

Women, Work, Rearguard Politics, and Defoe's *Moll Flanders*

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The last third of *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders* (1722) opens as Defoe's title character has been reunited with her husband, Jemy, in Newgate prison. Having recently undergone her own conversion, repentance, and reprieve, Moll exhorts Jemy to follow her example by pleading no contest to the charges against him. In so doing, Moll argues, he might save his own life and be sentenced to transportation rather than risk hanging for his highway robberies. Alive in the colonies, "there might be an Hundred ways for him that was a Gentleman, and a bold enterprizing Man to find his way back again."¹ Like so much of Defoe's writing, Moll's exhortations to Jemy are thick with interpretive possibilities. Among the most obvious of these possibilities is that Moll's promise of a new life in North America underscores the half-century-old critical convention that Defoe's novel epitomizes Enlightenment individualism's central claim that "persons" are "ends in themselves."² As Ian Watt put the matter, "Moll Flanders . . . is a characteristic product of modern individualism in assuming that she owes it to herself to achieve the highest economic and social rewards."³ Fifty years later, interpretations of *Moll Flanders* still hew in this direction. Individualism remains the dominant hermeneutic for cultural and literary historians of the eighteenth century alike, and Defoe continues to be understood as the ideology's particular purveyor, as his characters, perhaps more than those of any other novelist until Richardson, struggle with their "needs for autonomous security."⁴

Superficially, Defoe's commitment to the Enlightenment account of individualism is hard to dispute. From most vantage points, Moll looks self-reliant for exactly the reasons Watt and others have described. Yet closer scrutiny of Moll's Newgate conversation with Jemy reveals a formidable challenge to this critical shibboleth. For in this passage and others in the novel, "enterprise" has nothing at all to do with self-fulfillment. On the contrary, throughout the novel, Defoe very clearly represents "enterprize" as an antidote to the vagaries and degradations of collective affiliation. Jemy initially rejects Moll's proposal

that the couple accept transportation to North America and challenges his wife's assumptions that entrepreneurial initiative is the avenue to "find his way back again" to England. In his eyes "enterprize" is little more than "Servitude and hard Labour" and these are "things Gentlemen could never stoop to, that it was but the way to force them to be their own Executioners" (236). Jemy is resolute in his opposition. But Defoe's heroine is nothing if not resourceful. After two pages of ineffective argument, Moll finally explains that "enterprize" has nothing to do with "Servitude," but is, on the contrary, the instrument that will liberate the two from the sordid associations of the commons and the "Mob" (234). In North America, Moll points out to Jemy, they might "live as new People in a new World, no Body having any thing to say to us, or we to them" (238). For Moll, the felicities of a life free from public commentary and communal accountability contrast sharply with the perils of London's underworld where association made her constantly vulnerable to betrayal and violent reprisal either at the hands of her own confederates or the hands of the state. She paints a chilling picture of the dangers of collective affiliation in which "Enemies" vie to "upbraid" the couple with "past disasters" (238). Moll's arguments cannot be dismissed easily as an expedience born of a desperate moment. The very plot of the novel tells us that if Moll's persuasion fails, Jemy will hang, and the novel will end without establishing its new Eden. Given their centrality to the plot, Moll's arguments about the relationship between individual "enterprize" and local, communal relations also suggests to readers an important question that implicates both Defoe's novel and the critical conventions that surround it in a surprisingly conservative polemic: why was seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England so invested in proliferating narratives of Enlightenment individualism?

I argue here that *Moll Flanders* exposes individualism's roots in intersecting seventeenth-century discourses on women, work, and nonelite social relations. Paula McDowell has argued recently that Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, also published in 1722, is fundamentally an exercise in historical revision wherein Defoe sought to retool England's oral past as the prelude to its "print-oriented future."⁵ *Moll Flanders* is that and much more. While *Journal of the Plague Year* served Defoe's personal interest in elevating the prestige of print, *Moll Flanders* more ambitiously rewrites the economic and political terms of England's seventeenth-century past, in order to render that history prelude to a near future in which the state would function as the ascendant social category and work would be defined as a solitary contribution to the commonweal.

I: THE "PEOPLE'S POWER" AND THE TERMS OF POLITICAL DEBATE

Defoe's motivation for undertaking such a capacious project was likely complex. Like most of his contemporaries, his imagination remained haunted by

the specter of a social "world turn'd upside down," introduced during the civil wars (1641–48). Defoe had worried as early as 1698 that England had become a "Commonwealth of Vice," in which the "Devil has taken care to level Poor and Rich into one Class."⁶ Nearly two decades later, similar fears made Defoe an ardent supporter of the Septennial Act, which extended the maximum amount of time between Parliamentary elections from three to seven years and was designed to "reduce the power of the electorate over its representatives."⁷ In a tract titled "The Alteration of the Triennial Act Considered" (1716), Defoe complained that England's electorate was too fickle and that, without the Septennial Act, the nation would be condemned to endure endless political upheaval—not only triennial parliaments, but "a Triennial King, Triennial Alliances, and a Triennial Constitution."⁸ The bonfires that greeted Parliament's dissolution in the year of *Moll Flanders's* publication (1722), doubtlessly did little to persuade Defoe that ordinary Englishmen could shoulder the responsibilities of power without descending to mob rule.

By the time Defoe came to write *Moll Flanders* his antipathy for England's commoners was as entrenched as his involvement in shaping England's political identity was well established. It is all the more surprising, then, that *Moll Flanders* contains only one explicit historical reference. Nonetheless, it is a reference that opens the fabric of England's historical and political formation in astonishing ways. On the novel's final page, Moll reveals that she has finished composing her memoir in 1683 and that she is "almost seventy Years of Age" (267). The math is simple. Born around 1613, Moll's life spans some of the most tumultuous years in England's history, including the years of civil war and Interregnum. The dual disclosure of both her age and the date clearly is designed to "reveal" a foundational allegory underlying the novel. Moll's retirement from a similarly tumultuous personal history suggests a crude parallel between her life and the life of the nation. The parallel becomes compelling, however, as it prompts readers to recognize the novel's revisionist project. For the date functions like a signature and, through the process of her narrative, Moll becomes, in effect, "1683" just as "1683" becomes the culmination of the disparate events of Moll's life.⁹

The year 1683 was a watershed in English politics. During this year nearly two decades of political conflict between the Whig defenders of political rights and loyalist defenders of the crown culminated in Charles II's authoritarian assertion of his political power. Support for the monarchy's restoration had never been uniform, but during the late 1660s, the opposition took on a more serious cast. These were the years that witnessed the return of former civil war radicals to legitimate seats of government, indicating that opposition to crown authority could not be dismissed as a mercurial symptom of England's lunatic political fringe. Men who had been leading advocates of "participatory . . . government" during the Commonwealth, including William Kiffin, Henry Brandreth, and Slingsby Bethel, were elected to London's Court of Aldermen.¹⁰ In the 1670s a second generation of opposition

leaders who similarly viewed themselves as defenders of London's franchise, like Thomas Player, Patience Ward, Thomas Pilkington, and Robert Clayton, began their rise to power as "political apprentices" to "old radical masters."¹¹

In 1683, the acrimony between the crown and its opposition boiled over when a plot was discovered to assassinate the king and his brother. The so-called Rye House Plot gave Charles II the excuse he needed to purge from several levels of government those he viewed as radicals. Consequently, Charles II turned his wrath on London and revoked the city's right to self-government through the *quo warranto* proceedings.¹² The revocation was a bitter reminder to London's citizens that their political power existed only at the king's pleasure.¹³ Whigs and radicals were expelled from all aspects of city government and replaced with Tory loyalists.¹⁴ *Moll Flanders's* signature, "1683," thus sutures a past dominated by pressing concerns that England's nonelite was in the process of acquiring sufficient political power to overthrow the monarchy once again to an eighteenth-century present characterized by similar fears.

Like the conservatives of the Restoration, Defoe's antipopulism was not simply a reactionary effort to strip England's nonelite of their meager political powers. The real fear he shared with his Restoration antecedents was the concern that midcentury radicals had altered the terms of political debate irrevocably by making "interest" the ground of political power rather than ancestral title, virtue, or even education. Emerging in the 1650s' writings of men like Marrchamont Nedham, Bethel, and John Streater, English republicans came to understand that the "basis of economic [and political] well-being was not natural endowment but human labor" and that labor was the foundation of "interest."¹⁵ This "vernacular" republicanism led to a wider sense of enfranchisement because, unlike classical republicanism's emphasis on "virtue," one did not need leisure to develop one's interest. In theory, anyone who worked could stake a claim in defending the common good.¹⁶ The shift in radical thought away from questions of "entitlement" to questions of "investment" reverberated across England's political landscape. Among the most profound transformations it effected was the relocation of "work," viewed as an effect of "interest," at the epicenter of late seventeenth-century political debate, rendering it one of the most contested terms of the period. *Moll Flanders* is a conservative contribution to the ongoing debate over whether work can function as the foundation of political enfranchisement as Defoe repeatedly thwarts Moll's opportunities to earn an honest living.

Restoration conservatives were acutely attuned to the sense of entitlement "interest" had created in the hearts and minds of ordinary Englishmen. Even before Charles II's return, the Marquis of Newcastle warned the newly restored king that dissolving this "entitlement" among the nation's "commonality" needed to be among his first priorities if he was to secure his power, for the new king was returning to a country in which "Every man is now become

a state man."¹⁷ The path royalists plotted was successful but treacherous. Initially, conservatives caricatured "interest" as a creature of populist sympathies, creating a "Monstrous" "Body" politic, "possessed of more heads than one," incapable of resolving its multiple interests into a single identity and sense of purpose.¹⁸ But they had to tread carefully. However much loyalists disdained the "People's Power," they could not reject the commercial foundation of England's prosperity, and thus could not dismiss "work" on merely partisan grounds without also charting a disastrous economic policy.¹⁹ To this end, royalists and other political conservatives conceded that "interest" could be the basis for political participation.²⁰ They disputed, however, that everyone was capable of generating the kind of "interest" that would sustain the commonweal.

Among those whose "interest" was most frequently demonized and who seemed to validate the conservative argument that proper "interest" needed to be socially delimited were "common women" or prostitutes.²¹ Mid-seventeenth-century English print culture is riddled with antirepublican and antisectarian pornographic satires that featured common women as the epitome of radicals' depraved political programs. The genre retained cultural currency during the Restoration largely because the terms of midcentury political conflict remained so durable. Grounded in slightly earlier examples from the civil wars and Interregnum, Restoration versions of these satires foreground the social relations that make nonelite women's political claims possible. These cheap publications feature women who work, either on their own or beside their husbands: "drapers, grocers, stationers, haberdashers" and "bricklayers, shoemakers, weavers, butchers, cutlers" in small shops or artisanal family businesses.²² In the majority of these works, the labor of women of the commons and "common women" is symmetrical because both types rely on the support of local networks of women—neighbors and family in the former case, bawds and pimps in the latter.²³ The satires thus enabled loyalist partisans to advance the claim that liberty, as radicals construed it, could be separated neither from a debased and effeminate commonality, nor from that commonality's proclivity for collective action. Indeed, one satire ridiculed claims like John Lilburne's that radicals collectively and selflessly held "[them]selves bound, in mutual duty to each other to take the best care we can for the future to avoid both the danger of returning into a slavish condition,"²⁴ by having its "parliament of women" issue the following rallying cry: "Your help, good Women, else we loose the day: / There is no reason we should be [men's] slaves, / We'll have our wills in spite of foolish Knaves."²⁵ Indeed, loyalist polemicists throughout the Restoration seemed to have gravitated towards sexual satires of nonelite women when political tensions were highest—a feature of late seventeenth-century mass culture that illuminates Defoe's decision to feature a woman who confesses herself "Twelve Year a Whore" as the protagonist for his historicist intervention.

Perhaps no satire from the Restoration illustrates the extent to which conservatives understood the relationship between community and “interest” as emasculating better than the notorious pamphlet titled *The Whores Rhetorick* (1683), published the same year that Moll’s narrative concludes.²⁶ *The Whores Rhetorick* purports to be a dialogue between an ingénue, Dorothea, and the bawd Mother Creswel (d. 1698), a notorious Whig sympathizer. In the course of her exchanges with Dorothea, Creswel promises to do her share and “feed” Dorothea with “Precepts suitable to the exercise [she] hast undertaken.”²⁷ For her part, Dorothea must remember the following “golden rule”:

For that, Daughter, I must tell you: a Whore is a Whore, but a Whore is not a Woman. . . . A Whore . . . must mind her *interest* [emphasis mine] not her sport; the Lovers sport, the ruine of his interest and the emptying of his Purse.²⁸

Not only does the passage make clear that the pursuit of interest comes at the expense of others, but it also defines whoring as a social and economic pathology rather than a moral transgression. Creswel’s admonition to Dorothea comes as the young woman protests that satisfying a superannuated lover requires an unnatural effort on the part of a woman attempting to do so. Creswel reminds Dorothea that that is precisely the point of being a whore. The cohesion of “interest” and “women,” which do not go together naturally, requires the support of a confederation that in its turn transforms the naturalized “woman” into a “whore.” Thus, “interest” and confederation become axiomatically pathological. It is this social pathology, moreover, that enables populist political participation. The aim of such confederations, as Creswel explains, is to “comfort and support the whole amorous Republic.”²⁹

The problematic intersection between “interest” and affiliation among nonelite women seems to have weighed heavily on Defoe in the years surrounding *Moll Flanders*. Just three years after the novel’s publication, he complained obstreperously that not only were servant wenches prone to “cabballing together,”³⁰ but, like the masterless men of the 1640s,

They rove from Place to Place, from Bawdy-house to Service, and from Service to Bawdy-house again, ever unsettled and never easy; nothing being more common than to find these creatures one Week in a good Family, and the next in a Brothel.³¹

Defoe is profoundly bothered by what he perceives as the serving-girls’ poor work ethic. But underlying that distaste is a more profound concern that young women rely heavily on opposing communities to facilitate their search for ever greater profit from their labors. For these serving-girls are prompted

to move, by Defoe's own account, only when those community relations cease to facilitate their "interest." The end result of this peripatetic activity is that women of the servant class are empowered to "become their own Lawgivers" and thereby "bamboozle a whole Nation."³² In general, the algorithm went something like the more "interest" was tied to the constraints and authority of local community, the greater its corruption. The more "interest" could be liberated from those local constraints, the more it could be harnessed to serve the commonweal. The conservative argument proved compelling. By the 1680s even John Locke would admit that local communities could not be repositories of political power, as he defined political society by the state's ability to be the sole "force of the community at home"—the only acceptable articulation of collective action.³³

Moll Flanders's engagement with this ambient fear of affiliation among England's nonelite is pivotal to Defoe's often nuanced and just as often counterintuitive historical revisionism. Unlike Defoe's prose tracts, *Moll Flanders* is not peppered with obstreperous complaints against social leveling; there are no scenes of mobs rising up to overthrow the government, no conventicles fostering political sedition, nothing that identifies *Moll Flanders* as an explicitly political novel. If *Moll Flanders's* "1683" signature confirms retrospectively that Defoe has intervened in England's recent past, the novel's "opening" makes it just as clear that the nature of this intervention is necessary because of inadequate state formation, for the very first page of *Moll Flanders* renders the very possibility of Moll's "history" contingent upon the demise of her former confederates and then makes her past desire for such affiliations a consequence of a state that has failed to function as the sole "force of the community at home."

The beginning of the novel locates Moll in a social aporia. Though her true name apparently is a matter of public record, Moll insists that "it is not to be expected that I should set my Name, or the Account of my Family to this Work" (9). More significantly, in Moll's estimation it now lies beyond the power of the state to create conditions that would allow her to do so. Even "tho' a general Pardon should be issued, even without Exceptions and reserve of Persons and Crimes," she cannot disclose her name. But because the state has managed to clear the social field of her "worst Comrades, who are out of the Way of doing [her] Harm, having gone out of the World by the Steps and the String" (9), she is at liberty to disclose her old criminal alias. Moll's reliance on her alias illuminates much about the relationship between history and the kind of moral Defoe wants his readers to encounter. By means of her alias, readers are aligned with Moll's former criminal confederates who likewise knew her only by that name. And we are to stay in that criminal position until, as Defoe points out in the novel's preface, we understand that we are to take personal pleasure in the "End of the Writer" rather than identify with the "Life of the Person written of" (4) and form a de facto affiliation.

In many ways, history thus functions as the supplement of the state, erupting when the state does not function as the dominant social category and directing readers away from unproductive affiliations and identifications and towards the commonweal. Moll can end her narrative in 1683 because in that year the state reasserted its authority. The fact that Moll's personal history supplements state authority in this novel also makes Moll's otherwise idiosyncratic reference to seventeenth-century geopolitics at the beginning of her story considerably more intelligible. Before we know even the location and circumstances of her birth, Moll embarks on a stinging comparison of early seventeenth-century England and France. In France, she observes, if any condemned criminal "leave any Children, as such are generally unprovided for, by the Poverty or Forefeiture of their Parents; so they are immediately taken in to the Care of the Government." "Had this been the case," laments Moll, she "had not been left a poor desolate Girl without Friends" (9–10). The passage is historically dense and revealing in ways that are typical of Defoe's work, casting readers back both to the civil wars and to the Restoration.³⁴ The comparison between France and England was typical of the strategies Samuel Hartlib and other members of his circle had used to goad Parliament towards social reformation in the 1640s by similarly piquing its national pride.³⁵ But Moll's criticisms here also echo the sentiments of Restoration social reformers like Matthew Hale, Thomas Firmin, and Robert Clayton, who felt that the England of Defoe's youth failed its able-bodied poor. In language that might have served as the model for Moll's complaint, Firmin exhorted

Every Parish that abounds with Poor People, would set up a School in the nature of a Workhouse, to teach their poor Children to work in, who for want thereof, now wander up and down the Parish and parts adjacent, and between Begging and Stealing, get a sorry living; but never bring any thing to their poor Parents, nor earn one Farthing towards their own maintenance, or good of the Nation.³⁶

Read in tandem with statements like Firmin's, it becomes clear that the outline of Moll's origins has at least a double aim. On the one hand, her childhood evokes the 1630s' and 1640s' arguments that England ought to do better by its able-bodied poor. On the other hand, Defoe also makes it clear that the "industrious Behavior" so lauded by Moll is to serve the "good of the Nation," contradicting Amit Yahav-Brown's claim that *Moll Flanders* imagines a world in which the state guarantees "a set of inalienable [economic] benefits."³⁷ In thus arguing for a national policy on that subject, Moll's childhood foregrounds the Nation as an ascendant social category that supersedes all other constructions of community relations. It is the Nation's absence that leaves Moll "desolate," and friendless, and inspires in her a dangerous appetite for company.

The first third of the novel is dominated by Defoe's exploration of the various ways in which Moll's efforts fail to create a social field capable of advancing her "interest." During this portion of her tale, Moll avoids falling into political leagues with her fellow servants. She does, however, fall prey to the other pitfall of servants—class ambition, which her wages counterintuitively augment by making it seem as though a better life is within her reach. By the time Moll comes to live with the Mayor's family, she admits to "such a taste of Genteel living at the Ladies House," that she developed "quite other Notions of a Gentlewoman": "[I]t was fine to be a Gentlewoman, so I lov'd to be among Gentlewomen, and therefore I long'd to be there again" (16). Moll plays out the paranoid fantasy of class transgression Defoe articulates more explicitly elsewhere in his prose tracts. "If [a Servant-woman] be tolerably handsome," as Moll is,

and has any Share of Cunning, the Apprentice or her Master's Son are enticed away and ruined by her. Thus many good Families are impoverished and disgraced by these pert Sluts, who taking the Advantage of a young Man's Simplicity and Unruly Desires, draw many heedless Youths, nay some of good Estates into their Snares.³⁸

Although she has not yet descended to the stews, the ignition of Moll's class ambition, which is ultimately an articulation of her desire to belong to a greater whole, drives her to accept her employer's son's propositions under the misperception that he will marry her, thereby making her part of his prosperous family and elevating her class position. When those promises prove false, Moll then allows herself to be pawned off on her paramour's virtuous brother, whom she agrees to marry, largely because that marriage will alleviate her fear of being "left alone in the world to shift for [her]self" (48).

After Moll has returned from the colonies and freed herself from the incestuous marriage to her brother, she begins a series of candid disclosures that place her squarely at the center of late Stuart and early Georgian anxieties about collective affiliation and identification. Moll finds herself in dire straits, living in London on rapidly diminishing resources. As she contemplates her next course of action, she engages in the following meditation that reiterates the disastrous nature of affiliation and sets the stage for her first meeting with Jemy. Moll laments,

To be Friendless is the worst Condition, next to being in want, 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: but if a Woman has no Friend to Communicate her Affairs to, and to advise and assist her, 'tis ten to

one but she is undone: nay, and the more Money she has, the more Danger she is in of being wrong'd and deceiv'd. (102)

Superficially, the passage suggests that Moll's difficulties result from her isolation. Yet it is precisely men's ability to self-isolate and act independently that she admires and for which she longs. The passage serves as prelude to the complex web of deceit Moll weaves between Jemy and the banker as she continues to struggle for security. It also sheds significant light on why Moll's relationship with those men is both contorted and pivotal to her eventual civic redemption via the colonies.

In obvious ways Jemy and the banker are among the most diametrically opposed of all Moll's romantic partners. Jemy is the son of a gentleman who has lost his fortune and turned to a life of crime. Notwithstanding his checkered life, he is "a lovely Person" "of generous Principles, good Sense, and of an abundance of good Humour" (120). Alone among her partners, Jemy is clearly the one whose company Moll enjoys the most, and her affiliation with him is about pleasure. Moll's relationship with the banker, however, is about propriety. He is "a Quiet, Sensible, Sober Man, Virtuous, Modest, Sincere, and in his business Diligent and Just" (149). The banker, moreover, is morally scrupulous, marrying Moll only after he has legally divorced his own adulterous wife. Initially, the two live in the "utmost Tranquility" (149) and in stark contrast to Moll's former "Life of Pleasure" (148), yet this relationship too is sustained by Moll's pursuit of her interest.

Notwithstanding their superficial differences, these relationships share a common denominator in Moll herself, who is trapped between seeing her partners as a means to achieve the male prerogative for isolation she so covets and her instinctual distrust of people. For however much Moll's months with Jemy seem to celebrate the virtue of sincere affection freely given by two autonomous subjects, we are reminded that Moll has not "let him ever know [her] true Name, who [she] was, or where to be found" (126). In the end, her identity remains more elusive than ever. As if to underscore the wisdom of Moll's instinct for self-protection, Defoe makes her the victim of the banker's contrary inclination to seek out affiliations. Having rid herself of the son who results from her time with Jemy, Moll agrees to marry the banker. They live together in "an uninterrupted course of Ease and Comfort for Five Years" (149). The marriage seems the best of both worlds for Moll:

So I chose now to live retir'd, frugal, and within our selves; I kept no Company, made no Visits; minded my Family, and oblig'd my Husband; and this kind of Life became a Pleasure to me. (149)

If Moll is perfectly content to renounce "Company," she has attached herself to a man who does not share her inclinations. The "Pleasure" of living

"within [them]selves" is not to last as a "sudden Blow from an almost invisible Hand," "blast[s] all [Moll's] Happiness," for her husband makes the fatal error of "trust[ing] one of his Fellow Clerks with a Sum of Money too much for our Fortunes to bear the Loss of" (149).

In the wake of the banker's death, Defoe reveals to his readers how little Moll has progressed from the eight-year-old girl who wanted to live "independently" but did not understand how the circumstances of the world constantly press and push upon the poor to seek "Company." For during the time between her husband's death and her final descent into London's underworld, Moll views herself as lamentably "Friendless"; the error in her reasoning, Defoe suggests, is that she also considers herself by virtue of that social isolation "Helpless."

Having discovered Moll's talent for stealing, the governess offers to find her a "school-Mistress that shall make you as dexterous as her self" (159). Well aware of the implications, Moll

trembled at that Proposal for hitherto I had had no Confederates, nor any Acquaintance among that Tribe; but she conquer'd all my Modesty, and all my Fears. (159)

Affiliation, particularly the sort that requires individuals to make their interests contingent on the interests of others rather than the commonweal, remains for Defoe a matter of sexual chastity ("Modesty"), even when no sex is involved. Moll experiences considerable success as a thief, but as we know, that success is short-lived.

That Moll's repentance is as much about her descent into collective affiliation as it is about regret for having lived a sinful life is made abundantly evident by her behavior after she and Jemy have been reprieved. Awaiting their transportation, Moll contemplates the reality of their fate and comes quickly to understand that neither her redemption nor Jemy's will be complete until they land in Virginia and liberate themselves from the terms of their indenture. This, Moll knows, can be done with sufficient money, but the money needs to be protected from "the Publick":

For a poor Convict that was to be sold as soon as I came on Shore, to carry with me a Cargo of Goods would be to have Notice taken of it, and perhaps to have them seiz'd by the Publick; so I took part of my Stock with me thus, and left the other part with my Governess. (242)

Indeed, Moll is so reticent about all of her affiliations that even when she is "forc'd to let her [the governess] into the whole matter," she tells all "except only that of [Jemy] being my Husband" (243). Moll's pattern of strategic deceit in the service of social isolation continues through the remainder of the

novel. She scrupulously keeps Jemy and her brother separated until the last remaining voice from her past (her husband/brother) has died. What happens thereafter is at once shocking and yet eerily predictable. As the social slate from her past has been wiped clean and Moll no longer seeks affiliation as the means to an "independent living," Defoe rewards his title character with the opportunity to own publicly her marriage to Jemy and cobble together with her son Humphry the family she could never achieve in her former life. Simultaneously, she is able to unveil her extraordinary wealth—the result of her former ill-gotten gains, her current stewardship of the plantation in Maryland, and the income she receives from Humphry's management of the plantation in Virginia. The wealth is so overwhelming that upon learning its scope Jemy is prompted to exclaim, "who says I was deceiv'd, when I married a Wife in Lancashire? I have married a Fortune, and a very good Fortune too, says he" (266).

II: POOR-LAW AND THE GOOD CITIZEN

If Defoe drew heavily on mid-seventeenth-century political pornography's feminization and degradation of the social relations that sustained England's "commonality," he further refined the novel's critique by locating Moll's character in the second half of the narrative at the epicenter of what Jan de Vries has characterized as the "industrious revolution."³⁹ As I pointed out above, political pornography was not without its ideological risks, for at the same time that loyalist polemicists complained vituperatively about communities of women collectively proclaiming their liberty, others similarly suspicious of the commons understood that in practical terms the commonweal of the nation would remain dependent upon the disenfranchised laboring members of society whom the nation could ill afford to alienate.⁴⁰ As much as loyalists and other political conservatives had sought to counter the radical account of "interest" by reserving that attribute to the *civis sole* who could be isolated from local relations, so too had they countered the radical account of work. Work was not something one did in common as a member of a guild, farming collective, or cottage manufactory; it was an activity in which one participated separately because individuals were obliged to "contribute to the state by their labour."⁴¹ In *Moll Flanders*, as elsewhere, though, the rationale was complex. The novel does not flagrantly reject nonelite work as the degraded byproduct of illicit affiliation. Instead, it deftly reconstitutes the profit gained through local affiliation itself as theft. Indeed, in the second half of the novel, theft functions as a metonymic substitution for Moll's desire for "Company."

Almost immediately following her last failed attempt to salvage her economic security by marrying the apparently "respectable" banker, Moll describes herself as having been made "Distracted and Raving" by her "Friend-

less" condition. In response, Moll dresses in "pretty good Cloaths," as if anticipating a social encounter, and begins "Wandering" as one of the "masterless" multitude (151). Shortly thereafter, she commits her first theft. Tellingly, her subconscious desires intrude upon her ruminations. Seeing that the parcel of goods she has stolen contains a set of child-bed linen, Moll fantasizes that perhaps they belong to a "poor Widow like me" who had "pack'd up these Goods to go and sell them for a little Bread for herself and a poor Child" (152). Clearly, Moll recognizes that the child-bed linen symbolizes the affiliative relationship between mother and child. She also recognizes that the linen symbolizes the vulnerability of that relationship. In taking the linen, she effectively takes the relationship by removing the very thing that might make it possible for the "poor Widow" to sustain the relationship with her "poor Child" just a bit longer. This theft, together with the theft of the child's necklace and the linen Moll is "given" by other thieves, constitute a stark moral for readers: beware of relationships, for they may make you vulnerable to economic devastation. The moral, in turn, provides a chilling background to the brief reprieve that follows.

Returning again to her governess, Moll briefly renounces her criminal actions and seeks "any honest Employment" (156), but again she describes herself as having "no manner of Acquaintance in the World" (157). Unlike Moll's earlier efforts to earn an honest living, this time she actually succeeds in getting some "Quilting-Work for Ladies Beds, Petticoats, and the like" (157). She acknowledges that she "lik'd [the work] very well and work'd very hard" (157). Moreover, Moll is successful enough that she is able, at long last, to fulfill her childhood ambition to "get [her] Bread by [her] own Work" (14), and she "began to live" honestly (157). The transformation, however, is not to last. Moll's overwhelming desire for company becomes the tool with which Defoe recasts his heroine's diligence as the tragic prelude to her final fall into a life of crime. Overcome by her "Devil," she "take[s] a Walk" (157) with predictable results as Moll steals the tankard that makes her a thief in earnest and reopens the fabric of national history for its penultimate movement.

Moll's final transformation into a thief correlates roughly with the Interregnum (1649–60) so that her career as a thief uncannily evokes the radical account of "work" from the same period.⁴² Much like the radical account of property, which entailed a sense of collectivity that would allow one to "claim that one had a 'property in' common lands, fens, or the exercise of a trade without implying that the individual possessed an exclusive concrete object," work was often understood in similarly collective terms.⁴³ For Lilburne and a host of other midcentury radicals, work was both an effect of the commonweal, in the sense that peace and prosperity enabled individuals to work, and a necessary precondition for the commonweal, in the sense that individuals worked to create the health of the social totality. Indeed, Lilburne opened *The Agreement of the People* (1648) with the declaration that

Having by our late labors and hazards made it appear to the world, at how high a rate we value our just Freedoms . . . we do now hold our selves bound, in mutual duty to each other to take the best care we can for the future to avoid both the danger of returning into a slavish condition and the chargeable remedy of another War.⁴⁴

For Lilburne, labor forges the communal bond because it secures the liberty each member shares in common. Though less politically focused and less interested in questions of property than the Levellers, members of the aggregate dissenting communities understood work in similarly collective terms well into the Restoration. In 1688, Mary Waite observed the duty of every Quaker woman:

The very end of our travel and labour of love, that the hungry may be fed, the naked clothed, the weak strengthened, the feeble comforted, and the wounded healed. So that the very weakest, and hindermost of the flock, may be gathered into the fold of rest and safety, where no destroyer can come, where the ransomed and redeemed by the Lord have the songs of deliverance and high praise in their mouths.⁴⁵

Despite Defoe's own background in the dissenting communities of Restoration London, he sets his heroine on a path that defied nearly a half century of such sectarian and radical thought.

In charting Moll's course away from the radical axiom that work enabled the creation of a corporate well-being, Defoe evoked the great debate on the poor. There had been an ongoing conversation about what to do with England's able-bodied poor since the sixteenth century. But when the social reformer Samuel Hartlib and his followers joined the debate in the 1640s the conversation took a "statist" turn. Aided by the political climate, members of the Hartlib circle successfully retooled work as a mechanism for "public improvement," emphasizing the state as the ascendant social category. As Joyce Appleby points out, "the unwelcome hordes of masterless men at the beginning of the [seventeenth] century" were suddenly transformed into a "pool of badly managed labor."⁴⁶ Hartlib and other members of his circle argued not only that the able-bodied poor ought to work but also that the profits of their labor should be understood as economic and social contributions to the public good. No longer was work purely designed to punish the indigent and reform them; work had become something from which the nation might profit and through which it might manage its unrest. Schemes for putting to work the poor and unemployed abounded, some as ludicrous as making saltpeter from the *human* waste of those employed in a workhouse. Nothing, it seems, was exempt.⁴⁷

As they had with the midcentury emphasis on "interest" as the founda-

tion for political participation, Restoration conservatives shrewdly conceded the claim that “work” was both an effect of and a necessary precondition for the commonweal. In so doing, they transformed the “great debate on the poor” into a more subtle debate about what kinds of work contributed to state stability rather than whether work did so at all. The chief indication of this shift came with the frequent characterizations of begging and other forms of indigence as “trades.” The task of reforming the poor thus became one of substituting legitimate trades that did not require individuals to “commonly go in Companies,”⁴⁸ for the illegitimate “trades” of indigence and vagrancy.⁴⁹ This task, Matthew Hale observed, was an “act of great Civil Prudence and Political Wisdom: for Poverty in itself is apt to Emasculate the minds of men, or at least it makes men tumultuous and unquiet.”⁵⁰ By 1662 even the Stuart regime was contributing to the process. At Charles II’s behest, Parliament established a Corporation for the Poor for Middlesex, which subsequently opened a workhouse in Clerkenwell for poor children. The workhouse in Clerkenwell was added to by private enterprises like Firmin’s establishment, which “employ[ed] and train[ed] poor children in St. Botolph’s Aldgate,” where Defoe’s father had served his apprenticeship and where his uncle lived for the duration of his life.⁵¹ In 1677, the London Quakers initiated a flax-spinning project for the employment of poor friends.⁵² Both public and philanthropic “workhouses” shared the belief that work constituted a contribution to the public good *because* it functions as an impediment to collective affiliation and inevitably insurrection. By 1681, the virtue and value of isolated labor was self-evident even among progressive reformers like Firmin, who proclaimed,

Let any man that hath occasion either to walk or ride through the Out-parts of this City, (where mostly our poor people inhabit) tell but what he hath seen of the Rudeness of young Children, who for want of better Education and Employment, shall sometimes be found by whole Companies at play, where they shall wrangle and cheat one another, and upon the least Provocation, swear and fight for a Farthing.⁵³

Properly educated and employed, even the poor would presumably eschew the social dangers and chaos inherent in the “whole Companies.”

The statism and antipopulism that structured the “great debate on the poor” similarly organizes Moll’s relationship to work from the novel’s earliest moments, for Moll begins her odyssey in Colchester, a lingering refuge of “Quakers [and] representatives of the Old Dissent”⁵⁴ throughout the late Stuart period. Since the 1640s Colchester had been an important experimental ground for England’s evolving commitment to work as antidote to social instability. It had embraced a municipal Corporation for the Poor intermittently throughout the seventeenth century, underwriting a more local articulation

of authority. Defoe's silence on both points of Colchester's past is strategic. Making no mention of a workhouse, much less a Corporation, Defoe delivers Moll into the hands of parish officials who fulfill their duty and place the three-year-old with a "very sober pious Woman" who took a "great deal of Care" of her charges (11). In so doing, Defoe reduces the town's long-established civic interest in caring for its poor to a parochial intervention that trivializes both the poor and the municipally based body politic.

Defoe never suggests in these pivotal pages that Moll's "nurse" is anything but kind and well intentioned. Nonetheless, the intimacy between Moll and her surrogate mother ends up being as problematic as her relationship with Mother Midnight will prove to be later in her life.⁵⁵ Both women demonstrate "interest" in Moll for different reasons. But neither of them is able to direct Moll to the "independent living" she wants, having themselves gravitated towards the local constructions of community that define the emasculated commons. At the tender age of eight, Defoe's title character proclaims to her nurse her desire to be a "gentlewoman" and thus avoid service. To most readers and, indeed, to her nurse, Moll's ambition is at once touching but also naïve. As a child, Moll seems intuitively to understand that gentility depends upon solitude. But she also erroneously believes that solitude is a consequence of work rather than its precondition. When her nurse informs her that the wages she might earn as a seamstress will barely "keep her" let alone clothe her too, Moll concludes that she must "Work Harder" (13). At the end of this exchange, the older woman finally comes to understand that her charge simply aspires to "get [her] Bread by [her] own work" (14). But Moll damages her case and foreshadows her own fate when she cites a "Woman that mended Lace, and wash'd the Ladies Lac'd-heads," whom everyone "calls Madam" (14). Moll does not understand that her model, so far from working independently, relies on illicit company, which proliferates an illicit society in the form of "two or three Bastards" (15). As Moll's nurse informs her, the seamstress is a "Person of ill Fame" (15). From this Moll learns the devastating lesson that affects her life for decades: nonelite women cannot "work" towards independence. Indeed, Defoe revisited this matter three years later in *Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business* (1725), where he argued that women servants should be paid a subsistence wage. The consequences of doing otherwise, he insisted, were socially catastrophic. Not only would inflated wages lead servant women to masquerade as "Gentlewomen" with "great Fortunes,"⁵⁶ but worse still such women would likely organize themselves politically and "unite themselves into a formidable Body, and get the whip Hand of their Betters."⁵⁷ Defoe's analysis of Moll's employment options is, then, quite pernicious. Not only does he withhold from Moll the one occupation—sewing—at which she later admits she could make a decent living, but he also suggests to readers that Moll's entrance into "service"—a form of work destined to keep her

poor and politically corrosive—is at least inevitable, and in many ways axiomatic.

By the end of the novel, Moll and Jemy are alone—entrepreneurial individuals, at last. Jemy, in particular, is able to reclaim his genteel origins as he remains on the couple's Maryland plantation, leaving the task of collecting the profits from Moll's Virginia plantation to his wife. But if *Moll Flanders* offers its readers the "Moral" (4) it claims, it does so only in Moll's and Jemy's realization that work and "bad company" (5) cannot go together. The polemics and idioms that reshaped both the seventeenth-century understanding of England's nonelite and the ground on which their work might make an acceptable contribution to the nation's commonweal crosshatch Defoe's fiction and become strikingly evident in Moll's Newgate conversation with Jemy. They also critically illuminate the process whereby women's work, and the collective communities in which women often labored, came to be differentiated from the "Labour [where] there is Profit," and national interest. As Moll is able to separate herself from that collective work, she is materially rewarded. Indeed, Moll's renunciation is so powerful that it cleanses her ill-gotten gains, which she acquired solely through prostitution and theft, enabling her to live off the proceeds and liberating her from work. Moll is a gentlewoman, finally because she no longer "goes in Compan[y]" and because she has a sage understanding of the proper relationship between working women and the state. As Moll observes, she has returned to England "having perform'd much more than the limited Terms of my Transportation" (267). Her phrasing suggests the colonies have taught her that social isolation is a duty she has "perform'd" and that the prosperity that isolation has enabled is likewise for the benefit of the state and not herself.

Defoe's strenuous engagement with the seventeenth century functions as far more than enriched historical context for *Moll Flanders*. The durability of the issues he addresses across eight decades suggests that *Moll Flanders* was aimed at participating in a conversation whose outcome was still not assured in 1722, rather than reiterating an ideology whose hegemony had already been established. Far from signaling the triumph of individual "rights" over social privilege that ushered in an age of democracy and progress, *Moll Flanders* reveals "individualism" as a defensive social hermeneutic deployed, if not designed, in the service of limiting the political franchise. Chief among those against whom the Enlightenment individual—"persons who are ends in themselves"—defended were women of the commons and those who labored collectively.⁵⁸

NOTES

1. Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders: An Authoritative Text, Contexts, and Criticism*, ed. Albert J. Rivero (New York, 2004), 236. All subsequent citations are from this text, and will be noted parenthetically.

2. Cited in Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley, 1957), 225. The literature on this critical tradition is voluminous, beginning with Watt's study and continuing through C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford, 1962); Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976); Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore, 1987), passim; Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680–1760* (Cambridge, 1996), 98; Mary Butler, "'Onomaphobia' and Personal Identity in *Moll Flanders*," *Studies in the Novel* 22 no. 4 (1990): 377–91; John Reitz, "Criminal Ms-Representation: *Moll Flanders* and Female Criminal Biography," *Studies in the Novel* 23 no. 2 (1991): 183–95; Mary Jo Keitzman, "Defoe Masters the Serial Subject," *ELH* 66 no. 3 (1999): 677–705; and Amit Yahav-Brown, "At Home in England, or Projecting Liberal Citizenship in *Moll Flanders*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 35 no. 1 (2001): 24–45.

3. Watt, 94.

4. Bowers, 98. On Defoe's biography, see Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore, 1989). For a fascinating exploration of seventeenth-century sectarians' contributions to the modern sense of individualism, see Katharine Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women Writers and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 2004). For more on the shortcomings of current historicist work on the novel, see Gary Hentzi, "Holes in the Heart: *Moll Flanders*, *Roxana*, and 'Agreeable Crime,'" *boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* 18 no. 1 (1991): 174–200.

5. Paula McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral: Modeling Media Shift in *A Journal of the Plague Year*," *PMLA* 121 no. 1 (2006): 87–106, 95.

6. Defoe, *The Poor Man's Plea to all the proclamations, Declarations, Acts of Parliament, &c. Which Have been, or shall be made, or publish'd, for the Reformation of Manners, and suppressing Immorality in the Nation* (London, 1698), 6.

7. Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), 31.

8. Defoe, *The Alteration of the Triennial Act Considered* (London, 1716), 24, cited in Rogers, 31.

9. It's worth noting that Defoe continues this theme in his next novel as *Roxana* begins her life in England in 1683.

10. Gary S. DeKrey, "The First Restoration Crisis: Conscience and Coercion in London, 1667–73," *Albion* 25 no. 4 (1993): 565–80, 568. DeKrey goes on to note, "The number of dissenters and old radicals chosen for common Council service also swelled after 1667. They were quickly accused of 'setting up for defenders of the liberties of the city, [and] fomenting popular notions'" (568).

11. DeKrey, "The First Restoration Crisis," 579.

12. Literally, "by what authority." *Quo warranto* had been established as prerogative writ that allowed the crown to abolish "private and irregular jurisdictions." For more on its history and applications, see J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to Legal History* (London, 1990), 166–67.

13. For more on the crises of the 1670s and 1680s, as well as the infiltration of London government by former civil war radicals, see DeKrey, "The First Restoration Crisis," and "Rethinking the Restoration: Dissenting Cases for Conscience, 1667–1672," *The Historical Journal* 38 no. 1 (1995): 53–83; and Tim Harris, "Was the Tory Reaction Popular?: Attitudes of Londoners Towards the Persecution of Dissent, 1681–86," *London Journal* 13 no. 2 (1988): 106–20.

14. DeKrey, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688–1715* (Oxford, 1985), 13–14.

15. Steve Pincus, "Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism: Commercial Society and the Defenders of the English Commonwealth," *American Historical Review* 103 no. 3 (1998): 705–36, 712.

16. Carving out a position between J. G. A. Pocock and Macpherson in his article, Pincus points out that "the conception of liberty advanced by Harrington and Milton,"

whom he takes as the epitome of English classical republicans, "was conceptually indistinguishable from a wide variety of other defenders of the English Commonwealth." The primary difference between Milton, Harrington, and their more radical successors was that the latter cohort "developed a political economy and a conception of interest appropriate to a commercial society. These people borrowed many of the old tropes of classical republicanism—especially their devotion to the common good and their hatred of tyranny—and blended them with a newly appropriate vocabulary of interests and rights in defense of the common good" (707).

17. Cited in Pincus, "Coffee Politicians Does Create: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture," *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 807–34, 807.

18. [Anon.,] *A Worthy Panegyrick on Monarchy: Written Anno MDCLVII. By a Learned and truly Loyal Gentleman, for Information of the miserably mis-led Commonwealths Men (falsly so called of that Deluded Age): and now revived by One that honours the Author, and the Established Government of these Nations* (London, 1680).

19. Roger L'Estrange, *A Word Concerning Libels and Libellers* (London, 1681), 2.

20. Pincus, "Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism," 730.

21. For more on the history of this term, see Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York, 1998).

22. [Anon.,] *Now or Never: Or a new Parliament of Women Assembled And met to gether near the Popes-Head in Moor-Fields, on the Back side of All-such* (London, 1656).

23. As Laura Gowing has argued, the permeable boundaries of domestic and public urban space often threw women into intimate working relations that satirists portrayed as a mirror of the relations in a brothel ("The Freedom of the Streets': Women and Social Space, 1560–1640," *Londinopolis: Essay in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner [Manchester, 2000], 130–53).

24. John Lilburne, *An Agreement of the People of England, and the places therewith Incorporated; For a firm and Present Peace, Upon Grounds of Common Right and Freedom* (London, 1648), 3.

25. *Now or Never*, title page. For more on the "Mistress Parliament" Dialogues and their specific political timing, see Lois Potter, "Mistress Parliament Dialogues," *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography*, ed. Lois Potter, 1 no. 3 (1987): 101–71.

26. [Anon.,] *The Whores Rhetorick, Calculated to the Meridian of London: And conformed to the Rules of Art* (1683), ed. James Irvine and G. Jack Gravelee, (Delmar, 1979).

27. *Whores Rhetorick*, 146.

28. *Whores Rhetorick*, 144.

29. *Whores Rhetorick*, 26.

30. Defoe, *Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business; or Private Abuses, Public Grievances* (London, 1725), 4.

31. Defoe, *Every-Body's Business*, 7.

32. Defoe, *Every-Body's Business*, 11.

33. John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Indianapolis, 1980) § 131, 68.

34. For more on Defoe's habits of rewriting history in the service of creating "a newly far-reaching bureaucratic civic and national order," see McDowell, 95.

35. Paul Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), 84.

36. Thomas Firmin, *Some Proposals for the employment of the Poor, and For the prevention of Idleness and the Consequence thereof, Begging* (London, 1681), 2.

37. Yahav-Brown, 26.

38. Defoe, *Every-body's Business*, 6.

39. Jan de Vries, "Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe," *Consumption and the Worlds of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York, 1993), 107–21.

40. Potter, *passim*.

41. Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions: His Life and Ideas* (Oxford, 2001), 106.

42. For more on the trend of thought about labor during the seventeenth century, see John Hatcher, "Labour, Leisure, and Economic Thought Before the Nineteenth Century," *Past and Present* 160 (1998): 64–115.

43. Michael Levy, "Freedom, Property and the Levellers: The Case of John Lilburne," *Western Political Quarterly* 36 no. 1 (1983):116–33, 122. See also Macpherson, 145. Pocock has also disputed the centrality of "property" to radical thought, arguing that the Putney debates, in particular, reveal a greater concern over questions of authority than they do with questions of property ("Authority and Property: The Question of Liberal Origins," *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J. H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara C. Malament [Philadelphia, 1980], 331–54).

44. Lilburne, 3–4.

45. Mary Waite, *Epistle from the Womens Yearly Meeting at York, 1688. And an Epistle from Mary Waite. A Testimony for the Lord and his Truth, given forth by the women friends, at their yearly meeting, at York, being a tender salutation of love, to their friends and sisters, in their several monthly meetings, in this county, and elsewhere, greeting* ([London?], 1688), 6.

46. Joyce O. Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, 1978), 152.

47. Slack, 84.

48. Firmin, 20.

49. Firmin complained, "the Trade of Begging, being known to be so easie and gainful, they will much rather range about forty or fifty Parishes in a day, and get a penny in each Parish than work hard in one to get six pence or eight pence" (18).

50. Matthew Hale, *A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor* (London, 1683), A3.

51. Slack, 90; Backscheider, 4.

52. Slack, 90.

53. Firmin, 4.

54. Slack, 108.

55. For a different perspective on these relationships, see Srividhya Swaminathan, "Defoe's Alternative Conduct Manual: Survival Strategies and Female Networks in *Moll Flanders*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 15 no. 2 (2003): 185–206.

56. Defoe, *Every-body's Business*, 6. For more on this trend see, Melissa Mowry, "Dressing Up and Dressing Down: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Seventeenth-Century Textile Industry," *Journal of Women's History* 11 no. 3 (1999): 78–103.

57. Defoe, *Every-body's Business*, 12.

58. Watt, 225.