“Callicco Madams”:
Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis

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The “calico crisis” of 1719–21 depicted Indian textiles as a national threat to English trade and gender roles. Like imported china, tea, and lacquered cabinets, calicoes contributed to the debates over luxury in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that focused attention on the behavior of female consumers. Condemned as the chief consumers of calico, women were reproached in dozens of pamphlets and economic tracts for purchasing the printed cotton fabric.¹ Attacks on female consumption, however, were not limited to the shopping habits of upper-class women. The pamphleteers also crafted the female servant as a trope for the social and sexual desires of working women who defied the decorum of consumption. In pamphlets and tracts in support of the wool trade, authors such as Daniel Defoe and Richard Steele accused female domestic servants, who were subject to fewer sartorial constraints than their liveried male colleagues, of ruining England’s wool industry and of causing widespread unemployment among male weavers. The behavior of female servants, as decried by their critics, reveals how fashion as a form of self-assertion and self-expression was not limited to upper-class women.² By drawing attention to female servants’ habits of consumption, therefore, the pro-wool pamphlets credited
working women with substantial social and economic power. Anti-calico critics thus paint a compelling portrait of female servants that ultimately reaffirms their agency, even as it attempts to restrict their spending and sexual habits.

By advocating that female servants wear English wool, wool’s defenders sought to preserve sartorial hierarchies and to manage the perceived sexuality of domestic laborers. Although English sumptuary law had lapsed under James I, the calico crisis reflects the continued interest throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in renewing laws that would regulate clothing.\(^3\) Defoe represents the clothing of female servants as an unpredictable threat to England’s economic and social structures. In his pamphlets, servants slip between legitimate and unlawful roles; they pass as maids and mistresses, moving from households to brothels and back again. Motivated by a desire to afford economic protection to the wool trade, those who tried to reform the dress of servants were attempting to control three things: the sexuality, consumption, and appearance of working women. The fervent rhetoric of the crisis pitted the interests of female consumers against those of working men, as I will explore in the first section of this article. In so doing, the crisis elided the contributions of working women to the textile industry. I will investigate this erasure of working women in the second section by looking at pamphlets and tracts that offer misleading accounts of the division of labor in the wool industry, and that portray working women, such as spinners, as consumers. Finally, I will show how the pamphleteers reserved their most heated attacks for the social and economic transgressions of female servants. Dominated largely by the interests of the wool industry, these pamphleteers represent a one-sided view of female servants. Unlike the Company of Weavers, which paid writers like Defoe to publish sympathetic accounts of the weavers’ plight, no guild spoke on behalf of the collective interests of servants.\(^4\) Few of the pamphlets attempt to represent a woman’s perspective, let alone that of a servant. By drawing so much attention to the sartorial transgressions of servants, the anti-calico pamphleteers betray their own ends, criticizing working women for their inability to refrain from buying calico, while at the same time confirming the power of servants to express themselves in the marketplace.
“Callico Madams” and Contested Gender Ideals

Although wool and silk manufacturers had opposed the East India Company’s imports of high-quality printed calicoes and silks since the 1690s, widespread depression in the wool industry from 1717 onwards animated the weavers and wool manufacturers to call for a ban on importing or wearing Indian cottons. Furthermore, English wool represented an ideal rallying point for calico’s critics, as the country’s “golden fleece” blended ideals of masculinity with patriotism. Histories of wool invented mythological origins for England’s national product, tracing its manufacture to before the Roman occupation. Defoe’s *The Complete English Tradesman* (1725) portrays the male English subject as a tapestry of native textiles, proclaiming that country laborers and household servants together “shall in some part employ almost every one of the manufacturing counties of England, for making up one ordinary suit of cloaths; for example, If his Coat be of Woollen Cloath, he has that from Yorkshire, The Lining is Shalloon from Berkshire. The Wastcoat is of Callamancoe from Norwich.” Defoe proceeds to detail the native textiles worn by the merchant classes and those adopted for household design. In Defoe’s view, England’s homegrown cloth embodies the English subject, and the bonds between English men are secured through the production, manufacture, and wearing of sturdy domestic wool. From the start, critics exploited perceived gender roles by positioning English wool against feminine tastes in fashion—tastes that Daniel Defoe characterized, in *A Brief Deduction of the . . . Woollen Manufacture* (1727), as existing for “the weakest of all Reasons, the Love of Change and Variety” (50).

These critics imagined women as “Callico Madams” who flaunted their bright fabrics from foreign countries, displaying more evidence of the deleterious effects of imported luxury goods on both the appearance and morality of English women. Although popular male garments like nightcaps and *banyans* (dressing gowns) were made from calico prints, the consumption of calico was largely attributed to women. Claudius Rey, the most scathing of calico’s critics, devoted *The Weavers True Case* (1719) to attacking “those Branches of the Weaving Trade, which only relate to Womens Garments.” He accuses women of wreaking economic havoc of biblical proportions (the typeface lends appropriate force to his words): “So that it seems as if our Women had resolv’d to put no other Bounds to the Flood of Evil, than
the utter Ruin and Destruction of our most famous Silk and Woollen Manufactures! Manufactures! which are so beneficial, and whose Welfare is so nearly linked with that of the whole Nation!" (14). Describing similar stakes, The Spinster (1719), a pamphlet by Richard Steele, addressed the “Female World, whose Apparel is the cause of this Evil.”11 Calico’s critics blamed women of all classes for the slump in wool prices; Henry Elking, for instance, commented on the “present Fondness [that] all Degrees of the Female Sex have for these Callicoes.”12 But as we shall later see, the pamphleteers reserved particular ire for the trespasses of female servants. In political tracts, satiric poems, and didactic drama, women figure as wanton consumers capable of ruining the national economy. During a period in which fabric was the most costly component of a garment—in essence a gown was its fabric—restrictions on a particular type of fabric represented aggressive attempts to reform women’s clothing.

Critics used female consumption of calicoes to promote an image of the English woman clothed in decadent, luxurious foreign fabrics.13 The consumption and display of Indian calicoes, with their bright floral designs, were exclusively linked to the female toilet and wardrobe.14 Veering from composed commentary—wool manufacturing “is very much in the Interest of the Nation”—to shrill exclamation—“The Wearing of printed Callicoes and Linnens, is an Evil with respect to the Body Politick”—the pro-wool pamphlets capitalized on the symbolic importance of the wool trade in order to turn female fashion into a crisis of national proportions.15 In The Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers (1719), Defoe stresses that “the Complaint against the printed Callicoes, is the Complaint of the whole Nation.”16 To its critics, calico was responsible for widespread poverty among weavers, the war with Spain, and the collapse of the wool industry, supposedly at the hands of the Jacobites.17 In the first issue of his weekly paper, The Manufacturer (1719–21), Defoe compares the calico trade to a plague: “‘Tis a Disease in Trade; ’tis a Contagion, that if not stopp’d in the Beginning, will, like the Plague in Capital City, spread itself o’er the whole Nation.”18 Aiming to stir nationalist sentiment, critics pointed out its exotic origins. The fabric was “a Foreigner by Birth; made the L . . . d knows where, by a Parcel of Heathens and Pagans, that worship the Devil, and work for Half-penny a Day.”19 Defoe declared in The Manufacturer that a calico woman, “whether rich or poor, . . . shall be reputed an Enemy to her Country” (6 November 1719). A character in an anti-calico play, John Blanch’s The Beaux Merchant (1714), confesses to his companion, “You have hereby fix’d in my Fancy a
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new Map of the World” after his merchant friend delivers a long list of the foreign fabrics that adorn the female body, such as “the Glittering Silks of Italy and the Levant,” the “Rich Needle-work of Flanders,” and so on. If the male subject were measured by homegrown fabrics, according to Defoe, then the female subject would be a patchwork of international designs.

Like other forms of female consumption, the purchasing and wearing of calicoes provoked sexual allusions. One song, titled “The Spittle-Fields Ballad” (1721) after the center of the London weaving industry, announces that “none shall be thought / A more scandalous Slut / Than a taudry Calico Madam.” Although calico was dense enough to provide a solid ground for hand painting, it was commonly described as lighter and thinner in texture than wool and silk. “The Spittle-Fields Ballad” links calico’s perceived lighter texture to promiscuous women: “Thin painted old Sheets / For each Trull in the Streets, / To appear like a Calico Madam” (stanza V, ll. 10–12). In the dedication to his play Hoops into Spinning-Wheels (1725), Blanch observes that “light Indian Fabricks were most agreeable to light Women.” Another anonymous poem mocks the “Ladies, Madams, Trulls, and Misses” who “in their painted Garments glory, . . . like gay Peacocks proudly strut it, / When in our Streets along they foot it.” In a bawdy song titled “Naked Buff; or, the Downfall of the Callicoes” (1721), prostitutes top a long list of women deprived of the fashionable fabric:

The Calico Trade,
Which long since has made
Such Damage to Weavers of Stuff;
At length is no more,
And ev’ry poor Whore
Must strip into her naked Buff.26

The doggerel verse, with its refrain “Must strip into her naked Buff,” capitalizes on the fabric’s racy reputation.

In 1719, the verbal sparring between weavers and women erupted in violence as weavers rioted in the streets and attacked calico-clad women unlucky enough to cross their paths. Dorothy Orwell, for instance, testified that on 24 June 1719, “she was Assaulted by a Multitude of Weavers in Red-Lion-Fields in Hoxton, who tore, cut, and pull’d off her Gown and Petticoat by Violence, threatened her with vile Language, and left her naked
Despite incidents like Orwell’s that exposed male violence against women—the attacks usually involved several men and one woman—aggressive wool campaigners like Rey blamed the victims: “But then these petit Disturbances are properly among the Women themselves; which proceeds from the foolish Fancy of some, and the Madness and Rage of others” (41). The riots appear as the logical, though violent, extension of the conflict between solipsistic, decadent female consumption and the patriotic, masculine wool industry. By attacking women in the streets, the rioting weavers reified the rhetoric of the critics, which placed women’s bodies, as well as their sexuality and display, at the center of economic debate. Before the riots, the crisis followed Erin Mackie’s description of gender roles in the early Georgian marketplace: “Women and all that is symbolically feminine” represent “the potential excesses, instabilities, and irrationalities of the market that modern economic man sought to rationalize, contain, and manage.” The riots, however, inverted the gender roles depicted in the pamphlets, because the male weavers were acting as the irrational and unstable members of society. The riots were stopped by the police and condemned by the weavers’ guilds, but they galvanized efforts to introduce a bill that would block the importation of Indian calicoes.

The 1721 Calico Act prohibited English men and women from wearing and using calico for clothing and household interiors, with penalties running from five pounds for wearing the fabric to twenty pounds for selling it. The Calico Act suggests, at first glance, the success of the wool industry’s campaign against calicoes. Its extended title draws attention to its protective function as “an Act to preserve and encourage the Woollen and Silk Manufactures of this Kingdom; and for more effectual employing the Poor” (Calico Act, 199). The first paragraph incorporates the rhetoric of the pro-wool camp by outlining how calicoes

manifestly tend to the Great Detriment of the Woollen and Silk
Manufactures of this Kingdom, and to the excessive Encrease of the
Poor, and if not effectually prevented, may be the utter Ruin and
Destruction of the said Manufactures, and of many Thousands of
Your Majesties Subjects and their Families, whole Livelihoods do entirely
depend thereupon. (199)

In contrast with the rhetoric of the crisis, the Act does not include any attacks on female consumers. Indeed, the role of women is written out of the legislation, just as the Act also expunges women’s contributions to the domes-
tic textile industry by emphasizing instead the plight of the king’s “[male] Subjects and their Families.”

The Calico Act quelled the weavers’ violent protests and the pamphlet war of 1719–21, but it was less successful in mandating women’s dress. Defenders of the wool trade continued to voice concern over the purchasing and wearing of black market calicoes long after 1721, using language that echoed the fevered tone of the rhetoric during the calico crisis. Writing six years after the Act, Defoe decried the public’s refusal, despite the law, to “buy English”:

> We run to the remotest Corners for some Shift or other to cheat our selves; and now we see the general Cloathing (of the meaner People specially) runs into the meanest, tawdriest Colours, stamp’d upon the most ordinary Linnen, fetch’d from Scotland, Ireland, or indeed any where; as if any thing but our own was to be our Choice, and as if we had forsworn our own Manufacturers, and were ashamed to be dress’d in our own Cloths. (*Brief Deduction*, 51)

Although the Calico Act made it more difficult to obtain calicoes, the historical record reveals that women retrieved old folded calico gowns from their wardrobes and developed new sources for the contraband fabric, such as smuggled textiles, and that other fabrics, such as painted fustians and linen, served as substitutes for calico. The Act itself made an exception for fabric used in domestic furnishings prior to 1722, as long as it remained in household use (7 Geo. I, c. 7). Bed-hangings, for instance, were not to be taken down and restyled as dresses; however, women defied the Act’s restrictions by doing exactly that.

**Representing Working Women**

Despite all the attention paid to women’s habits of consumption, most pamphlets emphasized the plight of male weavers, at the expense of women. According to Defoe’s history of wool manufacturing, for instance, the weaving industry’s division of labor ensures that women depend on the work of men: “As for the Women and Children, they are nobody without the Men, for they cannot spin the Wool ’till the Men comb it, and when they have spun the Yarn, ’tis of no use when the Men are gone that should weave it” (*Brief Deduction*, 13). Such depictions of the wool trade prioritized the work of men, despite the fact that women, along with children,
commonly combed wool. Misleading accounts of laboring women's dependence on men are consistent with centuries-old attempts to exclude women from weaving guilds.\textsuperscript{36} Using figures from 1718 in \textit{The Weavers True Case}, Rey blames women for the unemployment of half of “many Hundreds of Looms” and of 128,000 poor because they now lined their clothing with calico instead of silks (8–9); he goes on to describe “Men out of Work” (10) and “Two Thousand Families within the Bills of Mortality” (13). On the rare occasions in which women appear in discussions of weaving, they figure as the starving wives of weavers and rarely as working spinners or weavers in their own right. The rhetoric of the pro-wool camp erased working women’s contributions to the textile industry while at the same time reflecting wider perceptions of female consumption as symbolically emasculating men.\textsuperscript{37}

Although commentators as a whole overlooked working women in the wool industry, a small group of pamphlets attempted to represent the female point of view, including \textit{The Spinster}, signed “Rebecca Woolpack” (attributed to Richard Steele) and responses to it from Defoe and “Jenny Distaff” (the younger half sister of \textit{The Tatler’s} Isaac Bickerstaff). These pamphlets suggest how working women, such as spinsters, were pictured as egregious consumers of fashion, despite their involvement in the textile industry. Playing with the double meaning of “spinster,” Rebecca Woolpack relishes her single status because the “word intimates that a Woman’s chief Praise consists in Domestick Industry, and its Simplicity, rather than Variety of Dress” (3). But her references to “Domestick Industry” and her status as a “spinster” serve as preludes to the central concern of the pamphlet: a critique of female consumption. Woolpack adopts rhetorical devices popular among calico’s critics when she dwells on the foreign fabrics worn by upper-class women and includes a detailed inventory that breaks down, by price and country of origin, the outfit of a woman clothed by “her Maid in Callico” (4).\textsuperscript{38} The final sums reveal the fashionable woman’s abundant consumption of foreign goods, rather than of the domestic work Woolpack praises at the start of the pamphlet.

Through the voice of Jenny Distaff in \textit{The Linen Spinster} (1720), Steele, or one of his colleagues, shifts the scene from Woolpack’s fashionable London to rural England. Styling herself as the country half sister of the urbane Woolpack, Distaff offers a competing list of female garments worn in the country. She depicts country women as staunch supporters of the English wool trade and of English masculinity; wool appears as a staple fabric in their wardrobes. However, she also champions domestic linen production
and thus argues for a more international view of the English textile industry. Distaff reminds Woolpack that printed linens are an English product grown in the colonies and manufactured by English workers, although printed linens, and printed linen and cotton blends, were often lumped with printed Indian textiles in the pro-wool pamphlets. She further counters Woolpack’s inventory with one that dismantles the model reputation of the Elizabethan wool trade; Distaff’s inventory, purportedly drawn from a relative who was maid of honor to Queen Elizabeth, demonstrates how even in the wool trade’s idealized past, women filled their wardrobes with foreign goods. While female consumers emerge as valiant supporters of both the wool and linen industries in Distaff’s pamphlet, her “feminine” perspective, as in Woolpack’s pamphlet, reinforces the importance of female consumption and echoes the broader neglect of women’s labor perpetuated by the pamphlets’ attention to male weavers. Woolpack’s name refers to a standard sign of woolen drapers, and Distaff’s summons to mind the spinning work that bolstered ideals of femininity. Although their names encode the materials and activities of two kinds of industry, female consumption—rather than the work women perform as spinners—is placed at the forefront of the Woolpack and Distaff pamphlets.

In The Female Manufacturers Complaint (1720), Defoe responds to Woolpack’s and Distaff’s focus on consumption by discussing the contribution of spinners to the wool trade. Addressing Woolpack as “your Ladyship,” Defoe’s country spinners, Dorothy Distaff, Abigail Spinning-Wheel, and Eleanor Reel, make serious claims for women’s work. They cite the “very hard Work and the utmost Industry and Application” of spinners and note that “the industrious poor Women, have by the help of the Spinning of Worsted Yarn . . . maintain’d their said Families, and kept themselves and their said Children from Misery” (6–7). At the bottom of the tract, both Dorothy Distaff and Eleanor Reel sign the pamphlet, but Abigail Spinning-Wheel makes her mark (figure 1). Rather than write the ordinary X of the illiterate, Abigail draws a spinning wheel, a visual reminder of her trade and contribution to what the weavers’ pamphlets represent as a male industry.

Nonetheless, Defoe’s portrait of hardworking spinners is laden with satire. The three spinners boast that they “have set to our Work harder than ordinary, [and] have obtain’d, by Long Labour and good Houswifry, a narrow Buckinghamshire Edging to our Pinnars” (6). Although the spinners purchase domestic lace, as opposed to expensive French needle lace favored by aristocratic women, their interest in fashion ultimately reveals that work-
ing women, just like upper-class women, are consumed by fashion. In stark contrast to the desperate cries of weavers, the spinners first lament the fashion for calicoes because their decreased income has deprived them of clothing, trimmings, and hair accessories, thereby reducing their marriage
prospects (8–9). They then petition Rebecca Woolpack to reform her shopping habits. Not only does Defoe describe spinners producing the goods Woolpack enjoys in London, but he also includes precise references to fabrics, accessories, and other fashions, connecting urban and rural women through their mutual interest in material goods. Unlike the wool that knits English men together in *The Complete Tradesman*, such female entanglements, which Defoe emphasizes at the expense of spinners’ work, become avaricious forms of consumption. Rather than representing their industrious labor, the spinners’ reference to their work functions as more evidence that women’s avaricious consumption crosses class lines.

Amid the satire, Defoe touches on the possibility that legislation against calicoes might represent a loss of rights for women. Steele’s Jenny Distaff first raises this issue when she claims that “it will not be practical by any Law, to force the Ladies to resume that Antient cheap Dress of their Ancestors” (12). Defoe’s spinners see the Calico Act as the first step toward dress reforms that would place women’s appearance under the control of men. Sounding like pleading male weavers, the spinners ask female shoppers to abandon calicoes: “We most humbly beseech you to let this Change be the Work of your own Choice; and not suffer it to be imposed upon you by the Men, who will certainly, if they carry this Point, take upon them for the future to bring in Sumptuary Laws upon us, and oblige us to wear such Cloaths as they think fit” (11). Moreover, they claim that working- and upper-class women, together, can elude such legislation only if they abandon calico fashions of their own accord. Such a claim displays the real power available to women as consumers of fashion during the calico crisis, but it also disguises self-imposed dress reform as individual choice.

Although Defoe mentions the restrictions on gender embedded in textile legislation, the spinners’ solution still depends on repressing female consumption even as it encodes women’s collective consumer choices as a kind of feminine agency.

**Servants as Consumers**

Although the wool pamphlets attack women of all classes for wearing calicoes, servants feature as the favorite example of the irresponsible and capricious female consumer. The trope of the wanton, spendthrift servant reveals what enormous purchasing power the pamphlets granted to working
women, who were more often abused than empowered by their positions as
domestic servants.43 Recent feminist histories of commodity culture have
stressed women’s consumption of luxury goods such as tea, fashionable
clothing, and china.44 But the calico crisis complicates this story, because
imported Indian cottons were not merely luxury goods that allowed middle-
and upper-class women to exercise their subjectivity as consumers; cali-
coes also represented just one of the many fashions that lower-class women
adopted over the course of the century.45 Calico-clad servants undermined
class hierarchies, exhibited their own tastes, and deprived the wool trade of
a traditional base of shoppers. Calls for trade restrictions often overlapped
with proposals to institute uniforms for female servants. Attempts to regu-
late servant clothing demonstrate how domestic servants were regarded as a
crucial group of consumers, with its own purchasing power and tastes.

The pro-wool pamphlets used servants as an example to persuade
upper-class women that calico belonged on the bodies of the lower classes.
They further argued that the Indian textiles represented a double threat
to class and aesthetic hierarchies because they were both worn by servants
and used in interior design. The author of The Interest of the Nation Asserted
(1720), for instance, claims that calicoes are “tawdry Finery more accept-
able to the vulgar Taste.”46 Writing in retrospect about the calico crisis in A
Brief Deduction, Defoe observes, “We saw all our Women, Rich and Poor,
cloath’d in Callico, printed and painted; the Gayer and the more Tawdry,
the better” (50). Shortened from the original phrase tawdry lace, which sig-
nified a lace produced in East Anglia, tawdry proved to be the wool camp’s
preferred adjective to describe a cheap fabric that passes for finery.47 On the
whole, the pamphlets lump women’s consumption of Indian printed cot-
tons together, giving the erroneous impression that servant maids wore the
same calicoes as their mistresses.48 According to Rey, calico “hath spread it
self, like an inveterate Plague, over all our Women-Kind; from the Ladies of
the best Rank, down to the lowest Servant-Maids; from the best Citizens
Wives to the meanest Country Women” (14). Not only did calico confuse the
decorum of consumption, but it also mixed decorative household use with
fashions for clothing. During a period in which dresses were often recycled
as textiles for chairs, pillows, and bedspreads, any woman dressed in a fab-
ric associated with decorative wall hangings disturbed calico’s detractors.
Defoe’s A Brief State of the Question (1719), for instance, deplores the domes-
tic use of calico for turning tradesmen’s wives into garish puppets: “The
Ladies converted their Carpets and Quilts into Gowns and Petticoats, and
made the broad and uncouth Bordures of the former, serve instead of the rich Laces and Embroideries they were used to wear, and dress’d more like the Merry-Andrews of Bartholomew-Fair, than like the Ladies and the Wives of a Trading People.” Whether it was used for home decor or in gowns for lower-class women, calico was attacked for the way it appeared to undermine distinctions of taste.

Despite such attempts to demean the tastes of lower-class women and, by extension, the upper-class women who shared those tastes, wool producers viewed servants, and the lower-class buyers they stood for, as a crucial market and were rankled when that market bought calico instead of wool. In his tract *The Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers*, for instance, Defoe observes that “all the mean People, the Servant-Maids, and indifferently Poor People” are now buying calico instead of English wool. He also attests to the enormous power that lower-class women wielded: “As if a Million it may be of the lower Sort of Women and Children, formerly clad in Worsted Damasks, Russets, colour’d Crapes, &c. could now be seen in Nothing but ordinary Callicoes, and yet not interfere with the Product of their own Country” (*Interest*, 7). Through sheer numbers, lower-class women exercised enough purchasing power that the potential loss of the market would understandably provoke the anti-calico pamphleteers. In their attacks on the tastes and consumer habits of servants, defenders of the wool trade betray the degree to which the industry’s profits depend on working women.

Like wool manufacturers, calico merchants also recognized the purchasing power of lower-class women. The East India Company, the largest purveyor of calicoes, imported fabrics aimed at a nonelite market. Moreover, London calico printers marketed their wares to lower-class women. For example, the trade card of the aptly named Jacob Stampe advertises the printer’s shop at the “Sighn [sic] of the Callico Printer in Houndsditch [sic]” where he “Prints all sorts of Callicoes Lineings Silkes Stuffes &c. New or Ould at Reasonable Rates.” The rough woodblock illustration shows the calico printer stamping the fabric. The card’s rustic illustration, the description of “ould” fabrics on sale, and the shop’s location on a street (Houndsditch) known for secondhand garments all suggest that Stampe envisions nonelite women as his potential customers.

Although both wool and calico manufacturers depended on the patronage of lower-class women, the rhetoric of the calico crisis associated attacks on foreign textiles with existing stereotypes of the well-dressed maidser-
vant, the figure that, as Anne Buck observes, “remained the whipping girl for vague social ills throughout the century.” The prologue to *The Beaux Merchant* describes the impending dissolution of social hierarchy by attributing common appellations for female servants to calico-clad women: “When Abigail by Ind'an-Dress / Out-shine her Lady” (ll. 9–10) and “Bett in Callico become the Toast” (l. 15). Unlike their male colleagues, female servants were not required to wear livery; rather, perquisites—gifts of clothing often handed down from mistress to maid—formed part of their wages.

Few writers were as fond of the image of the corrupt maid as Defoe. His attacks on female servants center on the way their clothing and behavior defy stable social signs. In his critique of uppity servants, *Every-Body’s Business, is No-Body’s Business* (1725), Defoe argues, “It is a hard Matter to know the Mistress from the Maid by their Dress, nay very often the Maid shall be much the finer of the two.” He repeats this point several times in the tract, using similar language to describe two firsthand encounters with a well-dressed maid (15, and 16–17) and detailing at length the sartorial transformations (shoes, stockings, hoops, and petticoats) of new servants (5). In proposing to clothe servants in “decent apparel,” Defoe argues:

> The Apparel of our Women-Servants should be next regulated. . . . What should ail them, but a Jacket and Petticoat of good Yard-wide Stuff, or Callimanco, might keep ’em decent and warm.

> Our Charity-Children are distinguish’d by their Dress, why then may not our Women Servants? Why may they not be made frugal *per force*, and not put all on their Backs, but save something against a rainy Day? I am therefore entirely against any Servants wearing of Silks, Laces, and other superfluous Finery; it sets them above themselves, and makes their Mistresses contemptible in their Eyes. I am handsomer than my Mistress, says a young prink’d up Baggage, what pity ’tis I should be her Servant; I go as well dress’d or better than she. (*Every-Body’s Business*, 15–16)

Rather than fine clothing, Defoe proposes that female servants wear wool fabrics, such as “Stuff” and “Callimanco.” Similar to the trade restrictions he had proposed five years earlier, his prescription for well-dressed servants both attempts to preserve expensive fabrics for their mistresses and secure a stable group of consumers for English wool, whose defenders continued to call for government protection long after the 1721 Calico Act. In proposing to clothe servants in “decent” apparel, Defoe reveals how attempts to reform servants’ clothing served a third goal of managing their sexuality, a point made all too clear by the comparison with the charity children’s
uniforms. Defoe argues that the tastes and desires of servants, like those of orphaned children, should remain firmly under governmental control.

Defoe’s portrait of the well-dressed chambermaid reflects the cultural associations between female servants and another large group of working women, prostitutes. In eighteenth-century print culture, service and seduction were linked through clothing. In *The Beaux Merchant*, the calico-clad maid, Betty, outshines her mistress, causing her male admirer to comment, “This Callico makes a better Shew than Silk; and no Lady in the Land is secure of her own Husband,—so little difference between my Lady and Abigail in habit” (12). Defoe argues that fine apparel prompts servants to practice prostitution because it confuses class hierarchies: “This makes the Girl take the first Offer to be made a Whore, and there is a good Servant spoil’d; whereas were her Dress but suitable to her Condition, it would teach her Humility, and put her in mind of her Duty” (*Every-Body’s Business*, 16). According to Defoe, the lines between service and prostitution are blurred, and many servants “rove from Place to Place, from Bawdy-House to Service, and from Service to Bawdy-House again” (7). These restless women spend “one Week in a good Family, and the next in a Brothel” in order to fund their purchases: “If they are out of Place, they must prostitute their Bodies, or starve; so that from shopping and changing, they generally proceed to whoring and thieving, and this is the Reason why our Streets swarm with Strumpets” (7). In advice manuals directed at servants and in novels like Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740), more sympathetic, if equally salacious, scenarios present female servants under the sexual threat of masters, sons, apprentices, footmen, and bawds. In *A Present for a Servant-Maid* (1743), Eliza Haywood cautions her readers, within the first few pages, against brothels that pass for respectable houses in need of servants. Inside these houses, the “Country Habit” of young girls is “immediately stripp’d off, and a gay modish one put on in the Stead; and then the design’d Victim, willing or unwilling, is exposed to Sale.” Haywood sees the scenario through to its conclusion at the hospital, workhouse, or, for the unluckiest victim, a “Death-Bed on a Dunghill” (3). The transition from potential servant to prostitute is swift, irreversible, and often fatal.

In addition to controlling servants’ consumption, trade restrictions on tawdry calico held the double appeal of regulating the status and the sexuality of servants. To support calls for dress reform, pro-wool pamphlets drew on the classical model of the Spartan Lycurgus. In *The Spinster*, for instance, Rebecca Woolpack notes, “I have read in the *Lives of Plutarch*,...
that the wise *Lycurgus*, in order to maintain the Commonwealth in its Simplicity, forbad the Use of certain Dresses to Women; and to deter them from appearing in them, allow’d them no Remedy against Abuse of their Persons in those Habits” (11). After the 1721 Calico Act, Lycurgus continued to inspire proposals to reform servant dress, and Defoe admires him in *The Great Law of Subordination Consider’d* (1724): “He provided that the Servants shou’d wear a particular Badge of their Servitude, that they might be known, upon all Occasions, to be what they were, namely Servants. N.B. This was for hir’d Servants, not Slaves” (291). The ancient law, however, referred to one very specific group of working women: prostitutes. The anti-prostitution tract *Some Considerations Upon Street-Walkers* (1726) also marshaled classical examples to propose sumptuary laws for streetwalkers. As Jenny Distaff notes in her correction to Woolpack’s reference, *The Linen Spinster*, Lycurgus’s “intent was to caution modest Matrons against the Wear of such like Habits as the lewd Women were distinguished by” because “in such a Dress [the Matron] appeared out of Character, and could not claim the Privilege of it” (16–17). The Lycurgus example illuminates the easy conflation of calico-clad women and prostitutes, as well as of prostitutes and servants, enabled by the calico crisis. In using Lycurgus’s sumptuary laws for prostitutes as a model for trade restrictions against calico, such pamphlets reveal how cultural concerns over female sexuality fueled the crisis.

Amid the multiple critiques of female servants, *The Maid-Servants Modest Defence* (1725) offers a rebuttal to Defoe’s *Every-Body’s Business*, wherein the anonymous author, who claims to be a lady’s maid, mounts a vigorous defense of working women: “Had I the Wit of a Behn, a Centli-ever, or an Haywood, I should have been much more capable of Defending the Cause of myself and Sisterhood.” She explicitly links servant dress to sartorial self-assertion: “And why may it not be as reasonable with Respect to Servants Dresses; that Those, who are Honest, Careful, and Pains-taking should lay out the Wages they work for, in such Cloathing, as well for Ornaments as Use, to their Satisfaction; since they are as much their own, as What the Squire [Andrew Moreton, Defoe’s pseudonym] possesses is His” (11). Her assertion articulates the class fears surrounding servants’ attire: that the dress of female servants does indeed amount to independent expression, and that female servants practice the same rights of ownership as their male employers. The maid defends her working sisterhood against what she characterizes as generalizing views that “make no Allowance for Per-
sons or Things, Circumstances or Conditions, Causes or Occasions” (7). Where Every-Body’s Business portrays female servants as prostitutes in disguise, The Maid-Servants Modest Defence attacks the sexual predators—male employers, sons, apprentices, and male servants—whom female servants confront on a daily basis (17–19).

The maid’s social status, however, limits her ability to rewrite Defoe’s portrait of the servant maid as both whore and thief. Like Richardson’s famous servant, Pamela, who exemplifies the qualities of a lady, the maid hovers between classes. She works as a servant because her brother-in-law lost her £1,000 inheritance in South Sea speculations (6). She displays an intimate knowledge of the inner workings of servant life and exhibits her cultural literacy with her references to popular writers. Her claims to higher status further evoke some of the calico critics’ rhetoric. She blames household cooks for the poor reputation of servants: “Among this Order of Servants are chiefly to be found those Country Joans, who, the Squire says, are transform’d into London Madams” (13). She separates London-bred servants, noting their superior clothing and sophisticated manners, from “Country Joans,” and her description of these “cock-a-hoop” country transplants replicates the description of female servants used throughout the calico crisis (8). Moreover, in her efforts to refute Defoe’s critique, she minimizes her initial claims for the sartorial self-assertion of female servants. She accuses female employers of forcing their servants to don upper-class apparel as a reflection of their status (11–12). Such secondhand apparel becomes a burden for servants forced to spend money repairing their mistresses’ castoff clothing when they could be purchasing class-appropriate garments (12). In her defense of the servants’ appearance, the maid retreats from her initial assertions about how clothing expresses a servant’s individual taste.

The maid’s complicated self-positioning limits some of her most powerful counterpoints to the image of servants trumpeted during the calico crisis and in the years following the 1721 Calico Act. She closes by directly appealing to her servant readers to reform their appearance and behavior: “You see, Sisters and Friends, the Squire’s Charges are heavy: ’Tis in your own Power very much to prevent them. You, by a good Conduct and modest Behaviour, may preserve the Character of Honest, Prudent, Industrious and Careful; and add to your other Virtues Piety” (35). Her recommendation echoes the dress reforms proposed by Defoe’s spinners and blurs the boundaries between sartorial expression and censorship. The unknown
identity of the author also complicates this inside view of servant life: is this Defoe’s own coy response to his original tract? Despite the many ways in which the tract limits the assertiveness of female servants, by its attention to their habits of consumption, the tract also testifies to their self-expression, both sartorial and verbal.

Although critics blamed the depression of the wool industry on spendthrift and promiscuous servants, their rhetoric created the image of a powerful group of consumers. The effects of the crisis reverberated long after 1721, and the pamphlets’ scathing critique of servants continued to inform images of working women throughout the eighteenth century. Writing six years after the ban, Defoe remembered, with contempt, how British women abandoned the wool industry: “We saw all our Women, Rich and Poor, cloth’d in Callico, . . . and though ordinary, mean, low-priz’d, and soon in Rags, the gayest Ladies appeared in them on the Greatest Occasions” (Brief Deduction, 50). The calico crisis consolidated attacks on the apparel of servants to such a degree that even late in the century, the well-dressed maid continued to be emblematic of the irrepressible purchasing power of working women. In a conduct book, Domestic Happiness, promoted (1786), which commemorates his daughter’s new employment as a servant, “Thomas Trueman,” described as a servant himself by the book’s “editor,” echoes Defoe’s language, advising Mary Trueman that “young women in service aspire to dress too much like their mistresses, which gives them a wrong turn. If thy mistree should give thee any of her own cloaths, consider what is proper for thee to wear, and in what shape; and what to sell.” During the nineteenth century, female servants in middle- and upper-class households faced increasing pressure to wear uniforms. Although the dress of female servants was never legislated, the widespread adoption of uniforms in the nineteenth century reflects the enduring cultural concern over the appearance of servants, particularly in the case of the chambermaids and parlormaids who might be mistaken for their mistresses. In contrast to upper servants, servants at the bottom of the domestic hierarchy, such as scullery maids, were not required to wear a black dress, white apron, and cap—the standard uniform by 1860—suggesting how uniforms regulated the boundaries between upper-class women and upper servants. At the height of the calico crisis, the pro-wool camp credited female servants with enormous power by suggesting that working women possessed the economic and cultural capital to save the nation’s wool trade, its male workers, and ideals of English masculinity. While the heightened rhetoric of the
pamphlets sought to demean and manipulate servants’ habits of consumption, as well as their sexuality; its uneven account of both the threat and the potential of servants ultimately revealed the degree to which men depended on the tastes of working women.

Notes

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1. Recent accounts of the crisis have stressed the central role of the female market. For a comprehensive overview of the intersections between the new cotton textiles and women’s fashions, see Beverly Lemire, *Fashion’s Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1991), 12–29.


3. As Alan Hunt, in *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1996), shows, sumptuary laws, which regulated the dress of men and women in early modern England, were repealed in 1604 not because of any particular opposition to the sumptuary project, but rather after constitutional wrangling over whether the Crown or the Commons should be responsible for the legislation (321–23). Hunt provides a history of sumptuary law in England and discusses how economic protectionism functioned as a form of sumptuary legislation in the late seventeenth century (295–324, and 357–78). For the seventeenth-century interest in sumptuary law, see also Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), on John Evelyn’s attempts to convince Charles II to introduce dress reforms that would encourage the wearing of wool (87). Ribeiro also documents how moral outrage was sometimes directed toward the dress of men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (74–188).


6. See, for example, R. C., The Triumphant Weaver: or, the Art of Weaving Discuss’d and Handled (London, 1682). The “golden fleece” (represented as a sheep with a thick coat) was a popular street sign for woolen drapers. Roze Hentschell, in “Weaving the Nation: The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England” (unpublished PhD diss., Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, 1998), argues that the ties between English identity and wool contributed to nationalism in the early modern period: “Domestic wool cloth, which visibly distinguished English moral superiority, was the material through which early modern writers often negotiated questions of national selfhood and foreign otherness” (151). And in the eighteenth century, David Kuchta, in The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 2002), observes that “wearing English wool was not only manly, it was patriotic” (75).

7. See, for example, the pro-wool tract by John Blanch, Speculum Commercii: or, the History of our Golden Fleece (London, 1716), 16. Credited with expanding production and introducing English wools to the world, Queen Elizabeth was perceived as the patron saint of the wool industry, her taxes on foreign fabrics and sumptuary laws admired as exemplary forms of protection. Defoe, in A Brief Deduction of the Original, Progress, and Immense Greatness of the British Woollen Manufacture (London, 1727), describes Elizabeth I as a “most glorious Patron (or Patroness) and Protector” (19) of wool. He concludes that at the end of Elizabeth’s reign, the wool industry was the “most encreasing, thriving, and rising Trade (at that time) in the World” (26).


9. See, for example, John Asgill, A Brief Answer to A Brief State of the Question between the Printed and Painted Callicoes, and the Woollen and Silk Manufactures (London, 1719), who maintained that calicoes were “chiefly worn by the Women” (15).

10. Claudius Rey, The Weavers True Case; Or, the Wearing of Printed Calicoes and Linnen Destructive to the Woollen and Silk Manufacturies (London, 1719), 4.


13. This line of critique reflects widespread suspicion of foreign perfumes, fans, and fabrics donned by women and mocked by influential periodicals like *The Spectator*. For instance, Addison and Steele, in *The Spectator* 69 (19 May 1711), report that “the single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of an Hundred Climates.”

14. Laura Brown, in *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ., 1993), discusses the period’s literary culture, in which exotic products “are made to represent the primary objectives of mercantile capitalism, and these commodities in turn appear exclusively as the materials of the female toilet and wardrobe” (114).

15. The first quotation appears in the anonymous *An Essay on Trade, Wherein the Present dispute about Callicoes, &c. Is Consider’d*, ([London?], [1720?]), 8. The second is drawn from Rey, *Weavers True Case*, 12. According to Rothstein, in “Calico Campaign,” wool was such a populist cause that the pamphlets’ rhetoric obscured the real threat that calicoes presented to manufacturers of half-silks. Rothstein argues that the 1721 Calico Act benefited London’s half-silk industry rather than the wool trade (17–18).


19. [Daniel Defoe], *The Female Manufacturers Complaint, being the Humble Petition of Dorothy Distaff, Abigail Spinning-Wheel, Eleanor Reel, &c. Spinsters, to the Lady Rebecca Woolpack* (London, 1720), 10. P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, in *Defoe De-Attributions* (London: Hambledon, 1994), question J. R. Moore’s and Maximillian E. Novak’s attribution of this piece to Daniel Defoe: “It is not impossible that Defoe could have written this piece, but we have detected no real significant verbal echoes of his known writings on the subject” (123). They
do not include it in their Critical Bibliography. Whether written by Defoe or not, the pamphlet raises important questions about English trade, imperialism, and perceptions of foreign goods. In emphasizing the foreign manufacture of calicoes, the pamphlet overlooks the fact that by 1721, many calicoes were produced and printed in England using colonial cotton. Defenders of the East India Company pointed out that some calicoes were just as British as wool and aided imperialist agendas, but their pleas fell on deaf ears. See Asgill, Brief Answer, 8. The calico printers also argued that their calicoes contributed, alongside wool, to England’s economy. See The Case of the Printers of Callicoes and Linens, (London, [1720?]), 1. Other pro-calico pamphlets include The Weavers Pretences Examin’d (London, 1719), and by the same anonymous author, A Further Examination of the Weavers Pretences (London, 1719). Unlike weavers and printers of wool and silk, calico-factories operated outside of the guild system, a fact that perhaps contributed to their unpopularity among traditional trades. See Thomas, Mercantilism, 127.


21. Defoe, in Complete English Tradesman, offers a rare departure from this image when he notes that “you shall find all the nation more or less concern’d in cloathing this Country–Grocer’s wife” (402). He also includes a detailed inventory of her clothing (largely wool) and accessories, noting the county or town of origin.


23. John Blanch, Hoops into Spinning–Wheels (Gloucester, 1725), ii.


27. Beverly Lemire, in “Second-Hand Beaux and ‘Red-Armed Belles’: Conflict and the Creation of Fashions in England, c. 1660–1800,” Continuity and Change 15 (2000), persuasively argues that the weavers’ animosity should be considered in the context of the design of women’s clothing that “featured the full sweep of flowered textiles in gowns, jackets, and petticoats” (391–417, 398). During this period, France also sought to suppress the importation of calicoes, introducing severe penalties such as execution. See Hunt, Governance, 369.


29. Rey’s position is somewhat softened by an appendix that reprints appeals by master weavers to their constituents to end the violence (Weavers True Case, 45–47). Although Defoe was unsupportive of the weavers’ violent riots, he imagined calico women as murderers, whose dress “merely because ’tis a Mode or Fashion, and then, too, of their own making, engages them in a Cruelty against Nature and makes them little less than Murtherers, and Destroyers” (Manufacturer, 30 October 1719).

31. See Lemire, Fashion’s Favourite, for a summary of the heated debates in the Commons (40–41).


33. Thomas, Mercantilism, 160–63. Thomas shows that English traders in India defied customs officials and that, apart from a brief dip in imports following the Calico Act, the East India Company continued to import large quantities of calicoes for the continental and colonial markets. Lemire, in Fashion’s Favourite, also documents the example of a printed Indian gown from ca. 1740 (42).

34. On this point, see Thomas, Mercantilism, 160, and Mukerji, From Graven Images, 207–08.

35. See Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, intro. Amy Louise Erickson (1919; rep. London: Routledge, 1992), 93–149, on how both the wool and cotton industries depended on the labor of women. The perceived opposition between consuming women and working men corresponds with stories of female shoppers abusing merchants. In Complete English Tradesman, Defoe warns his readers: “I have heard that some Ladies, and those too persons of good note, have taken their coaches and spent a whole afternoon in Ludgatestreet, or Covent Garden, only to divert themselves in going from one mercer’s shop to another, to look upon their fine silks, and to rattle and banter the journeymen and shopkeepers, and have not so much as the least occasion, much less intention to buy any thing; nay, not so much as carrying any money out with them to buy any thing if they fancied it” (104).

36. Clark, in Working Life, documents how the weaving guilds began to exclude women starting in the late fifteenth century (102–06), and describes the later tensions between weavers and spinsters (116–18). See Clark for the contributions, apart from spinning, of women and children to the production of wool (105–13). See also John T. Swain, Industry Before the Industrial Revolution: North-East Lancashire
c. 1500–1640 (Manchester: Manchester Univ., 1986), on the role of women in wool production (109–12).

37. Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, in Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Columbia Univ., 1997), notes that “female consumption is a kind of depletion that ‘eats up’ everything in its path, laying waste to what men would otherwise preserve. It becomes symbolically emasculating when it demands the sacrifice of male resources” (3).

38. Thomas Newcomb, in The Woman of Taste (London, 1733), offered a similar critique, citing the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese products favored by the fashionable town woman (6). An appendix to the Female Manufacturers Complaint entitled A Respectful Epistle to Sir R----d S-----le, Author of the Spinster, corrects Steele’s list of women’s apparel; “Tisserando de Brocade” points out that many “French” silks were woven in London’s Spitalfields (21–22).


40. Woolpack was the name for the large bags filled with wool for sale, OED, s.v. woolpack.

41. Pinners were a type of kerchief, sometimes trimmed with lace.

42. Defoe, in Manufacturer, 6 July 1720, advocates a similar position where he encourages women to boycott calicoes: “How easy it was for Women only, without the Help of Laws, or Acts of Parliament, to put down the Callicoes, by despising them, refusing to wear them, rejecting them as a Mode, scorning to be made gay by Forreingers.”

43. See Bridget Hill, Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 44–63, for the multiple ways in which female servants were physically and sexually abused by their employers.

44. For instance, Kowaleski-Wallace, in Consuming Subjects, argues that “we see how the female as an object of male desire became, over the course of the long eighteenth century, the female as a desiring subject” (54). Marcia Pointon, in Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession, and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665–1800 (Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1997), investigates how women produce and describe culture in relation to how they serve as subjects of representation. From the viewpoint of social history, Amanda Vickery, in The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1998), traces women’s access to cultural outlets and views shopping as a form of employment (164). And Laura Brown, in Ends of Empire, makes persuasive claims for the ties between adorned women and commodity culture: “Female adornment becomes the main cultural emblem of commodity fetishism” (119). G. J. Barker-Benfield, in Culture, pays somewhat more attention to the tastes of servants and other working women (173–87). In Maxine Berg’s most recent study of commodity culture, Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Oxford: Oxford Univ., 2005), she tries to complicate what she sees as the generic view of the female consumer and argues instead that extant historical data, albeit sketchy, “does challenge the gendered stereotype of the rapacious female consumer” (242) as described in studies like...


47. *OED*, s.v. *tawdry*.

48. Rey, in *Weavers True Case*, was one of the few calico critics to distinguish Indian textiles according to class: women “of the first Class are clothed with *outlaw’d India Chints*; those of the Second with *English* and *Dutch* printed *Callicoes*; those of the Third with ordinary *Callicoes*, and *printed Linnen*; and those of the Last, with ordinary *printed Linnen*” (39). Rey also includes a “pre-calico” list of fabrics worn by women in which the lower orders wear woolen fabrics.


50. Defoe, *Just Complaint*, 23. Defoe’s response to *Weavers Pretences* rankled with its anonymous author, who, in *A Further Examination of the Weavers Pretences* (London, 1719), retorted that very few poor people wore calico and that the middling classes only used calico for their upper garments (19–20).

51. Thomas, in *Mercantilism*, notes that, from the 1680s onwards, the East India Company tried to appeal to the lower-class market by importing low-cost fabrics (46).


53. Anne Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England* (Holmes and Meier: New York, 1979), 109. In *An Epistle In Answer to Susan Sauce-pan’s Famous Letter to Phil. Hor----eck. Now Cook-Maid to Cardinal Alberoni* (London, 1719), that takes aim at Catholics and the romantic aspirations of domestic servants, the new master’s servant, “Jenny Tuck-Bed,” accuses a former servant, “Susan Sauce-Pan,” of upgrading her clothing: “You talk of several Things that have slipt my Master’s Memory: As that of an old *Gown* left off. If any such thing was left in the *Wardrobe*, he supposes you took it for a Perquisite, vamp’d it up, and made a good Upper-Petticoat of it” (18). Ventriloquizing the voice of her master, Jenny Tuck-Bed mocks
female servants who turn castoff clothes into fashionable garments. Such critiques also appeared in advice manuals that urged waiting women and scullery maids alike to adopt “neat and clean” clothing. “Be neat, cleanly, and housewifely in your Cloths, and lay up what Money can handsomely be spared,” as Hannah Woolley phrased it in her popular manual *The Compleat Servant-Maid: or, the Young Maidens Tutor*, 7th ed. (London, 1704), 8. Woolley applies this phrasing to nursery maids, cooks, undercooks, and scullery maids (see 93, 96, 119, 127).


56. In *The Great Law of Subordination Consider’d* (London, 1724), Defoe also exploits the scenario of a man who mistakes a maid for her mistress. The book was later reprinted as *The Behaviour of Servants in England Inquired into* (London, [1726?]). Backscheider, in *Daniel Defoe*, observes that the well-dressed servant crops up in Defoe’s fiction; Roxana’s trusted Amy renegotiates the lines between mistress and servant by dressing as a gentlewoman (509). Backscheider also observes that “throughout his writing career, [Defoe] would quote himself either in long identified passages or in phrases, analogies, and well-turned sentences repeated from work to work” (143).

57. Tim Hitchcock, in *English Sexualities 1700–1800* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), notes that, in actual practice, prostitution was just one of many working options for women; prostitutes “were most likely to intersperse periods of life in service or in the largely female occupation of milliner, mantua-maker or haberdasher . . . with time spent on the street” (96).


59. Badges were also viewed as a mechanism for regulating the movement of beggars in city streets, as conveyed by Jonathan Swift’s *A Proposal for Giving Badges to Beggars* (London, 1737). Swift argues that “Beggars should be confined to their own parishes; that, they should wear their Badges well sown upon one of their Shoulders, always visible, on Pain of being whipt and turned out of Town.” See *Jonathan Swift: Prose Works*, ed. Herbert Davis, 14 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939–68), 13:132.

60. *Some Considerations Upon Street-Walkers* (London, 1726), deploys examples from several ancient societies: “That among the Jews, as was said, seems to have been a Foreign Habit; but the Grecians obliged their Whores, in Contradistinction to their Virtuous Women, to wear Gaudy and Flower’d Apparel: So that, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* remarks, a Harlot was as easily known by her flower’d Garment, as a Slave by his *Stigma*” (12). Classical comparisons also crop up later in the century in publications like *The Connoisseur* 4 (25 February 1754): “The Romans assigned different
habits to persons of different ages and stations; and I hope, that when the bustle of the ensuing elections is over, the new parliament will take this matter into consideration, and oblige the several classes of females to distinguish themselves by some external marks and badges of their principles.” See George Colman, *The Connoisseur by Mr. Town, Critic and Censor-General*, 5th ed., 4 vols. (London, 1767), i:33.


64. Diana Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agenda: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 2000), 90–92.

65. See Crane, *Fashion*, 91–93. Crane notes that the dated liveries of male servants distinguished them from their employers.
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