the act. As a result, a flourishing trade grew up in marriages, especially at Gretna Green” (523).

¹⁶¹ To stress “the communal nature” of letters in *Pride and Prejudice*, Davidson particularly mentions how Lydia’s letters to Kitty use “a simple code in which the letter-writer would underline certain letters and words to pick out a ‘secret’ message, one safeguard for privacy in a world where letters were usually shared among family members once they had been read by their initial addressee” (4, 5).

¹⁶² For comments on how the Bennet family draws conclusions about Collins’s personality by reading his letters, see Bray (125), Davidson (8) and McKeon (2005: 699–700).

process of Lydia's deviance from feminine norms, conveying this information to other communal members and carrying their disapproving responses back to the deviant's family, letters play a central role in the panoptic social structure of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Apart from documenting sexual scandals and punishing them through their publicity, letters also consolidate the social panopticon of disciplinary supervision by placing their writers under intensive communal surveillance. As Davidson puts it, "[l]etters may also reveal things that their authors don't intend" (8). Similarly, McKeon argues that "letters conceal – and through industrious reading are made to reveal – not the outward identity of their writers but the ethical quality of their motives and sensibilities" (2005: 700). Near the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, the letters that Caroline Bingley and Georgiana Darcy write in reaction to their brothers' marriages effectively reveal their different personalities to an observant reader:

Miss Bingley's congratulations to her brother [...] were all that was affectionate and insincere. She wrote even to Jane on the occasion [...]. Jane was not deceived, but [...] could not help writing her a much kinder answer than she knew was deserved.

The joy which Miss Darcy expressed on receiving similar information, was as sincere as her brother's in sending it. Four sides of paper were insufficient to contain all her delight, and all her earnest desire of being loved by her sister. (PP 425)

After she deliberately neglects Jane in London, Caroline's epistolary congratulations only highlight her shameless hypocrisy, whereas the extraordinary length of Georgiana's letter convinces the reader of her warm affection. Jane's "much kinder answer," on the other hand, indicates that she retains her forgiving temper despite Caroline's cruel deception. While the decisions to or not to write a letter shed light on the real feelings of Caroline, Georgiana and Jane, the scene in which a letter is written also offers a glimpse into the habits of all characters concerned. During her stay at Netherfield, Elizabeth observes the interactions between Darcy and Miss Bingley while the former writes to his sister: "The perpetual commendations of the lady either on his hand-writing, or on the evenness of his lines, or on the length of his letter, with the perfect unconcern with which her praises were received, formed a curious dialogue, and was exactly in unison with her opinion of each" (PP 51). Impressed by the multiple social interactions that this short episode involves, Davidson underlines "the ways that letter-writing can be used instrumentally to draw out and develop observations" (9). While Miss Bingley actively observes Darcy's letter-writing activity, her "perpetual commendations [...] on his hand-writing, or on the evenness of his lines," not only confirm Darcy's excellent writing skills but also expose her own desire to flatter him. As another observer in this scene, Elizabeth sees through Miss Bingley's trick, gains knowledge about Darcy's writing habits, witnesses his

arrogant “unconcern” and forms “her opinion of each.”¹⁶³ As a result, Darcy as the letter writer is subject to the disciplinary observation of those around him while he probably sends disciplinary instructions about good manners to his younger sister. Triggering disciplinary practices of mutual observation, letters place not only those whom their writers document or instruct but also the writers themselves under the reformatory influence of communal surveillance.

This epistolary network of mutual supervision compels the documenters of deviance to examine their own past behaviour, thus encouraging the practice of self-discipline in a cage-like community of diligent observers. Wrongly accused of depriving Wickham of his rightful inheritance, Darcy writes a lengthy letter to disclose “the whole of [Wickham’s] connection with [Darcy’s] family” and even offers to “summon more than one witness of undoubted veracity” (PP 222). In order to justify his antagonistic attitude towards his father’s godson, Darcy precisely documents Wickham’s past from the financial circumstances of Wickham’s father (“a very respectable man [...] always poor from the extravagance of his wife”) to Wickham’s own studies at Cambridge and finally to his despicable attempt to seduce Georgiana (PP 222). By recounting Wickham’s personal history in detail, Darcy invites his reader to judge Wickham’s irresponsible mother, censure Wickham’s own “want of principle” and lament their deviance from the norms of duty, honesty or integrity (PP 222). Apart from documenting Wickham’s transgressions, Darcy also examines himself as well as the reader of his epistolary writing: “whatever may be the sentiments which Mr. Wickham has created, a suspicion of their nature shall not prevent me from unfolding his real character. It adds even another motive” (PP 222–223). By speculating about Elizabeth’s romantic “sentiments” for Wickham, Darcy turns his judgmental gaze from the topic of his letter to its intended reader and punishes her lack of feminine modesty through his mocking tone. Meanwhile, he also scrutinises his own “motive” behind writing this letter and therefore subjects his own conduct to his reader’s evaluation. This practice of self-examination is even more obvious in his narration of Bingley’s affairs, in which he voluntarily confesses his own dishonest action and punishes it with self-criticism: “There is but one part of my conduct in the whole affair, on which I do not reflect with satisfaction; it is that I condescended to adopt the measures of art so far as to conceal from him your sister’s being in town” (PP 221). By reflecting on “the measures of art” that he draws on in his

¹⁶³ Examining Austen’s representation of this letter-writing scene, Davidson points out that “the third-person narrative voice here is strongly colored by Elizabeth’s perspective and point of view” (9). For further examinations of how letters reveal personalities in other episodes of *Pride and Prejudice*, see Davidson (18–19) and Bray (124–125).

endeavour to separate Bingley from Jane and by openly acknowledging his deviance from the communal norms of honourable behaviour, Darcy turns the act of letter writing into a process of self-discipline. At the beginning of the letter, Darcy makes clear that he expects his reader to take part in this disciplinary practice as well: “from the severity of that blame which was last night so liberally bestowed, [...] I shall hope to be in future secured, when the following account of my actions and their motives has been read” (PP 219). According to Mika Suzuki, Darcy’s demand that Elizabeth judge his “actions” and “motives” properly indicates her active participation in a system of mutual supervision: “by offering his life story, he demands Elizabeth’s justice towards him. [...] When X does justice to Y, [...] there is always some kind of judgement by the agent X. At the same time it also involves judgement about whether X can make a due judgement” (68). In this letter, therefore, Darcy passes judgment on Elizabeth’s ability to judge his behaviour, criticises his own violation of communal norms and invites Elizabeth to impose the proper extent of punishment on him but not more. As letter writers not only document others’ improper deeds but also supervise their own conduct, evaluate their readers and invite the readers to pass similar judgments, the acts of letter writing and letter reading forge a panoptic network of disciplinary exchanges.

As letter writers are reformed by their readers’ as well as their own normative supervision, letter readers also undergo disciplinary reformations in the process of reading and rereading. Underlining the reformatory effect that Darcy’s letter has on Elizabeth, Bray points out that “Elizabeth’s re-reading leads her to [...] a complete reassessment of her past feelings concerning Darcy and Wickham” (129). Similarly, Soni examines “the moment when Elizabeth changes her judgment of Darcy,” stressing that “[t]he turning point occurs famously after she reads, and indeed rereads, the letter” (371). Further exploring the implications of Elizabeth’s act of letter rereading, McKeon argues that “Elizabeth reads Darcy’s long letter over and over, each time correcting errors of construal not only in her previous readings but also in the way she had too hastily and confidently ‘read’ him in actuality” (2005: 700). If Darcy’s letter punishes Wickham’s and Darcy’s past deviances by exposing them to its reader, Elizabeth’s repeated rereading of this letter initiates her disciplinary process of self-reformation. During her first perusal, Elizabeth is still firmly convinced of her own competence in judging others’ personality, gratifying her vanity in her self-righteous condemnation of Darcy’s vice: “stedfastly was she persuaded that he could have no explanation to give, which a just sense of

shame would not conceal” (PP 226).¹⁶⁴ Later, however, Darcy’s epistolary account of his family history forces Elizabeth to doubt the truthfulness of Wickham’s relation and therefore the wisdom of her previous conviction: “it was impossible not to feel that there was gross duplicity on one side or the other” (PP 227). As the act of rereading compels Elizabeth to search for signs of “gross duplicity” in the conduct of both Darcy and Wickham, she gradually recognises the perversity of her determined belief in Darcy’s villainy and Wickham’s innocence. This change of attitude also forces her to reshape her opinion about her own family’s behaviour: “When she came to that part of the letter, in which her family were mentioned, in terms of such mortifying, yet merited reproach, her sense of shame was severe” (PP 231). Sufficiently reformed to perceive merit in Darcy’s “mortifying [...] reproach,” Elizabeth feels genuinely ashamed of herself instead of expecting any display of shame from the letter writer.¹⁶⁵ McKeon calls “this scene of reading [...] a reeducation of [Elizabeth] in which she comes to know her own secrets by rereading how she formerly has read other people” (2005: 701). This disciplinary “reeducation” – or reformation – of Austen’s protagonist takes place within the framework of epistolary exchange, which exposes Wickham’s wickedness, contains Darcy’s confession and promotes Elizabeth’s self-improvement. Near the end of the novel, Darcy himself also becomes the reader of his own letter and apologises to Elizabeth for his resentful expressions: “There was one part especially, the opening of it, which I should dread your having the power of reading again. [...] When I wrote that letter, [...] I believed myself perfectly calm and cool, but I am since convinced that it was written in a dreadful bitterness of spirit” (PP 409). Re-examining his past mood through the language of his letter, Darcy acknowledges his failure to control his temper and regrets his improper rudeness towards the woman who has rightfully rejected him.¹⁶⁶ By encouraging the disciplinary practices of mutual observation as well as self-examination, the rereading of epistolary texts strengthens the communal mechanism of panoptic supervision in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Elizabeth’s self-reformation through the act of letter rereading prompts her to re-examine the functions of her community, with epistolary exchanges epitomising the panoptic structure of communal surveillance in cage-like England. In his analysis of the influence of letters on

¹⁶⁴ Soni notes similarly that “[i]mmmediately after her first reading of Darcy’s letter, Elizabeth is not persuaded to change her opinion of him; if anything, she is further confirmed in it” (372).

¹⁶⁵ For similar analyses of Elizabeth’s reformation through her rereading of Darcy’s letter, see Soni (371–372) and Bray (128–129). Bonaparte, on the other hand, approaches the letter from a different perspective and addresses the epistemological question of reading in Austen’s novel (141).

¹⁶⁶ Suzuki also briefly comments on this conversation, mentioning that “[f]urther on in the novel, Darcy and Elizabeth review their own attitudes as writer and reader” (70).

both public and private issues, McKeon underlines the connection between epistolary exchanges and communal interactions in Austen's novel: "Reading letters provides a powerful figure for reading people, both others and oneself" (2005: 701). Studying Elizabeth's first meeting with Wickham, Soni points out that only after Darcy's epistolary revelation of Wickham's treachery can "all the Machiavellian details of the scene become legible. We see, for example, that Wickham only ventures his slander of Darcy once he is sure of Elizabeth's already poor opinion of the latter" (377). Before relating his forged personal history to Elizabeth, Wickham subtly enquires after Darcy's reputation in the Hertfordshire community: "I have no right to give *my* opinion [...] as to his being agreeable or otherwise. [...] But I believe your opinion of him would in general astonish" (PP 87). By claiming that Elizabeth's dislike of Darcy would "astonish" her community, Wickham cunningly encourages her to inform him about the community's attitude towards Darcy. Only after Elizabeth's fervent assurance that Darcy "is not at all liked in Hertfordshire" does Wickham start the deceitful narration of his past misfortunes (PP 87).¹⁶⁷ Since the purpose of Wickham's seemingly careless comment only becomes evident after Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter, her previous conversations with Wickham resemble the epistolary text which needs to be repeatedly reread with new pieces of information, information acquired primarily through communal communication.¹⁶⁸ As Elizabeth comes to understand how Wickham has taken advantage of the communal ignorance in Hertfordshire, she also obtains better insight into the functions of communal networks in general: "Of his former way of life, nothing had been known in Hertfordshire but what he told himself. As to his real character, had information been in her

¹⁶⁷ Soni analyses in detail both Wickham's psychological manipulation of Elizabeth's responses and Austen's brilliant design of this episode: "What is most remarkable about this conversation, though, is not Wickham's psychological acumen in enlisting Elizabeth's own prejudices to further damage her opinion of Darcy. Rather, what makes it such an extraordinary exercise for judgment is that it is written so as to be legible in two completely different ways, depending on what conceptions of Darcy's and Wickham's characters we approach the scene with" (377).

¹⁶⁸ Similarly, Soni compares Elizabeth's rereading of Darcy's letter with the reader's rereading of Austen's representations of Wickham, claiming that Darcy's letter, Wickham's speeches and *Pride and Prejudice* in general need to be reread: "It is not only Darcy's letter, but the novel as a whole that must be reread and judged anew. The letter has become a figure for the novel itself, rather than the novel being composed of a series of letters" (379). Focused on the act of reading, Bonaparte points out that "Austen not only [...] uses the concept and language of reading for every kind of interpretation, she clearly intends, as she trains Elizabeth, to educate her readers as well, to teach them to read both the world and her novel" (159). In *The Secret History of Domesticity*, McKeon also argues that "Elizabeth's gradual coming to knowledge about herself and others [...] is broadly analogous to the macroexperience we readers have in coming to know Austen's world at large" (2005: 708). Whereas Soni, Bonaparte, McKeon and Kelly (2015: 220; 1997: 166) examine the analogy between letter reading, world reading and novel reading, in this dissertation I focus on the blending of epistolary and communal exchanges in the operation of disciplinary surveillance.

power, she had never felt a wish of enquiring” (PP 228). Apart from criticising her former overreliance on her independent judgment, Elizabeth also learns from Darcy’s letter the importance of communal knowledge despite its occasional unreliability. Even though the community in Derbyshire might cherish as many prejudices as the one in Hertfordshire, its panoptic structure still ensures its ability to document valuable information about Wickham’s past behaviour, which turns out to be indeed “in her power” when Elizabeth actively enquires after it during her journey with the Gardiners (PP 292). If Darcy’s letter is Elizabeth’s first source of information, the communal documentation of Wickham’s deviance in Derbyshire further encourages her to discipline, punish and reform her former prejudices, reminding her of the “impropriety,” “indelicacy” and “inconsistency” of Wickham’s decision to smear his benefactor’s son (PP 229).¹⁶⁹ Supported by the mechanism of epistolary and communal surveillance, Elizabeth can now much better detect Wickham’s blatant violation of moral norms. In her strenuous process of self-improvement, Elizabeth’s act of letter rereading epitomises the community’s effort to perpetually collect new information about its members and improve its judgment of those members based on such information.

The blending of epistolary exchanges and communal surveillance invites a disciplinary re-examination of the English nation. As epistolary exchanges both take part in and shed light on the panoptic operation of local communities, the rereading of letters also leads to a reinvestigation of the ‘imagined community’ of the English nation. Exploring the political implications of Austen’s marriage plot, Parrinder claims that Elizabeth and Darcy’s “[e]xogamous marriage is a union of opposites – political, social, and temperamental – injecting new blood into one of the nation’s old or ruling families [...] to humanize the aristocracy” (189). From another perspective, Moretti illustrates how Austen’s novels reconcile national with local forces through marital alliance: “They take a *local* gentry, like the Bennets of *Pride and Prejudice*, and join it to the *national* elite of Darcy and his ilk. They take the strange, harsh novelty of the modern state – and turn it into a large, exquisite home” (1998: 18). With Elizabeth’s marital concerns set in the historical context of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the Scottish rebellions against militia recruitment, the protagonist’s efforts to reassess Wickham’s trustworthiness as a suitor based on communal knowledge inevitably induce her to rethink about the propriety of those communal structures. Although

¹⁶⁹ Bonaparte summarises the multiple improprieties of Wickham’s dishonest conversation with Elizabeth: “She recalls how freely Wickham had spoken to her of himself, how quickly he had confided to her what should have been his private thoughts, how unreservedly he had complained that Darcy had treated him unfairly” (155). For other similar analyses, see Soni (377).

Elizabeth gradually learns to rely more on communal documentation than on her own whimsical inclinations in her evaluation of Wickham, Austen by no means depicts existent communal networks as perfect sources of information. In *Pride and Prejudice*, various episodes of communal mistakes from Lady Lucas's invented "report" about Bingley's large assembly to the Meryton residents' initial appreciation of Wickham's personality highlight the frequent unreliability of a community's judgment and therefore the necessity to further improve its operation (PP 10). According to Deresiewicz, the reformation of Elizabeth's behaviour through epistolary exchanges constitutes a subtle comment on the English nation, with Elizabeth's advantageous marriage at the end of the novel symbolising her discovery of a better communal or national order: "it is through her love for one of those men that she begins to establish a new and better community," with her married life at Pemberley "sketching an alternative vision of communal life that corrects what has been shown to be vicious and preserves what has been shown to be cherishable [sic] in it" (520–521, 504). By correcting the "vicious" and cherishing the valuable in its reformation of English communal life, epistolary exchanges that reshape Elizabeth into the mistress of Pemberley also discipline the national arrangements of Austen's genteel England, punish their improprieties and improve their efficiency.

As Elizabeth's new home at Pemberley epitomises an improved version of the English nation, her love for Darcy instead of Wickham as a result of letter- and community-rereading symbolises a preference for the panoptic control of national spaces rather than the random transgression of national boundaries. As enclosed national spaces designed to defend England's territories, the militia regiments in Austen's novel tolerate capricious crossings of geographical, social or gender boundaries and therefore contrast sharply with the carefully managed estate of Pemberley, another epitome of the English nation. According to Kelly, "Pemberley as chronotope of the modern nation is constructed in terms of what many, including Austen, apparently, considered the best and distinctively English taste in architecture, landscaping, and furnishing" (2015: 225). As both the militia regiments and the Pemberley estate are closely associated with the English nation, a comparison of the two different forms of national spaces sheds light on the organisation of Austen's England. While Murphy points out that "Meryton, with its billeted militia officers, is one of the novel's greatest sites of danger" (136), Deresiewicz argues that "Pemberley is far less tolerant of vice and stupidity than Meryton is (Mrs. Bennet is made to feel unwelcome; Wickham is excluded)" (530). Similarly, Fulford states that "Austen opposes Brighton Camp to Pemberley [...]: as Elizabeth discovers at Pemberley, order and tradition turn an appealing address into a place of virtue. Brighton Camp,

by contrast, is a transitory place with no foundation” (174). Faced with spaces of capricious, dangerous metamorphoses and those of strict disciplinary control, Elizabeth eventually chooses the latter for her matrimony and regrets her previous tolerance of the former. After Lydia’s elopement, Elizabeth admits that she should have imposed communal punishment on Wickham’s treachery by revealing his past deviance to her Hertfordshire neighbours before he manages to seduce her sister: “I might have prevented it! – I who knew what he was. Had I but explained [...] some part of what I learnt, to my own family! Had his character been known, this could not have happened” (PP 305–306). Having learnt to value Darcy’s epistolary revelation of Wickham’s history, Elizabeth recognises here the necessity of further spreading disciplinary documentations through communal networks and punishing deviant behaviour before it causes serious damage. In other words, she approves of Darcy’s reliance on communal surveillance rather than Wickham’s on random transformation. Stressing Darcy’s success in finding Lydia through “the connections in Derbyshire and London that give him both knowledge of Wickham’s past and power with regard to the present” – in other words the power of communal supervision and punishment – Fulford concludes that “Austen looks to Darcy and his fellow landowner Bingley, rather than to the new social order of the army, for a model of social and national government” (171). As Wickham’s militia facilitates rebirth-like adventures in an absolutist system while Darcy’s social circles encourage disciplinary reformations under panoptic surveillance, Elizabeth’s preference for Darcy presents Pemberley as the epitome of a better national community than the militia.

Since communal structures as epitomes of national governance are both consolidated and reformed through the writing, reading as well as rereading of epistolary texts, national and narrative forms blend together in the figurative network of cage-like England. Refusing to interpret Austen’s “marriage plot [...] as a detachable marker of a static ideological dictum,” McKeon proposes to read *Pride and Prejudice* “as an actively contradictory process of ideological inquiry rather than as the defense of an already existent ideology” (2005: 714). Just as the reformation of individual characters is no brief occurrence of random miracles but a long process of disciplinary (self-)improvement, the reformation of the English national community does not end at the end of the novel. While Elizabeth’s choice of Pemberley signals both the correction of personal as well as communal prejudices and the start of her married life with even more disciplinary rules, Austen’s exploration of English nationhood continues in her wise, witty but never definitive representations of English men and women.

4.4 Conclusion

While in *Pamela* Mr B's houses become cage-like prisons for the protagonist due to his confinement of her movements and invasion of her privacy, in *Pride and Prejudice* genteel characters are often confined to their panoptic local communities as a consequence of infrastructural, financial and social restrictions. As domestic, local and national spaces blend with each other in both novels, the disciplinary practices of mutual observation enforce decorous codes, punish deviant behaviour, reform fellow supervisors and bring about a widespread internalisation of social norms. As the literary practices of letter writing and letter reading blend with the carceral and national structures of panoptic governance, the strenuous reformation of English people both inside and outside the novelistic storyworlds develops into a normative reconstruction of English national spaces.

Despite Pamela's obsession with the panoptic practices of observation, documentation and reformation, womb-like prison tropes can also be found in Richardson's epistolary novel. While Sally Godfrey's transatlantic voyage to Jamaica resembles Moll Flanders's transformative crossings of carceral and national boundaries (though without Moll's freedom to return to England), Pamela's own experience of imprisonment in Lincolnshire also evokes the trope of the womb in multiple scenes. Comparing Mrs Jewkes in *Pamela* with the Governess in *Moll Flanders*, Robert A. Erickson detects subtle allusions to sex, pregnancy and birth in the Lincolnshire episodes of Richardson's novel: "In her figurative role as midwife to the young woman in her care, Mrs. Jewkes" performs two key tasks: "to deliver Pamela of the secret body of letters which the girl sews to her underclothes, and eventually to deliver Pamela herself up to Mr. B. for the purpose of sexual consummation" (500). Similarly, Gwilliam claims that Pamela's writings "create a kind of paper pregnancy" (126), while Leiman examines the ambiguity of Mr B's language when he refers to Pamela's domestic incarceration: "'the Time of her Confinement,' a phrase that suggestively refers to the birthing of her narrative as well as her imprisonment at his estate," associates Pamela's prison with her literary creation (243). By interpreting Pamela's body, the Lincolnshire house or the experience of imprisonment in general as the figurative womb that first nourishes and then gives birth to Pamela's epistolary narrative, these scholars blend the concept of the womb with that of the prison in their analyses of Pamela's letter-writing activity. Another hint at rebirth can be found, according to McKeon, in the timing of Pamela's wedding: "the day of the wedding superstitiously commemorates not only Pamela's birthday but also the days of her arrival at Bedfordshire and of her abduction from it, both of which have already been associated with a rebirth" (2002: 375). The link between her imprisonment and her marriage is established by Pamela herself when she

proposes to Mr B that their wedding should take place on Thursday: “Of a *Thursday* your poor *Pamela* was born: Of a *Thursday* my dear good Lady took me from my Parents into her Protection: Of a *Thursday*, Sir, you caus’d me to be carry’d away to this Place, to which I now [...] owe so amazingly all my present Prospects” (P 326). As Pamela’s entrance into and departure from the prison-like Bedfordshire house take place on the same weekday as her biological birth as well as her entry into matrimony, another prison-like system that facilitates the lifelong operation of domestic supervision, the trope of birth or rebirth in Richardson’s *Pamela* highlights the protagonist’s embrace of panoptic surveillance rather than her liberation from it even in the most lifechanging situations of her life.

Apart from the rebirth trope, other features of womb-like prisons are also present in the romantic episodes of Richardson’s novel. Contrary to de Freval’s statement that *Pamela* “borrows none of its Excellencies from the romantic Flights of unnatural Fancy,” romantic elements prevail in Richardson’s depiction of a maidservant-turned-gentlewoman (5–6). While Mr B repeatedly draws on romantic expressions that evoke the prison-like love trope – e.g. “insnaring Loveliness,” “the sweet Girl has taken me Prisoner,” “the pleasantest Fetters that ever Man wore” – Pamela also evokes romantic storyworlds in her dramatic reactions to her confinement (P 197, 292, 292). When kissed by Mr B in Bedfordshire, Pamela enters Lucretia’s storyworld to emphasise her chastity and mentions death as one possible consequence of her incarceration: “May I, said I, *Lucretia* like, justify myself with my Death, if I am used barbarously? O my good Girl! said he, tauntingly, you are well read, I see; and we shall make out between us, before we have done, a pretty Story in Romance” (P 32). Like Arabella’s quixotic mimesis of romance heroines, Pamela’s purposeful imitation of Lucretia’s manners brings her briefly into the romantic storyworld where the absolute power of capricious authorities can result in the prisoner’s death. By “tauntingly” underlining the romantic tendency of Pamela’s behaviour, however, Mr B calls into question the sincerity of Pamela’s imitative speech and represents her fictional journey into the romantic storyworld as a cunning performance that deviates from the moral norm of honesty. Noticing Mr B’s hint that he is staging “a pretty Story in Romance” with Pamela instead of sexually harassing her, Fuchs argues that “Mr B himself uses romance to frame his advances on Pamela’s virtue, attempting to transform her from would-be martyr into a willing literary accomplice of the right genre” (114). Mr B’s reliance on the literary form of romance in his effort to discredit Pamela’s romantic speech draws attention to Richardson’s adoption of romance strategies in his

seemingly anti-romantic novel.¹⁷⁰ As Fuchs puts it, “the interest of the narrative lies precisely in the breathless, even prurient deferral of the seduction: we read avidly of Pamela’s confinement, her near rapes, her close escapes from the voracious sexual appetite of her master,” with Pamela’s almost miraculous success in evading Mr B’s sexual advances represented through the romance strategy of narrative delay (113). Focused on the miraculous events in Richardson’s novel that repeatedly postpone its ending, McKeon examines Pamela’s arbitrary transformation of ordinary circumstances into dramatic scenes, claiming that “she is a ‘romancer’” who associates “the Lincolnshire abduction and confinement” with “episodes of errancy and trial out of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*,” and “enchants cows into bulls and bulls into Lucifer” (2002: 363). Similar to Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*, Richardson’s *Pamela* also portrays prison-like spaces in which rebirth- or death-related metamorphoses take place randomly because of the protagonist’s fictional adventures into romantic storyworlds. Unlike Arabella’s acquisition of absolute female authority, however, Pamela’s romantic notions about cows, bulls and Lucifer lead her back into her domestic prison in Lincolnshire, reforming the rebellious prison escapee into a content prisoner in the panoptic spaces of disciplinary surveillance.

The narrative form of romance also blends with the womb-like and cage-like carceral forms in *Pride and Prejudice*, a novel which represents England’s militia regiments as national spaces of capricious authority and random transformation in contrast to Pemberley’s panoptic surveillance. As Poovey points out, *Pride and Prejudice* rejects the capricious kind of romantic love that dictates the actions of the lovers ever since their first short acquaintance: “Elizabeth’s actual romantic fantasies about Darcy are short-lived; the only dashing young man she fantasizes extensively about is Wickham” (200). By contrasting Elizabeth’s ill-judged passion for Wickham with her slowly growing respect for Darcy, Austen highlights the superiority of Darcy’s communally disciplined Pemberley over Wickham’s loosely governed militia, and disapproves of the latter’s random transformation from an unscrupulous debtor into a charming victim. This disapprobation of groundless romantic passion is also expressed by Mrs Gardiner, who sounds a note of caution when Elizabeth declares that Bingley “was violently in love with” Jane: “But that expression of ‘violently in love’ is so hackneyed, so doubtful, so indefinite, that it gives me very little idea. It is as often applied to feelings which arise only from an half hour’s acquaintance, as to a real, strong attachment” (PP 160). Criticising the romantic belief in

¹⁷⁰ For a different analysis of Mr B’s references to romance in his interactions with Pamela, see Chaskin (77).

“feelings which arise only from an half hour’s acquaintance,” feelings which have imprisoning effects on Arabella’s heroes, Mrs Gardiner warns against any abrupt, and thus often transformative, decisions about love or marriage. During her rejection of Collins’s proposal, Elizabeth also rebukes romance heroines’ wilful prolongation of courtship through repeated rejections of even their favourite suitors: “I do assure you, Sir, that I have no pretension whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. [...] Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you” (PP 122). While Elizabeth questions the moral propriety of absolute female authority through her comment on romance heroines’ habit of rejecting or “tormenting” their lovers, her claim that no woman would be “so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time” stresses the absence of any such authority in her storyworld (PP 122, 120). However, the fact that Elizabeth is indeed “asked a second time” by the owner of Pemberley indicates the influence of romantic forces even on the most panoptic spaces of Austen’s England. As Poovey puts it, “in awarding Elizabeth this handsome husband with ten thousand pounds a year, Austen is gratifying the reader’s fantasy that such outspoken liveliness *will* be successful in material terms” (201). Identifying “unaccountable, uncontrollable romantic love [...] in Darcy’s desire for Elizabeth,” Poovey further argues that “[r]omantic love remains the unexamined and unaccountable source of power in a novel preoccupied with various forms of social and psychological power and powerlessness” (201). Whereas Elizabeth’s unchecked passion for Wickham is punished and reformed by her humiliating rereading of Darcy’s letter, Darcy’s unexplained love for Elizabeth is not only allowed to grow in the centre of panoptic supervision, but it also facilitates the reformation of Austen’s two protagonists. If epistolary exchanges as one central element of Austen’s panoptic England hinder Wickham’s pursuit of social mobility through physical movements, the irresistible affection that Darcy feels for Elizabeth without any specific reason signals the presence of capricious elements in the most orderly spaces of the national panopticon. The blending of the womb and the cage tropes in *Pride and Prejudice* draws attention to the constant interactions between different carceral, national and narrative forms in literary texts of the long eighteenth century. Although these forms can be tentatively divided into various categories, no single category remains unchanged throughout the novel and no single form dominates the formal encounter for long.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

In the selected works of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Charlotte Lennox and Jane Austen, the concepts of the womb, the cage, the prison, the nation and various narrative strategies blend with each other in the figurative representations of a thief-turned-gentlewoman, maid-turned-lady, aristocrat gone mad and lovers properly educated – characters who undergo transformations or reformations in the absolutist or contractual English national spaces of the long eighteenth century.

In Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Newgate Prison encounters absolutist England as boundary-crossing adventures lead to death- or rebirth-like transformations in the process of spiritual-autobiographical or criminal-biographical narration. As both the protagonist's birthplace and the prelude to her social rebirth, Newgate is associated with home, motherhood and domestic relationships in Defoe's novel, evoking the trope of the womb in its transformative impact on Moll's life. In this womb-like prison, inmates are subject to the absolute authority of capricious prison officials who govern carceral spaces to make economic profits rather than educate the deviants. As Moll's exits from and entries into Newgate mirror her departures from and returns to England, the concepts of the womb and the prison blend further with the spaces of the English nation, whose monarchs, aristocrats and patriarchs enjoy unchallenged superiority in their respective realms and demonstrate supreme power through the practices of corporal punishment or economic domination. As the absolute rulers of both Newgate and England attach more importance to financial gains than to social decorum, the unsystematically regulated carceral and national spaces, together with their loosely governed boundaries, encourage frequent physical adventures in quests for social metamorphoses. Whereas Moll's trips within Newgate or England contribute to her social mobility primarily by concealing her identity, her boundary-crossing movements repeatedly bring about death- or rebirth-like changes in her social status. After her biological birth in Newgate, England, Moll's first departure from her carceral and national birthplace has death-like consequences for her social standing, with Moll the toddler joining a group of socially isolated vagabonds and Moll the wife facing life-threatening dangers at sea as well as an incestuous marriage in America. Similarly, her re-entrance into Newgate leads her into a hell-like, tomb-like place, while her first return to England leaves her in a state of friendless desolation. In contrast, her second transatlantic adventure transforms her from a notorious convict waiting for her execution in Newgate to a happy landowner enjoying both economic success and domestic authority. As boundary-crossing adventures in *Moll Flanders* randomly trigger transformative changes in the travellers' social positions without disciplining their deviant behaviour, the various narrative

strategies deployed by Defoe in his representations of a thief-turned-gentlewoman interact with the hierarchical structures of Newgate-like England. As one important narrative convention that Defoe draws on in his novel, the literary form of spiritual autobiography subtly destabilises the national form of absolutist England because the protagonist's rebirth as the climax of typical spiritual autobiographies takes place without any spiritual reformation and, therefore, challenges the sovereign authority of the English monarchs or their clergymen. If the form of spiritual autobiography underlines primarily the absence of judicial justice in Defoe's England, the loose narrative structure of criminal biography mirrors the loose social structure of the English nation which fails to offer its ordinary people sufficient institutional support – or at least a chance to survive. Attributing Moll's deviant conduct to the general lack of equality or the patriarchal oppression of women, the criminal biographical form conveys Defoe's criticism of England's inability to protect its law-abiding residents or punish the deviant ones. As Moll eventually benefits from her incestuous marriage outside England, deviance on both domestic and national levels blends with the concepts of the womb and the prison in the figurative network of capricious authority, random transformation and (auto)biographical narration.

Whereas multiple analogies exist between Defoe's Newgate Prison and Newgate-like England, carceral and national spaces in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* are composed of diametrically opposite structures. Despite the absence of literal penal institutions in the eighteenth-century setting of Lennox's novel, the marquis's castle is frequently depicted as a domestic prison for the protagonist. Accommodating the marchioness's romance volumes and satisfying the marquis's romantic taste, the castle blends the concepts of home, motherhood, romance and imprisonment in its womb-like functions of sheltering, nourishing and confining Arabella. In addition to her carceral home, the literal prison spaces in Arabella's romantic stories and the figurative prison imageries in her romantic language exhibit the womb-like features of capricious absolute authority and random individual transformation. Contrary to *Moll Flanders*, however, romantic prisons in *The Female Quixote* grant royal women unchallengeable power over their suitors as well as their subjects, thus differing significantly from the socially contractual but domestically patriarchal spaces of eighteenth-century England, whose constitutional system softens the strict stratification of social ranks but not the restrictive codes of proper femininity. As the romantic representations of female charm as both incarcerating and sovereign blend domestic hierarchy with carceral arrangements and royal absolutism, the tropes of prison-like home, womb-like prison, prison-like love and prison-like nation encounter each other in a dynamic figurative network of romantic prisons and anti-romantic England. As English and non-English national spaces form two distinct storyworlds

in Lennox's novel, fictional adventures into the womb-like, prison-like storyworld of romances result in arbitrary occurrences of social death or rebirth. Resembling the frequent journeys into or out of prisons in French romances, Arabella narratively crosses carceral and national boundaries despite being physically confined within the English territory. Whereas some of her quixotic manoeuvres transform her from an obscure woman in patriarchal England into a socially as well as morally glorified romance heroine, others deprive her of the ability to make independent speeches or judgements, leaving her in a death-like state of unthinking imitation. Similarly, Lucy metamorphoses during her journeys into Arabella's romantic storyworld from a contractually employed servant into either an aristocrat's confidant with remarkable influence or an unsuccessful imitator without individual selfhood. Entering the romantic storyworld through his own fictional-autobiographical narration, Sir George also faces random consequences, ranging from royal rebirth to almost fatal wounds. Such arbitrary transformations of fictional travellers' social or corporal status are facilitated by the narrative strategies of romance, whose tendency to idealise the protagonists, encourage random escapes and postpone the end of the story highlights the superiority of Arabella's womb-like storyworld over contractual, patriarchal England. This criticism of the English nation is most evident when romance associates Arabella, as well as her mentally constructed storyworld, with the directly anti-English forces of Jacobite, Scottish and Catholic traditions. In this confrontation between national and narrative forms, the practices of biographical narration, either imagined or actualised, also satirise eighteenth-century England by offering alternative histories of absolute female glory and thus challenging the male-dominated comprehension of the national past. As Arabella's desire for her personal biography ironically comes true in the form of *The Female Quixote*, the blending of romance, biography and history joins the tropes of womb-like prisons and prison-like nations in the figurative network of fictional escapes.

If Moll and Arabella undertake boundary-crossing adventures to achieve social rebirth, Samuel Richardson's Pamela manipulates disciplinary gazes within the borders of cage-like England, with her epistolary writings reforming herself, her fellow observers and the contractually organised English nation in the style of conduct literature. Stressing her lack of power or privacy in Mr B's Bedfordshire house, Pamela evokes the tropes of prison-like houses and cage-like prisons even before she is literally incarcerated in his Lincolnshire mansion, another domestic space that recalls the perpetual operation of disciplinary surveillance in penitentiary institutions. As the representations of a maidservant's domestic imprisonment by her upper-class master contain multiple allusions to nation-related concepts, the blending of domestic and national spaces in the figurative network of the cage-like home sheds light on the

primarily contractual structure of the English nation. Despite the lingering influence of royal and patriarchal absolutism on Richardson's England, *Pamela* imposes disciplinary restrictions on the actions of both aristocrats and commoners, both men and women, subjecting them all to the rules of social equality, free consent and individual property. Imposing contractual limitations on all its residents, this cage-like English nation does not encourage any capricious transgression of social or normative boundaries. Just as Sally Godfrey (with her sexual deviance) can only enjoy her new identity as an exile outside the English territory, other violations of social norms are also labelled as non-English. Confined within the borders of her domestic and national prisons, Pamela negotiates for power by meticulously documenting and judging Mr B's conduct while he gazes back at her and closely observes her daily activities. Taking advantage of the mechanism of disciplinary supervision, Pamela skilfully presents herself as a paragon of propriety in front of her supervisors and even draws on their inspective gazes to further improve her reputation. As fellow observers internalise the social norms that they impose on each other and therefore become their own discipliners, the practice of mutual supervision reforms Richardson's characters through neither boundary-crossing adventures nor abrupt social metamorphoses. Just as Pamela's spiritual development brings her back into her Lincolnshire prison, her seemingly transformative marriage to Mr B further strengthens the imprisoning effect of her cage-like nation. Similarly, Mr B's illness and recovery during his reformation from an immoral libertine into a responsible husband, though evocative of the concept of rebirth, take place exclusively in his prison-like Lincolnshire house and under the disciplinary effect of mutual observation. The domestic and national forms of cage-like surveillance are reinforced by the literary forms of epistolary writing and conduct literature. Blending with the carceral form of normative supervision through its similar invasion of individual privacy and reformation of material reality, the form of epistolary narration allows Pamela's readers both inside and outside her storyworld to reshape her letters, while these letters also reform their reformers in return and even rewrite the concept of English nationhood through a conduct-book-style redefinition of English norms. Illustrating his expectations of marital relationships, domestic arrangements and servantly manners in the style of conduct literature, Richardson thus constructs an English nation of normalising surveillance, mutual reformation and self-discipline through a blending of panoptic, contractual, epistolary and didactic forms.

While Pamela is literally imprisoned by her master in the first half of Richardson's novel, genteel characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* suffer from physical as well as social immobility despite the absence of any concrete prisons, with epistolary exchanges further

consolidating the panoptic structure of the English national community. Unable to travel freely because of infrastructural, financial and social restrictions, Austen's characters arrange their daily activities within the geographical borders of local neighbourhoods and the normative boundaries of proper behaviour, with communal structures evoking the cage-like prison trope due to their constant practice of surveillance. Since the constrictive norms of Austen's gentry hinder any abrupt change of social standing, even families who have achieved upward social mobility do not experience any rebirth-like transformation in their panoptic communities. As an 'imagined community' epitomised by various local communities, the English nation plays a concealed but crucial role in *Pride and Prejudice*, blending with domestic or regional organisations and comprising primarily cage-like spaces of disciplinary supervision. Contractually organised and normatively governed, England in Austen's novel grants no absolute authority to its aristocrats or patriarchs except in the enclosed spaces of the militia regiments, where the officers' frequent transgressions of geographical, social and gender boundaries recall rebirth-like metamorphoses in womb-like prisons. Tolerating corporal punishment and random transformations, these militia regiments constitute socially marginalised but politically significant national spaces in contrast to Darcy's decorously managed Pemberley. In the panoptic part of Austen's England, the spread of gossip facilitates the disciplinary documentation of individual deeds while the traditions of neighbourly visits and regular assemblies intensify the communal practice of mutual observation. Aware of others' inspective gazes and laughed at when they behave improperly, Austen's genteel characters discipline themselves in accordance with the norms of propriety, internalise these constrictive codes and impose them on their observers in return. As both discipliners and the disciplined, Elizabeth and Darcy undergo strenuous reformations of their personalities while other imperfect but improvable characters also manipulate the surveillance system to achieve their own furtive purposes. Like in *Pamela*, the panoptic structure of Austen's England relies on letters to document and punish deviant behaviour, although *Pride and Prejudice* is not an epistolary novel in its final version. While the documented violations of social norms are collectively censured by Austen's panoptic community, the letter writers who document deviance are also subject to the readers' intensive supervision and thus compelled to discipline their own behaviour. Similarly, the recipients of epistolary texts also do not escape the impact of panoptic surveillance, scrutinising and reforming their own conduct in the process of letter reading and rereading. As epistolary exchanges come to epitomise the communal structure of disciplinary reformation, literary, carceral and national forms blend into a re-examination of the English nation, with Elizabeth's love for Darcy instead of Wickham symbolising a

preference for the Pemberley-style governance of national spaces in contrast to the militia's toleration of capricious transformations.

In the encounters of carceral, national and narrative forms, the tropes of womb-like prisons, cage-like prisons and prison-like nations blend into a figurative network of various concepts: capricious authority, contractual relationship, random transformation, disciplinary reformation, boundary-crossing adventure and mutually practised supervision. All these concepts and many more prevail in the novelistic representations of England during the long eighteenth century.

With carceral tropes detected in almost every corner of daily life, the figurative representations of prison-like eighteenth-century England also shed light on numerous social arrangements of the twenty-first century. As the United Kingdom, England in particular, distances itself from the European continent again after joining the European Communities only in 1973, the political debates, disasters and developments surrounding Brexit invite further investigations into the conceptualisation of English nationhood in relation to not only other European countries but also Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and former British colonies. Although Scotland is briefly alluded to in novels like *The Female Quixote* or *Pride and Prejudice*, discussions about Scottish nationality are intentionally left out of this dissertation because this extremely complicated topic deserves an entirely separate volume of its own. Similarly, the representations of carceral and national structures in British colonies of the long eighteenth century cannot be examined in this work because their colonial context requires a different conceptual framework that incorporates the vast diversity of cultural identities, imperialist practices and local histories involved. Where Brexit primarily draws attention to the political formation of English nationhood or nationalism in isolation from other neighbouring countries, the tropes of womb-like or cage-like nations can also be found in the individual lives of our contemporary age. Through physical journeys across national borders or narrative entrances into international media, twenty-first-century dissidents transform from deviants imprisoned by oppressive regimes into heroes widely celebrated in other countries. When an asylum application is rejected, however, the asylum seeker becomes an illegal immigrant to be deported from familiar neighbourhoods to unknown spaces of danger or opportunity. The abrupt occurrences of rebirth- or death-like changes in the social status of such boundary-crossers both differ from and recall the transatlantic voyages of Defoe's Moll Flanders or the romantic escapes of Lennox's Arabella, evoking the womb-like prison trope and its positive as well as negative implications. Similarly, the cage-like carceral form prevails in the surveillance cameras and data collection apparatuses of our modern society, with the scanning of QR codes,

the consent to Cookies and the use of non-encrypted messaging services all contributing to the documentation of our everyday activities. As various measures of data protection are carried out to prevent governments from misusing their vast access to personal data, national and panoptic structures blend in the most private spheres of a citizen's life. As the formal blending of the womb, the cage, the prison, the nation and the narration takes place both in long-eighteenth-century novels and in our contemporary spaces, the novelistic representations of England in prison tropes help us better understand the diverse layers of human society inside as well as outside literary storyworlds.

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