

The Secret Textual History of Pamela, Methodist

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Article abstract

This essay will trace how the closely linked discursive practices of oral testimony in Methodist classes and bands, manuscript circulation via letter of spiritual experience accounts, and publication of letters and narratives in the *Arminian Magazine* can be mapped onto the discourse culture that brought about the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and the resultant media storm that was only rivalled by the vehemence of the attacks on Methodism in the contemporary press. This history makes clear some of the links between the discourse of evangelicalism and the discourse of the early novel, most notably in the shared textual histories and similar protocols of mediation that define early works in each field.

THE SECRET TEXTUAL HISTORY OF PAMELA, METHODIST

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ABSTRACT

This essay will trace how the closely linked discursive practices of oral testimony in Methodist classes and bands, manuscript circulation via letter of spiritual experience accounts, and publication of letters and narratives in the *Arminian Magazine* can be mapped onto the discourse culture that brought about the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and the resultant media storm that was only rivalled by the vehemence of the attacks on Methodism in the contemporary press. This history makes clear some of the links between the discourse of evangelicalism and the discourse of the early novel, most notably in the shared textual histories and similar protocols of mediation that define early works in each field.

RÉSUMÉ

Nous nous intéresserons ici à des pratiques discursives apparentées : le témoignage oral dans la tradition méthodiste lors des rencontres de « classes » et de « bandes »; la diffusion épistolaire, donc manuscrite, de témoignages relatant des expériences spirituelles; et la publication de lettres et de récits dans le *Arminian Magazine*. Nous tenterons de voir de quelle manière toutes ces pratiques participèrent au discours ambiant qui mena à la publication du roman *Pamela* de Samuel Richardson et au tollé médiatique qu'il souleva, tollé qui ne fut surpassé que par la véhémence des attaques qu'on fit alors subir au méthodisme dans la presse. Ce cas de figure met en lumière certains des liens existant entre le discours évangéliste et le discours adopté par le roman de l'époque, surtout en ce qui a trait aux histoires textuelles partagées et aux protocoles de médiation similaires qui caractérisent les œuvres fondatrices de chacune des deux sphères.

Mrs. Jewkes went in with me, and helped me to pack up my little All, which was soon done; being no more than . . . some few Books: as, a full Answer to a plain and true Account, &c. The Whole Duty of Man, with only the Duty to one's Neighbour, torn out. The Third Volume of the Atalantis. Venus in the Cloyster: Or, the Nun in her Smock. God's Dealings with Mr. Whitefield. Orfus and Eurydice. Some Sermon-Books; and two or three Plays, with their Titles, and Part of the first Act torn off.¹

During this scene in Henry Fielding's *Shamela*, the title character describes her "modest" possessions—detailing a collection of books that includes "A full Answer to a plain and true Account, &c. The Whole Duty of Man, with only the Duty to one's Neighbour, torn out . . . God's Dealings with Mr. Whitefield . . . [and] Some Sermon-Books," all books that were important to the contemporary evangelical movement that was sweeping the nation with almost as much controversy as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, the text which Fielding is so openly mocking. This was a connection that Fielding clearly understood, with the unreflective enthusiasm² (or claim to divine revelation) that characterizes books like *God's Dealings* reflected in Pamela's claim to immediate revelation in Richardson's text. A careful reading of *Shamela* indicates that the portions of *Pamela* that come in for the severest censure all have to do with religion and specifically with the types of behavior that Fielding believes Pamela's unreflective reading and writing authorize.

In fact, the links between the discourse of evangelicalism and the discourse of the early novel are very clear—most notably in the shared textual histories and similar protocols of mediation that define early works in each field. For example, *Shamela's* copy of *God's Dealings with Mr. Whitefield* was published in 1740, around the same time as *Pamela*, and it elicited almost as much controversy due to its detailed descriptions of the author's struggle with his "secret and darling Sin" of masturbation, "the dismal Effects of which I have felt, and groaned under," until he came to realize that nothing could "pluck me out of [God's] hands."³ Its inclusion by Fielding as one of *Shamela's* books was thus no accident, as the two texts were easily associated with each other in the public mind due to their overt sexual content. In his prefatory letter to *Shamela*, for example, Parson Tickletext seems to take an almost masturbatory pleasure in his reading of the novel:

For my own Part . . . "I have done nothing but read it to others, and hear others again read it to me, ever since it came into my Hands; and I find I am like to do nothing else, for I know not how long yet to come: because if I

lay the Book down it comes after me. When it has dwelt all Day long upon the Ear, it takes Possession all Night of the Fancy. It hath Witchcraft in every Page of it.” —
—Oh! I feel an Emotion even while I am relating this: Methinks I see *Pamela* at this Instant, with all the Pride of Ornament cast off” (310–11).⁴

The implication throughout *Shamela* is that, encouraged by promiscuous reading practices and the unscrupulous and enthusiast Parson Williams, Shamela (and by extension the readers) comes to believe that as long as she reads the right things she has a license to do whatever she likes. In *Shamela*, the association between the Richardsonian novel and evangelicalism may only be a convenient way of casting aspersions on both, but Fielding’s joke actually points to a surprising amount of overlap between these two contemporaneous cultural forms.

The connections that Fielding and other contemporary readers made between *Pamela* and early evangelicalism expose a largely hidden history of the novel that traces its roots to the tradition of Puritan devotional literature that both Richardson and Wesley admired. Cynthia Griffin Wolff, for example, has rightly traced the influence of Puritan spiritual narratives on Richardson’s work, particularly how the Puritan practice of self-examination in diaries as a way of forming the spiritual self is mirrored in Pamela’s obsessive cataloguing of the minutiae of daily events and thoughts.⁵ These Puritan narratives were filled with precisely the type of interiority and enthusiastic spirituality that characterizes both Methodist spiritual experience narratives and *Pamela*.⁶ Likewise, the links between Methodist spirituality and sentimental fiction have long been noted, with G.J. Barker-Benfield going so far as to argue that “It was Methodism that seems most to have resembled the cult of sensibility, a resemblance noted by contemporaries.”⁷ By reorienting spirituality towards the feelings of the heart, Wesley participated in the same sentimental movement that we see in the novels of the 1740s and 50s.

In a different vein, Keymer and Sabor insightfully point out that Fielding’s satire of *Pamela* “lay more in religion and ethics than in questions of rank,” and that *Shamela* “implicates Richardson’s narrative of virtue rewarded in larger theological controversies concerning the rival claims on the Christian soul of inward piety and outward action.”⁸ These controversies were part

and parcel of the evangelical revival and, as Fielding knew full well, had as much to do with *how* Methodist theology was mediated in public as the content of the theology itself. However, neither Wesley nor Richardson necessarily saw inward piety and outward virtue as mutually exclusive. In this vein, Bonnie Latimer has identified a strain of low-church latitudinarianism in Richardson's works, arguing that his heroines' focus on outward virtue and duty while climbing the social ladder is characteristic of an Anglican spirituality focused on performing virtuous outward actions as a means of winning the favor of god and man.⁹

In addition, the shared mediation history of evangelicalism and the novel has remained largely unexplored, in large part because it has long been assumed that the Methodists (who generally opposed novels) and writers and publishers like Richardson and Rivington had little in common. Indeed, when Methodists appeared in early novels (and they did so at a striking rate), it was generally as an object of ridicule. Recently, Misty Anderson and Brett McInelly have traced this antagonistic relationship, arguing that Methodism and Methodists operated as ideal interlocutors for early novelists like Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Oliver Goldsmith, and Richard Graves. Anderson points out that Methodism "served imaginatively as a space of intimacy, desire, and even ecstasy for the modern British self even as, and indeed because, it served as a boundary for that self."¹⁰ This imaginative space, according to McInelly, can be traced especially well in the anti-Methodist literature, including novels, of the 1740s and 50s, of which there were many. Indeed, this attitude towards Methodists was so internalized that even novels that were not specifically anti-Methodist, like *Tom Jones*, include passing references to Methodism that would have been commonly understood at the time.¹¹ In this light, McInelly argues that Methodism can be "understood and approached as a rhetorical problem—as a point of contestation and debate resolved, at least in part, through discourse."¹² In this context, Methodism itself was constituted by and in conversation with the public discourse on the revival, which included novels that no self-respecting Methodist would ever be found reading.

Indeed, though the public controversy over *Pamela* has been constructed as a controversy over morals, manners, and mediation, the evangelical subtexts of the novel and Richardson's own ties to the evangelical movement have gone largely unexplored. Keymer and Sabor, for example, regard the novel

as merely “tangentially implicated” in the religious controversies of the time despite Fielding’s explicit identification of the novel with Methodism.¹³ This is due at least in part to a fundamental misunderstanding about what evangelicalism *was* in the 1730s and 40s and a tendency to overlook how the mediation practices of the revival were adapted more widely—how evangelicalism operated as a platform for new types of mediation practices. However, not only are there explicitly evangelical themes within the novel but Richardson and his friend and publisher Charles Rivington had close connections with the early evangelicals, having published several of Whitefield’s and Wesley’s early works. Furthermore, John Dussinger has recently presented compelling evidence that the anonymous 1733 pamphlet on *The Oxford Methodists* was not only printed by Richardson but *adapted* by Richardson from an early manuscript version of a famous letter by John Wesley defending the Oxford “Holy Club”.¹⁴

Thus, here I will trace how the discursive practices of the early evangelical revival can be mapped onto the discourse culture that brought about the publication of Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* in 1740 and the resultant media storm that was only rivalled by the vehemence of the attacks on Methodism in the contemporary press. Specifically, I will illustrate how, linked by their mutual interest in restoring “Primitive Christianity,” Samuel Richardson, Charles Rivington, and John Wesley were heavily invested in restoring what they saw as the primitive practices of the Church by fully realizing the potential inherent in new technologies of mediation. *Pamela* is perhaps one of the best expressions of the convergence of these discourses and this convergence helps explain why the novel came in for censure amidst a particularly tense political and religious climate where any form of non-conformity could be read as enthusiasm or Jacobitism, especially as it was disseminated for public consumption. Re-contextualizing the novel within the discourse of the evangelical revival thus opens up new ways of reading the novel and its perceived subversiveness.

A (Very) Brief Introduction to Methodist Discourse Culture

Over the past thirty years, scholars of evangelicalism have begun to question the extent to which the movement represented what R.G.A. Pocock termed the “Anti-Self” of Enlightenment.¹⁵ Instead, scholars like Michael Warner

have argued that “What we now call evangelicalism can be seen as the transformation of older strains of pietism by public sphere forms. . . . Indeed, it is not clear that enlightenment and evangelical religion were recognizable to contemporaries as opposing forces.”¹⁶ To take only the most notable example, numerous scholars across disciplines have illustrated the many ways in which John Wesley was a child of the Enlightenment—adopting and adapting Enlightenment philosophy (especially that of John Locke) within the context of the revival.¹⁷ Indeed, the theological underpinnings of the revival were not (as I will explore at length below) new, but adaptations of older ideas and forms of piety, many of which originated in the seventeenth century among the Caroline Divines in England, Catholic mystics in France, and Moravians in Bohemia and the German principalities.

What *was* new was the way they used the new structures, practices, and protocols of mediation to *transmit* these ideas. What I want to suggest, following Siskin and Warner’s recent influential argument in *This is Enlightenment*, is that reading the revival as part of a history of mediation instead of ideas provides a more satisfactory lens through which to view the radical shifts that were occurring in British culture and religious life. Indeed, it was this blurring of the lines between reason, enthusiasm, and radicalism enacted by evangelical media that most alarmed the establishment. Edmund Burke, for example, deplored the use of print in the service of enthusiasm, condemning its ability to “make a kind of electric communication everywhere.”¹⁸ According to Burke, such “‘mechanic’ spasming of enthusiastic philosophers” did not provide the space for reflection that was necessary for reasoned discourse. As Jon Mee points out, Methodism “was very much a print phenomenon, one that encouraged converts to translate their feelings into words. . . . Many of the attacks on Methodism complained of the proliferation of enthusiasm in print.”¹⁹ What I want to argue is that evangelicalism was a *media* revolution, whose discourse practices can be productively mapped onto contemporary literary events like the rise of the novel.

First, however, I want to briefly explain what I mean by reading evangelicalism as an event in the history of mediation before turning to some specific examples of how these new media practices operated. In *This is Enlightenment*, Clifford Siskin and William Warner argue for Enlightenment

as an event in the history of mediation by contrasting Francis Bacon’s idea of the “machine” or technology as the means through which we know with Kant’s sense in his 1783 “What is Enlightenment?” that Enlightenment was the overcoming of the machine by man and that the rationality of the individual subject defined the changes of Enlightenment. Instead, Siskin and Warner argue that Kant’s assumption that Enlightenment is about a revolution in ideas about the self and its relationship to the world is itself predicated on shifts in the history of mediation—of how the self interacts with various evolving publics.²⁰ In other words, the essay is a *product* of Enlightenment, not simply an intellectual description of it. This formulation can also help us think through evangelicalism, which is often assumed to be Enlightenment’s other, but which was in reality its collaborator—both of which formed what Siskin and Warner term “operational platforms” upon which other literary, social, cultural, and political programs were made possible.²¹

Siskin and Warner describe Enlightenment as an operational platform that underwent four fundamental transformations during the eighteenth century, including changes to infrastructure, genres and forms of mediation, associational practices, and the development of new protocols of mediation.²² These changes in what Siskin and Warner term “cardinal mediations” had the effect of creating a new operating system upon which “programs” like the novel or Romanticism could be run and in each of these categories evangelicalism pioneered shifts alongside of Enlightenment. If the printing press is the computer hardware, then Enlightenment is the operating system that makes a personal computer usable by a wider section of the population and Evangelicalism is the updating and streamlining of that operating system to make it easier to use and even more widely accessible. Enlightenment is MS-DOS, Evangelicalism is Windows 95—while the transformations that come with the former are monumental, we cannot ignore the latter as it too affects what types of programs can be run *on* the operational platform. This is not to argue for a type of technological determinism—the printing press did not *create* Enlightenment any more than the falling cost of printing created Evangelicalism—both simply used the new technologies that were available in order to better shape new modes of thinking.

Here I want to argue that the genre of the novel used the operational platform of evangelical discourse to mediate new forms of cultural capital along with new reading and writing practices. Specifically, I want to trace how the closely linked discursive practices of oral testimony in Methodist classes and bands,²³ manuscript circulation via letters of spiritual experience accounts, and publication of letters and narratives in the *Arminian Magazine* can be mapped onto the discourse culture that brought about the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* in 1740. This closely linked mediation history also reveals important structural links between printers, publishers, and tradesmen like Richardson and Rivington, and evangelical clergyman like Wesley—links that help us better understand what early evangelicalism was, especially in its desire to restore and remediate primitive Christianity within the Church of England. To be clear, I am not suggesting that Richardson had these *specific* mediation networks in mind when he was working on *Pamela*, but Richardson and Rivington *did* have important points of contact with John Wesley and the early revival, and all three men seemed to have been simultaneously exploring the ways in which personal religious experience could be adapted to new protocols of mediation that had the potential to spread widely and influence a large portion of the population towards inner virtue.

Richardson, Rivington, and Early Evangelical Print

The history of Samuel Richardson's and Charles Rivington's connection with the early evangelical revival begins at least in 1733. In 1733 the thirty-year old John Wesley was still only a small part of the nascent evangelical movement. A resident Fellow at Lincoln College in Oxford, Wesley was one of the leaders of a group of young men—including his brother Charles and George Whitefield—who were derisively known as the "Holy Club" and were known for their intense spirituality and focus on performing good works in the Oxford community. One of the members of this group was William Morgan, a younger student who became involved with the Holy Club upon his matriculation to Oxford and who died in 1732 of consumption. Morgan's father Richard blamed Wesley and the Holy Club for his son's death—accusing them of encouraging his son's extreme fasting and ascetic practices—practices meant to imitate those of the "primitive" Church that he believed contributed to the younger Morgan's death. In response, Wesley penned a widely circulated letter defending the Holy Club

and using, perhaps for the first time, the name “Methodist” to describe himself and his friends. This letter was later adapted into the Preface of Wesley’s *Journal*, which commenced publication in 1740 and was then published in installments until 1789.

Until recently, it was believed that the 1740 publication of the *Journal* was the first time the Morgan letter saw print, though it had been widely circulated in manuscript. This seems especially odd, even given Wesley’s two year absence (1735–1737) in Georgia as parish priest of Savannah. It was not until his return in 1738 that Wesley became widely known as Methodism and its related evangelical groups began to flourish and controversy swirled over the revival. However, John Dussinger has recently discovered textual evidence that suggests the letter was published much earlier—1733—by none other than Samuel Richardson under the title *The Oxford Methodists*, then re-issued twice in 1738 right as the revival was taking off. Generations of Methodist scholars have attributed this anonymous pamphlet (without much evidence) to the Non-juror William Law who was acquainted with Wesley and the early Holy Club under the assumption that he was likely sympathetic to their beliefs about Christian perfection and restoring primitive Church practices. Wesley biographer Henry D. Rack questions this attribution but offers no evidence for this skepticism, nor does he speculate on the identity of the true author.²⁴

Dussinger, on the other hand, offers convincing evidence that the text is based on Wesley’s original Morgan letter and adapted by Richardson himself. Given the many similarities (including verbatim quotes) between Wesley’s letter and the *Oxford Methodists* it is astonishing that no one has made this connection before, though, as Dussinger points out, Wesley himself wrote that part of the letter “was publish’d in 1733; but without my Consent or knowledge” and *with* “Addition, Diminution . . . [and] Amendment.”²⁵ In fact, Richardson appears to have scrambled or paraphrased parts of the original letter in the first eighteen pages of the *Oxford Methodists*, though Dussinger estimates that fully 4,650 words in these pages are taken directly from Wesley’s manuscript, with the remaining 40 percent of the words added by the editor. Furthermore, it is not inconceivable that Richardson would have had access to a manuscript copy of Wesley’s letter, given the way that Methodist manuscripts circulated even at this early date. Richardson was acquainted with Wesley’s father, Samuel

Wesley Sr., the rector of Epworth and Wroot in Lincolnshire and a journalist and writer. In 1730, Richardson had printed a pamphlet by Samuel Wesley and it is likely that the latter provided a copy of the manuscript to Richardson after a December 9, 1732 *Fog's Weekly Journal* article accused the Oxford Methodists of causing William Morgan's death.²⁶

Though Law was clearly not the author of the pamphlet, scholars have not been wrong to identify within it strong non-juring sympathies. This indicates another possible point of contact between Wesley, Rivington, and Richardson in an Oxford tutor named John Clayton. Clayton was a tutor at Brasenose College, who became acquainted with Wesley and his Holy Club in April 1732 and immediately embraced their mission of restoring "Primitive Christianity." Crucially, he appears to have provided the young Wesley with access to his extensive library, which included almost every book that influenced Wesley during this period, including many that moved him in a High Church/Non-Juring direction. Clayton himself, while a conforming High Churchman, was a Jacobite who also had connections to the book trade. His father was a Manchester bookseller and he was in frequent contact with Charles Rivington, who likely published many of the High Church/Non-Juring books in Clayton's library.²⁷ Thus Clayton provides yet another link between the Oxford Methodists and booksellers like Rivington and Richardson in London, who published many of their early works and sermons. If Samuel Wesley Sr. did not provide Richardson with a copy of his son's letter, it is entirely possible that Richardson received one through Clayton and/or Rivington.

As this connection with Clayton and Law illustrates, Wesley owed important points of his theology to High Church doctrine. Particularly in his desire to restore "primitive" Christianity, Wesley's interests allied strongly with a group of non-juring clergy known as Usagers, who insisted upon the primacy of the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* of Edward VI over the 1662 version and who furthermore advocated a more "primitive" method of preparing the Eucharist based on four essential "usages." The specifics of the controversy are not as important as the stakes involved, which primarily had to do with the nature of ecclesiastical authority. As Geordan Hammond puts it, for "Wesley and the Usagers primitive tradition was an avenue through which they could critique contemporary Anglican practice. Usagers

therefore used ancient tradition as a justification to restore primitive practices they believed were binding on all Christians.”²⁸

Richardson’s adaptation of Wesley’s letter is explicitly framed as a defense of the Methodist movement and especially its emphasis on primitive Christianity in which he crafts “a fictional letter from Wesley’s original manuscript letter to Richard Morgan in the form of advice from an impartial observer to a nervous parent of a son intended for Oxford.”²⁹ While in 1733 he could pass this off simply as a defense of a small harmless group of Oxford students, in 1738, publishing the letter had decidedly different undertones. While the 1733 printing was a defense of an obscure group of Oxford clerics and students, the 1738 version was a defense of an increasingly controversial and enthusiastic movement. And while in 1733 the shift from manuscript to print represented (however problematically) a natural “enlightenment” progression of mediation, in 1738 it could be read as a dangerous shifting of enthusiasm from oral and manuscript culture to print, with all of its capability of making an “electrick communication everywhere.”³⁰

Indeed, the editor of *The Oxford Methodists* comments that he is “entirely satisfy’d with their [the Methodists] Scheme in general, and think it worthy of a more primitive Age” while dismissing the “particular Unseasonableness of making such an Outcry against [a supposed Excess in] Religion at *this* Time when the World is running into the very opposite Extreme, of crying-down the very Shew and Appearance of it.”³¹ Thus evangelicalism, with its focus on the restoration of primitive Christianity provided Richardson with the language and means to enact his project of restoring virtue through *Pamela*.³² Not only do we have the movement from manuscript letter to printed text that is mirrored in the novel itself, but also the same sort of textual “enthusiasm” and adaptation that promotes further promiscuous reading and writing practices. In this reading, Pamela’s manuscript narrative is not only responsible for the preservation of her own virtue but the conversion of others (Mr. B., Lady Davers, and neighboring gentry) to virtue as well and their subsequent remediation of her texts and experience. Lady Davers, for example, makes a point of mentioning that she intends to share Pamela’s account with various friends—marking a final movement back to a still vibrant oral tradition.

This, however, was only the beginning of Richardson's and Rivington's investment in the material culture of the revival. By 1733, Charles Rivington had established himself as the leading theological publisher in England, while his close friend Richardson was an important business partner who printed many of his books. Rivington published John Wesley's edition of Thomas à Kempis's *The Christian's Pattern; Or, a Treatise on the Imitation of Christ* (1735), his *Sermon Preached at St. Mary's in Oxford* (1735), and Samuel Wesley Sr.'s *Dissertations on the Book of Job* (1736). He was also responsible for publishing some of George Whitefield's earliest and most popular sermons, including ones on *The Nature and Necessity of a New Birth in Christ* (1737 with a second print run in 1737 and third and fourth printings in 1738 and 1739), *The Benefits of an Early Piety* (1737, second printing in 1738), *The Nature and Necessity of Society in General and Religious Society in Particular* (1737), and a 1739 collection of *Sermons on Various Subjects* that included the three independently printed sermons in addition to seven others. These commercial links are clear evidence that, during the early years of the evangelical revival, the discourse structures and literary genres that were coming into being were closely connected and not necessarily clearly differentiated. That *Pamela*, John Wesley's *Journal*, and George Whitefield's *Journals*, were some of the biggest best-sellers of the 1730s and 40s indicates that the appetite for this type of religious and internal narrative was large and that people wanted to read it if only to indulge their appetite for voyeurism. Popular and critical reaction against these genres was thus a product of the new structures and protocols of mediation that were just coming online and that *both* participated in – *not* the actual content of either the spiritual narrative or the novel.

That Rivington himself was a High Churchman with Non-juror and Jacobite sympathies is further evidence of how intertwined the discourse cultures of evangelicalism, High Church theology, and the novel were at the very beginning. To be sure, there was money to be made in publishing Methodist material, as Septimus Rivington remarks in his account of the publishing house published in 1894. When John Rivington inherited the business upon his father's premature death in 1742, "Wesley and Whitefield had to go elsewhere for a publisher, although there must have been plenty of temptation to incline the trade to patronise Methodism,"³³ given how well Methodist works sold. However, the fact that Charles Rivington was willing to publish evangelical material is also further proof of the fact that even for

a High Churchman, the doctrine of the revival deeply resonated with his own concerns for the restoration of primitive Christianity, and, furthermore, at this early stage, the concerns over the discourse of evangelicalism had not fully manifested themselves.

The fact that most Methodists objected to reading novels like *Pamela* is further evidence (as contradictory as it might seem) of the close relationship between spiritual narrative and the novel. For Methodists, the internal subjectivity and representation of the novel too closely approximated religious experience as transmitted through media without any sort of editorial or regulatory function. Hester Ann Rogers, for example, comments that before her conversion to Methodism, she sinfully “obtained all the novels and romances I possibly could, and spent some time every day in reading them,” instead of spending time in pious devotion.³⁴ Located outside of the associational context outlined above, novels represented a type of unregulated reading—an immediate “enthusiasm” that transmitted experience without an intermediary. In this, the novel appropriated the immediacy of the Methodist message as mediated through experience narratives without (or in the case of *Pamela* with) the explicitly religious content. The larger cultural controversy over the appropriateness of novel reading and the orthodoxy of Methodism are thus linked, as they are both controversies over the appropriateness of mediated enthusiasm in a public space and fears over vulnerable readers imitating inappropriate behaviors. That the sensational supernaturalism that characterizes works by people like Walpole, Radcliffe, and Lewis is almost a mirror image of the supernaturalism of Methodist spiritual account narratives is further evidence of how intertwined these discourses were from the very beginning.

Pamela, Methodist

In this light, it is no coincidence that the rise of evangelicalism roughly coincides with the rise of the novel, as both are predicated on the transmittal of internal subjectivity and felt experience. Many Methodist narratives have all the drama of a good novel—supernatural phenomena, secret sins (running from Whitefield’s masturbation to less scandalous transgressions like dancing, card playing, and novel reading), providential intervention, crime and punishment, bodily degradations, mental torment, redemption—all of which are calculated to captivate the audience with the

inner thoughts and feelings of the protagonist and which, with their narratives of moral struggles and sexual sin, allow the audience to partake in something of the voyeuristic. Many of these elements could be taken from contemporary sensationalist and scandal fiction or from *Pamela* itself. In fact I would argue that this novel engages in Methodist discourse practices through three primary modes: 1. by adapting Methodist media practices (letter writing, publication, orality); 2. by (unintentionally) portraying Pamela herself as an enthusiastic “scribbler” who reads novels and becomes prey to an evangelical enthusiasm that inspires potentially dangerous writing; 3. by mirroring Methodist discursive structures (enthusiasm as a mode of feeling/interiority and persuasive sharing of feeling).

It is in the first mode that the “editor” of *Pamela* follows the epistolary practice of claiming to have “found” the letters which he (it’s always a he) is passing in order to “inculcate Religion and Morality, . . . to paint Vice in its proper Colours . . . and to set Virtue in its own amiable Light.”³⁵ He nevertheless goes on to remark that the letters “were written under the immediate Impression of every Circumstance which occasioned them, . . . to those who had a Right to know the fair Writer’s most secret Thoughts” (5). As with early Methodist publications and letter collections, the editor goes to pains to justify the reader’s intrusion into these “most secret thoughts.” In his immensely popular collection of *Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper*, for instance, John Wesley frames our intrusion into Cooper’s thoughts by claiming that “here are no extravagant flights, no mystic reveries, no unscriptural enthusiasm. The sentiments are all just and noble . . . [and] expressed in such a stile . . . not only simple and artless in the highest degree, but likewise clear, lively, proper.”³⁶ Despite their best efforts, however, neither the editor of *Pamela* nor Wesley can quite get around the fact that we are not the people to whom these letters were written. This is the problem at the heart of *Pamela*—to what extent is it proper to read correspondence written under “immediate Impression” or (dare I say) “inspiration” without the proper mediating structures with which to provide appropriate context? Like Wesley’s collections of letters and conversion experiences, *Pamela* is printed, published, and widely disseminated—without any space for sober reflection. This is Burke’s “electrick communication” all over again.

Indeed, Pamela herself is always “Scribbling,” an activity that brings censure from Mr. B, who is (rightly) concerned that her impressionable imagination is painting him in a poor light. In fact, it is Squire B’s constant assertion that Pamela’s accusations are the product of an overheated imagination and “romantick Inventions.” He further claims that her “head has been turn’d by Romances, and such idle Stuff, which she has given herself up to, ever since her kind Lady’s Death” (93), and that as a result she is a “mighty Letter-writer” who carries on a “sort of Correspondence, or Love Affair, with a young Clergyman [Parson Williams], that I hope in time to provide for” (93). Though these lines are written in order to put Mr. and Mrs. Andrews’ minds to rest over the fate of their daughter, nonetheless they indicate some of the major themes that consume the rest of the novel—in particular Squire B’s concern over the spread of Pamela’s enthusiasm, especially to the young Parson Williams. He attributes this enthusiasm to Romances and “such idle stuff,” which have turned Pamela’s head—a critique that is later echoed by many evangelicals. And yet, interestingly, there is no indication in the novel itself that Pamela actually *reads* Romances. Though she often talks about reading, her reading list is confined to the Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer*, Shakespeare, and various other pious devotional books—the very type of books that were the stock in trade of Rivington and Richardson and which Fielding singles out for censure in *Shamela* for cultivating antinomianism.³⁷

It is in fact Pamela’s *religious* reading and writing that is most of concern—both to Mr. B and to the public at large. After all, at several crucial points during the novel, Mr. B and his sister explicitly paint Pamela as an enthusiastic itinerant preacher—circulating private experience publicly and using public expressions of virtue as a cover for immoral behavior. In fact, after one of his many attempts on Pamela’s virtue, which she piously rebuffs, Mr. B mockingly associates Pamela’s discourse with evangelical preaching:

Well said, my pretty Preacher! when my Lincolnshire Chaplain dies, I’ll put thee on a Gown and Cassock, and thou’ll make a good Figure in his Place!—I wish, said I, a little vex’d at his Jeer, your Honour’s conscience would be your Preacher, and then you would need no other Chaplain. Well, well, Pamela, said he, no more of this unfashionable Jargon. (68)

The pious and “unfashionable Jargon” (and Methodism was indeed *very* unfashionable) of letting one’s own conscience, one’s own understanding of divine revelation, become one’s preacher is perhaps the clearest sign that Pamela has strayed into the language of enthusiasm, for it is in her claim to understand, interpret, and then *circulate* divine revelation that she reveals herself as a promiscuous enthusiast who, like Parson Williams in *Shamela*, uses personal inspiration as an excuse for immorality.

And indeed, one of the most popular contemporary criticisms of Methodism was that it promoted antinomianism, especially in the form of sexual sin. *Shamela* for example, under the influence of Williams, tells her mother that she is free to “do what I will, I say my Prayers as often as another, and I read in good Books, as often as I have Leisure; and Parson William says, that will make amends” (316), while her mother responds by commending her on reading these “good Books,” and enclosing “one of Mr. Whitefield’s Sermons, and also the Dealings with him,” (316) to further improve her reading—books that Squire Booby later mistakes for Rochester’s poems. These accusations of antinomianism tied explicitly to important evangelical texts indicate one of the major lines of attack against the revival. Methodist women were especially susceptible to portrayal as sexually wanton enthusiasts who after experiencing Christian perfection then slipped into antinomianism, wreaking havoc on the family and community. Anti-Methodist tracts accused Methodists of holding orgies at their love feasts, while John and Charles Wesley were often portrayed as preying on impressionable young women sexually. While it is true that some Methodists *did* move too far into antinomianism,³⁸ much of the criticism of the movement revolved around far less extreme behavior as it was mediated in letters, diaries, and print.

More troubling for contemporary audiences is the way that Pamela uses this type of inspiration to write or rewrite divine revelation, a practice for which she “hopes she did not sin” (140). The most prominent example of this is her paraphrase of Psalm 137, which substitutes her own captivity for the Babylonian captivity it originally describes with the original quoted first and Pamela’s adaptation second:

When we did sit in Babylon
The Rivers round about:
Then in Remembrance of Sion,

The Tears for Grief burst out.

We hang'd our Harps and Instruments
The Willow-trees upon:
For in that Place Men, for that Use,
Hand planted many a one.

...
When sad I sat in B——n-hall,
All watched round about;
And thought of every absent Friend,
The Tears for Grief burst out.

My Joys, and Hopes, all overthrown,
My Heart-strings almost broke:
Unfit my Mind for Melody,
Much more to bear a Joke (317).

While Pamela's hope that she did "not sin" may seem odd given the fact that she is reading and paraphrasing scripture, this was a source of major controversy during the early stages of the revival. Fundamental to evangelical theology was the belief that a person could *know* and *feel* that his or her sins were forgiven and that this opened the way for direct communion with the divine through the means of grace. Though Psalm translations and/or paraphrases by women were common throughout the seventeenth century, Pamela's is nevertheless tainted by enthusiasm—she is not simply translating here, she is mapping her own personal experience and inspiration in her own (common) language onto the divine word. This was a type of dangerous enthusiasm that many critics of evangelicalism feared—women using experience as a license to reinterpret scripture and publish the results of their experience widely in public speech, letters, print or all three together.

These unsanctioned and promiscuous verses are even more troubling in that Pamela attempts to circulate them and, through circulation, convert others to her pious enthusiasm. A case in point is the scene that occurs shortly after Pamela writes these verses. Having conspired with Parson Williams, she tasks him with getting a packet of letters, including the Psalm 127 paraphrase, to her parents—of circulating her enthusiasms more widely. In this he has been caught, not only in the snare of Pamela's beauty, but in her unreflective enthusiasm and it begins to affect him outwardly. Indeed, as he

is conveying the collection of Pamela's papers that include the enthusiastic paraphrase, he is set upon by "rogues" sent by Mrs. Jewkes, beaten and robbed, though he manages to save Pamela's papers. Writing the next day, he says that his "Cassock is sadly torn, as is my Band" (150), without which signs of ecclesiastical office he has become little more than a Methodist itinerant preacher—circulating the "experience" of a young female enthusiast outside of the bounds of the Church. This is repeated on multiple occasions as the young clergyman cannot keep anything to himself—letting slip portions of his and Pamela's attempts to escape from Mrs. Jewkes without any apparent reflection on the consequences. He is enthusiastic for Pamela and this enthusiasm slips into the performance of his duty—the very slippage that critics of the revival and women's roles within it were concerned with, especially as more and more men *and* women did actually become unordained itinerant preachers.

This pattern of conversion through Pamela's public enthusiasms continues throughout the novel and eventually reaches Mr. B. himself. Indeed, one way of reading Mr. B's change of heart towards Pamela is as a conversion of sorts, whereby her virtue and enthusiastic piety reform his heart so that he is able to internalize, to feel. Pamela frames her own narrative as a conversion narrative, whereby she is purified through suffering and tribulation:

Because wicked Men persecute thee, wilt thou fly in the Face of the Almighty, and bid Defiance to his Grace and Goodness, who can still turn all these Sufferings to thy Benefits? And how do I know, but that God, who sees all the lurking Vileness of my Heart, may not have permitted these Sufferings on that very Score, and to make me rely solely on his Grace and Assistance, who perhaps have too much prided myself in a vain Dependence on my own foolish Contrivances? (174)

This is precisely the type of language evangelicals used to describe the purpose of worldly sufferings. Take, as one example of many, Sarah Ryan's reflection in her conversion narrative published in the *Arminian Magazine* that she is "capable, yea, very capable, of suffering; and much of this he hath been pleased to lay upon me: but through all, my soul sweetly rests on the bosom of my Beloved . . . and I pray, from my inmost soul, that he would with-hold from me no suffering, that can work for his glory, only let *his* will be done".³⁹ And indeed, Pamela even goes so far as to reflect that, through

her suffering, “God can touch his [Mr. B’s] Heart in an Instant” (173), language that evangelicals used specifically to reference the moment of conversion from sin to virtue, from darkness to light.

Indeed, it is through *reading* Pamela’s conversion narrative that Mr. B is himself converted. Consider the squire’s own account of his conversion to virtue, within which Pamela and her writing play the central role:

You are, said my dearest Sir, very good to me, Madam, I am sure. I have taken Liberties in my former Life, that deserved not so much Excellence. I have offended extremely, by Trials glorious to my Pamela, but disgraceful to me, against a Virtue that I now consider as almost sacred; and I shall not think I deserve her, till I can bring my Manners, my Sentiments, and my Actions, to a Conformity with her own. And, in short, my Pamela, said he, I want you to be nothing but what you are, and have been. You cannot be better; and if you could, it would be but filling me with Despair to attain the awful Heights of Virtue, at which you are arrived. (408)

In using the language of bringing manners, sentiments, and actions into conformity with hers, Mr. B echoes common Methodist rhetoric about the desire to bring one’s actions in conformity with God’s. Sarah Ryan, for example, expresses her desire to have “no will, but what is conformable to his; no happiness, but in doing his pleasure,”⁴⁰ while Mary Entwisle reflects in her manuscript diary that she increasingly feels “an ardent desire for a greater conformity to the blessed Jesus,”⁴¹ and in the introduction to his *Lives and Public Ministries of Various Holy Women*, Zechariah Taft writes that the chief desire of all of these women was “communion with God, and conformity to him.”⁴² Here, though, Pamela is the vehicle through which this virtue is transmitted and through which the squire is ultimately converted, and it is in the further transmission of her writing in manuscript form that other individuals are converted as well. Consider that Lady Davers is ultimately converted by Pamela’s *writing* and not Pamela herself, and that she requests Pamela “send her my Papers; which I find she intends to entertain Lady Betty with, and another Lady or two, her Intimates, as also her Lord; and hopes to find, as I believe, in the Reading of them, some Excuse for her Brother’s Choice (457–58). As with the early transmission of the Methodist manuscript conversion accounts from person to person,

Pamela's promiscuous writing has now been spread abroad and outside of her direct control—it will now be remediated orally in Lady Davers's social circle and also in print—as the editorial conceit of the novel itself suggests.

It is in this conversion of Squire B's household, neighbors, and even physical house itself in the form of the chapel to Pamela's brand of pious evangelicalism that we most clearly see the influence of the revival, and especially its connections to the High Church/Non Jurors dedicated to restoring Primitive Christianity. Indeed, when Lady Davers is castigating her brother for his choice of Pamela as a wife, she calls him an "Egregious Preacher," before commenting that he has "turn'd *Puritan!*" and sarcastically congratulating Pamela because she has not "only made a Rake a Husband; but thou hast made a Rake a Preacher!" (423–24). Perhaps nowhere is this dramatic conversion more physically evident than in the revival and repurposing of the family chapel, which Pamela insists upon as a condition of her marriage: "I have no Will but yours, said I, (all glowing like the Fire, as I could feel:) But, Sir, did you say in the House? Ay, said he; for I care not how privately it be done; and it must be very publick if he go to Church. It is a *Holy Rite*, Sir, said I, and would be better, methinks, in a *Holy Place*" (276). To which Mr. B replies that he will order his "own little Chapel, which has not been us'd for two Generations, for anything but a Lumber-room, because our Family seldom resided here long together, to be clear'd and clean'd, and got ready for the Ceremony" (276) while assuring Pamela that "it has been consecrated, and that many Ages ago, in my Great Great-grandfathers Time, who built that and the good old House together" (277).

This chapel becomes the physical location of Pamela's final conversion of Mr. B in marriage and the brick and mortar representation of the revival of original church principles in the form of primitive Christianity. Pamela's Methodism, like Wesley's, is thus not one of innovation but of return—a return to an ecclesiastical past that is embodied in the chapel itself—unused for two generations (since the Glorious Revolution) and consecrated during Mr. B's great grandfather's time (the Civil War). These two temporal markers are no accident on Richardson's part, as they indicate two crucial periods in the establishment of High Church resistance within the Church of England—first in the form of the expelled clergy during the Civil War and then with the separation of the Non-Jurors from the main body of the Church in 1689. The fact that the chapel has not been used for two

generations suggests that, since the Revolution, the Church of England has stagnated and is in need of reformation and revival by returning to the primitive Christian principals advocated both by Non-Jurors like Rivington and evangelicals like Wesley.

Indeed, as I have indicated above, Wesley was reading deeply in the Caroline divines and Non-Juror theology at the time he penned the letter that became Richardson's *Oxford Methodists* and he described Methodism not as a separation from the Church of England but a renewal of its primitive principles. This reformation is reflected throughout *Pamela* as the title character seeks to return Mr. B, his family, and his house to the virtuous path of true religion. Consider Pamela's response to the Squire when, chancing upon her shortly before their wedding and finding her with the *Book of Common Prayer* open, he chides her for not coming down to breakfast to eat with Parson Williams and Parson Peters. "Why, indeed, Sir," she replies, "I will set about a Reformation this Instant! He saw the Common-prayer Book lying in the Window. I hope, said he, my lovely Maiden has been conning the Lesson she is by-and-by to repeat" (340). Though the direct context refers to Mr. B's request that Pamela attend breakfast with the Parsons (the Established Church), the use of the word "Reformation" in the context of reading *The Book of Common Prayer* has other connotations. Specifically, it has resonances with the controversy over which version of the *Book of Common Prayer* should be used in Church sacraments and especially the Eucharist. Though many Non-jurors used the standard 1662 version of the text, others, including the Usagers, insisted upon returning to the original 1549 version, arguing that it better represented the worship practices of the primitive church. As Geordan Hammond has convincingly demonstrated, John Wesley's theology during this time period, influenced by John Clayton, was distinctly of a Usager cast. Though we cannot be certain what Richardson thought about this controversy, given his association with Rivington it is at least possible to read these references to the "Reformation" of the Church and Prayer Book as a call by Pamela (and Richardson) for a return to primitive evangelical principles.

In fact, the *Oxford Methodists* explicitly condemns "modern Christians, who place all Religion, as well as Prayer, in a dead Indifference" (27), while upholding the "Method practised by those young Gentlemen [the Holy Club]" as a "Revival of that good old Way which was practised by the best

People of the first Ages” (28). This claim is easily confirmed by those who look “into the Bible, or have ever dip’d into Cave’s *Primitive Christianity*” (27). Cave’s book, first published in 1672 and frequently reprinted, was especially popular at this time among the Non-jurors and those interested in restoring the practices of the primitive Christians. John Wesley—likely under the influence of John Clayton—is known to have been reading this book in 1732 and it would appear that Richardson too agreed that it was time for a revival of these primitive principals. Likewise, Rivington was heavily invested in the Usager controversy and issued several pamphlets during the early 1720s that took on the issue of primitive church practice and in general came down on the side of Usager principles and the 1549 *Common Prayer* book.⁴³

Despite Wesley’s (and Richardson’s) insistence upon the orthodoxy and conformity of their beliefs and adherence to primitive principles, both got painted as textual enthusiasts in the end, intent on tearing down established structures. Indeed, there are multiple attempts throughout the novel to associate Pamela’s and then Mr. B’s enthusiasm with an era of religious tumult. Lady Davers goes out of her way to call her brother “Friend,” associating him with the Quakers by asking, “Is thy Wife, as thou callest her, to go along with thee, Friend? said she. Yes, to be sure, answered he, my dear Quaker Sister, and took her Hand, and smil’d. And wouldst have me parade it with her on the Road?” (430). These explicit accusations of enthusiasm—leveling dissent—within the novel reflect the criticisms Methodism was already receiving outside of it while anticipating the critique of the novel itself levelled by writers like Fielding.

And it is here, embedded in these shared textual histories, that we begin to comprehend what was really at stake in the controversies over Methodism and early novels like *Pamela*—controversies that had as much to do with discourse and the protocols of mediation as they did with doctrine. If this is the case, then it helps us comprehend why a seeming return to original Christian principles in the reformation of the Church could be perceived as a social threat—whether this was expressed in the fields outside Bristol or in a novel which took as its chief objective the restoration of virtue. As the case of Richardson’s adaptation of Wesley’s Morgan letter in the *Oxford Methodists* indicates, at this early point in the revival, both Wesley and Richardson were working along similar tracks and both astutely understood

that the mediums of mass publication and grass-roots circulation were ideally suited to spreading their message. This is something that critics like Fielding understood as well and, instead of being merely “tangentially related” to the controversy surrounding the novel, religious controversy was at its very heart.

This brings us back to Siskin and Warner’s assertion that not only is Enlightenment an event in the history of mediation, but it acts as an operational platform upon which new programs and protocols of mediation can be run. Re-reading the mediation history of *Pamela* along these lines, then, opens up new ways of thinking about the novel and the controversy surrounding it. In particular it allows us to track the ways in which Pamela herself and the discourses she participates in are implicated in the enthusiasm of the early revival. By claiming immediate inspiration and then transmitting it widely as a means of converting those around her to her own brand of evangelical virtue, Pamela becomes a Methodist preacher—destabilizing the discursive order in the pages of the novel itself and in the society of its readers. As late as fifteen years after its initial publication, a survivor of the Lisbon earthquake could be mocked as “Master *Pamela*” in the contemporary press for describing his survival in enthusiastic and providential terms.⁴⁴

These new ways of reading the novel reveal that what people objected to in *Pamela* were not Christian principles themselves, the message of virtue rewarded, or even a call for the reformation of the Church of England, but the *manner* in which these principles were mediated. Especially in their claim to be restoring primitive Christianity, which was easily associated with Jacobitism and non-conformity, the potentialities of these new or adopted forms of circulation were made even more dangerous. Though the messages themselves were not necessarily enthusiastic, the mediums, with their potential to make a kind of “electrick communication everywhere” were, whether this was preaching in the open fields, gathering in classes in bands, itinerant preaching, circulation of spiritual experience in manuscript and print, or yes, even novels. The social, political, and religious instability these uncontrolled and uncontrollable mediums made possible were too much for many in contemporary society to handle and thus they had to be discredited and marginalized by the only means available—ironically the very same uncontrollable mediums that birthed this instability in the first place.

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Notes

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¹ Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. Douglas Brooks-Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 332. Hereafter cited in text.

² “Enthusiasm” during the eighteenth century had very specific religious connotations that dated back to the Civil War. The first entry in the OED defines it as “possession by a god, supernatural inspiration, prophetic or poetic frenzy. For more on this see Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³ Luke Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* (New York: Randolph, 1877), 7. See also Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 17–18

⁴ I am indebted to Lisa Maruca for pointing out this connection. See Maruca, “Fielding, Print Culture, and the Pamela Media Event.” In *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Henry Fielding*, edited by Jennifer Wilson and Elizabeth Kraft. New York: Modern Language Association, in press.

⁵ Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth Century Puritan Character* (Hamden: Archon, 1972).

⁶ D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁷ G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 267. See also Emily Walker Heady, “Flutters, Feelings, and Fancies: John Wesley's Sentimental Sermons and the Spirit of the

Age,” *Christianity and Literature* 53, no. 2 (2004): 141–62; and Alex Wetmore, *Men of Feeling in Eighteenth-Century Literature: Touching Fiction* (London: Palgrave, 2013).

⁸ Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, Pamela *in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

⁹ Bonnie Latimer, *Making Gender, Culture, and the Self in the Fiction of Samuel Richardson* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013). For more on Richardson’s politics see Margaret Anne Doody, “Richardson’s Politics,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2, no. 2 (1990): 113–26.

¹⁰ Misty G. Anderson, *Imagining Methodism in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Enthusiasm, Belief, and the Borders of the Self* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 15.

¹¹ Brett C. McNelly, *Textual Warfare and the Making of Methodism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 40–41.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³ Keymer and Sabor, Pamela *in the Marketplace*, 11.

¹⁴ John Dussinger, “*The Oxford Methodists (1733;1738): The Purloined Letter of John Wesley at Samuel Richardson’s Press*,” in *Theology and Literature in the Age of Johnson: Resisting Secularism*, eds. Melvyn New and Gerard Reedy (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012), 27–48.

¹⁵ Pocock, J.G.A. “Enthusiasm: The Antiself of Enlightenment,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60.1/2 (1997), 7-28.

¹⁶ Michael Warner, “The Preacher’s Footing,” in *This is Enlightenment*, ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 368.

¹⁷ See Richard Brantley, *Locke, Wesley and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984); Frederick Dreyer, “Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley” *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (1983): 12–30; Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Jasper Cragwell, *Lake Methodism: Polite Literature and Popular Religion in England, 1780–1830* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2013).

¹⁸ Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1901), 380.

¹⁹ Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation*, 64.

²⁰ Clifford Siskin and William Warner, “This is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of an Argument,” in *This is Enlightenment*, eds. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1.

²¹ Clifford Siskin and William Warner, “If This is Enlightenment Then What is Romanticism?” *European Romantic Review* 22, no. 3 (2011): 285.

²² Siskin & Warner, “This is Enlightenment,” 12–14.

²³ These were single-sex groups organized by John Wesley that met weekly to hold members accountable, encourage spiritual growth, and operate as community action organizations. It was within these associations that ordinary Methodists came together to pray, read, and share experience.

²⁴ Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), 83. Wesley was undeniably influenced by Law’s work, especially his *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call*, but Law appears to have met Wesley only once or twice and have been less than impressed by the young man. After Wesley’s return from Georgia the two engaged in a rather sharp exchange over the nature of justification (See Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 142).

²⁵ John Wesley, *An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley’s Journal, From His Embarking for Georgia, to His Return to London* (London: Whitfield, 1797), iii-iv.

²⁶ Dussinger, *The Oxford Methodists*, 29.

²⁷ Geordan Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. 30-31.

²⁸ Hammond, *John Wesley in America*, 28.

²⁹ Dussinger, *The Oxford Methodists*, 29.

³⁰ Burke, *Writings and Speeches*, 380.

³¹ *The Oxford Methodists: Being Some Account of a Society of Young Gentlemen in That City, so Denominated; Setting forth their Rise, Views, and Designs. With Some Occasional Remarks on a Letter Inserted in Fog’s Journal of December 9th, Relating to Them. In a Letter from a Gentleman near Oxford, to his Friend at London* (London: J. Roberts, 1933), 24, 28. Hereafter cited in text.

³² Dussinger includes an extensive appendix which tracks the linguistic similarities between *The Oxford Methodists* and all of Richardson’s work. See pgs. 45–48.

³³ Septimus Rivington, *The Publishing House of Rivington* (London: Rivington, Percival, 1894), 13.

³⁴ Hester Ann Rogers, *An Account of the Experience of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers* (New York: Mason & Lane, 1837), 7. As late as the 1830s, the Methodist poet Agnes Bulmer could write to a young friend of novel reading that they “debase the understanding, deteriorate the passions, and deprave the heart. In common with other writings of this class, they apply a strong stimulus to the mind, and thereby excite and exhaust its energies to such a degree, as to disincline it to, and disqualify it for, those regular and serious efforts by which alone any thing worthy of the name of knowledge can be acquired, or any progress

made in that mental cultivation and discipline without which there is absolutely no such thing as wisdom.” In *Memoir of Mrs. Agnes Bulmer* (London: Rivington, 1837), 93.

³⁵ Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, eds. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3. Hereafter cited in text.

³⁶ Jane Cooper, *Letters Wrote By Jane Cooper. To Which is Prefixt, Some Account of Her Life and Death*, ed. John Wesley (London: City-Road Chapel, 1789), n.p.

³⁷ Antinomians believed that Christians who lived under the law of grace did not need to follow the moral law. For many, John Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection or “perfect love” strayed too close to antinomianism for comfort.

³⁸ John Wesley’s own brother-in-law Westley Hall, for example, who married Martha Wesley, began as a Methodist preacher but eventually slipped into antinomianism and inflicted a long series of live-in mistresses on his long suffering wife.

³⁹ Sarah Ryan, “Account of Mrs. Sarah Ryan,” *Arminian Magazine* II (1779): 310.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Mary Entwisle, *MS Journal (1770–1804)*, Methodist Archives and Research Centre, John Rylands Library, Manchester, UK. Accession: 1977/229.

⁴² Zechariah Taft, *Biographical Sketches of the Lives and Public Ministry of Various Holy Women* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1992), iii.

⁴³ Following the publication of the pro-Usager *Communion Office, Taken Partly from Primitive Liturgies, and Partly from the First English Reformed Common-Prayer-Book* in 1718 by Bettenham, a pamphlet war ensued over these “primitive” usages. Rivington published several pamphlets in this controversy, including Samuel Downes’s *An Abridgement of the Controversy Between the Church of England and the New Pseudo-Primitives* in 1722 and other decidedly primitivist publications like Thomas Comber’s *A Companion to the Altar* (1721), Lewis’s *Historical Essay Upon the Consecration of Churches* (1719), *The True Church of England Man’s Companion in the Closet* (1722), and Charles Wheatly’s *Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer* (1720).

⁴⁴ Keymer and Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace*, 7.

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