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Mapping Molly Affect: Subjectivities of Society and Same-Sex Individuals through Eighteenth-Century British Print Culture

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INTRODUCTION

This is an undergraduate thesis that exemplifies several disciplines including material culture, social history, art history, emotional geography, cultural geography, philosophy, statistics, and linguistics. My thesis inquires about the subjectivities that society felt towards mollies, or sodomites, and sodomites' subjectivities in the negative environments of eighteenth-century London. I look at representations of emotion through various lenses of print culture, phenomenology, affective atmospheres, textual agencies, semantics, and their visual representation. Questions I raise throughout this thesis are whether affective atmospheres, or imagined felt space, that exists in the 'in-between' of selves and objects, can be examined, constructed, and can be 'seen' through print culture, court cases, text, and illustrations. Also, I examine whether phenomenology, or the process of experience, can be studied in an historical perspective.

This thesis serves as an archive of a reinterpretation of eighteenth-century British society in regard to negative attitudes towards sodomites. In the course of this thesis, I propose a method of practicing emotional geography by looking at the phenomenology of subjects and affective atmospheres. I study the concept of affective atmospheres, particularly negative atmospheres, by examining them within an historical context of eighteenth-century London. I look at objects that can influence feeling and contribute to these affective atmospheres. Specifically, I look at language, text, and visual representation in print culture. Particularly for text, I study statistical analyses of diction that was used to describe sodomites and sodomy that were present in the Old Bailey Proceedings, which were the widely read and published court cases. I study phenomenology by conducting statistical analyses of frequented spaces of mollies in London. By frequented spaces, I mean places where mollies were apprehended and places that they visited before they were caught such as specific streets, taverns, etc. to
map out their experiential trajectories in London. This allows me to view mollies’
trajectories through space examining feelings to historical spaces, which have not been
done thus far in molly research.

For organizational purposes I will first discuss the sections of the thesis. First is a
literature review analyzing relevant existing scholarship in regard to what has been
studied and examined in the fields of social history of mollies and emotional geography.
Secondly, there is a brief discussion of the social background and oppression mollies and
sodomites faced during the long eighteenth century. Then, I explain my method of
practicing emotional geography by introducing and elaborating on the data set I
composed that consists of 50 sodomy court cases ranging from the early to the late
eighteenth century. Then I briefly introduce the theoretical affective atmospheres to better
communicate the invisible social constructions of negative affect through print culture
consisting of the Old Bailey Proceedings and satirical broadsides of mollies that were
read throughout society. Furthermore, I discuss the textual agency, diction, and semantics
the Old Bailey Proceedings utilized to shape negative atmospheres of mollies and
sodomites by discussing etymologies of words and how their origins played a vital role in
then-contemporary contexts. And lastly, I examine the visual representation of affective
atmospheres and the subjectivities of mollies and society through an illustration of a

I took this approach to research because the combinations of the two fields of
emotional geography and history have not yet been delved into heavily. Producing
theoretical and interpretive ways of knowing onto history allow the field of history to
become less compartmentalized, and more flexible regarding how to perceive primary
and secondary sources and how to interpret those sources. Applying emotional geography
to history has allowed me to gain a step closer in answering a primary question that began
this research project. How can one ‘see’ a culture through print culture and cartography?
LITERATURE REVIEW:

The relevant and contemporary literature that helped construct my thesis and methodology covers topics over the general sociological and historical facets of mollies, as well as foundational studies of emotional geography.

Existing scholarship about molly culture in eighteenth-century London considers the identity of mollies in terms of social class, examining court cases, newspaper articles, satirical caricatures and literature, and some spatial analysis. For example, Rictor Norton (1992) has devoted a monograph to mollies that generally covers most of these aspects on the molly community. Norton examined the cruising grounds of the mollies and included maps that located the molly houses. This is beneficial for my research regarding the social history of mollies, however Norton’s research lacks the subjective aspect of mollies and society through his analysis. I am able to expand molly research by investigating affect, space, and mollies’ phenomenologies. Tim Hitchcock, prominent British historian and digital historian, also discusses the social aspects of mollies and the general lower-classed individuals of London’s society throughout the long eighteenth century. Tim Hitchcock is a vital source for this research due to his creation of the digitization of the Old Bailey online, a website I use frequently in my research. Norton and Hitchcock’s research have shown extensive survey work on mollies and sodomites, however, there are gaps in terms of examining mollies and the general populations’ subjectivities through print culture. I am expanding research over molly scholarship by looking at how negativity and language in society were manifested through print culture and how that in result created affective atmospheres. Also, I contribute to scholarship by looking at the phenomenology of mollies’ trajectories through space as well as the visual representation of mollies’ subjectivities and the subjectivities of the general population that can be seen in illustrations on broadsides.
The literature for the newly emerging field of emotional geography includes methods of phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and ethnography. Moreover, scholars in the field of emotional geography have delved into particular patterns of the construction of emotional atmospheres, or ambiences that can be 'felt' in society. Emotional geographic scholar, Ben Anderson (2009), discusses the components of affective atmospheres and explains how they are inevitable and embedded among society and suggests the public atmosphere is constructed from subjectivities that factor from subjects’ moods, feelings, and tones. The idea of invisible affective atmospheres stems from the emotional geographic scholar Nigel Thrift about his work on ‘non-representational theory’ and how it correlates to real-life spaces and situations. Another emotional geographic scholar, Steve Pile (2009), discusses the survey of emotional geography looking at subjects who carry experience, meaning as one who feels various emotions as they proceed in life, and are self-aware in experience. There are gaps still in emotional geographic research that need to be accounted for regarding the exact constructions of affective atmospheres, and how history and historical uses of language and vision have helped conduct these invisible ambiences, particularly looking at negativity. However, this research benefits and expands my thesis by examining feelings that construct historical atmospheres of mollies and their internal subjectivities as well as the general publics’ emotional tones that were presented in the community. This furthers emotional geography by looking at these theories of affective atmospheres and how they are applied to historical instances, especially within negative situations. I expand emotional geography by looking at how text and language can affect and influence atmospheres making them “active agents” in the atmospheres. In which I explain more in proceeding sections. Also, I further emotional geographic research by applying aspects of phenomenology to historical situations.

With the combination of emotional geography and textual and visual representations, I can expand scholarship on molly culture by considering and examining the historical affective atmospheres of eighteenth-century London in regard to the molly community. By examining textual evidence from court cases about mollies and visual representations, it shows importance for eighteenth-century scholarship due to the lack of emotional and affectual scholarship in historical scholarship. This is also important for emotional geographic scholarship because it allows new ways of approaching historical materials. It allows a new method of looking at historical documents, which show us a different perspective at looking at information. Through an emotional geographic lens, it allows one to view the documents looking specifically for subjectivity and how that might relate to space and place.

SOCIAL CONTEXT:

In early eighteenth-century London, there was a covert, collective culture of male same-sex individuals, who were then referred to by society as sodomites or “mollies”. By the 1720s, this underground cultural phenomenon became more evident and therefore more persecuted within mainstream London society. This is largely due to the actions of two mollies, Edward (Ned) Courtney and ‘P----’ (still unidentified to this day), for personal motivations including revenge, and who conspired to reveal “molly” culture to mainstream culture and developed police action that consisted of raids and set ups. After mollies were caught in set ups or raids, they then were put on trial and their court cases served as criminal narratives that were published in a popular periodical entitled The Old Bailey Proceedings. The Old Bailey Proceedings or the Sessions Papers were cheaply sold, read by the general public, and were distributed in coffeehouses and taverns.² The

Old Bailey Proceedings was not the only periodical that expressed or unveiled the molly court cases—newspapers did the same—and were distributed in taverns and coffee shops as well.

At this time, molly culture became an intriguing topic to mainstream society because the court cases shed light on a new cultural construction of men in the city. Rather than having the ability to easily target a molly, they were categorized primarily through their social class and places they frequented rather than their pigment and ethnicity. In London’s space, mollies inhabited lower-class neighborhoods and occupations. Mollies generally held lower class occupations such as merchants, shopkeepers, upholsters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, servants, artisans, cabinet makers, gilders, barbers, tavern keepers, silk dyers, blacksmiths, among several other occupations that aided to progress the public sphere of London.³

Mollies dwelled in their specific neighborhoods, promenaded through particular alleys and routes such as the infamous “sodomites walk”, and acquired their own language to communicate to disjoint themselves from mainstream culture to preserve their discreet identity. The origin of the molly culture started in the reign of Ann from 1702 – 1714, and ripened to maturity from 1714 – 1727.⁴ The various London neighborhoods where mollies resided and occupied socially were Covent Garden, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Holborn, Royal Exchange, and Moor Fields among others.⁵ These places had become known as the red light district that originated in the late seventeenth century, causing the space to harvest a demographic of middle to lower classed individuals.

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It was pertinent that the molly culture lived in furtiveness because London was an oppressive society in regard to sodomy. It was seen as a crime that was equivalent in caliber to homicide. In the late seventeenth century, the Catholic Church created organizations deemed Society for the Reformation of Manners and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge to eliminate and execute sodomy in the city. Usually, men accused of sodomy would be executed regardless of evidence or lack thereof. In the height of the emergence of molly culture, in the 1720s, the reformation of manners killed 1,363 people from December 1726 to December of the next year. Though society was aggressively against sodomy, they were however intrigued by the sodomites. To fuel aggression and intrigue in society toward sodomites, the media began to publish pieces over the molly court cases. These media outlets consisted of the Old Bailey Proceedings, newspapers, Catholic pamphlets, and broadsides, which I will discuss in later chapters. The media helped shape negative attitudes in society towards sodomites and created negative affective atmospheres in society.

EXPLAINING AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERES FOR MOLLIES:

In my method of practicing and applying emotional geography to historic examples, my first method is looking at affective atmospheres and how print culture influenced emotion. I am studying an invisible phenomenon that was present, constructed and felt in eighteenth-century England, called “affective atmospheres”. In a theoretical sense, an affective atmosphere is an ambiguous space that exists in the “in between” of selves or subjects and is constructed by a collection of peoples' feelings or can be perceived as a mold containing affect. Affective atmospheres must have “active agents” that serve as actors, which can consist of objects or subjects, that influence the subjects, which then also alters the atmosphere in a number of ways. Actors can influence by entering, circulating, and simply moving through atmospheres. The affect in the

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atmosphere is a representation of a response to active agents, a response of emotion. These atmospheres existed in space between mollies, the mainstream population, emotions, experience, language and print culture.

The emergence of the molly and or sodomite produced anxious and negative, social affective atmospheres through the active agent of print culture, and more specifically, the Old Bailey. In the early eighteenth century the Old Bailey revealed very little background or detailed information over the sodomites. Though as time progressed, the length of the Old Bailey increased containing more content revealing regions where mollies resided as well as their trajectories through London’s spaces. This in part could be due to the increase of public interest. By the 1720s and onward, the records began to incorporate detailed accounts regarding where mollies were located in terms of where they were apprehended, the pubs they visited, their reactions to being apprehended, and even began to disclose where and when mollies were to be pilloried. This allowed the audience to know where mollies were and see the criminal of whom they were reading about in The Old Bailey Proceedings. These pieces of information began to construct identity of sodomites in terms of frequented locations and activities.

Due to the covertness of the subculture of the mollies, there were hidden spaces in society that allowed the mollies to frequent and allow them to sexually engage in taverns deemed “molly houses” as well as pick up other mollies in designated spaces and alleys such as the now infamous “sodomites walk” in Moorsfield. Eighteenth-century gender studies scholar, Rictor Norton, has noted that molly houses were generally located near molly cruising grounds, thus allowing a subcultural geographic space to develop. As many mollies were lower-classed individuals who occupied jobs as merchants, butchers, servants, weavers, etc. they maintained their own shops and it wasn’t unusual for mollies to have their shops near molly houses making the subcultural geography even more

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8 Norton, *Mother Clap*, 70.
interconnected, intimate, and familiar. This spatial closeness becomes a concept of feeling familiarity in designated spaces making connections between emotion and space. Then, this relationship of feeling comfort in a frequently designated space would allude to affective atmospheres of familiarity.

Looking at the affectual geography of the molly culture through an affective atmospheric aspect, we must identify the active agents of the atmospheres. In one case, the active actors are court cases that reveal molly neighborhoods allowing the mainstream public to know about molly spaces, which then changes the publics’ perception of that particular space from perhaps a general perception of the space into a molly district or neighborhood. However though, in result, it also allowed other mollies and or sodomites to become familiar with molly areas that they might not have known about otherwise, which then expands the molly-active places in the city. If this occurred, then this would be an example of the active agent (the court cases) influencing the reader about a particular molly district either influencing different feelings for the general public and the mollies. For the general public, it most likely harvested sensibilities of anger and disgust and with the mollies it might have caused senses of belonging within those spaces, as it was a collective cultural space. Hypothetically, if these two different groups were encountering the identified molly districts and feeling these sentiments of either disgust or belonging, it would then become carried, expressed, and felt in the atmosphere in relation to other subjects or perhaps an object, remembering the atmosphere is the translucent representation of feeling. Meaning, the court cases and newspapers that identified these spaces were the active agents that influenced the subjects or the readers, to then react emotionally, either in disgust or in a sense of belonging. The mollies would perhaps have felt a sense of belonging to spaces with the notion of shared-interests in terms of sexuality, social class, and experiential trajectories. This hypothetical situation is an example of active agents influencing perception and emotions, which then are
associated with places and spaces, and are then leaked into affective atmospheres or ambiances.

THE APPLICATION OF EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHY TO PRIMARY SOURCES

In this section before I discuss the experiential trajectories and phenomenology of mollies, I want to explain my approach to applying emotional geography to an historical archive by looking at primary sources of sodomy court cases that examines space, experience, and language. I will discuss my findings by investigating 50 sodomy court cases solely in the Old Bailey Proceedings and what results my research has generated.

There are three parts of my method that I will discuss, first are the affective atmospheres of society, then the experiential trajectories of the mollies, thirdly, the textual agency and visual representation of mollies through print culture and how these parts contributed to social affective atmospheres.

The first part of my method for phenomenology, is tracking the experience of mollies as they travelled through spaces of eighteenth-century London. I am examining what I call, “emotional pivotal locations” that mollies would have experienced. 

*Emotional pivotal locations* means the most emotionally impacting points in their experiential trajectories that would have shifted their subjectivities from one emotional state to another. This holds significance because it exemplifies space containing emotion that signifies a relationship between space and emotion creating affective atmospheres. And it also holds significance in terms of seeing space as the “active agent” for these particular instances. Applying that concept to their real world spaces in London such as where mollies frequently socialized, sexually engaged, were apprehended, and where they were pilloried, allows us to see emotions that were associated with spaces and not just other subjects and objects.
Then, I am categorizing and associating those emotional pivotal locations with "emotional indicators", meaning I suggest that a particular feeling was felt in particular instances. I find evidence of this in the Old Bailey Proceedings, which are the published English criminal court cases that serve as beneficial text to perceive the molly community.

To carry out my method of mapping feelings and experiential trajectories of the mollies, I utilized Locating London’s Past website. This website allowed me to map out locations of molly crimes looking at the digitized criminal court cases in the Old Bailey Proceedings and place them onto John Rocque’s 1746 map of eighteenth-century London.

I examined 50 sodomy court cases from the years 1694-1779, and created a data sheet that labeled names of the accused sodomites, dates, regions of where mollies were apprehended, streets and places they experienced, diction that was used in the court cases describing the “sodomites” or “mollies”, punishment, and the “emotional indicators” that they would have felt in particular spaces. This data sheet allowed me to compose statistical analyses of frequented regions where mollies interacted and socialized as well as examine repetitive diction patterns and non-patterns of words, which I will discuss my results in proceeding sections.

PHENOMENOLOGY OF MOLLIES

These affective atmospheres of frequented molly spaces, or what I call “hotspots” represented a sense of belonging, familiarity, and social intimacy. Out of the 50 sodomy court cases that I examined, the “hotspots” of the mollies resided in regions of Holborn/Moorfields, Covent Garden, Chancery, Strand/Fleet Street, Whitechapel, London Bridge, Pall Mall, Cheapside, East Smithfield, Cross Keys, and Piccadilly. According to my statistical analyses the regions that were mostly in the court cases, meaning where the mollies were generally caught, was the Strand/Fleet Street area attaining 22.2% of the 50 court cases, Holborn/Moorfields accumulated 19.4%, and the third most discussed region
was the Pall Mall area obtaining 11.1% of discussion in the Old Bailey Proceedings. These hotspots of mollies exemplify the shared trajectories of mollies as they inhabited shared-interest spaces and engaged in shared-interest practices for sexual engagement. By sodomites frequenting specific spaces several times exemplifies the sense of belonging in an affective atmospheric aspect.

The examination of hotspots of sodomite activity is important because it displays not only collective behavior and senses of familiar atmospheres, but shows a shared experience of mollies in London’s space. Looking at experience and frequented crossed-paths of mollies, allows identity to be tacked on from experience to space and place. The examination of hotspots presents itself as an extension of the already mentioned relationships between space and feeling.

Now I want to discuss phenomenology of mollies through an emotional geographic lens examining specific sodomite experience taken from a narrative in a court case of the Old Bailey Proceedings. To track the experience of the molly through London’s space and calculate the emotive atmospheres that were present, I must look for vital spaces and locations that would have changed the molly’s feelings in their experiential trajectories and the relationship between emotion and space. These vital locations that shift molly affect are what I call “emotional pivotal locations”. The trajectories I examine range from the feeling of comfort as in mollies in molly houses or the location as to where the mollies are engaging in sexual activity. I then look at sentiments of surprise, fear, and anxiety when the mollies are confronted and caught, and lastly to the sentiment of public humiliation in pillories. For example, following the experiences of the 1761 sodomy case of William Bailey and Robert Stimpson begin in the location and atmosphere of comfort and desire in the dark alley of Ball Alley. As a man of Giles Cooper, a butcher, was walking towards his house near Cross-Keys Inn, he enters through Ball Alley to shorten time. He states that he saw two men standing in the
alley motionless and he has seen several men frequenting the alley at night, though does not know why. Thus, out of frustration, he grabs one by the neck and asks what their business is in a dark alley, he obtains no response, lets go and enters his home. He then hears the two men whisper outside, and grows even more suspicious, ordering his servant to follow him outside. The butcher and his servant end up catching the two men in the middle of the act in Cross-Keys Inn. Cooper and his servant pounced on the two men restraining them as Bailey and Stimpson made no attempts to escape. Instead, Cooper stated they were “begging and praying” to be let go for “it would be the ruin of them” which suggest signs of fear. After they were criminally examined, the verdict resulted in Bailey pleading guilty having to pay a fine, and was sentenced to the pillory on Bishopsgate, and six months of imprisonment at Newgate. 9 These locations where emotions likely shifted, such as Cross-Keys Inn, are associated with comfort, surprise and fear, and ultimately result in humiliation taking us to the next emotional pivotal location, the pillory. This court case is an example of the various subjectivities the mollies might have felt as well as exemplify the delicacy and the malleability of atmospheres. This is important due to the association with spaces in experience as well as the active agents that are constantly changing the atmosphere.

EXPLANATION OF ASSOCIATING FEELINGS TO SPACES

For this section, I intend to discuss in a brief sense, why and how I can argue that spaces were associated with feelings of the molly phenomenology. I will discuss the central shifts in affect that the mollies, Bailey and Stimpson experienced. It wasn’t unusual for mollies to be caught engaging in sexual activity in the streets in places such


as churchyards, alleys, and bridges. Scholars have suggested that due to the mollies or sodomites' lower-class positions in society, they had no other option than to participate in sodomy acts outside or in molly houses due to the absence of privacy that the aristocratic classes exercised. Though, it has been argued during this time that pornographic illustrations were composed of situations emphasizing feelings of risky behavior creating allure to concepts of being walked in on as sexual actions were taking place. This genre of being surprised or walked in on caused a change in erotic culture placing sex on comfort and excitement.\textsuperscript{10} The places that were in these pornographic illustrations would closely resemble those where mollies were captured—the outside. This pornographic genre may have influenced mollies actions of engaging in sexual activity in the exterior—strengthening the sense of familiarity with their frequented spaces.

In reality, when the mollies were caught, surprise might have been felt following closely fear, anxiety, and perhaps shame. Since sodomy was seen as equivalent in the criminal courts as murder, it was perceived as one of the worst possible crimes to have committed. Having knowledge of this, Bailey and Stimpson “begging and praying” for their lives and not to be “ruined forever” exemplifies fear and anxiety of their potential future and their future social identifications as forever sodomites if they were sentenced to the pillory.

The next experiential phase the mollies would have experienced was either acquittance due to lack of evidence, execution, imprisonment, or were sent to the pillory. The pillory was a designated space in the public sphere that harvested public humiliation and had been perceived as a symbol in space for fear.\textsuperscript{11} This is an example of space containing emotion; the pillory is the site of fear. In the pillory, the convict would stand on a platform in the middle of the street, and cement his new identification as a sodomite,

\textsuperscript{10} Karen Harvey, “Gender, Space, and Modernity in Eighteenth Century England”, 166.
as passersby would throw produce, rotten eggs, offal, dead animals, excrement, stones, mud, and yell profanities.¹²

I argue that in the pillory, mollies would have felt anxiety, fear, and mostly humiliation. There are cases that reflect this consisting of Isaac Broderick, a convict accused of attempted sodomy was claimed to have been permanently injured after his pillory experience, as another convict who kept a molly house attempted to bribe his way out of having to experience the pillory.¹³ These examples are emotive representations of the negative, oppressive atmospheres that were present around the pillory that which the audience participated in, in response to the agent of print culture that influenced these attitudes because of text.

INFLUENCE OF TEXT:

In this section I would like to examine diction that society used in then key examples of contemporary print culture consisting of court cases and street ballads. I argue in this case, these forms of media acted as the “active agents” that shaped the negative emotive atmospheres and attitudes in society. I propose a method particularly for demonstrating emotional geography that consisted of data-mining through primary sources of eighteenth-century sodomy court cases and street ballads. I composed data sheets and statistical analyses of the diction and etymologies of the words associated with the oppressed demographic. I looked at text or language as an object, meaning text holding the same principles objects do. Objects can influence affect and are temporal, thus can text. Language can evoke emotion, and though it can be intangible as it is spoken, when it is written, it becomes a material and thus temporal as well.

In this section I want to explain my second part of my methodology examining text and language. I created a datasheet that consisted of 50 sodomy court cases from the

Old Bailey Proceedings spanning the long eighteenth century. The Old Bailey Proceedings were published court cases that covered felonies such as murder, theft, and sodomy. The Old Bailey Proceedings weren’t used solely for the court audience and authorities, but it was published, cheaply sold, and circulated among society allowing it to be possible for non-authorities to access. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Old Bailey Proceedings evolved and were received by a general audience who read them for entertainment, moral guidance, and news. As this was a primary periodical among society the content and language within the Proceedings were vital for the readers.

To discuss the significance and influence that text had as an active agent in space that contributed to the negative emotive atmospheres in society, I examine diction and semantics theoretically. I argue that language can evoke the feeling of the readers and that diction preserves the words’ historical uses and carries a constant sentimental lineage from its beginning. Every time one uses or reads a word, the then-present context is attached to the word creating another shell of meaning and context, which is then tacked onto the word and its history of meaning and usage. This contributes to a part of my methodology, which is looking at how diction in the Old Bailey Proceedings created atmospheres by looking at etymologies and their meanings and how they circulated throughout society.

I examined the diction in court cases and recorded 241 words that were negatively directed towards the mollies and sodomites. Out of 241 words, only 31 were repeated more than once. With having only 31 words repeated more than once, and having 210 words occurring once, suggests a lack of legal phrasing pertaining to the mollies and exemplifying an unfiltered speech containing emotional attachment with every word.

15 http://www.londonlives.org/static/OBP.jsp
In my statistical analysis, using Predictive Analytics Software, I conducted a data sheet consisting of negative words towards the mollies out of 50 court cases. The words most frequently used include “wicked”, “unnatural”, “sin”, “indecent”, “detestable”, and “vile” to name a few. For the purpose of discussion, I want to consider the etymology and historic sentiment of one word, “wicked”. In the Oxford Dictionary, “wicked,” means “bad moral in character”, a term normally utilized to the highest degree of immorality. By 1535, “wicked” was associated with the men of Sodom thus establishing a two-hundred-year relationship between “wicked” and the town of Sodom creating an implicit re-intertextual interpretation onto the word. Meaning, this original association of wicked and Sodom from a biblical text, is then reiterated and reinstated within another text of the Old Bailey. The sentiments that originated with the wicked and Sodom association are exact however, now with a new meaning, a new identification—the molly. This exemplifies text as object as it evolves meaning and context and is then contributing to the negative atmospheres of affect.

These textual phenomena of sentimental historical etymologies used and practiced in the Old Bailey were also practiced in street ballads. The two media circulated and was read repetitively by society shaping affective atmospheres and attitudes towards mollies, making the text in print culture the active agent influencing the atmosphere. For example, a street ballad created in 1760 entitled “Plain Reasons for the Growth of Sodomy in England” has a section stating “For leaving Women fine and gay/ To make a monstrous Sort of Play/ With wicked Men/ Coiting when / More Brutal then/ Than savage beast”. This ballad contains 4 words that were utilized in my text data sheet - “monstrous”, “wicked”, “brutal” and “beast”. They constitute an example of the Old Bailey Proceedings’ repetitive tactic of using specific words that influenced its readers and in result, readers “felt” these words, associated them with the contemporary issue of sodomites, and applied, reiterated, and reinstated those words to negative affects. Print

culture and text circulated throughout the social environments actively influencing the
general population and constructed negative and oppressive emotive atmospheres
towards the molly community. Because of text and its movement through space as it was
distributed in coffeehouses and taverns and was read by the general population, indicates
a collective affective atmosphere towards mollies. Text and diction played as the active
agent in space and influenced social atmospheres.

As text was shaping negative attitudes through the Old Bailey, text also was
shaping identity and characteristics of identity. Comparing the societal perception on
"sodomites" or mollies from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century differs
dramatically regarding criminal identity and more importantly, an identity of the
subculture. In the seventeenth century, men whom were accused of sodomy would be
placed within an ambiguous criminal category referred to as "otherness and subversion"
rather than being characterized by having sexual relations with other men regarding
emotional matters. They were classified in the same category as Jesuits, Spanish spies,
and werewolves. Because of this generality of being placed within other criminal
identities, the mollies lacked their own identity and society lacked the vocabulary to grant
them an identity. However, this changed in the eighteenth century through the rise of
print culture regarding periodicals and newspapers.

New layers of meanings tacked onto words that circulated through society were
also prevalent in the identifications of the same-sex demographic. The etymology of
"molly" was first synonymous with female prostitutes however, when the molly
community emerged within the public sphere, the term then transferred to the
"effeminate" male demographic. Due to the shift of identification, the prostitutes of

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17 Paul Hammond, "Friends or Lovers? Sensitivity to Homosexual Implications in
Adaptations of Shakespeare, 640-1701" in *Texts and Cultural Change in Early Modern
England*, eds. Cedric C. Brown and Arthur F. Marcotti (New York: St. Martin's Press,
Inc., 1997), 226.
18 Randolph Trumbach *Invention of Pornography*, 256.
eighteenth-century London were then exalted onto a higher status within society, as the new “molly” dwelled in the lowest social class. So, as social groups move through this word of “molly” starting from female prostitutes to men of same-sex relations, the meaning and the social perception of that word remain consistent.

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERES AND SUBJECTIVITIES OF MOLLIES AND SOCIETY IN PRINT CULTURE

The last section of this thesis inquires about the visual representation of the mollies in early eighteenth-century print culture. I examine the Women-Hater’s Lamentation, a satirical broadside printed in 1707, which consists of an illustration with a poem of satire. The poem alludes to a realistic account about three mollies who killed themselves while they were waiting trial in prison—two hung themselves as the other took a knife to his throat. The poem mocks this occurrence and is stated to be sung with a tune of a catchy song of “Ye Pretty Sailors all” to add satire as well as play on words with the title and the content, as mollies were often called “pretty”.

The broadside has three different scenes that span the top of the page (fig 1). The first scene is an illustration of a molly who is hanging from a rope, as another molly is lying dead on the floor with a knife in his hand. The second scene is an illustration of two mollies affectionately embracing in a secluded room. The third scene depicts a molly who has hanged himself as a disapproving woman stands on a chair to cut the rope from the molly’s throat. A commonality within all of these scenes is that all possess an overwhelming sense of emotion—whether sentiments of desire and familiarity with the molly embrace, or shame and guilt with suicide.

These emotions find themselves manifested with other aspects of the sodomites in London’s space. Emotions like desire and familiarity have already been discussed in terms of molly phenomenology and experiential trajectories through London. Expressing
sentiments of familiarity and comfort in shared-interest spaces such as molly houses or cruising grounds. And guilt and shame have too been discussed regarding pillories, the space of fear and shame, as well as the affective atmospheres that were present around these cultural landmarks.

Emotion can also be found in the illustration of the figures in the prints regarding the visual representation of the subjectivities of the oppressed mollies and the aggressive society. For instance in the street ballad, due to lack of realistic renditions of figures, eyebrows and mouths are the purest indicators of emotion in the illustration. Particularly for the third scene of the woman cutting the rope to release the molly, her eyebrows are construed in an exaggerated scorn and her mouth is made of a straight dash as if her lips are pursed (fig 2). The molly who hanged himself has his eyes open with a seemingly innocent furrowed expression with a slight frown for his mouth. This interaction is a representation of society towards sodomites in eighteenth-century England. Through facial expressions alone it serves as a representation of the then contemporary attitudes and atmospheres in eighteenth-century British society towards sodomites.

The woman is the only figure in the street ballad who is not a molly, meaning she is the only figure of general society. Her aggravated and disapproving facial expression serves as an indicator of the viewer and mainstream society. Her scorn represents the rejection of sodomizing and correlates with the morals of the Christian people. It also corresponds with the disgust the general public felt and expressed through text in court cases as well as the satirical poem that is positioned below the illustrations.

These negative attitudes expressed in various aspects of print culture including text and illustration were both perceived in the same settings and manners—meaning they both circulated through several coffeehouses, taverns, and the general publics’ hands. The illustrations of the mollies make it easier for even the most illiterate of the social classes to perceive and most likely laugh and revel in the depiction of the mollies.
CONCLUSION:

To conclude my undergraduate thesis, I have found correlations and evidence of negative attitudes of society constructed through intentional uses of diction in the Old Bailey as well as broadsides. I have reinterpreted historical spaces and affect of molly phenomenology by applying a method that I developed from contemporary scholarship in the field of emotional geography. I have attempted to map emotions and experiences as well as calculate and determine the invisible but felt constructions of affective atmospheres and how they interact and dwell in eighteenth-century society.

Aspects of this research still need to be further detected, such as the influence that print culture had on society and etymologies of diction used in court cases and street ballads. Also, I intend to examine newspapers and their diction and how that influenced atmospheres as well. I intend to reinterpret social spaces and shared-interest spaces of mollies and society, regarding spaces becoming active agents for affective atmospheres.

This research has grown tremendously in the last year. I came upon this research from an Eighteenth-Century Topics in art history honors class in the spring of 2011 and completed a semester research paper about the sociological aspects of the mollies. I attempted to see a culture through cartography; however, I had not fully developed a way to perceive that original question. In approaching this thesis, still, my main concern was that question—could one ‘see’ a culture through cartography and what might it look like? In my research I learned about the field of emotional geography and realized its theories and methodologies provided what I was missing. Space, invisible space, emotion, self, and how these things interrelate with culture. Through this research process, I have learned and become accustomed to working with and between the primary and secondary sources as well as the methodologies of different fields such as cultural geography, philosophy, material culture, and social history. I wouldn’t have been able to complete this research without the active help and mentorships of my mentor professors Dr.
Jennifer Way and Dr. Denise Baxter, for they have allowed me to present aspects of this thesis nationally and internationally and have given me invaluable feedback to progress my current and future research endeavors. I thank them immensely.
A New Copy of Verses on the Fatal End of Mr. Grant, a Woollen-Draper, and two others that Cut their Throats or Hang'd themselves in the Counter; with the Discovery of near Hundred more that are Accused for unnatural Disposing the Fair Sex, and Intriguing with one another.

To the Tune of, Ye pretty Sailer all.

(Figure 1) Women-Hater's Lamentation, 1707, Courtesy of Guild-Hall Library
(Figure 2) Close up of third scene of woman cutting molly down from rope, Women-Hater's Lamentation, 1707, Courtesy of Guild-Hall Library
BIBLIOGRAPHY


