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Mothers at Cards: Motherhood and Gaming in Two Late Georgian English Novels

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Abstract

Gaming is a significant and recurrent theme in eighteenth-century English literature. Often a target of criticism, gaming includes female gamesters, who are especially censured. In the eighteenth century, English society also witnesses the birth of maternal ideology and demands that women be responsible and sentimental mothers. Gaming mothers in eighteenth-century literature conflict with that demand; yet, through these figures, their authors also suggest an alternative idea of maternity and motherhood. In exploring this subject matter, this essay studies two late Georgian English novels, Anna Maria McKenzie's *The Female Gamester; or, the Pupil of Fashion* (1796) and Charles Sedley's *The Faro Table; or, the Gambling Mothers* (1808). The essay's argument is twofold: it is first that the characterization of gaming mothers in the two novels ostensibly warns readers against the danger of gaming and reminds women of the importance of domestic responsibility; and second that eighteenth-century fictional gaming mothers, gaming culture, ideas about motherhood, and the discourse of so-called unnatural mothers, reflect English social anxiety about female virtue and positive motherhood. In other words, gaming mothers are figures who deviate from the common concept of natural maternity, reflecting the rise of a feminist consciousness, and function as a comment on a patriarchal hierarchical order. Such critical understanding of mothers at cards widens understandings of so-called monstrous or unnatural mothers in eighteenth-century literature.

Keywords: eighteenth-century English literature, gaming, Faro Lady, motherhood, eighteenth-century English women

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Gambling, or what is called gaming in eighteenth-century England, is a problem to which both the government and moralists of the time cannot turn a blind eye.[1] Conduct book authors and critics by and large hold that that gaming incites greediness and mental weakness. In comparison to men's gaming, women's gaming addiction comes under particularly severe censure. First published in 1722, *The Ladies Library* states that "if gaming is a vice in men, [then] it is much more so in women; for that one of its consequences is often the loss of what is much more valuable than gold or diamonds, their reputation, if not their honour" (40). A mother with a gaming addiction is a culpable figure; not only are her body and mind harmed but also she neglects her domestic duties. "The Bad Consequences of Women's Gaming," published in 1778 in *The Weekly Miscellany*, points out that a gaming mother can never raise fine, qualified children (73-5). Actual eighteenth-century female gaming house hostesses and gamers—named Faro ladies due to the faro game they favor—earn notorious reputations in addition to gaining (and losing) money. In the late Victorian period, in an article entitled "Women at Cards in The Eighteenth Century" (1899), the author criticizes gaming women's tricks at card tables and attributes their infamous gaming habits to women's fragile psychology (255). In short, eighteenth-century gaming women draw contemporary English society's attention to debates about femininity and are a common and significant motif in literature of the time.

It is generally believed that eighteenth-century English women with a gaming addiction fail to fulfill their domestic duties, playing neither the role of a good wife or mother. As the eighteenth century marks the birth of a systemized maternal ideology, contemporary discourses in effect assume that women are born with natural maternal desires and affection and women who do not demonstrate this are unnatural. The former refers to mothers who dedicate all of their time and energy to their husbands, children, and household work. The latter refers to mothers who neglect their wifely and motherly duties and even harm their children. Eighteenth-century mothers at cards could easily be labeled as unnatural mothers; they are treated not only as laughing-stocks but also as patients who may infect their children with a gaming addiction. However, twenty-first century critics have begun to justify Faro ladies and see the expression of female subjectivity and consciousness through female gaming. Fictional gaming mothers thus inspire a reexamination and exploration of eighteenth-

[1] The word "gambling" is seldom used in eighteenth-century English and does not appear in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*. In this essay, I use "gaming" when referring to gambling, as eighteenth-century authors do.

century motherhood and femininity. Mothers on the gaming table widen the scope of maternal discourse, and they suggest that there are alternative ideas about motherhood in the eighteenth century.

This essay examines the images of gaming mothers in two English novels, Anna Maria McKenzie's *The Female Gamester; or, the Pupil of Fashion* (1796) and Charles Sedley's *The Faro Table; or, the Gambling Mothers* (1808), both published in the late Georgian period. The two novels, written by, respectively, a female author and a male author, can be read in the context of English anti-gaming literature, which, in Janet E. Mullin's words "was concerned with the mayhem that trailed in the wake of the addicted player, who lived his or her life from game to game and who cared nothing for family, reputation, or finance" (*A Sixpence at Whist* 118). The two novels also contribute to the building of ideas about maternity, for the plots center on mothers with gaming problems. Both novels have tended to be overlooked by readers and critics; thus by noticing them here, and by reading them together, this essay aims to deepen critical understandings of gaming women in Georgian England.

The Female Gamester delineates the intricate psychological transformation of a woman, from an innocent to corrupt being, while *The Faro Table* realistically details the vices of gaming in English fashionable circles. Besides the gaming motif, the two novels also examine the formation of motherhood and maternal ideology: *The Female Gamester* questions the existence of a natural, positive maternity, and *The Faro Table* shows that maternal nature is not something that is fixed but rather is something that is at least to some extent a social construction. The two novels are also important because of the realistic representation of maternal psychology. Unlike figures of female guardians, aunts, or elder relatives, figures who are symbolic mothers because they do not have children themselves in eighteenth-century plays or periodical literature, the heroines in the two novels are mothers and therefore their maternal experiences are more convincing. The alternative interpretation of the two novels given here suggests in effect that fictional gaming mothers reflect eighteenth-century English writers' exploration of the concept and ideal of motherhood. Generally speaking, the image of fictional mothers at cards discloses a rather complicated struggle in anti-gaming literature, one that both supports and questions the maternal discourse and patriarchal ideology of the time.

Eighteenth-century Gaming Women

Gaming is socially and culturally significant in eighteenth-century England,

and it is perceived as a necessary aspect of private parties and gatherings, and of social clubs. Mullin observes that gaming as well as manuals on popular games appeal to both sexes and become one of the English leisure class's favorite pastimes ("Cards on the Table" 59). However, English society also perceives gaming to be a bad influence and makes gaming an object of ridicule. James E. Evans notes a shift in gaming discourse by the end of the seventeenth century, "from a social spectacle representing the uneasy privilege of the aristocracy during the Restoration to a spectacle recreated in comic plays and periodicals after the Revolution of 1688" (2). Furthermore, gaming is considered ruinous at almost every social layer. Donna T. Andrew notices the damage gaming brings to different classes:

> Among upper-class male devotees, gambling was portrayed as the prelude to political corruption, to dueling or suicide; in females, it was argued, it would invariably . . . lead to adultery and death. And among working-class men, gaming led inexorably to theft, forgery and the highway. (178)

It is arguable that gaming makes English society anxious because it speaks for an ancient order that conflicts with the values of the newly rising middleclass. A. A. Markley shows that by the end of the eighteenth century, gaming, similar to dueling, recalled an aristocratic living style and overlooked "the political changes that were occurring in the world" (162). However, gaming's real fault lies in the effeminacy that English society sees in male gamesters, and in comparison to male gaming, women's gaming is seen to be even more inexcusable and deplorable, for it suggests an intrusion into the masculine, public domain. Roger Munting argues that throughout English history there are three main objections to gaming: "opportunity cost, moral shortcoming, and the association with crime" (296). Munting also suggests that gaming is a gendered vice, as "there were strong suggestions that [women] needed more protection from their own folly than did men" (302). It is true that in eighteenth-century England a group of upper-class gaming women, known as "Faro ladies" due to the game of faro they often played, become a primary concern and target. Representative works criticizing Faro ladies include Mary Robinson's comedy, *Nobody, a Comedy in Two* Acts (1794); the anonymous mock-epic, *The Rape of the Faro Bank* (1800); and a series of James Gillray's satirical caricatures such as *Modern Hospitality, or A Friendly Party in High Life* (1792) and *A Voluptuary under the Horrors of Digestion* (1792).[2] Authors and artists take actual Faro ladies, for instance, Lady

[2] Other notable eighteenth-century English satirical paintings about gaming include *A Gaming Table at Devonshire House* (1791) by Thomas Rowlandson and *Dividing the Spoil! St James's. St Giles's* (1796) by Isaac Cruikshank.

Sarah Archer, Lady Albinia Hobart (Countess of Buckinghamshire), Georgiana Cavendish (Duchess of Devonshire and author of *The Sylph*) and Lady Elizabeth Luttrel, as female gaming models and denounce them.[3] These women, although they are of noble birth, are characterized as obese, vulgar, coarse, and greedy. The image of these Faro ladies corresponds to stereotypes of female gamesters, who in Mullin's explanation are "agent[s] of disorder, disobedience, dysfunction, of financial and sexual agency that threatened the stability of family and society alike" (*A Sixpence at Whist* 102).

Gaming women also remind the public of prostitution. Studying the relationship among gaming, gender, and politics in Georgian London, Phyllis Deutsch demonstrates that "the gamesters, the prostitute and the public, political woman were of the same vices all compact" (649). Jessica Richard pays special attention to the connection between gaming and prostitution, pointing out that a woman sitting at a card table is a figure that carries sexual connotations, and especially so when she is "a married woman [who] uses her last stake, her own body, to pay her gambling debts" (112). Many of the gaming episodes in eighteenth-century fictions imply that "the gamestress's economic transaction is a sexual one, just as is the prostitute's, even if the gamestress doesn't actually grant any sexual favors" (Richard 118). Generally speaking, women's gaming arouses suspicion of adultery and prostitution, and it causes social uneasiness about women's chastity and virtue.

Instead of seeing female gamesters as a source of moral corruption and blemish, as much of eighteenth-century society views these figures, scholars today recognize in gaming women a feminist consciousness and women's struggle against the patriarchal bounds of society. E. Leigh Bonds finds that although Mary Robinson denounces gaming in general, she nevertheless voices sympathy for women who play at eighteenth-century card tables. According to Bonds, Robinson knows that in a card game "the cards are literally stacked against women: if cheated, their voice becomes their only recourse—and one easily dismissed by the male offenders" (28). Beth Kowaleski Wallace argues that female gamesters in eighteenth-century plays suffer from sexual exploitation and are treated as "objects of a voyeuristic gaze" who "bring to the foreground a class-bound anxiety about the derivations, disseminations, and ultimate destination of wealth" (22). In other words, female gamesters wager female virtue, which is also a patriarchal convention, on their fortune, social position, and gentility. Modern critics also find in women's gaming an expression of early feminist

[3] For example, it is the robbery in Lady Albinia Hobart's gaming house that inspired the composition of *The Rape of the Faro Bank* and many of Gilray's biting comics.

thinking in the context of the maintenance of female subjectivity. In this sense, women's gaming challenges the patriarchal discourse. Gillian Russell, for example, understands that Faro ladies annoy the public because they represent "an older, more entrenched form of this 'womanpower'—the sexual, financial, and class power of the aristocratic woman, traditionally seem as threatening by both aristocratic men and middle-class opinion" (482). Focusing on Lady Albinia Hobart's career as a gaming hostess, Clare Walcot emphasizes that "female players would have been in direct competition with, and in danger of succeeding against, their male counterparts" (466). Across the Atlantic Ocean, female gaming also reflects a power struggle. Linda L. Sturtz overthrows the idea that women in British colonies are rare participants in games and shows that "[g]aming at home can indeed be seen as representing the struggle for authority within the plantation household" (171). Accordingly, women's gaming is not merely about the acquisition of money. Women's gaming bespeaks a feminist consciousness. Such claim challenges reductive assumptions about the pastime of gaming. As Mullin argues, women's gaming in "[m]ixed-sex gatherings often had an added sparkle, with cards as weapons in the battle of the sexes or as an excuse for flirting" ("We Had Carding" 995). However, in the eighteenth century, common assumptions are that gaming not only invariably leads to sexual corruption and endangers social decorum but also makes women potential usurpers of male governance. Today, critics argue that eighteenth-century English women's gaming implies female individuality and subjectivity and women's voicing of the right to participate in public affairs, or in spheres of activity that usually are denied to women on the grounds that women lack the psychological and physical strength to participate in those spheres. Women's sophisticated and gendered gaming behavior challenges eighteenth-century patriarchal society; thus, their financial usurpation is less threatening to this society than is their challenging of gender ideology.

Gaming Women in The *Female Gamester* and *The Faro Table*

Although modern critics argue that eighteenth-century female gamesters deserve sympathy because they are early practitioners of feminist thinking, in literature of the time there is usually found harsh criticism of gaming women. Eighteenth-century anti-gaming literature usually adopts the tone of conduct book literature and manages to discourage readers, both male and female, from engaging in habitual gaming. Anna Maria McKenzie's 1796 novel *The Female Gamester* and Charles Sedley's 1808 novel *The Faro Table* offer salient examples of how contemporary anti-gaming literature endeavors to lecture about the evils

of gaming and highlight the bad influences of gaming on natural maternity.

The Female Gamester is an epistolary novel divided into two volumes, and the first volume shows the danger of gaming addiction. The young and beautiful heroine Polyxena marries the Duke of Wolsingham and is almost immediately introduced to fashionable circles. Welcoming Polyxena, Lady Henrietta Butler decides to seek revenge because in the past she had targeted the Duke for marriage. Lady Henrietta Butler teaches Polyxena how to gamble with the aim to acquire the Duke's fortune, and volume one ends when the family is so ruined by gaming debts that they have to leave England.

What makes *The Female Gamester* realistic and attractive is its careful delineation of the transformation of a woman from innocence to ruin. When the story begins, one first reads that Polyxena is shocked by the deep gaming of the fashionable society:

> I have often played in company, but you know not how the sums startle me; I have seen twenty thousand pounds depend on one round of cards; I declare it makes me shudder . . . Lady Henrietta says, I cannot do without playing. I do not much like, but habit reconciles us to everything. (vol.1, 40-41)

Polyxena's words remind readers of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), in which the heroine claims that cards are the "diversion that I am not fond of; nor shall I ever desire to play" (300). Both Pamela's and Polyxena's words embodiy the eighteenth-century conduct book teaching that gaming is the enemy of women's innocence and virtue. The passage implies that gaming is against Polyxena's nature and she takes up gaming, and grows accustomed to it, only because she is thrust into fashionable circles and thus has no choice in the matter: "I entered into it merely because I was told I must; I did not like it, but found it impossible to leave off; by degrees, I was more pleased with it; and now, alas! cannot do without" (vol. 1, 69). The heroine's transformation echoes conduct book teaching that women's natural moral weakness makes them easy prey to gaming. The novel's didacticism continues with the emphasis on gaming's ruinous power. Polyxena's adoptive mother Mrs. Newborough writes to her daughter and warns her against gaming, which "is a companion, if once encouraged, which you can never rid yourself of; its attendants are meanness, selfishness, and *criminality!!!*" (vol. 1, 80-81). The letter resembles moral lectures in eighteenth-century English conduct books, which severely censure gaming. Polyxena's problem recapitulates eighteenth-century warnings against female gaming, which are based on the logic that women can be easily seduced. By the end of the novel, Polyxena's confession and accusation make it clear that a woman can easily fall prey to a gaming addiction: "Oh Henrietta! it was you that undid me,—you that led me to ruin, despair, and annihilation:—you who taught me,

because I unfortunately was a Duchess, that I must be a MONSTER" (vol. 2, 185). *The Female Gamester* suggests that female virtue can be fragile, and the stereotypical depiction of gaming women in the novel reflects eighteenth-century society's anxiety about women and gaming.

Further, analysis of the novel reveals that Polyxena is in fact the victim of her marriage, and gaming is how she endeavors to achieve economic independence. In short, she is victimized by the patriarchal hierarchy. In contrast with widespread beliefs that eighteenth-century gaming women are a social and moral problem, Polyxena is a figure that reflects that these women are not entirely to blame, and especially so because of the impediment of marriage. The huge age gap between the couple (the Duke is fifty years old and Polyxena is only sixteen when they marry) foretells that their marriage is doomed. Marriages denies Polyxena economic independence and subjugates her to patriarchal ideals. The Duke's friend, George Froome, gives a piece of misogynist advice to him about how to treat Polyxena. He tells the Duke to "clip the wings of your IDOL'S liberty, or she will soar to regions from whence you will not easily regain her" (vol. 1, 46). The connotation here is that a married woman should be controlled, governed, and even confined. As a wife, Polyxena is completely dependent on her husband, and so as well as having to ask her husband for money she resorts to usury and high stakes gambling to acquire money (vol. 1, 68). She does not represent the encouragement of female gaming; rather, she represents the difficulties that women experience in their struggle to achieve economic independence. Lady Henrietta Butler's words underscore the cruel fact that a married woman's security is obtained at a card table: "what is money for but to be spent? . . . And if these are procured by cards, why reflect on yourself so heavily?" (vol. 1, 71). The character of Polyxena also reflects that gaming is about women's self-achievement: "It is in order to fly from myself, that I engage in play; and am involved in a new species of gambling, of the most fascinating nature—Lottery insurance—it being at present the Irish Lottery" (vol. 2, 57). The so-called immoral gaming wife is in fact a woman who suffers psychologically and materially from a patriarchal ideology.

In comparison with *The Female Gamester, The Faro Table* focuses less on gaming women's psychology and more on the caricature of gaming follies and patriarchal sermons about the immorality of fashionable circles. The novel tells the simple story of how the newly rich Henry Mortimer and his wife Eloisa fall victims to the fashionable circle; it also includes digressions that consist of stories of many fashionable figures and descriptions of gaming nights, horse-racing, and extra-marital and other adulterous love affairs. It begins with warning its readers against the dangers of gaming. Sedley writes that a novice to fashion

may easily find "the loss of fortune leads to the loss of honor—and both to the destruction of her peace of mind; transforming the beauties of a Venus into the deformities of a Medusa" (vol.1, 6). Mrs. Fortescue, a Faro lady and a tyrannical mother demanding her daughters' obedience "till they were drilled into moving machinery" (vol. 1, 16), introduces Eloisa to the fashionable world. Accordingly, the novel again suggests that a young woman's virtue is delicate and should be governed, as Eloisa's mother teaches her: "experience, my love, has taught me, that however pure and fervent the sentiments, they cease to preserve their tones, unless, incessantly, cherished by the cultivation and practice of our religious duties" (vol. 1, 72-3). The novel takes the usual voice of eighteenth-century conduct book literature; its aim in effect is to prevent women from falling victim to various social vices, especially gaming. Sedley writes that "[t]he most selfish, perhaps, of all pursuits in life, is that of gaming; when all sit down in the benevolent hope of fleecing their friends, and decking their own brows, with smiles of victory, at the expense of every mental pang they joy to inflict on others" (90). Gaming leads to all female vices, and the distorted mother-children relationship in this novel, as the essay will demonstrate, is an aftereffect of gaming addiction.

While *The Female Gamester* denounces gaming women and shows sympathy for eighteenth-century wives, the moralizing voice in *The Faro Table* unravels the eighteenth-century gender ideology that oppresses women. The novel implies that natural maternity also requires patriarchal governance and wives should be carefully controlled:

> Neglected wives, in the bloom [of] youth, are [susceptible] to flattery—Gamester wives to ruin—Platonic wives to *forget* their tenets: Temptation is the prevalence of the day—as ordained by fashion—and religion—its only antidote—is an alien among the polished ranks of society. (vol. 1, 147-8)

The implicit message is a wife's conduct requires guidance, and the female virtue of mother nature can be achieved with the help of strict patriarchal regulation. Thus, Henry believes that he is responsible for Eloisa's change:

> "I have been her bane—her eternal ruin: I gave her to the guidance of an unprincipled woman; I gave her to the artifices of the polished Libertine: I sacrificed her, in short, to the common enemy of all excellence—to craft, subtlety, and dissimulation: I surrounded her with friends, who smiled in her face, till they had a fair opportunity of stabbing her to the heart.—" (vol. 2, 123-4)

Even though Henry blames himself for not governing his wife well, what he fails to perceive is that patriarchal dominance victimizes women and defines women's maternal roles. Sedley emphasizes this by making his heroine a repentant one. Both Henry and Eloisa live rakish lives up until the moment of death of Henry's father, when they are present at his deathbed. The story ends with the couple

"purified by suffering, blessed by the hand of Providence that chastised them" (vol. 2, 176) and Mrs. Fortescue committing suicide due to the great loss at play. The novel is a social satire that attacks the fashionable world and its mercenary values; it also is a novel that on its surface is an attack on female gaming. However, on a deeper level, the novel seems to question patriarchal opposition to female gaming, and this questioning merits attention.

Still further analysis of gaming women in *The Female Gamester* and *The Faro Table* reveals that eighteenth-century moralists' primary concerns are about female gaming's challenge to patriarchal notions of domesticity and ethics. A woman in the eighteenth-century English public imagination was the moral center of the family, and her "responsibilities within society were primarily to her husband, her children, and smooth supervision of her household" (Mullin, *A Sixpence at Whist* 103). Thus, a woman who wagers fails her society, for she falls short of its maternal ideals: "[w]orst of all was the gamestress who had not yet become a mother: beyond the money she wasted in play, beyond her disregard for her household duties, she rejected her most elemental role as a wife" (Mullin, *A Sixpence at Whist* 104). Thus, while critics today argue that female gaming implies a feminist consciousness and a challenging of patriarchal ideology, in the eighteenth century there was considerable anxiety about gaming women. They betrayed conventional notions of motherhood. To further understand this historical and cultural connotation of female gaming, one needs also to examine the development of eighteenth-century maternal discourse.

Eighteenth-century Motherhood

Gaming is generally held to be a vice in eighteenth-century English society, and female gaming in particular is understood to be a pastime that undermines the development of a young woman's femininity and motherhood in a mature woman, ideas systematized and standardized by eighteenth-century Europeans.[4] Feminism and gender studies have established that motherhood is a paradoxical social construction that reflects a patriarchal ideology and so deserves critical attention in the context of understanding maternal discourse in western history. Modern ideas about maternity trace at least as far back as the eighteenth century

[4] In *The Compleat Gamester*, published in 1674, Charles Cotton opens the book by calling gaming "an enchanting witchery, gotten betwixt *Idleness* and *Avarice*" (1). The attempt to convict women of moral weakness is more than obvious.

in Europe.[5] In his influential *The Culture of Sensibility*, in his elucidation of this subject, G. J. Barker-Benfield articulates that the reformation of sensibility begins in the early modern period, with changes in the way English parents understand childbearing. Since at least the seventeenth century, women have been seen to be primarily responsible for raising their sons and daughters and ensuring that their children grow up into mature individuals and become respected members of society. In other words, motherhood is understood to carry great public as well as private responsibility (Barker-Benfield 161). Ideas about sensibility elevate the importance of the maternal role, and also increase the burden of maternity, since a mother has to raise children for both her family and the entire society. The importance of motherhood transcends domestic spheres of activity, turning a mother from a caretaker of a house to the guardian of the nation's future generations. Eileen Janes Yeo suggests that the eighteenth century in both England and France mark a critical stage for the building of concepts about maternity: "from the 1750s onwards, women were increasingly depicted as mothers with weighty responsibility, for the fate of the family, for the stability of the class and for the vitality of the race" (201). A wife serves her husband, while a mother serves not only her children but also the entire society.

It is easy to conclude from the foregoing that an eighteenth-century woman's commitment to her family and country makes her a victim because of her total submission to the paternal and hierarchal system. On the other hand, as Beth Fowkes Tobin suggests, women also took on this commitment at least in part because they believed that it was right to do so; women, as committed and dedicated mothers, thus also played a role in elevating their status in the family and demonstrated that they were equally important to men:

> The idea of motherhood gave to women the opportunity to perform a task that was of equal or greater value than their husband's worldly and compensated work, and it provided women with a sense of self-worth and the confidence to value themselves and their "feminine" traits of tenderness, sensitivity, and compassion. (Tobin 217)

Just as many women who are mothers contribute to the formation of ideas about motherhood, so intellectual women also participate in this formation and the importance given to it. As Eve Tavor Bannet demonstrates, both the Egalitarian and Matriarchal feminists in eighteenth-century England aim to elevate women's social position and teach the two sexes their rights, duties, and places within a

[5] For example, in *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson suggest that maternity as a social motif emerges in the mid-sixteenth century (3).

family.[6] Both groups "used the conventions of exemplary narratives to dignify and reward the sorts of conduct in women, the sorts of husband-wife and parent-child relations, and the sorts of solution to the difficulties facing women that they proposed in their place" (Bannet 15). Female writers and intellectuals teach women what their responsibilities are and so play a crucial role in the construction and transformation of maternity. Eighteenth-century England, as one sees, marks a pivotal period for the birth of maternal discourse, which requires women to take weighty responsibilities in both the public and private (domestic) spheres; it also reflects that women actively contributed to this discourse.

With the emphasis on a mother's domestic and public duties, English society also celebrates the image of a mother who is naturally tender and caring. Eighteenth-century English society promotes and welcomes the idea of natural maternity, which becomes, in Susan C. Greenfield's words, "entrenched throughout western Europe" (20). The general belief is that women are born with the capability and impulse to be mothers; accordingly, the term natural mother refers not only to a woman's biological and consanguineous relationship with her child but also to the ideal woman. Eighteenth-century maternal discourse elaborates on this ideal. *The Ladies Dispensatory*, published in 1740, introduces one of the earliest ideas of maternal nature, comparting it in significance to Christian doctrine:

> We must be so faithful, says he, as to tell nice and delicate Mothers, that nursing of their Children is a natural Duty; and because it is so, of a more necessary and indispensable Obligation, than any positive Precept of Revealed Religion; and that the general Neglect of it is one of the great and crying Sins of this Age and Nation. (xi)

The passage shows that motherhood is an instinctive trait and common among women; further, it implies that the failure to fulfill one's maternal duty as a woman is equivalent to the loss of the entire society. "The Good Mother, A Moral Tale," an essay published in *The Weekly Amusement* in 1764, sums up the social expectations and requirements for a mother. In the tale, the widow's devotion to her daughter resembles self-abdication: "and let me sacrifice to my Daughter, who is every Thing to me, that Alien Multitude, to whom in a short Time I shall be nothing" (193). The tale echoes the enthusiastic voice in *The Ladies Dispensatory*, as the former persuades its readers that "The Care of a Mother for her Children is of all Duties the most religiously observed in Nature.— This universal Sentiment governs all the Passions; it prevails even

[6] By Egalitarian feminists Bannet means women who believe that there are no differences between men and women. By Matriarchal feminists Bannet refers to women who believe in their superior status over men.

over the Love of Life" (193). The rhetoric of ideal motherhood demands that a mother eliminate her self-identity. She must subjugate herself to the greater good, that of the general public. In short, according to the concept of natural maternity, women must be not only tender and sensitive but also sacrificial beings. An eighteenth-century natural mother is a mother who devotes herself to her family and has a limited sense of female subjectivity and self-identity.

If natural maternity suggests everything that is apparently positive, then the unnatural mother suggests the opposite. An unnatural mother indicates a careless, neglectful, even murderous maternal type. Eighteenth-century fictional figures of unnatural mothers markedly contrast with the figures of natural mothers "fussing over their children, worried about their health and happiness" (Tobin 209); they suggest a different type of maternity. The popularity of problematic motherhood is testified to by the publication of literary works that render unnatural motherhood a source of entertainment. For example, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* both present unconventional mothers with limited affection for their children even they evoke readers' sympathy for these mothers. Jane Austen portrays a manipulative mother in *Lady Susan* and a hysterical mother (Mrs. Bennet), in *Pride & Prejudice*. Austen uses both of these mother figures to satirize and otherwise criticize the hierarchical society of her time. Frederick Reynolds's play, *Notoriety: A Comedy* (1792), and John Tobin's play, *The Faro Table; or, The Guardians* (1816), focus on the domestic turbulence caused by irresponsible mothers. The heroines in these plays arrange inappropriate marriages for their descendants in order to serve their own interests. "The Bad Mother: A Moral Tale," published in 1783 in *Bristol and Bath Magazine*, tells the story of a widow who favors her first son over the second but finds that the latter is her salvation toward the end of her life. The moral lecture in the story teaches that "It is the punishment of foolish mothers to love unnatural children" (Marmontell 187). Yet, "The Bad Mother" also serves as criticism of primogeniture. *Notoriety, The Faro Table*, and "The Bad Mother" are texts that complicate ideas of motherhood. If they suggest that in the eighteenth-century an unnatural mother is one who values herself more than she values her children, then they also problematize that.

The issue of the popularity of the unnatural maternal women in eighteenth-century literature, indeed, is provocative for scholars. Jessamyn Jackson raises the question of "why novels make bad mothers" and argues that the demonization of so-called unnatural mothers can be read as patriarchal society's attack on female writers, for such writers "not only mother books, [but] other people through those books" (164). In other words, a female author who influences her readers is like a mother intruding on other families, and a woman may through

writing interfere with and threaten male discourse of children's education. When "novels and female writers engage in a mutual mothering, a process of reproduction from which fathers are eliminated" (Jackson 171), there is a reaction from the patriarchy.

Fictional unnatural mothers also symbolize a conflict between individuals and the society; between the maintenance of a woman's subjectivity and the expectation by society that she relinquishes this subjectivity; and between female consciousness and the ideology of motherhood and domesticity. Toni Bowers examines "monstrous motherhood" and suggests that exemplary motherhood requires a woman's total sacrifice to her family and a bad mother separates herself from her children and domestic duties. "Maternal virtue," Bowers holds, "is pitted against public and material success; the erasure of autonomous subjectivity becomes the price of maternal excellence" (98). The contrast between a natural mother and an unnatural mother is that the former emphasizes complete devotion to one's children and the latter underscores one's own interests over the interest of the welfare of one's children. For an eighteenth-century mother, there is no balance between personal identity and social expectation; the two are in conflict.

Nonetheless, unnatural mothers challenge the concept of ideal motherhood. Take *Pamela II*, for example. Rebecca S. Davies points out that in this novel the idea of maternity is itself full of contradictions. According to Davies, an ideal or exemplary mother only exists in literature and never in real life; and an ideal mother "was a 'written' mother, whose biological functions were consequently no longer relevant" (383). Also, a perfect mother does not guarantee a perfect woman. A perfect woman suggests a total submission to the patriarchal order, whereas a perfect mother, especially in Enlightenment thinking, implies female autonomy that celebrates traits of maternal intellectualism such as education and independence. As a result, maternity and femininity are two separate ideas, and the combination of the two can be achieved only through performance: "If the 'person', or physical body, allows the 'acting' of a part, any biological woman can thus 'act' the role of mother" (Davies 390). Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson offer a similar argument: women under social pressure become aware of what a maternal role is, help each other, and "[craft] exemplary roles for themselves in their personal writing, often intending it for circulation within the family—[and so] witness the 'mother's legacy' phenomenon" (6-7). An ideal mother, as indicated, first comes from fictional writing and may only exist in the writer's imagination. The image of the tender mother is as much a construct as a reality and that other notions of motherhood also are social and cultural constructions.

To claim that natural maternity is a performance, or something constructed,

is not to dismiss it as being something that is only a mirage; rather it is aimed to point to the gap between social expectations for mothers and women's actual maternal experiences. This gap traces back to the eighteenth century and earlier. It is known as "maternal ambivalence," and modern critics see this uncertainty about maternal love as being a part of a mother's nature. Rozsika Parker expounds that maternal ambivalence denotes "the experience shared variously by all mothers in which loving and hating feelings for their children exist side by side" (1). Parker sees maternal ambivalence as a universal psychological phenomenon that reveals the paradox that the more natural maternity is emphasized, the more the imperfect part of maternity is to be recognized. As Tatjana Takševa elaborates on maternal ambivalence, it is an idea "constructed by both psychological and social factors, emerging from contradictions at the subjective level, but also contradictions of the level of male-dominated social structures that are oppressive to women" (154). Eighteenth-century unnatural mothers in English novels, as this study shows, are mothers who resist the patriarchal notions of motherhood.

Vivian Jones, in the anthology *Women in the Eighteenth Century*, also discusses eighteenth-century motherhood in the context of both the importance of it in literature and how it functions in society. The promotion or celebration of motherhood is beneficial to the public in two ways. A woman's ideal motherly image is useful when "the restriction of female sexuality to motherhood is dedicated to the expansionist ideology of an upwardly mobile middle class; at the same time, it is used conservatively to protect that class position against encroachment from above and below" (Jones 59). Motherhood guarantees the function of a family and solidifies the distinction among social classes. The purpose of the maternal exemplar or female domestic ideal in literature is to encourage natural motherhood, regulate femininity, and govern class mobility; and fictional bad mothers in literature ostensibly highlight that purpose. Bad or unnatural mothers in eighteenth-century literature function as a moral warning. However, these figures also demonstrate an alternative notion of motherhood; indeed, they question and disturb common ideas and assumptions about motherhood.

The Deconstruction of Mother's Nature in *The Female Gamester*

Much eighteenth-century English literature teaches the readers that maternity is an inborn quality, and its examples of natural and unnatural mothers aim in effect to strengthen that precept. Examples of unnatural mothers are women gamesters. In eighteenth-century English literature, gaming mothers contradict

the maternal ideal. *The Female Gamester* offers a good example of a woman's transformation from an innocent young wife to a monstrous mother with a gaming addiction. As noted in the previous section of this essay, the first half of *The Female Gamester* focuses on Polyxena's gaming addiction. In the second volume, Polyxena's children Theodosia and Henry have grown up, and the family returns to England. After the Duke's death, the Duke's niece Stolina Lucchesini seeks out Polyxena's protection. Polyxena has taken up gaming again, trying to manipulate the young people's marriages in order to pay her debts. Polyxena's schemes against her children and niece and makes them suffer, and the story ends with Henry's death in a duel and Polyxena committing suicide.

The Female Gamester challenges the discourse of natural maternity by showing Polyxena's deviation from the embodiment of motherhood that she is supposed to perform. If the Duke is convinced that women are "born with the noblest and most exalted principles, and the finest and most exquisite feelings" (vol. 1, 214), then Polyxena's confessions in her letters show that she refuses and seeks to revise that patriarchal fantasy. The novel speaks out about the delicate psychology of a gaming mother and suggests the existence of an alternative motherhood. Lady Henrietta Butler writes in her letter that Polyxena lacks maternal affection when she gives birth to the first child:

> Polyxena, however, is not quite pleased, for [the Duke] has requested she will nurse the bantling. She undertook the charge with pleasure; but I have let her into a secret—"the very great confinement it will be;" and she now thinks the burden will be a heavy one. (vol. 1, 96)

Lady Henrietta Butler is not exaggerating here, for the maternal duty that eighteenth-century society requires women to fulfill is a stressful. The mother's complete concentration on her familial duties, indeed, leads to the elimination of her own identity and individuality. Polyxena questions her own motherly nature:

> I imagined my little infant would interest my feelings, and rouse me from the torpor my senses had sunk into; but I was deceived. I feel no concern but for one thing. Oh! I blush to name it; it is what you have so repeatedly warned me against—gambling. (vol. 1, 102)

Polyxena's words point to the fact that the belief in natural maternity needs revision. If maternal affection is as natural and strong as eighteenth-century society believes, gaming does not influence the fulfillment of maternal duty. The Duke also accuses Polyxena when the idea of committing suicide comes to her, who "forget[s] she is a wife and mother" (vol. 1, 194). The emphasis on patriarchal ideology, female virtue, and maternal nature are being challenged here, for Polyxena does not abide by maternal standards of the time. *The Female Gamester* therefore criticizes gaming women and at the same time questions the

concept of mother's nature; it deconstructs this concept and, in the same breath, it states in effect that a mother's nature is obstructed when a mother takes up gaming in fashionable public circles.

Polyxena's monstrous motherhood is particularly obvious when she becomes a widow and tries to intervene in the marriages of members of her family. In debt to Lord Hastings, Polyxena devises to marry her niece Stolina to Lord Hastings as a means to pay off the debt:

> God of Heaven! what a game I am playing—*selling* this Stolina;—massacring this amiable and lovely girl—and what for? but to add to the catalogue of my crimes; procuring a temporary release from care, to be doubly overwhelmed hereafter. My reason disapproves the act, yet I am hurried forward by an impulse that I find irresistible. (vol. 2, 147)

What Polyxena does echoes eighteenth-century moralists' concern that a woman may use her own or another woman's body as gaming stakes. Noticing herself "selling" and "procuring" her own niece, Polyxena is fully aware of her crime of prostituting her family. The eighteenth-century discourse of motherhood emphasizes that maternal affection for children is as important as the family's economy and mothers should take full responsibility for children's instruction and guidance. All of these motherly duties make a woman a participant in public affairs. If a natural mother functions as an important bridge between the society and the family and an unnatural mother fails in both her public and domestic roles, then an eighteenth-century gaming mother further complicates maternal discourse. Polyxena, as a gaming mother, is a particularly striking counterexample of natural maternity. She is disturbing to patriarchal society, for she fails to perform the roles expected of her as a mother both inside and outside the family.

As mentioned, an eighteenth-century mother is both a caretaker of the family and a supervisor of society's younger generations. Although a mother stays at home, her influence extends into the public sphere. Considering the continuity between the public and domestic sphere, Marilyn Francus points out that

> The public sphere (in its bourgeois and national form) provided venues for masculine intellect, class mobility, and power, and the home was the private, intimate sphere, a woman's refuge and domain, and the place for masculine respite from the rigors of the public sphere. The public and private spheres were not discontinuous: the private, domestic woman served as the caretaker and inculcator of moral value, and as she wielded influence over the members of her household—especially her children, who would leave home and enter the world—she indirectly shaped society. (3)

The social expectation for a mother lays stress on the full practice of natural

maternity, and the purpose of maternal sacrifice is to shape and govern not only a home but also the society in general. Eighteenth-century English motherhood in this way requires a woman to show her natural maternal affection for the benefit of the entire community. In *The Female Gamester*, Polyxena fails to take care of her children, and the crimes she commits, besides gaming and prostituting her niece, include disturbing English social tranquility and prohibiting the younger generation from becoming mature and responsible individuals. Polyxena fails to understand that "while home provided a space and a venue for motherhood, mothering was not limited to its confines, nor were mothers limited to domestic practices" (Francus 6). Gaming harms femininity and domesticity, and it breaks the connection between a woman and the society and undermines the contribution eighteenth-century women can make to the public.

None of Polyxena's children are aware of their mother's gaming addiction; nonetheless, they suspect her for being deviant. Henry indicates that Polyxena has lost humanity:

> Is it my mother—whom I have adored with enthusiasm—to whose mercy I have given up my fortune—whose errors I have winked at, and whose caprices I have indulged—whom I have idolized and adored, in spite of every thing! Can it be her that is the serpent! It is she that drives me to infinity and despair—. (vol. 2, 216-7)

If Polyxena's gaming habit remains a secret to her children, then it is fully apparent to the reader, and the novel suggests that female gamesters, or at least those in fashionable gaming circles, are monstrous mothers. What Polyxena lacks, as David B. Paxman points out, is generational thinking, or a parental attitude that "means not only avoiding the damage but also stopping the damage inherited from the past" (138). Generational thinking reflects parental concern for children's current happiness and future needs; in contrast, an unnatural or monstrous mother subordinates her children's welfare to her own interests. Polyxena represents the conflict in English society between gaming in fashionable circles and natural maternity.

Considering that *The Female Gamester* is a woman's work, the characterization of a gaming mother's psychology is not without irony. An unnatural mother is a woman who sacrifices domestic harmony to personal interest. A mother's gaming addiction does not make natural maternity a myth, but it proves that such maternity is an ambiguous and fragile idea. *The Female Gamester* functions as a cautionary tale, and its moralizing tone resembles the lectures in conduct book literature, but it also deconstructs the concept of mother's nature, offering an alternative image of maternity, one that society may not welcome but cannot refuse.

The Convertible Maternity in *The Faro Table*

The Female Gamester questions and deconstructs the concept of natural maternity by highlighting the absence of a mother's maternal affection, whereas *The Faro Table*, which concludes with the redemption of a gaming mother, suggests that nature maternity can be regained after it is lost. Eloisa's natural maternity is restored after she gives up gaming, adultery, neglect of domestic duties, and other vices. *The Faro Table* provoked strong critical reactions, but Sedley cannot be blamed for his realistic characterization of gamers and gaming addictions.[7] What the novel presents is a true picture of the infamous English fashionable society, a world contradictory to the building of natural parenthood, especially maternity. As mentioned earlier, the novel's frivolous mother, Mrs. Fortescue, fails in her maternal duty. Her daughters

> were such adepts in Romance, that they could avoid absolute lying, by a niceness of prevarication that was irresistibly imposing. All which accomplishments were founded on the grand basis, "that a child should always think a parent can do no wrong." (vol. 1, 17)

The mother leading her daughters to be corrupt is a despotic figure. Mrs. Fortescue reflects the eighteenth-century maternal discourse that a gaming mother is an unnatural one and that gaming is a social disease spread by parents. Thomas Marriot, in *Female Conduct: Being an Essay on the Act of Pleasing*, writes that gaming is a taboo for a married woman, since "A Gaming Passion may, in Women, prove Brutal, and monstrous, as Pasiphae's Love; The Female, who this Passion entertains, With the same Passion, oft her Offspring stains" (198). In *The Faro Table*, the distorted mother-children relationship proves to be unhealthy:

> To these captivating accomplishments was added the science of gambling; and Mamma was the Jackal to provide them with prey—by which honorable arrangement, the family was enabled to keep an elegant equipages—to give splendid parties—and pay their tradespeople out of a very slender income. (vol. 1, 24-5)

Female gaming in this novel is the source of all vices, and the daughters of the gaming mother are "always engaged in works of fancy, to be sold among the nobility, in relief of some distressed family" (vol. 1, 25). Similar to other eighteenth-century English authors who condemn female gaming, Sedley treats gaming as a vice that humiliates the entire family. A gaming mother's devotion

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[7] For example, in a book review, "The Faro Table, or the Gambling Mothers," published in *The Satirist*, the reviewer calls the novel "loathsome as the spawn of toad" and a work that "float[s] in the pond of vice" (530).

to cards will make her sacrifice "every other consideration to the indulgence of this darling vice" (vol. 1, 27). A natural mother gives herself to the family while a gaming mother sacrifices people around her to the card table, widening that gap between female individualism and social expectation for her.

Although the characterization of fashionable vices in *The Faro Table* may have shocked readers and moralists of the time, the novel's promising ending guarantees the heroine's transformation and restores her positive mother nature. The mother figures in the novel are desperate gamesters, but by making the heroine a reformed wife, Sedley shows that changing ideas about maternity already are occurring in society. By the end of the novel, Henry and Eloisa express regret for their extravagant life, and the novel ends with the hope that Eloisa eventually will become a good mother. *The Faro Table* therefore suggests that a mother can indeed regain as well as develop natural maternity, or a maternal psychological strength that fixes maternal ambivalence and restores a mother's primary affection for and primary attachment to her children. According to Lisa Baraitser and Amélie Noack, "a resilient mother would be a mother who has a complex internal working model of relationships that allows her to understand her baby as a mental entity" (177). Modern psychoanalysis reveals that maternal resilience enables a mother to restore her maternal affection and recognize the ambivalent feeling towards the children (Baraitser and Noack 180). Maternal resilience underlines the fact that natural maternity is socially constructed and convertible, and only one facet of maternity. As a result, the vices and crimes discussed in *The Faro Table* are balanced, if not corrected, by the converted mother. A representative works of anti-gaming literature, *The Faro Table* reflects eighteenth-century patriarchal and middle-class morals. Sedley's fable, as the work's subtitle manifests, functions as a quasi-conduct book literature, where women are the main targets. Eloisa's mother teaches her daughter to "Let your ambition, therefore, be rather restricted than enlarged: seek to please—not to dazzle—by your accomplishments: by the first effort, you will ensure the happiness of your husband—by the latter, risk it" (vol. 1, 78-9). This passage reflects a patriarchal viewpoint, emphasizing the happiness of the husband and, at the same time, assigning responsibility for this to the wife. The lecture aims to moralize eighteenth-century readers and promotes the idea of a so-called normal wifehood and motherhood. The mother continues to explain what a wife's duty is:

> Let her be careful, therefore, upon all occasions to appear cheerful and obliging: to avoid servility, as studiously as she would superiority: never to increase her husband's charging by reproach; but to win him, by gentleness, to forget it—in short, to essay, by very amiable condescension, to make home happy to him, and to convince him,

> that happiness is mutual. (vol. 2, 51)

The mother's advice is not without an early feminist consciousness, which is that a wife's virtue plays a role in determining a husband's happiness. Corresponding to eighteenth-century moral values, *The Faro Table* echoes contemporary conduct book literature in the doctrines and moral values that it espouses and promotes.

The transformation of Eloisa from "a stranger to the allurement of fashion" (vol. 1, 10) to a notorious gamester and finally to a mother whose "domestic joys have, lately, been increased by the birth of a son" (vol. 2, 177), states in effect that maternity can be acquired and is not merely or only an innate virtue. The novel opposes maternity as a fixed and natural-born idea yet also suggests that patriarchal expectations of how women who are mothers should behave make life very difficult for mothers. Takševa explains that for a woman, the internal conflict

> arises between a male-dominated capitalist system that on the one hand advocates individualism, freedom, and the pursuit of personal gain and fulfillment for men and women, while on the other hand expects a good mother to show complete selflessness and unconditional, round-the-clock devotion to her child. (157)

Eighteenth-century English society sees women as easy targets of gaming addiction and regards men as women's salvation. Anti-gaming literature of the time therefore both criticizes men for not governing women well and women who turn to gaming. Both *The Female Gamester* and *The Faro Table* show that a wife should depend on her husband morally as well as economically. The husbands in the two novels blame themselves for giving their wives too much freedom and thus making their wives vulnerable to gaming, a hindrance to her natural maternity. The heroine is, if not the victim of gaming, the victim of prevalent gender ideology. Thus, the restoration of natural maternity in *The Faro Table* is paradoxical, for it reflects, on the one hand, patriarchal desires and aims, and, on the other hand how those aims and desires restrict and oppress women.

Conclusion

As gaming is a serious moral concern for eighteenth-century social critics, the cultural and psychological significance of gamesters cannot be easily overlooked. Eighteenth-century female gaming drew attention from these critics as well as from other figures in society and was largely condemned; it associates with immorality and hindering women from cultivating their maternal sensibilities. The eighteenth century in Europe is a pivotal period in the construction of a concept

of motherhood that in effect requires women to exercise natural maternity. Eighteenth-century English mothers had to bear the responsibility of a domestic caretaker and also shoulder the burden of serving society in their role of raising children—the future generations of that society. Gaming is seen to be an impediment to these duties and responsibilities. Eighteenth-century mothers at cards are not "modest, chest, pious, compassionate, and virtuous" maternal exemplars (Francus 2); rather, they are blind to maternal responsibility and betray the idea of natural maternity. Eighteenth-century English literature uses gaming as a trope in the context of moral instruction about and denunciation of gaming women. At the same time, this trope invites readers to challenge the maternal discourse and patriarchal hierarchy of the period. The authors ostensibly criticize gaming mothers and the violation of the maternal discourse; they also sympathize with these figures and imagine an alternative type of mother. Figures of unnatural mothers in this literature suggest that natural maternity is to a considerable extent a patriarchal invention used to regulate and control women and deny them the full status of a subject. McKenzie's *The Female Gamester* and Sedley's *The Faro Table* are two examples of eighteenth-century anti-gaming literature that reflect this double stance: on the one hand, the novels critique women from patriarchal perspectives; on the other hand, they show how women are oppressed by patriarchal notions of marriage, family, and domesticity. Reading the two novels together also lends support to the claim that is made here that the novels condemn female gaming yet also challenge eighteenth-century discourses of femininity and motherhood. What is a mother's nature? The two novels ask this question by deconstructing conventional ideas about maternity. In addition to condemning gaming, *The Female Gamester* and *The Faro Table* explore the diversity of motherhood and unravel paradoxical constructions of natural maternity. Examining this diversity and these constructions widen the discourse of and understandings of maternity and so usefully complicates the rhetoric of motherhood.

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牌桌上的母親：兩部英國喬治亞晚期小說裡的母親與賭博

摘要

賭博是十八世紀英國文學裡一個重要且不斷出現的主題。賭博時常成爲批評的目標，女性賭客更是備受責難。十八世紀的英國社會也見證了母職意識形態的誕生，要求女性成爲負責且情感豐富的母親。十八世紀文學裡的賭客母親不符合這樣的要求，然而，透過這些角色，作者對母性與母親形象提出另類的想法。本文欲藉由兩部喬治亞晚期英國小說探究此一主題，分別是安娜瑪莉亞麥肯錫（Anna Maria McKenzie）的《女賭客》（*The Female Gamester; or, the Pupil of Fashion*, 1796）和查爾斯西德利（Charles Sedley）的《法羅牌桌》（*The Faro Table; or, the Gambling Mothers*, 1808）。本文有著雙重論證：首先，在這兩部小說裡賭客媽媽的角色刻畫，明顯地警告讀者賭博的危險性，並提醒女性，家庭責任的重要性；其次，十八世紀小說中的賭客母親、賭博文化、對母性的想法，以及所謂的違常母親論述皆反映出英國社會對於女性美德與正面母親形象的焦慮感。換句話說，賭客媽媽是背離天然母性共識的角色，反映了女性意識的抬頭，並且對父權階級制度做出批評。這種對於牌桌上的母親的批判性理解擴展了對十八世紀文學裡所謂駭人或違常母親的認識。

關鍵字：十八世紀英國文學、賭博、法羅女士、母親形象、十八世紀英國女性