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The Inventory, the Dissection, and the Literary Character Sketch

A Gentleman has writ to me out of the Country a very civil Letter, and […] has […] desir'd, that, for the Benefit of my Country Readers, I would let him know what I mean by a Gentleman, a Pretty Fellow, a Toast, a Coquet, a Critick, a Wit, and all other Appellations of those now in the gayer World, who are in Possession of these several Characters. (Bond 1987, vol. 1, 164-65)

Introduction

In this passage from Tatler 21, The Tatler's persona Isaac Bickerstaff announces the periodical's characterological programme, while presenting himself proudly as experienced moral city observer and tutor to the supposedly ignorant (country) reader, thus reiterating the traditional town/country divide and suggesting – concomitantly – the paper's geographical reach and impact beyond the boundaries of London. This approach and agenda broadly characterise Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's most famous satirical periodicals, The Tatler, published thrice weekly from 1709 to 1711, and The Spectator, issued daily (save Sundays) from 1711 to 1712 and revived for a short period in 1714. Inspired by the Horatian maxim aut delectare aut prodesse, Addison and Steele print their observations of early 18th-century metropolitan society to encourage the reader's self-reflection and moral reform. Their satirical essays prove to be particularly suitable to engaging the readers' attention and curiosity, combining, as they do, essay writing with such literary forms as the anecdote, the fable, the allegory, and the character sketch (see Kay 1975).

Rooted in Greek antiquity and highly popular among moralists in 17th-century England, the character sketch offers itself as an exceptionally flexible tool for capturing London's morals and manners. It serves to explain the complex human psyche by breaking it up into fictional, yet recognizable types. Originally proposing generic images of socio-moral types of men and women that are neither explicitly situated in space nor in time, character sketches represent a means of socio-moral education as well as a tool for rhetorical exercise aimed at the perfection of good sense and wit. From the outset, the character sketch affords a range of ideas more or less explicitly related to reading and, essentially, to deciphering human behaviour. As Katrin Hockenjos has shown, 17th-century writers often associate the character sketch with the

1 Famously, Addison and Steele's periodicals, and especially The Tatler and The Spectator, were widely consumed by contemporary readers (by subscription and/or in coffeehouses) and had a lasting influence on 18th-century literature and culture as bound volumes and in frequently published selections (cf. Bond 1971, 188-209; Bond 1965a, lxxiii-cvi; Justice 2005).
2 See J.W. Smeed's history of the genre (1985), which considers its historical development from its origins with Theophrastus to the 20th century as well as formal and methodological concerns.
(alphabetical) letter, the emblem, the hieroglyph, and the map, entailing the notion of legibility, of enigma, of the "terra incognita" (Hockenjos 2006, 70; see also 45-51, 68-70; original emphasis). By laying out behavioural details (language, habits, outward appearance), the character sketch makes readable the type of person at the root of its actions and offers a glimpse into its character. The text translates the enigmatic origins of someone’s behaviour, it explores and charts the social and moral characteristics of men and women and, thus, like a map, provides orientation and guidance. Addison and Steele's numerous character sketches rely on the specific affordances of these forms and profit from a shift effected in contemporary character writing: rather than solely representing the result of the epistemological effort, most of their texts depict concrete interactions between their fictional personae, Isaac Bickerstaff and Mr Spectator, and equally fictional (or fictionalised) representatives of a moral type that are explicitly located in space and time.  By thus considering the perceptual source of the observations, the texts add a significant dimension to the genre's methodological repertoire that allows them to depict, beyond the behavioural details, the respective observer’s perceptual process. Hence, the texts propound means to decode and map complex human behaviour.

In shaping their character sketches, Addison and Steele playfully adapt contemporary epistemological methods such as those developed in the natural sciences, like repeated and systematic observation and note-taking (Daston 2011). More particularly, they exploit the formal flexibility of the character sketch by combining it with non-literary forms of producing and communicating knowledge traditionally associated with musico logical, geographical, anatomical, economic as well as sociological practices.  In the following, I shall discuss two such forms in detail: the anatomical dissection and the inventory. Focusing on two exemplary character sketches, the dissection of a Coquette's heart in Spectator 281 and the inventory of a Coquette's stolen goods in Tatler 245, I will argue that, while these texts employ the same object of observation (the type of the Coquette), their respective forms and their affordances add a dimension of meaning specific to each text. The conventional dissection presents a normative and (primarily) male perspective; it provides a context of reading and analysis, of education and science, and, to some readers, surely a context of death and crime. The inventory, by contrast, represents a tool usually identified with trade; it presents the context of conspicuous consumption, possibly fashionable goods (and fashionable society), of a private as well as a public setting. These affordances inform the reader's interpretation of the texts as much as the moralistic content, i.e. the exposure of coquettish behaviour.

3  Smeed traces the origin of this shift to Jean de la Bruyère's Les Caractères ou les Mœurs de ce Siècle, first published in 1688 (1985, 52-53; 64-67).
4  See Caroline Levine's differentiation of genres and forms: "Genres […] can be defined as customary constellations of elements into historically recognizable groupings of artistic objects, bringing together forms with themes, styles, and situations of reception, while forms are organizations or arrangements that afford repetition and portability across materials and contexts" (2015, 13-14).
By targeting the Coquette, Addison and Steele move within a fairly recent, yet well-established socio-moral paradigm. After entering English literary and cultural discourse in the Restoration period, the term ‘Coquette’ is soon used as "a disapproving appellation for a woman who eschews feminine modesty and exhibits vain, domineering and/or flirtatious tendencies," even serving as "a metaphor signifying some combination of attractiveness, capriciousness, and power" (Braunschneider 2009, 26). Essentially connected to consumer society, fashion, and modern bourgeois culture (32), the type functions as the major moral (female) antagonist in Addison and Steele's two periodicals, a figure that largely fails to conform to their moral (and, especially from today's perspective, highly misogynist) ideal, actively defying the rules that result from her social roles as (obedient) daughter and (dutiful) wife and mother. In a socially prescriptive approach, Addison and Steele use the Coquette to expose what they believe to be morally deviant behaviour (i.e. vanity, libertinism, pride) to negotiate and to confirm their socio-moral norm (see also Braunschneider 2009, 4-5).  

The Dissection of a Coquette's Heart (Spectator 281)  
Anatomical dissection originated in the medical works and practices of Hippocrates and Galen before it became part of the empiricist programme with Andreas Vesalius's first edition of De humani corporis fabrica. Published in 1543, the treatise's influence seems to have taken two directions. On the one hand, it introduced a new model for anatomical illustration and revolutionised the methods and practices of performing and teaching anatomy. The traditional paradigm had separated the so-called lector, usually an anatomist reading aloud from an established anatomical treatise (e.g. Galen's De usu partium corporis humani), the sector, often an unlearned barber-surgeon who actually dissected the cadaver, and the ostensor, who indicated the body parts mentioned by the lector to the audience. In this scheme, anatomy amounts to an art of reading, of analysis and interpretation, spatially combining the literal reading of a book (the anatomical treatise) and the metaphorical reading of the body at hand (cf. Benthen and Gadebusch 2003, 91). In contrast to this, Vesalius positioned the anatomist on a level with his object of interest and emphasised "personal observation," "first-hand experience" and "direct knowledge" (Landers 2012, 11; see also Ghadessi 2012, 149). On the other hand, Vesalius's publication heightened contemporary (lay) interest in the study of human anatomy and inspired writers and moralists with the idea of what Mauro Spicci has termed "moral anatomy or anatomy 'of the mind'" (2012, 54). Moral anatomy relies on the anatomist's analytical and empirical approach, essentially employing the medical science, Spicci says, "as a demystifying instrument, combining moralistic reflection, universal didacticism, and a strong religious and satirical streak" (55).  

With Vesalius, anatomical dissection entered the realm of "normalizing discourse," quintessentially interested in the "normative ideal" represented then – and now – by the  

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5 Addison and Steele's normative approach to morals and manners, of course, does not only extend to women, but also includes their male companions. They use the type of the Beau to exemplify morally deviant male behaviour.  
6 Character writing itself is linked to the tradition of moral anatomy, as Samuel Person's 1664 character-book An Anatomical Lecture of Man reveals (Hockenjos 2006, 75-76).
adult male body (Ghadessi 2012, 148, 149; see also Benthien and Gadebusch 2003, 96). Although the normative glance predominated, the anatomist – of necessity – dealt with the individual and, hence, the potentially deviant. This tension between norm and deviance resulted in what scholars have found to be a parallel anatomical tradition concerned with the 'monstrous' (Ghadessi 2012, 149f.). As Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park have shown, the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society are filled with contributions reporting on dissections of deformed bodies – from monstrous calves to Siamese twins (2001, 173-214; see also Hagner 1999; Benthien and Gadebusch 2003, 98f.). Available and collectible not only as conserved specimens, but also in texts and illustrations (Ghadessi 2012, 145), these monstra testify to the entertainment value such deviance had for the contemporary audience. At the same time, anatomists used them to stipulate the physical norm. The descriptions and depictions of monstrosities worked as a foil to the norm, confirming the value of a regular physical constitution (Hagner 1999, 176 and passim).

The (socio-moral) dissection of the Coquette's heart in Spectator 281 forms a miniseries with a preceding issue detailing the dissection of a Beau's brain (Spectator 275)." The two sketches are dream narratives shaped according to contemporary literary practice (Graeber 2003): the frame of the embedded dream refers to the experience that triggered the dream, i.e. Mr Spectator's presence "in an Assembly of Virtuoso's [sic], where one of them produced many curious Observations, which he had lately made in the Anatomy of an Human Body" (Bond 1965b, vol. 2, 570). The sensations Mr Spectator has gathered during the day keep his mind busy and fabricate the following dream, in which he witnesses the dissection of the organs of the two characters. In this, Addison follows the tradition of connecting Mr Spectator's nightly mental activity to his daily occupations or, as Manfred Engel calls it, to the day's residue (1998, 109).\footnote{Shaped by the same form, the anatomical dissection, the texts differ in their manner of dealing with specialised terminology, in their structure, and in the fate of the organ. While Mr Spectator does not see the need to explain Latin or Greek terms (e.g. "Pineal Gland," 1965b, vol. 2, 571) in Spectator 275 on the Beau's brain, he translates the technical terms in the second text on the Coquette's heart (as in: "the Pericardium, or outward Case of the Heart," 1965b, 594) – an action surely related to the group of readers the respective text is aiming to reform (Spectator 275: male readers; Spectator 281: female readers). Whereas the dissection of the Coquette's heart proceeds along a movement of penetration from the outside to the inside, the Beau's brain is explored in a circular manner from the core (the Pineal Gland) to the periphery. In contrast to the Beau's brain, which is conserved as a (collectible) preparation, hence, as a potentially valuable and valued rarity, the Coquette's heart vanishes in the course of a concluding experiment, which allows observations on the organ's response when exposed to fire – a fact possibly indicating Mr Spectator's assessment of the severity of the types' moral fault (Spectator 275: possibly controllable; Spectator 281: insupportable).}

\footnote{The dream narrative anticipates the aesthetic system set forth in the essay series on the "Pleasures of the Imagination" (Bond 1965b, vol. 2, 536), published in Spectator 411 to Spectator 421. While the "uncommon" (541) nature of the naturalists' discourse activates Mr Spectator's imagination and causes its "Primary Pleasures" (537), his mind then creates the dream, i.e. the moral anatomies, that, in turn, trigger the "Secondary Pleasures of the Imagination" (538).}

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The dissection of the Coquette's heart leads the observer (and reader) from the heart's 'shell' (the so-called pericardium) to its core. The text thus follows the conventional anatomical method of exploring the human body according to the principle of successive penetration (Benthien and Gadebusch 2003, 90): guided by an impulse of discovery, the anatomist penetrates the visible surface and attempts to decipher the secrets hidden underneath, moving progressively from the outside to the inside and clearing away layer after layer of the body (Benthien and Gadebusch 2003, 89-93; Spicci 2012, 54).

The issue's introductory passage calls the reader's attention to the heart's particularity or monstrosity: "Our Operator […] told us, that there was nothing in his Art more difficult, than to lay open the Heart of a Coquet, by reason of the many Labyrinths and Recesses which are to be found in it, and which do not appear in the Heart of any other Animal" (Bond 1965b, vol. 2, 594). What the operator emphasises in his remark is the heart's and, thus, pars pro toto, the Coquette's singularity. Essentially, he highlights her deviance from any conceived physical (and, by analogy, moral) norm. This is, it appears, the hypothesis that Mr Spectator sets out to prove in the ensuing character sketch.

The dissection begins with the scrutiny of the pericardium, first the outside, then the inside, which metonymically reveal the nature of its owner:

[By] the help of our Glasses [we] discerned in it [i.e. the Pericardium] Millions of little Scars, which seem'd to have been occasioned by the Points of innumerable Darts and Arrows, that from time to time had glanced upon the outward Coat; though we could not discover the smallest Orifice, by which any of them had entered and pierced the inward Substance. (594-595)

It is only with the help of the microscope – surely a tribute to such scientifically crucial works as Robert Hooke's Micrographia, published in 1665 (Bardell 2004) – that the observers are able to detect the scars, remnants of injuries once received, and the immunity of the heart's shell to intrusions from without that suggests the organ's hardness and rigidity. The contents of the pericardium reveal another particularity:

Every Smatterer in Anatomy knows, that this Pericardium, or Case of the Heart, contains in it a thin reddish Liquor, supposed to be bred from the Vapours which exhale out of the Heart, and being stopt here, are condensed into this watry Substance. Upon examining this Liquor, we found that it had in it all the Qualities of that Spirit which is made use of in the Thermometer, to shew the Change of Weather. (Bond 1965b, vol. 2, 595)

Most certainly referring to quicksilver, the description of the liquid serves a double purpose. On the one hand, it implies that the Coquette has received treatment with quicksilver, probably for syphilis, and thus insinuates her sexually loose behaviour. On the other hand, it enables Mr Spectator to bring in another contemporary scientific invention, the barometer. In a kind of narrative pause, the episode emphasises the (moral) significance of scientific instruments, and allows Mr Spectator to describe an experiment, the second most important method of empiricism beyond observation (Winau 1992, 85f.). Aiming to determine the function of the liquid found in the Coquette's pericardium, one of Mr Spectator's fellows watches its behaviour in a controlled, artificial experimental setup: having filled the liquid into a cylinder, he
examine its transformations when subjected to different environments. The liquid, he finds, behaves very much like a "Weather-Glass" and reacts, not so much to air pressure, but to the presence and absence of (un)fashionable commodities – e.g. "a Plume of Feathers" – as well as persons – e.g. "upon his Laughing aloud when he stood by it [i.e. the liquid], the Liquor mounted very sensibly" (Bond 1965b, vol. 2, 595). The experiment, thus, inductively reveals the nature of the liquid and, *pars pro toto*, of the Coquette: her obsession with fashion and fashionable men.

Having removed the *pericardium*, they progress to the examination of "the Heart itself" (595). Drawing on the sense of touch, Mr Spectator describes the Coquette's heart as "extremely slippery, and the *Mucro*, or Point, so very cold withal, that upon endeavouring to take hold of it, it glided through the Fingers like a smooth piece of Ice" (595). Thus, he implicitly calls up the type's emotional frostiness. Turning to the various connections – the vessels and nerves – of the heart to other organs, they find another particularity in which their present object of interest deviates from the norm: the Coquette's heart is neither linked to the tongue (the owner was thus incapable to 'speak her heart'), nor to the brain. Instead, emotions such as love and hate appear to be transmitted or triggered by "the Muscles which lie about the Eye" (596). Hence, the heart's inner constitution confirms the results of the experiment with the *pericardium*'s liquid and reveals the Coquette's passion for fashionable commodities and people.

Finally, the observers arrive at the core of the heart. Resorting to biographical information about the behaviour of the organ's owner, they form a hypothesis that they assume will be proven by their subsequent discoveries.

We were informed that the Lady of this Heart, when living, received the Addresses of several who made Love to her, and did not only give each of them Encouragement, but made every one she conversed with believe that she regarded him with an Eye of Kindness; for which Reason we expected to have seen the Impression of Multitudes of Faces among the several Plaites and Foldings of the Heart, but to our great Surprize not a single Print of this nature discovered it self till we came into the very Core and Center of it. We there observed a little Figure, which, upon applying our Glasses to it, appeared dressed in a very Fantastick manner. [...] one of the Company, who had examined this Figure more nicely than the rest, shew'd us plainly by the make of its Face, and the several turns of its Features, that the little Idol which was thus lodged in the very Middle of the Heart was the Deceased Beau, whose Head I gave some Account of in my last Tuesday's Paper. (596)

The observers' analytical stance is guided by a social norm, the norm that women's hearts are affected in the process of courtship, a process in which this particular lady had also supposedly been involved. This norm deductively creates an expectation that is, however, disappointed. The rhetorical structure of the passage, climactically moving from the observers' hypothesis ("we expected") to its reversal ("to our great Surprize not a single Print") highlights the Coquette's status as a deviant exemplar, or, as an anatomical and a moral 'monster.' Devoid of any trace of active use, the condition of her heart positions her outside the anatomical norm. Also, by implication, her failure to respond emotionally to the attentions of her lovers (or, more particularly, the emotional commitment to one of them) marks her as a strange specimen outside the moral norm that *The Spectator* embraces. The discovery of the person who reigns (or has reigned)
the Coquette's heart is presented as the result of very intense study: the only observer able to recognise the figure's face, and to form a conclusion, is the one applying himself meticulously to the examination of the picture impressed on the heart's core. The text's perspective is decidedly male. A group of male observers examine a female body and appropriate it in the process of the dissection: they penetrate the surface and discover its characteristics, ultimately disclosing its secret motivation. By revealing the heart's idiosyncrasies, they confirm the anatomical norm. At the same time, the text examines the moral nature of the Coquette by moving from the outside to the inside, from observable behaviour (courtship, language) and the mind (interests/concerns) to the detection of her innermost passion.

As the analysis reveals, the metaphorical dissection follows the anatomical mode. The kinds of conclusions about the heart's owner correspond to conclusions conventionally formed in the course of dissections. The anatomical structures found in human or animal bodies are taken to indicate the state of the individual's health, and shed light on the physical shape of the organs as well as potential deviations from the perceived norm. The explicit references to the senses (sight, smell, hearing, and touch) embed the representation in a decidedly empirical setting. The sketch delineates a moral and anatomical monster. It emphasises the deviant nature of the type – deviance that is visible not only by her inappropriate daily (inter)actions, but detectable even in her anatomy, in the deformity of her organs. Her social habitus, one might conclude, has contributed to the degeneration of her body (see Mackie 1997, 67-69). Yet, whereas anatomy deals with individual bodies and their idiosyncrasies, the individual body (i.e. the heart) analysed in *The Spectator* represents a class of people, i.e. the moral type of the Coquette. Hence, the monstrosity of this lady's heart extends beyond herself to the entire group of Coquettes.

Employing the anatomical dissection allows the authors to cast their socio-moral ideas in a (pseudo-)scientific form. This has the primary effect of defamiliarizing the moralistic content of the text, i.e. the type and her apparently familiar characteristics, and thus heightening the readers' attention and curiosity. At the same time, the reference to a form essentially associated with empiricism alerts the reader to the significance of the senses and, particularly, of observation, in reading and understanding (the cause of) others' behaviour. Yet, despite these positive affordances, the activities of contemporary naturalists (and anatomists) are subject to extensive contemporary criticism – not least in *The Tatler* (see e.g. the Virtuoso in *Tatler*, 216) – that targets naturalists' excessive preoccupation with the study of nature and their concomitant neglect of their social duties, and questions their contribution to socially useful knowledge.

However, Mr Spectator takes special care to distance his text from an association with an allegedly pedantic endeavour of contemporary naturalists by emphasising, in the mini-series' frame established in *Spectator* 275, that it is his own mind that connects the form (anatomy) and the moralistic content (the types):

> The different Opinions which were started on this Occasion [i.e. among the naturalists] presented to my Imagination so many new Ideas, that by mixing with those which were already there, they employed my Fancy all the last Night, and composed a very wild Extravagant Dream. (Bond 1965b, vol. 2, 570)
Mr Spectator presents anatomy as a source of ideas that his mind then (involuntarily) associates with other ideas already stored in his memory. He uses the affordances of the anatomical dissection to his own end: while the anatomical dissection as such suggests the context of knowledge that is not immediately useful to society, and an activity that potentially threatens its stability, Mr Spectator (or, rather, his mind) dissects and exposes the Coquette, a type of woman that also challenges the social order. Hence, the frame emphasises that he uses the form for the reformation of his readers and thus contributes to the social good.

The Inventory of a Coquette (*Tatler* 245)

An even more unusual means of representing a moral type, the inventory in *Tatler* 245 provides ample material for arousing the readers’ curiosity. In contrast to the dissection, the inventory reduces the type’s characteristics to items on a list – items that do not necessarily add up to form a coherent whole but, in sum, serve to evoke the idea of a Coquette.

Attesting to the transhistorical significance of the list in and for everyday life, Robert E. Belknap defines the "list form [as] the predominant mode of organizing data relevant to human functioning in the world" (2004, 8). Although he draws attention to the fundamental difference between pragmatic and literary lists, e.g. regarding the pragmatic list’s infinite "expandability" that is of only limited validity for the literary list which tends towards (aesthetic) "closure" (30-31), Belknap emphasises that pragmatic lists, originally "used for commercial, reference, and mnemonic purposes," can equally assume literary functions, e.g. as a device for characterisation (12). Highlighting the complex relationship of its items to the list as a whole, he describes the list to represent simultaneously the sum of its parts and the individual parts themselves. By accretion, the separate units cohere to fulfil some function as a combined whole, and by discontinuity the individuality of each unit is maintained as a particular instance, a particular attribute, a particular object or person. Like the conjunction and, the list joins and separates at the same time. Each unit in a list possesses an individual significance but also a specific meaning by virtue of its membership with the other units in the compilation (though this is not to say that the units are always equally significant). (15)

Furthermore, as Eva von Contzen aptly explains, a list displays a wide range of affordances that crucially depend on its (literary) context:

> Ob eine konkrete Liste nun Ordnung stiftet oder Identität, Räumlichkeit suggeriert oder Zeitlichkeit aufhebt, ob sie die Grenzen des Erzählbaren auslotet oder einlädt, die Lücken zu füllen und eine Geschichte zu erzählen, ob sie juristische, religiöse, administrative oder therapeutische Zwecke verfolgt, ob sie beschreibt oder klassifiziert, gleichmacht oder differenziert, Oralität evokiert oder Schriftlichkeit betont – all das ist immer neu zu hinterfragen, da sich mit jeder Liste in ihrer jeweiligen kontextuellen Verankerung ihr Optionsspektrum – ihre Affordanzen – neu konfigurieren. (2017a, 322; see also 2017b)

In their capacity of ordering the world, lists, and especially literary lists, Umberto Eco explains, move centre stage because they represent instruments for "control and denomination" (2009, 117). Lists, he continues, "conf[e]r order (and hence a hint of form) to an otherwise disordered set" (131).
In *Tatler* 245, the list's supposedly pragmatic nature is indicated from the start by labelling it as an "Advertisement" (Bond 1987, vol. 3, 253). Approaching the folio half-sheet of this issue, the contemporary reader might have marvelled at the unusual structure of the paper: while the standard layout consisted of three parts with (1) masthead, (2) periodical essay, and (3) advertisements, *Tatler* 245 seems to proceed from the masthead almost immediately to the advertisements. It is only at closer inspection that the reader would have noticed that the first part of the advertisement section actually belongs to Bickerstaff's 'Lucubrations' – as the first collected edition of the periodical was titled.

Announcing the circumstances and nature of stolen goods, and thus roughly corresponding to what we would now categorise as 'classifieds' or, possibly, 'miscellaneous ads,' (Lewis 1909, 78) the advertisement follows the conventional structure of the day. As a corresponding (authentic) specimen from *The Spectator* (no. 381) reveals, such texts featured a list of the stolen items as their central element [2], framed by an initial description of the circumstantial details [1], possibly including the (potential) culprits, and a concluding definition of the (monetary) reward [3]:

[1] Whereas on Saturday May 10, 1712. [sic] about Eleven of the Clock at Night, between Columbton and Bradnich in Devon, Robert Bathe, the Bath Carrier, was robbed, and had a Portmanteau Trunk bore open, and the following things taken out, [2] a Gold Repeating Watch, the Case finely Engraved, and pierced with a Gold Chain and Gold Hook; a Triangular Cornish Diamond, […]; a Silver Knife, Fork and Spoon, a small Silver Porringer, a small Silver Cup in the shape of a Boat with a foot, a Ruby Ring of six Diamonds, a Turky [sic] Ring of two Diamonds, two Necklaces of Pearl, one of three, the other of four rows, […]; 8 Cambrick Handkerchiefs, 3 markt [sic] E. G. 5 markt A. G. one blue and Silver wrought Handkerchief, 3 Cambrick ones markt with P. [3] If any one will discover the aforesaid Goods, so as they may be had again, to Mr. Twining at his Coffee-house in Devereux Court without Temple-bar, Mr. Philip Bishop Bookseller in Exeter, or Mr. Yorbury in Bath, shall receive 10 Guineas reward, or proportionately for any part. (Lewis 1909, 152)

In a similar manner, the advertisement in *Tatler* 245 begins by representing the sequence of events as well as the perpetrator's profile, including the criminal's age, outward appearance, and her nature of speech:

*Whereas Bridget Howd'ee, late Servant to the Lady Fardingale, a short, thick, lively, hard-favoured Wench, of about Twenty nine Years of Age, her Eyes small and bleared, her Nose very broad at Bottom, and turning up at the End, her Mouth wide, and Lips of an unusual Thickness, Two Teeth out before, the rest black and uneven, the Tip of her Left Ear being of a Mouse-Colour, her Voice loud and shrill, quick of Speech, and something of a Welsh Accent; withdrew her self on Wednesday last from her Ladyship's Dwelling-House, and, with the Help of her Consorts, carried off the following Goods of her said Lady, viz. […].* (Bond 1987, vol. 3, 253)
In a tone clearly imitating legal or official discourse, this introductory passage signals the satirical mode of what amounts to a character sketch of Lady Fardingale herself.\(^9\) At the same time, it seems to aim at countering the potentially tiring effect of the list by arousing the reader's curiosity and endowing the dramatis personae with telling names (von Contzen 2017a, 318). The servant's last name 'Howd'ee,' a shortened form of the conventional expression ('how do you do?' or 'how do ye?'), refers to messages carried as well as to the messenger herself, certainly suggesting the predominance of that activity in Bridget's daily chores (Bond 1987, vol. 3, 253 note 3; see also "How-do-you-do"). Lady Fardingale's name refers the reader to two fashion commodities essential to any Coquette: the 'farthingale' or hoop petticoat, and 'fard' or paint for the face. Hence, rather than announcing explicitly (and deductively) that the woman in question is a Coquette – as in the case of the dissection – Tatler 245 leaves this information implicit, to be induced by the reader herself.

Occupying both columns of the half-sheet's front page (or: more than two modern book-sized pages), the list itself is truly extensive and stretches the boundaries of the advertisement into an inventory of Lady Fardingale's dressing room.\(^10\) Rather than representing some kind of real warrant of apprehension, the list and the nature of the goods metonymically reflect on their owner. In line with the prime purpose of an advertisement (Dyer 1982, 2), Lady Fardingale draws attention to her property and, by extension, to herself. Considering that advertisements are charged by the line or even by the word, the excessive length of Lady Fardingale's advertisement exhibits (or: is meant to exhibit) her wealth and/or the value that she allot(s) to her possessions.

Choosing an inventory, a form originating in economic discourse, to sketch the character of the Coquette appears to be a logical consequence of her intrinsic association with conspicuous consumption. As Theresa Braunschneider shows, (early) 18th-century texts imagine the Coquette as "the quintessential modern consumer (acquisitive, fickle, vain, imprudent, always in search of novelty)" (2009, 5) seeking admiration and aiming at getting "such admiration through their skillful manipulation of fashionable clothing and goods" (44). Coquettes, Braunschneider argues, are choosers:

the modernity that coquetry helps define constitutes subjectivity largely as a series of choices. What to buy, what to read, what to wear, what to eat, where to reside, where to travel, how to travel, whether to marry, whom to marry, how to walk, how to speak, when to wake up, when, with whom, and where to socialize […]. Being modern, in short, means having options and making choices. […] In each arena, coquetish desire is portrayed as a one-to-many relation; what she wants is the plural. (13)

\(^9\) Additionally, the passage seems to relate to early modern physiognomy. Those readers familiar with Giambattista della Porta's *De humana physiognomonia* (1586) would have recognised the doubtful character of Lady Fardingale's servant, e.g. in the shape of her nose: according to della Porta, broad and crooked noses indicated idleness as well as an ill-conditioned mind and corresponding morals (1601, 173-74).

\(^10\) Tita Chico (2005) provides a comprehensive study of the role of the dressing room in 18th-century literature.
The *Tatler*'s inventory of Lady Fardingale's dressing room confirms this reading. The text implicitly ascribes to the Coquette a desire for fashion, on the one hand, and for profusion, on the other: The nature of the items listed reveal her ambition to adorn her person and her craze for fashionable goods, and the mere quantity of items listed shows that she chooses, and that she chooses in abundance. Hence, the form of the text implicitly gestures towards the type of woman that she represents.

Primarily containing commodities of fashionable women, Lady Fardingale's inventory conforms to the demands of a pragmatic list. It follows a horizontal order, enumerating the items in series. Though, of course, on the textual level, the referential function dominates, the metatextual level adds an aesthetic as well as a didactic function. The listing allows for tentatively forming categories of the individual items. Arranged according to the text's (sub-)divisions, the ad specifies (Bond 1987, vol. 3, 253-256):

1. Underwear, e.g. "Four Pair of Silk Stockings curiously darned,"
2. "Silver"-ware, e.g. "a Silver Pot for Coffee or Chocolate, the Lid much bruised,"
3. A Bible "never opened but once,"
4. A "small Cabinet, with Six Drawers:" a. commodities for concealing her age and/or deformity, e.g. "Two Sets of Ivory Teeth, little the worse for wearing," b. jewellery, e.g. "a Crotchet of 122 Diamonds, set strong and deep in Silver, with a Rump Jewel after the same Fashion," c. coins, e.g. "one Guinea the first of the Coin," d. stimulants, e.g. "one small Amber Box with Apoplectick Balsam," e. "Gold" accessories, e.g. "a large Gold Repeating Watch, made by a Frenchman,"
5. Private papers: a. (love) letters "dated between the Years 1670 and 1682, most of them signed *Philander,*" b. recipes, e.g. "an approved Medicine to procure Abortion."

The last item clearly represents the climax of the enumeration. In the unlikely case that the reader has not yet deciphered the moral nature of the woman, the inventory's conclusion bestows certainty.

What is at stake here, what Lady Fardingale's inventory expresses, is the impact of contemporary consumerism on the individual's morals and manners. The items on the lady's list are not mere fashion products, but, in a consumer society, correspond, as Erin Mackie argues, to "highly prized tokens [...] that produce social, sexual, and cultural values. Anxious to exercise the taste that signals cultural competence, men and women become avid consumers. Shopping is not mere consumption; the selection and use of things *produces* meaning, identity, and social relationships" (1997, 64; original emphasis). That Lady Fardingale possesses the items and advertises them as stolen, the text suggests, shows her to be an enthusiastic consumer who regards the items as part of her identity. The items and their condition (e.g. the damaged lid of the

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11 It refers to objects in the 'real' world, has the purpose of recovering the stolen goods (i.e. a practical purpose), and is in some sense finite and unalterable (Eco 2009, 113).
coffee/chocolate pot, the pristine state of her bible) shed light on the lady's age, her social status, her preferences, and her activities, even without explicitly describing her outward appearance or her behaviour.

The items on the list metonymically characterise the owner very clearly as an aged Coquette. A member of the (impoverished) aristocracy (in need of mending her own stockings), Lady Fardingale loves fashion and uses clothing as well as cosmetics to conceal her age and physical deformity. The list suggests that she is marked by scoliosis, baldness and toothlessness, possibly inflicted by syphilis and the subsequent treatment with quicksilver, as she possesses "Six Pair of Laced Shooes [sic], new and old, with the Heels of Half Two Inches higher than their Fellows" as well as "Three Pair of Stays, boulstered below the Left Shoulder" (253), "Two Leather Forehead Cloths" as well as "Two Sets of Ivory Teeth [...] and One Pair of Box [Teeth] for common Use" (254). The dating of her letters as well as some of her curiosities (e.g. "one Guinea the first of the Coin," Bond 1987, vol. 3, 255) associate her with Restoration culture and politics, indicating her advanced age and her allegiance with the Stuarts. The unused state of her Bible, her preference for blasphemous art (as in: "Adam and Eve in Bugle-Work, without Fig-Leaves, upon Canvas, curiously wrought with her Ladyship's own Hand," Bond 1987, vol. 3, 254) and her possession of instruments as well as a drug for inflicting abortion, to herself and, possibly, to others, insinuate the depravity of her morals and, by implication, the deformity of her mind.12

As a whole, the list suggests Lady Fardingale's most severe fault: her lack of self-reflection, her failure – or inability – to scrutinize herself. She publishes the inventory of her belongings without being aware of the fact that they reflect the state and nature of her character – that the items have replaced herself, that she is indeed what she possesses (see also Mackie 1997, 66). It is precisely the form of the inventory that significantly promotes this reading. In contrast to more conventional character sketches, the list itemises the lady's character literally and, thus, emphasises its objectified nature.

Conclusion

In sum, the two sketches set out to describe the same moral type, the Coquette, using different forms, while relying on the readers' familiarity with the type. The texts are published in satirical periodicals that offer gentle criticism of contemporary (urban) manners and rely on such (new) behavioural norms as gentility and politeness to effect their programme of social reform (Klein 1996). Hence, the generic setting suggests an approach of (benevolent) mocking, of urbane wit, towards the object of interest (here:

12 Possible evidence of instruments in Lady Fardingale's possession that might be used for procuring abortion, are the "Gold Etuys for Quills, Scissars, Needles, Thimbles, and a Spunge dipped in Hungary Water, left but the Night before by a young Lady going upon a Frolick Incog." (Bond 1987, vol. 3, 255; original emphasis). The inventory also lists a drug potentially used to the same purpose, in "an approved Medicine to procure Abortion" (Bond 1987, 256). For 18th-century evidence of the use of an abortifacient and instruments used for the purpose, primarily drawn from trial records in New England and England, see Dayton (1991) and "The Tryal of Eleanor Beare of Derby" (Anon. 1732).
the Coquette), and prepares the reader for such literary techniques as irony and defamiliarization, ultimately aiming at self-reflection. More particularly, the texts are cast in two very different forms, the anatomical dissection and the inventory, with very different affordances. In their capacity as character sketches, both texts communicate moral knowledge. Both address the idea of moral legibility essential to the character sketch. Yet, while the traditional character sketch describes outwardly visible behaviour in order to grasp the essence of a type of person, the two texts analysed above play with this concept and adapt it according to their respective form's affordances. Concerned with taking stock, with recording which items are visibly present (and absent), the inventory reveals Lady Fardingale as defined exclusively by outward appearance. Aimed at detecting, understanding, and describing the internal (hidden) structures of the human or animal body, the anatomical dissection presents outside habits, interests, even items of passion as internalised. What is more, their different formal affordances affect the manner of the texts' communication of knowledge. Whereas the advertisement and inventory offers the idea of everyday, practical knowledge as at least potentially beneficial to society, the (contemporary) association of anatomy with natural philosophy threatens to raise doubts regarding the utility of the knowledge it conveys. While both approaches are, by definition, empirical, they differ with regard to the observer's expertise. In contrast to the inventory that (usually) lists consumer goods and can technically be arranged by any observer, the anatomical dissection requires an anatomist, i.e. a trained expert, able to perform the dissection and to read the physical structures adequately. However, although the inventory appears to be more easily accessible to the observer, not least through her familiarity with contemporary consumer culture, the decoding of the metatextual meaning of the individual items requires a reader at least as equipped with moral knowledge and experience as the anatomist needs to have medical expertise. In contrast to the dissection, which offers a kind of narrative to frame the description of the organ, the list just provides what von Contzen calls the grid of a potential narrative and leaves narrativisation largely to the reader (2017b, 234). In this regard, the list is much more complex: each of the items carries particular and historically diverse socio-cultural implications; the interpretation of these implications significantly decreases the reading speed and (at least potentially) focuses the reader's attention on the items, individually and in conjunction. Furthermore, both texts relate to crime: for the inventory, theft provides the context and prerequisite; the dissection essentially relies on crime as the source of its object: the dissected body usually belonged to a convicted and executed criminal (Cregan 2008). At the same time, the inventory implicitly raises the fundamental question which of the characters represents the real criminal, whether it is Bridget Howdée or Lady Fardingale who endangers the social order. Hence, while both texts are firmly indebted to the periodicals' didactic purpose of reforming contemporary (London) society, while both encourage the reader to observe and think about her own manners and those of others, it is the form of the list that seems to lend itself more readily to activating the reader's self-reflection and, thus, by extension, her capacity of self-reformation.
Works Cited


