

**The Indissoluble Knot ?**  
**Public and Private Representations**  
**of**  
**Men and Marriage**  
**1770-1830**

Submitted by Michael John Fielding to the University of Exeter  
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## Abstract

Men have been largely absent from the literature of eighteenth-century matrimony, their role and performance being inferred from examination of female experience. The aim of this thesis is to remedy that omission by exploring two representational forms: the public - contained in fiction, advice literature, periodical, newspaper and adultery case reports; and the private, a range of unpublished correspondence and diaries, almost all of which are being cited for the first time. Together, the two bodies of material reinforce the cultural history of developing affectivity which has been one of the principal trends of work within both history and criticism over the last 40 years. They focus attention on the domestic environment increasingly occupied by men, and the effect of this emphasis on perceptions of masculinity. In these respects they support the drive of historians such as Amanda Vickery and Karen Harvey to “write men back into a history from which they have been written out”. Critical reflections and the place of fiction and other literature as sources of social history comprise a second strand of the thesis. A third area of concentration will be the influence of public media on personal behaviour. Historical research into various aspects of contemporary culture – including domestic violence, prostitution, children’s upbringing – have explored *what* people did without exploring the rhetorical influences that might explain *why* people did things. Direct evidence of reading practices and therefore of these effects is limited but nonetheless important.

With its focus on marriage and after an Introduction that sets out some of the key issues, the thesis is divided into two parts: Before Marriage and After Marriage. Within each part there is further division into chapters devoted respectively to considerations of relations between men and women to be found in the public prints and those available through correspondence and diaries archived in a number of local Record Offices.

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*This thesis is dedicated to Keith Williams (1947-2011) whose untimely death robbed me of a good friend, and the world of a gifted family historian.*

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## *Abbreviations*

### *Newspapers and Periodicals Consulted and Abbreviations where Used*

The Athenaeum

The Belfast Monthly Magazine

Cabinet

Edinburgh Weekly Magazine

The Edinburgh magazine, or literary miscellany

The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle

The Lady's Monthly Museum.

The Literary Journal

The Lounger

The Matrimonial Magazine

The Matrimonial Preceptor

The Monthly Panorama

New Universal Magazine

The Oxford Magazine

Sentimental Magazine

The Scourge, or, Literary, Theatrical, and Miscellaneous Magazine.

Town & Country Magazine

Universal Magazine

The Universal Repository

Walker's Hibernian Magazine

The Weekly Entertainer

*Husband and wife are always together and share the same society. It is the rarest thing to meet the one without the other. The very richest people do not keep more than four or six carriage horses, since they pay all their visits together. It would be more ridiculous to do otherwise in England than to go everywhere with your wife in Paris. They always give the appearance of perfect harmony, and the wife in particular has an air of contentment which always gives me pleasure.<sup>1</sup>*

## *Introduction*

In 1788 Joseph Strutt, Derbyshire manufacturer's younger son and future philanthropist, wrote to his bride-to-be, Isabella Douglas:

I walked with Mrs Bateman by chance a week ago, she told me you was coming to her House for a few days whilst the Militia were here. I own I was surprized & concerned at it - she is far from a desirable companion for a young Woman like you. The impressions you receive now will last as long as you live – it is your duty & will be your ultimate happiness, to guard against receiving any that are bad [...]<sup>2</sup>

Less than ten years later, Edgar Mandlebert, stuffy and solicitous proto-lover of Fanny Burney's eponymous heroine *Camilla* warns against her friendship with a married woman who has rapidly become the centre of male attention during the fashionable season at Tunbridge Wells:

Ah my dear Miss Camilla [...] drop, or at least suspend an intercourse too hazardous to be indulged with propriety! See what she may be sometime hence, ere you contract further intimacy. At present, unexperienced and unsuspecting, her dangers may be yours. You are too young for such a risk.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of the two reproaches lies in their tonal similarity. Both men are demonstrating patriarchal authority in the guise of romantic concern. They will continue to give advice, admonition, and occasional apology for their intrusion throughout both the novel and the correspondence. They exemplify what Eleanor Wikborg has called the 'Lover as Mentor', using their superior experience of the world to guide the women they confess to love, and thereby fulfil her perceived psychological need for "The Lover as Father Figure".<sup>4</sup> It also satisfies their own desire for authority and hierarchically gendered power relations within the pre-marital setting. This behaviour gives some intimation of what might happen in their marriages, but, while we can only guess at the future of Mandlebert and Camilla, we have ample evidence to show that Strutt and Isabella's subsequent marriage followed the pattern set in their pre-marital correspondence.

These excerpts illustrate two important features of this thesis: first, it is focused on men – a new departure for academic discussion of eighteenth-century marriage; second, it is about different representational forms – including published and previously unexamined material - and what they reveal about the male matrimonial experience and reactions to it. Paradoxically, Mandelbert and Strutt also demonstrate attitudes to romantic relations which I shall argue were becoming less prevalent at this period than previously. Whereas, they display no reservations about their right to direct and instruct, the public and private material on which this thesis is based reveals a more restrained version of patriarchal authority. Other literary and historic examples in the thesis represent different characterisations of the lover, husband or father. But substantiating direct or causal correspondence between these requires evidence of discursive influence on personal behaviour that is not available in the private or unpublished material. And yet questions remain about why these resemblances exist: must, for instance, a private correspondent read the public material to be influenced by it or is he succumbing to a pervasive zeitgeist? Does, alternatively, the public material reflect discursive normativity among the increasingly letter-writing populace? Susan Whyman concludes that by the end of the eighteenth century “epistolary voices had become integral parts of daily discourse”..<sup>5</sup> As essential elements of popular culture, love and marriage have the power to endorse the imbrication of letter writing, literature and culture, and, as one of its objectives, this thesis seeks to corroborate the connection.

Married men have been almost entirely neglected by cultural historians of the eighteenth-century except by some Early Modern Scholars, although there are now signs – particularly in current work by Karen Harvey and Amanda Vickery – that the balance may be shifting. Vickery published her investigation of the Georgian home in 2009<sup>6</sup> and Harvey is publishing her cultural history of men and the house later this year. This “reconstructs men’s experiences of the house, examining the authority that accrued to mundane and everyday household practices and employing men’s own concepts to understand what men thought and felt about their domestic lives”.<sup>7</sup> My project, which started before either book was available or publicised, will contribute to this growing interest in domestic man.

Most scholarship has concentrated on women and their subordination within a patriarchal culture.<sup>8</sup> In this model, marriage constitutes a sexual exchange in which the father transfers the property rights embodied in his daughter to the husband in return for money, status or the latter’s expressed willingness to support her practically,



emotionally and socially. For his part, the husband is promised legitimised sexual relations; probable continuance of his patrilineal inheritance; gratification of his domestic needs; and, in many cases, funding for his business or lifestyle.<sup>9</sup> In this model - derived initially from the wealthy and aristocratic but found, with minor variations, at most levels of the class structure<sup>10</sup> - women became “pawns in the struggle for estate accumulation”.<sup>11</sup> Although ameliorated by some scholarly acceptance of an overlay of affectivity that generated psychological and sentimental as well as social, economic or political motivations for marriage, the submissive female paradigm remains. Privileging the subordinated woman presupposes the presence of a subordinating man, and while he is nowhere explicated, he remains the ‘deus ex machina’ in the scholarly narrative of eighteenth-century marriage, resulting in over-simplified characterisation of the supplicant lover who becomes an authoritarian husband and father.

This model may also prioritise perceived differentiation between the ‘powerful dichotomy’ of public and private realms that allegedly emerged in the eighteenth-century”<sup>12</sup> and which constrains male and female marital roles.<sup>13</sup> Lawrence Klein identified four different ascriptions of ‘public’ but concluded: “What people in the eighteenth century most often meant by ‘public’ was sociable as opposed to solitary (which was ‘private’)”.<sup>14</sup> Klein disputed the conventional binary opposition of men-public/women-private. Other historians have also challenged the validity of a ‘separate spheres’ model. Amanda Vickery described ‘public and private’, ‘separate spheres’ and ‘domesticity’ [as] key words and phrases of academic feminism but suggests that it is misleading to consider women as increasingly confined to privacy and domesticity in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.<sup>15</sup> Linda Colley argued that: “separate sexual spheres were being increasingly prescribed in theory, yet increasingly broken through in practice”.<sup>16</sup> My examination of this conceptual and practical paradox will facilitate a more rounded impression of marriage as an institution and “the intermediate terrain between the political and the private spheres that they call society”.<sup>17</sup>

The cultural climate within which men experienced marriage materialised at two levels: lovers, wives and families brought their personal and psychological expectations to the exchange; and marriage as an institution occupied a political and social position of such importance that writers in various media, as well as politicians, clergymen and polemicists of disparate persuasions expounded lengthily on the way in which participants might conduct their marriages in their own and society’s interest. By

examining archived but previously un-cited collections of letters and diaries and a range of published materials, I aim to reveal the way different types of eighteenth-century writers - personal and professional - gave meaning to men's experience of the different stages and elements of marriage.<sup>18</sup> These written representations of the state of marriage both reflected and influenced a social phenomenon in the process of continuous transformation. By investigating the culture within which individual men were required to perform their marital roles, I shall propose some adjustments to the prevailing historiography of marriage.

Modern scholarship has extensively explored the way roles such as wife, mother and child were fashioned<sup>19</sup> through discourse.<sup>20</sup> But only Anthony Fletcher<sup>21</sup> has done anything similar for husbands or fathers. One aim of this study is to investigate the actions and processes promoted by the discursive environment within which men courted, married, became fathers, widowers, and sometimes went through the whole process for a second or third time.<sup>22</sup> There are inevitable similarities and connections with work on women's roles, but also contradictions. Marriage is not a single or stable experience and, both between marriages and within individual marriages, there are huge disparities of expectation, involvement and meaning. The most obvious is between men and women, but class, wealth, education, occupation, age and psychological make-up all contribute to this complexity. Race is another contributory category, but will not be considered in this study which, because of its accessibility, addresses only material generated by white Britons.

### ***Representations of men's experience***

This thesis takes as its field of enquiry men's experiences of marriage in the period 1770-1830, which we can attempt to understand through various forms of representation. The thesis investigates a range of diverse material: published material (conduct literature, novels, court records) which reveal a great deal about standards of conduct expected of men in courtship and marriage; and unpublished material (letters and diaries), which give us insights into how a number of men during the period understood themselves in these roles. I scrutinise representations of men's marital influences, rather than their detailed history, and propose a model in which marriage, while customarily and legally granting the man a high degree of sovereignty and freedom, also imposed on him at each stage of the experience a matrix of cultural obligations and responsibilities from which it is possible to hypothesise a version of

marital conduct that differs in significant ways from those previously assumed. The hope here is to illuminate, in relation to the issue of men and marriage, what John Tosh has called ‘the terms on which individual men internalized the discourse’ of masculinity. These terms, as he says, have been the subject of much less research than the public discourses of gender, and understandably so, as subjective experiences in history are hard to investigate.<sup>23</sup> How can we tell to what extent a private letter reveals the subjectivity of its writer? What can the writings of a small sample of men tell us about men at large? The thesis therefore proceeds cautiously in drawing conclusions about men’s feelings, but it does contend that its sample of writing from a selection of men of the ‘middling sort’ in 1770-1830 reveals that they express a range of responses to public ideals of masculine conduct in the matter of marriage. Considering marriage from this perspective does not deny previous interpretations, but does create space for a more nuanced account in which an emphasis on partnership and domesticity generates at least the appearance of greater balance in the distribution of power within marriage. There are obvious parallels with aspects of Lawrence Stone’s ‘companionate marriage’ paradigm, but limitations of that model will be carefully explored.

### *Concepts of masculinity and manhood*

Discussions of eighteenth-century masculinity - ‘the quality or condition of being masculine’<sup>24</sup> – have taken little account of either the difference marriage makes to an individual man’s social standing or how behaviour in marriage with its responsibilities beyond the self contributes to, or is constrained by, conceptions of manliness. According to Elizabeth Foyster, marriage ‘conferred’ manhood which then had to be ‘continually proved and asserted’ mainly through control of female sexuality.<sup>25</sup> Lack of wider discussion resulted in part from a distracting concentration in early gender studies on establishing a hegemonic masculinity that could describe all acceptable behaviours.<sup>26</sup> In later work, Connell and others revised this conception to recognise that “masculinities are, in a word, historical” and “come into existence at particular times and places and are always subject to change”.<sup>27</sup> As Harvey and Shepard illustrate, quoting John Tosh, hegemonic masculinity demarcates “the masculine norms and practices which are most valued by the politically dominant class and which help to maintain its authority rather than functioning as a blanket term to refer to the gender norms to which most men subscribe”.<sup>28</sup> To focus, therefore, on the generalised man or, as some authors do, men at war or business, men duelling or men in society, without

acknowledging different features of the life cycle – especially marriage - is an obvious limitation of this type of scholarship.<sup>29</sup> Responsibility for a wife or children inevitably transforms a husband's relation to codes of behaviour assigned to his singular self. By exploring a range of sources relating to men's experience of marriage, this thesis will expand the definition and show that the adoption of more varied qualities to meet the demands of a heterogeneous vision of marriage is not an abandonment of manliness but an illustration of the "alternative masculinities" that have recently interested some scholars.<sup>30</sup>

The thesis enquires both into the cultural ideals surrounding men's conduct in marriage and into the way men responded to these pressures. It is concerned with the social construction of masculinity in courtship and marriage and with the thoughts and feelings this social construction prompted in men. Representations of men and marriage and men's response to them were tightly bound up in this period with prevailing constructs of masculinity and these constructs themselves have been the subject of much historical discussion since the 1980s. The main elements of these discussions include the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity', the form(s) of masculinity that command most cultural authority in a given time and place. This concept allows masculinity to be considered subject to change, opening up the idea that 'older forms of masculinity might be displaced by new ones'<sup>31</sup>. Also important is the work of Davidoff and Hall<sup>32</sup>, and Connell, who have found changes in masculinity in the eighteenth century related to the transition from landed to commercial society – from male sociability to domesticity, and from sexual licence to respectability. Lawrence Stone has argued for the growth of gentler relations between the sexes, and the rise of 'companionate marriage', during the eighteenth century<sup>33</sup>. Thomas Laqueur's idea of a move from a 'one-sex' to 'two-sex' medical model has been used to suggest a new understanding in the eighteenth century of women as sexually passive, entailing a corresponding understanding of men as holding a monopoly on sexual aggression<sup>34</sup>. Michele Cohen has argued that the 1750—1830 period saw a shift in gentlemanly ideals for politeness, with its perceived dangers of effeminacy, towards chivalry, which combined positive valuation of women with greater emphasis on martial virtues for men<sup>35</sup>. However, John Tosh has queried this historiographical emphasis on change, arguing that 1750—1830 was an era of strong continuity in masculine ideals – especially the values of male authority in the home and men's sexual mastery.<sup>36</sup>

The scope of the thesis is not restricted to the fields of masculinity, or even gender studies, but crosses the boundaries of several academic disciplines including literary, gender, family and cultural studies. It includes references to medical opinions and practices, particularly in the fields of sexual relations and procreation and the controversy over ‘man-midwives’. Jacqueline Pearson maintains that, “writing cultural history requires juggling large numbers of balls at once”<sup>37</sup> and, in this spirit, I shall make forays into the debates over the changing nature of patriarchy, private and public spheres, the constitution of masculinity and femininity, the effects of discourse on behaviour and the place of epistolary skills in developing selfhood, and all within the framework of trying to understand how the experience of the male majority who entered matrimony at some stage of their lives was represented in print media and private discourse.

### *Combining the fictional and the historical*

The thesis explores fictional texts, historical documents such as court trials, and historical unpublished letters. Fiction holds an important part in the history of representation, and while it needs to be read carefully with due attention to the way it is shaped by generic convention, it offers valuable insights into ideals of marriage and sexual conduct in the period. Only a small number of novels depict the conduct of a marriage; most leave the main protagonists at the altar. But married minor characters can be illuminating. Because of this, and its importance both to contemporary readers and modern scholars of marriage, I engage extensively with fiction. I used a number of selection criteria - a mixture of male and female writers; authors with either conservative or radical political affiliations; ‘canonical’ and anonymous texts including examples from the increasingly popular circulating libraries;<sup>38</sup> varied fictional styles – for example epistolary and third person narrative; and examples from significant periods of the overall time frame. This has, inevitably, produced a larger number and broader spread of texts than might be expected. Breadth, however, is reinforced by analysis of implications and reflections on meaning. In selecting novels, I have aimed for breadth across chronology, authorship and styles and therefore use them as exemplary sources rather than the focus of critical analysis.

Women authors include Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Inchbald, Amelia Opie, Mary Robinson, Frances Sheridan, Charlotte Smith, Helen Maria Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft. Robert Bage, Henry Fielding, Thomas

Holcroft, Samuel Richardson and Tobias Smollett make up the male authors. Although Richardson's and Fielding's novels were originally published in the middle of the eighteenth century, they continued to be popular during the period and contain many observations on marriage that might be considered both prescient and influential. Circulating library novels are predominantly anonymous although often the author's gender is discernible.

The selection of conduct material is less controversial because, in the main, it focuses on examples and direct commentary on issues surrounding marriage, and in these the political and moral tendencies of the authors are manifest in the text.<sup>39</sup> Courtship novels tended to focus on women's experiences and many were written by women; however, they are still useful for investigating ideals of masculinity in marriage – indeed in one way they have an especial use because they show a development in how masculine ideals are being constructed; not only by men, but by women who are considering what makes a good suitor or husband from a woman's point of view. Masculinity studies has looked at how masculinities are formed among male groups. The addition in this period of female influence in defining desirable male behaviour is significant and worth studying. Similarly, commentary in newspapers and periodicals generally reveals its ideological standpoint. Choice of news reports, however, is determined more by the relevance of their subject. The sheer volume of cases for breach of promise reported in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, for instance, suggests significant attitudinal ambivalence, particularly to seduction and the sexual status of women, and this is strongly underlined by their content. The “celebrity” status that newspapers accorded exponents of sexual aberration (ie adulteresses) reinforced these ideological ambiguities.<sup>40</sup> Adultery case reports, while superficially offering conventional condemnation of perceived immorality, have to be treated with caution because of the complex private and public rationales on which they are founded.

Of course, historical documents themselves are often influenced by literary representations. A case in point in this thesis is the ideal of sensibility, which was developed in literary culture and can be seen to have influenced the self-presentation of some of the letter writers in this study. John Tosh considers that eighteenth-century manliness was based on rationality and self-restraint. He acknowledges that the ideal of sensibility prevalent in the late eighteenth century complicates this model, but argues that we do not know whether this ideal extended beyond literary convention into social

behaviour.<sup>41</sup> Through the investigation of men's various expressions of sensibility, the thesis aims to illuminate an area of masculine subjectivity. By discussing personal letters of the period this thesis can investigate men's self-representations for evidence of both the model of rational self-restraint and the model of more emotionally expressive sensibility. The thesis includes some novels published before 1770 because they indicate early evidence of a shift towards seeing marriage as a central experience for men; and because they had enduring influence in the period 1770—1830, so having an effect on how marriage was conceptualized and on how it was imagined in later fiction.

### *The use of primary 'private' texts*

The private material is drawn from twenty collections of unpublished correspondence – totalling several hundred letters - and a similar number of diaries and journals, found in local record offices in different parts of the country. The letters and diaries are all unpublished (except those of Edmund Harrold) and held in local Record Offices around the country. With only minor exceptions the material is unique to this study. Most of the correspondents and diarists are of the “middling sort”, “an umbrella category to refer to the expanding but disparate range of people who occupied the spaces in society between the lower orders and the landed elites” and acquired economic, political and social predominance during the century.<sup>42</sup> These were the people most likely to retain the family documents which are now preserved in public archives. The private material in Chapters 2 and 4 is not claimed as representative of certain categories of people but simply as personal voices.<sup>43</sup>

Difficulties of interpretation arise from the one-sided or incomplete nature of the correspondence which can make the narrative difficult to follow; and the diaries are often recorded in such small spaces and terse language that the writer's feelings must be conjectured. But in combination, and as a result of the diversity of sources, this material is an important contribution to the central hypothesis that increasing cultural emphasis on domesticity and partnership produces an impression of eighteenth-century married men that destabilises the stereotype of distance and lack of engagement assumed in much of the literature about women's subordination.

### *Is there a tension between the published and the unpublished?*

The thesis is divided into different stages of the matrimonial relationship, each of these investigated through published and unpublished representation. The inclusion

of both published and unpublished sources allows the thesis to investigate the relation between the ideologies of men and marriage promulgated in the culture at large, in discourses such as court records, conduct books, and novels; and the responses of private individuals to those discourses. The relation between ideologies and practice can be illuminated by setting published discourses alongside private letters.

From the published material, we gain insights into how both men and women were encouraged to deal with a mutable situation; from the private, we can infer the extent to which those individuals either interpreted the discourse, or negotiated their way through a complex web of beliefs about what was right for them and for the society they inhabited. This was especially evident in sexual relations, where signs of erosion of the traditional “double standard” emerge in several parts of the study, including selective elasticity in the link between respectability and absolute female chastity.<sup>44</sup> Some emergent commitment to the value of male fidelity within marriage presupposes shifting attitudes to sexual morality.<sup>45</sup> In an age when individual happiness began to attain significance as a human value<sup>46</sup> it can be questioned whether sexual enjoyment and satisfaction remained an entirely one-sided expectation and, despite the commitment of some writers to the concept of female sexual passivity, this thesis will provide several examples of more positive and enthusiastic engagement to be found within both public and private material. This confirms Ellen Pollak’s “myth of passive womanhood”.<sup>47</sup> But developing beliefs about the nature of roles within marriage also encompassed the exercise of responsibility for children, the management of servants and some aspects of financial arrangements and in each of these we can see the growth of the importance of partnership.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Trends Identified by the Thesis***

In a study focused on a complex set of cultural and ideological variations, it was always unlikely that a single or grand narrative of the male marital experience and its representation would emerge. And so it has proved: the picture is much too subtle and complicated for that and is subject to a range of variables that, in the end, are more interesting than any single conclusion might have been. Nor does it support claims for a sudden or dramatic shift from, say, an authoritarian to companionate discourse, or that the shift towards affectivity and its concomitant, domesticity, followed an unvarying trajectory. A comment by Alan Sinfield (in another context) seems particularly apt here. It is not “necessary to assume an even development, whereby one model characterises



an epoch and is then superseded by another".<sup>49</sup> While I argue that many features of marriage changed significantly during the century, and that, by the end, married men had different expectations and experiences than their counterparts at the beginning, (particularly from the trend towards affection, esteem and reciprocal appreciation as both motives for and patterns of conduct within marriage) it was part of a continuing process. Ideology lagged behind practice but cultural representations both reflected and influenced the changing landscape. The published literature and the private material provide good evidence of the discernible trend towards matrimonial partnership and greater (although in no sense absolute) equality in relations between the participants.

The investigations tend to support the views of Davidoff and Hall that there was in broad terms an emphasis on the centrality of domestic life and experience to men in this period. Readings in the private correspondence indicate some support for Stone's much-disputed theory of 'companionate marriage'. The thesis argues that the emphasis on domesticity in this period led to at least the appearance of greater balance of power within marriage. While Tosh is right to say that the ideal of husband's household authority persisted, the evidence of the letters discussed in this thesis indicates that for some people at least, a more restrained version of this authority was developing as an ideal and perhaps a practice. Material in the adultery trials examined in the thesis indicates that Laqueur's medical model of a passive female sexuality was not uniformly characteristic of legal discourse of the period. Some of the private letters examined here indicate belief in a more equal distribution of active sexual feeling between men and women than Laqueur's model implies. Overall, the thesis hopes to show that there were indications of a gradual shift in attitudes to men and matrimony in which more equal partnerships between the sexes were being considered possible and desirable.

This study, consequently, challenges any assumption that patriarchal authority inevitably produced one model of gendered power relations in all marriages. Some authorities dispute whether this had been universal even in previous centuries, but, whatever the history, it is clear that in the second half of the eighteenth century male roles within marriage could be properly represented in a variety of fashions, on a spectrum from harsh or indifferent to subtle and attentive. Many examples - more obviously in the private material but visible sometimes in the public - can be found of family relations founded more on partnership than division. And yet, this re-configuration of masculine authority and responsibility was neither uniform nor

universally adopted. Discursive friction over both its nature and performance is present in both kinds of material considered here.

The choice of the period 1770-1830, on which most of the study is concentrated, recognises that the principles supporting marriage during this period continued – with some variation during the Victorian period<sup>50</sup> - until well into the twentieth century. These included principles such as individual marital choice, prevalence of love over interest, parents retaining only veto rights, and the entrenchment of what Lawrence Stone controversially called “companionate marriage”<sup>51</sup> and Randolph Trumbach the “egalitarian or domestic system of household relationships”<sup>52</sup> This period also coincides fairly closely with the marriage of George III and Queen Charlotte which is sometimes seen as a model of domestic harmony.<sup>53</sup>

### *Challenges*

The main challenges of pursuing this thesis arise from an approach which is neither entirely historical nor literary but combines the two in a cultural history of representational forms.<sup>54</sup> This meta-historical/critical methodology raises questions of both historical accuracy and critical interpretation. It does not purport to present a historically validated picture of “the male experience of marriage”, or to reflect precisely on either the ideological inferences of the literature or, in the case of fiction, the way exploration of these issues reveals developments in the novel’s history.<sup>55</sup> It does, however, deploy cultural history’s “exceptionally wide range of evidence”<sup>56</sup> and weaves through elements of all of them, with resulting methodological and interpretative opportunities and dilemmas. It uses historical documents which Peter Borsay teasingly suggests are only representations of reality, not reality itself. They represent one, or some, person’s perception of the way things are or of the way they wish to see them.<sup>57</sup> This is clearly true of individual documents but the use of multiple sources advances an impression of reality. Conversely, interpretative security about eighteenth-century perceptions is further challenged by the extensive twenty-first-century resonance of the subject and the need to recognise that, “the eighteenth century was in important ways not ‘a civilization like ours’ and the real historical and cultural differences should not be flattened out when we read texts from the period”.<sup>58</sup>

Blending of private and published material – Ruth Perry’s movement “between literature and history”<sup>59</sup> – presents two particular temptations: first to assume that the almost inevitable influence of print culture on private manners and moral interpretations can be traced in the letters and diaries; second that, because they are the products of a random sample of individuals, we can attribute more “truth” to them than to the variously motivated constructions of fiction, conduct literature, polemic or reportage. The danger in the former is of selecting material because it appears to fit this hypothesis; and of the latter that explanations ignore the effect of potential audience on even the most private of communications. A diarist may have no thoughts of publication, but still wish to record himself in particular ways which, in the absence of detailed biography, can only be elucidated from internal evidence. Similarly, the practice of sharing correspondence in a family - particularly love letters – means they must be construed as public, rather than wholly private documents with rhetorical audiences beyond the nominal recipient.

Another interpretive challenge inherent in a plan to examine fiction for evidence of contemporary attitudes to marriage and men’s experience of it, is that such revelations are inevitably mediated through the demands of plot, characterisation, artistic intention and commercial expedience. The “despotic father”, for instance may be more of a plot device than an image with significant historical reliability.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the “happy ending” of most courtship novels is more likely to reflect the idealising fantasies of its readership than existential reality. In James Raven’s phrase “print culture is part nursemaid and part chronicler”, of the many aspects of what Ian Watt called the “rising tide of individualism”.<sup>61</sup> Fiction and reality become difficult to disentangle although frequent polemical condemnations of the ‘undesirable’ consequences of the “mass of novels and romances which people of all ranks and ages do so greedily devour” might suggest that readers recognised their own lives in the fiction.<sup>62</sup>

### *Academic Context*

Until recently, the married man has been the invisible partner in the scholarship of eighteenth-century marriage. Most studies of marriage undertaken by critics and historians concentrated on the subordinate position of women. Basing their conclusions on the perceived legal and customary status of women,<sup>63</sup> and evidence from courts and elsewhere of domestic violence and male anger, historians characterised a norm of female repression in marriage resulting from the imperatives of chastity, sexual double

standards and the married woman's loss of identity and agency.<sup>64</sup> Critical readings of fiction and other material reinforced theories of patriarchal hegemony and female submission. Examination of gender and power relations in marriage must, therefore, incorporate this feminist thinking on sex and sexuality but recognise Toril Moi's unequivocal conclusion: "The principal objective of feminist criticism has always been political; it seeks to escape, not to perpetuate, patriarchal practices".<sup>65</sup> Armstrong particularised this contention:

Rather than read the qualities, possibilities and limitations that fiction assigns to women as a reflection, or effect, of their actual lack of economic and political authority, feminists influenced by post-structuralism read fiction as one, if not the major, cause of women's confinement to the household and forms of service associated with motherhood".<sup>66</sup>

One result of this political project to privilege the representation of domestic incarceration was to disregard contrary evidence – for instance courtship novels' concentration on 'getting married' leaves little room for post-marital depiction of the kind asserted. A second result was to infer authoritarian aspects of men's role in marriage that the concentration of masculinity studies on hegemonic patriarchal order and authority did nothing to question.<sup>67</sup> The married man was almost entirely missing from gender studies. Similarly, family studies while revealing extensive knowledge of many aspects of eighteenth-century family life has had little to say about married men. In 1999 Megan Doolittle argued that for many historians "Neither gender nor family has a presence in this construction of what matters about the past", and "Constructions of masculinity are much less often explored in their domestic settings, in terms of family, kin or household relationships".<sup>68</sup> There is little evidence of development in this area. In her study Naomi Tadmor suggests that "we .... know much about the different experiences of women and men in the past" but in the list of 23 studies on which she bases this conclusion none contain the word 'man' or 'men' in the title. Two include 'patriarchalism'; four 'gender'; but twelve, the word 'woman' or one of its variants. The rest are general histories with only one – Keith Thomas's *'be Double Standard* - having a specific concern with male experience.<sup>69</sup>

Three particular scholarly authors – Lawrence Stone, Anthony Fletcher and Ruth Perry – incorporate many of the key features of the debate around male and

female relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These include the degree of affectionate attachment expressed in marital relations; challenges to husbandly authority; men's involvement in domestic life; and the implications of these for constructions of masculinity. In his *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977), Stone established a foundation on which much subsequent family and gender history is based but which also proved controversial. His identification of three kinship and family patterns developed over 300 years and culminating in what he called the "Closed, Domesticated Nuclear Family" of the eighteenth-century, established an academic benchmark and a popular phrase to describe marital relations – "the companionate marriage" (or in Ruth Perry's critical phrase, "the privatised marriage").<sup>70</sup> In this model which Stone said was a "clear trend in the upper and lower levels of society", couples displayed more affection for each other and modified some of the formality of former times, including the mutual use of first names and terms of endearment.<sup>71</sup> The companionate marriage "demanded a reassessment of power relations between the sexes since it depended on a greater sense of equality and sharing".<sup>72</sup> Stone also suggested the introduction of "eroticism in marital relations as well as the extra-marital relations to which [...] it had been previously confined".<sup>73</sup>

Considering the power to choose a partner, he identified 'four basic options' and argued that the rise of 'affective individualism' necessitated the choice being made by children themselves "from a family of more or less equal financial and status position".<sup>74</sup> Of the 'possible motives' for marriage, physical attraction and 'romantic love as portrayed in fiction and on the stage' established affection as the chief incentive and thereby generated a 'radical shift' in parent-child relations.<sup>75</sup>

The limitation of Stone's thesis lies partly in his assumption of a sudden historical change – that previously unacknowledged affection became the social norm in the mid-eighteenth-century - and its universality, despite noting that "almost everyone agreed that both physical love and romantic desire were unsafe bases for enduring marriages".<sup>76</sup> Alan MacFarlane challenged Stone's conclusions because "his description of life in the Early Modern Period bears little resemblance to the society which is revealed to a number of us who have studied the period".<sup>77</sup> Other critics condemned his attitude to the poor: "He insists that the bourgeoisie were the first to marry for love and value their wives and children emotionally. And yet we know that the footloose poor were notorious for their lusty courting and

consensual unions”.<sup>78</sup> He was also criticised for his attitudes to women: “Stone's perspective is masculine and elitist, his treatment of women in all social categories perfunctory, and his characterization of such central matters as mating arrangements, romantic love, companionate marriage, parent-child attitudes, and sexuality open to question. His general sequence of change may, therefore, be unreliable”.<sup>79</sup> His conclusions were also heavily indebted to the observations of foreign visitors, including the Duc de Rochefoucauld whose sentimental view of English marital relations is quoted at the head of this chapter. The immediate popularity of Stone's thesis may also have benefited from catching the mood of 1970s attitudes to marriage that celebrated more open and equal relations. Despite these criticisms, “his overall conclusion retains wide currency”<sup>80</sup> and “his work continued to be used as a standard reference on the history of the family and marriage” despite the continuity school of historians emerging triumphant.<sup>81</sup> This work provides the inevitable backdrop to my attempt to define and explicate relations between men and women and fathers and children in the period, and to develop the concepts of affectivity and partnership which he initially introduced into the discourse.

Two works by Anthony Fletcher incorporate important implications for the thesis: *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (1995) and *Growing up in England: the Experience of Childhood 1600-1914* (2008). In the former he largely initiated the systematic study of patriarchy – “the institutionalised male dominance over women and children in the family and the subordination of women in society in general”.<sup>82</sup> His main thesis is that “Men's power in history has resided in their ability to transform patriarchy by replacing its ancient scriptural and medical basis with a new secular ideology of gender”.<sup>83</sup> His conclusions are based on a mixture of sources, including conduct literature, plays, and ballads. He argues that this material was “written by men [...] specifically to instruct women” and they “tell us how men wanted women to see the gender order, their place in it and themselves. They tell us what women heard, saw, read or were taught. But they tell us nothing about what they thought”.<sup>84</sup> In addition, Fletcher presents “nine case studies of well documented gentry marriage between the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Anne”.<sup>85</sup> Despite the prevalent cultural perception of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century women “possessing a powerful and potentially destructive sexuality which made them naturally lascivious, predatory and, most serious of all, once their desire was fully aroused, insatiable”,<sup>86</sup> Fletcher is struck by the “sheer quantity of anecdotal evidence that husbands responded positively to their

wives' emotional needs. There were some, of course, who were uncaring or insensitive”.

<sup>87</sup> This argument challenges Stone's claim for a dramatic shift in social and marital relations and reinforces claims for a more continuous historiography. However, Fletcher does not claim that his case studies have 'any kind of typicality', and his published sources that emphasise the “structures of domination which sustain patriarchy” <sup>88</sup> appear to contradict the private.

In his later book, Fletcher made the first serious attempt to present eighteenth-century fathers' affection for their children as “central to their parental performance”.<sup>89</sup> He provides valuable insights into the role of the father which was, he states, “about combining the exercise of guidance and authority with the expression of the affection that fathers felt for sons and daughters”.<sup>90</sup> As one might expect, “the tenor of fathering varied with the characters of the men concerned. Some took their children lightly, some rather heavily” but “the keynote, overall, of fatherly performance ... was thus responsibility”.<sup>91</sup> Fletcher contrasts the ‘new self-conscious enjoyment of fatherhood’ - promoted by didactic literature and portraiture in the late eighteenth century – with the historiography of severity in the decades before 1660. Drawing on a very wide range of diaries, memoirs and other personal reflections, he is struck by the “seriousness with which many fathers took the responsibilities of their allotted role”.<sup>92</sup> The same applied to educating boys for whom school was a way of extracting them from maternal influence.<sup>93</sup> Fathers did not “balk at sending boys some distance, if it meant finding a sound education at a reasonable cost”.<sup>94</sup> Fletcher's analysis of fathers' engagement with their children validates the pervasiveness of affectivity in the family and accords with the evidence found in my private material.

Moving between history and literature, Ruth Perry maintains that “The restructuring of kinship from a consanguineal to conjugal basis for family identity was part of the transformation of England in the eighteenth century”.<sup>95</sup> She examines the influence of fiction in this change and identifies four questions posed by novels in the period 1748-1818: “To whom did one belong – to one's family of origin or to one's conjugal or contractual family? To whom did one owe allegiance? Who had claims on one's love and obedience? With whom should one share ones resources?”<sup>96</sup> These questions alter the assumptions on which previous family structures had been based, and, while pertinent for all parties to a marriage, are particularly resonant to women who make the move from one family to another. Thus “women were the first members of

society to be judged on the basis of their own individual qualities of mind and heart rather than on the basis of their inherited class, status, or origins”.<sup>97</sup> Women’s property rights were at the heart of those questions. In a chapter entitled “The Great Disinheritance”, Perry claims “women came to have more power in their new conjugal families than in their families of origin, and that their autonomy may have been more limited as wives and mothers than it had been as sisters and daughters”.<sup>98</sup> Although she does not explain this apparent contradiction (between power and autonomy), it seems to reflect ambiguities in property ownership.<sup>99</sup>

Perry is particularly critical of Stone’s ‘privatised marriage’, “This rather 1950s-ish description of a woman’s place in the world – an image of the upper-middle-class [...] woman before women’s liberation ruined her attitude – never takes into account what a woman might do, or who she might be”.<sup>100</sup> More broadly, she criticises what she calls the “sentiments” approach to family structure analysis adopted by Stone, Trumbach and Shorter because of its reliance on “documents (memoirs and letters) produced for the most part by the middling and upper classes [which] tends to privilege the literate classes”.<sup>101</sup> While admitting that “using fiction as a source for writing the history of the family is a tricky business”,<sup>102</sup> she seems unaware of the paradox. Throughout the thesis, I shall make frequent reference to fiction, while I construct a richer and more discriminating portrayal of men’s experience of marriage.

Women’s place in the home has been historically central – “The Puritan [...] ideal of woman as helpmeet”<sup>103</sup> - but the role of husband generally thought to be limited to the exercise of authority. Once past the altar he has been academically acknowledged only as a wife-beater<sup>104</sup> or, very recently, with the work of Margot Finn and others, as a consumer.<sup>105</sup> When they are mentioned, husbands mostly appear as political figures exercising physical and moral power over their wives but not (except in some recent work on men’s diaries) as people with feelings, wishes and ambitions.<sup>106</sup> They have a categorical and representational identity which appears largely untouched by lived experience. Little detailed attention has been paid to the roles of lover, husband, father, and widower on which the male experience of marriage is scaffolded.

Very recently, historians have begun to shift their focus from polite, social and public man to the more domesticated male partner increasingly found in ‘middle class’ families.<sup>107</sup> Whereas “club and coffee house, the debating society and the political crowd” were previously considered the principal sites of masculinity acquisition<sup>108</sup> this



new emphasis on the home and its importance to men is gradually bringing the married man out of the shadows.<sup>109</sup> In doing so, it radically alters assignment of gendered public and private space and identity. The home becomes a shared, rather than an exclusively feminine, physical and mental construction.

If, as Karen Harvey suggests, “for many [scholars] it was during the eighteenth century that modern domesticity was invented, before coalescing into the more intense nineteenth-century domestic culture,”<sup>110</sup> then it is important to understand the shape and meaning of the concept and how it affected performance, particularly by men. Is it simply about being embedded in a set of emotional, sexual, family and, household relations, or does it go further towards defining gender relations and, particularly, what it is to be a man? How is patriarchal authority reconfigured by domestic man? It is often difficult to be sure because men are not good at revealing their connection to the home or its importance in their lives. “Male silence on the home is of a piece with broader assumptions about that which was significant to report and seemly to broadcast about a man’s life”.<sup>111</sup> Other work on manliness - for instance Cohen’s examination of the movement from polite to chivalric codes of masculinity - maintains a similar silence on the home.<sup>112</sup> But clearly there is a move to revise some of those perceptions and these are the areas pursued in this thesis. I shall discuss representations of courtship practice; sexual, emotional, financial and organisational expectations of husbands; their involvement as fathers in the birth and upbringing of children and their role in the marriages of the next generation.

Many historical studies of masculinity are situated in the Early Modern period and demonstrate marriage’s tentative emergence both historically and in literature from domination by traditional hierarchically gendered values. My project is situated at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, and therefore positioned to build on and challenge some of those earlier perceptions. It foregrounds partnership within marriage and the increasingly domestic performance of men. It follows John Tosh’s proposal that masculinity should not be studied simply as a balance to femininity but “to understand a system of social relations *as a whole*” [original emphasis]<sup>113</sup> thus highlighting the advantages of diverse perspectives.

Writings on the historiography of sexuality by Michel Foucault and Thomas Lacqueur enlivened gender studies in the last quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>114</sup>

Foucault's contention that from the seventeenth century, sex became "policed" through discourse and "calling sex by its name thereafter became more difficult and more costly",<sup>115</sup> underlies numerous historical and literary studies. Was not the outcome of these varied discourses, he asked, "to dispel from reality the forms of sexuality that were not amenable to the strict economy of reproduction [...] to reduce or exclude practices whose object was not procreation?" In other words they valorised heterosexuality. This included "constant surveillance" of the "marriage relation".<sup>116</sup> Critics of Foucault challenge his concentration on discourse which, in Ludmilla Jordanova's view "tends to hover in an overly abstract vacuum above specific historical circumstances, and fails to give his favourite concept 'power' a sufficiently vivid, graspable presence".<sup>117</sup> Similarly, Hitchcock argues for "the existence of sex before discourse". In his account, "The desire for sex is certainly there, but it is strictly controlled within an ideological framework which saw sex, including penetrative and non-penetrative varieties, as part and parcel of the broader social process of marriage and procreation, rather than as a discrete activity".<sup>118</sup> "Heterosexuality was gradually imposed on both plebeian and elite cultures."<sup>119</sup> But, Hitchcock suggests, "this is all part of an agenda developed by 'liberationist' historians" and emphasises the limitations of reliance on public discourse. He draws upon private diaries and other sources to illuminate more nuanced versions of sexuality than is possible from the print media foregrounded by others, including Foucault.

Laqueur's "One Sex-Two Sex" theory of sexual relations which "put the history of the body on the historiographical map"<sup>120</sup> is based on the narrow literature of medical and scientific understanding of male and female organs. "Culture, in other words, forms the body and not vice versa."<sup>121</sup> Laqueur relies heavily on Foucault's central contention that 'discourses about sex' produced by 'institutions' are 'mechanisms' of power successfully penetrating and controlling individual's 'every day pleasure'. He claimed that, until the eighteenth-century, representation of women's sexual organs as inverted male organs produced the 'one-sex' theory and made women inferior. He then argued that scientific recognition of female orgasm as unnecessary for conception, made it possible to decide that men and women were sexually, and therefore socially, different and hierarchized – the 'two-sex' or 'incommensurable sexes' model. As a result of this discourse women were encouraged to become "passionless" and domesticated – an ideological determination that, theoretically at least, eliminated female sexual

subjectivity. Historical as well as some discursive evidence reveals flaws in this supposition.

My thesis challenges Laqueur's assertion of women's sexual passivity. Polemical authors castigated women's wantonness – thus highlighting the opposite tendency. At the same time conduct writers promoted mutually comforting sexual relations and the importance of confidence between husband and wife. Adultery trial reports and some of the private letters depict sexualities that defy Laqueur but contradictorily imply that “the body [...] is so hopelessly bound to its cultural meanings as to elude unmediated access”.<sup>122</sup> Real evidence of the sexual thoughts and feelings of married couples, or the nature and frequency of their sexual relations is very hard to find. As Vickery has pointed out, “inevitably the most intimate thoughts and feelings go unrecorded”.<sup>123</sup> But some examples will be offered to question the hegemony of female sexual passivity in marriage.

Sexuality was a component of sensibility that, for women, was manifested in the “chaste female body [which] appeared, then, a private family commodity for which the man could reasonably fight or go to law”.<sup>124</sup> “With women in whom sensibility, when admired, was assumed to imply chastity, and only if denigrated was feared to denote sexuality.” Its emasculating effect on men was feared and “By the last decades of the eighteenth century, sensibility was felt to have done its work and to have moved manners from coarseness towards gentility; in the process it was judged to have softened or undermined morals as well”. The culture of sensibility fashioned behaviour and discourse. “Little used before the mid-eighteenth-century, [...] it came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering.” The cult of sensibility – “largely defined by fiction from the 1740s to the 1770s [...] - initially showed people how to behave, how to express themselves in friendship and how to respond decently to life's experiences”.<sup>125</sup> It also reinforced gendered and hierarchized perceptions of sexuality as men “tried to make sense of a manhood now expressing itself more immediately in commerce rather than war”.<sup>126</sup> “The fate of the nation is understood on all sides to be tied up with the right heterosexual sentiment of its citizens.”<sup>127</sup> “Sensibility was a distinctly feminine field of knowledge, which, although available to both men and women, was particularly associated with the behaviour and experience of women and often apostrophised as a

feminine figure”.<sup>128</sup> Materials manifesting the conditions of sensibility appear in this thesis even after its alleged “decline into irretrievable disgrace during the 1790s”.<sup>129</sup>

### *Socio-political context*

The period covered in this study revealed a gradually changing cultural climate in which shifting priorities in the state of matrimony carried implications for the society as a whole. New industrial processes, and the developing consumerism that followed, demanded a structure in which unpredictable conduct could be minimised.<sup>130</sup> “The impulse to order and community exists in Britain,”<sup>131</sup> and marriage offered at least some level of guarantee by corralling the waywardness believed inherent to sexual desire.<sup>132</sup> This theme of sexual misbehaviour’s apparent threat to social stability, public health and traditional values was not new; it had excited public concern for much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but acquired a new urgency in the eighteenth. This was especially true at the end of the century when, in addition to commercial fragilities, protection was needed against the spread of revolutionary infections from abroad which at least one historian has seen as “an attempt by sons to overturn patriarchal rule”.<sup>133</sup> Contemporary writing about marriage both implicitly and explicitly acknowledged these tensions.<sup>134</sup>

Marriage became, therefore, more than a private objective signifying social acceptance and personal achievement. It was one of the building blocks of stability for a nation state which historians now see (in contrast to former perceptions of its placidity and sobriety) as full of “struggle, tension and conflict”.<sup>135</sup> “Stable, well-ordered marriage was viewed as central to ... a well-ordered society.”<sup>136</sup> This acquired legal as well as cultural significance. Formally, the state first intervened in the personal contract between individuals and their families with Lord Hardwicke’s controversial Marriage Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriages (1753).<sup>137</sup> Ostensibly designed to prevent the “mischiefs and inconveniences” of secret marriage through which couples with varying degrees of agreement and intention sought to satisfy their own desires in contravention of the wishes of their parents or sooner than customary practice allowed, the Act “marked a watershed in English legal history”,<sup>138</sup> changed forever married people’s relation to the state and turned marriage into a publicly regulated institution. Heterosexual union thus became the “heart and source of political economy”<sup>139</sup> and a rallying point for social commentators of all political persuasions.

Whereas libertarian opponents of Hardwicke's law had defended the individual's right to organise sexual relations in their own way provided they conformed to religious precept, later polemic focused on the socially damaging effects of sexual licentiousness – what Vicesimus Knox called “The Tendency of Moral Profligacy to Destroy Civil Liberty”.<sup>140</sup> Francis Foster blamed both the “Profligacy of our Women of Fashion” and how the legislature “suffers it to be encouraged”.<sup>141</sup> In 1792, an anonymous pamphleteer complained that:

The leading vices of the present age, and those that have the most extensive influence on society, are a looseness of principle, a rage for sensual pleasure, and a contempt for marriage; these introduce prostitution and adultery with all their train of woes.<sup>142</sup>

The infamy charge was not restricted to the way people behaved but also to the way they thought. The “Friend to Social Order” who dedicated his thoughts on marriage, criminal conversation and Mary Wollstonecraft to the most frequent judge of these cases, Lord Kenyon, questioned whether: “those momentous changes which have agitated, convulsed and overthrown the empire of nations, lay a greater claim to our astonishment, than that which appears to have taken place in the human mind during the same period”<sup>143</sup> This, he contended, consisted in rejecting “the most favourite opinions of our forefathers” and removing “from their own individual sphere all the restraints, which the former refined suggestions of social life had imposed”.<sup>144</sup> While Mary Wollstonecraft was the particular target of this polemic, it appeared during the period of turmoil in social and sexual relations that Binhammer described as a “sex panic” and Johnson “a war of sentiments about sex”<sup>145</sup> and became part of both. One form in which these issues emerged was as an attack on the growing fashion for divorce through Lord Auckland's Adultery Bill of 1800. The particular aim of the bill was to prevent adulterous couples marrying each other after one of the parties was divorced. While the Bill seems to have been intended primarily to prevent women enjoying the fruits of their adultery, the rules would also apply to the men and this attempt to criminalise the lover (by making adultery a misdemeanour) failed to become law, perhaps because “the majority of the sitting Members of Parliament would have automatically become criminals”.<sup>146</sup> While, in the end, pragmatism might have determined the Divorce Bill vote, deep ideological differences separated Parliamentarians as well as the many writers on the subject.

The security of the idea as well as the reality of family was, supposedly, the principal concern of both Parliament and the churches. Evangelical doctrines, particularly influential among the rising commercial classes, promoted the importance of the family for both religious and practical reasons.<sup>147</sup> In Sir Robert Filmer's seventeenth century vision of divinely ordained patriarchal society the government of a family by the father had been the model for all government, and so a microcosm of the state with its own monarch.<sup>148</sup> Lockean Social Contract<sup>149</sup> theory inevitably changed the nature of political, and therefore marital, contracts. For conservative commentators the strong family household became a requirement of the secure state. "A family," William Gouge insisted, "is a little commonwealth, a school wherein the first principles and grounds of government and subjection are learned".<sup>150</sup> Carol Pateman, though, insists that "The social contract is a story of freedom; the sexual contract a story of subjection".<sup>151</sup> Paraphrasing Blackstone, she insists that *femme couverture* made the marriage contract a man's contract with himself. Without civil identity, women were incapable of legally entering into contracts and yet were always believed to enter into the marriage contract. This, Pateman asserts, is because the contract is not really with the woman but with her "friends". It could be argued that the eighteenth-century trend towards affectivity is about aligning the friends' wishes with the woman's. This must apply equally to men: even though they enjoyed the contractual authority denied women, they were still subject to the support of family and friends (and, if under 21, needed formal permission) which may go some way to explain the prompting to early marriage by some contemporary authorities,<sup>152</sup> and the political anxiety when the average age of marriage for men began to rise.<sup>153</sup> Some historians, however, have questioned this view of the homogenous family. John Gillis, for instance, suggests it was largely a Victorian invention which "imagined earlier families to have been large and cohesive, inclusive of kin as well as multiple generations, rooted in place and tradition and more deeply religious than themselves".<sup>154</sup>

Even if there had been truth in that view, the pattern was changing. Urbanisation "helped to promote and stimulate the process of social and economic change".<sup>155</sup> London's population grew from about 740,000 in 1760 to 1.4 million in the period and most other cities followed suit, and this made inevitable inroads into the comfortable paradigm of rural family life.<sup>156</sup> "The provincial middle class took shape during the turbulent decades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries"<sup>157</sup> and the altered economic organisation which underpinned the term 'friend' had a

“plurality of meanings that spanned kinship ties, sentimental relationships, economic ties, occupational connections, intellectual and spiritual attachments, sociable networks and political alliances and it contributed to restructuring the family [...and] tended to reduce the prevalence of households comprising a mixed group of kin and other dependents – the myth of the extended family”.<sup>158</sup>

And yet ‘family and friends’ remained a key phrase in the vocabulary of eighteenth-century matrimony. Apart from the most noble and landed circles, the marriage of prudence or convenience – what Mary Wollstonecraft called being “legally prostituted”<sup>159</sup> - had become more exception than rule by the middle of the century. Even those who reject Stone’s history of “companionate marriage” accept the overall contention that the balance between finance and affection in the choice of marriage partner shifted in favour of the latter.<sup>160</sup> But even the most passionate of love matches might not be consummated without the exchange of suitable funds, and negotiations with the couple’s families, friends and lawyers remained necessary features of all representations of marriage.

William Blackstone’s famous dictum encapsulated the legal relationship represented by the marriage contract:

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband.<sup>161</sup>

The framework of *couverture* is thought by some scholars – including Perry<sup>162</sup> - to justify the conclusion that wives lacked economic agency, even though Amy Louise Erickson, a leading feminist authority on this aspect of eighteenth-century marriage, has called it a “common law fiction” and shown that *couverture* was not as strictly adhered to as is often thought.<sup>163</sup> “Women’s property rights were often better protected under equity, chancery, and ecclesiastical law ... than under common law”.<sup>164</sup> Common law did not recognize contracts made by a woman before marriage. Often deprived of the right to funds during marriage (except for what were, in the main, small sums of “pin money”) and uncertain even of the jointure she would, in theory, receive if widowed, women are portrayed as entirely dependent for subsistence on their husbands. As Susan Staves has demonstrated, the ‘portion’ was increasingly left to daughters in the form of trusts - that is, they did not have direct access to capital themselves - and was often not paid at all if the estate's income was heavily burdened by the expenditures of sons or

fathers.<sup>165</sup> Davidoff and Hall point out the inequity in even a relatively prosperous merchant family. “Equal in the eye of Heaven they [women] may have been. Equal in property and importance they certainly were not. As a married woman, Mrs Luckcock had no rights to property and her life was spent in domestic obscurity.” But as Linda Colley and others have argued,, “The true position of British women was more diverse than the statute books suggested and increasingly in flux,”<sup>166</sup> so that the position may not have been as stark for all women as Staves and Davidoff and Hall imply.

Motherhood and the rights of the mother had been problematic in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries because of the “insistence that mothers be invisible, inaudible, and without political agency, but nevertheless always accountable”<sup>167</sup> but there are indications of changes in practice, if not in law, by the turn of the century. For instance, writers on education sometimes defined a role for mothers, and in the correspondence of mothers like Mrs Mayow and Mrs Lovell to be considered in Chapter 4, it is clear that they exercised a degree of practical authority unconstrained by theoretical legality.<sup>168</sup> These are examples of women’s capacity to navigate successfully both legal and customary constraints which have important implications for the way we understand what marriage might mean to men.

Even more critical to our understanding of the culture of marriage is the question of sexual behaviour. The nature and frequency of sexual relations among married couples are seldom alluded to directly in the public prints, except in medical treatises, but can to some extent be inferred from the works of conduct writers such as Fawcett, Mussolini and Kitchener who praise wives as, in Fawcett’s phrase, “beings with whom we may form the tenderest of all connexions”.<sup>169</sup> Others favour living “chastely in marriage”, and believe that “as true love is well known to be always modest, and that the lover, of whatever sex, will be timorous of expressing his sentiments by word of mouth”.<sup>170</sup> These attitudes encourage the ‘passionless female’ but, as the discourse was predominantly masculine, the “passionless female” may have been the other side of the same misogynist coin that castigated some women as wanton. There is evidence of enthusiastic sexual relations between men and women to be found in visual print material, particularly in the satirical vein that invariably invoked female lustfulness.<sup>171</sup>

However couples conducted their sex lives, the pregnancies and births that resulted with challenging regularity form an important aspect of the study of men’s



involvement in marriage. E.A Wrigley used parish registers to calculate the mean interval between births from 1580 to 1817 which fell significantly over the period and was at its shortest in the years between 1770-1799 (30.85 months) and 1790-1819 (30.54 months), precisely the period covered by this study. Of course, for many individuals, the interval was much shorter and frequent pregnancy is the most quoted cause of women's ill-health. In her study of changing medical attitudes to children and childhood, and particularly the development of the idea that preservation of children was valuable for the nation as well as for their individual parents, Adrianna S. Benzaquien contends that "an important aspect of the doctors' project was a resolute effort to reconfigure the roles and identities of the adults who looked after the child".<sup>172</sup> The increasing medicalization of pregnancy and delivery may have increased the probability of successful live births – particularly outside of hospitals which were mainly the refuge of the poor – but stimulated intense controversy over the process and the practitioners involved. For some, the new breed of "man-midwives" became further evidence of unnecessary freedoms; for others more reassurance than the old village midwife had provided.<sup>173</sup> One of the private diarists in this study comments extensively on both the work and the controversy.<sup>174</sup> Roy Porter proposed that "Enlightenment thinking challenged attitudes to body and health, confronting custom with reason and the spiritual with the secular".<sup>175</sup> How couples might have prevented pregnancies is mostly evidenced in the medical literature. Injunctions for women (particularly wealthier ones) to breast feed rather than send their babies to a wet nurse were based in the psychological benefits of early closeness to the baby but also the contraceptive effects. Other methods of restricting fertility varied within social settings and educational levels.<sup>176</sup>

The sexual mores of society at large occupied polemicists - many from their pulpits but others in the public prints - throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Over this period the balance of criticism shifted from the threat to society of female wantonness to the dangers of accepting male libertinism. In 1739 Philogamus wrote: "the depravation ... of the women has a very great Share in the most flagrant and destructive Disorders"<sup>177</sup> In 1792, another commentator complained that "The errors and failings of respectable men, give only a stronger credit and a wider circulation to their vices".<sup>178</sup> Within these trends, however, there continued condemnation of both wanton women and licentious men throughout the century. Warnings against the threat of male libertines supposedly determined on the ruin of

credulous young women became a staple of both fiction and the advice literature.<sup>179</sup> Their prevalence in reality may be difficult to judge, but we do know that bachelordom for many men increased in length as the century progressed<sup>180</sup> and “modern gallantry” became “mainstream enlightened opinion”.<sup>181</sup> Resistance to marriage – frequently characterised in fiction – may have been influenced by Henry Carey’s designation of the territory as “overspread with Briars and Thorns, and full of dark and melancholly Vales”<sup>182</sup> or, perhaps, the recognition that “companionship and sexual satisfaction could be obtained far more cheaply with a lower-class mistress”.<sup>183</sup>

The prevalence of pre-marital sexual relations among those who eventually married is difficult to determine, but the number of Breach of Promise cases reported in the press, resulting from consensual sexual relations that were not then legalised by marriage, suggests that it was not unusual.<sup>184</sup> According to Hitchcock, “while both men and women certainly did put off marriage until their mid to late twenties, their late teens and early twenties were likely to be filled with highly sexualized encounters”.<sup>185</sup> This evidence further problematizes the perception of universal female chastity before marriage on which men are popularly alleged to have insisted. Further evidence of a more relaxed attitude to sexual behaviour is suggested by the case of Miss Broderick. She had been mistress to Mr Errington (husband of the celebrated adulteress) for several years but, when he married someone else, shot him dead and was expected to be found guilty of murder and executed. Instead, to the pleasure of the court spectators, who burst into applause at the verdict, she was found to be insane and therefore not responsible. The pamphlet reporting the trial commented:

It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr Errington, who had felt so severely the effects of inconstancy, should himself be guilty of the same offence; for though he was not legally married to Miss Broderick, yet, having lived with her some years in the greatest harmony, the tie was equally great, considered in an honourable light, while she behaved towards him with kindness and decorum.<sup>186</sup>

This was a version of partnership for which some elements of press and public, at least, were sufficiently pragmatic to evince sympathy. It may well have also represented a more widespread practice.

A frequent grievance of social commentators and clergy who attended to sexual mores was the incidence of extra-marital sexual relations, particularly among fashionable

society. Fordyce had warned that “the unbridled pursuit of sensual enjoyments defeats its own intentions”; the 1792 pamphleteer that “no vice can prove more fatal to dissolve the ties of society, to bring distrust and distress into families”; and Thomas Gisborne of the “Great [...] miseries which result from a breach of personal fidelity in either party”.

<sup>187</sup> Within circulating library fiction, the unfaithful husband was generally reprobated. Lady Dursley, for instance, lamented: “I should not have ventured myself with a man of corrupt principles; with a licentious man no woman is safe”. <sup>188</sup> The husband’s early death points the moral, and enables her to marry a good man and recognise “the difference between the *man of merit*, and the *pretender to merit*”. <sup>189</sup> There is also evidence of attitudes to male infidelity within the private correspondence and diaries in this thesis.

Detailed descriptions of the process of sexual infidelity – particularly by wives – filled large numbers of pamphlets reporting trials for Adultery and Criminal Conversation which will be one of the important sources used for this thesis. For some husbands, the trials represented stages on the path to a full Parliamentary Divorce, for others an attempt to restore honour, and for a third group a source of funds or advancement. The most notorious of this last group was probably Sir Richard Worsley who encouraged his wife’s adultery with George Bissett from whom he thought he could procure a Parliamentary seat. In a famous satirical cartoon, Bissett is pictured on Worsley’s shoulders peering at a semi-naked Lady Worsley taking a bath. <sup>190</sup> Worsley was decidedly among the third group in Cornuto’s categorisation of cuckoldry:

1. Those that are so and do not know it.
2. Those that know it without being grieved at it.
3. Those that know it, and are fond of it. <sup>191</sup>

Collusion over divorce between husbands, wives and their lovers was illegal and frequently criticised, particularly by the Kings Bench judge, Lord Kenyon, who said of Mr Hodges: “It is most scandalous for a man first to prostitute his wife, and then to come into a court of justice for damages”. <sup>192</sup> This practice and a number of notorious cases including the Criminal Conversation trial of George III’s brother, the Duke of Cumberland, with Lady Grosvenor contributed to the perception of widespread debauchery among the fashionable classes. <sup>193</sup> Readers, presumably, enjoyed the titillating details contained in the reports because, as one contemporary wrote: “No paragraphs are more greedily read, than those which relate to business of this kind”. <sup>194</sup>

The picture of sexual and social relations emerging from this material contrasts sharply with the vision of chaste and domesticated marriage promoted by conduct and medical literature and domestic fiction. Intercourse became associated with “romping and playfulness”. Illicit sex occurred in a wide variety of venues including the shrubbery, a ditch, a coach, a stable, and across the chairs in dining room or parlour. In the main, the accused men were single but the literature which, of course, dealt primarily with the infidelities of wives, has some examples of transgressive married men.<sup>195</sup>

As evidence of marital behaviour, the cases detailed in this body of literature provide more than a description of extra-marital relations. Stone observed that “a bitterly disputed marital separation provides us with a unique and privileged view into otherwise hidden areas of thought and behaviour”.<sup>196</sup> Stripped of the formulaic persiflage required by the law, they reveal much about the way some individuals conducted and thought about their marriages. Husbands’ reliance on the invariable fidelity of their wives, for instance, implies a cultural norm that dismissed the possibility of female sexual agency or assumed it could be lightly controlled, and yet it is clear that the wives in all these cases were willing, if not eager, participants. The homosocial rules of conduct by which husbands depended on their friends and colleagues to respect the sanctity of marriage were frustrated by the frequency with which the trust was exploited and the ‘friend’ became the illicit lover.<sup>197</sup> Husbands’ commitment to the manly pursuits of sport, business or war left several of the wives in these accounts lonely and therefore vulnerable to temptation.<sup>198</sup> The reports also demonstrate the crucial role played by servants in the conduct of marriages. They are most usually the observers of infidelity and, dependent on their own moral outlook or calculation of advantage, will reveal, disregard or be complicit in the adulteries. Occasionally they are participants.<sup>199</sup>

Even this brief historical survey shows the extent to which the subject of marriage occupied the thoughts and pens of many authorities and individuals. The private literally became public. Although, as an institution, marriage remains a site of contestation today, many of the controversial seeds were sown during the eighteenth century. By promoting affective relations and loosening authoritarian control over choice of partner, the discourse created expectations of personal satisfaction that may have been less frequently demanded then than now, but were clearly visible in sentimental literature and the private reflections of people for whom it was intended.

### *Structure of this Thesis*

As men move through the different phases of the marriage experience, their disposition inevitably changes from the romantic to the familial, from pursuer to provider. This will, to some extent, always have been true but the trends mentioned above gathered momentum during the period and must, therefore, affect our way of explaining the masculine experience. By highlighting these trends, this study both challenges some aspects of current understanding and provides a platform for further research. Through its concentration on different representational forms, it also enables questions to be raised about the extent to which the key constructions of domesticity and male participation exist as ideas or facts, and to explore the impact of media on contemporary behaviour. Furthermore, it helps us to question whether the mental structures and vocabulary identified in these representations give us a clear, even though complex, impression of eighteenth-century marriage, and the way roles within it were performed, or whether they are obscured by the ideological and personal objectives of the authors.

The thesis is organised in two main sections entitled *Before Marriage* and *After Marriage*. Chapters 1 and 3 examine the wide range of published material devoted, either overtly or implicitly, to marriage; and Chapters 2 and 4 to impressions drawn from the private correspondence and diaries found in archives. *Before Marriage* (chapters 1 & 2) is chiefly concerned with how men pursued and acquired a bride; this includes the part played by both sets of parents and family and friends and thus focuses on important male roles, principally the suitor and bride's father. *After Marriage* (chapters 3 & 4) explores representations of the husband, father and head of household, and also considers the experience of widowhood and second marriage from a male perspective.<sup>200</sup> The Conclusion includes proposals for further research.

Among the fictional representations in the *Public* sections, some authors, particularly Fielding and Richardson, will feature only briefly as part of an argument for the shift between mid-and late-century fictional interests in the particulars of marriage. More detailed attention will be paid to novels that appear to represent the ideological imperatives of their period, or of their authors' political standpoints. Frances Burney's three major texts, for instance, and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* will be taken to exemplify a broadly conservative tradition, and the books of Bage, Holcroft, Inchbald, Robinson, Charlotte Smith and Helen Maria William a more radical or Jacobin tendency.

The Austen texts reveal her capacity to resolve some of these tensions. Within advice literature and polemic, ideological differences between, for example, James Fordyce and Thomas Gisborne are also identified. The extensive literature of adultery displays contradictory ideological objectives: on the surface it strives to reinforce a conservative view of marital obligation but, by disseminating the scurrilous particulars in the interest of commercial exploitation, it presents the reading public with a titillating and challenging version of sexuality. These two positions within one genre demonstrate some of the important contradictions within the public discourse of marriage. Both this material and reports of cases of Breach of Promise, while being part of public discourse, are concerned with real people and could be considered a bridge between the public and private representations.

Within the private material, the mundane nature of the correspondence and diary entries might obscure ideological difference. Individuals write about the ordinary events of their lives and their feelings within the limited contexts of love letters, intra-family communication and personal journals. But, throughout the exchanges of emotion, gossip or news it is possible to discern diverging views on the social significance of marriage and of the attributes necessary for success. Love, esteem, partnership and family affection predominate, but there remain clear traces of both prudential advantage and traditional authority relations. Differences are most noticeably attributable to class – between say the upper-gentry friends and relations of Lord Boringdon and his relatively near neighbour, the small town lawyer, John Andrews.<sup>201</sup> But, they are exceeded by the similarities: in both of these examples, for instance, sexual fidelity and fathers' emotional attachment to their children are clearly valued. Similarly, commitment to partnership and the sharing of marital responsibilities between husband and wife can be found in the correspondence of the upper gentry Massingberd- Mundy and the yeoman farmer Lovells and this suggests the existence of identifiable cultural norms applicable to different class levels and situations.<sup>202</sup>

This does not mean we can define *the* male experience of marriage. In the eighteenth, as in every other, century, individuals entered into, continued or left the institution for reasons as varied as their personalities, interests and situations. But it is possible to draw out some broad strands, and to picture, through the complex web of ideas with which marriage is invested, some conception of the political, social and

psychological meanings given by eighteenth-century writers of many different kinds to its pursuit, undertaking and practice. That is the object of all that follows.

## *Introduction*

### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup> Duc de Rochefoucauld, 1784 cit Lawrence Stone *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977) 220.

<sup>2</sup> Birmingham Archive Centre MS3101/C/E/4/8/11 Joseph Strutt to Isabella Douglas Derby, May 5 1788.

<sup>3</sup> Fanny Burney, *Camilla or A Picture of Youth*, 1796. ed Edwards A. Bloom & Lillian D. Bloom, (Oxford: World's Classics, Oxford University Press.,1983) 476.

<sup>4</sup> Eleanor Wikborg, *The Lover as Father Figure in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Women's Fiction*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002) chap 4.

<sup>5</sup> Susan E Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009),230.

<sup>6</sup>Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Karen Harvey, University of Sheffield, Staff Directory. Her book, *The Little Republic: Men and the House in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Britain*, is scheduled for publication by Oxford University Press in April 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Examples include: Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Bridget Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England* (London: UCL Press, 1994); *Women and Property in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Wendy Moore, *Wedlock*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009); Ingrid Tague, "Love, Honour and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourse of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century", *The Journal of British Studies*. Vol. 40, No. 1, (Jan 2001), 76-106; Maureen Waller, *The English Marriage: Tales of Love, Money and Adultery* (London: John Murray, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of the Domestic Woman". *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, Ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, (London: Methuen,1987) 96-141. In this article Armstrong coined the phrase "sexual exchange" in explaining the role of conduct literature in altering the rules of the exchange.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Rogers, "Money, Marriage, Mobility: The Big Bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London", *Journal of Family History* Vol. 24(1999), 19-34. The author argues that rich businessmen of the metropolis were not always interested in investing their fortunes in landed estates, but those who were and who had the wealth and demographic fortune to do so were not unsuccessful. This article also suggests that some of the merchant class were less interested in male primogeniture and patrilineal descent than the landed aristocracy and more willing to accommodate the interests of wives and daughters in the quest for social ambition and financial security.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen Pollak. *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope*, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press,1985) 31.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Meldrum, "Domestic Service, Privacy and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Metropolitan Household", *Urban History*, Vol 26, No 1, (1999) 27.

<sup>13</sup> Part of what Dror Wahlmar described as "increasingly rigid and essentialized 'rules' for gendered and sexual behavior" qd Kristina Straub. *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism and Violence between Servants and Masters in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Britain*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009)4.



<sup>14</sup> Lawrence E Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure", *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29.1, (1995) 104.

<sup>15</sup> Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to separate Spheres? A review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History": *The Historical Journal Vol 36 No 2* (June 1993), 383--414. Other writers, including Anne Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England 1780-1830*. (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002) have challenged the original formulation of 'public realm' by Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society*. (Cambridge: Polity, 1962 trans 1989).

<sup>16</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, (London: Vintage, 1992) 263.

<sup>17</sup> Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009) 9.

<sup>18</sup> Plays, poems, ballads, satires and pictures – many with 'marriage' as their subject - have been deliberately ignored in the interest of focus on print media and the effective management of material despite their potentially rich contribution to our knowledge. I have also ignored published memoirs and journals in order to prioritize unmediated sources and so get closer to the people involved.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) quoted in Muller, 2006, 2, describes "fashion" as "a term for the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern, the word had been long in use, but it is in the sixteenth century that fashion seems to come into wide currency as a way of designating the forming of a self."

<sup>20</sup> For instance Anja Muller, Ed. *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: Age and Identity*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006); Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British writing and culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) argues that "At a time in which about one marriage in three was broken by the death of a partner before the end of the wife's fecund period there could be a significant fluidity in household composition", 34.

<sup>23</sup> John Tosh, "The old Adam and the new man: emerging themes in the history of English masculinities 1750—1850", in Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen, eds, *English masculinities 1660—1800* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 230.'

<sup>24</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 322. Fletcher claims 'masculine' had its first recorded usage in England in 1748 (OED Masculinity).

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage*. (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 55.

<sup>26</sup> See R.W. Connell *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987)., Mike Donaldson, "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" *Theory and Society* Vol. 22 No. 4, (1993) 643-657.

<sup>27</sup> R.W. Connell, "The History of Masculinity" 1995. *The Masculinity Studies Reader* Ed. Rachel Adams and David Savran, (Maldon, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002) 245.

<sup>28</sup> Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, "What have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500-1950", *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 44, (April 2005) 278.

<sup>29</sup> Examples of this type of study include: Donna T Andrew. *The Code of Honour and its Critics: Opposition to Duelling in England 1700-1850*, *Social History*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (October 1980) 409-434; Robert B Shoemaker, *The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence in the Streets of London 1660-1800*; *The Historical Journal* Vol. 45, No. 3, (Cambridge University Press, 2002) 5, 25-45; Philip Carter, *Polite Persons': Character, Biography and the Gentleman*. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Vol. 12, (2002). 333-354; Joanne Nagel, *Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nation*', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 21 No. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Eg. Donald E. Hall, "The end(s) of masculinity studies", *Victorian Literature and Culture*, (2000) 227-237; Mark A Liddle. "State, Masculinities and Law: Some Comments on Gender and English State-Formation" *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 36, No. 3 special issue (1996); D. S Neff, "Bitches, Mollies, and Tommies: Byron, Masculinity, and the History of Sexualities" *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Jul, 2002), 395-438; Peter McNeil, "Macaroni Masculinities". *Fashion Theory* Vol. 4, issue 4, (2000) 373-404.

<sup>31</sup> R.W.Connell and James Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Re-thinking the Concept", *Gender and Society* 19 (2005), 832-3.

<sup>32</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson 1987; Routledge, 1994.)

<sup>33</sup> <sup>33</sup>Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. Ch 8. Pro- and anti-Stone views dominated family history until different constructions of family formation were developed by writers such as Steven King and Naomi Tadmor. Few, though, seriously challenge the principle of affective individualism and its corollary in companionate marriage.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Laqueur *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>35</sup> Michele Cohen, "Manners' .... Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity". *Journal of British Studies* 44, (April 2005) 312-329.

<sup>36</sup> John Tosh, "The old Adam and the new man: emerging themes in the history of English masculinities 1750-1850" in Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen, eds, *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, (London and New York: Longman, 1999) 233-5.

<sup>37</sup> Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation*. (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.1999) ix.

<sup>38</sup> See Edward Jacobs, "18<sup>th</sup> Century British Circulating Libraries and Cultural Book History" *Book History*, Vol. 6, (2003) 1-22.

<sup>39</sup> In its development from tracts on courtliness popular on the continent via practical addresses to aristocratic men, such as Richard Allestree's *Gentleman's Calling* and their 18<sup>th</sup> Century focus on female desire and desirability, conduct literature in Nancy Armstrong's phrase (Armstrong, and Tennenhouse *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*) "constitute ideology in its most basic and powerful form." 2. There is, however, a question of audience: Ingrid Tague, (2001), 82, suggests "it is extremely difficult to say with any certainty who made up the audience for these books" with consequent concern for how we interpret them into historical reality.

<sup>40</sup> Mrs Errington was called "most knowing of her sex since she has studied under naval and military Commanders and not been wanting attention to the good things that are to be obtained from *law, physic and divinity!* (*Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* July 16, 1785). When William Pitt was having political difficulties with the "last Commercial System" the same newspaper suggested that "Mrs Errington in particular is lavish in his praise, and has been heard say, that if it were possible she could fill his place as Prime Minister, she would commence her administration by granting *the Irish a free trade* (*Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* Aug 24, 1785).

<sup>41</sup> John Tosh, 'The old Adam and the new man', 230.

<sup>42</sup> Bob Harris, "Praising the Middle Sort? Social Identity in 18<sup>th</sup> Century British Newspapers", eds.; Alan Kidd & David Nicholls *The Making of the British Middle Class: Studies of Regional and cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998) 3.

<sup>43</sup> Details of the correspondents and diarists and the archives in which the material is stored appear in Appendix 1.

<sup>44</sup> Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard", 195-216. For commentary see *An Essay on Marriage or the lawfulness of Divorce in Certain Cases Considered: Addressed to the Feelings of Mankind*. (Philadelphia: Zachariah Poulson, junior, 1788); *Instructions to a Young Lady in Every Sphere and Period of Life*. (Edinburgh: A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1762); W.J. Morris, *Observations on the Marriage Laws particularly in reference to the case of Desertion or a Fraudulent and Violated Contract in which the Right of the Injured Party is supported by Religious, Moral & Historical Evidence Demonstrating the Necessity of Legislative Interference* (London: Hatchard, 1815).

<sup>45</sup> John Adams, *Elegant tales, histories, and epistles of a moral tendency; on love, friendship, matrimony, ... and other important subjects, by the author of Woman; or historical sketches of the fair sex* (London: G.Kearsley, 1791, Gisborne, 1793).

<sup>46</sup> Porter, (2000), 258 suggested "The Enlightenment's great historical watershed lay in the validation of pleasure".

<sup>47</sup> Pollak, (2004) 3. She later suggests a "contradiction common to myth [...] that women are, by nature, at once insatiably oversexed and indefectibly spiritual", 5.

<sup>48</sup> Eg. ThomasSecker, *On the relative Duties between Parents and Children and between Masters and Servants. To which is added the Duty of Subjects to those who are placed in Authority over them*. A Number of Tracts published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Practice in the Kingdom of Ireland. (Dublin: John Exshaw, 1790). Mr. Langridge, *Letters from a Parent on the Education of Children*. (London: Conference Office, 1800). George Wright, Esq., *The lady's miscellany; or Pleasing essays, poems, stories, and examples, for the instruction and entertainment of the female sex in general, in ...* (Boston, 1797). Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Corrected)* (London: T.Cadell jun and W. Davies 1797).

<sup>49</sup> Alan Sinfield, "The Wilde Century," quoted in George E. Haggerty, *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (Chichester, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> See Elizabeth Thiel, *The Fantasy of the Family: Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature and the Myth of the Domestic Ideal* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. Ch 8. Pro- and anti-Stone views dominated family history until different constructions of family formation were developed by writers such as Steven King and Naomi Tadmor. Few, though, seriously challenge the principle of affective individualism and its corollary in companionate marriage.

<sup>52</sup> Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England*, (New York: Academic Press Inc, 1978) 3.

<sup>53</sup> Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, (London: Penguin, 1990) 306.

<sup>54</sup> Miri Rubin, "Cultural History: What's in a Name". *Making History*, (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2008), highlights "the domain of representation, the struggle over meaning" as a central concern of cultural history. She also maintains: "Cross-disciplinary practice is indeed the hallmark of much cultural history. The desire to embrace the plenitude of interlocking experiences has meant that cultural historians work hard, often collaboratively, with experts in other fields of history and disciplines".

<sup>55</sup> The focus of writers such as Margaret Doody, "Samuel Richardson: Fiction and Knowledge" *The Cambridge Companion to the 18th Century Novel*, Ed. John Richetti, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998) 90 -119; Nancy Armstrong. "What Feminism Did to Novel Studies", *The Cambridge*

- Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*. Ed. Ellen Rooney. (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 99-118; Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* 1957 (London: Pimlico, 2000).
- <sup>56</sup> Karen Harvey, Ed. *The Kiss in History*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005) 1.
- <sup>57</sup> Peter Borsary. *The Image of Georgian Bath, 1700-2000: Towns, Heritage, and History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000) 5.
- <sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Republic of Letters*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996) 7.
- <sup>59</sup> Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations - The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture 1748-1818*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004) 1.
- <sup>60</sup> An example might be Lord Grondale in Robert Bage's *Hermesprong* whose immovability fires the eponymous hero's moral determination without which the narrative would lack dramatic tension.
- <sup>61</sup> James Raven, "New Reading Histories, Print Culture and the Identification of Change: the Case of 18<sup>th</sup> Century England." *Social History*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (Oct 1998) 273; Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe Richardson and Fielding*, (1957) 92.
- <sup>62</sup> *The evils of adultery and prostitution; with an inquiry into the causes of their alarming increase, and some means recommended for checking their progress*, (London: T.Vernon, 1792) 51.
- <sup>63</sup> Sue Chaplin, *Law, Sensibility and the Sublime in Eighteenth Century Women's Fiction. Speaking of Dread* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2004) quotes Blackstone: "civil identity is premised on the ownership of property; women don't have property (at least when married) and so have no civil identity" but adds "Single women – spinsters, widows, while having some legal identity are culturally demeaned – the only culturally acceptable category of woman remained that of wife" 37.
- <sup>64</sup> Eg. Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Tassie Gwilliam, "Female Fraud: Counterfeit Maidenheads in the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (April 1996) 518-548; Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard". *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 20, No. 2 Apr (1959) 195-216; Nancy Armstrong, 1987; Margaret Hunt, "Wife Beating, Domesticity and Women's Independence in 18<sup>th</sup> Century London" *Gender & History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1992); Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jessica Warner and Alison Lunny, "Marital Violence in a Martial Town: Husbands And Wives in Early Modern Portsmouth 1653-1781" *Journal of Family History* 28, (2003) 258-276.
- <sup>65</sup> Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, (London, Routledge: 1985) xiv
- <sup>66</sup> Nancy Armstrong, "What Feminism Did to Novel Studies", *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*. Ed. Ellen Rooney, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 107.
- <sup>67</sup> R.W Connell, "The History of Masculinity" 1995. *The Masculinity Studies Reader* Ed. Rachel Adams and David Savran, 245-261.
- <sup>68</sup> Megan Doolittle, "Close Relations? Bringing Together Gender and Family in English History". *Gender and History*, Vol. 11, No. 3, November, (1999) 542 and 544.
- <sup>69</sup> Naomi Tadmor, (2001) 2.
- <sup>70</sup> Stone, (1977) Chap 8. Perry, (2004) Chap 5.
- <sup>71</sup> Stone, 220.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 225.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 150.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 182.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 183.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Alan MacFarlane, "Review: The Family, Sex and Marriage", *History and Theory*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (Feb., 1979) 103-126.

<sup>78</sup> Michael MacDonald, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (Summer, 1979) 122-123.

<sup>79</sup> Lois G. Schworer, "Seventeenth-Century English Women Engraved in Stone? *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (Winter, 1984) 390.

<sup>80</sup> Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen Eds., *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, (London & New York: Longman, 1999) 14.

<sup>81</sup> Tadmor, (2001) 5.

<sup>82</sup> *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, xv.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 283.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, xxi.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 154.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 185.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, xvi.

<sup>89</sup> *Growing Up*, 133.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 129.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 149.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>97</sup> Perry, *Novel Relations*, 41, referring to Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 8.

<sup>98</sup> *Novel Relations*, 194-5.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 51-53.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, 195.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>103</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson 1987; Routledge, 1994.)

<sup>104</sup> Elizabeth Foyster, *Marital Violence: An English Family History, 1660-1857*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2005); "Creating a Veil of Silence ? Politeness and Marital Violence in the English Household." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Association*. Sixth Series, Vol. 12, (2002) 394-415;. "At the Limits of Liberty: married women and confinement in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England" *Continuity and Change* Vol. 17, No. 1, (2002) 39-62; Joanne Bailey "I Dye(sic) by Inches?: Locating Wife-beating in the Concept of a Privatisation of Marriage and Violence in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England", *Social History* Vol. 31, No. 2, (2006) 273-296.

<sup>105</sup> Margot Finn, “Men’s Things: masculine possession in the consumer revolution” *Social History* Vol. 35, No. 2, (May 2000) 133-155; Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*. Karen Harvey, “Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Britain” *Gender & History*, Vol. 21 No.3 November, (2009) 520–540.

<sup>106</sup> Hannah Barker, “Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-class Masculinity in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Manchester” *Social History* Vol. 33 No.1 (February 2008); Katrina Navickas, “The Cragg Family Memorandum Book: Society, Politics and Religion in North Lancashire during the 1790s”, *Northern History*, XLII, (March 2005) 151-162.

<sup>107</sup> Defined, for instance, in Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (London: Guild Publishing, 1989); Alan Kidd & David Nicholls ed. *The Making of the British Middle Class: Studies of Regional and cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998) xvi. The term middle class, their study suggests, was interchangeable with others like ‘rank’ and ‘order’ (and to a lesser extent ‘sorts’, ‘parts’, ‘interests’, ‘degrees’, and ‘stations’)[..] Class began to replace most of the other terms as the principal descriptor of social position in the mid-eighteenth century and was a firmly entrenched by the mid-nineteenth (xvi).

<sup>108</sup> *Behind Closed Doors*, 52.

<sup>109</sup> For example: Vickery (2009); Harvey (2009). Her book *The Little Republic: Men and the House in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Britain* is expected in 2012; Hannah Barker (2008).

<sup>110</sup> Harvey, 523.

<sup>111</sup> *Behind Closed Doors*, 55.

<sup>112</sup> Michele Cohen, “‘Manners’ .... Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity”. *Journal of British Studies* 44, (April 2005) 312-329.

<sup>113</sup> John Tosh, “What Should Historians Do With Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain.” *History Workshop Journal*, (1994) 179.

<sup>114</sup> Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality", (1977), in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. ed. Vincent B. Leitch. (New York: W.W.Norton & Co Ltd, 2001), 1648; Thomas Laqueur *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>115</sup> Foucault, ed. Leitch, 1648.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 1659.

<sup>117</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989) 12.

<sup>118</sup> Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997) 24.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>120</sup> Harvey, “Century of Sex”, 916.

<sup>121</sup> Regina Morantz-Sanchez, review “Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud by Thomas Laqueur”, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 66, No 4, (1992, Winter) 670.

<sup>122</sup> Laqueur,12.

<sup>123</sup> *Gentleman’s Daughter*, 60.

<sup>124</sup> Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), 19.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 4, 7 8, 137 .

<sup>126</sup> G.J Barker-Benfield. *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain*, (Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press,1992) xxvii.

- <sup>127</sup> Claudia L Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s*, Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 11.
- <sup>128</sup> Markman Ellis. *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 24.
- <sup>129</sup> Johnson, 6.
- <sup>130</sup> See, for instance, Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, "Women, China, and Consumer Culture in Eighteenth Century England". *18th Centuries Studies* Vol. 29, No. 2, (1996) 153-167; Finn Margot "Men's Things: masculine possession in the consumer revolution." *Social History* Vol. 35, No. 2, (May 2000) 133-155.
- <sup>131</sup> Miranda J. Burgess, *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000) 59.
- <sup>132</sup> One of the best known commentaries is by James Fordyce, *The Folly, Infamy, and Misery of Unlawful Pleasure. A sermon preached before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, May 25, 1760*. (Edinburgh: printed for G.Hamilton and J.Balfour, 1760). There were many others.
- <sup>133</sup> Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (London: Routledge, 1992) xv.
- <sup>134</sup> See Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic of the 1790s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 6 No. 3, (1996) 409-434.
- <sup>135</sup> Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 98.
- <sup>136</sup> Donna T. Andrew, "Adultery a la Mode: Privilege, the Law and Attitudes to Adultery 1770-1809", *The History Association*, (1997) 7.
- <sup>137</sup> 26 Geo II.ch.33 "for the better prevention of clandestine marriages" was introduced into Parliament by Lord Hardwicke in 1753 and became law in March 1754. For commentary see: Eve Tavor Bannet "The Marriage Act of 1753: 'A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex'". *Eighteenth Century Studies* Vol. 30, No. 3, (1997) 233-254, and Rebecca Probert, "The Impact of the Marriage Act of 1753: Was it Really a 'Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex?'" *Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, (2005) 247-262.
- <sup>138</sup> Sandra Macpherson, "Lovelace Ltd", *English Literary History* Vol. 65, No. 1, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 104.
- <sup>139</sup> Miranda J Burgess, *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order*, 21.
- <sup>140</sup> Vicesimus Knox, *Essays Moral and Literary, by Vicesimus Knox, M. A. a New Edition, in Two Volumes*. (London, MDCCLXXXII. [1782]) Essay No V, 52.
- <sup>141</sup> Francis Foster, *Thought on the Times but Chiefly on the Profligacy of our Women and its Causes: Addressed to every Parent, Husband and Modest Woman in the Three Kingdoms*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (London: C.Parker, 1779) 5-6.
- <sup>142</sup> *The evils of adultery and prostitution; with an inquiry into the causes of their alarming increase, and some means recommended for checking their progress*, (London: T.Vernon, 1792) iii-iv.
- <sup>143</sup> *Thoughts on Marriage and Criminal Conversation with Some Hints of the Appropriate Means to Check the Progress of the Latter Comprising Remarks on the Life, Opinions and Example of the late Mrs Wollstonecraft Godwin Respectfully Addressed and Inscribed to the Right Honourable Lord Kenyon, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench*, (London: F&C Rivington, J. Hatchard and W. Stewart, 1799) 1-2.
- <sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.
- <sup>145</sup> Katherine Binhammer, (1996); Claudia L, Johnson (1995) 11.
- <sup>146</sup> Katherine Binhammer, 432.
- <sup>147</sup> See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, Chapter 2.

<sup>148</sup> Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha* (1680); Susan Moller Okin, “Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family”. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. Vol 11, No 1 (Winter 1982), 68, argues that “Filmer’s justification of absolute monarchy (and therefore of family patriarchalism) was based on the drawing of a strict parallel between the authority structures of families and states”.

<sup>149</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1689).

<sup>150</sup> cit Fletcher, (1995) 205.

<sup>151</sup> Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, 1988).

<sup>152</sup> Eg. R. Elliot, *A Wedding Sermon being the Substance of a Discourse Delivered at Glass-House Yard, on May 14 1775, Preached by Particular Desire and now Published at the Request of the Bridegroom, and of Others Who Heard It. To which is added An Address (by way of caution and advice) to Young Persons. 2nd Edition* (London: 1778); *Letters on Love, Marriage and Adultery Addressed to the Right Honourable Earl of Exeter*. (London: 1809). William Penn, *Fruits of a Father’s Love Being the Advice of William Penn to his Children Relating to their Civil and Religious Conduct* (London: James Phillips, 1778).

<sup>153</sup> Newspapers and periodicals deprecated this trend, eg. “Important Considerations on Matrimony”, *New Universal Magazine; or, Miscellany of Historical, Philosophical, Political and Polite Literature* Vol. 87, No. 607, (1790) 211-213; ‘Clericus’, “Matrimony!” *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine*, (Sept 1808); ‘Nestor’, “Defence of Matrimony or How to Marry Happy”, *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine* (Nov 1808).

<sup>154</sup> John Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual and the Quest for Family Values*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1996) 6.

<sup>155</sup> P.J Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 1.

<sup>156</sup> Source: *Population History of London*. [www.oldbaileyonline.com](http://www.oldbaileyonline.com), accessed 22.09.2011.

<sup>157</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 18.

<sup>158</sup> Tadmor, (2001) 108.

<sup>159</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindications: the Rights of Men, The Rights of Women* Ed. McDonald D.L.& Kathleen Scherf, (Canada: Broadview Press, 1997) 176.

<sup>160</sup> For example Michael MacDonald, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (Summer, 1979), 122-123; John Gillis, “Review: Affective Individualism and the English Poor”. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (Summer, 1979) 121-128; Paul Slack, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 370, (Jan., 1979) 124-126.

<sup>161</sup> William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books. 12<sup>th</sup> edition with notes and additions by Edward Christian Esq.* (London: A. Strahan and W. Woodfall, 1793), Vol. 1, 441.

<sup>162</sup> Perry, (2004) 54.

<sup>163</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, “Couverture and Capitalism”. *Historical Workshop* Journal Issue Vol. 59, No 3.

<sup>164</sup> Erickson cit Perry, (paraphrase) 46-7.

<sup>165</sup> cit Perry, 52.

<sup>166</sup> Colley, (1992) 253.

<sup>167</sup> Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 32-3.

<sup>168</sup> Cornwall Record Office Ref WM489-498 Letters from Mrs Philip Wynell-Mayow to Miss B Mayow (her sister in law) and to her children Ursula & Philip; Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre Ref 161/109. Lovell Family correspondence.



<sup>169</sup> Medical treatise include *Aristotle's Compleat Master-piece* or Nicholas Venette's *Pleasures of Conjugal Love*, both first published at the end of the seventeenth century but popular throughout the eighteenth. Joseph Fawcett, *An Humble Attempt to form a System of Conjugal Morality: being the Substance of six Discourses Addressed to Young Persons of both Sexes, with a Design to lead them through the Becoming Duties of Celibacy and Marriage*, (Manchester, 1787) 117; Cesare Mussolini, *Friendly Advice Comprehending General Heads of Qualifications for Those Who Wish to Marry Well and Live Happy, Compiled and Translated from Different Authors*, (London: 1794); Henry Thomas Kitchener, *Letters on Marriage on the Causes of Matrimonial Infidelity and on the Reciprocal Relations of the Sexes in two volumes* (London: C.Chapple, 1812).

<sup>170</sup> William Whateley, *Directions for Married Persons Describing the Duties Common to both and peculiar to each of them*. (Bristol: for R.Farley, 1763). *The Science of Love or The Whole Art of Courtship Made Familiar to every Capacity, Containing Love Letters, Pleasing Conversations, Poems and Songs* (London: J.Roach, 1792).

<sup>171</sup> For a rich and detailed analysis of what these prints tell us see Vic Gattrell, *City of Lights: Sex and Satire in 18<sup>th</sup> Century London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

<sup>172</sup> Adriana S. Benzaquien, "The Doctor and the Child: Medical Preservation and Management of Children in the Eighteenth Century", *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century Age and Identity*. Ed. Muller, Anja, (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006) 13-24.

<sup>173</sup> John Blunt, *Man-Midwifery Dissected or the Obstetric Family Instructor for the use of Married Couples and Single Adults of Both Sexes in Fourteen Letters addressed to Dr Alex Hamilton* (London: R.W.Fores, 1793).

<sup>174</sup> Lincolnshire Archives: Flinders 1 & 2.

<sup>175</sup> Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, (London: Penguin Books, 2000) 209.

<sup>176</sup> See Angus McLaren, *A History of Contraception: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1990).

<sup>177</sup> Philogamus, *The Present State of Matrimony: or the Real Causes of conjugal Infidelity and Unhappy Marriages*, (1739) 79.

<sup>178</sup> *The evils of adultery and prostitution*, 4.

<sup>179</sup> For instance Courtall in James Bacon, *The Libertine* (1791); or Hargrave in James Norris, *The Mansion House: A Novel Written by a Young Gentleman*. (London: William Lane, 1796); *The Cherub or Guardian of Female Innocence Exposing the Arts of Boarding Schools, Hired Fortune Tellers, Corrupt Milliners, Apparent Ladies of Fashion*, (London: W.Locke, 1792); Honoria, *The Female Mentor: or, Select Conversations ... In two volumes*. (London, 1793); Mary Robinson, *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination with Anecdotes by Anne Frances Randall* (London: T.N.Longman and O. Rees, 1799).

<sup>180</sup> Stone, 377, calculated the median age of marriage among the children of the upper and professional classes was reaching twenty-eight by 1800.

<sup>181</sup> Barbara Taylor, "Feminists versus Gallants: Manners and Morals in Enlightenment Britain", *Representations* No 87, (Summer 2004) 125-148.

<sup>182</sup> Henry Carey, *Cupid and Hymen; a voyage to the isles of love and matrimony. By the facetious H.C. and T.B To which is added a map of the Island of Marriage...By Sir Humphrey Single Esq (Henry Ward)*, (London, 1748), 38..

<sup>183</sup> Stone, 378.

<sup>184</sup> Eg. *World and Fashionable Advertiser*, Friday, March 30, 1787; *Times* May 29, 1793; *The Sun* Monday, December 29, 1794.

<sup>185</sup> Hitchcock, (1997) 31.

<sup>186</sup> *The Fatal Effects of Inconstancy Verified in the Life and Uncommon Proceedings of Miss Broderick who was tried on July 17 at Chelmsford Assizes for the Murder of Mr Errington Her Lover by shooting him with a pistol*

and proved insane to the satisfaction of a crowded audience, as appeared by the Clapping of Hands on hearing the Verdict given, (London: Printed for Robert Turner in Jan 1796) 23.

<sup>187</sup> Fordyce, 8. *Evils of adultery*, 3; Gisborne, 604.

<sup>188</sup> “*Twas Wrong to Marry Him*”, 2 vols. (London: printed for F&J. Noble, 1773), Vol. 2, 155-6.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, 219.

<sup>190</sup> James Gillray *Sir Richard Worse-than-Shy, Exposing his Wife’s Bottom-O Eye* (W.Humphreys 1782) in Gattrell, 2.

<sup>191</sup> Cornuto, *Cuckoldom triumphant or matrimonial incontinence vindicated. Illustrated with intrigues public and private, ancient and modern. By a gentleman of Doctors Commons. To which is added, a looking glass for each sex.* 2 vols., (London: T.Thom, 1771) I,13.

<sup>192</sup> *The whole of the Trial of the Hon Charles Wyndham on a Charge of Adultery with Sophia, the wife of Anthony Hodges Esq. Before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury When, After an Examination of Considerable Length Replete with Curious Matter, and in which was mentioned among others an ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE The Jury Gave a Verdict in Favour of the Defendant*, (London: Upton, 1791) 23.

<sup>193</sup> *The Trial of His R.H. the D. of C. July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1770 for CRIMINAL CONVERSATION with Lady Harriet G-----r., 1770; Trial of Mrs Harriet Errington, Wife of George Errington of the Adelphi in the Bishop of London’s Court, at Doctors Commons* (1785).

<sup>194</sup> *The evils of adultery*, 49.

<sup>195</sup> Lady Grosvenor, for instance, won her case by revealing her husband’s many affairs and Rev Altham was married at the time of his adulteries: see *The Trial of the Rev James Altham of Harlow in the County of Essex, Vicar of St.Olave, Jenry; Rector of St Martin-in-the-Fields; and one of His Majesty’s Justices of the Pace for Essex For Adultery, Defamation and Obscenity in the Consistorial and Episcopal Court of London, at Doctors Commons* (London: Printed for G. Lister, 1785).

<sup>196</sup> Lawrence Stone, *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England 1660-1857*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1993) 12.

<sup>197</sup> Eg. “The Trial of the Rev William Sneyd for seducing, debauching and carrying off the wife of Henry Cecil Esq Before Lord Kenyon in the Court of the King’s Bench Westminster, June 26 1790” in *The Cuckold’s Chronicle Being Select Trials for Adultery, Incest, Imbecillity, Ravishment &c* Vols 1 and 2 (London: H.Lemoine, 1793); *The Trial at Large on an Action for Damages brought by the Right Hon George Fred. Earl of Westmeath against the Honourable Augustus Cavdenish Bradshaw for Adultery with the Right Hon Mary Anne, Countess of Westmeath* (1796).

<sup>198</sup> Eg. *Baytun; The Trial of Lydia Sheridan* (1787); *The Trial of Mrs Elizabeth Williams in the Arches Court of Canterbury at Doctors Commons For Committing Adultery with Joseph Peyton Esq Captain of the Beaver Sloop; The Very Interesting and Remarkable Trial of Mrs Elizabeth Hankey (formerly Elizabeth Thomson)*, 1783.

<sup>199</sup> See *A Report of an Action Brought in His Majesty’s Court of King’s Bench by William Middleton of Stockeld-Park Esq Against John Rose, His Groom for Criminal Conversation with Clara Louisa Middleton, the Wife of Mr. Middleton* (London: C.G and J.Robinson, 1795).

<sup>200</sup> Ann Monsarrat, *And The Bride Wore; The Story of the White Wedding* (London: Gentry Books Ltd, 1973).

<sup>201</sup> Plymouth Record Office 1259/1 & 2 Parkers of Saltram correspondence. Ref 535/11-31 John Andrews of Modbury.

<sup>202</sup> Lincolnshire Archive. Ref 2MM G 5/1-2; Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre Refs. 116/109-111.

*Before  
Marriage*

*The happy marriage is where two persons meet, and voluntarily make choice of each other, without principally regarding or neglecting the circumstance of fortune and beauty... Personal perfections are the only solid foundation for conjugal happiness; the gifts of fortune are adventitious, and may be acquired; but intrinsic worth is permanent and incommunicable <sup>1</sup>*

# *Chapter 1*

## *Wooing and Winning – Published*

Men's formal marriage experience begins in the period before the ceremony, when lovers and their families negotiate the emotional, financial and social "rules and rituals",<sup>2</sup> "pitfalls and uncertain outcomes"<sup>3</sup> of the period known as Courtship through which all couples passed in one way or another on their route to matrimony. For Amanda Vickery, being courted might be "the only time in her life [when] a woman was the absolute centre of attention, and often the protagonist of a thrilling drama",<sup>4</sup> but eighteenth-century writers were more divided about its appeal for men. It might be "the pleasantest part of a man's life"<sup>5</sup> or, conversely "a fatal season".<sup>6</sup> Courtship could "test their masculinity to the utmost"<sup>7</sup> and produced a wide range of responses and approaches. In this chapter and the next, I shall look at the representations of courtship, particularly but not exclusively from a male perspective, contained in a variety of publications and some private experiences portrayed in contemporary letters and diaries.

Work on the process of individuals acquiring marital status, and the literature that represented it to a growing public of readers, predominantly takes the female perspective, for instance in studies by Vickery, Nancy Armstrong, Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, Caroline Gonda, and Eleanor Wikborg.<sup>8</sup> The "walk to the altar" might well have been "the most decisive a lady was ever to take",<sup>9</sup> but what of the man waiting for her there? How did he come to be marrying at all and why to this particular bride? What were the stages and activities he had gone through and obstacles overcome? What advice or models did he have to help him carry out the role of suitor and the courtship process through which it was performed? Why were many men reluctant to adopt the role and how did they manage to avoid it? And what difference did class or social status make to courtship conduct? These are some of the questions to be answered in this chapter which, in contrast to most other work on the topic, will examine representations of the pursuer rather than the pursued. It is not possible, of course, to separate the two roles entirely, nor right to assume the pursuer was always a man. It is clear from several reports of cases for breach of promise to marry and some examples from advice literature, that, in these cases, it was frequently the woman – usually, but not always, older – who instigated the courtship. Nor should we assume that the male suitor was always young or that he was doing it for the first time. But, in the main, suitors in both

literature and 'real life' records which I have examined are young men and either from gentry or wealthier business families.

As a masculine performance,<sup>10</sup> courtship has three major participants – the suitor, his father and the father of the proposed bride. Although the Marriage Act (1753) only required parental approval for marriage where either partner was under 21, in most cases the acquiescence of both fathers – particularly the bride's – was necessary and resulted finally from satisfactory negotiation of the property and other settlements.<sup>11</sup> As I shall show later, the wider family had a role in this process but, as long as he was still alive, the father was the dominant force; if he was not alive then he would almost certainly have appointed a guardian. The versions of masculinity displayed by the three men may be very different but were all part of what it was to be an orthodox eighteenth-century man. The suitor may be seen as an example of what E.J.Clery called the "feminization" of society. In the proffer he makes of ardour, passion, sincerity and constancy he employs feminized language, and in the popular role of supplicant temporarily abandons the authority status which patriarchy accords his maleness.<sup>12</sup> This is not true, of course, of all lovers and we shall see examples later where masculine qualities of caution, integrity, taciturnity and responsibility dominate. These lovers, as Eleanor Wikborg has shown through critical analysis of some fiction, echo characteristics central to the father's performance. For the fathers, disposal of a child – son or daughter – in marriage is the most significant exercise of authority and the way it is done has consequences for perceptions of their manliness. Wikborg's model is a literary construction with, as we have seen in Joseph Strutt, practical application. For the lover in this version, the transformation to husband entails adaptation to the father role but with sexual rights. In doing so, he will consciously or unconsciously determine the kind of father he will be, and achieve masculinity in awareness of both his own parent's conduct and that of the older man who has been his new wife's model. The small, but significant, group of men who resist marriage, may do so to enhance their masculine standing among their acquaintance or in some cases, to reject the hegemony of "compulsory heterosexuality".<sup>13</sup> Randolph Trumbach notes that in the eighteenth century "adult men with homosexual desires" were increasingly presumed to be "members of an effeminate minority [...] men had entered a new gender system by changing the nature of their sexual relations with each other: men no longer had sex with boys and women - they now had sex either with females or with males".<sup>14</sup>

Whatever their personal experience was to be, men and women contemplating marriage, all the friends and family who might be concerned and even people with no interest in a matrimonial event, could find a wide range of literary materials through which to explore their feelings, plan their procedures or confirm their prejudices. Contemporary feminist writing created one strand of cultural awareness potentially affecting men's approach to marriage, but there were many others.<sup>15</sup> An entire fictional genre – the courtship novel – explored the complexities of the process, and an extensive range of conduct literature was devoted to advising young people on the why, how, what and when of the pre-marriage dance. It is this literature, plus newspapers and periodical commentary on marriage, and the revelations of breach of promise cases where the whole courtship process has unravelled into painful failure, that will be examined in this chapter. The variety of discursive evidence presents both opportunities and challenges. Accumulation of examples may suggest some historical reality, although this can be undermined by the rhetorical intention of the material. Fiction is a case in point. J. Paul Hunter claimed that “A lot of the pleasure available, especially to young readers, involved recognizable situations in the contemporary world where decisions about marriage and a course of life were practical ones”. Novels then might be social history but “‘accuracy’ [...] is thus doubly, even quadruply, complicated. Novels rely on a context of which they are a part and they address it with a design to modify it, make it move on.”<sup>16</sup> As a “mode of knowledge”<sup>17</sup> they inform historical understanding while, at the same time, fulfilling formal conventions that render them unhistorical.

Contemporary commentators condemned the effect of novels on their readers: James Fordyce vituperated “the swarms of foolish and of worthless novels, incessantly spawned by dull and by dissolute scribblers” and Vicesimus Knox, while admitting that Richardson's novels had the “purest intentions of promoting virtue”, argued that, in the process, “scenes are laid open, which it would be safer to conceal, and sentiments excited, which it would be more advantageous to early virtue not to admit”.<sup>18</sup> He feared that “the moral view is rarely regarded by youthful and inexperienced readers, who naturally pay the chief attention to the lively description of love, and its effects”.<sup>19</sup> A correspondent to *The Gentleman's Magazine* blamed novels for “corrupting the idea of real love”, and described the novel as “more powerful than the nurse, the mother and the Common Prayer Book”.<sup>20</sup> An equally critical writer in *The Lounger* noted that he:

purposely pointed my observations, not to that common herd of Novels (the wretched offspring of circulating libraries) which are despised for their insignificance, or proscribed for their immorality; but to the errors, as they appear to me, of those admired ones which are frequently put into the hands of youth, for imitation as well as amusement.<sup>21</sup>

The advice literature, once directed principally at men but, by the latter part of the eighteenth century increasingly at women,<sup>22</sup> employed the prism of clearly defined rules for choosing and pursuing an appropriate love object. Generally, these rules favoured reflective rather than passion-driven choice and encouraged both parties, but particularly men, to look beyond the immediate excitement of the chase to the longer term realities of domestic life. Caution may be needed over the historical representativeness of conduct literature. With its avowed purpose of modifying behaviour, this literature may be unreliable as evidence of how people actually behaved, but modern scholarship has generally accepted its truth. Nancy Armstrong, for instance concluded that this literature “presented readers [...] with ideology in its most powerful form”<sup>23</sup> which assumes some practical application. Similarly, Ingrid Tague suggested that “by insisting on the primacy of love in marriage, eighteenth-century conduct writers changed the language of subordination”.<sup>24</sup> With this acknowledged influential authority, we can, perhaps, accept post-hoc some conclusions about their historical validity.

The strictly ‘courtship’ novel concentrates explicitly on a young woman’s entry into the world and how she makes a choice from competing suitors, or resists the constraints on that choice imposed by family or convention.<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Bergen Brophy in her exploration of the interplay between women’s lives and the novel argued that “With their emphasis on mutual esteem between the couple and their condemnation of sordid motives for marriage, novels encouraged the tendency towards companionate marriages based on love rather than family alliances”.<sup>26</sup> But “The sentimental novel, although entertainment, was [also] a recognised agent for the dissemination of argument and advice”<sup>27</sup> and within the genre room existed for economic, social and political commentary, and the exploration of gender roles. This is what we find in most of the novels considered here and especially true in the more radical authors of the 1790s and early 1800s<sup>28</sup> in which period “political crisis had already become [...] thoroughly intertextualized in the fiction”.<sup>29</sup>



Two themes dominate modern literature on marital choice: first Lawrence Stone's proposition that a change from interest to affection as the main marriage motivation occurred during the century; and second the impact of marriage on the subordination of women in domesticity and the restrictions of the private sphere. Both will be considered as part of the context in which to review eighteenth-century writing. The "grand narrative of romantic love has been problematic",<sup>30</sup> in part, at least, because of continuing eighteenth-century discursive preoccupation with the persistence of "mercenary marriage" as a guiding principle of choice, and the casual licentiousness that often followed marriage, particularly, but not exclusively, among the elite. These phenomena sit uncomfortably with the hegemonic "love-match". The frequency of affection for and choice of the love object may have gained traction in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but Stone's "much criticised attempts to [...] bolster claims that a newly affective, individualistic and inward-looking family came to offer a haven of love and security in the late eighteenth century"<sup>31</sup>, are still the subject of controversy among family historians.<sup>32</sup> The line between "a union of interests and a love-match is not always easily drawn",<sup>33</sup> and "most love matches were made within strict limits".<sup>34</sup> The 'real life' courtship narratives in Chapter 2 exemplify these diverse reasons for marrying and demonstrate, as Steve King suggested, that, "the process may be more complex than macro theories allow".<sup>35</sup> Across classes, geography, age and occupations, historians locate widely different experiences of opportunity, pursuit, selection and accomplishment. Waller, for instance, claims that, "after a betrothal or an exchange of verbal promises many couples tended to consider themselves 'married in the eyes of God' and anticipated the wedding night".<sup>36</sup> Gillis maintained that, "most choices were collectively (community, family, kin) rather than individually determined"<sup>37</sup> and King that "kinship, friendship and neighbourhood networks could be a pivotal or negative influence on the courtship, marriage and household formation process".<sup>38</sup> Most of the courtship narratives described in chapter 2 support this analysis. Within this social framework, "Women had to wait on men to make the first move, although brothers, sisters or friends could be used to act as go-betweens and alert a young man to a woman's inclinations".<sup>39</sup>

The second theme traces the consequence of courtship on female subordination. Court records and other materials that chronicle the prevalence of male 'domestic violence' – a term that Joanne Bailey, incidentally, considers 'anachronistic' for the period –<sup>40</sup> provide evidence of reduced female agency in both choice and

experience of marriage.<sup>41</sup> Bailey has identified “pessimists who think that women’s status diminished as a result of both legal and cultural influences and optimists who propose that marriage was more mutual and complementary”, and reconciles these two views because “contemporary culture itself [...] promoted an idealised view of harmonious relations between spouses while simultaneously demanding female subordination”.<sup>42</sup> She discovered that not all relations were gendered and between married couples, a “great deal of co-dependency existed”.<sup>43</sup> This dichotomy is revealed in my examination of conduct literature and fiction. Resolution of some of these questions is more likely to derive from historical research than textual analysis: for example Hannah Barker’s work on four Manchester men’s diaries that exposes the men’s feelings towards marriage and their wives as well as their thoughts, actions and context.<sup>44</sup> Objections might be raised to the small scale of the research but, as with my own work detailed in chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis, the gradual accumulation of this kind of evidence will help to broaden the picture. So far, Amanda Vickery’s analysis of the diaries, correspondence and other writings of a group of Lancashire gentry provides the most complete portrayal of a defined group’s courtship and marriage experience. She admits, however: “This is not a story that sits comfortably with the accepted narratives and categories of English women’s history, indeed, it is the very reverse of the accepted tale of progressive incarceration in a domestic, private sphere”.<sup>45</sup>

Critical analysis of contemporary texts - particularly conduct books and fiction – usually generates a representation of female subordination and, by analogy, male domination. In her discussion of feminism and the novel, Armstrong suggested that “Feminist literary theory [...] persuaded a whole generation of readers to consider what female protagonists lacked rather than their male counterparts”.<sup>46</sup> They most often identify the lack of political agency to affect change, however “local and temporary” to any woman’s own situation. Fiction produces “a class specific definition of women, a normative model – ‘Angel in the House’ in England, ‘The Cult of True Womanhood’ in the United States”.<sup>47</sup> Arguing that law and custom, “increasingly defined women as wives rather than daughters,” Perry believed that, “the responsibility of fathers for daughters was so far attenuated that the fantasy of paternal responsibility was the subject of nostalgic yearning”.<sup>48</sup> The idea of “nostalgic yearning” implies an unsatisfactory alternative – acquisition by a husband – which creates a set of assumptions about the nature of the relationship and may then be fed by Foucauldian assertions about power within the marriage. The actual conduct of men in courtship and

marriage is seldom the overt subject of modern scholarship, but is insinuated from the female lack of political agency.

### *Manuals of Conduct and Advice*

In this section, I examine advice or conduct literature that considered or promoted important features of marital choice and was available to both men and women in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Later I will trace similar content in fiction. The two genres have obvious areas of overlap: as well as much of the conduct literature being presented in fictional form, many fictions can be shown to replicate ideas, argument and characters found in advice material. Lady Pennington's letter to her daughter, for instance, warns: "you are just entering, my dear girl, into a world full of deceit and falsehood, where few persons or things appear as they really are; vice hides her deformity with the borrowed garb of virtue".<sup>49</sup> This is precisely the advice that Mr Monkton, albeit with mixed motives, gives Cecilia Beverley when she leaves for London, and which proves, at least in the early part of the novel, appropriately prescient.<sup>50</sup>

The difference between the fictional vignettes of advice literature and the romantic novel is mainly in their different levels of complexity and the requirement for characters in the latter to grow and develop. In her work on *How Novels Think*, Nancy Armstrong argues "that the history of the novel and the history of the modern subject are, quite literally, one and the same".<sup>51</sup> Most of the novels being considered here are concerned with the subjectivity of the female protagonist. Only those by Bage and Holcroft are principally concerned with male identity, but all the others have significant male characters upon whom it would be possible to theorise the male suitor as self-governing individual. This construction does not usually carry the same level of anxiety and lack of control that is evident in the women, but the result is not necessarily unproblematic.

Conduct books fell into three principal categories: the polemical which expatiated on the ideals of marriage and the effect on society of their depravation; those that addressed the practical conduct of marriage; and the group devoted to helping young men and women make decisions about their journey into marital status. Of this last group, two further divisions can be made: those that addressed what they envisaged as their readers' concerns directly – sometimes under the banner of parental advice to

offspring; and those which approached them tangentially through, for instance, the developing interest in epistolary skills.<sup>52</sup> Some authors employed the technique of identifying different kinds of lover to demonstrate the messages they wish to endorse. *The Complete Art of Writing Love Letters*, for instance, includes in its 40 model letters and commentary on, among other things 'The Sweets of Matrimony' and 'Good Advice to Batchelors', effusions from 'The Constant Lover', 'The Sincere Lover', 'The Dishonourable Lover', 'The Raving Lover'.<sup>53</sup>

The surprising thing about *The Complete Art* is its lack of any obvious instructional content. *Every Man His Own Letter Writer*, on the other hand, devotes ten pages to "A Plain and Familiar Grammar" and a further three to "General Directions for Writing Letters". But the book mainly comprises nearly sixty letters on "Courtship and Marriage" squeezed between smaller sections on "Letters of Advice and Rebuke" and on "Friendship" plus a whole series of exemplary business letters.<sup>54</sup> By comparison, the much older *A New Academy of Compliments*, written during the seventeenth-century but still in print in 1784, took the following as its theme: "Without Dispute, Eloquence is a Qualification highly necessary to adorn both sexes, more especially the Female whose tongues often prove as attractive as their Beauty". It then offered multiple variations on the ways to approach various social situations such as 'The Way to Invite a Friend to Dinner' or 'To accost a Lady and enter into a Discourse with her'. This latter offered six opening gambits and then six more for if "it be a Lady to whom you have never spoke before, and with whom you are fallen passionately in Love, and towards whom you are determined to continue your Love". There are six pages of instruction on 'The Form of Writing Letters' and then over thirty examples of standard types of letter plus a "Silent Hand Language" by which a man might intrigue secretly with a woman while in company plus, 'A Short Treatise on Moles in all parts of the Body'.<sup>55</sup>

We know very little about the readership of this type of material.<sup>56</sup> Although Ingrid Tague suggested that "most writers were not explicit about their intended readers,"<sup>57</sup> some texts were addressed to 'young men', 'young women', or both, but the actual composition of the readership is less clear. Most of the work on book sales and the business of bookselling and publishing has concentrated on the novel, the history or belles lettres.<sup>58</sup> Jacqueline Pearson discusses conduct books but, only as one type of material read by women.<sup>59</sup> Jan Fergus has shown that, in the provincial bookshops she

studied, men were the principal purchasers of novels and, “Even if we assume that some were obtaining fiction for their wives or daughters, others can be shown not to have done so”.<sup>60</sup> Whether men also read conduct material addressed to women, and how many read that addressed to men or to both genders, is not at all clear. But, the different approach of the later letter-writing guides suggests that readers had become more sophisticated in their demands and were less interested in tuition and more in identifying with the characters who supposedly wrote the letters. The later letter writing guides served as role models of communicative style but also, perhaps more valuably, of amatory expectation. As well as learning to express their feelings, readers might also learn what it was appropriate to feel – a variation on Armstrong’s opinion that conduct books determined “what kind of woman men should find desirable”.<sup>61</sup>

Inducements for men to marry appealed to aspects of both self-interest and altruism. Apart from the social and political imperatives of the institution which were discussed in the Introduction, this material highlighted the human essentialism of the married state – “necessity obliges both sexes to find a companion”;<sup>62</sup> and “Man and woman, are made for each other [...] Either considered singly, does not constitute a perfect moral being and in a state of separation, could not exist in circumstances of utility or enjoyment”.<sup>63</sup> John Adams warned men, “hope not to find *unalloyed* happiness in this ever varying life” but argued “the nearest approach to it is the state of the wedded pair”.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, readers of the *Complete Art* were told “if you find yourself capable of regulating a family, of living upon good terms with an honest person, and of giving good education to children, you would find that there is nothing more comfortable than living with a woman who has made a tender of herself to you”.<sup>65</sup> Readers of *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* had long been told that “Without a doubt the uniting of hearts in holy wedlock is, of all conditions, the happiest; for then a man has a second self”.<sup>66</sup> John Ovington highlighted the positive personal and social effects on a man of the marital state:

The matrimonial connection stamps a man’s character, and adds to his dignity. It gives him a greater degree of respectability in society; and when he becomes the father of a family he feels his importance increasing. Every body considers him as a person of more consequence to the community, than he could have been if he had remained single. <sup>67</sup>

Other writers appealed to a man’s sense of social responsibility or obligation to the young women for whom marriage was the principal, if not only, way to establish

themselves in society.<sup>68</sup> A woman on her own, Cesare Mussolini suggested, was like “a flock of sheep without a guardian, not knowing any person to protect her from the violence of those who are only desirous for violence”.<sup>69</sup> Men were enjoined to contemplate “how far it is in [their] power to contribute to the happiness of the more delicate part of creation”.<sup>70</sup>

The more self-interested encouragements for men to enter the matrimonial state might be oversimplified as “sex and money” or, ‘what Carey called “the two Ports” by which to arrive at matrimony – “love and interest”.<sup>71</sup> For the newly rich “big cits”<sup>72</sup> this might mean exchanging a daughter for access to titled society, while for the impoverished aristocracy and gentry this so-called “Smithfield bargain”<sup>73</sup> enabled estates to be saved and titles to remain untarnished. These were the people Carey had in mind when he wrote of the “Port”... “of interest” as a

trading Port ... where *Fathers* and *Mothers* keep a *perpetual Fair*, to *put off* their *Daughters*, who are set out for sale and [...] disposed of for good round Sums in ready money

Whereas other types of merchant expect money in return for their merchandise, “these give a handsome Price to those who will take their Merchandise off their Hands”.<sup>74</sup>

Thus men might acquire the funds to maintain the stable, gambling and the opulence of a rakeish life-style. While all these exchanges might have been invaluable for the developing commercialisation of Britain and the conspicuous consumption that went with it,<sup>75</sup> the general trend of both fiction and conduct literature was to denigrate the mercenary marriage. As late as 1828, in his advice for the promotion of conjugal happiness, Francis Lye, was still criticising men who “seldom think” except of “marrying a Lady of great fortune, and merely because she is possessed of one, without feeling one spark of Love, or affection for the woman they seek to unite with. In the great majority of instances, it is from this origin that the conjugal state is so often rendered unhappy”.<sup>76</sup> Benjamin Franklin thought “marriages which are made on the mere motives of interest, will naturally turn out insipid, unhappy, and fatal situations”. However, he quickly dismissed the idea that, “prudence and discretion, with regard to fortune, are to be banished from our consideration”.<sup>77</sup> In other words, a man should not be content with his bride’s “hand” which could be given him by her father; he must also win her “heart”, which only she could bestow. Many commentators supported Sir John Fielding’s contention that “A marriage of love is pleasant, a marriage of interest easy,

and a marriage where both meet happy”.<sup>78</sup> Men whose interest was only in the money, rather than the person or mind of the woman they pursue, are less severely reprobated in literature than women who make that choice, perhaps because of some residual sympathy for Sir John Barnard’s view that a “fair wife, with empty pockets, is like a noble house without furniture, showy but useless”<sup>79</sup>.

Ingrid Tague contends that, despite the many motives for matrimony revealed in recent studies of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, “they emphasise that love was always accepted as an important factor in choosing a spouse.”<sup>80</sup> But love is a compendious concept and covers many aspects of human feeling. Men were encouraged to love without, in the conduct material at least, any clear indication of what that might mean. Was it passion, a sexualised emotion that might overwhelm body and mind?<sup>81</sup> Could it be the product of esteem in which the love object’s quality of mind and accomplishments were the attraction? Was it a feeling that a man could analyse and determine by rational examination? The conduct literature and fiction we are considering encourage the belief that it encompassed all of these.

To advance sexualised aspects of love, men were told that “nature has implanted in every creature a mutual desire of copulation”<sup>82</sup>, “but our Privy Parts are more sensible than those of Women”.<sup>83</sup> Many statements of love are in fact passionate expressions of sexual feeling. They are modelled in fiction and conduct material and, as I shall show in the next chapter, may also be found in the love letters of ‘real’ men. Conduct letters, such as that of “The Lover in Raptures” in *The Complete Art*, can be both intense and sensitive in their evocation of sexual engagement. Recalling a kiss, he writes to the woman: “[...] that at least was a lover’s kiss. Its eagerness, its fierceness, its warmth, expressed the God its parent. But oh! its sweetness, and its melting softness, expressed him more, with trembling in my limbs, and fever in my soul, I ravished it”. And then, as though he wanted to make absolutely sure she could not misunderstand his intentions, “Convulsions, pantings, murmurings, shewed the mighty disorder within me; the mighty disorder increased by it; for those dear lips shot through my heart and through my [...] bleeding vitals, delicious poison, and avoidless, yet charming ruin.” Overwhelmed by sexual desire, his previously settled world has, he says, “in a moment [...] have removed me to a prodigious distance from every object but you alone”.<sup>84</sup> In modelling this degree of abandon, the letter implicitly invites readers to explore the same feelings in themselves.

When it came to marriage, however, what did men value in a prospective bride? From her analysis of “lonely hearts” advertisements, Francesca Beauman concluded that “Men want a partner who is young”. Next most important on the list are looks, domestic prowess and resources of ‘Comeliness, Prudence and 5 or 600l. in Money, Land or Joynture.’<sup>85</sup> These choice drivers are a mixture of the biological, psychological and cultural. Evolution encourages youthful union because of its greater potential for procreative success but the other measures by which men choose their mates can be located within the cultural environment in which the pursuit occurs. And this was an environment structured, in Armstrong’s perception, by literature – conduct and fiction – which strove to “reproduce, if not always revise, the culturally approved forms of desire”.<sup>86</sup> Although not apparent in the ‘dating agency’ preferences described by Beaumann, “Her value as a female was supposed to derive from certain qualities of mind, or nature as a desiring subject”.<sup>87</sup>

Chastity – or “this overvaluation of virginity”<sup>88</sup> – was supposedly the prerequisite of bridal choice. Eighteenth-century discursive obsessions with female virginity arose, in part at least, from conceptions of masculinity that might be “tested to the utmost by courtship.”<sup>89</sup> “Female sexuality became a commodity in which a woman’s virginity and marital chastity had a price, to be bartered by fathers and husbands.”<sup>90</sup> But “there is sufficient evidence from private correspondence to indicate that sexual passion was an essential ingredient of many marriages,” and that eighteenth-century woman was “better equipped than any generation before her to handle the problems of marital sexuality”.<sup>91</sup> In her chapter on Sexualized Marriage, Perry argues that the moral debates contained in novels “were part of the process of re-conceiving Englishwomen as the sexual property of their husbands”.<sup>92</sup> Much conduct material, on the other hand, entreats husbands to recognise their wives’ subjectivity, “like a man who knows the value of the blessing he possesses”.<sup>93</sup>

Patriarchal subordination of women required fathers to hand over a chaste object and the husband to maintain it. Philogamus had set out the ostensible reason:

Because [the adulterous wife and by implication the unchaste bride] not only imposes a spurious Breed on her Husband’s Family; makes a Foreigner Heir to his Estate; depriving sometimes his own real Children begotten afterwards of their just Inheritance; or, at least, his right Heirs and next Relations; but makes the Son of a Man his Heir, who has done him the greatest Injury.<sup>94</sup>



In George Kenrick's 1753 version of *The Whole Duty of Woman*, women are warned: "its loss is the loss of peace and satisfaction to thy soul; and the consequences too often the worst that can befall thee".<sup>95</sup> But the desire of men to "discern the presence of other men on 'their' women's bodies",<sup>96</sup> perhaps reflected their insecurity about the "extent to which women's behaviour was actually constrained by the cultural and ideological developments"<sup>97</sup> that encouraged women to see themselves as sexually passive. It certainly led in Tassie Gwilliam's perception to "women's reciprocal impulse to erase those markings"<sup>98</sup> and the ludicrous situation of medical writers such as Venette prescribing recipes for both discovering and concealing broken hymens – one for use by the prospective husband or his family, the other for prospective brides.<sup>99</sup> Even more ludicrous, perhaps, is the use of those recipes by 'innocent maid[s]' who are 'naturally too wide'. Thus the maiden whose body might falsely betray her is encouraged to use the techniques of counterfeit virgins to prove her own (true) virginity.<sup>100</sup>

It was not, however, only a question of the loss of physical virginity; men were also thought to value a kind of mental chastity in the women they would marry. John Gregory told his daughters:

One of the chief beauties in a female character, is that modest reserve, that retiring delicacy, which avoids the public eye, and is disconcerted even at the gaze of admiration.[...] When a girl ceases to blush, she has lost the most powerful charm of beauty.<sup>101</sup>

Other desirable features in a prospective wife were the subject of conduct literature. Mussolini's contention that, "men must seek for beauty of person, whilst the proper effect of beauty is to generate love",<sup>102</sup> represented a conservative expression of female virtue. Most writers were promoting the merit of accomplishment over beauty. Sarah Howard thought that "however a man may at first be captivated by a beautiful woman, if that be all her boast, her pretensions to a husband's affection stand on a precarious foundation".<sup>103</sup> Before contracting a marriage a man should be sure of the woman below the surface. John Ovington recommended, "When a man marries, if he acts wisely, he marries for love; he prefers the person before the property; and virtue before beauty; the mind before the body".<sup>104</sup> Eugenia Stanhope, in her advice to young women, emphasised the importance of affection to married happiness<sup>105</sup> and Benjamin Franklin had earlier explicated the belief that: "there cannot be any steady and lasting happiness, where a mutual esteem, and friendship of the strongest kind does not subsist." Its cultivation should be the "sacred business of our courtship".<sup>106</sup> *The Matrimonial Preceptor*

contrasted the claims: “As love without esteem is volatile and capricious; esteem without love, is languid and cold”.<sup>107</sup> The *Beauties of the Magazines* agreed that marriage “ought not to be entered into without some prospect of felicity, grounded upon judgement and reason.”<sup>108</sup> The writer of letters to Lord Exeter proclaimed:

the genuine principal of love, producing genuine and permanent happiness – is not an idea merely speculative; it is not a poetic fancy conceived to amuse or delude the multitude, it is an indispensable principle of nature, as obvious in its utility as any truth of natural philosophy.<sup>109</sup>

John Aikin - dissenter physician, writer and brother of Anna Laetitia Barbauld<sup>110</sup> - having first established that, “The difference of opinion between sons and fathers in the matrimonial choice may be stated in a single position – that the former have in their minds the first month of marriage, the latter, the whole of its duration” considered the “two main points on which the happiness to be expected from a female associate in life must depend – her qualifications as a *companion* and as a *helper*” and went on to advise his son that: “no man ever married a fool without [...] repenting it”. He thought the “pretty trifler [...] enough for the hour of dalliance and gaiety, yet when folly assumes the reins of domestic, and especially of parental, controul, she will give a perpetual heart-ache to a considerate partner”. Aikin believed that “the arts of housewifery should be regarded as *professional* to the woman who intends to become a wife” and consequently should be added to the list of qualities by which a man might choose a wife.<sup>111</sup> “[S]weet temper [...] to sooth the Anguish and Anxiety produced by Hurry and Disappointments” is a quality applauded in *The Lovers Instructor*.<sup>112</sup> Joseph Fawcett “ever thought it the most valuable recommendation of a wife, to be capable of becoming a conversable companion to her husband”.<sup>113</sup> Betty Rizzo refutes this recommendation when she concludes that “Throughout the eighteenth century, while male rhetoric was almost universally, perhaps unprecedentedly, valued and studied, women’s silence was almost universally commended, recommended, and virtually enforced”.<sup>114</sup>

Notions of esteem may be rooted in the man’s recognition of his potential partner’s intellectual powers but this was not thought entirely unproblematic. John Adams, in his diatribe against modern education of women and the effect of novels on both sexes, wrote:

But refinement has now taught the sex to slight the commendations of their beauty, if not accompanied by the higher flattery of intellectual

merit.[...] Nay, not content with deceiving *them*, we even deceive ourselves. For having been inspired by novels, and the retailed delusions of novels, with romantic ideas of early attachment, and having learned by rote a sentiment which few can feel, 'That all true love must have its source in mental excellence' - we are no sooner conscious of the flutterings of *desire*, than we fancy ourselves in *love*; and no sooner do we suppose ourselves in love, than we conceive that the fair object must be a paragon of wisdom and refinement.<sup>115</sup>

By foregrounding mental excellence and accomplishment, literature encouraged men to assume their presence in favoured women, and thus justify the privileging of beauty in their choice. The extent and nature of a woman's education permeated this tendency. But, paradoxically, women were also being warned to hide their learning. In her advice to her daughters, Lady Pennington warned:

It has been objected against all female learning, beyond that of household œconomy, that it tends only to fill the minds of the sex with a conceited vanity, which sets them above their proper business, occasions an indifference to, if not a total neglect of their family affairs, and serves only to render them useless wives, and impertinent companions.<sup>116</sup>

Franklin was even stronger in his warning against certain kinds of learning in a woman. "Nothing in nature is more odious and contemptible than a female pedant, a formal, conceited and affected wit; whose brain is loaded with a heap of undigested stuff [...] Such women are the mountebanks of their own, the dread and contempt of our sex".<sup>117</sup> John Gregory advised his daughters "if you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men who generally look with jealous and malicious eye on a woman of great parts and cultivated learning".<sup>118</sup>

This raises the question of honest dealing in courtship. Charles Freeman in *The Lovers' New Guide* thought that, in the pursuit of a love object, "unadorned truth will often fail to produce the desired effect; to ingratiate esteem, something more will be necessary than merely an endeavour to avoid exciting disgust".<sup>119</sup> Most writers, though, advanced the importance of caution and the need for information before making the choice of a partner. The *Complete Art* warned that:

The affairs of Lovers are generally so intricate and perplexed, that it's no easy matter for a by-stander to find the clue that leads to their real intentions. [...] Either the man conceals the basest designs under the cover of the most virtuous and honourable pretences; or the Lady

encourages those addresses which she is resolved to disappoint. Selfish or sinister views are too apt to gain the ascendancy in the scale of love; and the word *sincerity* is too frequently made a trap to ensnare unguarded virtue.<sup>120</sup>

The *Ladies' Magazine* thought that “in the choice of a companion for life, no one will be hardy enough to deny that great circumspection and a proper knowledge of the disposition of each party by the other is absolutely necessary”.<sup>121</sup> Franklin encouraged openness for the practical reason that, “By so intimate an union as marriage, all bodily defects will soon be discovered” but if, “no art had been used for their concealment, they might have caused little or no concern”.<sup>122</sup> This could apply equally to mental and behavioural defects as to bodily ones.

Male duplicity in love relations is a feature of both fiction and warnings in conduct literature. Men might “promise fair and yet, at the same time, aim at nothing more than the Gratification of their unruly desires.”<sup>123</sup> As Wetenhall Wilkes phrased it: “It is as much the province of a licentious rake, to betray the young, the rich, the beautiful, or the female; as it is the quality of a fox to prey upon poultry”.<sup>124</sup> In her *Letter to the Women of England*, Mary Robinson maintained: “the passions of men originate in sensuality; those of women in sentiment; man loves corporeally, woman mentally”.<sup>125</sup> These discrepancies support a climate of betrayal which, at its worst, promotes violent seduction and abandonment. The authors of the *Matrimonial Magazine* declared open war against “the designing and frivolous of their own sex”, while, at the same time, “they mean to be equally hostile against the Arts of Prudery and Coquetry in the other”.<sup>126</sup> Frances Lye thought, “the great majority [of men] are too apt to place their Thoughts on mere Transitory Pleasures”, but even when a man would be a “tolerable good Husband, the laughs and raileries, or Quizzing, of his fashionable associates, soon put him out of conceit with a correct Behaviour, and he becomes sullen and discontented”.<sup>127</sup>

That some men avoided marriage or were unable to find a suitable partner is well established.<sup>128</sup> Both Stone and Fletcher offer explanations of Early Modern male resistance to marriage. Stone simply asserted the economic argument that “During the late seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, there were a very high proportion of lifelong bachelors among younger sons of the nobility and gentry. Unless they were lucky enough to catch an heiress many could not afford to get married and still maintain themselves in the life style to which they were accustomed”.<sup>129</sup> This, he said, resulted

from changes in the distribution of funds to younger sons. Fletcher, conversely, highlighted psychological barriers to marriage: “Men’s dilemmas were focused upon a stereotype of womankind which left them feeling intensely vulnerable and unprotected”.<sup>130</sup> Neither considers the extent or reasons for resistance in the later eighteenth-century but contemporary conduct writers were more forthcoming. With no statistics or hard evidence, they chose to expound on qualitative reasons for deliberate resistance to marriage rather than accept other possibilities. One in *The Lover’s Instructor* expressed it colourfully:

From the Thoughts of Hanging, I naturally enter’d upon those of Matrimony. I considered how many Gentlemen have taken a handsome Swing, to avoid some inward Disquiets; then why shou’d not I hazard the Noose, to ease me of my Torment.<sup>131</sup>

Henry Kitchener believed “there is reason to think that pride and a desire of making an appearance beyond their means, prevent a great many of our young men from marrying; for not knowing how to acquire women with sufficient fortunes to enable them to live in the style they expect, they never marry at all, but gratify their passions in an illicit manner”.<sup>132</sup> Joseph Smeeton, opposing the suggested imposition of a “bachelor tax”, divided men into two classes: “those disposed to marry who become good husbands and fathers” while the others “may be said to devote themselves to the offices of dutiful sons, good brothers or relatives, obliging friends, honourable and advantageous members of their respective kingdoms or communities”. Consequently, it would be “opprobrious with government to single out the bachelors and require them to enter a condition of life they deem less eligible, in order to increase national finance”.<sup>133</sup>

Resistance to marriage and theories to explain it became popular topics of both articles and letters in the periodical Press. The ‘Disreputation of Matrimony’ resulted from “the insulting conduct which the young men of fashion now adopt towards the fair!”<sup>134</sup> Clericus – “greatly hurt to see so many unmarried persons” – surmised, “We have societies for everything, why not one to train up young women and young men to fit them for wives and husbands”.<sup>135</sup> This might counter the tendency of “our present race of young men – aye, and women too, [who] are foolishly impatient of reasonable control and madly rush in to the vortex of unlawful pleasures”.<sup>136</sup> But “no man in his senses would prefer the obscene and dear-bought embraces of a prostitute [...] to the blissful enjoyment of beauty, virtue, health and tranquillity, if the marriage state had not, like the Garden of Eden, a flaming sword at every corner”.<sup>137</sup> And yet, “Marriage has

been very justly compared to a lottery – here and there a capital prize, and many thousand blanks. He, therefore who marries, is a desperate adventurer – one very uncertain of augmenting his happiness but quite sure of increasing his cares”.<sup>138</sup> In fact “the married adventurer risques not only his fortune but his health, ease, liberty, fame and all that is dear to him and can expect no restoration of his quiet; whereas the adventurer in the lottery may receive part of his stock again”.<sup>139</sup> For James Single, “Happiness is an object the attainment of which stimulates the actions of all men, and the present era seems to be fraught with an universal opinion, particularly amongst young men, that this is only to be acquired, but in the possession of ‘riches’ or ‘money’ so that every other virtuous consideration is made subservient thereto”.<sup>140</sup> From a more positive perspective, “Matrimony is a vessel composed of two equal parts which, when properly united, and compacted together is found to be of infinite use in making the voyage of life”.<sup>141</sup> It is not the institution of marriage but, it is men and women who are heavenly minded or diabolical [who] are the cause of engagements which are not consistent” according to a writer in the *Sentimental Magazine*.<sup>142</sup>

Three major topics can be identified from this brief survey of conduct and advice literature: first the persistent tension between love and interest as the basis of marital choice; second, the varieties of form employed, whether to develop epistolary skills or instruct through fiction; and third the differences between identifiable male and female writers. Despite repeated insistence on the primacy of love and attraction to the person when choosing a marriage partner, anxiety remained high about the appeal of ‘interest’. There is an obvious tension between the moral and the pragmatic: men should not marry for money but, without it, many would not be able to marry at all and that would be bad for them and society at large. Law and custom which assigned a woman’s property to her husband on marriage supported the practical argument. Moral opposition emphasised and reprobated the degree of cynicism involved at the social level while appearing to understand the necessity for individuals. This persistence does not, in itself, invalidate claims for the predominance of affection in marriage but, even within the limited compass of advice literature, demonstrates a degree of ambiguity that complicates meaning and problematises a simple construction of the courtship concept.

The historical significance of the varied forms used by the conduct writers to convey their messages requires a much more detailed study than is possible here but two of the methods – epistolary instruction and fictional example – suggest appeal to an ever

widening audience. “In the late eighteenth-century, technical and organisational developments fostered family relationships. Increasing literacy, the introduction of the postal service, fast and relatively cheap travel by coach, steamer and later railway all encouraged family and friends to keep in touch”.<sup>143</sup> Thus acquisition of social and commercial communication skills became a necessary part of middle class identification and could be supported by the guides to writing. Similarly, increased freedom of marital choice created a demand for the discursive capacity to experience and express sentiment which as Armstrong and others have argued, was, in part, supplied by fiction. Accessible conduct material – generally cheaper than fiction and so more available to the young – served a similar purpose, with fictional techniques reinforcing its didactic objectives.

Differences between the male and female conduct writers quoted here comprise both style and content. Whereas the men such as Freeman, Aikin and Franklin adopt authoritative and didactic styles, the women – Lady Pennington, Eugenia Stanhope, Sarah Howard – write more provisionally. The examples in this chapter and again in chapter 3 are designed to persuade female readers of their latent power but do so cautiously – “It has been objected against all female learning [...]”, writes Lady Pennington without necessarily agreeing with the proposition.<sup>144</sup> Franklin’s rejection of the female pedant, conversely, is uncompromising. More analysis and more understanding of the status and reception of the two sets of writers is required before real comparisons can be made but these tentative conclusions represent a superficial reflection on the trend.

### ***Fiction***

Fiction incorporates many of the same themes that we find in the conduct literature: mercenary marriage, passion and desire, chastity, accomplishment and beauty, family, jealousy and male resistance. In addition, there is commentary on the timing and venues of courtship and of attitudes to the role of mistress. Marriage for money or position but without affection carried the same fictional opprobrium as in the polemical writings of conduct literature (although sometimes through the exigencies of plot development rather than direct comment). For those women forced or strongly encouraged by their families to enter into cynical marriages Daniel Defoe had coined the phrase “matrimonial whoredom”.<sup>145</sup> When, however, a woman made the mercenary choice for herself she might, like Laura Shenstone in the appropriately titled anonymous novel *The Mercenary Marriage* be thought “guilty of the worst kind of prostitution”.<sup>146</sup>

This was one of F & J Noble's Circulating Library tales which Anne Mellor suggests "spread rapidly throughout England during the late eighteenth-century, [and] ensured that women dominated both the production and the consumption of literature".<sup>147</sup> Shenstone deliberately rejects the man she really loves in favour of a richer, titled man so that she can enjoy the independent life that comes with wealth and status. "To what purpose," she demands, "have I more beauty and more wit than other women, if I do not reap some advantages from them? [...] To give up all my hopes of grandeur, to be confined to an obscure nook in a solitary part of the country, and to live only upon love – no – I can never consent to bury myself alive".<sup>148</sup> Lord Glandour, the husband she accepts, is entirely conscious that he has "purchased – Yes, purchased – I have spared nothing to gain the affections of my charming Laura". But, despite his affection for her, he quickly becomes "a very husband: he is wilful, imperious, positive and contradictory; and so obstinate that when he has taken a fancy into his head, the whole earth cannot move him from his purpose". Eventually, her intolerable behaviour forces him to decide on divorce although, before this can happen, she, "is dying: shame, grief, and despair have blasted all her charms, and brought her to the brink of the grave".<sup>149</sup> Meanwhile the lover she rejected in favour of Glandour has, after numerous vicissitudes, "won the heart" of her friend and demonstrated the virtue of prudent expectation and constancy. As well as condemning female avarice, this story neatly contrasts the marital benefits of wealth and sentiment for men. Other circulating library stories such as *The Modern Wife*,<sup>150</sup> *The Unfortunate Union*<sup>151</sup> and *The Fatal Marriage*<sup>152</sup> underline these principles.

In novels by Smollett, Burney, Robinson, Smith and Austen mercenary marriage is a practice that attracts direct or indirect censure. But the way this is represented changes over the forty plus years that separate the first and last of the novels considered here both in the nature of the condemnation and the way it is done. In none of the examples is there direct authorial commentary but the criticism appears to become more explicit over time. In *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* Matt Bramble's meeting with his old friend Mr Baynard exposes the destructive consequences of a mercenary marriage. "Baynard, at his father's death had a clear fifteen hundred pounds a year [...] but with some excess of youth, and a contested election, he in a few years found himself with debts of ten thousand pounds, which he resolved to discharge by means of a prudent marriage."<sup>153</sup> He married a woman with £20,000 who complains that, "even with that pittance I might have had a husband who would not have begrudged me a house in



London” and “was continually surrounded by a train of expensive loungers, under the denominations of language-masters, musicians, painters and ciceroni” so that life becomes intolerable and Baynard’s appearance “meagre, yellow and dejected.” Despite this he declares: “There are tender connexions of which the bachelor is unaware. Shall I own my weakness? I cannot bear to make that woman unhappy.[...] I am persuaded she loves me with the most warm affection”.<sup>154</sup>

Condemnation of the mercenary marriage is partially ameliorated by Baynard’s reaction to his wife’s death. Matt Bramble is forced to admit that Baynard, “held the body in his arms and poured forth such a lamentation that one would have thought he had lost the most amiable consort and valuable companion upon earth” and he concluded that, “affection may certainly exist independent of esteem”. Even so, Smollett denounces the mercenary marriage and its empty extravagance by the device of juxtaposing Baynard’s experience with that of Mr Dennison who can fairly claim that from an original love-match:

All this time my wife and I have enjoyed uninterrupted health, and a regular flow of spirits, except on a very few occasions, when our cheerfulness was invaded by such accidents as are inseparable from the conditions of life. – I lost two children in their infancy to smallpox.<sup>155</sup>

Cecilia Beverley, eponymous heroine of Frances Burney’s 1782 novel is the “poor simple victim [...] marked for sacrifice [and] destined for prey”. Her pursuit by Sir Robert Floyer is entirely because his affairs “are in some disorder”, as Mr Delville describes it when he tries to persuade Cecilia that “he has a noble estate and your fortune would soon clear all its incumbrances. Such an alliance, therefore, would be mutually advantageous”. Pressure on Cecilia to marry Floyer also comes from her other guardian: “Mr Harrel had contracted with Sir Robert Floyer a large debt of honour before the arrival in town of Cecilia; and having no power to discharge it, he promised that the prize he expected in his ward should fall to his share, upon condition that the debt was cancelled”. Cecilia dismisses both attempts to persuade her and Sir Robert, “too proud for solicitation, and too indolent for assiduity, was very soon checked because very soon wearied”.<sup>156</sup> Her apparent friend from the country, Mr Monkton, provides another example of a man who “In the bloom of his youth, impatient for wealth and ambitious for power, [had] tied himself to a rich dowager of quality, whose age, though sixty-seven, was but among the smaller species of her evil properties, her

disposition being far more repulsive than her wrinkles”.<sup>157</sup> Monkton’s interest in Cecilia is both financial and amorous.

Similar cynical pursuit of an heiress’s money motivates several characters in another Burney novel, *Camilla* (1796).<sup>158</sup> The most degenerate is Augustus Bellamy who, in effect, kidnaps Eugenia Tyrold, hurries her to Scotland and claims her wealth and control over her actions – “That lady, Sir, [...] is my wife”, he tells Melmond, “speak to her therefore; [...] but in my hearing”<sup>159</sup> - but without any personal regard for her. The enormity of his behaviour, and his blatant disregard for the “path of propriety” which Burney contemplated for her “scenes of high seriousness”<sup>160</sup> is underlined by his death. A less callous version of the mercenary marriage is proposed to Camilla by the urbane Mrs Arlbery. When, however Camilla rejects the “rich, young, and amiable” Sir Sedley, the older woman accuses her of, “the high-flown disdain of juvenile susceptibility, to cast him and his fortune away; as if both were of such every-day baubles, that you might command or reject them without thought of future consequence”.<sup>161</sup> Other characters in Mrs Arlbery’s circle and the men about town at Southampton are all intent on identifying the Tyrold heiress and attempting to secure her. But all are rejected in favour of, in Camilla’s case, the constant Edgar Mandlebert, and in Indiana’s, the reasonably honest, McDersey. In these contrasts manliness is confirmed as rooted in virtue rather than politeness and the marriage for money firmly rejected.

George Willoughby, the central male character in Charlotte Smith’s *Celestina*, is himself the one to reject a mercenary marriage. His love for Celestina compromises the long standing family supposition that he will marry Miss Fitz-Hayman, the “tall, fat, formal brown girl”, so that her parents’ money can save his family home. She is, for him someone he, “soon forgot and never desired to remember” and he determines to tell his uncle who had promoted the match that it is, “impossible for him to fulfil an engagement in which his heart had never had any share”. This rejection creates the family conflict that leads ultimately to the calumny of Celestina’s maternity and sends Willoughby across Europe to uncover the secrets. Charlotte Smith confirms her antipathy to the mercenary marriage from which she had personally suffered, by a conclusion in which, “Willoughby, the best and most affectionate of husbands” dedicates his life to making Celestina happy.<sup>162</sup>

While George Willoughby was himself the main critic of a marriage based on bribery, in Mary Robinson's political novel, *The Widow*, we see a mercenary marriage condemned by a friend of the man involved. Lord Allford married "the result of interest, and merely an expedient to cement a shattered fortune," but is told very firmly by his friend Woodley: "Lady Allford, whom I rather consider as your mother than your wife, is not formed for such a husband, [...] and you deserve some punishment for the folly of so absurd a marriage".<sup>163</sup> Allford's response acknowledges the obligation which follows from such a marriage: "I am bound," he says, "by a principle of honour to treat Lady Allford with respect, though my heart shrinks from the idea of tenderness".<sup>164</sup> Later he admits: "I feel but too sensibly, every hour, the miseries of an interested marriage, and the pangs of remorse are considerably augmented, by the recollection of the comforts I have lost".<sup>165</sup> Chiefly concerned with the cynicism and venality of fashionable people, *The Widow* denounces mercenary marriage but concludes with the 'widow' insisting: "I will convince the world, that the virtues of the heart, are not to be tarnished by the outward forms of life". Having been reunited with her "lost" husband, Allford, (who appears still to be "married" to his elderly wife) she protests: "I will *be*, even under the title of a mistress, what the proudest wedded dame, would in vain, attempt to imitate",<sup>166</sup> thus demonstrating the moral authority of love over other relationship motivations.

The final example of this particular marriage motivation is Mr Elton in Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815). He "only wanted to aggrandize himself and enrich himself and if Miss Woodhouse of Hartfield, the heiress of thirty thousand pounds, were not quite so easily obtained as he had fancied, he would soon try for Miss Somebody else with twenty or ten".<sup>167</sup> His rapid success in capturing Miss Hawkins after only four weeks in Bath becomes an object of amused speculation even though we are told that, "he had caught both substance and shadow – both fortune and affection".<sup>168</sup> For, in this final statement, we come to the crux of the 'money or love' marriage dichotomy. While a cynical ambition for money alone must be condemned as a marriage motive, no one was expected to ignore matrimonial prudence. In *Cecilia*, Mrs Delville, with some attention to her son's situation, suggested that, "Interest and inclination are eternally at strife, and where either is wholly sacrificed, the other is inadequate to happiness".<sup>169</sup>

A very detailed exploration of the influence of family and finance on marital choice, as well as the challenge of romance for two strong-minded people, can be found

in the *Letters Between Henry, and Frances* published first in 1757 but remaining in print through numerous editions.<sup>170</sup> These were based on the real-life love letters of Richard Griffith, a Kilkenny farmer, and Elizabeth Griffith (no relation) the playwright and writer, and published to raise money during a period of “financial desperation”. However, “the letters established the fame but not the fortune of their authors”.<sup>171</sup> At the centre of the correspondence is Frances’s inability to bring any money to their marriage and Henry’s anxiety about his family’s reaction. The imperative of secrecy appears in several of the 347 letters.<sup>172</sup> The correspondence includes disagreements and debates – both personal and philosophical – as well as statements of affection and jealousy. They deal with practical issues – travel, post and so forth – and social events, health concerns and giving of advice. They are also often passionate and Henry, attempting some specious rationalisation of sexual passion, writes to Francis, who has argued for esteem and friendship as the basis of love: “As to the Grossness of the Passion, I think, that as Brutes are indulged but once a Year, and Man, the Year round, we may fairly conclude Providence to have set the Mark of a rational Pleasure, upon what is miscalled, a Brutal Desire.”<sup>173</sup>

Susan Staves argues that “Although we do not know to what extent the letters have been edited since the manuscript letters have not survived, these nevertheless do seem to be genuine letters between Richard, writing as Henry, and Elizabeth, writing as Frances”.<sup>174</sup> In style and organisation they present the same narrative challenges as “real” letters. In other words, it is not always clear what one or other of the correspondents is complaining about, and there are significant gaps in the correspondence which sometimes obscure the narrative. Gendered roles are blurred: Henry appears to lead the correspondence but Frances is very assertive and frequently complains about his failure to write when she expects. There are also occasions of complete breakdown in the relationship when letters are returned. Without any dating it is impossible to say how long the breaches last. According to the editor’s Preface “To the Publick”, Henry “became [...] a real and honourable Lover but declined Matrimony, for several Years, as she had no Fortune and his Expectations from his Father were much larger than they are likely to turn out; to which Consideration you may add his other Relations and Friends, whose Interest he had great Prospects from”.<sup>175</sup> In his will, included in one of the last letters of the series, Henry acknowledges that his marriage “may surprise some of my Relatives and Friends” but to reassure them declares:

I was not over-reached into this Match by Art, nor hurried into it by Passion; but, from long Experience of her Sense and Worth, I reasoned myself into it; And that I have not had any Cause to change my Opinion since, may be seen by my leaving this Writing uncanceled at my Death.<sup>176</sup>

Their “flirtatious and spirited correspondence in which they combined rational discussion of their reading with lavish displays of sensibility”,<sup>177</sup> predominantly portrays the fluctuations of their romance and always within the context of potential family opposition, and therefore highlights the key issue of marriage as public and private institution.

Passion and desire which penetrate the *Letters Between Henry and Frances*, are at the heart of the courtship novel although it is usually the woman’s experience that is highlighted. In *Hugh Trevor* we have pursuit from a man’s perspective. Falling in love inappropriately with his childhood playmate, Trevor pursues her through the tangles of poverty, skulduggery and deception – much of it induced by his own naivety – and eventually achieves fulfilment after a series of coincidences. Sightings of her produce “a trembling that shook my whole frame, and a sickness that I with difficulty subdued”. When, for the second time, he rescues her from drowning he exclaims: “For how many rapturous moments are lovers indebted to accident”. Sexual attraction is too transient to be the whole basis of amatory feeling so Trevor eventually realises: “To be beloved by her, to be found worthy of her, and to call her mine, are blessings that infinitely exceed momentary rapture: they are lasting and indubitable happiness”.<sup>178</sup>

The woman’s sanction and possession are the twin objectives of respectable love; “Momentary rapture” the ambition of the rake and libertine – as for instance Sir William Hargrave in James Norris Brewer’s novel *The Mansion House* - “after he had had the possession of her person for a short time, he cared not who had it”.<sup>179</sup> The lover with ambitions to respectability disguises the sexual passion in a more refined language that, nonetheless, makes clear its primal basis:

To the woman whom my soul adores how shall I address myself? Tumultuous thoughts, hopes which vanish, and fears that distract are ill fitted for such a talk. Governed by feelings that will admit of no controul, I can only claim your pardon on the plea of inability to preserve that silence which it is temerity, or something worse, to break.<sup>180</sup>

In one of his several attempts to attract the attention of Eugenia Tyrold, Alphonso Bellamy deploys familiar tropes of violence, entreaty, trembling, honour, soliciting and apprehension. But, as a calculating seducer, Bellamy offers more than simple ardour. Acknowledging Eugenia's qualities of mind, he presents a rational argument and one which obeys the rules of familial responsibility. At the same time he invests her, rather than her family, with the power of refusal and, in effect, places his future in her hands.

The delicacy of your highly cultivated mind awes even the violent passion which you inspire. And to this I entreat you to attribute the trembling fear which deters me from the honour of waiting upon Sir Hugh while uncertain, if my addressing him might not raise your displeasure. I forbear, therefore, to lay before him my pretensions for soliciting your favour, from the deepest apprehension you might think I presumed too far, upon an acquaintance, to my unhappiness, so short; yet, as I feel it to have excited in me the most lasting attachment, from my fixed admiration of your virtues and talents, I cannot endure to run the risk of incurring your aversion.<sup>181</sup>

He attempts to deceive by playing on the crippled Eugenia's longing for esteem and the appearance of social propriety in a world of confusion.

The directness of his confrontation contrasts with the more circuitous expressions of jealousy we see in other situations. It is Vavasour's jealousy for what he perceives to be Celestina's preference for Montague Thorold that makes him demand the basis of her objections: "are they to my person? my family? my fortune?" When he persists in knowing if she is engaged to Thorold, her spirited denial and rejection of Vavasour – "did no such person exists it would make no difference in the resolution I have made never to listen to the offers with which you honour me" – is insufficient and she employs an even stronger rebuff "I will tell you candidly, Mr Vavasour. My objections, then, are to your morals." An episode that started in Vavasour's resentment ends with Celestina's unrelenting assertion of independence. This was a "disappointment [he had] never been used to" and exhibits a state of relations in which male power does not automatically prevail.<sup>182</sup> In *A Simple Story*, Dorriforth's jealousy over Miss Milner's provocative behaviour with Sir Frederick is mediated through his honour. When he "rushed forward and struck him a blow in the face"<sup>183</sup> he behaved instinctively. On reflection, he concludes "I have departed from myself; I am no longer the philosopher but the ruffian [...]"<sup>184</sup> Love has unmanned him. But it produces a

complicated response in Miss Milner who must pretend to love Sir Frederick to prevent the duel that might result in injury to Dorriforth, her real love. In this episode, Inchbald explores the impact of sexual jealousy more subtly than found in some other representations.

Even though, marriage was the most socially acceptable situation, there were many other opportunities for men to gratify their sexual desires, including the “revelling in the brothel”,<sup>185</sup> or the keeping of mistresses. The appearance of such women in novels is usually a device to highlight personal tragedy or a weakness of public morality. Emily Cathcart’s presence in *Celestina* is designed instead to display a more positive quality in an otherwise questionable male protagonist. While Vavasour’s general behaviour and demeanour in the novel display many undesirable features of the avowed rake, his treatment of Emily reveals his character’s more sensitive and upright aspect. Dismissing the “ridiculous prudery” that effaces her because, “she does not rank among those who are falsely called virtuous women”, he proclaims—“[...] by heaven she has virtues that might redeem the vices of half her sex; not one in a thousand of whom possess a twentieth of her worth”.<sup>186</sup> Emily herself confirms that “Mr Vavasour’s generosity has left me nothing to fear for the rest of my life, even if it were to be a long one”.<sup>187</sup> While redressing the destructive image of the woman “in keeping”, Charlotte Smith also demonstrates that the men who maintain them may do so in an honourable manner.<sup>188</sup>

The extent of society’s willingness to rehabilitate women who have been “disgraced” and its impact on the masculinity of their seducer also features in Amelia Opie’s *The Father and Daughter* (1801). Agnes McHenry expiates her humiliation by good works and humble service to her demented father and her child.<sup>189</sup> Her seducer, Captain Clifford, although it is alleged “that he really loved Agnes as well as a libertine can love” marries someone else but is made to regret “refusing to perform his promises to the injured Agnes” and eventually takes their son to be his heir. Opie makes the point that there are “many instances of women restored by perseverance in a life of expiatory amendment to that rank in society which they had forfeited by one false step”.<sup>190</sup> But Clifford has also attempted to amend his reputation and rehabilitate himself by making his and Agnes’ son heir to his estate.

The theme of male rehabilitation occurs in the circulating library novel *The Libertine* in which it is the seducer, Courtall, who eventually attains domestic

respectability after being “like the changeful bee [who] rove[s] from sweet to sweet”. This is as much a story of masculine friendship as sexual adventure. It is Courtall’s friend Bygrove who constantly denigrates “the pernicious tendency of your conduct”<sup>191</sup> and reunites him with Miss Hargrave whom he had cheated with a false “private marriage”. After more twists of the plot, they marry and the recovered libertine avows “thy constancy and truth shall henceforth direct my steps, and teach me where to look for peace”.<sup>192</sup> Thus redemption is available to sexual miscreants of both sexes.

Chastity, though, remains central to fictional marriage. Even the possibility of lost virginity might be enough to deflect a man’s interest. Hebe Petworth, after her abortive elopement with Euston in *Twas Right to Marry Him* demands:

Where is the man who will think of making me his wife? Or suppose any man should offer to marry me, how can I, with the least delicacy, accept of him? Would he not know that I had been all night with a man alone; that I had eloped with him with my own consent; and that he had dared to insult me?<sup>193</sup>

Hebe had thought it “politic, if not prudent, to give the man whom I had consented to marry some proofs of my partiality for him” but was then persuaded that she had “much to fear from his behaviour” and that the “man whom I had distinguished from all his sex had deceived” her. Euston’s assumption that, having eloped to Scotland, she would not expect him to, “sit tamely by her side, and never attempt the smallest familiarities with her”, highlights one of the borderlands traversed by betrothed couples and explored by novels. It also reveals the tendency of men to throw the blame for their own actions onto a permissive view of female sexuality. Even before the elopement and his attempt on her, Euston has prepared his own excuses with his reflection to Sir Walter Carey that:

The woman who gives her consent to such a manner of proceeding loses a little of that delicacy which renders her alluring. [...] I am too much afraid that a woman who runs off with one man, *may*, at some other time, be strongly tempted to run off with another, on his appearing more agreeable to her fancy.

Most of the rest of the novel comprises his many attempts to recover his favour with Miss Petworth. At the end, he is able to declare “Happy [...] as my present situation is, I would, by no means advise any man to make an attempt upon the virtue of the woman whom he intends to marry.”<sup>194</sup> In *The Mercenary Marriage*, Laura Shenstone rejects



Charles Herbert, “with the most delicate timidity,” although she had initially “made no resistance to his endearments” but then became afraid “of [his] “being impelled by the violence of [his] passion, to make an improper use of her indulgences”. Had she not repelled this first attack she would be giving, “encouragement to her lover to renew it; and a second attempt will be still more dangerous”.<sup>195</sup>

Characters in novels, as well as the writers of advice for men emphasised the importance of qualities of mind over beauty as the basis for happy marriage. Mr Elford, Hugh Trevor’s uncle, contends that: “The leading features [...] of an amiable and good woman are mildness, complacency, and equanimity of temper”.<sup>196</sup> Melmoth, protagonist in the epistolary courtship novel *The Unfortunate Union*, has no doubts: “this same Harriet is a nonpareil both in person and in mind [...] as to the former, I care not a rush for it, except for a novelty; as to the latter, she is pious, modest, a great œconomist, fond of home, and, in short, has every accomplishment one could wish for in a wife or sister”.<sup>197</sup> Similarly, Courtall in *The Libertine* is adamant about his preference:

if ever I marry, I will take a women, whose mind shall be adorned with every social virtue, in preference to the attractive graces of a handsome face. The one, the mellowing hand of time will ripen to still greater perfection, while every care to preserve the other will not extend it to any thing farther than a short-lived blossom.<sup>198</sup>

In *Julia*, Helen Maria Williams confirms the importance of friendship between men and women but adds a warning: “The gradations from friendship to love are often imperceptible to the mind [...] Love comes to the bosom under the gentle forms of esteem, of sympathy, of confidence [...]”.<sup>199</sup> This is acceptable where there is no barrier to the development of love but, in the case of Charles Seymour, the transformation in his feelings proves fatal to his peace of mind. In a novel which, unusually, explores the psychological impact on a man of loving one woman while being engaged to another (perhaps drawing on *Sir Charles Grandison*), we see the lack of freedom accorded honourable men once an offer of marriage has been accepted. Seymour cannot break off his engagement to Charlotte, goes through with the marriage but suffers mental and physical anguish and dies because the woman he really loves – the eponymous Julia – is too honest and conscious of her ties of friendship to his wife to respond to him. It demonstrates the pain for a man of love thwarted by the strict conventions of society, and by his own endorsement of honour’s worth.<sup>200</sup>

In this case, the man acts honourably but at considerable cost to himself. Others were less honest. Belinda Portman, heroine of Maria Edgeworth's novel, claimed that, "Men have it in their power to assume the appearance of everything that is amiable and estimable, and women have scarcely any opportunities of detecting the counterfeit".<sup>201</sup> Mr Villars, in the role of her guardian, warned Evelina that "Sir Clement is far more dangerous because more artful [...]".<sup>202</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft fulminated: "There are as many male coquets as female, and they are a far more pernicious pest to society, as their sphere of action is larger, and they are less exposed to the censure of the world".<sup>203</sup> Among them should be included Mr Wakefield from *Hugh Trevor* "the most deceitful, plausible, and dangerous [man]. Neither man nor woman are safe with him; and his arts are such as to over-reach the most cautious".<sup>204</sup> He not only betrays Miss Wilmot but his 'friend', Hugh Trevor's, mother as well.

But men also need to exercise caution. Dr Marchmont, Edgar Mandelbert's mentor in *Camilla* points - from bitter experience - at the necessity of knowing the real state of a love object's feelings before making any move - "forbear to declare yourself, make no overtures to her relations, raise no expectations [...] in her own breast, and let not rumour surmise your passion to the world, till her heart is better known to you".<sup>205</sup> Marchmont claims to be embittered by the pain and indignity of discovering that his first wife had maintained her feelings for a previous lover throughout their life together and determined to prevent Edgar from a precipitate marriage - "to avoid all danger of repentance, you must become positively distrustful", he advises. The naïve and exaggerated response to Marchmont's first warning - "Edgar, starting and amazed, with great emotion exclaimed; 'What do you mean, my good Doctor? Do you suspect any prior engagement? Any fatal prepossession?'" - suggests authorial irony at this point.<sup>206</sup> Excessive masculine caution - evident in the blatant pessimism of this scene - may prevent healthy relationship development, a theme which appears elsewhere in the book.<sup>207</sup> Throughout Edgar's relations with Camilla - what Claudia Johnson has called his self-appointed "monitor"<sup>208</sup> role - his willingness to question the motives of her behaviour, even though he acknowledges to himself that he finds her "resistless"<sup>209</sup> - obstructs the romance. He presents his concerns as advice to her - "Suffer me then [...] to represent to you my fears, that your innocence and goodness may expose you to imposition" - but in doing so he has Dr Marchmont's warning in mind. This is clear at the end of the book when Edgar admits "the turn which of late he had taken, doubtfully to watch every action, and suspiciously to judge her every motive".<sup>210</sup>

In some fictional men this caution went to the extreme of resisting marriage altogether. The rake, James Dursley, for instance, wished to be, “well satisfied with you without any matrimonial proceedings” and considered: “matrimony is a very serious business, and [...] a man ought not to throw himself into it without thinking of consequences. It requires, indeed, very great resolution to marry at all”.<sup>211</sup> Or as Mr Smith, one of the peripheral characters in *Evelina* put it: “there is no resolving on such a thing as matrimony all at once: what with the loss of one’s liberty and the ridicule of all one’s acquaintance.”<sup>212</sup> This may have been the oppositional motivation for one character in *The Modern Wife* who wrote: “Neither example nor precept will ever persuade me in favour of that indissoluble knot you have so rashly tied: but a hundred examples , that I daily see of its infelicity, steel my heart against it”.<sup>213</sup>

The assumption to this point has been that only youthful couples are involved in courting but both fiction and conduct material are rich with examples of significant age differences between pursuer and pursued – mostly an older man and younger woman. The attractions for the man may be sexual, ornamental or political/financial but, for the young woman usually only the desire to obey and please parents, particularly her father. The outcome is seldom painted positively. Burney demonstrates the “ill fate of such unequal alliances” in the character of the Berlinton. “Mr Berlinton, when he made this marriage, supposed he had engaged for life a fair nurse to his infirmities; but when he saw her fixed aversion, he had not spirit to cope with it”.<sup>214</sup> Mrs Berlinton became one of the, “few young brides of old bridegrooms [to] fly their mates thus openly”. The men in such alliances are, “generally regarded as the gaolers of their young prey”, a fate which Lucy Shelbourne in *Each Sex in their Humour* was determined to avoid. Her father’s business partner, fifty years her senior, “had long been her secret admirer”, but, even though, “sensible he possessed, in the large sums he was master of, every accomplishment and qualification requisite to recommend him to her father and mother [...] death appeared a thousand times more eligible to her than[...] so unnatural and disproportionate an union”.<sup>215</sup>

Asserting a negative choice in this way challenges the patriarchal order and is even more the case when the woman becomes pursuer. In William Combe’s *Original Love-Letters Betwe[en] a Lady of Quality and a Person of Inferior Station* , the letters, which the author makes a feeble prefatory attempt to claim as ‘real’, trace the courtship of an exuberant, passionate and frequently melancholic man by a calm and rational woman

who makes frequent reference to her education and intellectual powers.<sup>216</sup> While he is concerned by the implications for him of their class difference, she dismisses it on the grounds that “My ancestors may have quitted the plough-share and the pruning-hook a century before yours, and there is all the [...] difference between us”. Combe’s manipulation of their different social stations is, in reality, more about gender than class. The unnamed Lady leads the relationship, making the first connection, laying down some rules – “Integrity among men should be governed by the same rules as virtue among women” – and criticising his weakness when he reveals his problems: “I am really angry with you. In the name of sober reason, why did you not seal your letter with black wax, as an happy prognostic of that approaching fate which you seem to invite with such a melancholy zeal”.

When he fantasises his future she rebukes him: “Endeavour, my friend, to prune your wings, and to be content with the common happiness and common misery of mortal men”.<sup>217</sup> When he worries about “the world” she responds: “To be the slave of public opinion, is a most miserable and disgraceful bondage” (incidentally a sentiment at the heart of *Adeline Mowbray*).<sup>218</sup> This exercise of female authority reverses the usual gender and family hierarchy. In her final letter she explains her determination to make her own choice of husband without interference from relations or friends and admits that he matches her “imaginary model”. The correspondence has been an extended test of his suitability and she says, “I know what I feel [...] to which my feelings direct me. I shall [...] manifest an entire obedience to their impulse” and despite their disparities of station they will be married.<sup>219</sup> Unlike the happy ending of the conventional courtship novel, however, the man suddenly dies. The lady’s social daring produces nothing. Surprising for having been written by a man, this novel’s unfulfilled ending may indicate a lack of confidence in the model of courtship he has promoted. Alternatively, Combe may have used the death of his protagonist to return decision-making authority to its traditional status with the male.

The ‘lovers’ in *Original Love Letters* never actually meet but most novels rely upon the evocation of place and their protagonists’ engagement in society as the source of the conflict and tension apparently inseparable from the complications of courtship. This produces many venues in which men may pursue women and both genders declare or obscure their desires. Frances Burney’s fictions have an objective of promoting mannerly behaviour – in both romance and general social life – and so take their main

characters into a variety of physical situations which challenge their sense of moral fortitude. Her most vulnerable character Evelina is pursued at the Ridotto, the Opera and the spa at Bristol Hotwells. All are places of risk and uncertainty that heighten the heroine's anxieties. They are ultimately relieved by the security of Lord Orville's attention. Cecilia Beverley on arrival in London found, "the mornings were all spent in gossiping, shopping and dressing; and the evenings were regularly appropriated to public places, or large companies of people." The public places included the entertainment gardens of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, the ball and a variety of private houses, all of which provide space for Floyer's unwelcome importunity. It is only at the Delville's country home that she starts to feel more secure. In the case of Camilla Tyrold, it is in the society house of Mrs Albery and at Southampton that the security she has felt at home dissipates. Mandlebert's ability to appear unexpectedly in these venues becomes part of his pursuit, as does that of Wilson "the stroller" in *Humphry Clinker*. Presented - until his revelation as Dennison's son - as a threat to both Liddy's and her family's security, Wilson fulfils the role of 'mystery' lover, to create a frisson of danger in the otherwise smooth surface of the other 'romances' in the book. In the case of Hugh Trevor, danger presents opportunity: on three occasions he becomes Olivia's rescuer, at the same time promoting his cause with her. In similar style, Hermsprong's seizure of Catherine Campinet's runaway horse initiates their romance.<sup>220</sup> Sir Philip Chestrum's attention, on the other hand, is in the conventional context of the Sumelin's party. His attempt to impress with his pedigree fails. Venue, as well as person, contrast disadvantageously with Hermsprong's colonial energy and highlight the limitations of conventional ardour. The siting of 'romantic' scenes can thus promote feelings of virtue or vulnerability.

This novel also touches on Ruth Perry's argument for a universal shift of kin formation from consanguineal to conjugal families. She argues that: "The restructuring of kinship [...] was part of the transformation of England in the eighteenth-century from a status-based to a class-based society and from a land-based agrarian economy to a cash-based market economy".<sup>221</sup> But, in satirising the backward-looking, conservative Lord Grondale, Bage is highlighting historical opposition to this formulation. Caroline Campinet cannot marry without her father's permission and Lord Grondale's only motivation is dynastic – even the birth of three daughters was, "an affront which Lord Grondale never could forgive".<sup>222</sup> In stating that: "It appertains to my honour and dignity, to marry my daughter properly and speedily, that she may not throw herself

upon that low fellow, that Hermsprong”, he is determined to retain her within the ambience, if not the strict boundaries, of her natal family.<sup>223</sup> The case for the conjugal family is made by feisty Maria Fluart: she would say to her father: “it is I who am to be married, not you; it is I who am to bear his follies and his humours by day and by night, not you; it is altogether my own affair and ought to be regulated by my own feelings”. Hermsprong, himself, while acknowledging the importance of traditional family – “you are my uncle, sir” – exists to change perceptions and when, at the end of the novel, Grondale “took [Miss Campinet’s] hand and motioned it towards his nephew” it represents not only recognition of the young people’s attachment, but also the exchange of one kind of family relationship for another.<sup>224</sup> The book’s conventional ending deprives us of any insight into the new conjugal family and its effect on Caroline but, according to Perry, we should expect her to have “more power” but more limited authority.<sup>225</sup>

The “institutionalization of a national marriage-market for the elite” led to the boom in resorts such Bath, Bristol Hotwells, and Tunbridge. They were a magnet to young people and their match-making families, as well responding to widespread hypochondria. They feature in courtship novels because of the opportunity they provide to put pursuers and pursued in a fervid environment in which a facade of politeness obscures the venality present in many of the encounters. Frances Burney captures this aspect in the words of Lord O’Lerney: a woman visiting Bath “If without fortune, she is thought a female adventurer, seeking to sell herself for its attainment; if she is rich, she is supposed a willing dupe, ready for a snare, and only looking about for an ensnarer.” His cynicism is countered by Lady Isabella, the woman to whom it is addressed: “And yet, young women seldom, I believe, my Lord, merit this severity of judgement. They come but hither in the summer, as they go to London in the winter, simply in search of amusement, without any particular purpose”.<sup>226</sup>

This frivolity was the least attractive aspect of Bath for the serious minded Anne Elliott, an attitude shared by Frederick Wentworth. But it is the resort where Wentworth finally declares the constancy of his love for Anne: “Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant”.<sup>227</sup> It is a statement of fidelity and future assurance to compare with Anne Elliot’s impassioned *cri de coeur* that women live the longest, “when existence or hope is gone” and not to be

compared with the, “many polite but meaningless reflections to which women at Bath are often subject”.<sup>228</sup> It is, perhaps, a statement more appropriate to the gravity of the countryside than the lightness of Bath but this very contrast invests it with even more than usual import. Similarly the revelation of William Elliott’s character –“a man without heart or conscience; a designing, wary, cold-blooded being, who thinks only of himself”<sup>229</sup>– is sharply contrasted with the superficial sociability of the city.

Within such recognised haunts of marital pursuit, convention determined the patterns of interaction between all the parties. Elsewhere, lovers pursue different routes, although usually within the framework of actual or assumed politeness. Social gatherings, dinners, balls, and walks all provide opportunities for conversation and the exchange of glances. In the case of Mr Knightley, daily proximity without any indication of interest in Emma moves the pair towards a declaration. For Hugh Trevor, rescuing Olivia from danger reinforces the love he has harboured since childhood. Other lovers pursue surreptitiously: William Dennison appears in Liddy’s proximity in disguise; Montague Thorold, even more furtively, materialises unannounced in the Hebrides to shadow Celestina. Public perception and rumour play an important role in some fictional relationships – Frederick Wentworth’s assumed preference for Louisa Musgrove, for instance - but can be used to pressure the woman or mislead the man. So Mr Harrel tells Cecilia that, “her marriage with the Baronet was universally expected” despite her explicit refusal.<sup>230</sup> Montague Thorold’s impending marriage to Celestina is a “settled thing” according to the society to which George Willoughby returns after his travels in Europe.<sup>231</sup> As a result, he resumes his abandoned courtship of Miss FitzHayman. The clandestine romances of courtship fiction often require intermediaries but they can cause complications, as in the affair of Lord Gould and Lady Sappho in a circulating library novel that made readers more aware of the problems than the pleasures of this kind of intrigue.<sup>232</sup> Misunderstanding, the anonymous intervention of “enemies”, and even the weather frustrate delivery of letters between the couple, so, in a plot device based on “lonely hearts” advertising, they also communicate in part through newspaper notices. But because of their coded language, these notices obscure rather than advance the affair. The message is clear: expressive clarity is vital even in secret situations.

Elopement represents the ultimate example of clandestine romance and offers the novelist important opportunities for drama, or to release young people from the

constraints of family and convention. Frances Burney gives examples of both in *Camilla*. Alphonso Bellamy “had spirited this young creature [Eugenia Tyrold] away to secure her fortune by her hand” and predictably the affair ends in tragedy. Conversely Indiana Tyrold’s elopement with McDersey would not be, “so disadvantageous as matches of this expeditious nature prove in general.” The husband was “honourable and good natured, not particularly endowed with judgement or discretion, but by no means wanting in parts [...]” The family, in other words, need have no further anxiety. Most fictional representations are less benign. Hardwicke’s Marriage Act, by excluding Scotland and the Channel Islands from its provisions, effectively created the market in elopement and provided novelists with a ready source of drama.<sup>233</sup>

Time occupies an important place in romance, whether the suddenness of elopement, a lengthy regard maturing into love, or the frustration of a long engagement. One cause of the last might be lack of money but, in her usual robust way, Mrs Croft believed that it was better to settle on a small income and struggle together than begin the engagement “without knowing that at such a time there will be a means of marrying.” Her own courtship had been brief; as the admiral tells Anne Elliott: “We sailors [...] cannot afford to make long courtships in time of war”. Turning to his wife, he asks: “How many days was it, my dear, between the first time of my seeing you, and our sitting down together in our lodgings in North Yarmouth?” To which she, rather coyly, replies: “We had better not talk about it, my dear, [...] for if Miss Elliot were to hear how soon we came to an understanding, she would never be persuaded that we could be happy together. I had known you by character, however, long before.”<sup>234</sup> Croft is underlining the importance of knowledge alongside feeling – rationality and affection.

Hugh Trevor and Frederick Wentworth, in their different ways, took many years to bring their affairs to a satisfactory conclusion. In Trevor’s case, a disallowed childhood love remains in the background of an adventure story until, after occasional sightings of the love object and three opportunities to rescue her from danger, he can be “beloved by her and [...] found worthy of her”. Wentworth, who had, “been lucky in his profession, but spending freely what had come freely, had realized nothing”, could make no headway against the prejudices of Sir Walter Elliott and Lady Russell. Consequently, Anne Elliott gave him up because she, “imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own.” Against this background, the feelings of the more mature couple,



when they meet again, can flourish. Love can overcome worldly opposition, is the important message of both these lengthy romances.

In other fictions, there is extensive evidence of the role families played in the courtship process. Principal among them were the fathers of the suitor and the bride. Within courtship and domestic fiction, fathers are generally concerned with the marriage of their daughters although, as we shall see below, occasionally it is sons they seek to direct. Opposition is either financial or, as in three of the novels considered here, connected to rank. Lord Grondale intends to exercise all his paternal authority to ensure Catherine Campinet marries Sir Philip Chestrum, an inept boy but scion of an ancient family: “if she does not marry tomorrow morning, for no longer will I suffer my patience to be abused, I will take legal measures for her disinheritance. I will leave my fortune to hospital [...] or to Bedlam’. His opposition to the supposed colonial, Hermsprong, has the effect of severing his daughter’s commitment to duty until she is faced with the choice of lover or father and returns home, even though her father offers her no affection. The final scenes in which the dying Grondale joins Hermsprong and Catherine represent a triumph of morality and rationality over blatant authority. Like Grondale, Lord Castlenorth has a dynastic motive for the plan to marry his daughter to George Willoughby. He was “the last male of his illustrious race [...] he had concerted with his sister, even while George (who was younger than his daughter) was yet a child, how the family might be restored by a union of its two remaining branches”.<sup>235</sup> Similarly, Mr Delville opposes his son Mortimer’s preference for Miss Beverley because, in order to gain her fortune, he would be required by the terms of the will through which she was to inherit it, to change “his ancient name and family” and thereby “the whole race would be extinct”.<sup>236</sup> Dynastic pride surpasses personal feeling, and even the practicality of Mortimer’s need for Cecilia’s money to restore the family estates.

As well as this kind of absolutism, parental control of marital choice in many cases, shades into psychological pressure. In *The Father and Daughter*, the psychology works in two directions: first Clifford acts to make Agnes’ father dislike him, “yet his management was so artful, that Fitzhenry could not give a sufficient reason for his dislike” and then the father warns about, “the inconvenience to which an officer’s wife is exposed” but agrees that, “if, after time and absence have been tried in order to conquer your unhappy passion, it remain unchanged, then, in defiance of my judgement, I will consent to your marriage with Mr. Clifford, provided his father consent

likewise”.<sup>237</sup> Thus Agnes is presented with the dilemma that she resolves by eloping with Clifford, from which all the novel’s anguish follows. Parental authority has been amended from outright refusal to a choice in which one or other of the men must be dissatisfied. Reliance on guilt or family affection, particularly towards the father, exemplifies other contexts. In Harriet Villars’ case it is the appeal to family loyalty and the threat of bankruptcy that sacrifices her to the unsuitable Melmoth, “for her father’s welfare”.<sup>238</sup> The contrasting attitudes are well delineated in a narratorial commentary in James Norris Brewer’s *The Mansion House*:

How short, how *worldly* sighted, must be the eyes of the father, who, when he sees his daughter fondly attached to a man, amiable, in every way worthy to become her husband, but in wanting abundance of that wealth he has sufficient store of himself, and forces her, on pain of being banished from his presence for ever, to forsake him, whom she fondly loves, and be led a victim to the arms of a man abounding in riches, whom she before saw with indifference; but as preventing an union with the object of her affection, she feels an abhorrence for.<sup>239</sup>

As one might expect in the developing affectivity of the later eighteenth century, not all fictional fathers are so dogmatic. Fathers like the Rev Tyrold and Mr Dennison are responsive to the wishes of their children. In Tyrold’s case, Claudia L. Johnson attributes this to the regendering of “stereotypes about affectivity”. It is Mrs Tyrold who goes abroad, her husband who stays at home and is virtuous and sentimental. He, and Sir Hugh, can, she argues, be loved for wearing their hearts on their sleeve because “sentimentality licences their excess”.<sup>240</sup> There is nothing, though, sentimental about Mr Sumelin, the businessman in *Hermesprung*. Responding to his daughter’s elopement, he acknowledges: “The law, gives young women leave to choose their husbands after twenty one, or before if they do not marry in England”. But then adds waspishly: “the law also allows fathers to dispose of their acquired property as they please. To this inconvenience, Harriet must submit”.

The autocratic, repressive version of the father effectively forcing, or attempting to force, their sons and daughters into marriage is often a necessary plot device to foreground the power of love in its reaction to opposition. If Mr Delville, for instance, had allowed Mortimer to marry Cecilia without any conditions, the last third of the novel would have been largely redundant. Had Lord Castlenorth been less committed to the continuance of his line, an important strand of *Celestina* would be lost. Without Grondale’s megalomania, Bage’s revolutionary message could not exist. The same is

true of fathers in a number of the circulating library novels. They use the language of obedience and subordination: "I will use," said my father, "the authority of a parent, and compel her to be yours",, but in the end true feeling triumphs.<sup>241</sup>

Jane Austen offers two different fatherly responses to a child's marriage plans. Sir Walter Elliott, when the young Frederick Wentworth had first sought his daughter's hand:

without actually withholding his consent, or saying it should never be, gave to all the negative of great astonishment, great coldness, great silence, and a professed resolution of doing nothing for his daughter. He thought it a very degrading alliance; and Lady Russell, though with more tempered and pardonable pride, received it as a most unfortunate one.<sup>242</sup>

To Mr Woodhouse, "Matrimony, as the origin of change, was always disagreeable; and he was by no means yet reconciled to his own daughter marrying, nor could ever speak of her but with compassion, though it had been entirely a match of affection".<sup>243</sup>

Fictional lovers might have the outward characteristics of looks, carriage and ardour, but inner qualities of perseverance, equanimity and integrity were the frequently lauded ideal. Two Austen characters, Mr Knightley and Frederick Wentworth, Frances Burney's Edgar Mandlebert and Maria Edgeworth's Clarence Hervey, all demonstrate the capacity to overcome overt or implicit obstacles to pursuing the woman of their choice.<sup>244</sup> Each novel follows the courtship model of misunderstanding, obscurity, rumour or false inference to create the tension which is eventually resolved with the man's statement of his long-standing admiration. Each man demonstrates an appropriate taciturnity, even at the point of declaration: "I cannot make speeches, Emma" [Mr Knightley] resumed, [...] "if I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more".<sup>245</sup> Despite his "long doubts" and Camilla Tyrold's "long perplexities"<sup>246</sup> Edgar Mandlebert maintains, "the brotherly character in which I consider myself to stand with you" as a disguise for his true feelings until all the difficulties are resolved.<sup>247</sup> Clarence Hervey, in another celebration of amatory endurance, says: "That love is most valued which cannot be easily won".<sup>248</sup>

In contrast to the in-depth critical analysis that yields significant conclusions from carefully selected texts this section has been a broad-based survey of some of the issues of marital pursuit and choice to be found in a variety of fiction. This method

emphasises both the topic's complexity and the capacity of different authors and texts to enhance our understanding. Other issues might have been chosen – the role of chance or the place of misapprehension and confusion in shaping relations, for instance – but those considered here seem particularly apposite to exploring *men's* experience. Money, sexual passion, jealousy, fathers and family and the reversal of gender norms in the process of selection and pursuit epitomise the concerns of eighteenth-century suitors and are exemplified in the novels. They are also the concerns that drive the conduct literature and, to that extent, demonstrate the ideological homogeneity to be found in the two kinds of writing.

A different analysis of fictional sources might also have highlighted more psychological drivers for action, but as in the rest of the thesis the intention here was to concentrate on social and political motivations. In contrast with the psychology of character, these are less the function of authorial insight than external representations of the context in which the novel is situated and, therefore, of the cultural environment surrounding, in this case, the institution of marriage. While the final selection of examples was driven by the argument, the initial process of examining books for evidence of prevalent issues helped to elucidate and prioritise key themes for evaluation and to ensure some degree of objectivity in the construction of a model of cultural obligations to which the suitor, so far as writers of fiction were concerned, was subject. A similar method, with similar results, was employed for chapter 3 when the focus shifts to fictional representations of married life.

### ***Breach of Promise***

So far the focus has been on fiction and advice literature but before concluding this chapter on the representation of courtship, it is important to draw attention to one other version of the experience which occupied the public prints. The dishonest pursuer, the man with no intention of marrying, but simply satisfying either his sexual or financial ambition is a commonplace of romantic fiction; and we have seen some examples earlier. But seduction on the promise of marriage is a frequent cause of the breach of promise cases which were reported in the Press. In a 1796 case, Mr Jones, a “young gentleman of fortune”, it was said, “by the practice of several arts, found means, in an unguarded moment to deprive [the plaintiff] of her virtue and afterwards deserted her”.<sup>249</sup> “Because of the resentment she now felt at the Defendant’s ill-treatment of her”, Miss Tawes decided not to marry him which meant her suit must fail. The judge,

however, pointed out that her father might have brought a case against Jones for “seducing and debauching his daughter”. It was this type of case before Judge Buller at Exeter Assizes that had, “occasioned the court to be thronged with all the beautiful women of the county, whose tears eloquently expressed their feelings of tenderness and pity” towards a young woman whom the defendant, on the promise of marriage, had made pregnant and then “married another lady”.<sup>250</sup> The audience frequently burst into applause and had to be silenced and “the plaudits were incessant” when the jury gave a verdict and substantial damages to the plaintiff. These were examples of what Fordyce had called “the craft, the duplicity, the falsehood, the treachery, the dark and deep undermining, hourly practised by multitudes of our sex to gain their ends amongst the other; or to gratify their avarice, ambition, resentment, or envy?”<sup>251</sup>

One of the most notorious cases of seduction-for-profit was Andrew Robinson Stoney’s complicated scheme to entrap the Countess Strathmore. Stoney induced the countess to marry him on what appeared to be his death bed, only to recover and spend the next eight years depriving her of sustenance, company and status while systematically stripping away her fortune. Stoney had been what appeared an assiduous friend to the recently widowed countess until he hatched a plot to have her life-style publicly criticised; challenged to a duel the editor of a newspaper carrying the libel and was then wounded in a way designed to catch the countess’s sympathy and her promise to marry him, despite her being pregnant with another man’s child.<sup>252</sup> When, after eight years, she finally sued him for cruelty, he kidnapped her and the newspaper-reading public was treated to daily racy accounts of their progress around the country before they were eventually captured and the countess returned to the security of the Kings Bench court and eventually off the front page of the newspapers.

Another type of breach of promise case is the sudden move to abandon one intended spouse for another. Mr Harding had promised marriage to Miss Williams but “without giving any reason abandoned the Plaintiff and went into the country where he married a widow of considerable fortune”. Mr. Thomson, Mr Norton, a “widower aged 60” and Mr Gordon were all accused of promising to marry one woman and then going to church with another, although only Mr Gordon was reported to have “acknowledged that he had treated the Plaintiff with cruelty in not fulfilling his promise, and said he wished he had kept it”.<sup>253</sup>

In many of these cases money appears to be the motive for making the change. In the case of Mr Sands' abandonment, the motivation was passion. He, and the woman who subsequently became Mrs Sayer had, "lived together upwards of two years" pending the death of her uncle and the consequent release of his fortune. Eventually a wedding date was set but then came, "Mr John Sayer, a London Haberdasher and struck the lady's fancy so much that she would have nothing more to do with the plaintiff".<sup>254</sup> Mr Sayer was included in the suit because "when he introduced himself to his wife, he was perfectly aware of the engagement she was under".

Manipulative women in these cases were usually, like Miss Brown, older and wealthier than their intended spouses. She had "artfully availed herself of his pecuniary embarrassments" to try to make him marry her but his counsel argued that the defendant could not have promised marriage to a woman old enough to be his mother "who had manifested her affection for him by threatening to send him to gaol".<sup>255</sup> This question of age difference appears regularly in these reports with a frequent defence being that the promise of marriage, "could not have been made with the solemnity and seriousness which the law requires to make it a ground of an action".<sup>256</sup> In the case of *Heyward v Arnold*, the judge supported that contention and added that "there ought not to be too great disparity in the age of the parties".<sup>257</sup> Both, too, should be fit to marry. Part of Mrs Baker's defence was, "some physical malady that made marriage impossible," to which the judge, Sergeant Runnington, responded that, "if a party contracting marriage laboured under any disease either of mind or body that rendered it impossible to fulfil the duties of the marriage state, the object of that sacred institution could never be answered by enforcing such a contract".<sup>258</sup> Similar questions arose about Mr Gale whose fitness for marriage could only, in the opinion of his doctor, be assured if he were "got into the country and if he were to live soberly."<sup>259</sup> This was also the case in which defence counsel "stated some circumstances which [...] were inauspicious to the cause of the Plaintiff" and Lord Kenyon said he was "sorry to have any more of the veil withdrawn than was absolutely necessary".<sup>260</sup>

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This chapter has examined a range of published examples of relations between men, women, their families and friends in the period before marriage. While literature

may not necessarily be a historically accurate depiction of the period in which it is written or appears, instances and examples accumulated here might be considered representative of the broad trends. In this literature men contemplating matrimony are encouraged to seek mutual affection, respect and compatibility with their prospective bride. They are, though, warned of the problematic nature of both the pursuit and the confirmation of these qualities. Similarly, the literature highlights the complex attributes expected of a successful suitor (and ultimately husband). While no single ideal is proposed, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of integrity, honesty, sincerity and devotion to the happiness and well-being of the love object. Cynical motives for marriage are denigrated, although most writers acknowledge the necessity of economic security to matrimonial success. While not all the examples reach fulfilment, there is some recognition of women's determination to assert their own preferences through taking the lead in courtship or rejecting an unappealing offer. Both fiction and advice literature respect the role of father and family in their children's marriage arrangements, but strongly endorse the necessity to consult the child's interest and wishes rather than their own. Press reports of unfulfilled courtships, by exposing the capricious behaviour of some lovers - mostly, but not exclusively, men - reinforce the powerful advice that all lovers should proceed with caution.

Just as it is difficult to be certain of the historical reliability of fictional and other published representations, so the extent to which readers were influenced by the material is impossible to judge in the absence of individual acknowledgement. But it will be evident from the private diaries and correspondence examined in the next chapter that there are significant similarities, as well as some disparities, between the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs expressed in that material and in the literature considered here. On this basis we can theorise some general realities to enhance our understanding of the courtship stage of eighteenth-century marriage and men's experience of it.

## Chapter 1

### *Woing and Winning – Published*

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Steele, *The Spectator, An Essay by Richard Steele*, No 149, Tuesday August 21<sup>st</sup> 1711, (London: 1711).
- <sup>2</sup> Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women Words and Sex in Early Modern London*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)141.
- <sup>3</sup> Steve King, “Chance Encounters ? Paths to Household Formation in Early Modern England”, *International Review of Social History*, 44, (1999) 26.
- <sup>4</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, 82.
- <sup>5</sup> John Fielding, *The universal mentor: containing essays on the most important subjects of life*, (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1763) 163.
- <sup>6</sup> *Antenuptial Fornication considered in a Letter to a Young Gentleman*, (London: for T.Becket and P.A. de Hondt, 1766) 76.
- <sup>7</sup> Anthony Fletcher, “Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household In Early Modern England. *History*, (1999) 427.
- <sup>8</sup> Nancy Armstrong, and Leonard Tennenhouse. *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality* (London: Methuen, 1987). Elizabeth Bergen Brophy. *Women's Lives and the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Novel* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991). Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fiction 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth*. (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1996). Eleanor Wikborg, *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction*. (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002).
- <sup>9</sup> Vickery *Gentleman's Daughter* 39.
- <sup>10</sup> Masculinity as a performance derives from the concept of gender performativity proposed by Judith Butler in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. (New York, Routledge, 1993) 21. She writes: "Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance".
- <sup>11</sup> Sources include: H. J. Habakkuk “Marriage Settlements in the Eighteenth Century”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fourth Series, Vol. 32 (1950). Amy Louise Erickson, “Couverture and Capitalism”, *Historical Workshop Journal* Issue 59, (2000) 1-16.
- <sup>12</sup> E.J Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 10. Clery distinguishes between “characteristics gendered ‘feminine’: sociability, civility, compassion, domesticity and love of family, the dynamic exercise of the passions and, above all, refinement, the mark of modernity” and “‘Effeminacy’ or ‘effeminization’ [which] is employed as the sum of a complex of derogatory ideas also gendered ‘feminine’, including corruption, weakness, cowardice, luxury, immorality and the unbridled play of passions.”
- <sup>13</sup> This phrase was first used by Adrienne Rich in her essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," which originally appeared in *Signs* in 1980 and has been widely anthologised



and quoted since. While she directed the concept at female sexuality, there is evidence of its applying equally to men. See, for instance, Karen Harvey, "The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800", *Journal of British Studies* 44 (April 2005): 296–311 where she writes: "Masturbation, pornography, sex with prostitutes, and sex with other men" emerged as the markers of men who had stepped outside hegemonic masculinity", 305.

<sup>14</sup> Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, Vol. 1, *Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London*, (Chicago, 1998), 6-9 cit D. S. Neff.

"Bitches, Mollies, and Tommies: Byron, Masculinity, and the History of Sexualities".

*Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 11, No. 3, (University of Texas Press, Jul., 2002) 399.

<sup>15</sup> For example: Mary Hays, *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women*, (London: J. Johnson, 1798); Mary A Robinson, *Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination with Anecdotes by Anne Frances Randall* (London: T.N. Longman and O. Rees, 1799); Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), ed. Candace Ward (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> J. Paul Hunter "The novel and social/cultural history" in *Cambridge Companion to 18th Century Novel* ed John Richetti, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998) 22, 31.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Doody "Samuel Richardson: Fiction and Knowledge" *Cambridge Companion to the 18th Century Novel* ed. John Richetti, 107.

<sup>18</sup> Vicesimus Knox, *Essays moral and literary, by Vicesimus Knox, M. A. a New Edition, in Two Volumes. ...* Vol. Volume 1. *A new edition, in two volumes*; 69; James Fordyce, *The character and conduct of the female sex and the advantages to be derived by young men from the society of virtuous women.*

<sup>19</sup> Vicesimus Knox, *Essays moral and literary, by Vicesimus Knox, M. A. a New Edition, in Two Volumes*, 69.

<sup>20</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine* 1793 Pt 1 April, 293. *The Lounger, a Periodical Paper Published at Edinburgh in the years 1785 and 1786 in Three Volumes* Vol I the Third Edition Corrected. (Dublin: 1887), 188; Armstrong & Tennenhouse *The Ideology of Conduct*, 4; Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of the Domestic Woman". *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, (London: Methuen, 1987) 97.

<sup>21</sup> *The Lounger, a Periodical Paper Published at Edinburgh in the years 1785 and 1787 in Three Volumes* Vol. I the Third Edition Corrected, (Dublin: 1887) 188.

<sup>22</sup> Armstrong & Tennenhouse *The Ideology of Conduct*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of the Domestic Woman". *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, (London: Methuen, 1987) 97.

<sup>24</sup> Ingrid Tague, "Love, Honour and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourse of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century", *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 40, No. 1, (Jan 2001) 85.

<sup>25</sup> Lorraine Fletcher has pointed out that "Genre is flexible; 'courtship story', 'novel of sensibility' and 'Gothic tale' are interchangeable terms for much of the fiction of the late eighteenth-century". Charlotte Smith, *Celestina*, (1791). Ed. Lorraine Fletcher, (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004) 9.

<sup>26</sup> Brophy, 138.

<sup>27</sup> Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, gender and commerce in the sentimental novel*, (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1996) 16.

- <sup>28</sup> Examples to be considered here include Robert Bage, Helen Maria Williams, Amelia Opie and Mary Robinson.
- <sup>29</sup> Claudia L Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s*, Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 144.
- <sup>30</sup> Tague, *Discourse of Marriage*, (2001) 78.
- <sup>31</sup> Kate Retford, "Sensibility and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Family Portrait: the Collection at Kedleston Hall." *The Historical Journal*, 46, 3, (2003) 535.
- <sup>32</sup> Vide Fletcher (1995) Gillis (1996) Tadmor (2001) Tague (2001).
- <sup>33</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 2001) 193.
- <sup>34</sup> Vickery, (1998) 285.
- <sup>35</sup> King, 40.
- <sup>36</sup> Maureen Waller, *The English Marriage: Tales of Love, Money and Adultery*, (London: John Murray, 2009) 112.
- <sup>37</sup> John R. Gillis, "'A Triumph of Hope Over Experience': Chance and Choice in the History of Marriage" *International Review of Social History*, 44, (1999) 49.
- <sup>38</sup> King, 34.
- <sup>39</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 326.
- <sup>40</sup> Joanne Bailey, "'I dye(sic) by Inches': locating wife -beating in the concept of a privatization of marriage and violence in eighteenth-century England". *Social History* Vol. 31 No. 2, (August 2006).
- <sup>41</sup> In addition to work by Bailey, Foyster, Gowing and Hunt we have the smaller scale projects such as: Jessica Warner & Alison Lunny, "Marital Violence in a Martial Town: Husbands And Wives in Early Modern Portsmouth 1653-1781", *Journal of Family History* 28, (2003) 258-276.
- <sup>42</sup> Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).
- <sup>43</sup> Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 11.
- <sup>44</sup> Hannah Barker, "Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester" *Social History* Vol. 33 No. 1 (February 2008).
- <sup>45</sup> *Gentleman's Daughter*, 288.
- <sup>46</sup> Nancy Armstrong, "What Feminism Did to Novel Studies". *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*, ed. Ellen Rooney, (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 99.
- <sup>47</sup> Armstrong, (2006) 111.
- <sup>48</sup> Perry, (2004) 90.
- <sup>49</sup> *Instructions to a Young Lady in Every Sphere and Period of Life*, (Edinburgh: A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1762) 11.
- <sup>50</sup> Frances Burney, *Cecilia or Memoirs of an Heiress (1782)* ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Doody. (Oxford: OUP, 1999).
- <sup>51</sup> Nancy Armstrong *How Novels Think: The Limits of British Individualism from 1719-1900*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). In a former work Armstrong is clear that we should not assume the "women's courtesy books and novels of manners sprung into being and passed out of currency together". "The Rise of the Domestic Woman" in *Ideology of Conduct*, 99.

- <sup>52</sup> Susan Whyman's analysis of the explosion in literary correspondence suggests that new writers took their models from fiction, particularly the epistolary novels which comprised about 40% of the total in the 1770s and 80s, but also from this body of ostensibly "how to" manuals.
- <sup>53</sup> *The complete art of writing love letters; or, the lover's best instructor. ...* (London: printed by W. Franklin, for R. Richards; H. Serjeant, and F. Newberry, 1795?).
- <sup>54</sup> Rev James Wallace, and Charles Townshend. *Every Man His Own Letter Writer or The New and Complete Art of Letter Writing Made plain and familiar to every Capacity* (London: J.Cooke, 1782).
- <sup>55</sup> Henry Scougal, *A new academy of compliments: or, the lover's secretary: being wit and mirth improved, by the most elegant expressions used in the art of ... The seventeenth edition, with additions* (London, 1784).
- <sup>56</sup> We do, though, thanks to Lisa O'Connell have some idea about the readership of one of the most popular women's magazines of the period. "The *Lady's Magazine* was a monthly, with a circulation of between fifteen and sixteen thousand copies, but its readership was much larger than that. Although it was modestly priced (6d.) and advertised itself repeatedly as a bargain [...] most of its readers would not have been regular subscribers to the magazine or have bought copies for themselves. It was widely read aloud, privately borrowed, lent out for a price from circulating libraries and even coffee houses. Its primary readership was, of course, women but many men read it and the editor wrote as a man (though she may well have been a woman). It was, in fact, a "Lady's Magazine" because it was about women and femininity almost as much as because it was addressed to their specific needs and wants." Lisa Connell, "Gender, Sexuality and the Family: Women's Writing, Language and Readership in The Lady's Magazine, 1770-1832", *Defining Gender 1450-1910*, [www.gender.amdigital.co.uk](http://www.gender.amdigital.co.uk).
- <sup>57</sup> Ingrid Tague, Discourse of Marriage, 76-106.
- <sup>58</sup> See Jan Fergus, *Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Oxford: O.U.P. 2006), Jacobs. Edward. "Eighteenth-Century British Circulating Libraries and Cultural Book History" *Book History*, Vol. 6 (2003), 1-22; James Raven, "New Reading Histories, Print Culture and the Identification of Change: the Case of Eighteenth-Century England." *Social History*, Vol 23, No 3 (Oct 1998) 268-287; James Raven, "The Book Trades" Isabel Rivers ed. *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2001) 1-3.
- <sup>59</sup> Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation*.
- <sup>60</sup> Fergus, 41.
- <sup>61</sup> Armstrong & Tennenhouse, 5.
- <sup>62</sup> Cesare Mussolini, *Friendly Advice; Comprehending General Heads of Qualifications for Those Who Wish to Marry Well and Live Happy, Compiled and Translated from Different Authors*, (London: 1794) 3.
- <sup>63</sup> *Letters on Love, Marriage and Adultery Addressed to the Right Honourable Earl of Exeter*, (London: 1809) 16-17.
- <sup>64</sup> John Adams, *Elegant tales, histories, and epistles of a moral tendency; on love, friendship, matrimony, ..and other important subjects, by the author of Woman; or historical sketches of the fair sex*. (London: G.Kearsley, 1791) 413.
- <sup>65</sup> *Complete Art*, 160.
- <sup>66</sup> *Aristotle's master-piece compleated. In two parts. The first containing the secrets of generation, in all the parts thereof. ... The second part being, a private looking-glass for the female-sex.*(1702) ... (Glasgow, 1781)
- <sup>67</sup> John Ovington, *The Duties, Advantages Pleasures, Pleasures and Sorrows of the Marriage State*. (London: 1813).
- <sup>68</sup> Stone, (1977), 380, highlighted the alternative: "there developed in the eighteenth century a new and troublesome social phenomenon the spinster lady who never married, whose numbers rose

from under five per cent of upper class girls in the sixteenth century to twenty to twenty-five per cent in the eighteenth century”.

<sup>69</sup> Mussolini, *Friendly Advice*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> George Wright, *The lady's miscellany*, (1797), 20.

<sup>71</sup> Henry Carey *Cupid and Hymen*, 37.

<sup>72</sup> This “new bourgeoisie” appear in many fictions including John Shebbeare’s novel about Hardwicke’s Marriage Act (1753) in which he criticises the tendency of the act to increase the practice of brides for status.

<sup>73</sup> McKeon, (2005), 143 explains: “The ostentatiously mercenary motive linked plebeian wife –sale and patrician arranged marriage in the minds of many; both might be called ‘Smithfield bargains’” (in which the wife is thrown in on what is essentially a financial deal).

<sup>74</sup> Carey, 37.

<sup>75</sup> See Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (London: Guild Publishing, 1989).

<sup>76</sup> Francis Lye, *The Single Married and the Married Happy Being a Series of Wholesome Advice Designed to Promote the Discreet Union of the Sexes and Their Mutual Happiness When United*, (Cheltenham:E.Matthews,1828) 2.

<sup>77</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *Reflections on courtship and marriage: in two letters to a friend. Wherein a practical plan is laid down for observing and securing conjugal ...*, (London, 1784) 17-18.

<sup>78</sup> Fielding, 164.

<sup>79</sup> Sir John Barnard, *A present for an apprentice; or a sure guide to gain both esteem and estate*. (London: 1742) 77.

<sup>80</sup> Tague, 79.

<sup>81</sup> The impact of erotic and pornographic literature on sexual feeling is examined by, among others, Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>82</sup> *Aristotle's master-piece*. (1702) ... (Glasgow, 1781), 73.

<sup>83</sup> Nicolas Venette, *The pleasures of conjugal-love explain'd. In an essay concerning human generation. Done from the French, by a physician*, (London, 1740) 49.

<sup>84</sup> *Complete Art* Letter XVI, 26-7.

<sup>85</sup> Francesca Beauman, *Shapely Ankle Preferred: a History of the Lonely Hearts Ad 1695-2010*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 2011) 2.

<sup>86</sup> Armstrong, (1987)1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>88</sup> Perry, 252.

<sup>89</sup> Anthony Fletcher,. “Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England”. *History*, (1999) 419-436.

<sup>90</sup> Elizabeth Foyster review of *Novel Relations: the Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture* by Ruth Perry, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Jan 2007) 127-129.

<sup>91</sup> Stone, 338.

<sup>92</sup> Perry, 251.

<sup>93</sup> *Art of Engaging*, 35.

- <sup>94</sup> Philogamus, *The present state of matrimony: or the real causes of conjugal infidelity and unhappy marriages*, (London: printed for John Hawkins, 1739)12.
- <sup>95</sup> William Kenrick, *The whole duty of woman. By a Lady. Written at the desire of a noble lord.* (London: printed for R.Baldwin, 1753), 38. (not to be confused with the 1701 edition published in response to Richard Allstree's *Whole Duty of Man*).
- <sup>96</sup> Tassie Gwilliam, "Female Fraud: Counterfeit Maidenheads in the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 6, No. 4, (April 1796) 520.
- <sup>97</sup> Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997) 108.
- <sup>98</sup> Gwilliam, 520.
- <sup>99</sup> Nicholas Venette, *The Pleasures of Conjugal Love Explained.* (London: P.Meighan).
- <sup>100</sup> Gwilliam, 521.
- <sup>101</sup> John Gregory, *The Ladies Library or Parental Present: A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, (1775) 10.
- <sup>102</sup> Mussolini, 11.
- <sup>103</sup> Sarah Howard, *Thoughts on Female Education with Advice to Young Ladies. Addressed to her Pupils*, (London: for J. Mathews, 1783)12.
- <sup>104</sup> Ovington, 6.
- <sup>105</sup> Eugenia Stanhope, *The Deportment of a Married Life Laid Down in a Series of Letters A Few Years Since to a Young Lady, her Relation Then Lately Married*, (London: Mr Hodges, 1790)10.
- <sup>106</sup> Franklin, 33.
- <sup>107</sup> *Matrimonial Preceptor*, 20.
- <sup>108</sup> *The Beauties of the Magazines, and other Periodical works, Selected for a Series of Years*, (Attenburgh, 1775) 28.
- <sup>109</sup> *Exeter Letters*, 14.
- <sup>110</sup> Marilyn L. Brooks, 'Aikin, John (1747–1822)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004).
- <sup>111</sup> John Aikin, *Letters from a Father to his son, on Various topics relative to Literature and the Conduct of Life*, (Dublin 1795) 237-8, 240, 241-2.
- <sup>112</sup> *The lover's instructor; or, the whole art of courtship. Containing I. The most ingenious letters, ... II. Love-epistles in verse, ... III. The politest Personal Conversation between Lovers...*, (London, 1770) 100, iii.
- <sup>113</sup> Joseph Fawcett, *An humble attempt to form a system of conjugal morality: being the substance of six discourses addressed to young persons of both sexes, with a design to lead them through the becoming Duties of Celibacy and Marriage*, (Manchester, 1787) 102.
- <sup>114</sup> Betty Rizzo, "Male Oratory and Female Prate: "The Hush be an Angel Quite" *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (Winter 2005) 23.
- <sup>115</sup> John Adams, *Elegant tales, histories, and epistles of a moral tendency; on love, friendship, matrimony, ... and other important subjects, by the author of Woman; or historical sketches of the fair sex*, (London: G.Kearsley, 1791) 342-3.
- <sup>116</sup> *Instructions to a Young Lady in Every Sphere and Period of Life*, (Edinburgh: A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1762) 29.
- <sup>117</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *Reflections on courtship and marriage: in two letters to a friend. Wherein a practical plan is laid down for observing and securing conjugal ...*, (London, 1784) 30.
- <sup>118</sup> John Gregory, *The Ladies Library or Parental Present: A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, 12.

- <sup>119</sup> Charles Freeman, Esq., *The lover's new guide; or, a complete library of love, giving full instructions for love, courtship, and marriage. ...* By Charles Freeman, ... London, [1779].
- <sup>120</sup> *The Complete Art*, iii.
- <sup>121</sup> *The Ladies Magazine*, March 1811, cit Jones, 2009, 15.
- <sup>121</sup> Gregory, 12.
- <sup>122</sup> Franklin, 1784, 23.
- <sup>123</sup> Fanny Burney, *Evelina or a young lady's entrance into the world, 1778*. Ed and intro Margaret Doody, (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 21.
- <sup>124</sup> Wetenhall Wilkes *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady 8<sup>th</sup> edition* (1766), 178.
- <sup>125</sup> Mary Robinson, *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination with Anecdotes by Anne Frances Randall*, (London: T.N.Longman and O. Rees, 1799) 10.
- <sup>126</sup> *The Matrimonial Magazine or Monthly Anecdotes of Love and Marriage*, (London: W Nicholl, 1775) 2.
- <sup>127</sup> Lye, 13.
- <sup>128</sup> Convincing figures are notoriously difficult to establish. R.B. Outhwaite concluded “Despite the volume of opinion upon this subject, however, there are precious few references to the mean age at marriage of English bachelors and spinsters from the late seventeenth century onwards, and what exists is extremely difficult to interpret.” (Outhwaite. “Age at First Marriage in England from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Winter, 1973) Bridget Hill (“The Marriage Age of Women and the Demographers” *History Workshop*) questioned the demographer’s focus on mean age at marriage and asked “how much the focus on mean age at marriage conceals more than it reveals about marriage patterns. Most work in this area concentrates on parish records and relates the experience of rural and often poor men (eg. Davidoff and Hall *Family Fortunes*, 324 suggested that “The significance of marriage for men cannot be over-estimated. It profoundly affected their economic, social, spiritual and emotional life as well as everyday standard of comfort. For that reason, some avoided committing themselves.”
- <sup>129</sup> Stone, (1977) 377.
- <sup>130</sup> Fletcher, 1995, 4-5.
- <sup>131</sup> *Lover's Instructor*, 60.
- <sup>132</sup> Henry Thomas Kitchener, *Letters on Marriage on the Causes of Matrimonial Infidelity and on the Reciprocal Relations of the Sexes in two volumes*, Vol. 2, (London: C.Chapple, 1812) 158.
- <sup>133</sup> Joseph Smeeton, *An Apology for Bachelors Considered: Description and Prospects of Effective Education*. (London: 1808), 20.
- <sup>134</sup> ‘A Married Man’. “On The Prevailing Inattention of Young Men of Fashion and the Disreputation of Matrimony”, *Ladies Monthly Museum*, (July 1799).
- <sup>135</sup> ‘Clericus’. “Matrimony!” *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, (Sept 1808) 541.
- <sup>136</sup> ‘Nestor’. “Defence of Matrimony or How to Marry Happy”. *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, (Nov 1808), 671.
- <sup>137</sup> “On Celibacy” *The Monthly Panorama*, (June 1810) 352.
- <sup>138</sup> ‘Single Gentleman’. “Matrimony”. *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, (Nov 1808) 674.
- <sup>139</sup> J.M “Thoughts on Matrimony” *Town and Country Magazine* (Jan 1788).
- <sup>140</sup> James Single, “On Happiness Particularly in Matrimony”. *The Literary Journal* (August 1818).
- <sup>141</sup> “On Matrimony” *Weekly Entertainer* (Feb 9 1778).

- <sup>142</sup> “On Matrimony” *Sentimental Magazine*, (Nov 1774) 504.
- <sup>143</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 321.
- <sup>144</sup> *Instructions to a Young Lady in Every Sphere and Period of Life* (Edinburgh: A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1762).
- <sup>145</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Conjugal lewdness: or, matrimonial whoredom*, (London, MDCCXXVII) 422.
- <sup>146</sup> *The Mercenary Marriage; or, the History of Miss Shenstone*, (London: F&J Noble 1773) 15.
- <sup>147</sup> Anne Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women’s Political Writing in England 1780-1830*. (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 3. Edward Jacobs, “Eighteenth-Century British Circulating Libraries and Cultural Book History” *Book History*, Vol. 6 (2003),9, agrees: “For just as, between 1766 and 1790, circulating libraries chose, in contrast to other publishers, to shift their resources from fiction declared to be by men to fiction declared to be by women, during this same period they chose anonymous rather than named female works far more often than other publishers did.
- <sup>148</sup> *Mercenary Marriage*, Vol. 1, 4.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid Vol. 1, 101-2; Vol. 2 147, Vol. 2, 205.
- <sup>150</sup> *The Modern Wife. A novel in two volumes.* ... (London, 1769).
- <sup>151</sup> Lady A. *The unfortunate union: or, the test of virtue. A story founded on facts, and calculated to promote the cause of virtue in younger minds.* (London: 1778). In 2 vols.
- <sup>152</sup> *The Fatal Marriage: A Novel in Two Volumes.* (London: T. Hookham at his Circulating Library, 1785).
- <sup>153</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771). Ed. and intro Angus Ross. (London: Penguin, 1967, 1985), 325.
- <sup>154</sup> Ibid 327, 329, 331 & 333.
- <sup>155</sup> Ibid 382, 368.
- <sup>156</sup> *Cecilia*, 157, 68.157 & 433, 230.
- <sup>157</sup> *Cecilia*, 7.
- <sup>158</sup> Fanny Burney, *Camilla or A Picture of Youth* (1796). Ed. Edward A. Bloom & Lillian D. Bloom.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid, 802.
- <sup>160</sup> Ibid, Introduction, xv.
- <sup>161</sup> Ibid, 509.
- <sup>162</sup> *Celestina*, 61, 98, 542.
- <sup>163</sup> M Robinson, *The Widow or a Picture of Modern Times a Novel in a Series of Letters*, (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1794) 86.
- <sup>164</sup> Ibid, 128.
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid, Vol 2, 13.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid, 168.
- <sup>167</sup> Jane Austen, *Emma* (1815) ed. & intro Fiona Stafford, (London: Penguin Books, 1996) 28.
- <sup>168</sup> Ibid, 171.
- <sup>169</sup> *Cecilia*, 498.

- <sup>170</sup> *Letters Between Henry and Frances 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Dublin: S. Powell in Crane Lane for the Authors, 1760.
- <sup>171</sup> Elizabeth Eger, ‘Griffith, Elizabeth (1727-1793) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).
- <sup>172</sup> See LX, LXXVIII.
- <sup>173</sup> *Letters Between Henry and Frances* Vol 1, 20.
- <sup>174</sup> Susan Staves, “Traces of a Lost Woman” *MLA Professional Resources* (downloaded Jan 2012).
- <sup>175</sup> *Letters Between Henry and Frances*, xxii.
- <sup>176</sup> *Ibid* Vol 2 Letter cclxxxv, 295, 296.
- <sup>177</sup> Eger, 2004.
- <sup>178</sup> Thomas Holcroft, *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor 1794-7*. Ed. and intro by Seamus Deane, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) 261,318, 495.
- <sup>179</sup> James Norris Brewer, *The Mansion House: A Novel Written by a Young Gentleman*, (London: William Lane, 1796), I, 89.
- <sup>180</sup> *Hugh Trevor*, 327.
- <sup>181</sup> *Camilla*, 115.
- <sup>182</sup> *Celestina*, 404-406.
- <sup>183</sup> Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story* ed. J.M.S. Tompkins; intro Jane Spencer,(Oxford: Oxford University Press Worlds’ Classics, 1988) 61.
- <sup>184</sup> *Ibid* 62.
- <sup>185</sup> Fordyce, 1760 (14); Boswell’s *London Journal 1762-1763*. intro and notes Frederick A. Pottle. (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1950) gives a very detailed account of his ‘revelling’.
- <sup>186</sup> *Celestina*, 403.
- <sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 425.
- <sup>188</sup> The case of Miss Broderick suggests changes in public perception that support Smith’s fictional stance.
- <sup>189</sup> Amelia Opie, , *The Father and Daughter* (1801) with *Dangers of Coquetry (1790)* ed. Shelley King & John B. Pierce (Canada: Broadview Literary Texts, 2003).
- <sup>190</sup> *Ibid* 75, 135 and 140.
- <sup>191</sup> James Bacon, *The Libertine, A Novel in a Number of Letters*, (London: W.Miller, 1791) 23, 40.
- <sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, 192, 274.
- <sup>193</sup> *’Twas Right to Marry Him, or The History of Miss Petworth in Two Volumes*. Vol. 1, (London: F & J Noble, 1774) 119-20.
- <sup>194</sup> *Ibid* Letter XX Vol. 1, 88, Letter XXI Vol. 1 107, XVIII Vol. 1 77, CIV Vol. 2.
- <sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 32.
- <sup>196</sup> Hugh Trevor, 27.
- <sup>197</sup> A Lady, *The Unfortunate Union: or, the Test of Virtue. A story founded on facts, and calculated to promote the cause of virtue in younger minds*, (London: 1778) I, 30-1.
- <sup>198</sup> *The Libertine*, 58.
- <sup>199</sup> Helen Maria Williams, *Julia, a Novel Interspersed with some Poetical Pieces*, (London, printed for T.Cadell, 1790) 116.



- <sup>200</sup> In chapter 2 we find Harriet Fane in a similar situation where a commitment once made must be sustained.
- <sup>201</sup> Maria.Edgeworth, *Belinda*(1801), ed. introduction and notes Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick, (Oxford: OUP, 1994) 240.
- <sup>202</sup> *Evelina*, 128.
- <sup>203</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: with reflections on female conduct in the more important duties of life*, (London, J.Johnson. 1787) 81.
- <sup>204</sup> Miss Wilmot in *Hugh Trevor*, 195.
- <sup>205</sup> *Camilla*, 158.
- <sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, 158, 160.
- <sup>207</sup> Examples include Melmond’s disdain for “the mercenary project”, 673; Mr Dubster’s “Matrimony’s a good thing enough, when it’s to help a man forward”, 603.
- <sup>208</sup>Johnson, 157.
- <sup>209</sup> *Camilla*, I, 89, 200-1.
- <sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, 901.
- <sup>211</sup> *’Twas Wrong to Marry Him*, 201.
- <sup>212</sup> *Evelina*, 250.
- <sup>213</sup> *The modern wife. A novel. In two volumes. ...*(London, 1769), 41.
- <sup>214</sup> *Camilla*, 686.
- <sup>215</sup> *Each Sex in Their Humour or the Histories of the Families of Brightley, Finch, Fortescue, Shelburne and Stevens. Written by a Lady of Quality.* (London: F.Noble and J.Noble at his circulating library, (1764)I,136-7.
- <sup>216</sup> William Combe, *Original Love-letters betwe[en] a lady of Quality and a Person of inferior station. ...* (Dublin, 1784).
- <sup>217</sup> *Ibid* 276, 54, 124-5, 192.
- <sup>218</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, II, 272, 278.
- <sup>220</sup> Robert Bage, *HermSprong or Man As He Is Not* (1796) ed Peter Faulker, (Oxford: O.U.P. 1985) 21.
- <sup>221</sup> Perry, 29.
- <sup>222</sup> *HermSprong*,15.
- <sup>223</sup> *HermSprong*, 140.
- <sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, 246.
- <sup>225</sup> Perry, 51.
- <sup>226</sup> *Camilla*, 471.
- <sup>227</sup> *Persuasion*, 222.
- <sup>228</sup> Perry, 251.
- <sup>229</sup> *Persuasion*, 187.
- <sup>230</sup> *Cecilia*, 162.
- <sup>231</sup> *Celestina*, 414.

- <sup>232</sup> *The Unhappy Wife: A Series of Letters by a Lady in Two Volumes*. (London:F Newberry, 1770).
- <sup>233</sup> For example: James Bacon, *The Libertine, a Novel in a Number of Letters*, (London: W.Miller, 1791) *The Way to Lose Him or The History of Miss Wyndham by the Author of The Way to Please Him*, (London: for F & J Noble, 1773). Amelia Opie, *The Father and Daughter* (1801).
- <sup>234</sup> *Persuasion*, 85.
- <sup>235</sup> *Celestina*, 60.
- <sup>236</sup> *Cecilia*, 462.
- <sup>237</sup> Amelia Opie, *The Father and Daughter* (1801) with *Dangers of Coquetry (1790)* ed Shelley King & John B. Pierce, 68-9.
- <sup>238</sup> A Lady, *The unfortunate union: or, the test of virtue. A story founded on facts, and calculated to promote the cause of virtue in younger minds*. In 2 vols (London: 1778).
- <sup>239</sup> *The Mansion House* Vol. II, 65.
- <sup>240</sup> Johnson, 147, 156.
- <sup>241</sup>, *The Libertine*, 131.
- <sup>242</sup> *Persuasion*, 26.
- <sup>243</sup> *Emma*, 9.
- <sup>244</sup> Respectively in *Emma, Persuasion, Camilla and Belinda*.
- <sup>245</sup> *Emma*, 403.
- <sup>246</sup> *Camilla* ,901.
- <sup>247</sup> *Ibid*, 339.
- <sup>248</sup> *Belinda*, 472.
- <sup>249</sup> Tawes v Jones *Oracle and Public Advertiser, Tuesday March 18, 1796*.
- <sup>250</sup> *Oracle Bell's New World, August 28, 1789*.
- <sup>251</sup> Fordyce, James. *The character and conduct of the female sex and the advantages to be derived by young men from the society of virtuous women*. (London: printed for T.Cadell, 1776).
- <sup>252</sup> Moore, Wendy. *Wedlock* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 2009).
- <sup>253</sup> *True Briton (1793) Monday December 12, 1796; Belchier v Thomson Oracle and Daily Advertiser Thursday May 16, 1799; Taylor v Norton Courier and Evening Gazette, December 11, 1794; Observer and Sunday July 21, 1793; Oracle and Public Advertiser, Tuesday July 5, 1796*.
- <sup>254</sup> Sands against Sayer and Wife. *Times, May 29, 1793*.
- <sup>255</sup> *London Chronicle, Thursday August 19, 1790*.
- <sup>256</sup> Bennet v Handcocks *Sun, Saturday November 19, 1796*.
- <sup>257</sup> *Sun, Saturday, May 14, 1796*.
- <sup>258</sup> Shawe v Baker *Morning Post and Gazette, August 18, 1800*.
- <sup>259</sup> Miss Emily Murray v W.Gale *Sun, Monday December 29, 1794*.
- <sup>260</sup> *Ibid*.

*There are no kinds of epistolary writing requiring so much attention as those relating to Love and Marriage: for they are generally considered as the criterion by which a judgement is formed of the understanding; to inspire a favourable opinion of which is the most successful way of securing the conquest obtained by personal attractions<sup>1</sup>*

## *Chapter 2*

### *Wooing and Winning – Unpublished*

Letters and diaries – most popular forms of public communication and private reflection – comprise the material for this chapter. For the increasingly literate eighteenth-century middle class and, as Susan Whyman points out, many others including farmers and domestic servants, “letter writing was a coveted technology that helped them to cope with life”.<sup>2</sup> It was also a, “necessary outcome of migration and social change that helped to maintain not just personal links but a developing sense of nationhood”<sup>3</sup> and had “a special place in the intellectual and personal lives of literate people”.<sup>4</sup> The diary, or journal, on the other hand, “served as a kind of intellectual self-inspection”<sup>5</sup> but also “as a site for self-fashioning and the construction of identity”.<sup>6</sup> Through regular recording of events, thoughts and emotions diarists create an image of themselves which, until researchers bring it into the public domain, is intended for private consumption only.

In his 1936 survey, Richard Bond identified three kinds of eighteenth-century letters: “the intimate, informal message designed for one person; the formal, public, ‘open’ letter written for any who will care to read it; and the fictitious letter used as a literary device, telling a story or describing people or events”.<sup>7</sup> The private message he described as, “the peculiar flower of the eighteenth-century”. Many eighteenth-century letters are situated in both Bond’s first and second categories. Although directed to particular recipients they might be read by whole families. This is particularly true of many of the love-letters that comprise the correspondence in this chapter. Love-letters serve different purposes: The eighty-one letters between Robert Parker of Alkincoats to Elizabeth Parker of Browsholme spread over the years from 1745-1751, “map the long road to marriage amongst the northern gentry”.<sup>8</sup> They represent a, “terse debate with three issues in play: power, duty and honour”<sup>9</sup> The letters of Henry Drinker and William Franklin have a different purpose: to use a third party to help them progress the courtship they failed to complete before leaving America for England.<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Eustace suggests that the prevalence of this kind of public love letter in the eighteenth-century, “sets that era apart as a critical period for understanding the origins of modern romantic love”. They were also part of a more general movement towards what

Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook calls, “an emblem of the private” alongside the “swarm of public print forms” that marked the century. They enabled expression of sentiment as well as, “the public exchange of knowledge” much of it about love, marriage and family.<sup>11</sup>

Writing about early colonial marriages, Eustace argued that the, “rhetoric of idealised romantic love had not yet taken hold” and social and economic considerations were equally acknowledged. His version of ‘public’ love letters enabled both strands to be pursued. But even letters without social and economic purposes were likely to be shared. Those collected here are negotiating the emotional and rational terms of courtship and marriage rather than those of finance and property but, through access to them, families could maintain some degree of influence on the nature of the correspondence, particularly between couples who were not formally engaged (as appears to be the case with all the lovers in this chapter).<sup>12</sup>

The previous chapter examined the cultural climate in which courtship might be conducted. This one constructs the courtship narratives of seven men in the period 1772 to 1823 and attempts to align them with some of the ideological influences found in the public material. Affection and prudence dominate the discourse, but to varying degrees. All the suitors profess to love the woman of their choice but their motivations towards matrimony differ significantly: one man seeks financial and social advancement; another, a pleasant and proficient ‘helpmeet’; and a third, marital control disguised as educative altruism. High-minded passion, unrequited sexual love, and intellectual challenge are the separate motivations for three of the lovers, and while the seventh’s reasons for marrying are never explained, they may have included the attraction of an older woman. The lovers’ expressive styles range from careless rapture to conditional commitment, although each one also exploits persuasive rationality. While all except one of the men adopt a supplicant character and express apprehension about the woman’s decision, there is little doubt in any of the suits that she will eventually agree. Family and friends inhabit the background. We have no evidence of the rhetorical influences on any of these men but, given the range and availability of letters in print, we can assume their written styles were influenced by their reading. Their stories feature themes and strategies discernible in fiction, published love-letters and advice literature. For example, the *Letters Between Henry and Frances* replicate the turbulence of courtship found in Charles Boughton-Rouse’s pursuit of Charlotte Clavering; *Original Love Letters* display argumentation in a similar tone to those from Joseph Strutt to Isabella Douglas; and several of those found in *New Art of Letter Writing* express the same kind of fervour

as Thomas Rawlinson. Similarities have already been observed between Edgar Mandlebert and Joseph Strutt, Hugh Trevor and Thomas Rawlinson but we can also identify resemblances between John Franklin and Mr Knightley; Charles Boughton-Rouse and Mortimer Delville; Tom Phillips and Montague Thorold. None, of course, is an exact replica of the other and the similarities must be treated cautiously.

Epistolary role models, as we have seen in Chapter 1, were plentiful. Letter collections were, in Perry's phrase, "piling up in booksellers' shops" because they were "the perfect form for the new breed of hack writers working long cramped hours for miserable pay in Grub Street".<sup>13</sup> They were short and easy to write which, given that none of the letters collected here fits that pattern, may make us question the extent to which any of these writers were affected by these published models. Other, more extended collections, such as *The Letters Between Henry and Frances*, *The Ladies Polite Letter Writer*, *Original Love-Letters betwe[en] a lady of quality and a person of inferior station*, are more closely linked to the styles of the letters here, although no direct connection can be established.

Analysis of these texts focuses on the language through which the men expressed their feelings and intentions; the pace at which the relationships developed and the difficulties the suitors either encountered or imagined; the way the terms of love and subsequent marriage were negotiated through the courtships;<sup>14</sup> and the ideological trends that can be identified in them. The seven men were not selected to be historically representative, although they inhabit different social milieux within the broad umbrella of "middling sort". Their ages at the time of marriage range from 20 to 37; and with the exception of a father and son, all lived in different parts of the country. They were chosen as powerful examples of courtship conduct and because none of the material (except some letters of Jedediah Strutt) has been discussed previously.<sup>15</sup> Five wrote letters, one kept his own diary and the seventh's experience is narrated through the journal of the woman he eventually married. Their stories are, consequently, patchy and incomplete – unlike, for instance, the story of *A Georgian Marriage* where an extensive sequence of letters enabled a detailed and authoritative construction of the Nash's courtship and marriage.<sup>16</sup> But they provide evidence of different courtship qualities and the challenges men might face at this vital stage of their lives. None of the courtships proceeded smoothly: conflicts about religion, absence, parental opposition, mistrust, and the love object's ambivalence imperil the success of one or more of the affairs. These are also the tensions central to the dramas of domestic fiction. But, unlike the

majority of novels and also of modern scholarship, where the woman is the focus, this material mainly highlights the difficulties men confronted in their pursuit of a bride.

The suitors occupied widely divergent social positions - from John Andrews, a country lawyer, to John Franklin, the arctic explorer and national hero. They include a Unitarian (Thomas Rawlinson), an Indian trader (Charles Boughton-Rouse), a manufacturing entrepreneur (Jedediah Strutt), his son and employee, (Joseph Strutt), and a junior army officer (Tom Phillips). With the possible exception of Rawlinson, their employment or business impacted significantly on their courtship story. Franklin spent most of the time he knew Eleanor Ann Porden on his first Arctic expedition which severely limited their correspondence; both Strutts quoted business as the reason for appearing to neglect their romantic obligations; and Tom Phillips's military career led to his rift with Caroline Treby. Except in one of Boughton-Rouse's romances, disparities in social status do not impinge on the courtship and there are only two examples where age difference might, briefly, have been a factor. In none of the correspondences is there any hint of the compulsion that we see in, for instance, the courtship by Rt Hon Charles Arbuthnott of Harriet Fane, granddaughter of the 8th Earl of Westmorland.<sup>17</sup> Financial negotiations had left Arbuthnott bruised but determined and Harriet obliged to write to her brother: "It is very true that I have promised to marry him, [...] & I am perfectly aware that if he insists on my fulfilling those promises I am bound in honour perhaps to perform them. [He should] reflect before he urges it, they were made at a time when circumstances were totally different, and I am now convinced that no happiness could be the result of an union, he will think so himself if he will consider, for all these pecuniary discussions have excited great irritation on his mind against my family [...] they are now as anxious to prevent it as they were in the first instance to promote my wishes & I could not marry him without making my mother miserable or disobliging all my brothers & sisters. [Breaking off the engagement] [...] is for our mutual good, if however he persists I have no alternative, I must abide by my promises, you will talk to him & decide for me. This I esteem as the greatest favour you can confer upon me." They eventually did marry and lived successfully together despite this rupture.

Each set of correspondence in this chapter conforms in one way or another to Samuel Richardson's criteria for this literary form:

Letters of *Courtship* [...] should not want the proper Warmth of Expression, which Complaisance, and Passion for the beloved Object, inspire (and is so much expected in Addresses of this Nature), [but] they should have their Foundation laid in *common Sense*, and a *manly Sincerity*; and, in a Word, be such as a *prudent Woman* need not blush to receive, nor a *discreet Man* be ashamed to look back upon, when the *doubtful Courtship* is changed into the *Matrimonial Certainty*.<sup>18</sup>

The letters are prudent and serious, emphasise the lover's esteem for the object of his attention, and deprecate some aspect of himself or his suit. Forms of address and subscription follow strict rules, and the style is invariably polite. Feelings are expressed with varying degrees of abandon, but typically qualified by the writer's ostensible perception of his own unworthiness or inability to express them effectively. These letters also deal with commonplace elements of life - meetings, visits, shopping. Families feature frequently and, in many cases, the writer demonstrates awareness that the letter may not be reserved for the notional recipient but be open to scrutiny by family and friends. As examples of private and public convergence these letters further undermine the credibility of separate spheres and the female-private/male-public binary. In each case, the archived letters start at a point in the relationship where the early, exploratory, stages of a connection have passed. These are 'mature' letters of courtship rather than initial expressions of interest but, in each case, we get a glimpse of the process by which the couple became acquainted. We can also see what happened after the courtship: except in one case, the couples married, and we have some of their husband-and-wife letters. From these, it is possible to see how courtship has been an implicit (or in one case, at least, explicit) negotiation of the boundaries within which the marriage will ultimately be conducted. Consequently, as husbands, these men may exercise only modified patriarchal authority.

The two narratives constructed from diaries are restricted to the exigencies of a love affair. They do, however, include the moments of first meeting and, in different ways, examples of separation and despair. Each is written with only the author as intended audience. In one case, this privacy facilitates release of an emotional frenzy; in the other, the author's laconic style fails to mask the strong feelings behind the language. Because of their daily discipline, the diaries are a more continuous record of the events they cover than the letters where there are often major gaps and potentially important moments go unrecorded or unpreserved. Conversely, they do not have the same room to explore situations or emotions and have only one perspective.



The narratives are presented in the order in which the men were married. Where necessary, background information is included to establish the context in which the suitor paid his addresses. So far as possible, the courtships unfold in the protagonists' own words with, where available, dates and venues given in text or footnotes. Parallels to contemporary literature and modern scholarship are presented in the same way to avoid impeding the narrative. A conclusion highlights key themes.

### *Thomas Rawlinson*

Thomas Rawlinson, as he portrayed himself in his seventeen letters to Hannah Satterthwaite between February and June 1776, was an energetically romantic man eager to express his passion, praise Hannah's qualities and question his own worthiness of her appreciation.<sup>19</sup> He presents himself as a man of sensibility with extravagant epistolary sentiment and self-conscious health anxieties.<sup>20</sup> In letter after letter, he expresses adoration of Hannah in the hyperbolic language characteristic of fiction, writing guides and conduct literature. For example:

I can believe myself the happiest Man on Earth when those transporting words with which you conclude are wrote by One for whom I entertain the most exquisite feelings of affection address'd to myself. Oh, lovely Charmer, I scarce knew what it was to love before. I find so many new pleasures rush upon my soul, that I can neither speak or think but you and your inestimable Beauties are the Subject – and I cannot forebear crying out to Heaven that it is too bountifull towards so undeserving a Creature.<sup>21</sup>

Comparable expressions of passion can be found in many sources including the following from the much later *New Guide to Matrimony*:

There is now no minute of my Life that does not afford me some new Argument how much I love you. The little Joy I take in every Thing wherein you are not concerned; the pleasing Perplexity of the endless Thought which I fall into, wherever you Are brought to my Remembrance; and, lastly, the continual Disquiet I am in, during your Absence, convince me that I do not do you Justice in loving you, so as Woman was never loved before.<sup>22</sup>

In the absence of further explanation, the origins of Rawlinson's epistolary style remain a mystery but phrases like "lovely Charmer" and "your inestimable Beauties" could have been found in fiction or writing guides. He may, though, have managed without published exemplars: he had four older sisters and

numerous female cousins as well as older brothers who might instruct him in the art of getting a wife. On the surface, Rawlinson is a man captivated by love but he is also conscious that his correspondence might have a wider audience than their nominal recipient.<sup>23</sup> He must convince Hannah, her family and the Quaker Friends of his fitness for marriage. He combines the humility of the supplicant with the fervour of the devotee in a style uniting the virtues of Politeness and Sensibility. Unfortunately none of Hannah's replies are preserved, although there are occasions when what she has said can be construed from his reply.

Thomas Hutton Rawlinson was the tenth child and fifth son of the Lancaster merchant of the same name, and his wife Mary Dilworth. He was therefore scion of two of the most influential business families in the north-west and, in Hannah Satterthwaite, he was planning to marry the daughter of a third. Little information is available about Thomas or Hannah, but it is probably right to assume, from the nature of the Quaker community, that they had known each other from childhood and may well have been destined by their families to strengthen the alliances even more.<sup>24</sup> However prudential this marriage may have been, the letters suggest – on Thomas's part at least – considerable fervour. They have none of the “distinctive Quaker elements in their language, content, and rhythm” that Susan Whyman notes, nor are there radical differences in forms of address, dating systems, or the names of days and months. They contain few mentions of God, religion or the Quaker community, except as they related to the marriage. Rawlinson may be “too sanguine in my expectations of Happiness” because “real, perfect and uninterrupted Tranquillity may be denied us here as Mortals and more peculiarly belong to Eternity,” but he believes it “both possible and probable we may be happy here” as long as “we are virtuous”. In an echo of the many published encouragements for a wife to be a confidante and comforter, he enthused:

When I can fly for Comfort to the partner of my Heart every Burthen that afflicts the Sprits would immediately become alleviated, the disquietudes of life less frequent and but of a moment's duration – by the dear Emollient her Tenderness of soul would prescribe – by the relief I should find in pouring out the inmost secrets of my Breast to the Object of my love – one in whom I cou'd confide with pleasure & satisfaction.<sup>25</sup>

In the first letter of this collection he wrote: “Confident of my dear Miss Satterthwaite's Goodness and Generosity, I venture to expose my sentiments on paper, to open my heart more largely and to tell her again that I do sincerely love her”.<sup>26</sup> In this very first

sentence we find themes that were to be reiterated and developed throughout the correspondence: his praise of her personal qualities, readiness to reveal his own feelings, and the sincere expression of his affection for her. He amplified his admiration later in the same letter:

Why are you possessed of so many Beauties, so superior to the rest of your Sex? Excuse me, Hannah, pardon the warmth of my imagination, it all arises from the Passion I have for you and the certainty there is of your many amiable Perfections, so well known and admired by your Humble suitor.<sup>27</sup>

He apologises again four days later, but blames his “restlessness and disquietude” on “Suspence [sic] and uncertainty in the pursuit of what is so dear to my existence”. It is of course “you, my dearest Hannah [who] with one Word can alleviate [my] distress”.<sup>28</sup> Her reticence may suggest indecision or else some delight at being the “absolute centre of attention”, or the “protagonist of a thrilling drama”<sup>29</sup> which Rawlinson is creating by his insistence on an answer to his proposal. Not content to praise Hannah alone Rawlinson broadens his encomium to include women in general: “if we wish to paint our imagination to the Idea of Celestial excellence in its softest Array we must look up to an accomplished woman – nought on Earth can be so emblematical”. This may be addressed to Hannah’s sisters and cousins. But he is also attracted by the state of matrimony itself: “tho’ the state is unknown to me yet I could dwell upon the rapturous thought forever and paint to myself scenes of Happiness superior to every other engagement beyond the Limits of Comparison”.<sup>30</sup> These strong feelings and her lack of response to his pleas for betrothal keep him in a constant state of anxiety:

Oh ! Hannah would you but give me leave to hope - wou’d you once pronounce the Tidings of my Fate to be happy and confer that Happiness by the pledge of your dear Hand & Heart – most supremely Blessed should I be – then shou’d I look forward with enlivened spirits towards this paradise of Bliss, and offer up my thanks to that bounteous Heaven that so abundantly rewarded my Importunities.<sup>31</sup>

It is, he argues in a later letter, “No Breach of either delicacy or decorum [...] for a Lady to give her Hand where her Heart was before engaged.” The connection of “hand and heart” might imply the handing over of property as well as affection to the lover.<sup>32</sup> This is the nearest the correspondence comes to mentioning financial negotiations or settlements. They would certainly have occurred but could have been conducted by the fathers or their proxies without the couple’s involvement.

Either deliberately, or for some other reason, Hannah continues to hesitate. Thomas writes:

impatience must be the Throbs & longings of my Soul after profession of so dear a Blessing – and you must – you will - excuse me – when I wish for your acquiescence to my Happiness – do, dear Hannah, give me leave, to ask for early Bliss – you have it in your Power to confer the greatest on me who loves you beyond description [...] and has a Heart capable of entertaining the highest sense of its obligation [...]<sup>33</sup>

She remains unforthcoming early the next month when he cannot understand why she “requests of me not to think of furnishing the house [...] why would she protract the Gift of Happiness and Joy to the person she intends and it is in her power to bestow it.” That something more than her irresolution is preventing their immediate union is hinted at by his argument early in the correspondence that:

If we expect to enjoy more superior pleasures in Matrimony why my dearest girl ought we not to embrace the earliest opportunity but show the World and each other, we espouse affections warmly connected with the Heart. That we love more than to admit of any Consideration being sufficient to delay the Completion of our Joys. I should contemn the Censures of the World when I know myself happy in the affections of my lovely Hannah.”<sup>34</sup>

Once again, the public intrudes on the private. “The World” - the Quaker meeting or their families – appears resistant to their marriage. Without evidence, we can only conjecture that perhaps their ages - she is not quite 21 and he only 25 – or his ill-health might be the cause. Whatever the difficulty, it is soon overcome and by the end of April he is in London with his sister and hers, exercising the increasingly manly function of choosing materials, silver plate and china for the home they will share in Liverpool. “The greatest part of our time,” he writes, “is spent in shopping and our Apartments are the likeness of a Warehouse”. Purchase of household goods and furnishings without the woman’s involvement was becoming common practice for men; he was furnishing a house to bring her to, although it is not clear whether it had been his bachelor house or somewhere new to both of them.<sup>35</sup> Involving their sisters is to ensure his purchases are likely to suit Hannah’s taste. It also helps to cement family relationships. He is pleased when the goods eventually arrive and “you think our Taste has been sufficiently

extended". He refuses, though, to take the credit and "thought the Ladies were so much superior to me in their Judgements".<sup>36</sup>

As well as household goods, the material for Hannah's wedding dress was being selected by Thomas and the sisters.

Yesterday morning we made a Grand Tour through the Silk Shops and I suppose laid out nearly £40 when my dear Hannah was purchased a most delicate White, the newest Taste. She will look most elegant in it, and the Ladies have visited the Gentleman who has the honour of making it up.<sup>37</sup>

White, sometimes with silver, had become the fashionable colour for the bride's gown replacing the more traditional blue or yellow. Bridesmaids, bride's mother and other important women guests might also wear white. Veils were not worn but wedding 'favours' were usually white ribbons. The visitors, particularly Hannah's sister, Polly, for whom this was the first visit to the capital, are also enjoying some of the London entertainments. "She says it is most charming, this dear London, there is no wonder people are so attached to it where every moment has its particular pleasures."

Progress towards their wedding can be judged from his letter to Hannah in mid-May.

our good Friends at Warrington gave me their Liberty to accomplish a design which at present engages so much of my attention [...] that I can't help exclaiming to myself, I am the happiest Rogue existing, or, by the Blessing of God I shall be.<sup>38</sup>

He was ill at the Friends meeting and became annoyed with one of the officers who told the meeting that he had to leave as soon as he had made his proposal to marry Hannah. "Any News of this kind travels fast – and you may think how ill grieved I was at Mr R for exposing me".<sup>39</sup>

As Quakers, they were not subject to the requirements of the 1753 Marriage Act and so were not expected to have the banns called or to be married in an Anglican church (as did people of all other faiths except Jews).<sup>40</sup> They did, though, need the permission of the Friends meeting. Rawlinson spoke to the meeting and was examined on the purity of his intentions before being given Clearness, for which he would be issued a certificate. Hannah, either genuinely, because she now understood the reality of her

situation, or as a matter of form, must have expressed doubts about her suitability to be his bride because on May 19, he wrote.

Worthy my regard – Yes, my dearest Hannah thou art thrice doubly worthy of every mark of Love and Friendship, a Soul inspired by the Virtue can show. However, I am happy in knowing thee to be a Woman possessed of every qualification my Heart could wish for or that any Man of Feeling or sensibility could desire.<sup>41</sup>

Rawlinson's reference to himself as 'A Man of Feeling' is as near as he comes to suggesting any kind of rhetorical influences or giving a name to the self-image he is creating throughout the letters. Had he read the novel, published five years earlier, or was it merely a term with which he was familiar?<sup>42</sup> Did Hannah understand the literary as well as emotional implications? There is of course no way of knowing. He is "enraptured" by her inquiries after his health – "to think myself necessary to the Peace of her whose Love and Friendship I value beyond my own existence." In the man of Sensibility, concern for physical health intensifies emotional expression.<sup>43</sup>

He refuses to do as she had obviously suggested – "Burn your letter, my dearest Hannah, no, excuse me, I too much revere any performance of her I love so dearly". He is less sanguine about his own epistolary skills, and there are several occasions in the correspondence when we find complaints such as: "I find every expression language can compose too feeble to convey my ardent Wishes or the fondness of my Soul in a manner satisfactory to its fondness for You".<sup>44</sup> But, he enthuses about the spiritual purpose of marriage.

Oh Hannah, every hour tells me more and more that you are really necessary to my Peace if not to my Existence and I cou'd repeat forever your many Virtues [...] now they will always wander to that blessed day the fixed period which is to be the Epoch from which we are to date the time of our (certain assured) happy Union – in which may God be pleased to appoint as a constant Guardian to our Felicity some goodly Genie under whose secure protection our days may glide on with Serenity & Joy<sup>45</sup>

This is a more mature Rawlinson than the passionate lover of only months earlier. Gone is the artificial reference to her as a "Charmer" which appears six times in the correspondence and seems to link back to an earlier and more antagonistic model of romantic relations. The longing for "bliss" disappears; instead, the key words in this

letter written a few days before their marriage – Peace , Existence, Virtue, Epoch, Happy, Union, God, Felicity, Serenity and Joy – encapsulate features of the dominant marital ideology which was explored in the previous chapter. He delineates the boundaries of a marriage with high expectations of both rational and sentimental accomplishment.

They were married at the Lancaster and Yealand Quaker Meeting House on June 5, 1776. Their marriage certificate, different from the standard version required by Hardwicke’s Act, included signatures of the entire congregation, not just the couple and their families. It certifies that, before the assembly, Thomas took Hannah by the hand and promised the Friends that he “would be unto her a loving and just husband until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us”. Substituting only the word ‘faithful’ for Thomas’s ‘just’, Hannah made the same promise to the Friends with regard to her husband. This is a clear example of the ‘public’ purpose of marriage: these promises were made to the congregation more than to each other. They were intended to ensure the stability of the marriage and therefore the security of families, business and faith.

After the ceremony, the couple set off for Liverpool and we know from a letter written in May that they were to be accompanied by her father. Marriage brings families as well as individuals together, particularly, perhaps, in the Quaker society with its commitment to business and integrity. In this letter Rawlinson is furthering a relationship with his future father-in-law based on esteem for the older man. It was, though, to be a short-lived marriage: the ill-health which may have caused Hannah’s reluctance to commit herself persisted through the marriage and he died on March 5, 1777, just over a month before the birth of their daughter Mary Hutton Rawlinson. Hannah lived to be 87, never re-married but lived all her life in Lancaster. There is no evidence of her reception of Thomas’s letters or her reaction to his sentiments, although the fact that she retained them and that they passed into the hands of their daughter, Mary Hutton Vyvyan and thence to the archive of her Cornish gentry husband, may be significant. But, probably more than any others in this chapter, these letters express unmistakable affection for their love object, and best reflect the culture of sensibility in which they were written. They also demonstrate consciousness of the ‘political’ environment in which they will be read, where family and church may determine the outcome.

## *John Andrews*

John Andrews is unique among the seven men whose courtships are reviewed here for having used a journal to record his sexual and amorous experiences as a young adult.<sup>46</sup> In 20 years of preserved diaries, he makes only a handful of references to the woman he eventually married, but many more to women with whom he was involved. He chronicles the disappointments, triumphs and tortures of largely unrequited pursuit.<sup>47</sup> Until his marriage to Susannah Rooke on July 9, 1781 he seems to have lived a turbulent personal life with frequent “Fractures and Disruptions” and painful introspection. All the diary entries are brief and terse. It is still possible, though, to construct a portrayal of a hot-blooded young professional experiencing the tribulations of love and sex during the years before his marriage. The combination of sexual disturbance and professional propriety define his masculinity. He presents himself as lacking the strength or initiative to manage rebuffs from women. In this he differs from each of the other lovers in this chapter. His diary reflects the experience of a small town professional man in the same way that the journals of John Cannon and Thomas Turner manifest their own earlier official and commercial milieux.<sup>48</sup>

Andrews worked as an attorney in the small South Hams town of Modbury, Devon. He was born in 1749 to Edmund Andrews and his wife Florence Gee. Edmund was steward to the Swete family of Traine and John took over some of this work when his father died. He acquired the diary habit from Edmund whose journals from 1745 to 1756 are also in the record office. His own son John seems to have continued the habit for a few years at least. The diaries are small – about 7"x 4" – with seven spaces on the left hand side for his diary and a matching seven on the right hand side for memoranda. He physically made his own diary – for the first few years there is a regular note of the day he makes his ‘almanack’ for the following year. The writing is neat and ordered with only occasional partially illegible entries and two entries in Greek.

It is primarily a record of frustrated courtship and, perhaps because of this, he never names his love objects. Even when a marriage proposal (December 28, 1773) is rejected – “thereby all my golden dream of Happiness – dissipated in an instant” – he maintains the woman’s anonymity. He later refers to “the famous Melissa” (who may be the woman who spurned him) being “delivered of a son and heir” on December 30, 1775. From his marriage onwards, except for occasional altercations, his entries are all about business or domestic social matters such as “drinking tea” with a variety of local



people. The diaries illustrate Modbury community life with food, music and occasional dramatic performances comprising the bulk of social activity.

He is very dispassionate about most of the major events in his life; for instance the calling of the “banns of marriage to Miss Rooke” (May 13, 1781) appears without any previous reference to her except when she came to “lodge at Miss Pullibank’s” (Nov 16, 1778), when “Miss Rooke & I dined at the Revd Mr. Holdsworth’s at Huish” (Dec 17, 1780) “and when she “and Miss Wakeham drank tea with us” (March 23, 1781). There are no more references to the banns, and nearly two months pass before the wedding takes place (although it could legally have occurred any time after the third calling). His “marriage settlement with Miss Rooke” was executed eight days before the marriage (again, more usual practice would have been for the marriage to follow quickly after the settlement). He reveals nothing about Miss Rooke nor, throughout the years of their marriage, says anything about his feelings for her. It is only when she dies after the premature birth of her fifth child that he refers to her as “my dear wife” (August 3, 1792). This contrasts with the many emotional revelations about the unnamed women of his single life. The 1772 diary refers to events from 1770 which seem to have precipitated many of his later distresses.

One of the first entries for 1772 records that he “shifted my quarters from Totnes to Modbury,” followed by the justification: “How could I refuse the correspondence of so fair a creature when desired !” (Jan 4). A month later he is noting “a strong attachment to my old sweetheart” (Feb 6). That his relationships were problematic can be judged from the proximity of comments such as “productive of a few jealous ideas” (March 10), “A Dawn of Hope my soul revives and banishes despair” (March 15), “Not troubled with Love but something to which Love has been compared” (March 25); and “A word whispered in the ear which rang all over the body” (March 29). By May 12 he is “Somewhat apprehensive that I may have been taken in by bewitching female allurements”. That he has some idea of marriage - even at this stage when it is clear that he is not very advanced in his business and therefore not financially viable - is suggested by the July 31 comment “A glimmering prospect of the Land of Canaan”. Three weeks later, when “Preparations made for the reception of any unwelcome Stranger who may chance to visit us at unseasonable Hours” (Aug 21), he may be hinting at the reasons for considering marriage.

He was plainly shaken by the refusal of his marriage proposal. The following day he “Writ a farewell epistle in the pathetic strain” (Dec 29) and on January 2, 1774

indicated that he might have been turned down in favour of someone else: “Another, not you! Mind that Jack!”. Three days later, “the more I reflect on a certain affair the less I like it” and next day, “Yesterday’s Reflections increase and almost induce Misanthropy”. By January 7 he had still received no response to his “epistle” but on the 11<sup>th</sup> he was “quite freed from the doleful Apprehensions which tormented me last week and the week preceding.” On January 31 he meets friends in the “Seven Stars” inn and is persuaded that “everything must be given up for ever” and the following day consoles himself that, had his proposal been accepted, “the Honey would not have been equivalent for the Gall”. A day later, though, he is having second thoughts: “The Cure of my Distemper seems more afflicting than the Disease itself; and the sky clearing up almost dissipated the Sentiments of Yesterday.”

He employs masculine language to express the powerful emotions instigated by refusal of his marriage proposal and lack of response to his ‘epistle’, in contrast to the tendency towards feminisation described by E.J.Clery and which was at its peak in the 1770s. Andrews’s lack of these feminised characteristics may be a distinguishing feature of his rural rather than urban background.

Throughout 1774 and 1775 he continues to suggest sexual engagement eg “Amor Furo Brevis est” (June 29, 1775) and “partly joyous, partly melancholy” (September 7) but makes fewer entries on the subject. All changes in January 1776 when he comments “Mad with myself for neglecting an invaluable opportunity” (Jan 17) and “still haunted with ideas of the same desirable object” (Jan 21). These seesaw emotions continue into 1777 when “To be or not to be that is the question!” (September 1), and, a month later, “Over Head & Ears in Love” (Oct 1). He ends the year on a positive note “More agreeable than for some time past” (December 17). After several comments in 1778 of “Agreeable” (Feb 1) “Not exactly right” (Feb 15) and “A very dejected day” (March 29) suddenly on May 17 “Love triumphant over Reason”. On July 18 he had the “First time (and as I intend the last) of consulting a Sybilline Oracle” and on July 29 “A Prospect of great Alterations – I fear for the worst”.

By October, Andrews is making one of his occasional forays into verse:

Our passion gone and Reason on the throne  
Amaz’d we see the Mischief we have done !

Days later he is apprehensive of, “Mischief from the Affairs of August 1770” (Oct 7). He continues to make resolutions of changed behaviour but in April spent most of the

day, in “Violent Agitations of Passion arising from an old cause” (18<sup>th</sup>). In December he had “A taste of something never tasted before” (5<sup>th</sup>). The new year began with “curious” (Jan 1, 1780) and “extraordinary” (Jan 2) events and on March 5 he exclaimed: “Unfortunate ! The Wall which had sustained between 9 & 10 years Siege was broken down”. There is no indication whether the wall was his own or someone else’s. This is again, presumably, linked to the events of 1770. On successive days in June (16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>) the diary comprised the single exclamation “Mad !”. These emotional disturbances might result from a well-developed feeling of sensibility but there is no indication that he has, for instance, read *The Man of Feeling*. He does, though, read “Lord Chesterfield’s Letters”<sup>49</sup> and in his acceptance of rejection might be displaying “Civility [...] the essential article towards pleasing” which “should be universal”.

In November he “drank tea with Miss Rooke” (19) and a month later they had dinner “at the Revd Mr Houldsworth’s house at Huish” (December 17<sup>th</sup>). On the 26<sup>th</sup> he “Went thro’ an important Trial which put me in great Pain for the Consequences but the next day Produced the joyful Sentence of Acquittal.” Even so, January 5 1781 was “very much discomposed” and the next day “A very great Storm inwards” That evening he “spoke abt D.S. with Mr Eveleigh at the Half Moon”. On May 9 – only four days before the banns of marriage with Miss Rooke were called – “the Pain continued”.

Andrews’s numerous and often turbulent relationships in the years leading up to his marriage at the age of 33 may well have included marriage proposals to more than the one woman before finally settling on Susannah Rooke. Even after their marriage there are hints that he may have had some other involvements but these are by no means certain. He provides no details of the looks, character, qualities or history of the women in his life, including his wife. Although a revelation of his inner emotions, the entries are presented in the same laconic and scant way he describes his social and business life. His sensibility is inward-directed and does not encompass his own behaviour to the women. In addition to the disagreements with Susannah referred to above he has “A disagreeable altercation with my neighbour who uses me very ill” (August 1, 1788) and another with “a particular friend” (Sept 4 1787) as well as a disagreement with his brother’s wife that results in her refusing “any longer to supply us with Milk & Butter” (June 12, 1789).

The coded style of many of the entries suggests Andrews’ reluctance to risk exposure. At the same time the meticulous daily entries (even those limited to “At

Home” which appears frequently) suggest his determination to maintain a record of his life to which he can, and often does, refer in subsequent years. His regular references to dining with ‘Mr Savery’, and other friends, and the discussions they have about his affairs, suggest close male companionship and his willingness to seek advice from an intimate circle. The usual venues for these meetings – Half Moon and Seven Sisters – implies a tavern culture in Modbury, although not necessarily the raucous or licentious kind that might have been found in more urban settings. We also gain some idea of his reading habits for example June 19 1782 “Reading Mr Gibbons account of Christianity” or Feb 14, 1784 “Read Baron Swedenborg’s works”. He records visits to the theatre in Totnes: “Saw the play of the West Indian with the Miller of Mansfield” (May 4 1784) and “The Beaux Stratagem” with “The Virgin Unmask’d”( May 5). For several years he played the oboe and sang in church and at concerts in Mr Savery’s house and elsewhere. The diaries function as a careful record of the social and cultural life of someone in his position in a small market town. What makes them particularly valuable though is that beneath the familiar surface, they dramatically illustrate the personal, emotional and sexual conflicts that dominated the years before his marriage and, as we shall see in Chapter 4, his more detached existence afterwards.

### *Charles Boughton-Rous*

Sir Charles William Boughton-Rous or Rouse-Boughton as he later became,<sup>50</sup> paid his addresses to two different women - one in India, the other, whom he eventually married, in his native Shropshire. Two small collections of letters illustrate the associations.<sup>51</sup> The first courtship, of Charlotte Clavering, daughter of Major General John Clavering, commander in chief of the Indian Army and implacable opponent of Warren Hastings, was thwarted by doubts about Boughton’s finances; the second, of Catherine Pearce Hall, represents a straightforward pursuit of status overlaid with signs of affection. They were married for 26 years until her death in 1808 and had a son and two daughters. After at least one other romance, Charlotte Clavering became the wife of Major General Thomas Brooke-Pechell and the mother of two future admirals.

Boughton’s Indian romance with the daughter of an ancient military family, exemplifies the way honour, snobbery and fatherly manoeuvring can marginalise emotion as the determinant of a couple’s marital opportunities. He was merely an up-and-coming young trader, she the daughter of a general. After initial success with Charlotte, he was rejected and only after her father’s death attempted reunion. The

preserved letters cover the period around her departure from India in November 1777. But there are other letters written by unidentified correspondents after he had returned to England that may well have contributed to cancellation of their marriage plans. Their romance also contrasts with practices which, 20 years later, would generate letters to the newspapers on the iniquities of the “Indian Marriage Market”.<sup>52</sup>

Arriving in India at the age of 17, Boughton rose, within five years, to the post of supervisor of Nator (Rajshai District), “one of the most valuable areas that the East India Company had just acquired in Bengal”.<sup>53</sup> Charlotte Clavering and her sister had accompanied their father and his second wife, Catherine Yorke, when he became a member of the Council of Bengal, and later Commander in Chief, India. The romance seems to have begun about 1774 when he was 27 and Charlotte 15. According to Boughton their “Inclinations were Reciprocally engaged” and the connection approved by her family. But relations between him and the General cooled and the romance ended. When, however, the general died in August, 1777, Boughton wasted no time in reviving his pursuit of Charlotte. The preserved correspondence begins in September 1777 when, under cover of a letter to his confidante, Mrs Johnson, he wrote to Lady Clavering, apologising for breaking in “upon your just Afflictions by introducing a Subject no way suited to the Occasion of them” but reminding her “how far Negotiations had proceeded towards an Alliance between your Family & myself”, and explaining that he is “bound in Honour to declare that my own Sentiments and Wishes are unaltered”. He encloses a letter to Charlotte in which he states:

consistent with the Principles and Motives which have ever influenced my Conduct towards you, I now consider myself bound in Honour, as well as urged by Affection, to declare that, after all my unfortunate disappointments, My Inclination, my Attachment, my high Opinion of your Merits still remain unaltered.

Charlotte, with her family connections, was, of course, a valuable prize for an ambitious young man although in his covering letter to Mrs Johnson he indicates his pleasure in pursuing her “under Circumstances which preclude all supposition that I can be moved by Views of obtaining Interest & Support from the Connection”. That he was not entirely motivated by affection, however, might be judged from his determination not to “subject myself to a vexatious Expectation and Disappointment again” nor to “any Scheme of protracting matters to a future meeting in England.” He was determined to close the deal, and to signal his public as well as private intention.

Charlotte did not reply but “Kath Clavering” (her stepmother) told Boughton that the breach between him and the General, after “the degree of esteem” he had once enjoyed, had made a deep impression on Charlotte. “She desires me to ensure you that she is very much flattered with your distinction, but is determined upon returning to England disengaged”.<sup>54</sup> As step-mother, Lady Clavering’s responsibility was to convey Charlotte and her sister Caroline to their uncle who was now their legal guardian. And there, perhaps, the matter might have rested had not Boughton insinuated himself into a farewell party held by the Claverings before they left Calcutta. In a four-page note which it is not clear whether he sent as a letter to Mrs Johnson or simply kept for his own records, he explains what happened and how they reignited their mutual affection. It began with Charlotte playing the piano and his accompanying her on the flute. He observed that she was crying. During a long conversation he reveals for the first time that her father’s objection to him was “not to the sufficiency of my Fortune but that it was not well enough secured to allow of my making a settlement”. The nouveau riche trader could not be trusted, even though he offered to “pay the sum he required into his own Hand”.<sup>55</sup> When he tells her “any financial objection could have been resolved three years earlier” when the Question was asked”, she replies “I wish it had”.

They discuss her plans to return to England; she wants to know when he will return and if she can meet his mother, but he responds that she should consider herself “entirely uncommitted and unembarrassed”. When he wants to know why she had not responded to his letter of September 28, she replies:” because I could not write the Answer I wished, so I chose rather to say Nothing at all”. “Had you,” he says, “told me your real Sentiments about our Connection, or the Continuance of either of us in Bengal, I should have done everything in my Power to model my schemes by them. But perhaps,” he adds, “your Family have other Views for you”. She admits her father “always had a Connection in View for me” although “very young at present”. When he discovers that this person is in England, Boughton absolves her “from all Promises of Engagement to me”. She claims she would much rather be with him but he urges “in the present uncertain State of things” not to make any promises and adds: “you have just pretensions to a Connection much superior in Rank & Fortune to what I possess and whenever I may return, I shall rejoice to find you settled to your Family’s Wishe”. Before leaving, he ensures Lady Clavering is aware of this manly sacrifice and she praises him for his “Honourable Conduct”. By expressly freeing Charlotte from social and romantic commitments, Boughton could be demonstrating “chivalry that

emphasised maleness”. More likely it is cynical calculation, establishing his credentials as disinterested adviser and guide in order achieve his goal.

Despite this injunction, Charlotte writes: “what a Conversation we had on Friday” She had thought herself resolved to “appear perfectly Unconcerned” but the music had been her undoing. To emphasise her strength of feeling, she adds: “The little picture in my Pocket Book which perhaps you have seen (if not it will be easy to guess whose it is) will be referred to so often that that must keep up the Remembrance of [India] “. <sup>56</sup> Charlotte writes to him next on the boat going down river from Calcutta: “Johnson spoke very handsomely of you before we parted”. In reply, Boughton reminds her she will be happier if she conforms to her family’s wishes. He then tells her about “the Conjecture formed in town upon our Conversation” and warns her of the “inclination of People here to collect Anecdote” but assures her “it has not been gratified by any Discoveries on my part”. He rejects her suggestion that he should renew his friendship with Johnson: “I cannot view any part of his Conduct in the last three years in a favourable light [...] I believe he has acted as a Treacherous friend to me and has been a ready instrument for anyone whose Patronage could benefit him”. <sup>57</sup> Finally, he tells her that he has booked a passage for England and hopes to see her there.

Movements towards a marriage continued in England. At the beginning of December, his sister wrote: “May the approaching union be one of the happy ones that dignifies the only exalted & complete bond of social happiness”. <sup>58</sup> Three weeks later Charlotte’s guardian, Sir Thomas Clavering, writes to him: “As I have not the honour of knowing you Personally or by Character, I can only hope my niece Charlotte has made a fortunate Choice”. <sup>59</sup> But by March 1779 it is all over. Boughton received a letter, the source of which is not clear, in which he is warned that “she is actuated rather by judgement than affection in chusing [sic] you & as she draws near the altar her heart recoils”. <sup>60</sup> An earlier unidentified and undated letter also criticises Charlotte’s motives. It speaks of both Clavering sisters as “no novices in Matrimonial treaties.” Boughton is believed to be hurt because “he thinks the Father played double with him – For my part I think he had a lucky escape. She is an inexplicable Medley of Coquetry, Affection, Prudery and Insensibility.”

This correspondence, patchy and brief as it is, exposes some of the pitfalls of courtship, particularly where there is disparity of rank between the couple. At that stage, Boughton was a rather minor official - although evidently one with a promising future -

and Charlotte's father, with the egregious Johnson possibly whispering in his ear, probably felt inclined to end the association before it became intractable. That, for a time, feeling seems to have reasserted itself indicates Boughton's determination, but something else happened to drive the couple apart - quite possibly, judging by the final letter in this collection, the opinion of others. One newspaper, though, alleged, when another engagement was broken off, that Charlotte had never managed to keep a suitor because she "was 6ft 2in in her stockinged feet".<sup>61</sup> Whatever caused their separation, Boughton's romance with Charlotte Clavering is an instructive example of the difficulties accompanying one of the strategies available to an impoverished younger son eager to make his fortune and enhance his social standing. Service in India might satisfy both aspirations but was not guaranteed. In the end, Boughton's ambitions were met through his marriage to Catherine Hall. Her connections to the Greville family furthered his political career, and accession to her family home of Downton Hall, near Ludlow, provided the kind of landed security essential to his urge for distinction. He was member of Parliament for Evesham and also the rotten borough of Bramber for 14 years between 1780 and 1800 and gained several minor ministerial posts under William Pitt. Most of the time he spoke on Indian affairs. He was created Baronet in 1791, which was fortunate because his eldest brother had bequeathed the family estates and title to the children of his marriage to a maidservant.

A small number of letters held in the family archive illuminate their courtship as well as other aspects of Boughton's role as a married man which we shall consider in Chapter 4.<sup>62</sup> They seem to have met in the summer of 1781, when "I entertained a Passion which, perhaps first, I was hardly justifiable in professing upon the shortness of the acquaintance I then had". He had since met and spoken to her again during the London season<sup>63</sup>. It had been his "ardent wish to render myself worthy of her Notice" but the main purpose of the letter is to "be honoured with your sanction". He sets out the "situation of my Fortune" which includes "a landed estate in Worcestershire" and "about 25000£ in Money". He calculated, "I have clear 1500£ a year to spend. Debts have I none. Even the expenses of my late contested Election are completely satisfied." Having confidently presented these details, he then reverts to petitioner - "I shall wait with the most anxious impatience to learn that the Alliance I propose is favoured with your approbation." This reticence is more than a matter of form; we can see from a note to Miss Hall two days later that approval is by no means a foregone conclusion. They have been invited to a "party this evening at Mrs Couper's" but Boughton, writing in the third person, agrees with her that "as there will probably be several persons there



to whom he and his Connection are much known, it is needless to lead them to any discoveries concerning the Situation [...] *until answer is received from Downton.*” [my italics] Her father’s acquiescence could not be assumed.

Some indication of the relative financial positions of Boughton and his future father-in-law are given in letters between them about the settlements. William Pearce Hall writes on April 24, 1782 to say that he owes £1400 more than he had “mentioned in the schedule of my debts” and adds “I am confident you do not wish to see me in debt without the wherewithal to pay everybody”. We do not have the response to this revelation but by May, Hall writes with un-masculine frankness: “I find myself so outdone in generosity [...] I find myself more honoured in a connection with you every day and, as we old fellows are always wishing for something, the summit of mine is to see the conclusion of my daughter’s Happiness”.

The wedding took place on June 3, 1782 and Pearce Hall handed over Downton Hall later that month. Whether a marriage to Charlotte Clavering would have equally satisfied Boughton’s ambition is impossible to say, but, in the record of both the putative and actual marriage, the centrality of financial and social benefits is patently clear but, in each case, accompanied by affection and at least some expression of honourable intention. Boughton thus conforms to the cultural obligations explored in Chapter 1.<sup>64</sup>

### *Jedediah and Joseph Strutt*

In the courtship correspondences of Jedediah<sup>65</sup> and Joseph Strutt, we have a rare opportunity to study the style and approach to matrimony of a father and his son.<sup>66</sup> The letters illustrate differences of character and time but also highlight enduring similarities. In Jedediah’s letters to Elizabeth Woollat and his son Joseph’s correspondence with Isabella Douglas, differences are attributable to the forty years that separated them, but also, more appropriately, to their differences in comparative social status. Jedediah was barely out of apprenticeship as a wheelwright and had just inherited a small farm to supplement his coal delivery business when he was courting Elizabeth. He seemed amazed at his good fortune in attracting the attention of Elizabeth, the lively maidservant, and persuading her to leave her highly valued place in London. Joseph his youngest child and third son enjoyed, as a result of his father’s endeavours, a comfortable upbringing in the family of one of the most successful entrepreneurs of the Derbyshire cotton industry, and imbibed his principles of economy and service from the

Unitarian Church and his education at Derby School. He had a highly developed sense of both his own dignity and his responsibility to educate as well as esteem Isabella Douglas. Jedediah's letters accentuate his passion; Joseph's his propriety.

Only a small number of letters between Jedediah and Elizabeth survive: three from the period 1748 – 1751; two from around 1752; and nine in the period January to September 1755. Even from this last group it is difficult to construct a detailed courtship narrative because of the gaps between letters and the illegibility of some of them. In Joseph's case we have his 34 carefully penned letters and eleven from Isabella written during the period of their courtship. The main differences between father and son are in the tone and content of the letters. Where Jedediah is suppliant, Joseph is condescending; where Jedediah foresees happiness, Joseph fears loss of virtue. Both accept their failures of epistolary regularity and blame 'business'.

### *Jedediah Strutt*

The seven years of Jedediah's and Elizabeth's courtship reflected contemporary practice among people of their social class; he needed to be established in the world and have the funds and prospects to support a family.<sup>67</sup> But whether the lengthy gap in this correspondence represents a break in the relationship or simply a failure of preservation is impossible to determine. But two lengthy letters, one from each period, deserve detailed attention. In the first, written in March 1748, Jedediah apologises for "so long a silence" (a tendency of which Joseph would be accused forty years later) but uses this failure to make the romantic assertion that, "if thoughts were Letters, Millions perhaps would not comprise the Sum". In contemplating his own life he concludes that "except a few hours and those chiefly spent with you, it appears as to goodness all a blank, an Empty nothing". Recollecting their happy hours together in "ye groves and bowers", he demands: "Can you, can I repeat these and a thousand happy Circumstances and not remember it was the charms of good Company that rendered them so delightful" and regrets "such Bitterness to think they will be no more [...]". For this he blames "My own ingratitude, so long a Silence, and the distance of its many miles", and adds provokingly "and perhaps other engagements stronger than these may forbid you to indulge one thought of tenderness for me". He philosophises on happiness and those "two Constant attendants on human nature viz pleasure and pain" and considers "the not being in Love may be no addition to my happiness, since the most languishing, fawning Lover never wished he had not Love, such a pleasing thing is Love". But it is the "Care

and Disappointments” of the world that mainly occupy his thoughts and make him wonder whether “you, even you, who have so often and so much Contributed to my happiness, instead of indulging my wishes, or answering my expectations, may Dismiss and Condemn both this and me”. He does not blame her entirely but demands, “how can I expect that Constancy in womankind which I myself never yet had”. In a previous [unavailable] letter he had accepted the need for them to wait before marrying, but now seems to be accusing her of vacillation. “You will much oblige me,” she writes, “if you’ll tell me, who is this Cruel Charmer who lets you sigh and languish morn and eve.” Unfortunately we do not have his response.

The next long letter in the collection was written in February 1755, seven months before their marriage and has the appearance of a proposal. “Since our first acquaintance which is now many years ago,” he writes, “I have often wrote [sic] to you but never in a strain like this.” He had believed that his previous conduct to her and the passage of years (“for time often puts a period to Love”) had prevented her “kind remembrance” of him but when they met in London she had “made a lasting impression” on him even though it was only from “the least glance of your eyes”. He is now “ready to be all you would wish me to be if you Loved me which is all I wish, your Husband”. But, assailed by doubts, he wonders how he can persuade her “to leave London with all its delights and leave a good master who I know values you.” In a phrase to be echoed later in one of Joseph’s letters to Isabella Jedediah states firmly “I am not now inclined to flatter or fill your imagination with fine words”. Instead he compares the benefits of town and country. “London air is not so sweet nor its pleasures half so lasting” and lyricises the pleasures of country life for which he employs phrases from Milton and makes the final plea “if you read [this] with Candour and the same simplicity with which I write, you will certainly find it Sincere. I hope that will recommend it to your kind reception and obtain if possible an answer of kindness”. Presumably he did receive “an answer of kindness” because, by April, Elizabeth is being solicited by her employer to stay “till towards August [because] of his particular fear of strangers” even though “he is provided with a servant to fill up my place.” In a phrase reminiscent of some conduct literature on honesty between lovers, she argues that couples contemplating matrimony should know as much as possible about each other: “For in that pleasing state of confusion which the warmth of the tender affections occasions, we are apt to dwell altogether upon the amiable parts of the Character intirely regardless of the Blemishes and Defects wh [sic] in a greater or lesser Degree are to be found in every individual of the Human Race”. She then sets out some of what she

takes “to be the distinguishing parts of my Character” which comprise little more than a statement of her love for him and the acceptance that “Indignities fire my Resentment”.

Jedediah and Elizabeth were virtually the same age; both were trying to make their own way in the world and, by the time of their marriage, had travelled widely and achieved some level of success. If anything Elizabeth appears, from this limited correspondence, the more rational of the two. Neither seems inclined to instruct, guide or make behavioural demands on the other. They are entering into marriage on some level, at least, of equality. They were married on September 25, 1755, had five children and lived together until Elizabeth’s death in London in 1774. In Chapter 4 I shall review some of their correspondence as a married couple. In 1781 Jedediah married Ann Cantrell, widow of a Belper merchant. There were no children of this marriage.

### *Joseph Strutt*

This correspondence, comprising 34 letters and one poem from him and 11 from her, covers most of the period of Joseph and Isabella’s courtship while he was in Derby and she mainly staying with her sister and brother in law – the Coopers – at Sandy Brook, near Ashbourne. A companion archive contains letters to and from each of them after their marriage. Isabella was the youngest daughter of William Douglas of Sandy Brook, Derbyshire and described by their friend Coleridge as, “sweet minded, lovely, handsome, beautiful”.<sup>68</sup> Strutt and Isabella were married in 1793.

Unlike Jedediah and Elizabeth, there is no suggestion of equality in their relationship: in almost every letter Joseph directs and criticises Isabella and excuses himself. Apart from complaints about his apparent indifference and neglect, she accepts – or at least fails to respond to – his charges. They display archetypal dominant/subservient traits typical of “the institutionalised male dominance of men over women”,<sup>69</sup> and more than any other couple in this collection reflect the relational assumptions I argue are present in much of the scholarly literature.

Joseph refutes the charge of neglect, distinguishing himself from “those fond, hypocritical, adoring lovers who either do not speak what they think or else say what they cannot feel.” He will always “place your good qualities in their proper light, but [not be] blind to your imperfections”.<sup>70</sup> This sentiment was to be echoed eight years later in a model letter from ‘A Sincere Lover to Sylvia’. “You must not expect in this or

any of my future letters, that I say fine things to you, since I only intend to tell you true ones".<sup>71</sup> Strutt sets out her future in the poem dated January 25, 1786:

My Love, you're Young – study with nicest care  
To make yourself as Wise as you are Fair  
Good sense you have, let Virtue be your Guide  
Walk hand in hand with Prudence by your side.<sup>72</sup>

The following year he warns that “you are young & handsome [...] your situation has peculiarly exposed you to the flattery of the Idle & the Dissolute”,<sup>73</sup> and in the next letter “nothing will place you in so amiable a point of view as bashful modesty which I have so often & so strongly recommended”.<sup>74</sup> He refers to beauty's transience even more pointedly a year later:

your Beauty will not last for ever – when therefore that is gone; when you are neglected by your Friends & your intimates; when you are stripped of all your outward attractions – what source shall you have within yourself to make the rest of your life comfortable & happy ? what foundation are you now making on which you may sometime build years of enjoyment, which may otherwise be spent in pain, contempt & misery [...]<sup>75</sup>

In May of that year he reveals his fear of family intrusion in his plans for marriage. “The eyes of all my friends & acquaintance are watching”<sup>76</sup> and “I feel so extremely anxious that you should sometimes appear to advantage to those with whom I am connected that I am feelingly alive to every circumstance which may lessen you in their opinion”.<sup>77</sup> In the same month, he repeats the warning but without elucidating any grounds:

That my Friends are dissatisfied with my conduct in this instance [...] is to me beyond a doubt, nor shall I at present attempt to alter their opinion, I had rather now bear their silent Disapprobation than their avowed censure of my choice, which I am well assured will be the consequence when I consult them on the matter. [...] I assuredly will not marry at present nor will I say when – circumstances are continually altering which may cause such an event to take place in two or three years, or may Defer it for a longer time.<sup>78</sup>

There is no mention of money, status, religion or any of the other usual reasons for family objection, which perhaps leaves Isabella – vivacious daughter of minor rural gentry – as a source of discomfort to dour manufacturing Unitarians. In the May letter,

he upbraids her because she is to stay with a Mrs Bateman whilst the Militia are visiting. “I own I was surprised & concerned at it – she is far from a suitable companion for a very Young woman like you”.<sup>79</sup> He follows this with a homily on the importance of absorbing good impressions in youth “that will last as long as you live” but then says that he won’t be able to see her when she comes to Derby because “my sister & I are going with a Party to Matlock & Buxton for three whole days”.<sup>80</sup> This theme of the unsuitability of her connections appears again as late as November, 1790 when he complains that “unnecessary conversation & idle company take up too much of your time & it is an evil which, if not checked, will grow upon you”.<sup>81</sup> To help her spend her time more fruitfully, he sends her Goldsmith’s *History of England* and apologises for not sending the *History of France* because “it has not yet arrived”.

Strutt frequently cites work in the family mill at Derby as reason for not visiting or writing to her, “for however my mind may be occupied with your Idea (and you are never absent from me) my time is employed in other necessary avocations”.<sup>82</sup> In March the following year he explains: “my time & my mind have been so much employed that, except upon my pillow, I have scarcely found a moment to think of you”.<sup>83</sup> She should not, though, see this absence as a sign of lack of love on his part – “if my love for you is lessened by time or by absence, it is not true love.”<sup>84</sup>

In January 1789, a potential rupture occurs in their relationship. Strutt accuses Isabella’s friends, probably with her support, of circulating false rumours that he has broken their engagement. He again accepts that he may have displayed some indifference but maintains:

That I have behaved differently to most lovers is not because I have felt less esteem for you, but because I equally detest the name & the actions of a Slave & a Tyrant – I will neither submit to the meanness of the one, nor exercise the usurped authority of the other.

But then:

If I were capable of so much meanness or Dishonour, or betrayed so much weakness of mind, or Depravity of heart, as to break off the engagement I have formed, without sufficient reason, I should hold myself the most contemptible of beings, & be justly entitled to the severest censure of the World – but when I know that my views are honourable & my intentions sincere, what must be my feelings when I hear there is a report in general circulation that I have endeavoured to engage your affections and now, either through Interest or Caprice, basely & wickedly desert you.<sup>85</sup>

He will continue to write to her but requires a “full & explicit” explanation before he will again visit: “I have a Character to support in the World which I trust I shall ever honourably sustain. I cannot therefore, I will not, suffer it to be traduced by such sinister methods”.<sup>86</sup> Isabella asks him to name her friends whom he accuses of circulating the rumours and to explain what has been said. He responds that he cannot name the friends but quotes an example of something he told her about his sister’s disapproval of his plan to marry so young that has now been circulated as the reason for his breaking off the engagement. “As I never mentioned the circumstance to any but yourself, must I then conclude that you are the original author of it & that you mentioned it to any of your friends with the intention that they should report it”.<sup>87</sup> It is, he says, a mystery why she should do it unless it is “the Idea of forcing me to perform my engagement or at least sooner than I intend”.

When Isabella hints at another possible reason for Strutt’s neglect and desire to break off the engagement, he responds vigorously to her “information about Miss Pole”:

I assure you upon my honour, that I have never said a word which could induce her to look upon me in the light you represent. I should be blind indeed if I did not admire her, but I should be wicked if I did more. It is true I have often visited there, but never without an invitation from Mrs Darwin, whom I am not ashamed to say I really esteem and almost love – my visits & my attention have been paid to her; I have been delighted and charmed with her company & if I have gained her good opinion I am well satisfied.<sup>88</sup>

The question of sharing confidences surfaces again later in the year when he supposes that she would not, “willingly expose my letters to anyone, yet from several circumstances, I am induced to believe that you have sometimes been obliged to do it”.<sup>89</sup> In that same letter, he again sets out the basis of his love for her which he contrasts with the common romantic view.

My affection for you I trust is founded on Principles which no time can eradicate; a basis which will remain when all your other charms are flown away. It is not that Romantic, that violent passion which in spite of Reason or of Prudence will bear down every Obstacle that stands in the way of its gratification; but it is that settled esteem, that tender love, which time instead of Diminishing will strengthen & improve – at least it will be your own fault if it does not. I am perfectly satisfied in my own mind with my own conduct towards you [...].<sup>90</sup>

The dispute rumbles on so that in December he is foreseeing “that I have greater trials to bear and will not now anticipate them but probably may write to you again soon.”<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, she should, “for your own sake and the affection I bear you, most sedulously attend to the improvement of yourself in every accomplishment.”<sup>92</sup> Several times in the correspondence he comments on their future together. In June 1787 he tells her that he has “been contemplating our future lot, that we shall be contented & happy will depend upon ourselves alone, if we are not so it will be our own fault & our own misfortune”.<sup>93</sup> The following year he remains ambivalent: “I sometimes imagine I shall be more happy than I have got any idea of, sometimes I think I shall be very much otherways”.<sup>94</sup> By 1791, he is clarifying the extent of the happiness he expects:

as I have not the folly to think you are more than Woman, so I do not expect to meet with more than amiable manners, good temper & good sense can bestow – those I think you have in considerable degree and persuade myself I shall not be disappointed.<sup>95</sup>

Essential to his happiness will be “that Virtue which, when it is present, everything is pleasing, Delightful & harmonious; without it all is horror, discontent & remorse”.<sup>96</sup> He expects “to enjoy that sweet & tranquil delight which can arise from Virtue alone”.<sup>97</sup> If people “find in you Virtue, Goodness, unassuming Modesty, they will respect & love you but if the opposite characteristics mark your conduct, they will despise & hate you”.<sup>98</sup> When she assures him that she tries to be virtuous for his sake, Strutt responds rather tartly, “Alas if that is your only inducement to be virtuous [...] your claim will be small indeed.”<sup>99</sup> Reverting to the desirability of her pleasing his family, he again urges virtue and warns against pride.<sup>100</sup>

I intreat you therefore to think seriously of all you say or do, avoid any appearance of personal vanity or affectation, every extream [sic] in the fashion of your Dress – a proper degree of Pride every woman ought to have, but it should be the pride of Truth, of Honour, of Virtue – to be vain of what one has not procured by one’s own exertions, betrays a little mind.

He emphasises the importance of public opinion which she would prefer to ignore.

The opinion of the World, which all the World seem to despise, is in reality the guide of most of our actions [...] if that freedom of sentiment & conduct which you talk of, were allowed, it would lead to endless confusion. We are all spies on each other’s actions.<sup>101</sup>



Whatever justification individuals offer for their behaviour – interest, fear of punishment or principle - it is really the “fear of censure from that World whose happiness it is their duty to promote”.<sup>102</sup>

Despite the violence of Strutt’s criticism, there is no evidence of a response from Isabella in the preserved correspondence. In only one letter she complains of his “long silence” and failure “to cement in stronger bonds that friendship & mutual confidence which I trust will prove the basis of our future happiness but which in our present state is not likely to be increased, we living in a manner strangers to each other”.<sup>103</sup> The lack of response to his disparagement of her may be an absence in the record but, perhaps, more likely, acceptance of his right as her lover and future husband to criticise. In the words of Daniel Defoe’s *Roxana* she is to have “No Interest; No Aim; no View; but all is the Interest, Aim and View of the Husband.” This is the “Discourse of Female Subservience”. And yet Strutt believes his “views are honourable & my intentions sincere”. He believes himself justified by the principles of his “settled esteem, that tender love, which time instead of Diminishing will strengthen & improve”. In this he echoes the “benevolent father” whose “knowledge and experience [...] is reinforced by the deference it inspires in the inexperienced heroine, his future wife”.<sup>104</sup> He remains, though, a suitor and despite protestations that he “equally detest[s] the name & the actions of a Slave & a Tyrant” he must, in Wikborg’s view oscillate between the roles of teacher and suppliant thereby demonstrating “the contradictory nature of male gallantry”.<sup>105</sup>

Strutt’s correspondence contains no trace of irony nor indication that he believes himself anything other than entirely sincere. Although detailed in many ways, this correspondence ignores one important area – why they were marrying. No connection between families nor meeting of the couple is explained or referred to. But he is obviously committed in honour to their marriage and will meet his obligations. In the boldest terms, his letters display features of the patriarchal lover/husband in whom unquestioned authority is taken for granted both by him and his future wife. His manner throughout the correspondence suggests a significant gap in their ages. As a man of business, making his way in the city of Derby, he believes himself more aware of the world than is possible for a woman in the retired situation of rural Ashbourne and that he has a responsibility to educate her. In fact, there was only four years between them and Strutt was just 21 when the letters in this collection began. They married in 1793 but lived together only nine years before she died, having produced five children. Strutt never remarried but became a prominent citizen of Derby, twice being mayor. He

was a philanthropist and social reformer, setting up the Mechanics Institute and an Arboretum, and offering ordinary citizens access to the art gallery he created in his own house.<sup>106</sup>

### *Tom Phillips*

Tom Phillips has the distinction in this collection that everything we know about him, except for a period of about nine months when he kept a journal of his time with the Hussars in France,<sup>107</sup> comes from the diaries of his future wife, Caroline Treby.<sup>108</sup> In them we chart the couple's romance from its beginnings in 1813 to their eventual marriage in February 1819.<sup>109</sup> He was seven years younger than her, a fact she laments in the early stages but later ignores.<sup>110</sup> But the most illuminating aspect of their courtship is the year-long account of his apparent desertion which filled the whole of 1818 and drove her to the edge of mental and physical destruction. From January 10, 1818 when "My letter came – And – he has deserted me" to December 24, "At ten o'clock the post brought me a letter from my dearest Tom and at eight at night he came. Is it possible, am I indeed so blessed", the diary chronicles the torture of abandonment and her overwhelming relief when she is repossessed. While neither Caroline's diary nor his own journal reveal anything of Tom Phillips's feelings or (except for a hint of another woman) his reasons for leaving and then returning to Caroline, he is included as an example of the potential for extreme emotional impact inherent in the courting experience. Until the events of 1818, Caroline Treby presents herself as an intelligent, lively and sociable young woman, comfortable and respected in her family and by the West Devon minor gentry among whom she socialised. Tom's failure to write, rumours about him that circulated in the community, and her dread of diminishing him in her family's eyes, reduce her to a woman devoid of rationality and, at one point, considering her own annihilation. Meanwhile he continued with military life, apparently oblivious of the devastation he had created. He represents a strand of romantic egotism that might have been displayed in many other situations, including fiction.

It is unclear how long they had known each other, but their families were socially connected and it may well have been since his birth. Tom Phillips makes his first appearance in Caroline's diary in August, 1813. He was 15, she 22. Over the ensuing years there are frequent references to his visits and to shooting and hunting with her father and brothers. On September 30, 1815, however: "Tom Phillips made known some flattering sentiments this morning – 'tis a pity he is so very young [...]" and she begins drawings of dogs and horses which she sends to him at Oxford early the

following year. By August, 1816 she is clearly smitten by, “dear Tom, he is a faithful swain after all or at least I hope so” and on August 30 he “gave me a most elegant watch, seals and chain all complete and very handsome”. Until his departure for Oxford in October, Tom makes almost daily appearances in the diary. She also records, without comment, a visit by his father which might have been related to their developing friendship. While at Oxford, he writes long letters and also sends the family “a large collar of brawn [...] from Brayesnose [sic] college”. She writes to his father. He returns for the Christmas vacation and gave her “a beautiful miniature tho’ not nearly handsome enough for him, and a beautiful seal”. They quarrel in mid-December but “Tom and I took a long walk and I am comfortable again”. This is the first sign of any disruption to their romance. Relations return to normal during the first part of 1817 and in March “Dearest Tom gave me a beautiful brooch”. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month “the dreadful moment of his departure is approaching very fast” and the next day “He is gone...” Tom has left to join the 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars at Maidstone where he was commissioned as a cornet.

On June 2, “My dearest Tom marched from Maidstone to join his regiment in France”. From then for the rest of the year her feelings vacillate between desolation when the post brings no letter and elation when it does. This is also the period covered by Tom’s journal in which he wavers similarly: “Received a long letter from my dearest Caroline. How thankful am I to her for the kindness she bestows upon me” and, “Almost a fortnight since I heard from my Dearest Girl but I scarcely deserve to have one, having neglected to write for such a length of time”. September proves a bad month for Caroline with no letter, and although she receives one at the beginning of October, the lack which will devastate her throughout 1818 is being pre-figured: “Still no letter, why will he not write? While he is absent I am parted from myself – deprived of every Joy”. Her sister Katherine marries the Rev William Molesworth in early November and she comments, “these weddings are but dismal things for those left behind, particularly when one cannot ever believe a letter will come from him to whom every thought, Every wish is devoted. Unhappy Carry”. What was to be the last loving “letter from my Adored friend” arrives on December 8; he had been ill and was “still confined”. The diary entries become increasingly desperate through the rest of December and early January 1818, as she tries to rationalise his failure to write. On January 9 she laments: “What dreadful accident has befallen you? You will not, I know you will not forsake me. Where then is my letter?” But on January 10, “My letter came – And – he has deserted me”. No explanation is recorded, only the pain, as she writes next day:

Oh God, Merciful Father Hear my prayer. I beseech thee, grant me strength to pray to thee, guide and support me in these hours of sad and bitter affliction, grant that I never more than at this moment feel either hatred or malice towards my destroyer. Amen, Amen.

There is no premonition of this shock in Tom's journal. As late as November 5, 1817, he is enthusing, "unexpectedly received a letter from my dearest Carry". It is impossible to know what happened between then and January. He does not seem to have enjoyed army life. In September he grumbled, "all my servants have been accused of robbing a French woman of some money. What a pretty mess I am in". Letters from Caroline are generally a source of comfort during the muddy autumn when he has to ride "two or three miles" to eat in the officers' mess but, there had clearly been some discontent between them because on October 1: "I read a letter from my dearest Caroline, Happy indeed happy am I that my suspicions were unfounded." There is nothing in either his or her journal to suggest the cause of his suspicions, nor to indicate whether they are connected to his abandonment of her.

But, from the moment of desertion her diary becomes the repository of her deep distress. Social engagements are neglected, friends barely mentioned. She is glad when her sister and husband, whose visit had been "all happiness" leave because "they will not see [my] misery". By January 17, the psychological trauma is affecting her physically: "I feel so poorly and so old this morning that I think I had better settle all my affairs. I will write a note to my dearest Tom that he will not see till I am no more".<sup>111</sup> The following week the family have gone out and, "I am glad to be alone for a few hours. I shall never go to a ball again, never again mix in the world. I have but one wish, if I could see my [obscure] once more and hear him say he was not angry with me. He did not hate me, I should die happy". But then it is the day of "My dearest Tom's birthday. Now he is twenty – sincerely, I wish him every happiness. I have written to him today but I hardly dare send my letter." But, the next day she receives his long awaited letter, but there is no cause for celebration: "He says he still loves me yet he abandoned me. Oh God take me from this world and yet if it is thy will that I should suffer let me not complain." Nearly three weeks later and waiting for more news, she confronts the impossible: "No, oh No. He does not love me now. Some other – dreadful idea." On February 26, she notes: "My heart is quite broken – almost a month since I have heard from my once kind, once best and most affectionate friend". She longs to have some news and in March frets, "this total silence is torture more than I can bear". When a letter comes from Calais, it is "Cruel to a degree" and she asks

herself “Why oh why will my heart not get hard like his ! He shall not know that I love him still, He shall not know what horrid pain I suffer for him.”

Over the ensuing months, Caroline has to deal with the neighbours – “Miss H had heard that my dearest Tom was at Calais. Who could have told her?” She determines to maintain his good name in the district – “What falsehoods I have told but can I say he has deserted me, can I cast a stain upon the honor of one so dear, so more than dear to me”. The idea that “he loves another” re-surfaces in April and Caroline attempts some normality – “I must try to draw again” but immediately worries “who will now praise my drawing?” The pain continues: in June “When I am alone I can recall hours of past enjoyments. I can fancy him near me. I hear his dear voice, I see him. Vain visions, he is gone, for ever, ever gone.” In July “I don’t know what is the matter with me – ‘tis not misery only that I feel – Oh Tom.” The saga takes another turn later in the summer when Caroline’s mother writes to Tom and gets a reply which, for some time Caroline cannot ask to see but, when she does, discovers that he does not “hate me”. There is obviously another cause of his actions because she maintains “I will die rather than sacrifice your happiness – agonising, wretched day”. And the next day she fulfils that promise “I have done my duty, early this morning I wrote to my darling lover. I have set him free”. She, must, though protect her family and on September 1, writes:

Since Papa came home I am obliged to talk, eat & jump about more than I feel able to do. He does, or so it appears to me, appear to watch my movements. Heaven knows I do all I can to conceal a grief that preys even more deeply every hour on my sad broken heart. Now he is coming home too the recollection of past happiness & of all I have lost for ever drives me almost to madness.

Rumours of Tom’s imminent return begin to circulate in the neighbourhood, and Caroline swears that: “I cannot go on in this dreadful state of despair. Some change or other must happen. I must hear of you. I must see you”. She is torn between rejoicing that “dearest Tom will soon be near me” and the “insupportably wretched idea that he is not coming to me”. By the end of November she is suicidal: “There are moments when I feel that I could end my suffering. One desperate effort and all would be over. [...] Life is almost an insupportable burthen to me”. Just before Christmas her mother receives a letter from Tom but, without reading it Caroline believes “Hope has vanished. I know he does not love me now”. But, the very next day she receives his letter and shortly after Tom appears in person. She still does not “know not what to believe but he is with me and to see him is to be happy”. Despite these uncertainties she

“Closed the old year with many a joyful hope – Many a transporting feeling”. Her optimism is justified because after three weeks of attending social events together, Tom “went to Plymouth on business, brought home a ring with him.” They were married at Cornwood Church in the presence of “all the family” two weeks later. The remaining diaries, which continued until just before her death, contain no mention of this period. They had three children, the youngest of whom became Major General Paul Winsloe Phillips-Treby and the owner of Goodamoor. They lived in two different houses near Launceston in Cornwall. Caroline died in 1831 and Thomas in 1849.

Despite being told from only one perspective, the story of Tom and Caroline’s turbulent journey to matrimony uniquely reveals the traumas of courtship and his contribution to them. Separation into public and private domains also plays a part: Caroline is left powerless at home, engaged entirely in familial socialisation. Thomas, conversely, is empowered by the world, first at Oxford and then the army. Separation licences his desertion but compels her dependence on his epistolary commitment. Every time there is a gap in receipt of his letters, and crucially during the major part of 1818, the usually ebullient Caroline is reduced to dependency and collapse. To what extent Phillips was aware of that, or conscious of his responsibility to her, is impossible to judge. In his own journal, he notes occasions of negligence and also, on one occasion at least, calls himself “undeserving of her attention”, but the absence of any explanation of his temporary desertion implies at least some degree of unconsciousness. This may, of course, be attributable to his youth – he was only just 21 when they married – but might also imply a gendered lack of awareness.

Caroline’s diaries also allude to family involvement in their matrimonial story. From the early days when he visits Goodamoor – most probably to see her brothers rather than Caroline – to the later correspondence with her mother that appears to break the deadlock of their separation, the family is always present. Sporting expeditions, walks and balls are all undertaken in the company of her parents or brothers and sisters and it is clear that she delights in showing him off. This makes it doubly difficult when he deserts her and she strives to maintain his reputation. The diaries make no reference to practical matters such as marriage settlements or formal requests for Tom to pay his addresses but we can speculate that Mr Phillips stay at Goodamoor may have been associated with at least the first of these.

The Treby family owned Goodamoor, on the western edge of Dartmoor, for at least three generations and her father supervised two farms on the estate. They are a

conventional family, conscious of their standing in society and of their responsibility to their community. Caroline's emotional outpouring appears contrary to the general tenor of their lives. The hyperbole of the 1818 diary might be thought to reflect a pattern of extreme Sensibility in which the emotions recorded may be those expected of a woman abandoned by her lover rather than what she actually felt. Separating her real feelings from the 'fictional' tropes through which they are expressed is complicated by the absence of any independent information about her character or interests. Consequently, I have taken them at face value as a genuine account of the devastating impact of one aspect of male courting behaviour.

### *John Franklin*

The courtship correspondence of John Franklin and his first wife Eleanor Anne Porden, represents a more mature but controversial approach to marriage than the other examples. Male authority, a woman's work and the place of religion in daily life test the couple's matrimonial determination and instigate a negotiated settlement of the emotional and intellectual boundaries of their marriage. When challenged by Porden, and, despite being older and more experienced, Franklin usually forsakes masculine authority and with it what Anthony Fletcher called "a firm and decisive identification of sexual identity" on which "male control had to be seen to rest".<sup>112</sup> Her identity would not be restricted to the roles of wife and mother or "circumscribed by the domain of the household" and she would enter marriage on a more equal basis than any of the other wives in this chapter.

The 51 preserved letters that passed between them from 1821 to 1823 reveal a sharp contrast between the socially awkward Arctic explorer used to long periods in the company of men, and the vivacious poet who moved confidently in the "fashionable and distinguished literary, scientific and artistic set [...] dubbed 'the Attic Chest'". Although older by nine years, Franklin appears diffident and ill at ease, and often admits the difficulty he has expressing himself in letters. Porden, on the other hand, while retaining some of the conventional formalities of epistolary correspondence (she almost invariably addresses him as 'Dear Sir' or "My Dear Sir") comfortably employs assertive and teasing forms of address and is very open about her feelings and principles. She is a mature woman (28 at the time of their marriage) who travelled extensively on the continent, published three lengthy poems plus a number of shorter ones, and was well known in London literary circles. She was not a 'conventional' bride and firmly rejected

Franklin's two main attempts to assert masculine authority - the first over her writing and the second about her religious views. She would rather not marry than give in to these demands.

Some letters in this collection were written during the later stages of his fateful exploration of the north coast of America from 1819 to 1822 – the expedition that resulted in his nickname of “the man who ate his boots”.<sup>113</sup> The main part of the collection covers the period from his return in October of that year to their marriage in August 1823. It was, ultimately, a very short-lived marriage: she died in February 1825, only eight months after the birth of their daughter and six days after Franklin embarked on his second Arctic expedition. He later married her friend Jane Griffin who was to be the obsessive architect of the search for him when he disappeared on his third expedition.<sup>114</sup>

Franklin and Porden met in 1818, before his first voyage. He was a friend of her father, the architect William Porden, although he does not appear in the latter's journal.<sup>115</sup> Letters between the couple during his voyage convey little of their feelings, although one in May 1821 contains a hint of the religious differences that were to threaten their relationship once he came home. Franklin points out that “contrary to my usual practice” he is writing a letter on a Sunday and acknowledges that “regarding the observance of the Sabbath [...] I learn we in some degree differ”. This was to be one of the two points of principle on which, in the interests of marrying her, he was eventually forced to submit. The other was her continuing to be a published author after their marriage. This second issue is anticipated in two of Porden's letters from this period. In May 1821, she says: “Were you in England, I am sure you would congratulate me, for I yesterday sent to the Press the last sheet of my poem *Coeur de Lion*.” By July of the following year – apparently unaware of the conflict her writing career would cause between them – she wants to send him a copy of the poem for “a frank and candid critique” because, “although there are many on whose judgment I might place nearly equal reliance, [...] there is none on whose sincerity I can so much depend”.<sup>116</sup>

In the early days of Franklin's return from the Arctic, the couple struggle to recreate their “former style of pleasant and familiar conversation.” A meeting in November, 1822 has been “as painful to you [...] it was exquisitely so to me” because “we were both under the influence of strong feelings so jealously suppressed that I think it probable they might have given my manner the same unnatural address that they



certainly did to yours”. Porden admits that “I am not the same in feelings or disposition that I was four years ago” but worries that Franklin “seemed to fancy I had some distrust of you.[although] It is utterly without foundation”.<sup>117</sup> He expresses relief at her “kind and candid explanation of your sentiments respecting me” and excuses any “appearance of coldness on my part” to “the painful apprehension that I entertained as to the probability of your ultimate determination” after her “delay in giving an answer to my proposal”.<sup>118</sup> This degree of insecurity exemplifies the status of ‘supplicant’ which, as we saw in Chapter 2, men often adopted and which, in the powerful emotion of the moment, outweighed all their other accomplishments.<sup>119</sup>

Franklin’s shyness in social situations and the infrequency of his letters is the subject of their correspondence in December 1822. She suggests he is uncomfortable in society to which he replies that her “sentiments” appear to be “a little mistaken”. “No one”, he assures her “enjoys a select circle of friends more than myself – or that class of society from which instruction and information may be secured”.<sup>120</sup> Disappointed by the irregularity and brevity of his letters, she sends him a “fine, saucy message” through her sister. She contemplates “threatening you with endeavouring to pick up a second hand copy of the ‘complete letter writer’ for your especial use”. After this teasing, and noting that he has “so much compelled writing on hand that when you have done your daily task, you are glad to fling the pens in the fire”, she is nonetheless, “apt to think that persons often arrive at a more intimate knowledge of each other’s feelings and sentiments from unrestrained epistolary intercourse, than even from the interchange of an equal number of visits”. This sounds like the reflective woman writer trying to encourage more open and emotional responses from the taciturn man of action. Unfortunately we do not have Franklin’s reply but there is little evidence from subsequent letters that he took the hint. He does, though, appear to be concerned about the persistent cough which eventually became the TB from which Porden would die. In reply to his enquiry she admits “I cannot bear the thought that it should ever become to another a source of the same uneasiness which it caused my poor Father” and had planned to go to the seaside where the “clean air” might affect a cure. But he has “unsettled all my plans and put my head in the most amiable confusion” so that she remains in London instead.

There are at least two other examples of her mocking style. When he has not visited for some time she writes to “Most faithless Saxon [...] to know your pleasure to the disposal of myself, the Disconsolate Monimia”. The second is when he is

established in the family home at Bolingbroke, Lincolnshire and she calls him “Most Magnanimous Harry the Fourth” and using the metaphor of royalty says: “as you have laid your commands on me not to wait for a letter, I, as a Dutiful subject am bound to obey”.<sup>121</sup> Unfortunately, no letters survive to demonstrate Franklin’s response to this flippancy but it must have either puzzled or delighted such an aloof man.

Before he went to Bolingbroke they had established a pattern of regular evening visits which became so informal that she eventually wrote to him: “I wish you could give me a hint when you are likely to come. It need not be an imperative as an engagement, but I should be sorry if you found me out.” There is another reason which demonstrates the important, and sometimes difficult, place of “friends” in the conduct of romance. If he were to arrive unexpectedly, he might encounter “two or three kind friends” whom “I hope you will meet hereafter but at present it would not be so well [...]”. Among them is “one very worthy old Lady, who has a great desire to see you, from our frequent mention of you in your absence, but whose affections I could unluckily trust much farther than her prudence.”<sup>122</sup> Whether she envisages this attempt to retain the privacy of their relationship as more beneficial to Franklin or herself is not made clear but he obviously responds because later letters often include arrangements to meet.

One of the two major conflicts of their courtship occurred in March 1823. We do not have the letter in which he appears to have expressed “horror” at the idea of a wife who writes and publishes, but over eleven pages on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month, she made it clear that she would not give up her work. It was, she writes:

the pleasure of Heaven to bestow those talents on me, and it was my father’s pride to cultivate them to the utmost of his power. I should therefore be guilty of a double dereliction of duty in abandoning their exercise.

She argues that he has known all along that she was a writer and cannot understand this “sudden appearance of opposition”. Furthermore, although she hates the idea of his profession, she would not “want to prevent him doing it”. She wants to “smooth the only difficulty which I believe exists between us” and is particularly pained that “it should have arisen from this cause”. What is more, “everything which bears even the least affinity to literature now seems almost equally opposed to your anathema”. He has said that “all desire of literary fame is vanity” but, in contradicting him, she expects that when his own book comes out he will take “something of a parent’s interest in its fate”.

She also points out that “should I never either write or print another line you would “equally have married Miss Porden the Authoress.” He is, she says, “now fully in possession of my feelings on the subject and I submit them [...] for your calm consideration”.<sup>123</sup> There is no preserved reply from Franklin. They seem to have discussed the issue prior to her letter, but she still felt it appropriate to write and set out her views in detail. His attempt to impose his authority appears to have spectacularly failed because by early May she is back to her tantalising former style warning him that she has heard that “a certain gay widow who wanted to take better care of your health [...] than you were inclined to admit has since made so many and over particular inquiries after you and launched forth so much in your praise that she certainly must have lost her heart altogether”.<sup>124</sup> There’s nothing left for Porden but to “look out for a murmuring brook or a weeping willow” by which to drown her sorrows.<sup>125</sup>

Having resolved the writing question, Porden takes on responsibility for house-hunting. In this same letter she explains that she has looked at two houses in the neighbourhood but “they would not do” and “the only thing that offers at the moment is the Corner House for which only 800£ per annum is demanded and which would suit your ideas of size to a hair. It has 11 attics so you can imagine the rest”. She again asserts herself over the choice of her friend Mr Oviatt to take over house enquiries for her. Franklin had wanted to ask her brother-in-law, Richard Kay, to act as agent but although she has “a strong confidence in Mr Kay’s goodwill and a high opinion of his judgement [...], as to doing anything, he has not time and it would be in vain to rely upon him.” Part of Franklin’s objection to Oviatt had been the disparity in age between him and his much older wife but Porden suggests “when you see more of them, you will own that their attachment makes it respectable, and his ill-health unhappily more than equalizes her years”.<sup>126</sup> She refuses to endorse Franklin’s conventional opinions or direction.

She challenges him about keeping their relationship secret from his family in Lincolnshire but he tells her “You are mistaken my dear friend in supposing the members of my family are ignorant of Miss Porden’s existence”. They have known her writing for some time “and have been made acquainted within these few days of our intimacy” about which they are very pleased and he asks her to “find a room in your heart for each of them” and adds in a possible reflection of her own ironic style “or at least to keep a corner vacant for them”.<sup>127</sup>

Later in the month they reflect on the history of their romance. He asks if she had suspected his attachment before he sailed on the Arctic expedition and on May 21 she tells him: "I did not suspect you till you were within a few days of embarkation and then I blamed myself severely for my own carelessness and for not having withdrawn from your society which I might easily have done." However, "I flattered myself that your feelings would not survive half your voyage to Hudson's Bay".<sup>128</sup> She admits that "you were certainly more in my head than I could account for" but considered herself "bound to my parents and was determined not to think on the subject at all".<sup>129</sup> Franklin's reply, which he addresses to "My dear Eleanor, As it is your pleasure to be addressed [...]", reveals anxiety in the early stages of romance. Admitting that, as they walked from her sister's house, "My mind was almost made up to the determination of pointing out my attachment to you but I considered it unfair to bind the affections of any Lady at the commencement of a voyage which promised so much danger as ours". Later, "I did obscurely hint at my regard as we went along but finding you did not then remark it I changed the conversation". The explorer again lacks courage as lover, but any petitions he might have made were prompted only by a "sincere regard for your present & eternal welfare". He then apologises for "my frequent introduction of religious subjects in my letters. I feel that we should, of all things entirely agree on this important point. But this was to be their second area of conflict and potential stumbling block to marriage.

In June 1823, Porden stated firmly that "if you expect a perfect conformity in our religious opinions you expect what Education and Habit have like forbidden in our case, and what I consider fundamentally impossible." There are no two minds exactly the same, nor any two people "ever thought exactly the same on any subject" which "must be especially the case in matters of religious belief". She thinks that any difference between them can only be on obscure points of doctrine which "should it exist can only call on us to begin at home with something of the spirit of toleration which we profess to all the world."<sup>130</sup> "I do not, dear friend," he replies, "expect a conformity in our serious opinions (however desirable it would be to me) but I should hope and trust we do not differ on any point of faith". If they did, he hopes they would "soon find a close agreement".<sup>131</sup> But the argument does not end there. In July 1823 Franklin sends her letters received from his friend, the Evangelical Lady Lucy Barry, whose religious books had been taken by the crew on the 1819 expedition. Both Franklin and his companion John Richardson had written about the great benefit of these books in helping them to, "endure the sufferings of the journey", and his

friendship with the “fanatical” Barry continued until his marriage.<sup>132</sup> Porden recognises that Barry’s, “long habits of intimacy with you” may “have authorised her interference on such a subject” but does not think any fear of wounding her feelings should “prevent expression of mine”. She demands: “are you become her disciple or does your heart revolt like mine at the prostitution of Scripture [...] if you are her convert and expect me to become so, I must tell you [...] that the greatest act of kindness that you can perform towards me would be to bid me farewell.”

She is, “well aware what I have at stake in writing thus to you”. This includes her reputation - “for our expected union has become unluckily so public, that any interruption of it must expose me, independent of my private feelings, to much of painful and ungenerous remark” – and adds, “if you think my disposition or habits likely to cause you uneasiness we had better keep them separate”. She refers to a previous occasion – presumably about her writing – when “the want of clearer explanation had nearly led to a serious misunderstanding between us” so, although their differences are on “points which I consider of little moment [...] the circumstance has given you uneasiness”, and so “my conscience will never be at peace if I do not write”.<sup>133</sup> The extent of her doubts about their relationship is forcefully expressed the next day when she tells him “the tenor of your conversation is sometimes calculated to make me vacillate.” Questioning whether, “we are calculated to live together in the closest domestic harmony” she admits to, “a degree of timidity by no means natural to me” and warns him :“There is yet one moment to hesitate, and only one.” He should know all he needs to know about her character by now and “if you expect it to alter, you deceive yourself”. She also uses this letter to complain about his apparent coldness to her friends and warn him against his “dark and unsocial view of human nature [...] Those around you are your fellow creatures; you must live among them and, highly as I rate you, I will boldly say that, in the great scale of human beings, three parts of them are as good as yourself.”<sup>134</sup>

Franklin’s denies he is a Methodist – “I cannot enter into the “exclusive opinions and ideas which they entertain on the subjects of Faith and Election [...] I am no enthusiast or bigot on these points but on the contrary am willing to permit everyone to cherish their own sentiments” but he “admires some of the energy and philanthropy of those friends who are”. He would prefer to talk to her on these matters because “the occupation of writing is generally most irksome to me”.<sup>135</sup> She, though, feels incapable of discussion because “my tongue becomes parched and cleaves to the roof of my mouth [...] and when you begin to question me with your keen fixed eye upon me, I

feel that I am still very, very nervous”.<sup>136</sup> Written discourse gives her power; his comes from looks and speech. They respectively construct elements of femininity and masculinity. He continues the correspondence with his views on appropriate behaviour for the Sabbath. She fears he thinks the day should include “penance and privation [...] “seems to me to be contrary to the spirit and intention of the day.” He rejects this interpretation and they eventually settle that, as well as a day for divine worship, Sunday should include rest, relaxation and innocent recreation, except they cannot quite agree what should be permissible. He will not travel or give a party except in particular circumstances; he welcomes conversation with friends but wants it to be serious rather than frivolous. In this letter, almost the last about their disagreements, he also denies antipathy to her friends “Pray tell me what opportunities have I had to of getting to know them [...] ?” but adds “Believe me I shall be most happy to know them as soon as you please.” He admits though that: “As to conversation, the habits of my profession have unfitted me for entertaining in the lively manner many may do, but this I hope will soon wear off under your tuition and example”.<sup>137</sup>

These letters are not straightforward explorations of different intellectual viewpoints: they show the couple negotiating the terms on which their marriage will be conducted. It becomes increasingly clear that Porden will not submit completely to Franklin’s intellectual authority. But it is also clear that he lacks the will to persist. Whether about religion, her work, the acquisition of a house, or the writing of regular letters she expresses herself with confidence and makes clear that she is a capable and intelligent woman who has been independent too long to submit to control by a man, even one she loves as much as Franklin. He, on the other hand, by both his willingness to conciliate when she challenges him, and his tentative expression of affection in the early stages of their relationship, demonstrates a level of dependence and insecurity that sits oddly with his public reputation as a hero, and his undoubted ability to deal with challenging situations. Is it just the shyness and social awkwardness noted by his biographers that causes this contradictory behaviour, or is he afraid of women in general or Eleanor Porden in particular? It could be that Franklin is conforming to an ideological expectation that, in the premarital context, a lover will subjugate aspects of his masculinity in favour of a more sensitive, indeed sentimental, expression of his subjectivity. His discomfort, as a man of action caught in the polite world of matrimonial pursuit, is evident in his response to an assertive and powerful woman for whom he has deep feelings. Significantly there is no mention of love throughout the extant correspondence, and despite the affectionate superscriptions to many letters,

their engagement is more intellectual than emotional and their short marriage, as we shall see in Chapter 4 will be based on mutual esteem for their qualities of mind and understanding.

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Courtship, as demonstrated in the correspondence and diaries considered here, is a process of exploration in which, to greater or lesser degrees, individuals test the character of their future relationship. In some examples, most notably, perhaps, the Strutts and Franklins, the courtship enables us to visualise the marriage: Isabella Strutt will readily accede to her husband's authority, both formally and informally; Eleanor Franklin will not. In the public world of exploration John will remain the man in command; at home Eleanor will continue to exercise independence. These 'negotiations' of the substance of the marriage can only exist where the older form of arbitration – between families and over property – are minimised or abandoned altogether which seems to be the case for all these couples. Except in Joseph Strutt's case, the kinship group is marginalised and the term "friends" attached to "sociable networks" rather than "kinship ties, sentimental relationships, economic ties, occupational connections, intellectual and spiritual attachments".<sup>138</sup> This reduction facilitates the more open relationship that I argue is a feature of late eighteenth-century marriage, and represents a different vision of the marriage contract. Although the legal structures of marriage are unavoidable, these couples are working out what goes on within that structure and by doing so are, in very small but important ways, contributing to changes to the meaning of marriage

Although too small a sample on which to theorise, these courtships represent important characteristics of 'companionate marriage' as a basis for marital choice that were described in Chapter 1. The combination of sexual passion and rational esteem as the foundation of choice is evident in four of them; one has a clear mercenary or status motive; one endorses male dominance; and the last reinforces the value of compromise and conciliation. These are qualities found in conduct and other literature and highlighted by scholarship. Over the almost 60 years from Thomas Rawlinson's wooing of Hannah Satterthwaite to John Franklin's of Eleanor Ann Porden, the terms of the pursuit develop sophistication. Rawlinson had only to contend with nervousness on Hannah's part; Franklin faces forceful opposition. Rawlinson's marriage seems certain, Franklin's doubtful. These variations over time, however, support a history of gradual

rather than abrupt change in the Stone model, and illustrate the increasing diversity of marital practices. In the next chapter we shall consider how the marriages and families that result from the passage of courtship, are explored ideologically by published writers, and in chapter 4 how they are depicted in letter and diary.



## Chapter 2 Wooing and Winning - Unpublished

### Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Charles Freeman Esq, *The lover's new guide; or, a complete library of love, giving full instructions for love, courtship, and marriage*, (London, 1779?) 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Susan Whyman, *The Power of Personal Letters*, <http://susanwhyman.com/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800*.
- <sup>4</sup> Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters and the Novel*, (New York, AMS Press Inc, 1980) 63.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 65.
- <sup>6</sup> Hannah Barker, "Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester", 15.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard P. Bond, "Eighteenth-Century Correspondence: A Survey", *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Oct 1936).
- <sup>8</sup> Vickery, (1998) 45.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 48.
- <sup>10</sup> Nicholas Eustace, "The Cornerstone of a Copious Work": Love and Power in Eighteenth-Century Courtship, *Journal of Social History*, (2001) 518.
- <sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender & Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996).
- <sup>12</sup> Hazel Jones, *Jane Austen and Marriage*, (London: Continuum, 2009) 56, indicates that the Morlands (*Northanger Abbey*) "tactfully close their eyes to the letters that pass between Henry (Tilney) and their daughter" while making the point that "Unmarried men and women who were not engaged were barred from writing to each other".
- <sup>13</sup> Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters and the Novel*, (New York, AMS Press Inc 1980) 67.
- <sup>14</sup> This is a different kind of negotiation from that identified by Amanda Vickery in *Gentleman's Daughter*. In her version the terms to be negotiated were property and finance related.
- <sup>15</sup> Susan Whyman examines the style of Jedediah Strutt's letters to Elizabeth Woolatt in *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800*.
- <sup>16</sup> Pedley, Avril ed. *A Georgian Marriage: The Family Papers of Sir Nash and Lady Grose, 1761-1814*. (Wimborne Minster, Dorset: The Dovecote Press, 2007).
- <sup>17</sup> Lincolnshire Record Office, Fane archive 6/4/2 Dec 2, 1813.
- <sup>18</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Letters written to and for particular friends, on the most important occasions. Directing not only the requisite style and forms to be observed ...* The fourth edition (London, 1750).
- <sup>19</sup> Cornwall Record Office Ref DDV FC/1/ 1-17.
- <sup>20</sup> See Barker-Benfield *Culture of Sensibility*.
- <sup>21</sup> DDV FC1/9 Thomas to Hannah Wednesday Evening (nd).
- <sup>22</sup> *The New Guide to Matrimony or the Lover's Vade Mecum Shewing by a Complete Collection of Serious & Humorous Letters the Best Method of Making Declarations of Love; Rejecting or approving of Offers; Spurning the Interested; Ridiculing the Presuming, and soliciting the support of Parents and Friends in Courtship*, (London:T.Hughes, Ludgate Street) 11.
- <sup>23</sup> In for instance the phrase "I cannot forebear crying out to Heaven that it is too bountifull towards so undeserving a Creature".

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<sup>24</sup> For an account of Quaker life in the mid-18th century see “The Diary of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood, Cumberland 1756-1781”, ed. Angus J.L. (Winchester, published by The Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 1994).

<sup>25</sup> DDV FC 1.4 nd 1776.

<sup>26</sup> DDV FC 1.2 Feb 16, 1776.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> DDV FC 1.1 Feb 20, 1776.

<sup>29</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998) 82.

<sup>30</sup> Praise of the married state frequently appears in conduct literature eg “Of all the pleasures that endear human life, there is none more worthy of the attentions of a rational creature, than those that flow from the mutual returns of conjugal love. A happy marriage has in it all the pleasures of friendship, all the enjoyments of sense and reason; and indeed all the sweets of life. And, to make it so, nothing more is required than religion, virtue, prudence and good nature” John Ovington, *The Duties, Advantages Pleasures, Pleasures and Sorrows of the Marriage State*, (London:1813).

<sup>31</sup> DDV FC/1/1 Feb 20, 1776.

<sup>32</sup> Philogamus complained “If the Parents and Friends are agreed about Fortune, the Parties, almost unknown to one another, are made to join their Hands supposing that Love, or at least a prudent Dissimulation of it will come after; a Supposition so directly against Reason and Experience, that, for one Time it happens, it has a thousand Times the contrary Effect”. Philogamus *The present state of matrimony: or the real causes of conjugal infidelity and unhappy marriages*, (London: printed for John Hawkins, 1739) 33.

<sup>33</sup> DDV FC 1.3 March 29, 1776.

<sup>34</sup> DDV FC/1/4 nd but addressed as the previous letter to Hannah at Kendal.

<sup>35</sup> See Margot Finn “Men’s Things: masculine possession in the consumer revolution”, *Social History* Vol 35, No 2. (May 2000) 133-155; Helen Berry, “Polite Consumption”: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 12 (2002), 375-394; Karen Harvey, “Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain”, *Gender & History*, Vol.21, No.3, (November 2009) 520–540; John Stobart, “Leisure and Shopping in the Small Towns of Georgian England: a Regional Approach”, *Journal of Urban History*, (2005) 479-503.

<sup>36</sup> DDV FC/1/17 May 19.

<sup>37</sup> DDV FC 1/15 nd.

<sup>38</sup> DDV FC 1/6 May 15, 1776.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> *26 Geo II.ch.33*, “for the better prevention of clandestine marriages” became law in March 1754. Jews and Quakers were excluded from its provisions but people of other faiths could only be married by special licence or in an Anglican church during ‘canonical hours’ and after banns had been read on three successive Sundays. When either bride or groom was under 21 written permission was required from parents.

<sup>41</sup> DDV FC/1/7, May 19, 1776.

<sup>42</sup> Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (1771), intro Kenneth C. Slagle.

<sup>43</sup> Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, 7. 'Sensibility' is perhaps the key term of the period. [...], although Addison among others had employed it to suggest delicate emotional and physical susceptibility, it came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering.

<sup>44</sup> DDV FC 1/2.

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<sup>45</sup> DDV FC/1/14 nd.

<sup>46</sup> Plymouth & West Devon Record Office Ref 535/11-31.

<sup>47</sup> In “Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester” (February 2008), Hannah Barker argues (after Spacks) that “We should therefore see the diary as a site for self-fashioning and the construction of identity”. In this respect, the difference between “The domestic focus of our Manchester men [...] appeared far removed from the public ‘sociable’ masculinity of the polite gentleman or ‘man of feeling’”. Andrews’s focus on his romantic experience reinforces perceptions of masculinity as rooted in sexuality.

<sup>48</sup> Somerset Record Office, MS DD/SAS C/1193/4, 'Memoirs of the Birth, Education, Life and Death of: Mr John Cannon. Sometime Officer of the Excise & Writing Master at Mere Glastenbury & West Lydford in the County of Somerset', cit in Tim Hitchcock, “Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England”, *History Workshop Journal*, No. 41 (Spring, 1996); *The diary of Thomas Turner 1754-1765* ed. David Vaisey (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1984), cit Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage*.

<sup>49</sup> Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, *The Art of Pleasing or Instructions for Youth in a Series of Letters*, (London: G.Kearsley, 1783), 20.

<sup>50</sup> Ainslie T. Embree, “Boughton, Sir Charles William Boughton, ninth baronet and first baronet(1747-1821)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004) .

<sup>51</sup> Shropshire Archive Boughton-Boughton Ref 6683/4/349.

<sup>52</sup> Letter to the Editor of *The Times July 1, 1801* in which the writer deplores the “Irreligious and immoral tendency” of sending “our young countrywomen, whose minds should be pure and unsullied with the least breath of immodesty, to a country where it is (alas! too well known) the custom for them to be disposed of to the highest bidder (if I may be allowed the expression); I mean to the man whose fortune is largest, and who is willing to take them; for, I am afraid that, in most instances, nothing else is sought for.”

<sup>53</sup> Embree, (2004).

<sup>54</sup> Lady Clavering to CWBR Oct 5, 1777.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Charlotte Clavering to Charles Boughton-Rous, Nov 23, 1777.

<sup>57</sup> To Charlotte Jan 1778.

<sup>58</sup> Lady Templeton to CWRB Dec 2, 1778.

<sup>59</sup> Sir Thomas Clavering to CWRB Dec 20, 1778.

<sup>60</sup> Unknown correspondent to CWRB Mar 7, 1779.

<sup>61</sup> Shropshire Archives 6683/3/332 CWRB to William Peace Hall, May 19, 1782.

<sup>62</sup> Shropshire Archives Ref 6683/4/332 Family Letters 1781-86.

<sup>63</sup> CWBR to William Pearce Hall March 19, 1782.

<sup>64</sup> Fletcher, 1995, 112. In a chapter entitled “Prescription and Honour Codes” considered “the real test for men was simply everyday living within a marriage partnership. This was where the enforcement of patriarchy rested”. Boughton intended to enjoy “the sure rewards of honour, truth, goodness and a prudent choice”; John Adams, *Elegant tales, histories, and epistles of a moral tendency; on love, friendship, matrimony*.

<sup>65</sup> Derby Record Office Ref 5303/1-4.

<sup>66</sup> Davidoff and Hall explore different generations of the Luckock family and the difference made to the children by James’s commercial and social achievements, but do not pursue their effects on romantic pursuit in the way that the Strutt archives do.

<sup>67</sup> Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997) 24.

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- <sup>68</sup> From *Collected Letters* ed E.L.Griggs, 1956, p 306. Quoted ODNB.
- <sup>69</sup> Fletcher, 1995, xv.
- <sup>70</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/6 Derby October, 1787.
- <sup>71</sup> *The Complete art of Writing Love Letters; or the Lover's Best Instructor.* (London: printed by W. Franklin, for R. Richards; H. Serjeant, and F. Newberry, [1795?]) 6.
- <sup>72</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/1.
- <sup>73</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/6 Derby October, 1787.
- <sup>74</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/7 Derby, October 1787.
- <sup>75</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/12 [1788] Undated or placed. Compare poem in Frances's Dedication to *The Letters Between Henry and Frances; To Beauty's fierce tyrannick Sway/ All Mankind their Homage Pay; but soon, alas! its Power decays,/ A strong but short-lived Blaze / While Wit and Virtue still maintain/ An uncontrolled, lasting Reign.*
- <sup>76</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/11 Derby, May 5, 1788.
- <sup>77</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/13 Oct 12, 1788.
- <sup>78</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/14 October, 1788.
- <sup>79</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/11 Derby, May 5, 1788.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/21 Derby, November 16, 1789.
- <sup>82</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/4 Derby, June 18, 1787.
- <sup>83</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/10 Derby, March, 1788.
- <sup>84</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/11 Derby, May 5, 1788.
- <sup>85</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/16 Derby, January 7, 1789.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>87</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/17 January 26, 1789.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>89</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/19 Derby October 13, 1789. Unlike Rawlinson, Strutt does not accept that his love letters might be open to family scrutiny.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>91</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/20 December 5, 1789.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/4 Derby, June 18, 1787.
- <sup>94</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/12, 1788.
- <sup>95</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/27 Islington, July 24, 1791.
- <sup>96</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/4 Derby, June 18, 1787.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>98</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/6 Derby, October 1787.
- <sup>99</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/14 October 1788.
- <sup>100</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/19.
- <sup>101</sup> MS3101/C/E/4/8/17.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>103</sup> MS3101/C/E/5/16/2 Sandy Brooke May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1788.

<sup>104</sup> Wikborg, 73.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>106</sup> ODNB.

<sup>107</sup> Plymouth and West Devon Record Office Ref 2607/12 *Journal of the misspent time of Thomas J Phillips, Cornet 7th Hussars*.

<sup>108</sup> Plymouth and West Devon Record Office Ref 1148 Diaries of Caroline Treby 1808-1831.

<sup>109</sup> We get a different view of courtship from the diary of Harriet Morse (PWDRO Acc 1533) who married Col. James Carmichael Smyth (1779-1838), future governor of the Bahamas on May 28, 1816. Covering only Feb 21 until her marriage, the diary shows Harriet being courted by three colonels – Powell, Smyth and Thackeray – the first of whom seems to have had some prior claim – “on return from church I received a long letter from Powell; the contents affected me very much”. But then Smyth on March 20 writes to her father: “I was somewhat surprised and a great deal agitated on reading the contents and yet I felt greatly pleased. I had some conversation with my Parents on the subject.” After the formal declaration, they settled into two months of getting to know each other – Smyth ‘visiting’ ‘breakfasting’ and talking ‘on the subject of his attachment’. During this period Col Thackeray wrote to her mother “requesting permission to pay his addresses” which “[...] she answered with a polite refusal.” On May 28 “We all rose early, my Parents & I went to Mary Bone Church where we were met by Smyth & Lord Lymedock & after the ceremony we all returned to Devon Place. S & I set off for Norwood House”. This is a lively diary, packed with social activity and an attachment moving towards conclusion and lacks any of the pain of Caroline Treby’s experience.

<sup>110</sup> In his work on “Age at Marriage in England from the Late Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Fifth Series*, Vol. 23, (1973) 59, R. B. Outhwaite contends that, while general trends of marital age between younger men and older women cannot be discovered, “there were noticeable differences between regions with respect to the numbers of marriages of minors as a proportion of all marriages occurring.”

<sup>111</sup> Her contemplation of suicide may reflect the heightened feelings of Sensibility and so be considered practically unlikely but Roy Porter, “Love, Sex and Madness in Eighteenth-Century England”, *Social Research* Vol 53, No 2, (Summer 1986) 215, contends that “People were always dying for love as any glance at the suicides in the obituary columns of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century news-papers instantly shows.”

<sup>112</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800*, (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1995) 83.

<sup>113</sup> Riffenburgh, R.F. “Franklin, Sir John (1786-1847)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Derby Record Office. Ref D331/4/1 Common place Book of William Porden c 1784-1821.

<sup>116</sup> D3311/8/1/1 EP to JF July 12, 1822.

<sup>117</sup> D3311/8/1/4 EP to JF Nov, 1822.

<sup>118</sup> Ref D3311/8/1/5 JF to EP Nov 1822.

<sup>119</sup> Examples of this style appeared frequently in the conduct literature, for instance “You have favoured me with a few Lines which I most humbly thank you for, and I do Assure you Madam, if you will be pleased to encourage my humble suit, you shall have just an Account of my Circumstances and Pretensions, as I hope will entitle me to your Favour in the honourable Light in which I profess myself dear Madam, Your most obliged and faithful Admirer *The complete letter-writer: or, new and polite English secretary. Containing directions for writing letters on all occasions, ... To which is prefix'd, an easy and compendious grammar of the English tongue*. Letter XXVI, 83.

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- <sup>120</sup> Ref D3311/8/1/9 JF to EP Dec 1822.
- <sup>121</sup> D3311/8/3/8 EP to JF Friday May 9/ Sat May 10, 1823.
- <sup>122</sup> D3311/8/3/1 EP to JF Jan 6, 1823.
- <sup>123</sup> D3311/8/3/6 EP to JF March 29, 1823.
- <sup>124</sup> D3311/8/3/8 EP to JF Friday May 9/Sat May 10, 1823.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>126</sup> D3311/8/3/10 EP to JF May 16, 1822.
- <sup>127</sup> D3311/8/3/11 JF to EP May 16, 1822.
- <sup>128</sup> D3311/8/3/12 EP to JF May 21, 1823.
- <sup>129</sup> Tadmor, 2001, 167.
- <sup>130</sup> D3311/8/3/15 EP to JF (at Bolingbroke, Lincolnshire) May 28, 1823.
- <sup>131</sup> D3311/8/3/16 JF to EP June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1823.
- <sup>132</sup> Janice Cavell, "Lady Lucy Barry and Evangelical Reading on the First Franklin Expedition". *Arctic: Journal of the Arctic Institute of North America*, Vol. 63, No. 2, (June 2010) 131-140.
- <sup>133</sup> D3311/8/30 EP to JF July 8, 1823.
- <sup>134</sup> D3311/8/31 July 9 1823 EP to JF.
- <sup>135</sup> D3311/8/34 JF to EP July 11, 1823.
- <sup>136</sup> D3311/8/33 EP to JF July 10, 1823.
- <sup>137</sup> D3311/8/35 JF to EP July 11, 1823.
- <sup>138</sup> Tadmor, (2001) 167.

*After  
Marriage*

*There is no relation in nature so near, so perfect, and so sacred, as that which subsists between a man and his wife; therefore the husband's care for his wife, and love toward her, ought to exceed that of all other relation whatever; for even the love and duty which he owes to his parents, must give way to the greater love he owes to his wife, if it cannot be performed in consistency with it.<sup>1</sup>*



## *Chapter 3*

### *Having and Holding – Published*

After the passions and formalities of courtship, the successful suitor assumed the status and responsibilities of the married man with all its social, sexual, economic and political implications. Care and protection of his wife – or her “real honour, peace and comfort”<sup>2</sup> - should be the primary concern of a husband but, in the social group whose experiences are the subject of this thesis, the married man would also become head of a household that might include servants, apprentices, family members or other dependents.<sup>3</sup> He would expect - often within the first year of marriage - to become a father with responsibility for the care and education of his own children, and possibly one or more from a wife’s previous marriage.<sup>4</sup> His new status might also impose civic and neighbourhood responsibilities.<sup>5</sup> Some married men would become widowers and return to the courtship arena in search of a second (or in a small number of cases, third or fourth) bride. In addition, husbands might be revealed as adulterers, cuckolds or both. Modern understanding of how these roles were perceived in the eighteenth century relies on two kinds of contemporary representation: the personal correspondence, journals and recorded speeches of individual citizens and their families; and the mass of published literary forms available to an increasingly literate public. Private representations will be considered in Chapter 4; this chapter deals exclusively with published media. These are principally fiction, advice literature and periodicals. But I shall also introduce a literary genre largely untouched by modern scholarship – reports of trials for Adultery, Criminal Conversation and Cruelty conducted in ecclesiastical courts and the King’s Bench.

The material will be presented within one of two analytical frameworks: first the various personal, social and political elements that made up the public images of husband, father, master and married member of society, and the meanings assigned them; second, a detailed analysis of the failed marriage, as represented in court case reports. This material, by revealing intimate details of marital breakdown and divorce, illuminates many critical aspects of the whole marriage experience that frequently escape notice in the more benign literature of marital success. Each of these representational forms has a distinctive contribution to make to our understanding, but collectively they expose the range, variety and nature of the many public perceptions of matrimony by which any man, and those associated with him, might have been influenced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries.

Two important themes emerge from this material: first the psychological aspiration of a genuine love connection between the married couple bolstered by fidelity and care; and secondly the social benefits of stable relationships in which a husband's reputation as well as his comfort and fortune are enhanced. These reflect Lawrence Stone's 'companionate marriage' and Anthony Fletcher's 'transforming patriarchy' but go further than either. I shall argue that "manly" husbands were persuaded by the public discourse to stay at home more, take pleasure in their wife's company, and provide financial and social security. They demanded reciprocal warmth and prudence and rejected many of the lures available to the late eighteenth-century married man. Similarly, they were counselled to be intimately concerned with their children's welfare and education and to establish close relations with them. These were not new developments but part of a trend that Michael McKeon identified as "the gradual shift of normative weight from the public referent to the private reference – more particularly, the gradual absorption of the public realm's traditional privilege and priority by the realm of private experience".<sup>6</sup> Media characterisation of the married man ceased to emphasise position and concentrated on performance. Guidance, commentary, and polemic explicate the qualities required to be a successful husband and father.<sup>7</sup> Novels "retain their romantic heroes and villains, wish-fulfilments and fairy-tale endings but now these things have to be worked out in terms of sex and property, money and marriage, social mobility and the nuclear family".<sup>8</sup>

Focusing on the roles of husband and father reveals, as I shall show in detail later, the extent to which they have been overlooked by modern scholars of gender and particularly the "hot topic" of masculinity.<sup>9</sup> Historians have concentrated on courtship,<sup>10</sup> domestic violence<sup>11</sup> and prostitution,<sup>12</sup> and critics on the development of the novel and its social analytical capacity, as for example in Perry's conclusion that, "What *Clarissa* enacts - besides the power of language to recreate emotion and reinterpret events - is the dispossession of daughters in the new capitalist dispensation".<sup>13</sup> In her major work on masculinity, Elizabeth Foyster concluded that, after acquiring manhood, asserting it "was a task fraught with difficulty" and marriage, "signified the beginning of the ultimate test of manhood, which was the maintenance of sexual control of the man himself, his wife, children and servants".<sup>14</sup> Foyster's research pursued the Early Modern experience and, while the emphasis on sexual control remained throughout the century, I shall suggest some variation in its nature. The authoritarian resonance Foyster identified had moderated so that, in Claudia L. Johnson's phrase, "the good husband is 'exalted' in his possession of virtues such as gentleness, compassion, mildness, indulgence and softness".<sup>15</sup> John Tosh surmised that there was a shift from "masculinity as social reputation to masculinity as an

interiorised sense of personal identity” but did not relate this to the married man.<sup>16</sup> Crucial to the study of “married masculinity” is the patriarchy which “in contravention of some early feminist writing, was never simply hegemonic but always contained contradictions, compromises and sources of instability”.<sup>17</sup> Lawrence Stone claimed that the “Social Contract and the advent of affective individualism reduced a married man’s authority and turned marriage into a contract with mutual rights and obligations”.<sup>18</sup> Ruth Perry dismissed it as “anachronistic, reading twentieth-century concerns back into a culture that may not have privileged these relationships as much as ours does”.<sup>19</sup> The main debate centres on the extent to which new versions of gender worked to sustain, while altering the nature of, patriarchal authority.<sup>20</sup> Some of these issues will be explored in this chapter.

Fatherhood, while chronologically the second significant role for the married man is, arguably, the first politically. The family was “under the authority of the paterfamilias; husband, father and master who represented his dependants to the wider body politic”.<sup>21</sup> The conduct of fathers – of biological and acquired children and of the wider household family – assumed, therefore, a central ideological significance firmly grounded in the importance of home and domesticity. Hannah More concluded: “it is manly to enjoy domestic life and to willingly take responsibility for the education of both sons and daughters”.<sup>22</sup> But this, and other references, begs the question of ‘what is domestic life?’ Is it merely the occupation of defined premises and the performance of certain duties and responsibilities? Or does it incorporate “the multitude of assumptions and ideals that continually shaped and re-shaped British domestic relations?”<sup>23</sup> Toni Bowers argues that “family” and “home” were historically specific concepts but that both changed from sites and sources of productive labour to a separation between home and workplace by the end of the eighteenth century. This, she suggests, led to increasing isolation for women, a view supported by Perry’s analysis of “The Great Disinheritance”.<sup>24</sup> Alexandra Shepard, alternatively, suggested that: “Just as historians are beginning to accept that in certain circumstances certain women might have benefited from patriarchal norms (albeit to a different degree and in very different ways from men), so it is important to recognize that men as well as women actively resisted patriarchal norms and also pursued alternative codes of manhood”.<sup>25</sup> An important question to be considered later is the extent to which these alternative codes changed, for better or worse, men’s role in marriage.

Recognition of children’s importance to future economic prosperity inevitably caused problems for those charged with their upbringing and created space for an extensive literature of advice and instruction to enable men to understand and fulfil the

office.<sup>26</sup> Unsurprisingly, these publications extended the role beyond authority, and promoted affective models similar to those which were influencing marriage and the family as a whole. These attitudes and approaches are easily visible in the private representations which are an important part of this thesis. And yet scholars have paid almost no attention to the role, even those studying the fashioning of childhood during the century. In this literature, fathers are subsumed into “parents” without any distinct status of their own and, while there are several studies of how “motherhood” was constructed,<sup>27</sup> modern scholarship contained no fully developed model of eighteenth-century fatherhood until Fletcher in 2008. John Gillis suggested that “Fatherhood, like motherhood, was defined socially rather than biologically. [...] it was understood as a well-defined set of domestic skills – provisioning, hospitality, and child-rearing – that male heads of households were expected to acquire and share with other men”.<sup>28</sup> But this definition ignores the emotional ties that began to define the role. Davidoff and Hall, Hannah Barker and Nicola Phillips have produced examples of eighteenth-century fathers in action, but no critical examination of the concept ‘fatherhood’.<sup>29</sup> In the Parent-Child Relations chapter of his study Lawrence Stone refers almost exclusively to “the parents” or “the mother” and never separately to any action or thought of the father.<sup>30</sup> Fletcher’s 1995 study contained little detail of how real fathers behaved.<sup>31</sup> These deficiencies were substantially remedied, however, by his major work on childhood, published in 2008.<sup>32</sup> Using, a mixture of public and private sources, Fletcher argued that, throughout this period, “Fatherhood was about combining the exercise of guidance and authority with the expression of the affection that fathers felt for sons and daughters”.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Tosh, discussing mid and late Victorian fathers defined their role as, “Authority and Nurture”.<sup>34</sup> Fletcher claims that: “Explicit evidence that fathers regarded being affectionate to their children as central to their parental performance is bountiful between 1750 and 1914”.<sup>35</sup>

The father-daughter relationship, to be discussed historically later, forms an important strand of critical analysis. For Caroline Gonda and Eleanor Wikborg,<sup>36</sup> fatherly affection for daughters had, at the very least, ambiguous intentions. Novels, in their readings, demonstrate that, “the father is to gain authority (even authority to destroy) through tenderness; a sort of emotional blackmail is substituted for more straightforward authoritarianism”.<sup>37</sup> The sexual desire inherent in close father-daughter relationships could be exploited in these novels while leaving the incest taboo intact. The effect went further: “In many novels of this period, the intensity of relationships within the ‘sentimental family’ is such that it overshadows any sexual or marital love which the daughter may come to feel for a man outside the family”<sup>38</sup> while at the same time creating the, “terms for a daughter’s

future heterosexual marital and maternal roles”.<sup>39</sup> Wikborg’s “powerful father figure [who] should represent both a special allure and a special potential for despair in the imaginations of eighteenth-century women” replicates the psychological criteria by which women in certain novels evaluated suitors.<sup>40</sup> This study of women writers who, “were seeking to transform the powerful father figure from a frightening oppressor into an ideal suitor and future husband who would use his power to authorize a woman’s being rather than to destroy it” implied aspects of fatherly behaviour through the construction of lovers in a father’s image.<sup>41</sup> Hence ‘The Guardian’, ‘The Mentor’, ‘The Prince of All Creation’ and the ‘Ideal Love Relation’. She makes no claim for her model’s existence outside the radical novels she cites but, as we have already seen in Joseph Strutt, it is possible to identify men who conform to aspects of her structure. Women’s relationship with their fathers were, in Elizabeth Kowalesi-Wallace’s estimation, governed by the paradox that “the most powerful kind of patriarchal control is one that is least coercive, one that, in making the daughter so dependent on her father's love and esteem, makes her least likely to view him critically. As we have seen the most powerful kind of patriarchal control is precisely a seduction”.<sup>42</sup> While the literary evidence quoted by these authors supports this version of the father-daughter relationship, its application to the husband-wife partnership remains problematic, despite the assumption that “a husband took over from the father the legal guardianship of the woman he married, so that the father-daughter relation provided the dominant model for the married relation as well”.<sup>43</sup> No comparable literature of father-son relationships appears to exist.

In an historical example, Amanda Vickery quotes the “paternal satisfaction [that] gushed” from William Ramsden’s pen when he contemplated his wife and new son and records that he frequently looked after the children while his wife socialised outside the home, but Vickery’s only other discussion of fathers is of their exercise of authority within the family. Even though her later work contains 26 index references to “father” none of them turns out to explain in any detail how the role was undertaken.<sup>44</sup> No doubt, however, as she and Karen Harvey spearhead the project to reveal men in their domestic setting more acknowledgment of its complexity and importance will emerge.

In examining the literature, I have either deliberately ignored, or considered only briefly, certain aspects of the roles of husband and father because they have been the subject of significant previous academic work. Management of servants, for example – critical to the married man’s position as ‘father’ of the wider family – has been well researched over a number of years.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the passionate debates on education that

occupied a wide range of male and female authors during the period have been extensively discussed (although not directly in relation to the father's responsibilities for making choices about the most appropriate forms).<sup>46</sup> Writers on childhood have also examined medical advice and the dangers of childbirth; the discursive shaping of the concept of childhood; and the politics of motherhood.<sup>47</sup> Inevitably, given that these topics are largely approached from a feminist perspective, this work has said little about their implications for male choice and authority, but I have resisted the temptation to do so here because of the limited material on which to base conclusions in these areas. I will, though, discuss two major controversies that have direct relevance to fathers and their status: the contentious issue of men-midwives, and the impact of their employment on both masculinity and morality,<sup>48</sup> and the extensive contemporary debate over the practice of nursing and breast feeding for gentry women, a topic addressed by a small number of writers including Perry, Bowers and Cody.<sup>49</sup>

The rest of this chapter is organised under three main headings: *The Husband*, *The Father*, and *The Courts*. In the first and second of these fiction, advice literature and periodicals will be examined. In the third, I shall analyse reports of trials for Adultery, Criminal Conversation and Cruelty conducted in ecclesiastical courts and the King's Bench. This material reveals important aspects of the behaviour of some husbands and wives in a society in which superficial images derived from law and custom obscured a sometimes venal and often tendentious reality. The broken marriage exemplifies normality under tension, and these reports, despite their formulaic style and paradoxical motivation – they moralised while titillating - reveal important evidence about some matrimonial conduct. To underline the point, I have included two case studies that concentrate on the 'ordinary' aspects of the couples' lives together rather than the adultery itself (see p 203-4). This material prompts questions about its apparent popularity and ideological significance. Why, for instance, was a society apparently so appalled by the frequency and extent of licentious behaviour, so eager to consume this material? Does it demonstrate deep contradictions within the culture, or simply readers' capacity to separate enjoyment of scandal from moral feelings? Despite its significance, this material has, until now, received very little scholarly attention: work on divorce or marital violence by Stone, Gowing, Foyster and others has drawn extensively on court and parliamentary records but not this large body of published reports. Similarly, in her article on aristocratic adultery, Donna T. Andrew discussed the Adultery Bill and comment in newspapers, periodicals and the debating societies that "became particularly active in the 1780s" but said nothing about other cases or the adultery reports.<sup>50</sup> Sarah Lloyd drew directly on this material but focused on only two cases.<sup>51</sup>

## *The Husband*

Husband is the married man's fundamental role, and in this section, I consider the published representations of the role. These concentrate on his responsibility for his wife's conduct which appears to be predominantly concerned with controlling her sexuality.<sup>52</sup> Managing his household included both financial and moral responsibilities.<sup>53</sup> Welfare of servants and other dependents, inheritance, and the maintenance and improvement of property and status all helped define the husband's masculinity, and were the frequent subject of advice literature. The transition from suitor to husband - perhaps the most significant of a young man's life - involved modifications to both his self- and public-perception with consequent implications for the meaning of masculinity. This is an important example of "the notion of temporal scripts" that Gabriela Specter-Mersel has argued, "enables a holistic consideration of masculinity across the life course".<sup>54</sup> Specter-Mersel is particularly interested in the impact of age – including old age – on hegemonic masculinity scripts but her concept can be applied equally to significant life changes such as marriage. It also reinforces the conclusion that "both femininities and masculinities are constructed in specific time, place and circumstance"<sup>55</sup> – a "necessary diversity" welcomed by John Tosh.<sup>56</sup> At marriage, the lover's heightened feeling and sensibility give way to the husband's more down-to-earth ability to manage his wife and home. An accumulated vision of the role is found in three types of printed material – the novel, advice and conduct guidance, and periodicals.

One of the challenges of this material is the extent to which it can be treated as "history". Historians approach the three media differently, often accepting the didactic content of conduct and periodical material but questioning the novel's validity as social history.<sup>57</sup> "History, novels and gossip all offered accounts of individuals and thus focused on how best to understand and represent individuality, not least with reference to social norms".<sup>58</sup> But "when historians have tried to use such fictional sources for socio-historical research, they have often run into theoretical and practical problems".<sup>59</sup> Interest in the concepts of 'family' and 'friend' direct attention to novels because they "create a social world and relate stories which generally involve family matters" and enable development of the idea of variety in the meaning of the social language.<sup>60</sup> That social world "and the concerns that [the novel] exists to mediate is the emergent 'middle class'".<sup>61</sup>

Tadmor chose *Pamela* for her case study, "for it is commonly held to be an important landmark in the history of the novel, thanks to its innovative, realistic descriptions of everyday life and its simple, lively language - and above all thanks to the

author's psychological insight into the heroine's mind".<sup>62</sup> Gonda highlighted, "the openly tyrannical rule of Mr Harlowe and Sir Thomas Grandison and suffocating moral and pedagogical care of Mr Tyrold" as boundaries within which the "dutiful daughter" learned submission "from filial love, not fear".<sup>63</sup> Greenfield's selection included *Evelina*, *The Italian*, *The Wrongs of Woman or Maria*, *Belinda*, *Adeline Mowbray* and *Emma*. Upon these novels as well as polemical and conduct writing she constructed her claims that "Images of good motherhood and of mother-child bonding were deployed in remarkably diverse ways for progressive as well as conservative causes" and "that the family romance popularized in women's novels was among the many cultural paradigms that laid the ground for the creation and acceptance of psychoanalytical theory".<sup>64</sup> These studies demonstrate the capacity of fictional readings to reveal socio-historical insights, but they rely on a limited range of evidence and can invite the criticism of circularity. With broader models of analysis, both Ros Ballaster and Toni Bowers explore the place of seduction fiction in "the construction of alternative models and means winning female power".<sup>65</sup> Where Ballaster emphasised Early Modern writing, Bowers could conclude "by the 1790s, seduction fiction had become a chosen vehicle for writers with a radical agenda who struggled for new ways to imagine consensual relations among unequals and autonomous difference in British society." In seduction stories she writes, "we witness an effort to imagine for the first time the now familiar (though still problematic) distinction between courtship, supposedly a process of mutual consent, seduction which involves the gradual achievement of female collusion with primary male desire, and rape, an act of force defined by female resistance or non-consent".<sup>66</sup> The interplay between history and the novel in the mid-eighteenth-century was "part of a disciplinary readjustment whereby historians and novelists reclassified, separated and realigned their representational territory".<sup>67</sup> The exploitation of fiction by modern critics and historians suggests similar disciplinary adjustments today.

Critics' attention is particularly directed at eighteenth-century women writers. "A woman's writing and her life tended to be judged together on the same terms. The woman novelist's sexual behaviour was as much a subject of concern as her heroine's. Her main subject - female sexuality as controlled by female chastity - was established by the early 1700s".<sup>68</sup> In an original analysis of *Camilla* (1796), Andrea K. Henderson, engages with both female sexual desire and the increasingly critical topic of consumerism.<sup>69</sup> Casual shopping, she argues, provides the paradigm for a form of sexual desire that is self-serving, calculating and fickle. The desire to see everything while focusing on nothing suggests both a promiscuity of interest and an ultimate aloofness".<sup>70</sup> Gonda, though, points out that: "At a time when moralist and novelist alike were preoccupied with the image of a vulnerable



and corruptible young woman reader, and with the dire effects novel-reading could have on her, fictional representations of daughters' relationships with their fathers offered a moral framework for her."<sup>71</sup> This could be assessed by a, "New emphasis on differences that distinguish women from one another" and led Mary Jacobus to conclude that: "The prison of sensibility is created by patriarchy to contain women; thus they experience desire without the Law, language without power."<sup>72</sup> The historiography of the novel, "adds up in the long run (and retrospectively) to an unprecedented attempt to project a new sort of particularized presence, and to imagine persons speaking about themselves in their singularity, asserting themselves as unique individuals"<sup>73</sup> It is this assertion of the individual within the context of the public institution of marriage that is the subject of the next section.

### *Fiction*

Fiction that ends with marriage focuses on the passion of the lover and the naivety, duplicity or prevarication of his love object. Reflections on the qualities of a husband represent more what a young woman should expect of a lover than a man to be married to, and therefore are essentially idealised.<sup>74</sup> Marriage itself is seldom at the centre of the narrative, although exceptions can be found in some major novels for example *Pamela* (1741), *Amelia* (1751), *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph* (1761) and, much later and for a different purpose, *Adeline Mowbray* (1804).<sup>75</sup> Different reasons might be proposed for this absence, in addition to the artistic imperatives of the authors. The first, perhaps, is that fiction represented a society anxious to organise young people, with all their energy and potential for social disruption, into the stability of marriage.<sup>76</sup> To achieve that objective, and the necessary idealisation of matrimony, the literary focus remained on the *achievement* of marriage rather than its *conduct*. It is also true that, except for heavily conflicted married relationships, courtship provides the writer with many more dramatic opportunities than are contained in the day-to-day conduct of marriage. It also provides a natural end-point for the narrative, whereas in a marriage story this can only be achieved by death, divorce or separation. The last two of these may create the circumstances for a redemptive denouement but they seldom occupy a significant place in the plot.<sup>77</sup> Instead of being at the centre of fiction, married people often appear as minor characters in the protagonists' story and examination of these characters will sometimes reveal authorial and societal attitudes to marital realities more acutely than the exigencies of drama and romance required by the main fiction will allow. The Tyrols, Crofts and Dennisons represent marital harmony; the Hurrels, Elfords and Sumelins, conflict.<sup>78</sup>

Strong women play significant roles in both categories. In *Belinda*, the Percival family epitomise affective relations and domestic objectives. As a result, in contrast to the dissipated glitter of Lady Delacour's circle, Belinda Portman "found herself in the midst of a large and cheerful family, with whose domestic happiness she could not forebear to sympathise. There was an affectionate confidence, an unrestrained gayety in this house [..]" because "She perceived that between Mr Percival and lady Anne there was a union of interests, occupations, taste, and affection".<sup>79</sup> These are precisely the matrimonial qualities promoted by writers of advice and conduct manuals as they attempted to shape late eighteenth-century mores into what Armstrong called "the new domestic ideal".<sup>80</sup>

Novels that end with a wedding fulfil the social and political imperative for men and women to get together and - although it is seldom talked about - to procreate and perpetuate both the species and civil society. The husband as sexual and social partner, provider, upholder of moral precepts, pillar of the community etc makes few appearances in the domestic and courtship novel, even in prospect when the qualities of a lover are being examined. Cecilia Beverley, eponymous heroine of Fanny Burney's novel, for instance, only "looked forward with grateful joy to the prospect of ending her days with the man she thought most worthy to be entrusted with the disposal of her fortune".<sup>81</sup> Laura Shenstone in *The Mercenary Marriage* took an opposite view: "he must have an income sufficient to support me in the elegant style of life to which I have been accustomed; and I really imagine that I have some right to expect the continuation of such a style".<sup>82</sup> The Lady correspondent in *Original Love Letters* identifies in her potential husband: "that sense of honour, that inflexible integrity, and that exquisite sensibility, which gives to the more robust virtues their fairest shape and brightest colour".<sup>83</sup>

Admiral and Mrs Croft, the model of unsentimental marriage in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818), "seemed particularly attached and happy" and everything we read about them at this stage of their lives reflects the strength of their attachment and their ability, in public at least, (we never see them privately) to display some degree of equality in their relationship. The admiral is happy to let his wife manage their affairs. He enjoys the warmth and orderliness of their relationship and believes in marriage as a source of comfort and support, not of display, nor of exercise of power or authority.<sup>84</sup>

The degree of marital harmony achieved by the Crofts is a rarity in Jane Austen's fiction.<sup>85</sup> In *Persuasion*, more than any other Austen novel, we see the disparity between Ruth Perry's 'consanguineal' and 'conjugal families'. Sir Walter Elliott's devotion to his family's lineage - "he never took up any book but the Baronetage"<sup>86</sup> - and his very close

circle of advice, including Lady Russell, deprive him of interest in any alternative family formation including Anne's with Wentworth. They are "the new couple who make their own way alone, independent of any relations" in contrast to the young Musgroves of Uppercross Cottage who refuse to be inconvenienced by their children, or even, in Charles' case, by his wife and are still dependent on older relations.<sup>87</sup> Perry argues that "the balance shifts in *Persuasion*, as if some irremediable point had been passed and even the moral appeal of the consanguineal family had become, at last, a thing of the past".<sup>88</sup> Instead, the new Mrs Wentworth "gloried in being a sailor's wife but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance".<sup>89</sup>

Although most fictions take for granted the wife's constancy, some, particularly the anonymous offerings that comprised much popular reading, exploited the titillation opportunities of female infidelity. *Amusements in High Life or Conjugal Infidelities of 1786*, is the epistolary musing of two fictional young wives on their ability to avoid censure for their adulteries by hiding behind matrimonial conventions.<sup>90</sup> It attempts, by its emphasis on topicality, to pretend that it is reporting real rather than fictional inconstancy, for which there was an extensive market. In *The Modern Wife* Lady Warwick uses the appearance of adultery to establish her independence. When her husband drops "some gentle hints" about her behaviour she expostulates: "I shall not [...] take any violent pains to remove these unjust suspicions - suspect my honour! - dare to censure my conduct! - Heavens! what woman of spirit can tamely put up with such an indignity!".<sup>91</sup> In *The Unhappy Wife*, the lengthy correspondence of Lady Sappho and Lord Gould - both married unhappily - ends with their elopement and the tacit endorsement of adultery as a tolerable response to unsatisfactory connexions.<sup>92</sup> These were fictions that, within limited narrative confines, appeared to challenge conventional power relations and, without over-emphasis, might be read as small examples of retreating patriarchal authority.

Mr B in Richardson's *Pamela* provides a much earlier example of an ostensibly more liberal attitude to gendered power relations: "The Word Command on my side, or Obedience on hers, I would have blotted from my Vocabulary. For this Reason, that I would have thought it my Duty to have desired nothing of her that was not significant, reasonable or just; and that she then, on hers, have shewn no Reluctance, Uneasiness or Doubt to oblige me, even at half a Word".<sup>93</sup> While he may imagine a more equal relationship, it is still Mr B who sets the terms and Pamela who responds. And his contention, of course, comes after the extended attack on her virtue in which he attempted

to use his power as her employer as well as his strength as a man. *Pamela* is most often discussed in terms of “the fraught dance of conflict and compromise played out between its servant heroine and the predatory master she first resists and finally marries”.<sup>94</sup> This “drama of the aggressive male checked by the virtuous female” is “paradoxically a reaffirmation of the patriarchal values of the family”.<sup>95</sup> But the long section after the wedding shows them negotiating roles within the marriage, and revealing many of the issues about marital status and authority that exercised the wider society. In *Pamela the Continuation* many of those tensions are lived out. A particular conflict occurs over the topical subject of breast-feeding: Pamela believes it a sacred duty but Mr B that it is unworthy of her mind: “to seek my beloved in the nursery; or to permit her to be engrossed by those baby offices, which will better befit weaker minds [...] I cannot help looking upon the nurse’s office, as an office beneath Pamela”.<sup>96</sup> In focusing our attention on this issue, Richardson fulfils both the demands of social realism and the novelist’s need for dramatic tension. In *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* he again presents the appearance of shared authority within marriage when Sir Charles gives the new Lady Harriet, “my choice of servants of both sexes”; and “the power, madam, of change or dismissal thro’ the house”.<sup>97</sup> She has not claimed this as a right, but rather been awarded authority by her husband. In Charlotte Grandison’s transformation from indifferent lover to “an example of true conjugal felicity”<sup>98</sup> we glimpse the power of domestication. This transformation was substantially wrought by the birth of a daughter. Perry called this the representation of a “newly elaborated social and sexual identity for women” and a “colonial form [...] the domestic, familial counterpart to land enclosure at home and imperialism abroad”. Charlotte, in Perry’s view, is “tamed by motherhood [...] brought into line by child bearing, made to see her true nature, calmed, and fulfilled: “matronized” is Richardson’s word.”<sup>99</sup> Conveniently for her argument, however, Perry ignores Lord Grandison’s response to the maternal scene: “Henceforth, every thing you say, every thing you do, will I take for a favour”.<sup>100</sup>

Henry Fielding’s *Amelia* - published in 1751 and therefore a very early example of the fiction of matrimonial forensics - demonstrates the importance to social order of female steadfastness in the face of extreme provocation.<sup>101</sup> The downfall of the “improbably saintly” eponymous heroine’s husband, Booth, comes from his own greed, naivety and trust of people who purport to be his friends.<sup>102</sup> In presenting the “various accidents that befell a very worthy couple, after their uniting in a state of matrimony”,<sup>103</sup> Fielding awakens in his readers the “graver emotions of anxiety and compassion”<sup>104</sup> by revealing both the practical difficulties and interior conflicts suffered by Amelia in ensuring

her family's survival and her husband's reputation and friendships. Bergen Brophy captures that aspect of the situation in her assertion that the social interchange between men and women in the novel is always "highly charged with sexuality, making purely intellectual conversation difficult and leading to the use of an appropriated language with women which effectually destroys any assumption of equality".<sup>105</sup> In the case of *Amelia*, lack of equality also represents a necessary feature of plot and characterisation.

After a chaotic and sometimes surreal series of episodes, the book's epilogue details "what hath since happened to the principal characters" and concludes with a picture of idyllic rural domesticity in which William and Amelia have "enjoyed an uninterrupted course of health and happiness".<sup>106</sup> The novel is a commentary on the corruptions of its age and the necessity of female determination and devotion to both matrimonial and social stability. It also shows the challenge for any young husband of the many temptations and attractions lurking beyond the marital home and the danger of submitting to them.

*Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph* also deals in part with marital misery caused by an errant husband but, like *Amelia*, celebrates the power of redemption. Mr Arnold's initial "assiduity and tenderness" towards Sidney Biddulph convince her that, "it is not necessary to be passionately in love with the man we marry, to make us happy. Constancy, good sense, and a sweet temper must form a basis for a durable felicity".<sup>107</sup> Soon, "Coldness and indifference have at length succeeded to love, to complacency and the fondest attention".<sup>108</sup> Arnold's affair with Mrs Gerrard threatens the marriage but his response to Sidney's previous involvement with Orlando Fauckland is the clearest example of the sexual double standard at work.<sup>109</sup> Arnold, Sidney decides, was "led away from me by enchantment" but when "the charm is broke [...] I find him the tenderest of men".<sup>110</sup> We again see a man depend on the constancy and resolve of a loving wife to save him from himself and from the enticements of the world. This is a situation applauded in conduct and other literature. Men were enjoined to be more responsible, practice fidelity and prudence<sup>111</sup> and wives to be more assertive within the shifting patriarchal boundaries.<sup>112</sup>

In Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, the enticement for Mr Baynard is his passion for a wife who is, herself, obsessed with external display. Baynard had married for money, having reduced his own fortune in various ways. Matt Bramble felt the marriage inauspicious from the start:

She excelled in nothing [...] Her person was not disagreeable; but there was nothing graceful in her address, nor engaging in her manners; and she was so ill qualified to do the honours of the house, that when she sat at

the head of the table, one was always looking for the mistress of the family in some other place.<sup>113</sup>

As a result, a man with a “disposition strongly turned to the more rational pleasures of a retired country life” is instead “hurried about in a perpetual tumult, amidst a mob of beings pleased with rattles, baubles and gew-gaws”.<sup>114</sup> Despite his travails and the damage to his estate, health and reputation inflicted by his wife, Baynard retains the “generous feelings” towards her demanded by masculine sensibility.<sup>115</sup> Smollett’s main concern in this episode is Baynard’s apparent willingness to indulge his wife and therefore to risk exposure to the kind of ridicule which put him beyond the bounds of “acceptable masculinity”.<sup>116</sup> Bramble’s other friend, Mr Dennison, by contrast, displays the new form of engaging domesticity. Whereas the Baynards were ruined by social pretension, the Dennisons firmly resist. They are Smollett’s ideal couple – hardworking, sensible, supportive of each other and friendly with their neighbours. The contrast with the follies of London, even when those are physically transferred to the country, could not be plainer. By making Dennison speak for himself - unlike Baynard whose story is told by Matt Bramble - Smollett foregrounds the husband and with him the importance of affective family life. This is the life which William and Amelia Booth and the Arnolds could only attain after their tribulations.

In an equally idealised fashion, it is also the life of Henry Norwynne, junior, and his faithful love Rebecca in Elizabeth Inchbald’s *Nature and Art*. They are sharply contrasted with the cold prudential marriage of his brother William and while the novel is predominantly a political treatise on the iniquities of privilege, these comparisons demonstrate the redemptive power of domestic stability.<sup>117</sup> In *A Simple Story* (1791), the tale of Miss Milner’s turbulent relationship with her guardian, Dorriforth/Elmwood echoes other examples of women intent on establishing their independence from patriarchal rule but being finally forced to submit to it. Elmwood’s refusal to acknowledge his own passion until it is almost too late exposes the intense sexuality of the relationship and, with it, the loss of both honour and self-esteem caused by her (narratologically fairly unconvincing) adultery. In this respect, Inchbald concludes that a husband overwhelmed by desire is more vulnerable to disappointment and prone to strong negative reaction; his masculinity will be asserted negatively and with potentially disastrous results.

The causes of marital failure are different in Thomas Holcroft’s *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor*. Mr Elford’s expectation of “mildness, complacency, and equanimity of temper” as the “leading features in the character of an amiable and good woman”, are

disappointed by marriage to Hugh Trevor's aunt with whom "I have travelled through the vale of tears". She has "fed me with affliction, strewed thorns beneath my feet by day, and wound adders round my pillow by night" even though "To be a good - husband and a provident father, and to protect those that depend on me from injury and want, are qualities which I believe the whole world will allow me".<sup>118</sup> Her constant upbraiding prevents him exercising these manly qualities and he leaves, at the same time warning Hugh of the doubts he is entertaining about the virtue of the institution of marriage. The task of man and wife, he admits, is "reciprocally arduous. She should be mild, good humoured, cheerful and tender; he cool, rational, and vigilant; without acrimony, devoid of captiousness, and free from passion".<sup>119</sup> Elford's inability to exercise these qualities in the face of provocation drives him away.

Demonstrating the importance of both male and female virtue and the contribution a more composed and tranquil life could make to sustaining it, is one of the aims of two contrastingly titled circulating library novels that appeared in 1773. In *The Way to Lose Him*, Miss Wyndham rejects Edward Deerhurst's offer because "I cannot [...] bear to think of his expecting to find me a tame, submissive animal".<sup>120</sup> She elopes to Scotland with Captain Wilkinson who eventually decimates her fortune and "will not, I fear, be faithful [...]" She admits that she could not have stood Deerhurst's "prying disposition [...] quite an *English* husband" and yet, rather wistfully, wonders whether if she had married him "with a little management I could have done what I pleased." The romances of her friends are being transformed into loving relationships while her husband has become "a contemptible creature". She blames her friend for encouraging the rejection of Deerhurst and concludes "let every woman, therefore, who wishes to *keep her lover*, shut her ears against the envious, malicious, diabolical admonitions of her own sex, which must inevitably make her behave in such a manner as to *lose him*." There is a sharp contrast between the conspiratorial correspondence of the women in this story and the open confidentiality of the men. These men share their emotions and admit "There is infinitely more delicacy required from us in our connections with the fair sex than with our own".<sup>121</sup>

The companion piece, *The Way to Please Him*, shows how a woman of determination and discretion can retain, even enhance, the love of a notoriously philandering husband.<sup>122</sup> As usual, a number of love stories twist through this narrative but the main one involves Sir William Sedley and his wife Sophia. She employs three main strategies for retaining his attention: she ignores his affairs and his falling in love with other women; in at least two instances she makes herself as much like his intended mistress as possible; and she is always

discreet and supportive of him. This variation on the conventional fictional response which might be for her to seek lovers impresses itself on Sedley, who, eventually becomes “fond of Lady Sedley” and their marriage reaches a point where they could “bear each other’s absence without the least anxiety and could spend their hours together without being mutually tired.” This might sound a limited achievement but it again emphasises the commitment to domestic values. There is nothing equal about this relationship and, as the author wryly observes “where is the man so firmly devoted to his wife, as not to be [...] drawn away by an artful, seducing woman” but, importantly she can admit “I am always happy when *you* are pleased with me, Sir William” and he replies “I am *always* pleased with you, child”<sup>123</sup>. He may still be a rake but he is a husband who appreciates the advantages of home. Through these stories, young people seeking moral and social values by which to organise their own lives, were presented with choices in the context of strongly delineated characterisation and narrative.

The importance of public opinion in marital affairs is critical to Amelia Opie’s *Adeline Mowbray*. In this case, the ineffectual Glenmurray, theoretical promoter of ceremonial irrelevance to sexual relations, is undermined, philosophically and physically, by the opprobrium of society and “as any common man would have done under similar circumstances, he was contented to do homage to ‘things as they are’ without any effort to resist the prejudice to which he was superior”.<sup>124</sup> Adeline, who earlier had begun “to declaim against marriage, as an institution at once absurd, unjust, and immoral, and to declare that she would never submit to so contemptible a form, or profane the sacred ties of love by so odious and unnecessary a ceremony” is eventually forced to conform.<sup>125</sup> In this novel, Opie demonstrates the overwhelming force of public opinion when it comes to matrimony and warns against radical efforts to reconstruct male and female relationships on a more equal and tacit basis.

Conflicting messages emerge from these novels. The trend towards domestic values and the importance of men’s role in the family is evident in some, but issues around power relations are more strongly represented. In the earlier texts: the wife’s strength of purpose and ability to manage difficult situations are essential to the eventual salvation of her husband and family. Later narratives provide a more rounded and positive version of the husband’s performance and expectations. This trajectory implies a development in both the role and the way of representing it, and, while it would be inappropriate to invest too much historical significance in this phenomenon, it contributes to the broad theory of gradual change which is being pursued in this thesis.



## *Advice and Conduct Literature*

If fiction does not always illuminate our understanding of marital behaviour and attitudes, advice literature is eloquent on many aspects of the subject, and a widely used source of evidence about, among other things, power relations within marriage. From thirty two examples of advice literature and polemic studied for this thesis, it is clear that the genre maintained its preoccupation with the socially undermining effects of “Matrimonial Lewdness and Adulterous Conversation”<sup>126</sup> but, in the final decades of the eighteenth-century, transferred some of its emphasis away from inherent female wantonness and a husband’s need to manage his wife’s sexuality through containment or rejection,<sup>127</sup> to promoting the more socially desirable trait of masculine fidelity as the route to conjugal accomplishment.<sup>128</sup> Moral pressure replaced straightforward legal and customary authority as the mechanism for maintaining patriarchal ascendancy and defining manliness in husbands. This signals a move to a more subtle form of negotiated dominion which can be viewed from opposing political perspectives. For some writers, these arguments for a domesticated, caring but still powerful husband represented a conservative safeguard against “the increasing debauchery of the age”.<sup>129</sup> They can also be seen more positively as an adjustment to gender relations.

It is a mistake, however, to assume that this material is not problematic. In drawing conclusions from it, we need to bear in mind the questions posed by Amanda Vickery:

Did the sermonisers have any personal experience of marriage? Did men and women actually conform to prescribed models of authority? Did prescriptive literature contain more than one ideological message? Did women deploy the rhetoric of submission selectively, with irony, or quite cynically?<sup>130</sup>

Polemical writers usually had a religious or political point to make and their texts cannot be accepted uncritically. Similar doubts may be raised about the provenance of articles and letters to the editor that appeared in the large number of periodicals available in the period. Were the latter genuine expressions of public opinion or simply extensions of editorial policy? Were controversies real or fabricated? Despite these caveats, conduct literature, social polemic and periodical and newspaper commentary remain significant sources from which to judge public and ideological perceptions of the matrimonial state and will be extensively discussed in this chapter.

Marriage as a way of satisfying sexual needs within a secure and respectable environment imposes on the husband the responsibility to maintain his wife’s fidelity –

“the pivot on which manhood rested” - and this “gave male fortunes an unstable foundation”.<sup>131</sup> As Tassie Gwilliam has pointed out, “women’s behaviours and bodies were supposed to provoke desire, but women were forbidden from intending to provoke desire, or from being conscious of their desirability”.<sup>132</sup> This applied as much, or even more, to the married women as the single, except, perhaps among the most “sophisticated” where marriage’s respectability provided a necessary cover for infidelity, or where the appearance of infidelity became a tactic in marital conflict.

The literature of Advice and Conduct has been extensively drawn on by both critics and historians to theorise the state of matrimony and its social implications, particularly since 1987 when Armstrong and Tenenhouse produced *The Ideology of Conduct*.<sup>133</sup> In that book, Carol Houlihan Flynn contended that “Defoe’s conduct manuals establish a framework of social control contradicted by the numerous “examples” that emphasise the struggle for dominance between men and women “learning” to behave”.<sup>134</sup> The emergence of “modern patriarchy and its system of gender difference”<sup>135</sup> can be evidenced from this literature, particularly that devoted to encouraging men to manage their wife’s sexuality.

Two different but connected approaches appear: the first is primarily concerned with his honour and therefore his responsibility to procure his wife’s fidelity by any practical means – an example of ‘old style’ patriarchy; the second favours the creation within the home of an environment which promotes stability and affection and makes infidelity unattractive – ‘new style’ patriarchy. Both support the ideology of masculine authority but the latter represents a more affective route to achievement, and in the process a more flexible vision of gender which, according to Fletcher “shows itself above all in the mind, in the intimacies of personal behaviour and the unspoken and often unrecorded conventions of public and private life”.<sup>136</sup> While no definitive moment of change can be identified, the evidence suggests a developing trend towards the latter approach during the second half of the century. It is encapsulated in the titles of two works of advice addressed to husbands but separated by about 50 years: *The Art of Governing a Wife (1747)*<sup>137</sup> and *The Art of Engaging The Affections of Wives to their Husbands (1793)*<sup>138</sup>. The first of these focuses on the man’s honour which is “like a Looking Glass, any Stroke breaks it, and the least Breath clouds it”. Framed as “Healthy and Pleasant Advice for Married Men” this 205 page booklet is addressed to a newly married young man of 17, despite the author’s belief that, at that age, he is unlikely to display all the qualities of successful husband:

sober in Speaking, easy in Discourse, faithful where he is entrusted,  
discreet in giving Counsel, careful of providing his House, diligent in

looking after his Estate, prudent in bearing the Importunities of his Wife, zealous of the Education of his Children, vigilant in what relates to his Honour, and very stayed in all his behaviour.<sup>139</sup>

As well as condemning marriages in which “Inequality of Birth, of Fortune, of Age, causes Disputes, and those Disputes produce Discord” the writer counsels against settling the Wife’s allowance in the Articles of Marriage, particularly if she is an heiress: “Heiresses pretend to be Mistresses of their own, and to have more Power over it than their Husbands”. He then sets out some duties of the husband, the principal one being, “to go abroad and get his Living, and the Wives to look to the House. It is the Husband's Duty to provide Money, and the Wives to lay it our providentially”. Another duty “wherein married Men have most need of Counsel” is arranging marriages for their children. “Let Sons be free in their Choice,” he writes, “yet in such manner, that their Parents still endeavour to incline them to what is for their Advantage”. In this case fathers must “advise, not command.” When it came to daughters, the writer seemed content to warn: “In Daughters, the Danger is very great [...]. It is enough that the Son-in-Law be not dishonourable”.<sup>140</sup>

Married men should “contract Friendship with virtuous People, and shun ill Company” and avoid the danger of being “bewitched to Friends [...] some Men on this Account, mind nothing but Hunting, Feasting, Rambling, and Debauching with them. The middling Sort of People are most exposed to this Evil”. The writer also warns married men against being suspicious of their neighbours or extremely jealous of their wives, and of “carrying suspicious persons to their house”.<sup>141</sup> He is equally clear about the expectations of a wife, and frames some of his argument in terms of her acceptable behaviours. “it is,” for example “much better for a Man’s Honour, that a Wife be privately dishonest, than openly impudent. Modesty hides many Crimes in a Woman, and Impudence makes her be suspected of more than she is really guilty of.” In this spirit “a Woman [should] be reserved, and value her self upon being a good House-keeper; for when a Woman becomes too absolute at home, she is soon after dissolute abroad”. Despite the authoritarian implications of his title, this author’s seems to be more concerned with the *appearance* of control than of control itself. So, “*if there be any Differences between Married People they must not let the Neighbours understand it*”.<sup>142</sup> External reputation is the object.

*The Art of Engaging the Affections of Wives to their Husbands*, on the contrary, promotes relational interiority; the emphasis is firmly on the man’s responsibility to the marriage and its continuing existence. Husbands should maintain their wife’s fidelity [...] through attention to her psychological as well as economic and social needs. The author, supposedly French although the style of the introduction suggests this is a fiction, praises

Britain's more liberal attitudes compared to the continent and suggests that "there are fewer instances of infidelity amongst us than in those countries where the most rigid precautions are continually observed".<sup>143</sup> But, he warns "If a husband would have his wife faithful he should observe the same fidelity himself". While accepting that "the eagerness of the lover is lost in the indolence of the husband" he nonetheless advises that "husbands should not imitate those travellers, who, as soon as they have quenched their thirst, turn their back on the fountain with as much indifference, as they approached it with desire". Sexual possession, often the avowed object of courtship, is not enough, and "It is prudent in a husband sometimes to praise his wife for her beauty, and to express real sentiments of affection for her [...] like a man who knows the value of the blessing he possesses". But he should not "shew blind and excessive indulgence. This would be so far from preserving her affection, that it would loose her esteem; such a servile complaisance would make her forget all ideas of the respect due to [...] superior rank, and by degrees excite her contempt". Equally, men who "lay violent hands on their wives [...] can never expect any advantage from so inhuman a conduct [...] If a wife gives him just cause of complaint [the worthy man] will express his resentment in a calm, but affecting, manner; and try by gentle means to recall her to her duty." He might attempt "to gain an intimacy with her lover". The aim is to "recall [your wife's] attention to yourself [...] while your rival [...] must soon give up". "It is," he says, "certain that most injured husbands may blame themselves for their misfortune".<sup>144</sup>

John Aikin also recommended this longer term view of marriage. He wrote: "Romantic ideas of domestic felicity will infallibly in time give way to that true state of things, which will shew that a large part of it must arise from well-ordered affairs, and an accumulation of petty comforts and conveniences".<sup>145</sup> Joseph Fawcett, the Presbyterian minister and poet,<sup>146</sup> proclaimed is not "the man fixed in wedded love, attentive to his wife as his best friend [...] in the happiest situation in life?".<sup>147</sup> This is compatible with the idea that a woman should be "a conversable companion to her husband"<sup>148</sup> and that "Woman was intended to be our Companion and Friend - to share in our pleasures and Afflictions – to heighten our Joys' and alleviate our Distresses, by her Participation".<sup>149</sup> A wife should be subject to man's dominion, but he should not impose on her "other commands but such as may render her subjection the more agreeable." This sounds to be an enlightened attitude until we read the end of the sentence – "and his authority the more lasting" – and we realise that, in Fawcett's estimation, the husband's care of his wife has a controlling motive.

Modern subscribers to the theory of outright female subordination in marriage interpret these sentiments as revealing female subservience. In Perry's view the 'privatized marriage' (a phrase she uses as an alternative to 'companionate marriage') "put women increasingly in the power of their husbands as if marriage had the alchemical effect of transforming them into property at the same time as it made over the property that they owned to their new masters".<sup>151</sup> This pessimistic depiction assumes that, after marriage, women had no access to their former families or to other sources of support and advice. Much of the work on domestic violence, though, indicates that "kin, friends, and neighbours continued to keep a close eye over the marital lives of those they knew and could constitute a support network that did not hesitate to intervene if relationships became abusive or violent".<sup>152</sup> Women could be denied rational subjectivity. "She therefore had to lack the competitive desires and worldly ambitions that consequently belonged - as if by some natural principle - to the male."<sup>153</sup> From a political perspective, Susan Moller Okin argues that "this ideology [of the domesticated sentimental family] acted, rather, as reinforcement for the patriarchal relations between men and women that had been temporarily threatened by seventeenth century individualism".<sup>154</sup>

Some advice literature for women did, in fact, reinforce the idea of partnership and not only gave women a model of persuasive behaviour, but also encouraged husbands to accept the premises on which it was built, and therefore to desire the same thing. John Gregory, Scottish physician and writer,<sup>155</sup> for instance, in his advice to his daughters: "I have considered your sex not as domestic drudges or the slaves of our pleasures, but as our companions and equals; as designed to soften our hearts and polish our manners".<sup>156</sup> But some women writers in this genre sought to develop the idea of partnership as a means of adjusting the gender balance which might, in turn, be seen as patriarchal collaboration. Sarah Howard's *Education of Women* encourages the idea of wives creating a domestic environment attractive to their busy and worldly men.

Therefore do you endeavour to attain accomplishments, which will render you lovely to your latest period; then, whatever has been your partner's employment all the day, instead of a coffee-house or tavern, in the evening, to unbend his mind, he will hasten home to his own fire-side; there he is sure to find his best friend, whose cheerful and entertaining conversation will be more satisfactory than all he could find abroad.<sup>157</sup>

Eugenia Stanhope's advice develops the idea of a wife 'managing' her husband which is implicit in Howard's treatise. She urges the wife of a committed drinker to "Make your own Company agreeable to him by every Art and every Indulgence, and you will Wean him

from a Custom which he sees gives you Pain, and which robs him of so much of you. But all this must be the Effect of Good Humour. One reproach will destroy all that you have been labouring for Months; and throw him into the Fault too with new Extravagance”. Similarly “Never complain of the Hours which he spends from you [...] Never object to his Company; for he will then think his own Judgement questioned, and that he can only support it by Opposition”. By creating the illusion of subordination, a wife’s power is increased, is the implication of Stanhope’s advice. And to reinforce the message she encourages the deployment of sexual attractiveness. In order to maintain happiness “it is the Affection of your Husband, the preserving that Passion will be the Means to perpetuate the Consequences” and so “To this your own Affection unalterably fix’d, and on all Occasions shewn to him, will be the greatest, and almost the only Step”. But, she warns, “While your Heart burns for him at every Moment, while you idolize him, while you doat upon him, preserve the Modesty of your Sex in Public; [...] As nothing is so honourable to a Wife, as Fondness of her Husband when alone, nothing is so unbecoming when there are Witnesses to it”.<sup>158</sup>

Although potentially ambiguous – is it advocating female submission or a subtle form of marital management? – this advice exposes some of the tensions inherent in late eighteenth-century marriage where the exercise of power had become an area of negotiation and, despite the continuing legal reality, no longer as straightforward as previously imagined. If women are strategizing their behaviours in the way Howard and Stanhope suggest, men must find ways to respond. These will vary with the individual and the nature of the marital relationship, but is likely to be more nuanced than advocates of continuous female subordination might accept.

When she and Leonard Tennenhouse wrote *The Ideology of Conduct* in 1987, Nancy Armstrong was astonished that, “literary scholars and historians have seldom turned to this kind of writing for historical insight”. Since then, this material has emerged as an important influence on judgements about marriage and the cultural environment in which it was conducted. Anthony Fletcher made extensive use of conduct literature while acknowledging that “far too much” of the material, “was didactic and prescriptive” and “written by men to instruct women”. To avoid that dilemma, I have used a range of conduct texts written by both men and women. It might be argued that some women writers in this genre complied with masculine norms and advised women that submission, or its appearance, was a profitable course of action. But there is sufficient variation, in material written by both men and women, to suggest that this was a literature helping to

shape a different approach to marital relations. Yet they tend to ignore men in the domestic setting and, as Harvey points out, “Narratives proposing an absence of domestic authority and a feminine domesticity can work against an historically sensitive account of men and the eighteenth-century home” a situation she plans to change by “writing men back into a history from which they have been written out”.

This material also challenges central assumptions in the literature of female subordination, and suggests some answers to Fletcher’s proposal, made 16 years ago, that patriarchy was “crying out for investigation”. It is a malleable concept with which women have sometimes colluded and men been uncertain and uneasy about implementing. Shifts in gender definition, to a more feminised vision of the married man, inevitably transform the expression of patriarchal authority. Whereas Early Modern conduct writers premised their guidance on the certainty of women’s inferiority and her status as “The Weaker Vessel”, by the time some of the material reviewed here came to be written, power was becoming less uni-directional and the recovery of some female identity within marriage, conceivable. So, women were encouraged to ‘manage’ their husbands as they managed their households, with subtle determination and a willingness to entertain short term submission in the interests of longer term influence. Men were to be more considerate and more interested in their wives’ welfare, and to depend less for their own psychological well-being on homosocial bonding, and more for the comforts of home.

### *Periodicals*

More advice of this kind can be found in periodicals and newspapers. One article in 1793 argued that “To engaging manners, women owe the stability of their empire, and the less power they assume, the more they are sure to have”.<sup>159</sup> The same theme can be found 20 years later when it was suggested that, “that every woman could rule her husband, if her over-eagerness to establish her dominion did not sometimes defeat itself”.<sup>160</sup> She must remember that “the more secret the sway the more despotic it is”.<sup>161</sup> The writer admits his own failure to exercise authority; “she got the upper hand at the first set off and I never durst speak my mind from that day to this”.<sup>162</sup> It is impossible, however, to know if this is a genuine complainant or a journalist using this oblique method to raise a point of public interest.

“Advice to Husbands”, though, has no such uncertainty of authorship. Mrs Piozzi confronts the effect on a man of the changed status from lover to husband. She warns husbands that “Satiety quickly follows upon the heels of possession [...] The person of

your lady is already your own, and will not grow more pleasing in your eyes though the rest of your sex will think her pleasing for these dozen years". Therefore he should "turn all your attention to her mind". This is not the unqualified praise of female rationality it might appear because, in order for her mind to "grow brighter with polishing", husband and wife should "Study some easy science together, and acquire a similarity of tastes while you enjoy a community of pleasures."<sup>163</sup> These might be the practices of the "good Husband", described by an earlier writer, who "treats his wife with delicacy as a woman, with tenderness as a friend; he attributes her follies to her weakness; her imprudence to her inadvertency; and he therefore passes them over with good nature, and pardons them with indulgence".<sup>164</sup>

Licentiousness among married men – a regular source of complaint and criticism in the periodical Press – was attributed in part to the tendency of the, "The adulterer, and the man who is perpetually in pursuit of sensual pleasure [...] to advance, that, in all these forbidden enjoyments, there is no moral turpitude; that, provided they can escape detection, there can be no injury and no harm".<sup>165</sup> In this they are supported by the corruptions of language that "wipe off the odium of particular crimes; debauchery and adultery we only call gallantry".<sup>166</sup> Blame might also attach to publishers for "not content with making them an article of news, you have frequently the whole trials for adultery and rapes published at full length, with every circumstance belonging to them" and "the rapid sale that such productions meet with is an encouragement to the publication". But an earlier author denied that this licentious behaviour had actually increased. "The frequent accounts of the infidelities of married women, and the number of divorces that have ensued," he wrote, "have stigmatized the present race of females with more ignominy than any of their progenitors". But "till lately, the newspapers were confined entirely to what might be called news and the private memoirs and anecdotes never crept into them [...] But the case is altered, curiosity is awakened, and we are desirous of knowing who and who are together; when a woman of fashion makes a faux pas and when her husband takes another dulcinea into his keeping". To make the case even more strongly "I am so far convinced of the natural good disposition of my fair countrywomen, I will venture to pronounce not one in a hundred, I might say in a thousand, would go astray, if it were not for the behaviour of their husbands. Let these strive to merit the affection of their wives and there will be few if any matrimonial infidelities".<sup>167</sup>

In this section I have identified some key themes in the representation of the eighteenth century husband. Affective relations between partners, and a husband's



responsibility for satisfying his wife's psychological needs as well as providing protection and security, are central features of fiction, advice literature and the periodicals. While male honour remains an important objective, routes to establishing it may differ from previous periods with more reliance on behaviour than on status. They coincide with shifts towards a more chivalric version of masculinity<sup>168</sup> and will lead, eventually, to the Victorian husband.<sup>169</sup>

### *The Father*

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, very little historical attention had been paid to the role of father until Fletcher's work on children which covers a long historical period. Stone and other authors failed to separate 'fathers' from 'parents' or to identify practical aspects of the role, despite the wealth of information available from conduct texts and other material. Critical attention to the fictional father-daughter relationship, while extensive, is chiefly concerned with the intimate adult connexion between the two. Most fictional fathers, as we saw in Chapter 1, are concerned with their offspring's marriages; conduct and other literature present wider aspects of the role but seldom in direct address to fathers. If, with John Tosh, we divide fatherhood into the twin responsibilities of Authority and Nurture,<sup>170</sup> we find that fiction, where it depicts fathers, is almost entirely concerned with the former and advice literature with the latter.<sup>171</sup> In this section, I shall examine some portrayals of fictional fathers that are not concerned with ensuring a satisfactory marriage for their children, and also place the concept of fatherhood in the context of key controversies occupying advice writers and polemicists. From these I will theorise some elements of an image of ideal fatherhood. In the next chapter, I shall examine examples of how particular fathers responded to the demands of the role.

The reversion of fictional fathers in later eighteenth-century texts to the much earlier concern for their children's marriages, occurred despite Fielding's and Richardson's mid-century penetration of a more complex landscape. In the character of William Booth,<sup>172</sup> Fielding let us see the results of inattentive parenting; and with both Mr B<sup>173</sup> and Lord Grandison,<sup>174</sup> Richardson gave us fathers with distinctive views about, and some enthusiasm for, early child-rearing. Sidney Biddulph's husband, Mr Arnold, was said to "idolize" his baby daughter<sup>175</sup>, but later authors abandoned any thought of fathers as parents of *young* children and gave them over exclusively to their marriageable offspring. This apparent withdrawal from a brief but important excursion into domesticity in favour of a return to the authoritarian structure of the romance in which the father occupies a powerful position in the decision-making about marriage indicates the attraction of the

subject but may also, in part, be attributable to the need for dramatized opposition as a plot device to foreground the power of love. Even though the Marriage Act did not demand it, fictional marriages seldom occur without a father's involvement. By implicating fathers in the central purpose of romantic fiction, authors reinforced paternal authority and children's submission. Even Mortimer Delville, who should be free to marry whomever he chooses, is in Megan Woodworth's words, "no more in control of his life than Cecilia is in control of hers".<sup>176</sup>

Next, I shall infer a model of fatherhood from material about childbirth, early years and education, and commentaries on the rights and responsibilities of *parents* and the duties and expectations of children. William Blackstone set out the legal position: "The duties of children to their parents arise from a principal of natural justice and retribution. For to those who give us existence, we naturally owe subjection and obedience during our minority, and honour and reverence ever after [...]".<sup>177</sup> Two years previously, Thomas Secker had given a less judicial but no less stern view: "They [children] ought therefore to think of them [parents] with great reverence, and treat them with every mark of submission, in gesture, in speech, in the whole of their behaviour, which the practice of wise and good persons hath established, as proper instances of filial regard".<sup>178</sup> He had very little to add when he came to parents' responsibilities to children: "For not only parents have more understanding to know their duty, and stronger affections to prompt them to do it; but indeed a great part of it hath been already intimated, in setting forth that of children to them".<sup>179</sup> In this sentence we see the combination of reason and affection that reflected the late-eighteenth-century view of children in contrast to the "the seventeenth century, [when] gentry fathers normally quite sincerely acted out the patriarchal role that the conduct writers delineated".<sup>180</sup>

Controversy surrounded two aspects of early fatherhood: the presence of an accoucheur or man-midwife at the birth of a child; and arrangements for the early nurture of a baby. This was often incorporated into attacks on perceived female licentiousness. Francis Foster, for instance devoted a chapter of his essay on *The Profligacy of our Women*, to the violation of modesty resulting from the attendance at confinements of man-midwives.<sup>181</sup> He asked: "Now will any person of the least feeling for female Modesty, say, that it is not grossly violated by a strange Man's being the Attendant of a Woman, for Hours - handling her, *wherever he pleases and for as long as he pleases* - during Moments, when she is in a Situation to be as sensible of the Violations, as at any Period of her Life?"<sup>182</sup> But

Foster was not only concerned at the violation of modesty but also, rather contradictorily, by the potential damage to social relations between wife and accoucheur.

Can a man of any Politeness, or even Common Civility”, “pay so ill a Compliment to a pretty Woman, (who has been pleased to indulge him with Liberty to be intimately acquainted with all her *secret* Beauties--) *as to seem* perfectly indifferent while ranging over them --- insensible to what would tempt an Anchorite ? – Can he help admiring those Charms which are *unveiled to him*, though hidden to the World ? What an Opportunity for Exclamation ! What Subject for Rapture --- ! How much may a Man find to say on such an Occasion --- and yet he can *say* fifty Times as much --- *without speaking a Word!*<sup>183</sup>

“To be unmoved”, he suggests, “would be *incompatible with Manhood*”. The ironic tone betrays the strength of feeling, and yet Foster’s principal argument challenges the necessity of men-midwives: “except in very singular cases,” babies can be delivered by women who traditionally attended births. He criticises the insidious new fashion as evidence of female profligacy but allows: “The only Way we can *charitably* account for the prevailing Custom is, [...] that our Women *are ignorant* how much Modesty and Decency are violated during the Attendance of Men -- and that they are *deceived* by an idea that Men are safest. In Justice to their Husbands, too, we must suppose their seeming Indifference, proceeds from the same Causes”.

One writer, claiming to be a member of the profession, complained about the effects of the unnecessary employment of man-midwives.<sup>184</sup> His criticism is mainly aimed at the “Men of Fashion [...] who would of course readily risk their Wive's [sic] Purity being contaminated, rather than *be disappointed* in the Pleasure of seducing the Wives of *their Acquaintance*”.<sup>185</sup> He was, he said “quite indifferent about the Offence which my Letters have given *the Ladies of Fashion*, and their *darling* Doctors – *their “sweet men*”. It is to the “*sensible men* and unmarried Women” he hopes to prevent from “employing Men-Midwives [sic] which I know to be ERRONEOUS *as to it's* [sic] PRETENDED SAFETY – FATALLY *dangerous to the* VIRTUE – and CERTAINLY *destructive* of the MODESTY of my fair Countrywomen”.<sup>186</sup> The linguistic virulence of these assaults on the practice demonstrates the strength of controversy which the new putative father must resolve.

A different, but equally powerful, line of attack came from John Blunt, who styled himself “A Student Under Different Teachers but Not a Practitioner of the Art” (which might, following Vickery, raise doubts about his motives).<sup>187</sup> He complained about the unnecessary use of instruments, particularly the vectis or lever which was intended to save

the doctor's time. In order to use the instrument clandestinely male midwives "make the husband believe it [is] more indecent for them to be present at the delivery of their wives, than for strange men to assist thereat". It was as much the secrecy with which it was employed as the instrument itself that angered Blunt and he was especially critical of "Those pusillanimous husbands who feel themselves overborne by custom, and cannot muster up resolution enough to protect their wives' persons from injury and insult".<sup>188</sup>

Criticism of the practice of man-midwives was not restricted to their behaviour at the birth. The author of *Man-midwifery Analysed* warned husbands against allowing the freedoms associated with examinations to determine the state of a pregnancy. Imagining himself as a midwife, he wrote: "Upon my arrival, if her husband happens to be present, he must retire; for the Doctor knows too well the pain that he must feel on hearing even the first questions. Therefore nothing but an affected, stiff air, a grave face, peeping out of a *profound* wig, and my hand kept *warm* in my muff, must transpire, until the husband has quitted the room; and, from that instant, the dressing-room becomes sacred to me, and my patient".<sup>189</sup> This author, complaining about the "infidelity of wives" asked: "what man of sense will marry any woman for her personal charms, when he knows that a male hair-dresser is to straddle over her two hours every morning, and a Male-midwife is to examine her nipples, and *touch* her if he pleases, for another hour? and that too, not in the hour of labour, but at the end of three or four months after marriage".<sup>190</sup>

These writers saw the practice of man-midwifery as an assault on the manhood of husbands. To retain his own reputation a husband should prevent access to his wife's body by any other man, whatever the scientific rationale. A man who allowed it was, in effect, abandoning his manhood to the wiles of an unfaithful wife – an example of the "myth" of insatiable female sexuality.<sup>191</sup> And yet the practice had been widespread for many years. William Smellie's *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Midwifery* was published in 1752 and he had been training young surgeons for 20 years before. Many other man-midwives published advice and guidance to the profession.<sup>192</sup> Much of the opposition to man-midwives reflected a conservative reaction to perceptions of licentiousness which, as Binhammer has identified, pervaded the capital in the 1790s.<sup>193</sup> With his commitment to a Whiggish version of history, Lawrence Stone ignored the controversy around man-midwives, concluding instead that "between 1730 and 1770 infant and child mortality began to fall" because "male midwives appeared who possessed stronger hands and pioneered two extremely important technical advances."<sup>194</sup> By assuming men midwives were universally welcomed – except by "the ignorant female midwives whose livelihood

they threatened and by their professional medical colleagues, who associated the trade with that of abortionist”<sup>195</sup> – Stone removes from the record an important choice with which contemporary fathers were confronted. Amanda Vickery presents a more balanced account. Having highlighted the “man-midwife as villain” and the “patriarchal victory over teeming women” arguments, she quotes Roy Porter’s opinion that “Male public opinion [...] did not regard female employment of male accoucheurs as a victory for men”, rather “as a chapter in the emergence of female licence, and an insidious challenge to male authority.”<sup>196</sup> Adrian Wilson’s explanation emphasised mothers’ awareness that a male practitioner was more likely to “deliver a living child in an obstructed delivery” and this led to the “eclipse of the traditional midwife.”<sup>197</sup>

A second area of decision for the conscientious father keen to be involved in the early days of his child centred on breast-feeding and the employment of ‘wet’ or ‘dry’ nurses. James Nelson and William Cadogan were the best known exponents of this subject. Both encouraged women to enjoy “the inexpressible Pleasure in giving Suck”. Cadogan proclaimed himself “quite at a loss to account for the general practice of sending infants out of doors, to be suckled or dry-nursed by another Woman, who has not so much understanding, nor can have so much affection for it as the Parents” and argued that because it was “natural” for a mother to nurse her own baby, it was also healthier.<sup>198</sup> The children of poorer people were hardier than those of the rich because they are not “over-clothed and over-fed”.<sup>199</sup> But his argument was aimed as much at fathers as mothers. “I would [...] earnestly recommend it to every Father to have his Child nursed under his own eye, to make use of his own reason and sense in superintending and directing the management of it; nor suffer it to be made one of the mysteries of *Bona Dea*, from which the Men are excluded.”<sup>200</sup> He also had a practical argument: if mothers were to suckle their own babies, “There would be no fear of offending the husband’s ears with the noise of the squalling brat. The Child, [...] would be always quiet, in good humour, ever playing, laughing, or sleeping. In my opinion, a Man of sense cannot have a prettier rattle (for rattles he must have of one kind or another) than such a young Child”.<sup>201</sup> Although the practice increased later in the century and became the Victorian norm, Stone still maintained that some elite men objected in order that “the child at the breast would not be a competitor for his wife’s attentions, but mainly so that he would continue to have access to her sexual services”.<sup>202</sup>

Child diseases and infant death might also have been in the mind of conscientious fathers. In his study of Midwifery Reports of the Westminster General Hospital, Robert

Bland calculated that at least one child in twenty three was still-born and one in sixteen died within two months of birth. A small number were also born “deficient or monstrous”.<sup>203</sup> These statistics may have reflected experience among poorer families but infant death was a factor in all classes.<sup>204</sup> This does not mean, as popular belief might maintain, that infant mortality was accepted as “a fact of life” that precluded strong affection for children and grief at their deaths. Anthony Fletcher maintains that: “There is no other subject which provides us with such heartfelt outpouring of the emotions of parenthood as the death of children. Cumulatively, this evidence, in diaries, journals and correspondence, is the bedrock of the argument that parental love and affection was constant, powerful and virtually invariable from 1600 to 1914”.<sup>205</sup> Whatever their emotional response, however, many parents, were convinced “that there is little or nothing to be done for infants when they are ill [and] defer calling in proper assistance until it is too late”.<sup>206</sup> George Armstrong challenged the widespread practise of swaddling children and preventing them from moving and encouraged fathers to ensure their children were allowed freedom of movement. Even this brief appraisal confirms that fathers had access to considerable advice about their young children. The extent to which the advice was taken is more difficult to quantify.

As soon as children survived infancy, the eighteenth-century father was faced with yet another controversy – a decision about their education. This was even more complex than the other issues. Differences of view in the published prints fell into three main categories: the nature and purpose of the education of girls; the methods to be employed in educating girls and boys; and the place of religious instruction in the education of both sexes. There were also varied views on the place of public and boarding schools as compared to private education. Writers on all these subjects published in the 1790s. Many addressed themselves to parents, others to young people, particularly women. Most authors acknowledged the importance of education for young men, only some – mostly women – gave the same weight to the education of the other sex. Fletcher suggests that “Extracting boys from maternal influence was a long-established issue upon which fathers were united and determined” and that they, “did not balk at sending boys some distance, if it meant finding a sound education at a reasonable cost”.<sup>207</sup> Stone, conversely suggests that “the withdrawal of elites from the grammar school to the home” resulted from fears of “moral contamination by other boys.” He cites Squire Allworthy’s decision to educate Tom Jones and Blifil at home as an example of this tendency and then claims: “the rise of education in the home meant that teaching methods became less brutal and authoritarian”<sup>208</sup> without acknowledging Square and Thwackum’s methods with Tom Jones.

As Sarah Woodley explains in her article about the private versus public education debate, “The anarchic and brutal nature of the great public schools during this period was widely acknowledged”.<sup>209</sup> Vicesimus Knox, eloquent defender of the public school system, had to acknowledge that “licentiousness has often been found in them”. He attributed this to the “infection” scholars bring from home”.<sup>210</sup> Over 20 years later, Henry Kitchener warned against the “herding together” of large numbers of children in public school and recalls a letter he, “received from a person who had been robbed of his virtue and his integrity, at one of those fashionable places of resort for the heirs of men in the middle and affluent classes of society”.<sup>211</sup> A note in Sir George Crewe’s journal confirms Kitchener’s concern. Reflecting some years after he had left Rugby, Crewe writes: “But as I grew older, rose higher in the School and became acquainted with all the Vice and iniquity so rife in publick schools, good impressions had less weight, conscience was less troublesome, and when I left School, I shudder to think how deep an inroad Vice had made into my wicked Heart”.<sup>212</sup>

Thomas Gisborne, urged fathers to procure private education for their children:

The parent, retaining his child constantly [...] under his own eye has more favourable opportunities of becoming acquainted with his dispositions and talents; of superintending his conduct; of conciliating his affection, and gaining his familiar confidence. Many temptations to vice from the contagion of corrupt examples are avoided [...] and evil habits will speedily be discerned and corrected.

There were disadvantages, chiefly, “a the want of gradual introduction to the temptations of the world: and the consequent risk that will take place when the youth is first left to his own discretion at an university, or the wide stage of a busy life”.<sup>213</sup> There were fewer such dangers for girls in a domestic education because they would not be going into the world in the same way. The clergyman John Bennett, writing about education of girls, insisted that “a private education is more favourable to *morals*” [and] “that young people at least should never be trusted to the dangerous infection of publick schools, till principles and even *habits* of virtue have had time to *take root*”.<sup>214</sup> He did, though, accept that a mixture of private and public education was an advantage for “those, who wish their children to be at once possessed of talents and of virtues”.<sup>215</sup>

For ‘Mr Langridge’, author of *Letters from a Parent on the Education of Children*, religious virtue was the key to education. He recognised his responsibility to instruct his sons in religious knowledge but : “A numerous and afflicted family, extensive and important business, added to the defects in my own education rendered the trust

committed to me more difficult. But GOD had given me a post I could not quit” and so he set about the process of educating his sons.<sup>216</sup> He created a curriculum and a methodology which included keeping notes of each child’s progress, “in their acquaintance with sacred things”. He wrote that: “The pleasure I feel in conversing with my children, makes me hope, that the longer we live together, the more I shall see of their affection and duty”.<sup>217</sup> Readers were being encouraged to reduce the distance between themselves and their children.

After his initial success, Langridge began to think “how a foundation might be laid” for “more general KNOWLEDGE [sic] of those subjects which concern us as members of a civil society, distinguished from the particular branches of instruction, which merely affect our peculiar profession or occupation.” He taught the boys about history and eminent characters, which appeared to him to be “of more consequence, than that acquaintance with dead languages, which is usually obtained in schools.” Not content with improving his own children he argued that if conscientious parents were “to do what in them lies [...] I do not see, but the children of ordinary tradesmen, might have advantages in education which they are frequently deprived of”.<sup>218</sup>

A similar claim for purposeful education was promoted by Henry Kitchener, but this time in terms of sex rather than religion. Warning fathers about children being “polluted by servants” including “the most abominable of all pollutions”, Kitchener advised:

Should a father happen to discover that his son had fallen into this practice he will, if he is wise, talk to him kindly as well as seriously of the crime; and he would do well in my opinion to assure him that he could sooner forgive him any excess with women; knowing that the evils which result from such habits will, generally, in time work out their own cure.<sup>219</sup>

Concerned about the more general lack of sex education and its effects, what he called “doubtless the single point of most importance in male education – the want of information properly conveyed” Kitchener proposed that:

It is therefore of the utmost consequence that this knowledge should be imparted by a judicious person of mature age; by one whose opinions they have learned to respect and whose person they revere and esteem. By such a one the important secret might be gradually imparted and ninety-nine times out of a hundred it would be received without injury.<sup>220</sup>



As well as “proper attention to their exercise and diet” boys should be prevented from seeing “inflaming” printed material. “The injury that is done to the rising generation by improper books and lascivious prints is, I believe, very great”.<sup>221</sup>

But ignorance, servants and books were not the only problems: Kitchener suggested that “the promiscuous intermixture of children of different sexes in the same bed, or even undressing in the same room, takes away a portion of that shamefacedness which is a salutary barrier between the sexes”. Furthermore “If a boy has been in the habit of taking liberties with his sister, he will soon feel an inclination to take similar liberties with other females of his acquaintance; and this will prevent him from ever acquiring that real respect for the female character which it is desirable every young man should feel from his first entrance on the world to his last intercourse with it”.<sup>222</sup>

The construction of eighteenth-century fatherhood occurred within a varied discursive environment from which the educated man was obliged to determine his own position. It is evident from this material that, for the middling sort at least, attitudes to children had shifted significantly from those of Early Modern gentry for whom “The breeching of boys at around six [...], was taken very seriously because it marked a release from the female world”.<sup>223</sup> We can locate in this discourse some of what Lisa Wilson identified, in the context of New England fathers, as the “different voice” which “combined affection and power in the context of mutual familial obligation to raise their children to adulthood.” The material considered here promoted the active involvement of fathers with their young children and established a framework within which they could determine their own position. This represents a change from the concept of authoritarian parent described by Stone who appears to make no distinction between the strictness of sixteenth and seventeenth-century relations and those of the eighteenth-century.<sup>224</sup> In the next chapter, examples of these closer relations will be explored.

### *The Courts*

Marital failure and the divorce or separation which sometimes followed, occupied many late eighteenth-century authors and, through the reports of adultery trials that achieved enormous popularity in the last quarter of the 18th century<sup>225</sup> and are the focus of this section, provide us with fascinating insights into the marriages and the causes of their failure. These reports concentrate on the sexual depravity of adulterous wives and their lovers but, as we can see from the case studies below there is usually a more complex background. What the reports do not suggest, however, are the broader social

circumstances that helped to facilitate the phenomenon, particularly among the wealthy. These will have involved commitment to pleasure including novel reading and other stimulating pursuits, lengthy visiting particularly by bachelors and the physical space and apparent privacy of the new Georgian house. But the ideological significance of domestication and partnership which occur so forcefully elsewhere in the discourse may still be construed from editorial commentary and presentational format. Most of the cases were heard in the consistory court and the Court of Arches at Doctors Commons, and the King's Bench, Westminster. The homes of protagonists, and sites of adultery, were often outside the capital which challenges the categorisation of adultery as an entirely metropolitan transgression.<sup>226</sup> The trials involved a range of fashionable people, minor gentry or wealthy merchants, and, in one case, the wife of a craftsman. Some trials, such as those of Lady Foley and her sister Lady Maria Baynton, and of Mrs Errington or the Countess of Cork and Orrery became *causes celebres* and featured extensively in both national and local newspaper comment and public gossip.<sup>227</sup> The Countess of Strathmore's case against her second husband Andrew Robinson (Stoney) Bowes for adultery and cruelty along with his counter-accusations and trial for kidnap, became the most celebrated of its time and the central conversational topic for all of fashionable London as well as the army of servants and tenants with a connection to the countess.<sup>228</sup> Only Sir Richard Worsley's farcically unsuccessful accusation of George Bissett for criminal conversation in 1782<sup>229</sup> or the two trials involving Lady Harriet Grosvenor in 1771<sup>230</sup> achieved the same level of popular notoriety; most of the others went unremarked or were only briefly mentioned in the mainstream Press. They became public property through the pamphlets and small books, ranging in size from 19 – 126 pages, published and sold by booksellers such as G. Lister of 46 Old Bailey, R. Randall of 4 Shoe Lane and K. Bentley of Fetter Lane. The publications all purported to have been "accurately transcribed" from shorthand notes of the proceedings. I reviewed 43 separate reports – 24 of wives for adultery 15 of lovers for criminal conversation, and four of husbands for cruelty. The low number of the last reflects the difficulties faced by wives wanting to escape violent marriages.<sup>231</sup> Men, of course, could not be divorced for adultery unless accompanied by cruelty or other exceptional circumstances.

Divorce attracted widespread opprobrium and only one anonymous pamphleteer attempted "a rational defence [...] to stem the opposition raised against it by politic statesmen and priests [who] more apprehensive of the consequences which may result from the encouragement of this supposed vice". The defence – "full of spirit and irony", according to the Westminster Gazette – consists of a "detestation of any kind of

monopoly” (such as a husband over his wife) and a conviction that, “the youth of this present age seems unanimous in defence of the laws of participation”.<sup>232</sup>

Stone based his book of divorce case studies on official records from ecclesiastical or Parliamentary courts, but acknowledged the “embarrassment” caused “by the flood of published pamphlets containing the stenographic record of the most scabrous and sensational of these court cases”.<sup>233</sup> In his longer book, he uses the statistics of divorce to claim that “England in the Early Modern period was neither a separating nor divorcing society” while admitting that “there is no reason to suppose there were fewer unhappy marriages then than there are today”.<sup>234</sup> Without evidence, however, he attributes the ‘low’ rate of divorce to “internalised controls” and “external pressures”. He acknowledges the “private separations by deed”<sup>235</sup> without any attempt to quantify the phenomenon or include it in his ‘divorce and separation’ judgment. The adultery reports considered here and the widespread polemical condemnation of marital misbehavior – particularly among people of fashion – suggest that Stone may have been optimistic in his conclusions, and that they reflect his commitment to ‘companionate marriage’ more than the reality of unsuccessful marriages.

Adultery reports concentrate on the criminality of the case and the details of sexual irregularities but behind this often salacious narrative can sometimes be found a more down to earth story of a marriage. Two examples are given below.

### **John & Elizabeth Williams**

John and Elizabeth Williams (nee Melhuish) were a Devon couple who married in May 1774, had three children (one of whom died) and lived together in Exeter, Dawlish and Exmouth. It is not clear whether or not they were happy but they acknowledged each other as husband and wife among their “friends and acquaintance”. He, “constantly behaved to her with the greatest love, tenderness and affection” although her behavior to him is not recorded. While living at Exmouth, Williams, a tax inspector, travelled to Exeter every Monday and stayed until Saturday afternoon, leaving Elizabeth in lodgings on her own. In August 1779, he befriended Joseph Peyton, captain of the *Beaver*, a sloop moored in the Exe. Within days, Peyton was visiting Elizabeth when Williams was at work. They removed the lock to the door of the parlour where they usually met. Elizabeth’s servant, Susannah Reeve, noticed stains and marks on a “clean” shift her mistress

had worn to entertain Peyton and later, the scuff marks of boots on a new deal floor.

“Not in the least suspecting the criminal correspondence” at the beginning of 1780, Williams moved the family closer to Exeter “for the recovery of the health of one of his children”. When Elizabeth and Peyton were together, the children came into the room but were sent out to play. In summer 1780, Williams moved the family to Dawlish but by September, Elizabeth was asking for a separation and John, remaining in ignorance of the affair reluctantly agreed. He covenanted to pay her £150 per annum during their separation and an extra £25 pa for one of their children who lived with her. They never lived together again. She moved with the child to Sidmouth where Peyton lodged and visited frequently. Later, they moved to Weymouth then to Charmouth, Northam and other places in Devon and cohabited as man and wife. Elizabeth gave birth and Peyton acknowledged the child as his daughter, although she was baptized Sophia Melhuish in Elizabeth’s maiden name.

Although principally the story of the sexual relationship between Elizabeth and Peyton, this account shows how Williams’s weekly absence on business, his befriending of Peyton and his possibly willful ignorance of the affair shaped the end of their marriage. We can trace the family’s movements in the crucial 1779-80 period when they lodged in seven different houses. We also hear the authentic voice of the servant neglecting her mistress’s order to fetch “hot bread” from the bake house and, as she spied on them, hearing Peyton ask Elizabeth to “let him r...r her.” Or, the occasion when Peyton arrived drunk at Elizabeth’s lodgings and she “with her gown and stays off, in her night-cap and bedgown, led him to his own lodgings.”

Williams gained an ecclesiastical divorce from Elizabeth and the award of £1000 from a Criminal Conversation case against Peyton (although whether he received the latter is open to speculation).

### **Mr & Mrs Conner**

This case in which William Atkinson was accused of Criminal Conversation with Mrs Conner demonstrates the double jeopardy of a wife being involved in both public and private marital spheres. She had been married to Mr Conner for 18 years and, because he was an invalid crippled by gout and other

conditions he had, “for a series of years, entrusted the care and management of his business as an innkeeper to her, and found her attention and assiduity equal to the trust.” He stayed in a back room and rang a bell when he needed attention. He usually went to bed early. When she eventually eloped with William Atkinson, Conner lost wife and business and spent time as a debtor in the King’s Bench prison.

William Atkinson, a linen draper from Cheapside, described as “far from rich”, frequently visited the inn and became friendly with Conner, including some “money transactions” with him. He was always given the same room. Atkinson’s defence claimed Conner had been aware of the relationship between Atkinson and Mrs Conner for some time before he did anything about it. Customers and Conner’s friends were also aware. Mrs Conner had, for some time “borne a flighty character”, enhanced when the “18<sup>th</sup> regiment of Royal Irish had been at Barnet”. Conner had declared that if he won this case, he would bring another in a distant court “against a person who has also participated in Mrs Conner’s favours”. Mrs Conner was said to have “pampered her paramour with *game*, hare, partridges and so forth to a vast amount, at the expence of her injured husband.” Because of her actions, “her husband had been reduced from a comfortable state of affluence to poverty and want which ends in his being carried to gaol where he groans under the torture of disease of body, and what is still more painful, agony of mind.” The jury awarded Conner £1000 damages.

As a literary genre, Adultery reports combine a normative legalistic content with a more suggestive presentational style to titillate their readership. The formulaic language endeavors unsuccessfully to drain the reports of any emotions or a real sense of the participants’ lives. But, as in the Case Studies some sense of the emotional atmosphere and the impact on individuals does escape the language formality. Because the protagonists were not required to attend the hearings, nor allowed to speak, their motivations and psychologies must remain implicit. Strongly conservative views are contained in the anonymous editorial comments in some reports and the extensive quotation of counsel and judges in the King’s Bench cases. Male authority, female submission and the honour due a husband from family and friends are the common themes of this discourse. Servants, who are the main witnesses, appear to subscribe to the same ideology. But the contrast with much of the rest of the content, and the way the material is presented and marketed, suggests some ambivalence, at least among publishers and readers. The editors of an

anthologized version of many of these trials emphasized the salacious nature of the texts while complaining that previous reporting had been “cold and repulsive” because it provided too much detail of trivial matters:

Their grand object will be to present to the public a series of circumstances of such mingled seriousness and absurdity, such criminal turpitude and such ridiculous weakness, comprising scenes so wildly ridiculous, as so extravagantly absurd as must arrest every attention and furnish food for every disposition”.<sup>236</sup>

Another anthology<sup>237</sup> carried both recent and historic examples while the seven volume, “Trials for Adultery or The History of Divorce since 1760” devoted over 3000 pages to 36 adulteries, five Criminal Conversations, three cruelties and two impotence cases.<sup>238</sup> This included one entire volume of 512 pages devoted to the Lord and Lady Grosvenor adultery that followed his Criminal Conversation case against the Duke of Cumberland.<sup>239</sup>

The reports of trial for adultery have the organisation of legal documents. They always begin with the “articles of libel” in which formal matters (eg the dates of the marriage and of the separation) are proved, and the behaviours complained of detailed. These are followed by the depositions of the witnesses taken down by the husband’s proctor (lawyer) and handed in to the court to support the libel. Usually they are a repetition of the Articles, which were themselves constructed on the basis of the depositions. The legal formalities of identification – “the said Mr...” or “in the said room” – and of status – ‘the producent’, the person bringing the charge, or “the deponent”, the witness – are all carefully preserved throughout the text. Most depositions are followed by “Interrogatories”, supposedly on behalf of the defendant, but they usually just repeat what has been stated in the deposition and almost never add new information. As most of the witnesses are servants their depositions are often signed with their mark.

Because of the need for two witnesses to each event and the requirement to ‘prove’ adultery by repetition of the contentious circumstances, the texts become monotonously legalistic. Much of the evidence is presented in stock phrases. The wife is always described as “lewd and wanton”. The adulterous couple, always lay “naked, and alone in the bed together” and had “carnal use and knowledge of each other’s bodies” even though, in most cases, no witnesses could swear to direct observation. It was the language of circumstantial implication: “they were free and familiar” or “on the most intimate footing together”. The bed usually “bore the impression of two bodies” and “the bed clothes were tumbled”.

The lady's dress and hair were often "disordered". Servants would speak of doors locked from the inside and of the accused couple "laughing, playing and romping together". Regular readers, habituated to these phrases could take their repetition as clear evidence of guilt, even when no "oracular confirmation", as one witness called it, was available.

This legalistic appearance is misleading. It masks more explicitly salacious detail. Lady Ann Foley, for instance, was observed by her coach man "lying on her back upon the bench in the said coach with her thighs naked and extended and exposed towards him, and the said Lord Peterborough" was lying on top of her. On another occasion they walked into the park, and she:

put her back, to and leaned against an oak tree, and she [or the Earl...] pulled her petticoats up to her waist, and thereby exposed her naked thighs; and the said Lord Peterborough pulled down his breeches, and got between her legs and thighs; and then carnally enjoyed her [...] all of which was plainly seen and observed by the said Benjamin Smith, and John Hookey, the younger, the said Lord Peterborough's servant.

While part of the evidence against Mrs Arabin was circumstantial – for example after she and Thomas Sutton had been in the locked parlour together, servants found powder and black pins scattered on floor and furniture – some was more direct. Maria Haynes gave evidence that at hay-making time she saw Mrs Arabin and Mr Sutton enter a hollow in the woods and there he:

unbuttoned his breeches, and gently throwing himself on her, he pulled up her clothes, and this deponent plainly saw him in the act of carnal copulation with her, being at no greater distance from them than about three to four yards, and [...] concealed from them by the trees and bushes which grew about the place<sup>240</sup>

The implicit acceptance of female sexual agency in these instances is often reinforced with drawings of certain scenes. The report of Mrs Errington's trial is illustrated by a tryptich of events described by witnesses. "The Squirting Scene", "The Bedchamber Scene" and the "Adelphi Scene" all have the appearance of a theatrical setting in which Mrs Errington is the acknowledged star. In Lady Foley's case, readers are treated to a more pastoral visual representation of "The Driving Scene", "The Oak Tree Scene" the "Furze Bush Scene". "The Shrubbery" was pictured as the adulterous venue of Mrs Arabin and Mr. Sutton and also in the bizarre case of the Rev. James Altham. The pictures reinforce the implicit message of the text that the women are not being seduced or forced but are active

participants in the adultery – “The Oak Tree Scene” for instance shows quite clearly that Lady Foley is lifting her skirt while in the “Furze Bush Scene” she has bared her breasts. Likewise, the prints within the pages of *the Cuckold’s Chronicle* display bare breasts and smiling women. The walls are often decorated with lascivious pictures.

These images of female engagement reinforced the gendered insistence that their wantonness provoked adulterous behaviour in otherwise honourable men. But it also acted as a radical disturbance of their husband’s sexual authority: he was shown as incapable of managing his own household, an important aspect of masculinity. In earlier decades, the husband might have been shown in cuckold’s horns or subjected to the charivari of public humiliation. This concentration on female ‘libertinism’ seemed to excuse both the men - lover and husband - from culpability but without them appearing to understand the irony they were perpetuating. Whatever the pictures may reveal, the people involved in the divorce exposed by a set of stereotypical phrases designed to blacken the character of the defendant or demonstrate the virtue of the proponent. Thus in adultery trials wives might be, like Mrs Christie, “a loose and abandoned woman, of a lustful and wicked disposition”. The husband, on the other hand, was always, like Mr Hankey, “ a person of, sober, modest and virtuous disposition and always behaved to, and treated his wife [...] with the greatest tenderness, and affection[...]”. In adultery trials no character or motives are assigned to the wife’s lover, in fact he almost appears incidental in terms of agency – it is, for instance, the wife’s opening of her bedroom door that is deemed criminal, rather than the lover’s entering it. In the Criminal Conversation trial, by contrast, he is loaded with opprobrium. In those trials, too, where the husband had to prove that he had been deprived of the “comfort and harmony” of living with his wife, she had always to have been ‘preyed upon’. Thus Lady Cadogan was said to “have continued the affectionate wife of this unfortunate husband for a great many years” and to have been “without a taint of slander” until the defendant appeared to “blast and destroy his the husband’s] happiness.” At the Criminal Conversation trial of Lord Peterborough it was said that he had:

with force and arms, to wit sticks, staves, clubs and fists, assaulted Ann the wife of him, the said Edward, at Ross in the county of Herefordshire and then and there ravished, lay with, debauched and carnally knew the said Ann [...]

In Lady Ann’s trial for adultery, conversely, there was no question of her having to be overcome. Although only Lord Peterborough was cited in the trials it is clear from a subsequent pamphlet that Lady Ann’s sexual favours had been bestowed more widely. As a supplement to the trial report, George Lister produced a 31 page booklet entitled:



The Life and Amours of Lady Ann F-l-y Developing the whole of her intrigues from the time of her marriage with the Hon Edward Foley in October 1778, till the present time Particularly with Lord M -, Col F - zp—k Captain LL—d, Mr St—r, the Earl of P---h and others. [...]<sup>241</sup>

This included details of her husband's case against Lord Peterborough and some letters allegedly exchanged between Lady Ann and her older sister, Lady Maria Bayntun.

The adultery and cruelty cases are all for divorce “*mensa et thoro*”, that is from “bed, board and mutual cohabitation”, which did not allow the couple to re-marry but released the husband from responsibility for his wife and her debts.<sup>242</sup> In theory, this could leave her penniless but, in reality, jointure and pin money arrangements often saved her.<sup>243</sup> The “Criminal Conversation” trial enabled the husband to sue the lover for damages in a tort of trespass. This could be for motives of revenge, ruination or raising funds. In this last case, signs of collusion between the parties – by which, in effect, the lover ‘purchased’ the wife from her husband (a sophisticated version of the plebeian ‘wife-sale’) - are evident in some reports, even when the lawyers explicitly reject the suggestion.<sup>244</sup> A formal hypocrisy is demonstrated in those cases which were subject of both types of trial. In an Adultery trial, for the husband to achieve his objective of being released from his wife, she must be cast as “lewd and wanton” and said to not have “the fear of God before her eyes and being wholly unmindful of her conjugal vow and the duty she owed her husband”. When the same events became subject to a Criminal Conversation trial in which the husband sought both damages and the restitution of his honour, the same woman would be said to have “lived in the most perfect happiness and harmony” with her husband until her seducer appeared.<sup>245</sup>

The final stage taken by many protagonists in these reports was the Parliamentary Divorce which not only legally separated the couple but enabled both to re-marry elsewhere. This was so expensive that only 325 cases were brought in the period between 1670 and 1857, all but four by men.<sup>246</sup> The four women who successfully petitioned for Parliamentary Divorces between 1801 and 1850 each had to demonstrate exceptionality. As Lord Thurlow said it would “set a dangerous precedent if a married woman should obtain a Bill of Divorce merely on the grounds of the infidelity of her husband”.<sup>247</sup> Counsel for Jane Addison, the first successful applicant, argued that her husband's incestuous relationship with her sister made restitution of sexual relations between them impossible, and were the grounds for divorce. Several hours of debate and attempts to put off a decision demonstrated the extreme reluctance of the House of Lords to grant a woman a divorce. The Lord Chancellor maintained the difference between a divorce granted a

husband or wife “existed chiefly in the legal consequences, particularly with regard to children. One of the principal grounds that on which a husband applied for a divorce from his adulterous wife, was the great hardship he must lie under in being obliged to maintain and provide for a spurious offspring [...] The wife was liable to no such hardship in consequence of the adultery of her husband.”<sup>248</sup> Unusually, however, the Lords gave Mrs Addison custody of their children, Lord Auckland commenting that Mr Addison, by his actions, had made himself “unfit to be entrusted with the education of an innocent and virtuous daughter”.<sup>249</sup> This was a significant departure from previous opinions where the father’s ‘ownership’ of children was sacrosanct. Only three other women obtained Parliamentary Divorces in the more than 50 years before the law changed with the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. They also proved exceptional circumstances: Mrs Turton’s (1820) husband’s adultery was incestuous; Mrs Battersby’s (1840) case aggravated by cruelty; and Mrs Hall’s (1850) by bigamy.<sup>250</sup>

To avoid the expense of divorce many couples entered into private agreements - not strictly enforceable in court but sufficient if both parties adhered to it – and lived with new partners in ‘concubinage’ or bigamy.<sup>251</sup> Evidence from some trials points to the frequent practice of the private separation, despite Lord Chancellor Eldon’s warning that “People should understand that they should not enter into these fluctuating contracts, and after that sacred contract they should feel it to be in their mutual interest to improve their tempers”.<sup>252</sup> Sir William Scott also dismissed the practice: “it is a doctrine to which the morality of the law gives no countenance, that they may, by private contract, dissolve the bands of this solemn tie and throw themselves upon society, in the undefined and dangerous character of a wife without a husband and a husband without a wife”.<sup>253</sup> The Earl and Countess of Cork had, apparently, been separated for more than eight years and it was not until the earl wanted to remarry that he brought a case against her, which was unsuccessful.<sup>254</sup> The public enthusiasm for the case of Mrs Arabin<sup>255</sup> seems to have overlooked that her adultery with Thomas Sutton had occurred “four or five years ago” and while there is no indication in the report of the situation between then and the trial, it is probable the couple had been living together.<sup>256</sup> . The £100 damages awarded Mr. Arabin at the Criminal Conversation Trial against Sutton suggests that he was not judged to have lost greatly by his wife’s liaison. Why Mr Dodwell brought a case against Rev Bates who had not been one of Mrs Dodwell’s lovers for over six years and pleaded the statute of limitations, is not clear. There were numerous other lovers mentioned in the report but none were prosecuted. But his wife’s complaint about his profession may have been Dodwell’s motivation for proceedings. Arguing that there were “many cases where adultery

was pardonable and excusable, if not in the eye of the law, clearly so in the eye of common sense” Mr Mingay, leading counsel for the defendant, said “ [...] the Plaintiff had not only been inattentive, negligent and careless but rude, barbarous and brutal; he had long followed a science for which the delicacy, taste and the feelings of a beautiful female were ill adapted, it was the dissection of dead bodies, a practice he followed in utter disregard of her repeatedly desiring him to desist”.<sup>257</sup> Thus a husband’s way of life and professional activity as well as his failure to demonstrate affection and esteem, or to respect a wife’s feelings could, in this formulation, justify her seeking comfort elsewhere.

That divorce was a difficult business is attested by various writers<sup>258</sup>; the “indissoluble knot”<sup>259</sup> once made was hard to untie but not, as these reports show, impossible. The number of divorces was lower in the 1780s than in the decades before or after but, paradoxically, the number of published reports reached a peak.<sup>260</sup> After the divorce the dismissed wife and lover often went on to have a successful marriage. Lord Auckland’s Adultery Bill of 1800, instead of welcoming the regularising tendency of this move, attempted to prevent it on the grounds that the couple might be gaining an advantage from their criminal activity and further undermining the first husband’s patriarchal authority. Auckland argued that these couples might become a sect who were not content with the exclusive enjoyment of the privileges which their criminality had obtained, but like other sects, “would be naturally active in multiplying the number of its proselytes”.<sup>261</sup>

Publication of these reports carried contradictory implications for the husband’s relationship with the world. On the one hand, the formal accusation and public parade of marital dirty linen provided a mechanism by which the husband’s lost status might be recovered.<sup>262</sup> A man attempted to reinstate his patriarchal authority by dismissing his wife. But the action also problematized the legal construction of a wife as property subject to the constraint of her husband. By suing her, a husband unintentionally gave his wife the identity of which marriage had deprived her. But the courts, both ecclesiastical and civil, by denying her a voice in the proceedings and making assumptions about the venality of her motives, attempted to reinforce her lack of subjectivity. Furthermore, divorce proceedings exposed the fragility of a husband’s right to pursue a public life in politics, business or social activity; and to establish and maintain friendships with other men. These often created the circumstances in which adultery occurred: absence from home or lengthy visits by “friends” being two of the main opportunities for adulterous relationships. They also raised issues about the integrity and loyalty of servants and the security of the home. The

husband was supported by the courts which were entirely operated by men of his own class. Judge, jury, counsel, and the proctors who compiled the libel in adultery cases, all formally subscribed to the convention of male dominance and the injury done to a husband's property by female wantonness or male debauchery. The damages awarded in Criminal Conversation cases – ostensibly reparation for loss of the “comfort and harmony” of domestic life – were intended as a strong signal of the husband's innocence as well as a warning to other men and a constraint on future licentiousness in society.<sup>263</sup> The so-called “shilling divorce” in which derisory damages were awarded, produced the opposite effect.<sup>264</sup>

When Andrew Bayntun MP was persuaded of his wife's adultery with his cousin John Allen Cooper, he demanded she place her wedding ring on his little finger to signify that their marriage was over. He then quit the marital home for his father's seat nearby. This demonstration of masculine authority came at the end of what must have been an excruciating dinner party with the couple, her lover, the squire's two brothers and his brother in law. Bayntun, returning that day from a month at the Westminster parliament, had been alerted by his brother to suspicions about his wife. He was encouraged to seek “oracular confirmation” but decided to tackle her directly. As they gathered for dinner, Bayntun demanded of the men: “Now gentlemen will you declare as men of honour, what you have seen improper in Lady Maria's conduct to Mr. Cooper”. His brother Henry began to relate an incident which Lady Maria vehemently denied, but the enquiries were “interrupted by the servants coming in and acquainting them that dinner was ready.” Further discussion was impossible because of the servants' presence, but when they had gone Lady Maria admitted the charge and handed over her ring. While Mr Bayntun's response represents one aspect of late eighteenth-century masculinity, his previous ignorance of the intrigue, conducted wholly in his house and grounds and often during his residence, demonstrates another: a belief in the unassailability of his property contained in Lady Maria's body. The fact that he walked out rather than ejecting the lovers owed something to “consciousness of form, a concern with the manner in which actions were performed” that in Lawrence Klein's judgement was “perhaps the most important component of politeness”.<sup>265</sup> Similarly decisive was Captain Christie who “straightaway caught a boat home” from the West Indies when he was told of his wife's adultery.<sup>266</sup> In both these cases (and other examples) men decisively reasserted authority that had been temporarily disrupted by the adulterous liaison and then sought confirmation of their actions by the courts. Some men, such as Mr Arabin and Anthony Hodges, who was said

by his own counsel to have “been aware that his wife had an affair in Brussels and several others”,<sup>267</sup> appear to have simply accepted or colluded with their wives’ sexual infidelity.

These very different reactions to adultery might be seen as reflective of Elizabeth Foyster’s distinction between “honourable and dishonourable manhood”.<sup>268</sup> While Foyster’s research focus is earlier in the century, Michele Cohen’s contention that “polite gentlemanliness[.] was not homogenous but rather rent with anxieties, in particular the anxiety about effeminacy” refers directly to the last decades of the century.<sup>269</sup> It is possible to see the Criminal Conversation trial as an example of Tosh’s “masculinity as social reputation”, the Adultery Trial as “masculinity as an interiorised sense of personal identity”.<sup>270</sup> The fact that many adulteries resulted in both types of trial implies an asymmetrical chronology to Tosh’s suggestion. By replacing the duel, the Crim Con trial also suggests a changed understanding of male honour by which money overtakes blood as the honorific signifier.<sup>271</sup> There were, though, isolated examples (such as Mr Fawkener’s challenge to Lord Townshend) where the husband demanded both.<sup>272</sup>

Questions about the constitution of late eighteenth-century masculinity are also illustrated by the cruelty trials reviewed here. Marital violence and a husband’s rights and responsibility for controlling and admonishing his wife, have a place in the assessment of ideological norms. Writing of a slightly earlier period but one which still resonated at the end of the century, Anthony Fletcher suggested that, “much of the documented wife-beating of the period seems to have arisen from the expectations men brought to marriage about how they should be properly treated. These in turn reflected the core of their masculinity”.<sup>273</sup> Prescriptive literature constructed anger as a “specifically male issue or concern”.<sup>274</sup> Men were encouraged to practise restraint<sup>275</sup> and respect for their wives<sup>276</sup> but might have been encouraged by James Gillray’s cartoon *Judge Thumb* to believe that Sir Francis Buller had approved a man’s right to admonish his wife with a stick provided it was “no thicker than his thumb”.<sup>277</sup> It is not clear whether he ever did offer this opinion, but the illustration to the report detailing Captain Prescott’s cruelty to his wife shows a fiery-eyed captain brandishing a stick and the submissive Jane clutching her skirts.<sup>278</sup> John Hart, London alderman, was perhaps more subtle in his cruelty, retaining his servant-lover in the house and “keeping his wife cold and unfed”. He “forbad her all correspondence and intercourse with her father and mother, and other relations; continually exerted his endeavours to mortify, distress, and torment her”.<sup>279</sup> In his judgement of another case, Sir William Scott suggested that ‘cruelty’ need not be physical and could include psychological damage, but judged: “What merely wounds the mental feelings is in few cases to be

admitted [as a cause of divorce] where they are not accompanied by bodily injury either actual or menaced”.<sup>280</sup>

Elizabeth Foyster points to one of the “many continuities in ideas about marital violence in the past [...] an intolerance for this form of marital conduct”.<sup>281</sup> In comparing a 1666 marriage with one 160 years later she also argues that “the definition of what merited intolerable or cruel violence and how its consequences were manifest were demonstrably different.”<sup>282</sup> Robert Shoemaker has identified a “reduction in public violence” in the late part of the century, which he attributes in part, to the “development of reformed norms of masculine conduct”.<sup>283</sup> Those norms included the cultivation of masculine friendships, based at this period on “sport and codes of honour derived from military power finding expression in hunting, riding, drinking and wenching”.<sup>284</sup> This ‘chivalric’ code overtook the more effeminate masculinity of ‘politeness and sensibility’ which had dominated both male and female relations for much of the century and still retained significant influence. Writers, including Lord Chesterfield, emphasised the importance of friendship to civil society.<sup>285</sup> Paradoxically, this celebration of male friendship produced the unintended consequence that, in over half the cases reviewed here, the husband was instrumental in introducing the eventual lover into the family. Mr. Bradshaw, for instance, “was admitted on a footing of intimacy and friendly intercourse with the family of the noble EARL, he was on terms of the most intimate familiarity with LORD WESTMEATH and a frequent guest at his table.”<sup>286</sup> Mr. Parslow and his wife’s lover Mr. Sykes were fellow army officers and “interchanged visits and civilities and lived in the character and habits of the most friendly intimacy”.<sup>287</sup> John Allen Cooper was Andrew Bayntun’s cousin and invited by him to live at Bromham Hall.

The idea that husbands may “blame themselves for their misfortune” was acknowledged in some court cases. In addition to the folly of introducing potential gallants into their family, the husband’s trust and naivety also played a part in the continuance of some adulteries. He could often be “the last man acquainted with his wife’s dishonour”.<sup>288</sup> They ignored or actively rejected warnings from friends or servants.<sup>289</sup> As Mr. Erskine asked of one husband’s attitude to his wife: “did he, like too many husbands, permit her to go to scenes of vice and folly without any attendant, a practice which disgraces this metropolis?”<sup>290</sup> They might support a surprising level of intimacy between friend and wife: Mr. Cecil, for instance, allowed his wife to continue her evening’s entertainment in Birmingham with Mr. Sneyd while he went home in the family carriage. They were to follow in Sneyd’s coach, but instead the couple eloped.<sup>291</sup> Mrs Parslow, similarly, went out

for an “airing” in Mr Sykes’s phaeton and never returned.<sup>292</sup> In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to assume this was either husbandly naivety or an immoderate commitment to the infallibility of his authority. A husband’s friend might also be accused of insufficient vigilance. A witness who had introduced into a family someone he suspected of wanting to “pay attention” to the wife, agreed he had not warned the husband because “I did not think it my business to interfere”. The husband’s counsel then demanded “Did you not think it was the business of a friend? Nor of a man?”<sup>293</sup>

As we have seen, the adultery publications emphasised female licentiousness: Mrs Christie, for instance, was described as “a loose and abandoned woman, of a lustful and wicked disposition”.<sup>294</sup> An advertisement for the report of Mrs Errington’s adultery trial named 18 men with whom she had enjoyed “Amours, Intrigues and Tete a Tetes” but added “also Coachmen, Footmen, Postillions, Butlers, Gardeners, Post-Chaise Boys, Grooms, Footboys and Many Others”.<sup>295</sup> Even though there is a certain playfulness about the advertisement, the way these cases were framed was clearly intended to demonise women who had sought sexual and psychological experience outside marriage. There is some difference, though, in the way these notorious cases are represented compared to those where the wife has abandoned her husband for a single lover and lived with him. The tone is more muted and sympathetic: for instance, Mrs Hankey’s liaison with Colonel Straubensee at Brightehelmstone, and their subsequent cohabitation in various towns, is represented more as the rejection of domestic containment by a gouty and bad tempered husband than a search for sexual adventure.<sup>296</sup> Others such as Mrs Sheridan<sup>297</sup> or Mrs Villeneuve<sup>298</sup> simply abandoned their husband in favour of a single lover and were reported at the trial to be living with him.

While the language of adultery libels formally condemned the women, their representation in the reports implies at least some ambivalence towards their guilt. They were usually identified in capitalized letters on the front pages that were displayed openly in booksellers’ windows and several of the more scandalous trial reports were illustrated with drawings of certain scenes. These are crude pictures and lack any of the dramatic progression of, say, Hogarth’s *Marriage a la Mode*, but they would have signalled the nature of the booklet to an interested browser. The pictures reinforce the implicit message of the text that the women are not being seduced or forced but are active participants in the adultery. These images of female engagement reinforced the gendered insistence that their wantonness provoked adulterous behaviour in otherwise honourable men. But they also established the women protagonists as sexual beings with an identity beyond the passive

norm. For women the reports suggested that the “tightrope of romantic excitement:[and] imprudent encouragement” the young lady had enjoyed in courtship might be walked again by the married woman.<sup>299</sup> For the husband, they might have acted as a salutary warning against automatic assumption of fidelity from their wives and honourable behaviour from their friends. A deeper study of the reception of this material would be useful but given that that “No book is asked for so frequently in the lending library, and the editions, reprints and extracts from them prove their popularity”.<sup>300</sup> It seems probable that the readership spread across genders and classes. There remains, though, the question of why a society apparently so appalled by the frequency and extent of licentious behaviour so eagerly consumed the adultery material? To what extent does it demonstrate contradictions within the culture, or simply opportunistic cynicism by ‘opponents’ of elite morals? Or, perhaps, it is a matter of satisfying the urge for gossip a function of “every age”. “Gossip,” Gelles suggests, “can operate as a positive force [...]” In this case it is likely that, as people read and share the content of adultery reports, they, “convey the unwritten conventions of a circle of people. It is an expression of the rules and values governing behaviour in a particular time and place”.<sup>301</sup>

These reports also expose some of the tensions inherent in the management of servants. The same people who are supposedly under a mistress’s command will also appear as principal witnesses to her adultery. Their intimate knowledge of her life and their apparent willingness to reveal it in court and, in some cases, directly to the husband, presents the relationship more ambiguously than some other versions might maintain. The details they provided, though, may suggest that husbands involved had taken notice of the guidance to:

forget not to have your footmen and servants in your interest. All female intrigues are generally conducted by domestics; or at least they are privy to them; a woman will never embark in an affair of gallantry if she mistrusts them. Nothing is more easy than for the husband to secure these by proper gratifications and rewards.<sup>302</sup>

This is certainly likely to have been the case in those families where servants demonstrated real enthusiasm for their observation and revelation role. Mr. Bayntun’s servants – James Thring, Martha Jones and Edward Baldwyn – combined to spy on Lady Maria and Mr Cooper, and Baldwyn rode five miles to Spye Park to inform Bayntun’s father of what they had seen.<sup>303</sup> Some servants took pleasure from the spectacle of their mistresses’ misdemeanours: James Bradley told another labourer they should “see some game” when Mrs Arabin and Mr Sutton entered the shrubbery; and a 17 year old footboy, Thomas



Girdley called a 14 year old to come and look after he had seen them through the keyhole on an armchair together.<sup>304</sup> The most dramatic example of servant intervention was the *in flagrante delicto* apprehension of Lady Harriet Grosvenor and the Duke of Cumberland at the White Hart Inn, St.Albans in 1770. When Lord Grosvenor's butler Matthew Stevens apprehended the couple, having bored holes in the door so he could observe, he went to help Lady Grosvenor who had tripped in her hurry to escape the room. She said: "I suppose you think you have done a very fine thing now" He replied "My lady, I am sincerely sorry for the occasion." To which she responded tartly: "I am sure you are."<sup>305</sup>

The frequency of locked doors in adultery cases epitomises the understanding in both ecclesiastical and King's Bench courts that it was not necessary to prove adultery by "oracular demonstration"<sup>306</sup> but only by "strong, pregnant suspicions".<sup>307</sup> They also show how architectural adaption helped facilitate the very insecurities it might have been designed to prevent. The locked door was intended to guarantee a woman's privacy and safety, but, while she could use it against the physical intrusion of servants, she could not prevent the implications of immorality that they would draw, and later swear to, when it was known that mistress and lover were within the room.

Servants' involvement in adultery cases was not restricted to observation and revelation. Some male servants participated in adulterous liaisons for either as in the case of Mrs Newton,<sup>308</sup> being cited in a list of several lovers, including gentry, or, like John Rose being accused of Criminal Conversation.<sup>309</sup> While the servants in these cases appear to have taken some lead in the adultery, others were probably hapless victims of voracious mistresses. Mrs Levering, the only wife of a craftsman in this review – her husband was a carpenter – was exposed by the workmates of Gideon Gichenet whom she would frequently "call out of the workshop and detain for hours together".<sup>310</sup> Sixteen-year-old Simon Orchard swore that Mrs Errington, his employer's wife, had shown him indecent pictures and in the night came into his room "wearing only her shift", took the bedclothes off him and "taking hold of his privities" pulled him out of bed<sup>311</sup>. Mrs Lockwood, wife of a vicar and mother of nine children, committed adultery with a 'menial servant', Simeon Knowles, in a variety of places including a barn, a field, a ditch and her bedroom. He had sexual relations at her invitation ten days after she gave birth and while she was still lying-in.<sup>312</sup>

These women implicitly embraced the right to sexual satisfaction on similar terms to men and, by encouraging invasion of their 'private' spaces, transformed the home – with its expected "privacy, safety, intimacy, and protection against the outside world"<sup>313</sup> – into a

public domain, thereby undermining the equilibrium between masculinity and femininity “characteristic of the companionate marriage”.<sup>314</sup> These performances of “masculine femininity”<sup>315</sup> challenged the authority of ‘separate spheres’,<sup>316</sup> and made the home a potentially dangerous place, in direct conflict with the domesticating tendency of contemporary discourse in other literature. Many of these adulteries occurred in rural rather than urban settings. By exercising sexual independence where they did, the women in adultery cases blurred the boundaries of both class and geography (between the luxury of town and the simplicity of country) and the moral categories of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ that accompanied them. Rural dwellers, such as the Hereford jurors at the Earl of Peterborough’s Criminal Conversation trial, who were bemused by the late hours kept by the Foleys,<sup>317</sup> might similarly view female sexuality as a metropolitan import. This could not be said, though, of Mrs Middleton at Stockeld in Yorkshire or Mrs Lockwood in Norfolk. By committing adultery with servants they not only turned the rural home into a transgressive space, in direct conflict with its traditional symbolism of conservative values and moral propriety, but crossed the boundaries of class by which it was sustained.

Because these are trials in which the husband is plaintiff, his contribution to the failure of the marriage is seldom admitted, but there is some acknowledgement that men’s absence from home may have been a contributory factor. As well as spending long periods at Parliament, Andrew Bayntun was also a keen and regular huntsman.<sup>318</sup> Mr. Lockwood was frequently at his brother-in-law’s or in London.<sup>319</sup> Absence on military duty<sup>320</sup> or a job that required living from home<sup>321</sup> also facilitated adultery. A woman’s life in the country could be one of stale boredom with limited opportunities for legitimate entertainment in her husband’s absence or preoccupation.<sup>322</sup> While it remained a husband’s responsibility to control his wife’s behaviour, there is evidence in some of the commentary and the statements of defending counsel that he might also be expected to make some efforts to ensure her pleasure. What we cannot derive from these reports, except in some brief glimpses, is any picture of husbands’ adulterous activities.

The extent to which these adultery reports became part of a libertine discourse encouraging more independent female sexuality is uncertain. In her work on periodicals, Kathryn A. Shevelov argued that, as women took more part in the print culture, “the representational practices of that culture were steadily enclosing them within the private sphere of the home”.<sup>323</sup> These were periodicals with discernible “reformist agendas”<sup>324</sup> aimed, in the later part of the century, at behaviour modification. Similarly, Ballaster et al claim that women’s magazines “were instrumental in the development of a bourgeois

leisure industry habitually represented as 'feminine'".<sup>325</sup> If this can be said of periodicals and conduct literature why, if we were clearer about the constitution of the readership, could it not also be true of adultery literature? If, as I've suggested earlier they were paradoxical publications with an overt conservatism and sub-textual radicalism, then it is appropriate to suggest that both aspects could exercise their different influences on the readership. It might be, as one anthology, stated it that: "Wives [might be] kept in Awe by the just Odium that falls on *Conjugal Infidelity* – Husbands convinced of the Folly and Wickedness of Abandoning their Lawful Partners and Children, and making Connexions which only terminate in Misery and Expense".<sup>326</sup> Alternatively, for some wives, the "Impure Pleasures of Adulterous Love" might have appeared more attractive than the "Chaste Delights of Conjugal Love".<sup>327</sup> Married male readers might have felt their marital security challenged.

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From even the limited evidence presented in this chapter we get some idea of the complexity of married experience for men as represented in a range of literature. There are other roles to complete the picture, but I have concentrated on the husband, father and master because these are central. Each was performed within a framework of masculinity that valued authority and nurture in relations with the family. Men should control but support their wives, discipline but care for their children and be both directive and caring to their servants. While essential to social stability and family order, they were also subject to many difficulties (including dishonesty of wives, friends and servants). The married man, in each of his guises, set a public example, but was also, ultimately, a man with his own desires and weaknesses. These do not feature directly in literature which, in the interests of social harmony and defeat of libertinism, accorded him an exalted status. In the next chapter we shall see the extent to which some particular married men met those standards, at least in the way they represented themselves or were represented by people who knew them.

## Chapter 3 *Having and Holding - Published*

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup>R. A Elliot, *Wedding Sermon being the Substance of a Discourse Delivered at Glass-House Yard, on May 14 1775, Preached by Particular Desire and now Published at the Request of the Bridegroom, and of Others Who heard It. To which is added An Address (by way of caution and advice) to Young Persons.* 2nd Edition (London: 1778).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 7.

<sup>3</sup>Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kins and Patronage.*

<sup>4</sup> Work on aspects of children and family includes: Adriana S Benzaquien, "The Doctor and the Child: Medical Preservation and Management of Children in the Eighteenth Century". *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: Age and Identity*, ed. Anja Muller, (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006); Peter Borsay, "Children, Adolescents and Fashionable Urban Society in Eighteenth-Century England" (Muller, 2006); Leonore Davidoff, and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortune: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson 1987); Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914.* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008); John Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual and the Quest for Family Values* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996); Belinda Meteyard, "Illegitimacy and Marriage in Eighteenth Century England" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 10, No. 3 (1980), 479-489; Mary Peace, "The Magdalen Hospital and the Fortunes of Whiggish Sentimentality in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain: 'Well Grounded' Exemplarity vs 'Romantic' Exceptionality". *The Eighteenth Century* Vol. 28, 2 (2007) 125-148; Lisa Wilson, "'Ye Heart of a Father': Male Parenting in Colonial New England" *Journal of Family History*, (1999).

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the writers mentioned above aspects of this topic are discussed by Steve King, "Chance Encounters? Paths to Household Formation in Early Modern England", *International Review of Social History*, 44. (1999) 23-46. Kate Retford, "Sensibility and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Family Portrait: the Collection at Kedleston Hall" *History*, 46, 3 (2003) 533-560; Nicholas Rogers, "Money, Marriage, Mobility: The Big Bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London". *Journal of Family History* Vol. 24, (1999) 19-34; Richard Wall, "Beyond the Household: Marriage, Household Formation and the Role of Kin and Neighbours", *International Review of Social History* Vol. 44, (1999) 55-67.

<sup>6</sup> Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge.* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) 642 cit Harvey, (2009) 528.

<sup>7</sup> Examples which will be discussed later include, Joseph Fawcett, *An humble attempt to form a system of conjugal morality: being the substance of six discourses addressed to young persons of both sexes, with a design to lead them through the becoming Duties of Celibacy and Marriage* (Manchester, 1787), 117; Benjamin Franklin, *Reflections on courtship and marriage: in two letters to a friend. Wherein a practical plan is laid down for observing and securing conjugal ...* (London, 1784) 97 Ratio, *Matrimony, A Letter to Young Gentlemen and Ladies Married or Single.* (London: W. Domville, 1768); John Ovington, *The Duties, Advantages Pleasures, Pleasures and Sorrows of the Marriage State* (London: 1813); William Whateley, *Directions for Married Persons Describing the Duties Common to both And peculiar to each of them* (Bristol: for R.Farley, 1763).

<sup>8</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) 2.

<sup>9</sup> David Turner, rev. of Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage*, (London and New York: Longman, 1999).

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<sup>10</sup> King (1999) Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1990). Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998); Maureen Waller, *The English Marriage: Tales of Love, Money and Adultery* (London: John Murray, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800*, (Cambridge: CUP. 2003). " 'I dye(sic) by Inches': locating wife-beating in the concept of a privatization of marriage and violence in eighteenth-century England". *Social History* Vol. 31, No. 2, (August 2006) 273-296; Margaret Hunt, "Wife-Beating, Domesticity and Women's Independence in Eighteenth-Century London", *Gender & History*, Vol. 4, No. 1(1992); Elizabeth Foyster, *Marital Violence: An English Family History, 1660-1857*.

<sup>12</sup> Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth – Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis*. (London & New York: Longman, 1999); Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations - The transformation of kinship in English Literature and Culture 1748-1818*, (Cambridge C.U.P., 2004) 76.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage*, (London and New York: Longman, 1999) 93.

<sup>15</sup> Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s, Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 147.

<sup>16</sup> John Tosh, "The old Adam and the new man: emerging themes in the history of English masculinities 1750-1850", *English Masculinities 1660-1800* ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen, (London & New York: Longman, 1999) 219.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Fletcher, "Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household In Early Modern England", *History*, (1999) 420.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977) 165.

<sup>19</sup> Perry, (2004) 21.

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, Michael Roper and John Tosh eds. *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Karen Harvey, "The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800", *Journal of British Studies* 44 (April 2005) 296–311; Jeff Hearn, "From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men", *Feminist Theory*, Vol.5, No.1, (2004) 49-72.

<sup>21</sup> Davidoff & Hall, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Hannah More, *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* (1807) cit *Family Fortunes*, 167-169.

<sup>23</sup> Toni Bowers, *Domesticity and the Family in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dept of English, University of Pennsylvania, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Perry, (2004) 38-76.

<sup>25</sup> Alexandra Shepard, "From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen - Manhood in Britain circa 1500-1700" *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, (2005) 281-295.

<sup>26</sup> Examples include: *An Address to Parents Earnestly Recommending them to promote the Happiness of their Children by a Due Regard to their Virtuous Education*. (Uxbridge: T. Lake, 1787). George Armstrong, *An Essay on the Diseases Most Fatal to Infants, To which are added Rules to be Observed in the Nursing of Children With a particular View to those who are brought up by Hand* 2nd Edition, (London: T. Cadell, 1771). Sarah Trimmer, *An Address to Heads of Schools and Families Pointing Out, Under the Sanction of the most respectable Authorities, the Necessity for a Reformation in the Modern System of Education in the Higher and Middling Stations as far as the Interests of Religion are Concerned*, (London: F and C Rivington, 1799).

<sup>27</sup> For instance, Toni Bowers *The Politics of Motherhood: British writing and culture, 1680-1760*. (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996); Susan C Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance, Frances Burney to Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002).

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<sup>28</sup> Gillis, 1996, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Davidoff & Hall, Hannah Barker, "A Grocer's Tale: Gender, Family and Class in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester" *Gender & History*, Vol.21 No.2, (August 2009) 340–357; Nicola Phillips, 'Parenting the Profligate Son: Masculinity, Gentility and Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1791–1814', *Gender and History*, Vol.22 No.1, (April 2010) 92–108.

<sup>30</sup> Stone, (1977), Chap 9.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth and Patriarchal Complicity*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 17.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914*.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>34</sup> John Tosh, 'Authority and Nurture in Middle-Class Fatherhood: The Case of Early and Mid-Victorian England'. *Gender & History*, Vol. 8 No.1, (April 1996) 48-63.

<sup>35</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914*.

<sup>36</sup> Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth*. (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1996) Eleanor Wikborg, *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Doody, *Frances Burney; the Life in the Works*, (Cambridge: C.U.P. 1988) 184 cit Gonda, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Gonda, 34.

<sup>39</sup> Perry, (2004) 79.

<sup>40</sup> Wikborg, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *"Their Fathers' Daughters": Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth and Patriarchal Complicity*, (New York/London: O.U.P., 1991) 97.

<sup>43</sup> Wikborg, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> For instance D Marshall, "The Domestic Servants of the Eighteenth Century" *Economica* No 25 April, (1925) 15-40. Tim Meldrum, "Domestic Service: Privacy and the eighteenth-century metropolitan household" *Urban History* Vol. 26, No. 1. (1999) 28-39; Kristina Straub, *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism and Violence between Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Fletcher, 2008, Sophia Woodley, " 'Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure': the Debate between Private and Public Education in Britain, 1760-1800". Hilton, Mary and Jill Shefrin eds. *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> For example: Toni Bowers, 1996; Lisa Forman Cody, *The Politics of Reproduction: From Midwives' Alternative Public Sphere to the Public Spectacle of Man Midwifery*"; Jacqueline Hecht, *From "Be Fruitful and Multiply" to Family Planning: The Enlightenment Transition* *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.4 (1999) 536-551; Ruth Perry, "Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 2, No. 2, *Special Issue, Part 1: The State, Society, and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe*, (Oct. 1991) 204-234.

<sup>48</sup> Elaine Hobby "Secrets of the female sex: Jane Sharp, the reproductive female body, and early modern midwifery manuals", *Women's Writing*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2001); Ernelle Fife "Gender and professionalism in eighteenth-century midwifery", *Women's Writing*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2004).

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<sup>50</sup> Donna T. Andrew “Adultery a la Mode: Privilege, the Law and Attitudes to Adultery 1770-1809”. *History*, (1997) 5-23.

<sup>51</sup> Sarah Lloyd, “Amour in the Shrubberies: Reading the Detail of English Adultery Trial Publications in the 1790s”. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* Vol 39, No 4 (2006) 421-442. The reports are also mentioned without examination by Perry, (2004) 239-40.

<sup>52</sup> Cora Kaplan has described “The negative meanings which have been historically associated with women’s sexuality” as “a major impediment in their fight for liberation”. see Kaplan, Cora. “Wild Nights: pleasure, sexuality and feminism”. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse. *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, (London: Methuen, 1987) 160-184.

<sup>53</sup> Karen Harvey, ‘Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain’ *Gender & History*, Vol.21, No.3, (2009) 520–540 has emphasised the importance of œconomy “as a meaningful discourse of masculinity.” It “emphasised a man’s managerial engagement with home. It made ‘housekeeping’ central to manly status. It also made men central to the home. Œconomy shows the ways in which men made homes and homes made men”, 536.

<sup>54</sup> Gabriela Spector-Mersel, “Never-Ageing stories: Western Hegemonic Masculinity Scripts”. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 15, 1, (2006) 68.

<sup>55</sup> Carrie Paechter, “Masculine femininities/ feminine masculinities: power, identities and gender”, *Gender and Education* Vol. 18, No. 3, (May 2006), 253-263.

<sup>56</sup> John Tosh, “The old Adam and the new man: emerging themes in the history of English masculinities 1750-1850”, ed. Tim Hitchcock, Michele Cohen. *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, (London & New York: Longman, 1999) 217-238.

<sup>57</sup> See discussion in Chap 1, p5.

<sup>58</sup> Jeremy Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England: A Subject for Taste*, (London & Hambleton: Continuum: 2005)158.

<sup>59</sup> Tadmor, (1989) 290.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Michael McKeon *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London 1987), 22.

<sup>62</sup> Tadmor, 294.

<sup>63</sup> Gonda, xvi.

<sup>64</sup> Susan C Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance, Frances Burney to Jane Austen*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002) 14.

<sup>65</sup> Ros Ballaster: *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction 1684-1740*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992) 23.

<sup>66</sup> Toni. Bowers, “Representing Resistance: British Seduction Stories, 1660-1800”. *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture* ed Paula R Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia, (Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 141.

<sup>67</sup> Karen O’Brien, “History and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century Britain”, *The Huntington Library Quarterly* Vol. 68, No. 1/2, (2005), 397-413.

<sup>68</sup> Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist, from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Basil Blackwell Ltd 1986).

<sup>69</sup> Andrea K Henderson, “Commerce and Masochistic Desire in the 1790s: Frances Burney’s Camilla”. *Eighteenth Century Studies* Vol. 31, No. 1, (1997) 77.

<sup>70</sup> Andrea K Henderson, 67.

<sup>71</sup> Gonda, xv.

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<sup>72</sup>Mary Jacobus. "The Difference of View". *The Feminist Reader* ed Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, 2nd ed., (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997) 71.

<sup>73</sup>John Richetti, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780*, (London & New York: Routledge 1999) 1.

<sup>74</sup>Anonymous and circulating library novels particularly demonstrate this tendency. For instance, in *The modern wife. A novel. In two volumes. ...* London, 1769 one sister's husband is a rake, the other a paragon; A similar contrast is found in Lady, A. *The unfortunate union: or, the test of virtue. A story founded on facts, and calculated to promote the cause of virtue in younger minds.* (London: 1778). The aim of these novels is to present the ideologically most acceptable version of a husband.

<sup>75</sup> Henry Fielding *Amelia* ed. David Blewett, (London: Penguin Books, 1982); Samuel Richardson, *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1741) ed. & intro Thomas Keymer and Alice Walkley (Oxford: World's Classics 2001); Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) ed. & intro Jocelyn Harris (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); Frances Sheridan, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph*, (1761) ed. Patricia Koster and Jean Coates Cleary, (Oxford:O.U.P., 1995); Amelia Opie, (Mrs Opie). *Adeline Mowbray: The Mother and Daughter* (1804) intro Jeanette Winterson (London, Boston and Henley: Pandora Press 'Mothers of the Novel' Series, 1986).

<sup>76</sup>James Fordyce, *The character and conduct of the female sex and the advantages to be derived by young men from the society of virtuous women* (London: printed for T.Cadell, 1776).

<sup>77</sup> As, for instance, in *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph*, where, after leaving his wife in favour of his mistress, Mr Arnold eventually returns "the tenderest, the best of men", 269.

<sup>78</sup>Characters in, respectively, Fanny Burney, *Camilla or A Picture of Youth* (1796). Ed. Edwards A. Bloom & Lillian D. Bloom. (Oxford: World's Classics, O.U.P.,1983). Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1818) ed. & intro. Gilliam Beer, (London: Penguin Books, 1998). Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) ed. and intro Angus Ross. (London: Penguin, 1967); Frances Burney, *Cecilia or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782) ed Peter Sabor and Margaret Doody, (Oxford: OUP, 1999); Thomas Holcroft, *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor (1794-7)*, ed. and intro by Seamus Deane, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). Robert Bage, *Hermstrong or Man As He Is Not* (1796) ed. Peter Faulker, (Oxford: O.U.P. 1985).

<sup>79</sup> Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* (1801), ed. Intro. and notes Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

<sup>80</sup> Armstrong, (1987) 11.

<sup>81</sup> *Cecilia* 253.

<sup>82</sup> *The Mercenary Marriage*, I, 6.

<sup>83</sup> William Combe, *Original love-letters between a lady of quality and a person of inferior station*, ( Dublin, 1784) II, 274.

<sup>84</sup> *Persuasion*, 59.

<sup>85</sup> Hazel Jones, *Jane Austen & Marriage*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2009) 123.

<sup>86</sup> *Persuasion*, 1.

<sup>87</sup> Perry, (2004), 406.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 407.

<sup>89</sup> *Persuasion*, 236.

<sup>90</sup> *Amusements in High Life or Conjugal Infidelities in 1786.*In *A Series of Confidential Letters between Ladies who have distinguished themselves by the Multiplicity and Singularity of their Amours* (London: G.Lister, 1786).

<sup>91</sup>*The modern wife, A novel in two volumes. ...*, (London, 1769) 90.

<sup>92</sup>*The Unhappy Wife: A Series of Letters by a Lady in Two Volumes* (London: F Newberry, 1770).

<sup>93</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* (1741) ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Walkley. (Oxford: World's Classics, 2001), 446.



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- <sup>94</sup> Ibid, Introduction , vii.
- <sup>95</sup> Marilyn LeGates, *The Cult of Womanhood in Eighteenth-Century Thought* EHS 10 (1976/77) cit Gwilliam, (1991) 105.
- <sup>96</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*, Vol II ed M.Kinkead-Weekes, London: Dent Everyman's Library, (1914), (1979) 229.
- <sup>97</sup> Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison, Part 3*, (1753) 275.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid, 402.
- <sup>99</sup> Perry, 1991, 205, 206, 229.
- <sup>100</sup> *Grandison*, Pt 3, (403).
- <sup>101</sup> Henry Fielding, *Amelia* (1751) ed. David Blewett, (London: Penguin Books, 1987).
- <sup>102</sup> Eagleton, (2005) 58.
- <sup>103</sup> *Amelia*, 1.
- <sup>104</sup> R.S Crane. "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*" *The Novel: an Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000* ed. Dorothy J.Hale, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006) 125.
- <sup>105</sup> Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, *Women's Lives and the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Novel*, (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991) 22.
- <sup>106</sup> *Amelia*, 543.
- <sup>107</sup> Frances Sheridan, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph*, (1761). Ed. Patricia Koster and Jean Coates Cleary,(Oxford: OUP. 1995) 106.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid, 131.
- <sup>109</sup> For an exploration of this phenomenon, see Thomas, Keith. "Double Standard". *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 20, No. 2 Apr, (1959) 195-216.
- <sup>110</sup> *Sidney Biddulph*, 269.
- <sup>111</sup> eg Vicesimus Knox, *Essays moral and literary, by Vicesimus Knox, M. A. a New Edition, in Two Volumes*. (London, MDCCLXXXII. 1782); Cesare Mussolini; *Friendly Advice; Comprehending General Heads of Qualifications for Those Who Wish to Marry Well and Live Happy, Compiled and Translated from Different Authors*.(London: 1794); John Ovington, *The Duties, Advantages Pleasures, Pleasures and Sorrows of the Marriage State* (London:1813).
- <sup>112</sup> Eg., Countess Isabella Howard Carlisle, *Thoughts in the form of maxims addressed to young ladies, on their first establishment in the world*.(London, 1789); Honourable Eugenia Stanhope, *The Deportment of a Married Life Laid Down in a Series of Letters A Few Years Since to a Young Lady, her Relation Then Lately Married*. (London: Mr Hodges, 1790); Honoria, *The female mentor: or, select conversations. In two volumes*, Vol. 2 (London, 1793).
- <sup>113</sup> *Clinker*, (1771) 325.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid, 329.
- <sup>115</sup> See Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, (London & New York: Methuen, 1986) 67.
- <sup>116</sup> Philip Carter, "Men about town: representations of foppery and masculinity in early eighteenth-century urban society." *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles. Representations and Responsibilities*. Ed. Hannah Barker & Elaine Chalus, (London and New York: Longman. 1997) 57.
- <sup>117</sup> Elizabeth Inchbald, *Nature and Art 2<sup>nd</sup>* ed. 1797. Ed Shawn Lisa Maurer (Canada: Broadview Editions, 2005).
- <sup>118</sup> *Hugh Trevor*, 28-9.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid, 27-29.

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- <sup>120</sup>*The Way to Lose Him or The History of Miss Wyndham by the Author of The Way to Please Him*, Vol.1, (London: for F & J Noble, 1773) 104.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid, II 211-12, 236, 56, 225-6, Vol. I, 172.
- <sup>122</sup>*The Way to Please Him or the History of Lady Sedley by the Author of The Way to Lose Him* (London: F & J Noble 1773).
- <sup>123</sup> Ibid, I, 205-6, 39; II,173.
- <sup>124</sup> *Adeline Mowbray*, 130.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid, 28.
- <sup>126</sup> *An essay on conjugal infidelities; shewing the great mischiefs that attend those that defile the marriage bed* (London: printed for T.Warner, 1727).
- <sup>127</sup> For instance: Daniel Defoe, *Conjugal lewdness: or, matrimonial whoredom*. London, MDCCXXVII. [1727]. Philogamus, *The present state of matrimony: or the real causes of conjugal infidelity and unhappy marriages* (London: printed for John Hawkins, 1739).
- <sup>128</sup> Eg. “The Good Husband”, *New Universal Magazine*. (Sept 1772); Thomas Gisborne, *An Inquiry into the Duties of Men in the Higher and Middle Classes of Society in Great Britain Resulting from their Respective Stations, Professions and Employments* (London: B. and J.White, 1794); Mrs Piozzi, “Advice to Husbands”, *The Lady’s Monthly Museum*, April (1800).
- <sup>129</sup> *The evils of adultery and prostitution; with an inquiry into the causes of their alarming increase, and some means recommended for checking their progress*, (London: T.Vernon, 1792) 3.
- <sup>130</sup> Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to separate Spheres? A review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History": *History* Vol. 36 No. 2, (June 1993) 385.
- <sup>131</sup> Foyster, (1999) 55.
- <sup>132</sup> Tassie Gwilliam, “Pamela and the Duplicitous Body of Femininity”, *Representations* No. 34 (Spring 1991).
- <sup>133</sup> Armstrong and Tennenhouse,(1987); Vivien Jones, ed. *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London:Routledge, 1990).
- <sup>134</sup> Carol Houlihan Flynn, “Defoe’s idea of conduct: ideological fictions and fictional reality”. Armstrong and Tennenhouse, (1987) 74.
- <sup>135</sup> McKeon, (1995) 298.
- <sup>136</sup> Fletcher, (1995) xix.
- <sup>137</sup> *The Art of Governing a Wife with Rules for Batchelors, To Which is Added An Essay Against Unequal Marriages* (London: J.Robinson, 1747).
- <sup>138</sup> *The Art of Engaging the Affections of Wives to their Husbands Translated from the French of M. \*\*\*\*\**. (Berwick: for W.Phorson, B.Law & Son, 1793).
- <sup>139</sup> *Art of Governing*, 3.
- <sup>140</sup> Ibid, 123.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid, 41, 76, 29, 121-3.
- <sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 13, 24.
- <sup>143</sup> *Art of Engaging*, iii.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid, 9, 12, 42, 13, 15, 45, 18.
- <sup>145</sup> John Aikin, *Letters from a father to his son, on various topics relative to literature and the conduct of life*, 241.
- <sup>146</sup> Alan Ruston, ‘Fawcett, Joseph (c.1758–1804)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004).

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- <sup>147</sup> *The evils of adultery*, (1792) 2.
- <sup>148</sup> Fawcett, (1787) 103.
- <sup>149</sup> Francis Foster, *Thoughts on the Times but Chiefly on the Profligacy of our Women and its Causes: Addressed to every Parent, Husband and Modest Woman in the Three Kingdoms*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (London: C. Parker, 1779) 14.
- <sup>150</sup> Fawcett, (1787) 117.
- <sup>151</sup> Perry, (2004) 197.
- <sup>152</sup> Elizabeth Foyster review of Ruth Perry 2004, “*Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 16 No. 1, (Jan 2007) 128
- <sup>153</sup> Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 59.
- <sup>154</sup> Susan Moller Okin, “Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. Vol. 11, No. 1 (Winter 1982).
- <sup>155</sup> Paul Lawrence, ‘Gregory, John (1724–1773)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004).
- <sup>156</sup> John Gregory, *The Ladies Library or Parental Present: A Father’s Legacy to his Daughters*, (1775) 3.
- <sup>157</sup> Sarah Howard, (1783) 12-13.
- <sup>158</sup> Eugenia Stanhope, (1790) 14, 19-20, 58, 61-2.
- <sup>159</sup> “A Secret How to Keep a Husband True, An Address to Married Ladies”, (Aug 1793), 108. (This article had first appeared in the *Oxford Magazine or Universal Museum* Oct 1775 and its re-publication suggests the topic had retained its importance).
- <sup>160</sup> “How to Rule a Husband”. *The Ladies Monthly Museum*, (October 1816) 218.
- <sup>161</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>162</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>163</sup> “Advice to Husbands”, 276.
- <sup>164</sup> “The Good Husband”. *New Universal Magazine*, (Sept 1772) 117.
- <sup>165</sup> *The evils of adultery*, 32.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid, 8.
- <sup>167</sup> An Advocate of the Ladies. “Causes of the Infidelity of Husbands and Wives”. *Edinburgh Weekly Magazine*. Sept 11, 1777, 249.
- <sup>168</sup> Michele Cohen, “Manners’ Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity”. *Journal of British Studies* 44, (April 2005) 312-329.
- <sup>169</sup> Tosh argues that the acceptance of Victorian manliness as essentially public and not domestic is “to view the Victorian world through late Victorian or Edwardian spectacles” and that, in reality, male dominance of the home became a mark of masculinity. See John Tosh, ‘Domesticity and Manliness in the Victorian Middle: The Family of Edward White Benson’ in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*. ed Michael Roper and John Tosh, (London & New York: Routledge, 1991) 44-73.
- <sup>170</sup> Tosh, (April 1996) 48-63.
- <sup>171</sup> In *Growing Up in England* Fletcher described the role as “about combining the exercise of guidance and authority with the expression of the affection that fathers felt for sons and daughters”, 129.
- <sup>172</sup> *Amelia* (1751).

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- <sup>173</sup> Samuel Richardson, *l. Pamela*, Vol. II, 228.
- <sup>174</sup> Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), 402.
- <sup>175</sup> *Sidney Biddulph*, 117.
- <sup>176</sup> Megan Woodworth, "If a Man Dared Act for Himself: Family Romance and Independence in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*". *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* Vol. 22, No. 2, (Winter 2009-10) 356.
- <sup>177</sup> William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books. 12<sup>th</sup> edition with notes and additions by Edward Christian Esq.*, (London: A Strahan and W. Woodfall, 1793) 453.
- <sup>178</sup> Thomas Secker, *On the relative Duties between Parents and Children and between Masters and Servants. To which is added the Duty of Subjects to those who are placed in Authority over them. A Number of Tracts published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Practice in the Kingdom of Ireland*, (Dublin: John Exshaw, 1790) 5.
- <sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, 11-12.
- <sup>180</sup> Fletcher, (2008) 129.
- <sup>181</sup> Francis Foster, *Thoughts on the Times but Chiefly on the Profligacy of our Women and its Causes: Addressed to every Parent, Husband and Modest Woman in the Three Kingdoms, 2nd Edition*.
- <sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 159.
- <sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 168-9.
- <sup>184</sup> A Man-Midwife, *The Danger and Immodesty of the Present Too General Custom of Unnecessarily Employing Men Midwife*. (London: J. Wilkie and F. Blyth, 1772).
- <sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.
- <sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 8, 20-1.
- <sup>187</sup> John Blunt, *Man-Midwifery Dissected or the Obstetric Family Instructor for the use of Married Couples and Single Adults of Both Sexes in Fourteen Letters addressed to Dr Alex Hamilton* (London: R.W. Fores, 1793).
- <sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, 16.
- <sup>189</sup> *Man-Midwifery Analysed: or the Tendency of that Indecent and Unnecessary Practice Detected and Exposed*, (London: S. Fores, 1790) 13.
- <sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, xiv-v.
- <sup>191</sup> Ellen Pollak, *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope*, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1985) 5.
- <sup>192</sup> Eg. Brudenell Exton, *A new and general system of midwifery, in four parts. By Brudenell Exton, M.D. Physician and Man Midwife to the Middlesex Hospital. The fourth edition*. (London, MDCCLXXI. [1771]; Thomas Denman, *Aphorisms on the application and use of the forceps, on preternatural labours, and on labours attended with haemorrhage*. (London, Printed in the Year 1783); John Gibson, *Some useful hints and friendly admonitions to young surgeons on the practice of midwifery. By John Gibson, surgeon and man-midwife in Harwich* (Colchester, 1772).
- <sup>193</sup> Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic of the 1790s", *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 6 No. 3, (Jan 1996) 409-434.
- <sup>194</sup> Stone, (1977) 59.
- <sup>195</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>196</sup> Roy Porter, "Touch of Danger" cit Vickery (1998), 95.
- <sup>197</sup> Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery; Childbirth in England, 1660-1770*, (Cambridge Mass, 1995), 192 cit Vickery, (1998) 95.
- <sup>198</sup> William Cadogan, *An Essay upon Nursing and the Management of Children from their Birth to Three Years of Age. 10<sup>th</sup> edition*. (London: Robert Horsfield, 1772) 33-6. Other proponents of nursing mothers

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included William Moss, *An essay on the management and nursing of children in the earlier periods of infancy*. (London, MDCCLXXXI). David. Spence, *A system of midwifery, theoretical and practical. Illustrated with copper-plates*. (Edinburgh, M,DCC,LXXXIV).

<sup>199</sup> Cadogan, 9.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Stone, (1977) 270.

<sup>203</sup> Rober Bland, MD. *Some Calculations of the Number of Accidents and Deaths which happen in consequence of Parturition...* (London: J.Nicholls, 1781), 10.

<sup>204</sup> E.A Wrigley has calculated that, although rapidly reducing, infant mortality remained at 15.7% of all legitimate births in the period 1775-199 and at 13.6% between 1800 and 1824. Wrigley, E.A. "Explaining the Rise in Marital Fertility in England in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century". *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 51, No. 3, (Aug., 1998) 435-464.

<sup>205</sup> Fletcher 2008, 81.

<sup>206</sup>George Armstrong, *An Essay on the Diseases Most Fatal to Infants. To which are added Rules to be Observed in the Nursing of Children With a particular View to those who are brought up by Hand 2nd Edition*, (London: T.Cadell, 1771) 9.

<sup>207</sup> Fletcher, (2008) 149, 155.

<sup>208</sup> Stone, (1977) 274.

<sup>209</sup> Woodley, (2009) 28.

<sup>210</sup> Vicesimus Knox, *Liberal Education or a Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, (London: Charles Dilly, 1781).

<sup>211</sup>Henry Thomas Kitchener, *Letters on Marriage on the Causes of Matrimonial Infidelity and on the Reciprocal Relations of the Sexes in two volumes*, 119.

<sup>212</sup> Colin Kitching ed. *Squire of Calke Abbey*, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1821

<sup>213</sup> Thomas Gisborne, *Duties of Men*, 605-6, 607.

<sup>214</sup> John Bennett, *Strictures on Female Education, Chiefly As it Relates to the Culture of the Heart in Four Essays by a Clergyman of the Church of England*, (London: T.Cadell, 1781) 133-4.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>216</sup>Mr. Langridge, *Letters from a Parent on the Education of Children*, (London: Conference Office, 1800), 5.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 10, 26.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 28, 30, 32.

<sup>219</sup> Kitchener, 95.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>223</sup> Fletcher (1999), 422.

<sup>224</sup> Stone (1977), 115-36.

<sup>225</sup> "No paragraphs are more greedily read" according to the author of *The Evils of Prostitution*.

<sup>226</sup> As suggested for instance by James Fordyce in his polemic on the character and conduct of women (1776).

- <sup>227</sup> *The Trial of Lady Ann Foley*. (London: G.Lister). *The Trial of the Rt Hon Lady Maria Bayntun*. (London: G.Lister, 1783); *Trial of Mrs Harriet Errington*, (London: for F.Randall 1785). *The Trial of the Right Hon Ann, Countess of Cork and Orrery* (Printed and sold by G.Lister, 1782).
- <sup>228</sup> *The Trial of Andrew Robinson Bowes Esq for Adultery & Cruelty* (London: R.Randall, 1789). See also Wendy Moore, *Wedlock*. (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 2008).
- <sup>229</sup> Sir Richard Worsley, *The trial, with the whole of the evidence, between the Right Hon. Sir Richard Worsley, ... and George Maurice Bissett, Esq. defendant for criminal conversation* (London, 1782). *The whim !!! or, the Maid-Stone bath. A Kentish poetic. Dedicated to Lady Worsley*, (London, 1782).
- <sup>230</sup> *The Trial of His R.H. the D. of C. July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1770 for CRIMINAL CONVERSATION with Lady Harriet G-----r. To which is prefixed an INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE Upon the Antient and Modern Punishments of Adultery and the uncommon Progress of the Crime. Including all the letters which have passed between his R.H. and her Ladyship and were read in court*. London: John Walker, 1771; *The Tryal for adultery of Lady Harriet Grosvenor by Lord Grosvenor* (March 1771).
- <sup>231</sup> See Foyster. 2005. Also Jessica Warner, & Alison Lunny. "Marital Violence in a Martial Town: Husbands And Wives in Early Modern Portsmouth 1653-1781." *Journal of Family History* 28, (2003), 258-276.
- <sup>232</sup> *Westminster Magazine*, July 1773.
- <sup>233</sup> Lawrence Stone. *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England 1660-1857* (Oxford: O.U.P. 1993).
- <sup>234</sup> Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530- 1987*, (Oxford, New York: O.U.P, 1995) 2.
- <sup>235</sup> *Ibid*, 3.
- <sup>236</sup> *The Cuckold's Chronicle Being Select Trials for Adultery, Incest, Imbecility, Ravishment &c* Vols. 1 and 2 (London: H.Lemoin, 1793).
- <sup>237</sup> *Adultery Anatomised: In a Select Collection of Tryals for Criminal Conversation Brought Down from the Infant Ages of Cuckoldham in England to Its Full Growth in the present Times, 2 Vols* (London, 1761).
- <sup>238</sup> *Trials for adultery: or, the history of divorces. Being select trials at Doctors Commons, ... From the year 1760, to the present time. ... in seven volumes* (London, 1779-80).
- <sup>239</sup> *Trials, Vol 4*.
- <sup>240</sup> *The Trial of Mrs Henrietta Arabin, Wife of William John Arrabin Esq of Moulsey At Doctors Commons for committing Adultery with Thomas Sutton Esquire, junior, of Moulsey in the County of Surrey*, (London: R.Randall, 1768) 9.
- <sup>241</sup> *The Life and Amours of Lady Ann F-L-Y* (London, Printed for G. Lister No 46, Old Bailey).
- <sup>242</sup> The idea that separation in this way was a husband's only means of preventing a wife's financial profligacy is strongly contradicted by Chief Justice Kenyon's contention that the law in this area was not "designed as a licence for extravagance, or to promote domestic profusion." Qd in "The expences of a wife to be regulated by the income of her husband." *Cabinet* Vol 4, Oct 1808, 224.
- <sup>243</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, "Couverture and Capitalism". *Historical Workshop Journal* Issue 59, (2000) 1-16.
- <sup>244</sup> Eg. *The Trial for Adultery between Anthony Hodges Esq and the Hon Charles Wyndham*.
- <sup>245</sup> *Foley v Foley* and *Foley v Peterborough* are examples of this phenomenon.
- <sup>246</sup> Vickery, (1998), 73.
- <sup>247</sup> *The Times*, May 21, 1801.
- <sup>248</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>249</sup> *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Times to 1803*, Vol. 35, 1432.
- <sup>250</sup> Frances Burton, *Family Law*, (London: Routledge, 2003) 56.

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<sup>251</sup> Stone, *Broken Lives*, 19-20.

<sup>252</sup> Lord Eldon in *Lord St John versus Lady St John* (1805 11 Ves Jun 525,530, 532), quoted in *Staves Married Women's Property*, 185.

<sup>253</sup> *In the Consistory Court of London, Augusta Evans, the Wife versus Thomas Evans, the Husband. Sentence given by Sir William Scott*, (July 2, 1790) 87.

<sup>254</sup> *The Trial of the Right Hon Ann, Countess of Cork and Orrery*, 4.

<sup>255</sup> Richard Cumberland, *The Observer* (London: C.Dilly, 1785) 94; *Daily Universal Register*, cit Lloyd, 422.

<sup>256</sup> *The Trial of Mrs Henrietta Arabin*.

<sup>257</sup> *Trial in the Court of Kings Bench before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury between Edward Dodwell Esq Plaintiff and the Rev Henry Bate Dudley Defendant for Crim Con*, (London: D.Symonds 1789) 7.

<sup>258</sup> Stone, Vickery, Tadmor, Andrew, Donna. T. "Adultery a la Mode: Privilege, the Law and Attitudes to Adultery 1770-1809", *History* 1997, 5-23.

<sup>259</sup> Le Blanc, *Letters on the English and French nations; containing curious and useful Jean Bernard observations on their constitutions natural and political*, (London: J.Brindley, R.Francklin, C.Davis, 1747) 61.

<sup>260</sup> Lloyd, (2006) 422.

<sup>261</sup> Aukland, Lord. *Substance of Speeches in the House of Lords May 16 and 23, 1800 in Support of the Bill for the Punishment and More Effectual Prevention of the Crime of Adultery*, (London: J.Wright, 1800) 27.

<sup>262</sup> See Fletcher, Foyster.

<sup>263</sup> Juries were reminded that, "it was their duty, in the administration of justice, to take care how they played their part in beating down immorality and stigmatizing vice [...] they would make sure that the example of their judgement might operate on the public at large" [Mr Erskine in the *Trial of John Delenden Gawler Esq for Adultery with Lady Valentia* (London: T.Lewis 1796), 3.

<sup>264</sup> For example *Worsley v Bissett*.

<sup>265</sup> Lawrence Klein, "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century". *History*, Vol. 45, No. 4, (December, 2002) 874.

<sup>266</sup> *The Trial of Mrs Elizabeth Leslie Christie wife of James Christie Esquire for committing Adultery with Joseph Baker Esq; and Violating her Conjugal Vow* (London: Printed for G.Lister, 1815).

<sup>267</sup> *The whole of the Trial of the Hon Charles Wyndham on a Charge of Adultery with Sophia, the wife of Anthony Hodges Esq. Before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury When, After an Examination of Considerable Length Replete with Curious Matter, and in which was mentioned among others an ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE The Jury Gave a Verdict in Favour of the Defendant* (London: Upton, 1791).

<sup>268</sup> Foyster, (1999) 10.

<sup>269</sup> Cohen, (2005) 313.

<sup>270</sup> Tosh, (1999) 219.

<sup>271</sup> Robert B Shoemaker, "The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence in the Streets of London 166-1800", *History* Vol. 45, No. 3, (Cambridge University Press, 2002) 539.

<sup>272</sup> *The Trial Of Georgina Ann Fawkenor wife of William Fawkenor Esq of St James Street for Adultery with the Right Honourable John Lord Townshend Late Member of Parliament for Westminster Tried in the Bishop of London's Court, Doctors Common*, (London: E.Bentley 1791).

<sup>273</sup> Fletcher, (1999) 434.

<sup>274</sup> Foyster, Elizabeth, "Boys will be boys ? Manhood and aggression 1660-1800"; Hitchcock, Tim and Michele Cohen eds. *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, (London&New York: Longman, 1999) 159.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*.

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<sup>276</sup>*The Art of Governing a Wife*, 107.

<sup>277</sup> British Museum AN79564001.

<sup>278</sup>*The Trial of Isaac Prescott Esq a Captain in the Royal Navy, Late Commander of his Majesty's Ship the Seaford for Wanton, Tyrannical, Unprovoked and Savage Cruelty Towards Jane Prescott his Wife, Setting Forth the Whole of the Evidence upon that Remarkable Trial in the Consistory Court at Doctors Commons* (1786).

<sup>279</sup>*The Trial of John Hart Esq Alderman of London for Adultery and Cruelty in the Consistorial Court at Doctors Commons* (London: G.Lister, 1780).

<sup>280</sup>*Augusta Evans, the Wife versus Thomas Evans, the Husband. Sentence given by Sir William Scott, July 2, 1790.*

<sup>281</sup>Foyster, (2005) 8.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>283</sup> Shoemaker, (2002) 526.

<sup>284</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 110.

<sup>285</sup> Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield. *The Accomplished Gentleman or Principles of Politeness And of Knowing the World.* (Dublin: Wogan, Bean and Pike, 1782).

<sup>286</sup>*The Trial at Large on an Action for Damages brought in his Majesty's Court of Exchequer, by the Right Hon George Fred. Earl of Westmeath against the Honourable Augustus Cavendish Bradshaw for Adultery with the Right Hon Marty Anne, Countess of Westmeath* (London: Re-printed for Allen and West No 15 Paternoster Row, 1796).

<sup>287</sup>*Trial for Adultery in Westminster Hall on Wednesday December 9, 1789 before Lord Kenyon, John Parslow Esq, Plaintiff and Francis William Sykes Esq, Defendant, for Criminal Conversation with the Plaintiff's Wife,* (London: for J.Ridgway, 1789) 5.

<sup>288</sup> *Westmeath*, 4.

<sup>289</sup>Eg. *The Trial At Large of Sir Matthew White Ridley Bart for Criminal Conversation with the Wife of Mr William Brummell, Surgeon, Before Lord Kenyon at Guildhall, March 4 1793,* (Newcastle: for Joseph Whitfield and Wm Richardson. Price one shilling) 7.

<sup>290</sup>*The Trial of Mr Cooke, Malt Distiller of Stratford for the Crime of Adultery with Mrs Walford wife of Mr Walford,* (London: M.Lewis 1789) 43.

<sup>291</sup> "The Trial of the Rev William Sneyd for seducing, debauching and carrying off the wife of Henry Cecil Esq Before Lord Kenyon in the Court of the King's Bench Westminster, June 26 1790" in *The Cuckolds' Chronicle*.

<sup>292</sup>*Parslow Trial*, 8.

<sup>293</sup>*The Trial at Large of Robert Gordon Esq for Adultery with Mrs Biscoe wife of Joseph Seymour Biscoe, grandson of the late Duke of Somerset. Tried before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury in the sittings after Michaelmas Term,* 1794 (Lond: J. Ridgeway, York St 1794).

<sup>294</sup>*Christie Trial*, 9.

<sup>295</sup>*Cuckold's Chronicle*.

<sup>296</sup>*The Very Interesting and Remarkable Trial of Mrs Elizabeth Hankey Wife of John Hankey, Esq, son of Sir Thomas Hankey Kt) for Adultery with Turner Straubenzee Esq Lieutenant-Colonel of His Majesty's Fifty-second Regiment of Foot,* (London: 1783).

<sup>297</sup>*The Trial of Lydia Sheridan wife of Major Henry Sheridan for Adultery with Francis Newman Esq tried in the Bishop of London's Court, Doctors Commons* (London: 1787).

<sup>298</sup> "The Trial of Mrs Villeneuve for Adultery with Mr Hibbins a married Man Before the Judge of the Consistory Court, 1780" in *Cuckold's Chronicle* Vol. II, 30-42.

<sup>299</sup>*Gentleman's Daughter*, 8.



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- <sup>300</sup> German tourist quoted from Peter Wagner in Binhammer, 424.
- <sup>301</sup> Edith B. Gelles, “Gossip: An Eighteenth-Century Case”, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (Summer, 1989) 667.
- <sup>302</sup> *Engaging the Affections*, 28.
- <sup>303</sup> *Bayntun Trial*, 21-25.
- <sup>304</sup> *Ibid*, 22.
- <sup>305</sup> *The Trial of His R.H. the D. of C. July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1770 for CRIMINAL CONVERSATION with Lady Harriet G-----r*, (London: John Walker, 1770) 60.
- <sup>306</sup> Bayntun, 25.
- <sup>307</sup> *The Triall At Large of the Right Honourable Lady Cadogan for Adultery with the Rev Mr Cooper Before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury in Westminster-Hall. Plaintiff's Counsel Hon Tho Erskine and Mr. Baldwin; Defendant's Counsel Mr Law*, (London: Printed for J. Ridgway, 1794) 45.
- <sup>308</sup> *The Trial of the Hon Mrs Catherine Newton, Wife of John Newton Esquire* (London: G.Lister, 1782).
- <sup>309</sup> *The Trial of John Rose, Groom, for Criminal Conversation with Clara Louisa Middleton, the Wife of William Middleton of Stockeld Park* (London, 1795).
- <sup>310</sup> “The TRIAL OF Elizabeth Levering, Wife of W.Levering of Gun-Street, Spitalfields, Carpenter, for Adultery with Gideon Gichnet, an Apprentice and Journeyman, and Charles Sadler; in the Consistory Court of London in May 1792”, *Cuckold's Chronicle*, 269-273.
- <sup>311</sup> *Errington*, 41.
- <sup>312</sup> David Lockwood against Elizabeth Lockwood Libel 14<sup>th</sup> May 1777 *Trials for Adultery* (376-400).
- <sup>313</sup> Chris Roulston, “Space and Representations of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Advice Literature”. *The Eighteenth Century, Vol 49*, (Texas Tech University Press, 2008) 28.
- <sup>314</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>315</sup> Paechter, (2006).
- <sup>316</sup> Vickery. “Separate Spheres”, 383.
- <sup>317</sup> Lloyd, 437.
- <sup>318</sup> Bayntun, 60.
- <sup>319</sup> Lockwood, 8.
- <sup>320</sup> *The Trial of Lydia Sheridan wife of Major Henry Sheridan for Adultery with Francis Newman Esq tried in the Bishop of London's Court, Doctors Commons* (London: 1787).
- <sup>321</sup> *The Trial of Mrs Elizabeth Williams for Committing Adultery with Joseph Peyton Esq Captain of the Beaver Sloop*, (London: B.Cornwell, G. Lister).
- <sup>322</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 72.
- <sup>323</sup> Kathryn A Shevelov *Women and Print Culture*, (Routledge 1989) 1.
- <sup>324</sup> *Ibid*, 4.
- <sup>325</sup> Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer and Sandra Hebron *Women's Worlds - Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine*, ( London: Macmillan, 1991) 50.
- <sup>326</sup> *A New and Complete Collection of Trials for Adultery or a General History of Gallantry and Divorces...From the Year 1780 to the Middle of the Year 1797*, (London: J.Gill, 1796).
- <sup>327</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, *A Sketch of the Chaste Delights of Conjugal Love and the Impure Pleasures of Adulterous Love Translated from the Apocalypse Explicata, a manuscript of the Posthumous Works* (London: J.Denew, 1789).

*Matrimony is a vessel composed of two equal parts which, when properly united, and compacted together is found to be of infinite use in making the voyage of life. Its two broadsides are affection and circumstances. Some build the vessel square, and say that affection, circumstances, temper and degree are the only points necessary and indeed they must be allowed to be the most essential. Others look upon these as the main point but yet make as many variations as there are in the compass; but I think the number eight are liable to fewest exceptions.<sup>1</sup>*

## Chapter 4

### *Having and Holding - Unpublished*

Having established key features of the public representation of the *role* of married man, I now turn to *performance* of the particular roles of husband and father as exemplified in a range of diary and correspondence material that portrays a detailed and intimate picture of a small number of marriages. These are authentic voices, written to the particular moment. While the numbers considered and the selection method employed lack the rigour required of historical generalisation, they help to illuminate the cultural normativity generated by the published material. Direct comparison is possible between this material and the advice and fictional texts,<sup>2</sup> but a comprehensive framework for analysis would require too much fabrication. The published literature is concerned with the major themes of love, fidelity, authority and status; the private with the minutiae of sex, absence, gossip, shopping, servants, children, death, dependence, business and marital breakdown. They should be seen as complementary aspects of the whole picture. The published material explicates the duties and responsibilities of the *roles* of husband and father; the private, some instances of what it meant historically to *execute* those roles.

Sex is part of that history and this chapter will consider pre-marital relations, honeymoon practices and the way in which intimacy between husbands and wives “marked the most vital relationship they had”.<sup>3</sup> Stone claimed the, “new definition of the old word ‘honeymoon’ [...] as a period during which the newly married couple were expected to go away together and be left totally alone in order to explore each other’s bodies and minds without outside interference”.<sup>4</sup> While the honeymoon represented a definite change from the sixteenth- and seventeenth- century family custom of “putting to bed”, this description ignores the well-established practice of honeymoon companions. Wives took one or more companions to avoid the “total seclusion and dependence on just one person for conversation and occupation”.<sup>5</sup> For men used to male company and outdoor pursuits, a month or more away with their new wife must also have been difficult. We follow one such wedding journey from Lancaster to Cornwall. While men’s talk about sex is muted at best, this chapter includes the forthright views of one woman in correspondence with another about how to accept the inevitability of sexual relations when she is married. The impact on wives and family of husbands’ absence from home, and the effect of marital

breakdown on both the couple and their broader family, are part of the same narrative. Fathers' engagement with young children - which the 'public' writing in Chapter 3 encouraged - is seen in practice, and infant death and its (in most cases) devastating impact on parents produces some of the most anguished correspondence. Family responsibility for the financial affairs of indigent adult children produces some of the most intransigent. There is also evidence of developing consumerism and the role of husbands in managing domestic finances. All these strands are part of the trend towards greater domesticity for men and partnership for couples that characterise the relations between men and women which are at the heart of this thesis. They focus particular attention on the married man and the construction of his evolving masculinity.

What emerges from the private material is inevitably untidier and less certain than the literary representations (although, as Terry Eagleton says of Richardson, even epistolary novels lack the "authorial voice-over" and are thereby "deprived of a meta-narrative [to] guide our reading of the mini-narratives").<sup>6</sup> This is not just because both correspondence and diaries are usually incomplete, one-sided and lack the coherence of authored work, but also because they are dealing with the daily incidents, triumphs and inconveniences of ordinary people's lives. But in revealing the behaviours and feelings of husbands and fathers, both sets of material confirm the hegemonic trend towards a caring, domestically inclined, man of authority providing economic, social and emotional support for a wife and family within the framework of a dynamic patriarchal model. Because of its intimate nature, the unpublished material penetrates the interior of marriages more than the published, and acknowledges these particular husbands as unambiguously committed to the daily security and nurture of a family by whom they, in turn, are supported and nurtured.

Some of the men portrayed here also appeared as suitors in Chapter 2. This chapter, however, adopts a thematic, rather than character-based, approach for two reasons: first the courtship correspondence and other material in chapter 2 is end-focused – marriage is its objective – and capable of being structured narratively, whereas family correspondence has no such constructive homogeneity and covers a wider range of topics. The letters are addressed to a variety of people rather than simply between married couples, and so the audiences and relationships that the correspondence might help to construct, are more diffuse. Too much speculation would be required to construct a convincing linear narrative in any of these cases. For that reason examples will simply illustrate important themes.

Most of the men in the fictional representations – with the exception of Hugh Trevor and his associates – could be classed as gentry of one kind or another. In the seventeen married men discussed in this chapter, it is possible to see the “fine gradations” of social status that Roy Porter believes were essential to the commercial and political development of England in the eighteenth- century. From the junior member of the aristocracy (George Villiers) via the long-standing rural gentry (Vyell Vyvyan, Philip Mayow) and the new (Charles Boughton); the impoverished younger son who married money (Charles Mundy); the indigent soldier (Capt Yeomans); the thrusting Derbyshire manufacturer (Joseph Strutt); and the expatriate trader (Edmund Larkin) to the obscure country professionals (John Andrews and Matthew Flinders), the farmer (John Lovell) and estate worker (Thomas Brocas) – they all appear to have taken the role of husband seriously and to have accepted moral and practical responsibility for their families. Similarly those who appear solely as fathers – Charles Mellish, William Porden, William Sandys, Humphrey Sibthorp, and Paul Treby – demonstrate both affection and authority in relations with their sons and daughters. All lived in the provinces (or in Larkin’s case, abroad) although several had metropolitan connections. Everyone, except Lovell, was in the relatively early years of marriage when they wrote or were written about.

Commentary on the psychological and social consequences of their marital performance must be provisional because, apart from the journals of three men and a young woman, most of the evidence comes from the letters of wives or other family members. The many gaps necessitate some interpretative ambiguity. In only three of the cases (Larkin, Mundy and Strutt) is the correspondence directly between husband and wife; the rest are directed to a third party. Similarly, the diaries, while addressed inwardly and manifestly not intended for publication in any form, are still only a limited record of what the writers recollected or were prepared to admit to themselves. Despite all these caveats, I think it is still possible to construct from this material a vision of how certain late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century men executed the roles of husband and father, and what this contributes to our knowledge of masculine habits and values at this time. In the first section, I consider how some men fulfilled the expectations that came with being a husband; in the second how they performed as fathers; and then briefly the experience of a small number faced with the death of their wife and the challenges of re-marriage.

## *Husband*

The first obstacle for a new husband is the honeymoon and the first night sexual encounter.<sup>7</sup> No material has emerged in my research so far to indicate the feelings of any husband about this key moment of a marriage. It is unlikely that any man would publicly or even in the privacy of his own journal admit to nerves or worries about what would happen after the ceremony when the couple meet within the curtained bed for the first time where the, “most telling test of manhood was of course sexual prowess and performance”<sup>8</sup> within, “transformed attitudes that [had created] a phallogentric and increasingly heterosexual culture.”<sup>9</sup> In most cases it probably would be for the first time: as I suggested in a previous chapter, the extent of pre-marital sexual activity is difficult to quantify and depends on too many factors for generalisation, but the strong social emphasis on female chastity would have constrained many couples, particularly those from more affluent families.<sup>10</sup> However, we do have a woman’s perspective in the correspondence between Lady Plymouth and her friend Fanny Felton and from that can extrapolate some implications for the prospective groom. In 1790 Miss Felton was preparing to marry the businessman, Andrew Knight with whom she had apparently enjoyed no pre-marital sexual relations. Fanny had expressed fears about the wedding, to which her friend sends the hope that “you will look upon the day (or perhaps you will say the Night with less horror”. She continues:

Your ideas upon this subject have certainly weakened your nerves, so believe me the joy of being united to a person you have so high an opinion of & who possesses your heart will make you forget the worst part of the story which your fears have obviously magnified [...] All I can advise you is not to think at all about that “intermediate space” you so much dread.

There had been a suggestion that the work of the lawyers on the marriage settlement details might, “furnish you with an excuse to delay your marriage” but Lady Plymouth recalls her own marriage occurring within three weeks of the lawyers beginning work and urges “ye less time that is allotted for the indulgence of those fears that pervade your imagination the better.” The marriage was postponed for some reason, but a year later arrangements were again nearing completion and she writes once more: “I hope your mind is quite at ease and you do not so much dread the idea of the day. It must to everyone be an awful [sic] one, tho’ not so very tremendous as your imagination has represented it”.<sup>11</sup> How

aware Mr Knight was of Fanny's trepidations is impossible to tell, but in *Pamela*, we have a fictional representation of this moment. On the evening of her wedding to Mr B, Pamela Andrews has similar "fears and Apprehensions" but was "determined to subdue them".<sup>12</sup> And Mr B demonstrated his own awareness by taking notice "in the most delicate manner of my Endeavour to conquer my Foibles", and said, "I see with Pleasure, my dear girl strives to comport herself in a manner suitable to my Wishes." In a further attempt to calm her he, "made me drink two Glasses of Champaign and afterwards a Glass of Sack [...] and as the Time of retiring drew on, he took notice, but in a very delicate manner, how my Colour went and came and how foolishly I trembled".<sup>13</sup>

Lady Plymouth adds an interesting postscript to her first letter, which she demands Fanny will destroy, "for I wd not for all the world it fall into the hands of your father for he would not understand all the little questions from your letters and allusions and he unquestionably wd pronounce me to be a Mad Woman". Is her concern about what any man might feel on discovering that women discuss such matters, or is it a generational issue that a parent's mind is closed to their child's sexuality? It is impossible to say but it is clear from this correspondence that whatever his own unexpressed fears or concerns about the first night might be, the husband has to deal with the terrors his new wife might bring to the marriage bed.

While Mary Hutton Vyell's honeymoon correspondence contains no overt reference to what happens on the first night of her marriage, the six letters she wrote to her mother during the two-week honeymoon journey from her home in Lancaster to her husband's estate in Cornwall, suggest that this couple might have negotiated the first night hurdle with the kind of equanimity Lady Plymouth was urging on Fanny Felton. To marry the daughter of staunch Lancashire Quakers, her husband, Vyell Vyvyan, soldier and heir to his "mentally disengaged" cousin Carew, had overcome both the financial difficulties of an uncertain inheritance and her faith's moral objections to his profession. Her father (Thomas Rawlinson, whose courtship correspondence appeared in chapter 2) had died before she was born but her mother, assisted by her Satterthwaite uncles, scrutinised Vyvyan thoroughly before permitting the marriage. In a long letter following conversations with the uncles he admits "the difference of our religious worship, [...] our opinions may certainly vary but I imagine in no very material point". He explains that his present financial position is much worse than his expectations and reassures the family that he is

unlikely to suffer the “unfortunate malady” which afflicts his cousin, the current baronet because “I am of a different line”. He then deals with “the consequences that might be attendant upon Miss Rawlinson’s marrying a military man & I have most anxiously to lament that my profession should convey anything disagreeable with it. I have never had a particular partiality for the army, indeed nothing but the present urgency of the times cause my continuance [of] it at the same moment cannot warrant my leaving it.[...] To obtain your daughter’s hand no sacrifice could be too great yet in her heart she could not but condemn the man who would quit taking an active party in his Country’s cause at this momentous crisis”.<sup>14</sup>

The couple left Lancaster straight after the wedding on August 14, 1799 and arrived at Knutsford from where Vyvyan wrote immediately to his wife’s mother, Hannah Rawlinson, that “her daughter has endured the fatigue of the journey beyond my warmest hopes”.<sup>15</sup> He explains they had some problem with post-horses and plan to go on to Lichfield, “provided we find ourselves capable of going so far”. He refers to Mary as “my Dearest Wife”, sends his regards to her two Satterthwaite cousins and promises, “Mrs Vyvyan intends writing to you tomorrow”. When she does, she assures her mother that, “you will find a steady & affectionate friend in Mr Vyvyan”.<sup>16</sup> Two days later, writing from Dunchurch, she suggests her mother might be surprised to find they have progressed no further, but she has been fatigued by the journey (a possible euphemism for sleepless nights?) and “Mr V [sic] would not allow us to proceed only by short day’s journeys”.<sup>17</sup> The informality of “Mr V” implies a close relationship is already developing; later in the letter this is reinforced as she hopes to raise her mother’s spirits, “when you know that your child is very happy in possessing the Affection & attentive kindness & tenderness of the Man she loves more dearly than even my beloved mother ever loved”.<sup>18</sup> We cannot tell whether Mary or Vyvyan had read any of the manuals devoted to conjugal love but her phrase “attentive kindness and tenderness” might imply that he had learnt their message that, “women experience pleasure in the sexual act”.<sup>19</sup> This was, “according to the popular texts, not simply vaginal. Great attention was paid to the importance of the clitoris. According to [Aristotle’s] Masterpiece, it was clitoral stimulation that gave ‘delights’ and such knowledge was essential ‘for without this, the fair sex neither desire mutual Embraces nor have pleasure in ‘em, nor conceive by ‘em’”.<sup>20</sup>

The Vyvyans continued their journey south accompanied by Mary’s cousin, Anne Rawlinson, who was, “looking well and not the least fatigued”. Anne was to spend several



of the first months of the marriage in the Vyvyan household. After a few days in London “looking at the sights and shopping” they continued to Exeter where Mr Vyvyan “got a very bad Cold accompanied by a slight degree of fever”.<sup>21</sup> This is the first of several references to his poor health in the early stages of their marriage. In the same letter, she mentions the pain of leaving home but adds “when every day increased my Affection towards him for whom I have left there, I cannot regret the choice I have made”.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, after a “fatiguing journey” across Bodmin Moor they arrive at the Vyvyan’s ancestral home, Trelowarren. “At last I have the pleasure to address you from this charming place which indeed exceeds my expectations greatly and I already feel particularly reconciled to my new habitation”.<sup>23</sup> For any married man, transporting his bride to their new home supposes potential problems, but even more so in this case where he is Cornish gentry whose family have owned the same estate for several hundred years and lived in the house for almost as long, and she of North Country merchant stock and a Quaker. Their letters may have been intended to reassure the widowed Hannah Rawlinson, left alone in her Lancaster house, they also indicate an affectionate relationship established during the honeymoon.

It is difficult to know how true this might be of John Andrews’ and Susannah Rooke’s honeymoon. Like almost everything else in his diary, the entries about his marriage are terse and unrevealing. They suggest that early days of married life lacked the emotional vitality of his previous existence. Possibly, changed status produced even greater taciturnity.<sup>24</sup> On July 9, 1781 he writes: “Being the day of my marriage with Miss Rooke. Set out for Exeter & lodged at the Globe”.<sup>25</sup> Next day: “At Exeter. I drank tea at Mr Kennaways” (without, it appears, the new Mrs Andrews). On the third day of their honeymoon – “In the morning I walked to Bolham. Afterwards I & my Spouse returned home by way of Totnes”. The use of “Spouse” implies a certain discomfort – later she is always referred to as “my wife”. While certain people “came to tea” in the days following, these were not designated ‘official’ wedding visits. The first record of the more formal socialising expected after marriage was not until July 30 when “Mr Laskey paid us a wedding visit” and it would be August 12 before “The first Sunday that I & my wife went to Church. In the Aftn [sic] several of the best in Town honoured us with a visit”. The other event of that day was “Cath Shepheard was dismissed from our service”. Given that, in the three months leading up to his wedding, Andrews made several comments about his emotional state for example: “A very inconsiderate Act which is to be feared may be

attended with disagreeable consequences”<sup>26</sup> and “The Pain continues”,<sup>27</sup> it is possible there was a connection between the two situations. He had been a bachelor of 33 with a turbulent recorded love life and a sexual connection with his servant was quite possible.<sup>28</sup> The diary of Benjamin Smith gives a graphic account of one such situation.<sup>29</sup>

It is almost impossible to find evidence of the sexual thoughts and feelings of married couples at this period, or the nature and frequency of their sexual relations.<sup>30</sup> With the rare exception such as Edmund Harrold, the Manchester wig-maker who at the beginning of the century carefully recorded the times when he “did wife” and whether it was in “the old fashioned way” or “the new fashioned way”,<sup>31</sup> neither men nor women tended to keep records of this most intimate aspect of their married lives.<sup>32</sup> In this context, Lady Plymouth’s and Lady Vyvyan’s only slightly veiled enthusiasm for their husbands might be construed to contradict Edward Shorter’s claim that “the dangers and diseases that inevitably accompanied parturition were so great that women in past times must have loathed and feared sex”.<sup>33</sup>

Some degree of sexual intimacy between the couples is, of course, confirmed by the frequency of pregnancies mentioned in both correspondence and diaries. The numbers recorded within in the first twelve months of marriage indicate that conception occurred soon after the wedding. For these couples, the gaps between births seem, in most cases, to have been shorter than the national mean interval of just over 30 months.<sup>34</sup> Most of the husbands carefully documented the regular arrival of live or dead babies in their correspondence or diaries. George Villiers, for instance wrote enthusiastically to his wife’s aunt:

We have been in great anxiety for 23 hours but thank God a remarkable fine female child was safe in the world this morning at 2 o’clock and my Dearest wife as well in every respect as the most sanguine could wish.<sup>35</sup>

Matthew Flinders recorded a very similar period of anxiety: “About 2 in the morn my wife was delivered of a fine girl, and both I thank God are doing very well: the labour was rather difficult, but by suddenly turning over an immediately good alteration ensued and the delivery was quickly accomplished”.<sup>36</sup> John Andrews merely wrote: “About a quarter after four this afternoon my wife was safely delivered of a Girl”.<sup>37</sup> Similar correspondence or diary entries were to be repeated at regular intervals over the years of marriage. There is no evidence of these husbands attending the births although Fletcher suggests that: “It became usual in the nineteenth century, as it had not been earlier, for father to be present

to give support to their wives in labour and share in the happiness of birth”.<sup>38</sup> With the exception of Flinders, all fathers welcomed the arrival of children, and, unsurprisingly at this stage of the marriages, there is no mention of contraception or fertility control. Despite his claim that “writers of tracts on onanism and producers of condoms in effect launched the ‘commercialization’ of contraception,” Angus McLaren says little about the level of awareness of contraceptive methods.<sup>39</sup> He suggests, though, that men, “did not necessarily take the initiative in employing the withdrawal method” and “some men were cajoled by their wives into employing coitus interruptus.” “Sponges and tampons were more obvious female contraceptives”. “The condom, ironically, played little role in the decline of fertility [and] was mainly used to avoid venereal disease”.<sup>40</sup> Abortion was another form of fertility control.<sup>41</sup>

The anxiety evident in letters from new fathers conveys some of the difficulties and dangers attending birth. Despite this, Lady Plymouth, encouraged Fanny Felton:

keep up your spirits and do not fancy that it is a worse job than it is. I will not say it is unattended with pain but I can with truth assure you that that being over, nothing can equal the joy one feels at having performed so great a wonder [...]

She describes her own experience:

I was brought to bed the 12<sup>th</sup> of last month, had a very good tho’ sharp time. I was ailing from Friday till Sunday but not in hard labour above two hours and a half when to my unspeakable joy the little man made his entree into the world. He is a prodigious child.<sup>42</sup>

The preservation of children, both in childbirth and later, was increasingly medicalised through the century.<sup>43</sup> Adriana Benzaquien argues that this “constitute[d] an attempt to bring the whole domain of infant and child care under the purview of medicine, and in so doing to claim that the doctor’s role and responsibility was not just to diagnose and treat the diseases of childhood but to guide the treatment of *all* infants and children”.<sup>44</sup>

Proliferation in the practice of man-midwifery was part of this process. There is no mention of man-midwives in any of the private material, but Theresa Villiers refers to “my little doctor” who “threatens me that it [the birth] will not happen until the middle of February”. Charles Villiers’ exhibits fatherly apprehension. He “is so persuaded every night that it must happen before morning that he was not satisfied till he got the little man to sleep in the House”.<sup>45</sup>

Matthew Flinders, being a surgeon and man-midwife, was the expert on child-birth. His diary illustrates important details of the reproductive aspects of marriage and the challenge to men as well as women in the frequent production of children and the expense involved in maintaining them. When two daughters were still-born he honestly acknowledged “the unmerited goodness of the Supreme [sic]” for freeing him from the expense of further children<sup>46</sup> and, similarly, when his wife was delivered of dead sons: “I must not omit my humble gratitude to Divine Mercy for sparing my partner thro’ these perilous times and also at the same time for not burthening me with the additional care of more children”.<sup>47</sup> But, as Fletcher has pointed out, the death of a child is generally the occasion for an “outpouring of emotion”<sup>48</sup> for which “parents had little choice but to draw deep on their stoical reserves and attempt to submit like proper Christians”.<sup>49</sup> The combination of emotion and stoicism is apparent in George Villiers’ response to an invitation from his wife’s aunt, to convalesce at her house from the death of their daughter:

Dear Mrs Robinson, Your note was extremely kind and the proposition it contained so practicably & judiciously made that had we not found ourselves somewhat more composed this evening I believe we should have gladly fled to yr protection. I have been so entirely overcome myself, as indeed only to be careful in making her exert herself from her natural goodness of heart, out of consideration for me. By the assistance of medicine & being entirely by ourselves the first torment of grief is rather checked, but the dread we have of seeing those we know to be capable of sympathizing with us is scarce to be credited. However, in two or three days, these feelings may subside & the first moment we are able we shall immediately endeavour to obtain an interview with you, our best & sincerest friends. Pray do not mention the subject to either of us when we meet.<sup>50</sup>

John Andrews’s second daughter was born as the result of “(God be thanked) a very short and easy labour”<sup>51</sup> but died before her first birthday and he was clearly distressed. On May 31, 1784 he wrote: “My dear little daughter Ann died in the hooping cough about one this morning but was not observed to be dead until, three, being supposed at first to be asleep”. Next day he wrote: “At home, very melancholy” and on June 2 “Poor Nancy was buried about 9 in the morning in Modbury Churchyard”.

As well as the dangers of child mortality, particularly in the post-puerperal period, pregnancy and child-birth were, of course, dangerous for the mother, and three of the wives in this survey (Mrs Andrews, Flinders and Strutt) died as a result.<sup>52</sup> There was extensive writing on the subject by, among others, midwives

such as Mrs Wright<sup>53</sup> and Martha Mears.<sup>54</sup> Mrs Wright's aim was "to convey to my amiable countrywomen some hints or instructions how to preserve themselves in pregnancy from evils that often torment or destroy them".<sup>55</sup> Mrs Mears was keen to promote mental health in the pregnant state when "the fancy and the passions are so frequently exercised, and when the health of the mother [...] depend[s] so much on their powerful effects".<sup>56</sup> As a man-midwife, Matthew Flinders recorded with professional diligence what happened to his own wife following the birth of their son Samuel who, years later, was to follow his brother Matthew, the explorer and cartographer, into the navy:

Sund Nov 3 about 8 in the morning my wife was safely delivered of a fine boy whom we have called Samuel. I thank God she had a good labour but had been very poorly a long time; had an Ague a great part of her Pregnancy and lost flesh a good deal. This has been a fatal lying in & it was 6 weeks before she got downstairs at Xmas when the nurse left us. After being down until Xmas day she was forced to her room again, and I am at this time in the utmost distress for her safety {deprived of her reason}. Some days she is very well and capable of doing her business but on others in a most unhappy way indeed. I have taken notes of the case and upon the whole it is the most extraordinary I ever met with, at sometimes I have the greatest hopes of her recovery at others I am depressed to the lowest despair. At this time I am in the greatest uncertainty about it.<sup>57</sup>

She continued in this uncertain state until March. Flinders was on his surgery rounds when the "fatal messenger came in the afternoon that she died that morning". "My distress," he added, "may be better conceived than wrote at losing the dearest and most val [sic] friend I had on Earth." Her loss was a serious blow to him and he confided to his diary: "my situation is truly deplorable and unhappy on my own account of my comfort being gone but doubly so on account of my 5 children, two very small [...] my tears are plentifully shed each day [...] this world has now no charms left to me – there appears nothing for me but cares & troubles".<sup>58</sup>

The death of John Andrews' wife was similarly afflicting. He described her demise, which followed almost immediately after the delivery of a still born son, in more than his usual detail: "My wife's illness increased", he wrote, "seemed to abate in the afternoon but returned in the evening & after a most woeful night and with 3 hours Torture in the agonies of Death the poor creature expired about 10 minutes after six this morning."<sup>59</sup>

Three days later “my dear wife” was buried next to his father “a little after Eight in the evening”. He continued the diary to the end of the year but no more are known to exist.

No record survives of Joseph Strutt’s response to his wife’s early death in 1802. Her physical and mental health was a principal theme of her letters throughout their married life. “I am tormented with many apprehensions & my rest is disturbed by frightful dreams” she wrote, and, in a series of letters, to Strutt in London she twice referred to “my head and my mind” and that she was “so faint & poorly for several hours I could hardly hold the pen”. She also told her brother that she was frequently debilitated by “headaches since confinement”.<sup>60</sup> A wife’s poor health consequent on regular pregnancies and labours must have had implications for husbands’ personal and social lives. No reaction to his wife’s death is preserved in the Strutt archive but sympathy letters from his two sisters-in-law indicate that infection, which also affected him and their sons, had been the cause.

Once mother and child have survived the rigours of parturition, an immediate decision must be made about the controversial issue of breast-feeding versus wet nursing.<sup>61</sup> Both Theresa Villiers and Lady Plymouth believed in the importance of feeding their own babies. The latter advised Fanny Felton:

I am by experience so fully convinced that nature knows so much better what is proper for us than we do ourselves that without some especial reason against it, I shall if ever I have more children, always perform this desirable office myself & advise you by all means to nurse. It requires a little courage for ye first fortnight or 3 weeks [...] yet it prevents many evils the least of wh[ich] are by far of more consequence than ye former inconvenience wh[ich] is by no means the lot of everyone. I have surmounted these difficulties and am going on very well.<sup>62</sup>

Theresa Villiers’ ideas about baby management were fully supported by her husband. Before her child was born, Theresa told her aunt that she would not let “the little thing be away from me for many hours out of the twenty four, at least until it is weaned” and then revealed her husband’s proposal to “to have it in our room all night which is much better for it than trusting to the nurse who may well not be disposed to get up in a cold night”. This is something “I should not ever have thought of asking for, however much I might have wished it”. This “new man” attitude from Villiers challenges the model of paternal distance from everything to do with child-birth and early upbringing.<sup>63</sup> To what extent his attitude created circumstances in which “Mrs Chapman the nurse has

behaved infamously by going away without any previous notice whatsoever” cannot be judged.

I now turn to some other issues affecting husbands and wives and will return to childhood issues in the section on Fathers. For many wives, their husband’s absence from home on business was a cause of dissension, unhappiness and even, as we saw in chapter 3, adultery. All the husbands considered here spent some time away from home and their wives’ responses illustrate ‘public’ aspects of the matrimonial relationship in which the wife assumes some of her husband’s responsibilities. Edmund Larkin’s was the most extreme example of husbandly absence in the families studied here. He had gone to China as a tea trader with the specific aim of accumulating funds so that they could “enjoy the remainder of our lives together happy and comfortable” and he assured his wife that “we shall have the means to live independent of the world tho’ not luxuriously”.<sup>64</sup> Mrs Larkin extended her independence and their relationship enjoyed the same “permeable gendered boundaries” as Benjamin and Deborah Franklin where the husband’s absence obliged her to undertake ‘masculine’ responsibilities.<sup>65</sup> She wrote with pride about going alone to Yorkshire – “a long way to travel without a Gentleman”. When a business colleague in London refused to honour a money bill Larkin had issued in China, Ann Larkin wrote to him about the “great disgrace” of his failure. She justified the action to her husband: “I know you have an objection to women interfering in money concerns but in this case I think I should be excused”.<sup>66</sup> In his reply, Larkin writes: “the letter you wrote Mr A on that business was extremely proper my love and shows the goodness of your heart and the interest you take in my happiness”.<sup>67</sup>

The trust between the Larkins and the way Ann penetrated her husband’s business and personal life is further demonstrated by their discussion of his return from China. By February 1806 he was contemplating the possibility of staying longer in China, or coming home on leave and then returning to accumulate more money. Ann, though, “cannot bear the thought of parting with you once I shall be blessed enough to have you with me again”, and is adamant that “should you not, my dearest Love, make as large a Fortune as you wish we can live accordingly”.<sup>68</sup> She also has a plan for them to buy a house outside London “so that you can go up of a morning and come down every day to a late Dinner which I am sure will be much more comfortable and better for ourselves and the children [...] than living in London”.<sup>69</sup> Either she is not wholly secure in making this suggestion, or she is using a Stanhopian<sup>70</sup> strategy to ensure she gets her own way, because she adds: “if it is

your wish that we should [live in London] I will submit, for I am certain my dearest love that you know so much better than I the best plan to pursue". Although he does not respond to this proposal, Larkin displays considerable confidence in her discretion when he admits her to a subterfuge he intends to use to keep open his options with the East Indies Company. "This between ourselves my Love".<sup>71</sup> He involves her even more when he considers using ill health as his reason for coming home: "You must say to our friends that you expect me home by the first ships from China".<sup>72</sup> This level of mutual confidence is also seen in her chastisement of him for playing cards on a Sunday (which he excuses on the grounds that his Chinese fellow-players don't know about Sunday). She adds "I must earnestly beg that you will forgive my having said so much".<sup>73</sup> With these small expressions of diffidence she seems to be testing some of the boundaries of mutuality and both going towards and pulling back from the shift to a more equal form of partnership,

Another couple demonstrating mutual interest and a wife's involvement in her husband's business are the Mayows of Cornwall. In the period around Christmas 1770, they were in London where Mr Mayow was negotiating borough status for his home town of Saltash, near Plymouth. The negotiations were protracted and in letters to her children, Mrs Mayow expresses some of his frustration: "we both very much want to be at home and your Father assures me he will never come to London again".<sup>74</sup> Previously, though, she had been pleased at their being in London together: "I am very happy here in having your Father's company who is so kind as never to eat a meal from me, and constantly goes wherever I go of an afternoon, indeed I never had so much of his company in London before and we are both very well and in good spirits".<sup>75</sup> On three separate occasions she writes of her disappointment that their return has been delayed and on December 27 suggests "we will begin our Christmas this year according to the Old Style".<sup>76</sup> From Mrs Mayow's letters we sense the difficulties for a provincial man trying to penetrate London bureaucracy in the interests of his fellow citizens. But, more significantly, we can appreciate the importance to him of their joint sojourn, and how her presence eases his frustration. This is a marriage of partnership, if not equality.

It is difficult to say the same about the Strutts. Isabella Strutt's response to her husband's several absences in London was increasing, almost hysterical, dependence. Throughout their courtship, his failure to respond to letters or make promised visits had been a source of discord. She challenged him: "surely you can sometimes steal a few moments to convince me I am not forgotten".<sup>77</sup> Once married, however, his absence



reveals the depth of her emotional dependence. "I hope a few days will again restore me to the beloved object on whom all my happiness depends," she writes in October 1794.<sup>78</sup> By 1800, when the preserved record resumes, she has become more resigned to his absences: "I will not trouble you with useless repining as I flatter myself you will render this cruel separation if possible less frequent than it has lately been from the same cause".<sup>79</sup> By that time, at least some of their separation is the result of her holidaying without him. She is at Scarborough when she tells him "it is reported the Prince of Wales is to come during the season [and] Mrs Siddons will certainly be here with the opening of the theatre".<sup>80</sup> Her final, preserved, letter is from St Anne's Hotel in Buxton where she would be anxious "until I hear of your & my boys' safe arrival at home. The Manchester Mail being overturned has made me dwell on the dark side".<sup>81</sup> Weeks later she was dead.

The complaints of Mrs Lovell, Wiltshire farmer's wife, about her husband's frequent absence are sometimes on emotional grounds - "it is very maloncoly [sic] when you are ill"<sup>82</sup> - but more often practical. She is obliged to act in his stead. When they married, he acquired her family's farm at Cole Park, Malmesbury but retained his own at Axbridge. During the period of her correspondence with their sons at Oxford he spends time at Axbridge and on business in Bath and elsewhere. When, as she tells the boys, the house is taken over by "the same troop of workmen as ever, someone should always be with them. I am forced to be somebody and set up and order what I do not really understand".<sup>83</sup> Similarly, she is confronted with the problem of poachers killing hares; "Your father not being at home I could do nothing but they ought to be informd [sic] against and made to pay 5 pounds for each hare".<sup>84</sup> There is no correspondence between the couple so Mr Lovell's response to her grumbling is not available.

Charles Mundy made one of his absences, early in the marriage, the excuse for a romantic effusion:

I conclude you are now going to bed as it is nearly eleven I am going to bed also, as I am not with you my dear one it is some satisfaction to think we are employed in the same way, I shall shortly be putting up my prayers to heaven for my dear wife and unborn infant, how delightful is it to reflect that she is at the time supplicating for me and the same dear pledge of our pure affections! May God of Heaven protect and guard thee my most dear wife and grant thee quiet and refreshing sleep!<sup>85</sup>

Later, he would be less affectionate to her. Her protests about his self-pitying reaction to what he ought to have considered good fortune prompted a pessimistically honest

response from him. When, as the younger son of minor gentry, he married Harriet Massingberd and acquired her estate at Ormesby, Lincolnshire, he must have imagined that he had fulfilled the expected ambition of any man in his position. But with property came responsibility for managing something much bigger than the small estate he had been left by an uncle.<sup>86</sup> This proved too much for him and his letters from Cheltenham are full of the wish that “I could have any prospect of quiet & tranquillity of mind when I return. I am quite certain my health depends on it. I might, I think, add, the very continuance of my life”.<sup>87</sup> Although we do not have the letter, Harriet obviously chastised his defeatist attitude which he then attempted to justify on the grounds that their upbringings have been so different she cannot understand:

Great is the difference, my dearly beloved wife, betwixt you and me. Your life before our (in my mind blessed union) was passed without having the care or anxiety or providing anything. Although frequently teased and tormented by others, you had not as I have throughout my whole life had the necessity of providing for yourself, of keeping up a suitable appearance without the means of doing it. You never knew what it was to go without a farthing in your pocket, to feel the alternative of going without food or [...] into a house where you could run up a Bill which at last became too heavy for you to pay & which gain'd you the character of extravagance. You never knew what it was to see a wretched object in the street and while your heart bled for them to feel you had not the means of affording any relief. Nor did you feel the dreadful reflexion that you might (not improbably) grow old in poverty. All this my Harriett has been my lot. No wonder then if (when my constitution was shattered & my mind worn by the above causes & by the cruel mortifications I met with during the first years of our marriage) I wished on arriving at this situation of affluence I had been looking to enjoy a year or two of that peace & relaxation of mind I had never felt.<sup>88</sup>

Mundy's appeal for sympathy demonstrates a tendency at odds with the more 'masculine' prevailing mode, but may illuminate Roper and Tosh's suggestion that “Men are too easily seen as having a natural and undifferentiated proclivity for domination, because their subjective experiences are left unexplored.”<sup>89</sup> Mundy's 'subjective experience' (which includes not merely the fact of his feeling inadequate, but his willingness to reveal it) shows how a man of conventional exterior may suffer interior torment. There is little in the Mundy's correspondence to suggest that he considered himself the dominant partner in the relationship. In this letter, he appears to expose the extent of his dependence on Harriett's good opinion.<sup>90</sup> But theirs is a more complex relationship: he displays the personality traits of the passive-aggressive type for whom an apparent admission of weakness can also be a

strategy of psychological dominance. By deflecting her criticism with the challenges of life before marriage and the thwarted charitable intentions of a ‘man of feeling’, he exploits a subtle version of male supremacy that relies more on sentiment than authority. His ostensible incapacity becomes, instead, a challenge to his wife’s superiority.

John Franklin attempted to maintain the convention of “dominant husband”, particularly about matters of religion, after his marriage to Eleanor Porden, but was firmly resisted. She complained about the lack of “openness and confidence” between them. “You seem to think me unworthy of it, and I feel you are unjust”.<sup>91</sup> She remains anxious, as she had been during their courtship, about their opposing attitudes to religion, particularly the appropriate conduct for a Sunday. “Last year,” she complains, “you would have spent it like an Anchorite [but] if I have read my Bible right, God blessed the seventh day. The present fashion seems to be to rob it of every innocent recreation and to return to the Puritanism of the Commonwealth.” She is adamant: “I cannot agree with you” and, crucially, “I could not teach a child to do so.” She believes that: “on some points of this subject you seemed to be guided by an impulse foreign to your general nature – as fierce as it was unnatural – and seeming to be engrafted rather than natural.” She had once ascribed this to the influence of “Dr Richardson’s church” but no longer. She is, though concerned that “Mild as you usually are, your looks and voice have actually terrified me, and the first time left an impression that I cannot recover”. She dreads “weakening in your mind one feeling of genuine piety, one habit which was acceptable with God” but feels he has treated her unjustly and “cannot be easy until you do.” The letter is signed “Ever your Affectionate Wife, Eleanor Anne Franklin”.<sup>92</sup> Frustratingly, Franklin’s response to the accusations is not preserved, but the tone of their later correspondence suggests he recognised some truth in these charges. In these exchanges, as in some of the earlier ones, we see a struggle for supremacy over an issue critical to their relationship and, more particularly, to their views of the world. Her anxiety not to undermine his religious feelings while at the same time making hers clear, reveals further attitudinal complexity in their relationship. She seems to want to make him understand that, as an independent woman she is able to challenge him in specific ways, but not to challenge his authority overall,

In chapter 3, I mentioned the husband’s role in what Naomi Tadmor called “The Household Family”. Another aspect of that role which some husbands were obliged to fill – moral and practical support for friends and neighbours - can be found in the Boughton-Rous correspondence. Like Charles Mundy, Boughton was a younger son and married

Catherine Hall, at least in part, to acquire a country estate suitable to his political ambitions. As we saw in Chapter 2, it involved him in some expense and responsibility for his father-in-law's debts.<sup>93</sup> The older man became dependent on him for advice as well as money, and this continued for some time after the marriage. There are several more examples of other people's reliance on Boughton in times of personal or social difficulty. Although not the oldest son (hence the need to acquire Downton Hall while his unmarried older brother, Edward, kept the family estate) he seems to have taken over the head of family role where his sister Anne and her difficulties are concerned. Against the wishes of her family, Anne had married Capt Rutherford, a gambler and ne'er-do-well who was killed when he fell from his horse in Liege.<sup>94</sup> She is penniless, having "parted with every article of my dress, ornaments etc" in order "to accomplish the removal of my dearest Husband's remains to England".<sup>95</sup> She appeals to her family for funds on several occasions and Boughton obviously supplies them despite the "cruel insinuation expressed in Lady Templetown's [her sister] late letter". She had criticised Ann as wasteful and importunate. The saga of Ann's debts and Boughton's response continued for several years, without apparent complaint from him.

He also supported his relative, Sir Egerton Leigh, when the latter's daughter Theodosia eloped with a Mr Ward of Brownsover. Leigh thanks him for honouring "me with permission to make you upon this trying occasion my confidential friend",<sup>96</sup> and encloses two letters from the daughter and a lawyer acting for Mr Ward. Leigh fears that Ward, assisted by an unhelpful father and an unscrupulous lawyer, is trying to acquire Theodosia's property. He, therefore, proposes to make her a ward of chancery. Boughton takes a more conciliatory attitude, suggesting in a pencilled draft of his reply that "Both herself and John Ward feel hurt at the Father's duplicity for there undoubtedly wants that manly openness which ought to be characteristic of a Father".<sup>97</sup> Egerton Leigh asks whether he should suggest to the couple that they, "see a confidential friend about the business" and that Boughton might be that friend.

He would have undertaken that role. What is not recorded is his reaction to his own daughter's leaving her husband. Caroline Rous had been married to Henry Johnson for about ten years when she left home some time in 1820. When her husband writes to his father-in-law much of the letter is about the stipulations of the marriage settlement and what he might need to repay but then he makes his position very clear:

I would not allow her on any account to draw on my bankers or on any person in my name or to issue any bills without my consent. She is welcome to continue absent from Lutterworth for as long as she please; I will take care not to do anything contrary to Law, but whenever she does return, I shall be obliged to put her under bodily restraint, as I have already without effect tried many other means to induce her to submit to the Authority of her husband.<sup>98</sup>

Legally, Johnson was entitled to threaten bodily restraint, but as we saw in the pronouncements of Judge Kenyon and Sir William Scott there were significant signs of change in the practice of the law.

A more contentious example of parental involvement in adult children's financial and marital affairs is demonstrated in the 58 letters between Randolph Marriott, his daughter, Ann, and various family members and creditors of his son-in-law, Capt John Yeomans. This story highlights the fragile financial status of some middle-class men and the efforts parents are obliged to make to ensure their survival. In August 1798, Randolph Marriott wrote to Yeomans's father about the attachment between the captain and his daughter. A Marriott grandmother was willing to make a settlement but will Yeomans senior add to it? The reply is frosty: "the conduct of my son has been so uniformly imprudent & so highly offensive to me, that he has nothing to expect from me".<sup>99</sup> The captain expects money from recruitment of soldiers but it is not forthcoming, and he disappears to the north of England, avoiding creditors. Ann finally catches up with him in Leith, Scotland. He has suffered a stroke and his left arm and leg are paralysed. This prompts the first of several pleading letters from Ann to her father. "The doctor has frequently said he can do nothing for Capt Yeomans and thought he would be better amongst his friends who might prevail upon him to leave off drinking".<sup>100</sup> The following month, "Capt Yeomans writes with me in thanks for the £40" and wonders if they could have their allowance quarterly – "there would be exactly £75 which would be a very handsome sum." Ann is "quite shocked [...] there was so much owing at Whitby as Capt Y told me of all he could recollect." We then learn that "Capt & Mrs Y are now living at a great expense. They pay a Guinea and a half per week for their lodgings 2 shillings a pd for mutton, 2 shillings a pd for butter & every other article in proportion".<sup>101</sup> One of their creditors suggests Mrs Yeomans "might have power over the interest of her own fortune" but her mother corrects him; "you are under a great error as she has not a power over sixpence during her Husband's life".<sup>102</sup> Under *couverture*, Yeomans owns all her property.

The following May, Yeomans has taken more than he should of his £100 annuity but “promised he would write and give his reason.” There is no sign of it and the next letter is from Ann:

My Dear Father, I am really extremely sorry to be under the disagreeable necessity of requesting you to lend us a few pounds but assure you I would not have wrote had we not been reduced to our last half Guinea, and I am fearful of vexing my grandmother by writing for money as she was so good as send me ten pounds some time ago. It is a most unlucky affair.

A different kind of survival is portrayed in the tyrannical reaction to marital breakdown that emerges in the story of Lord Plymouth’s sister Lady Ann who had been three years married to the Rev Sir Thomas Broughton of Doddington Hall, Staffordshire. A letter from Lady Plymouth to Fanny Felton explains that she “received a very shocking letter from poor Ly Ann (with one from Sir Thos to her inclosed in it) where he accused her of injuring his Children & a thousand other false aspersions & propos’d & indeed insisted on an immediate separation”.<sup>103</sup> The Plymouths were in Margate at the time but “P set out immediately” for Doddington and after discussions with the couple thought he had effected a reconciliation, only for his wife to receive another letter two weeks later with “such an account of Sir Thos’s barbarous and infamous usage of her as I never heard of any villain”. Both Plymouths drove north this time and “after much deliberation & maturely weighing of the step and hearing what each side to alledge [sic] P assented to Sir Thos’s proposal and next morning early she left Doddn with us”. The journey from Margate to Doddington and back to their home in London covered 500 miles – “the fatigue of which was nothing compared to the agitation of mind this has and will still, occasion”.<sup>104</sup>

This degree of intervention, even by a brother, in a husband’s legal right to manage his wife and their affairs in whatever way he thought appropriate carried social and legal penalties, and Lady Plymouth worries that they are being blamed for causing the quarrel, although she hopes “the world is too discerning and just not to be convinced of the pains & trouble P repeatedly took to reconcile them.” In any event, Sir Thomas had followed them to town and is “taking steps to compel her to return” and “we are now in daily dread of the legal notice not to detain his wife”. Despite this, Lady Plymouth seems determined to stop Lady Ann returning. “He is really a disgrace to Humanity” and he had told his wife

“I wish to God I could catch you in bed with any man that I might have a plausible excuse to get rid of you”.<sup>105</sup> Her offense appears to be exceeding her annual allowance “which was, I assure you, spent amongst his children and tho’ an indiscreet liberality yet not an unpardonable error”.<sup>106</sup> The story continues into 1791 when Sir Thomas orders Lady Ann “to return immediately to his house having absconded without his consent and to refuse at her Peril, as he wd advertise [sic] her in all the papers & caution tradesmen not to trust her as he will not be answerable for her debts.<sup>107</sup> “Ye letter contained a most insolent notice not to detain or harbour his Wife as he w[oul]d commence a prosecution immediately.” Lady Ann then takes a house of her own “& is going directly to live in it, as we find he is liable to all ye debts she incurs till he does advertise which I think he never will be foolhardy enough to do”.<sup>108</sup> She hopes that when Sir Thomas realises his wife is determined not to return he will offer some maintenance. “She says she had rather consent to be hang’d than return but I am willing not to give way to despair & hope that something may yet be extorted for her support”. Although the final outcome is not clear the couple seem to be back under the same roof in June because Lady Plymouth writes to warn Fanny Felton that she has been “been misinformed with regard to Ly Ann & Sir Thos. Him & his take great pains to circulate reports that they are going on well together but we know they are infinitely worse than ever. I hope you will call there and find out something if you can, for she is debarred from writing to us”.<sup>109</sup>

This is a very dramatic and, from the third party correspondence, confusing story of a broken marriage. In exercising a legal right to control his wife’s future, Sir Thomas is performing the traditional role but one which as I suggested in Chapter 3, some men in similar situations were forfeiting for the pragmatic practices of couples masking their differences by privately agreed separations. Sir Thomas’s class, his sense of public honour and, perhaps, the money Lady Ann may have brought him are the most likely explanations of his persistence.<sup>110</sup>

Even without Lady Ann’s letters to her sister-in-law, their marital problems would not have gone unnoticed: the servants in their household would have known and had their opinions. As we saw in the section on adultery, servants were the constant observers, and sometimes, relaters of their employers’ behaviour. Employers’ behaviour would be observed and commented on, sometimes, as in the case of Thomas Brocas, to the privacy of his own journal but also more publicly. Brocas, later to become a leading merchant in Shrewsbury and a stalwart of the Methodist church, began his extensive journals while

working on an estate where he was appalled by the “unlawful, shamefull goings on of M\_ \_ \_ \_ {Master} and the D\_ \_ \_ \_ M\_ \_ \_ \_ {Dairy Maid}”.<sup>111</sup> Part of Brocas’s complaint is “how she vaunted over me, and what a pride she took in her wickedness [which] was too shocking to me to be exprest”.<sup>112</sup> However, his prayers are answered when it is realised she is “six, seven or even eight months gone with child” and she is married off to a young farmer “who had the sad misfortune to love this shameless pritty woman”. The following year he is glad not to have seen “such unlawful, shamefull goings on as usual, tho I understand the same vile Practice has been carried on in town with another W\_ \_ \_ \_ ” a situation he cannot understand because “has he not one of the greatest Beauties for a wife but [his lover is] as ill shapt, forbidding woman as ever dwelt in this family”.<sup>113</sup>

Matthew Flinders makes numerous references to the problem of employing servants. In May 1775 he replaced their maid “because my wife thought her wages too high”.<sup>114</sup> A year later he got rid of his servant, Thos Barton “who has lived with me two years, he growing careless saucy & ill behaved”.<sup>115</sup> Flinders’ servants were usually changed on an annual basis but then in 1785, “we have determined on parting with our Servant Mary Leak for obvious reasons”.<sup>116</sup> Another servant left to be married but by Jan 1791, Flinders was admitting that “we do not like new people around us if we are well or thereabouts”. The employment of male servants had been affected in all households by the imposition of a new tax in 1777 and by a rate increase in 1785.<sup>117</sup> Flinders noted “with pleasure that Mr Shilcock the assessor tells me that such servants as mine who are instrumental towards their Master’s business are exempt from the late new heavy Tax on male servants”.<sup>118</sup>

Commentary on the behaviour of errant husbands is not restricted to servants. Some of the correspondents discussed here wrote with superiority, and in some cases, perhaps, vicarious enthusiasm, on scandalous events in their neighbourhood. Isabel Strutt, for instance, told her brother of the “great disturbance” caused in the neighbourhood by Mr. Lowe’s seduction of his steward’s daughter while she was “in his own house and under the protection of his wife” which led to him being “very much blamed” and “the gentlemen of the neighbourhood have refused to visit him & he has left with his family & gone to reside at a place he has taken near Stamford”.<sup>119</sup> In a self-righteous letter to her husband she reports the elopement of Mrs Biscoe who “left her indulgent husband and lovely daughter to live in infamy with her seducer who has promised to marry her as soon as the divorce is obtained, but I should imagine he will be tired long e’er that & that she



will be left to bewail the sad effects of her folly & ingratitude”.<sup>120</sup> The Parker family letters contain frequent references to elopements and separations. For instance “that Lady Caroline Mackensie has gone off with the Comte de Milfont, her Cuzins Husband”<sup>121</sup> or “Lord Abercorn and Ly Sarah Villiers [...] I think the poor girl, who looks as good as she is pretty, can never like it, indeed I rather hope they will not now get Divorced”.<sup>122</sup>

Men’s relation to the home included the “economic unit” and many husbands managed, or at least had oversight of, household accounts. Harvey has argued that “for contemporaries, ‘housekeeping’ undertaken by men was understood as management – ‘œconomy’ – taking place at a global level”.<sup>123</sup> But other writers suggest that developing consumerism generated a more intimate connection for husbands. Margot Finn’s work on four diaries contradicts the general assumption that “the ‘sex of things’ is predominantly female” and Amanda Vickery devotes a chapter of her latest work to the different consumption practices of men and women.<sup>124</sup> One of these, Mr Ardennes, in mid-century, paid, “odd job men, the blacksmith, gunsmith, saddler, cobbler, linen draper, haberdasher, glover and his tailor”<sup>125</sup> – all ‘masculine’ purchases. The material considered here complements the general conclusions of Finn’s and Vickery’s work about husband’s more direct involvement in the management of household funds. Joseph Strutt, for instance, who spent several days in London just before he married Isabella Douglas purchasing goods for their new home, continued the practice once they were married, on one occasion producing criticism from Isabella about a kettle he has bought: “I think it is a great deal of money for an old fashioned thing & that we might have had an Epergne or something else for the money that would be more useful & elegant.” Matthew Flinders’ meticulous accounts show that all bills for the household as well as the business passed through his hands. The extent to which he was aware of or involved in specific purchases is impossible to tell, except for his regular deliveries from the bookseller and the detailed “Expences of the Repairs & Improvements of my house in 1778”. However, there are weekly entries for “Housebill” which varied from as little as 12s 5½ d to £1 3s 10d and occasional records of payments “to my wife”, for instance, £1 17s in March 1776 and £2 2s in August 1780.<sup>126</sup> There is no indication of the purpose of these payments but, as Flinders seems to be meeting all regular expenses, they might be for clothes or other personal items. Edmund Larkin ensured regular payments were made to Mrs Larkin during his absence but there is no suggestion in the correspondence that she should account for them in any way.

For all the husbands in this survey, the management of money and property is an important part of their role. Vyell Vyvyan's letters to his mother-in-law, Hannah Rawlinson, are all about business and the sale of a property he owned in the north. Teresa Villiers explains her husbands' problems in meeting new tax demands:

As our joint income is not quite £1000 we cd not be obliged to pay quite £100 but that even wld be attended with the aforementioned distress of not keeping a carriage, which in my humble opinion is of much greater consequence than the loss of £50 to the Government".<sup>127</sup>

John Andrews' business improved over the years so that the kind of comments about money he made early in the diary "Reduced to the very last penny" or "Getting money fast" disappear from the record and he is able to move his office out of his home to a separate building. Joseph Strutt's income improved to the point where he was able to buy "a cottage about half a mile from the town".<sup>128</sup> For Charles Mundy, the demands of property management produced the breakdown in his health that occupies much of the correspondence, and he confesses to "the idea of our expenses and the dread of our income not providing sufficient for our expenditure" (despite his wife's family being one of the richest in the Midlands with property in Lincolnshire and Derbyshire).

The material also gives some indication of the entertainments enjoyed by the husbands. Mundy seems to have concentrated on equestrian activities: he is often away hunting but is also keen to know "how your party {at the races} went off & above all how your horses went & how your equipage looked".<sup>129</sup> Andrews, on the other hand, once he had abandoned the public house and other bachelor activities, regularly "drank tea" or attended "a musical afternoon & evening at Mr Savery's".<sup>130</sup> In 1785 he recorded at least 18 concerts and 21 occasions of tea drinking which suggests a lively social environment in the small town. He attended church, usually with his wife, and also went to Methodist and Quaker meetings. He continued his practice of sea-bathing every summer, always noting the first time each year; but the plays which had featured in the journal before his marriage did not appear afterwards. He continued to read but there is no evidence of the scientific and philosophical writing that had seemed such an important part of his life before marriage. Matthew Flinders similarly records his reading, mostly scientific and medical works, but his journal seems too serious to deal with more frivolous entertainment, and even the necessary visiting after his second wedding made him "a good deal harassed [...] but we have now almost got thro' at which we are very glad".<sup>131</sup>

Except for Andrews and Flinders who only record feelings about their wives when they die, the overwhelming sense that emerges from this material is of the affectionate and respectful nature of relationships between the husbands and wives. Some caution about the reality of this might be appropriate where, as in the case of Mary Vyvyan, Lady Plymouth and Isabella Strutt, it is the wife's interpretation we are receiving but in each case the language suggests sincerity. The only hint of Charles Boughton's feelings are contained in a congratulatory letter from his sister soon after his wedding – "it is joyful to me to reflect that you bid fair to enjoy among the best of human lots".<sup>132</sup> Edmund Larkin and Charles Mundy are quite open about their feelings, including their pride in their wives. Larkin, for instance, wrote:

accounts I have from some of our friends speak of you so highly that I cannot express how much I feel myself obliged by your admirable conduct and manners to every body which has secured to you my dearest Ann the estimation and regard of everyone in the circle of our acquaintance<sup>133</sup>

Earlier she had written "I fancy there are few women who have got such a Husband as I have. There are very few so alive to their Wives feelings as you are[...]"<sup>134</sup> Taken as a whole, these unselfconscious expressions might reinforce the idea that affection had become the norm, for these couples at least. One important indicator of their feelings is the way husbands and wives address each other in their letters. Ann Larkin addresses her husband as "My dearest Love"; he goes a step further and calls her "My ever dearest, dearest love" Similarly when she signs herself "Yours affectionately, Ann Larkin" he is "Yours most affectionately". She never uses his name but in May, 1806 he, for the first time calls her "my dearest Ann"<sup>135</sup> and later "my dear Girl". Whereas Charles Mundy called Harriet by her first name before they were married, his address afterwards is to "My most dear Wife", "My Ever Dear Wife" or "My dearly beloved Wife". He signs himself "Your affectionate and devoted husband, C.G.Mundy". In the letters he refers to her as "my dear friend & partner", "my darling friend" or "my dearest Harriet". We do not have Harriet's letters once they were married, but those before are addressed to "Dear Charles" and signed "from your sincerely attached, Harriet" or "affectionate and tender attached".

Mary Vyvyan reveals the state of her marriage six weeks after the wedding: "Mr Vyvyan's attention continues as much & as kind as it was on the day of our Marriage, indeed I have scarcely a wish ungratified & my only fear is that my present happiness is too great for continuance".<sup>136</sup> A month later she returns to Trelowarren from an (unexplained) absence and assures her mother "you cannot think how kind that dear Friend is. Perhaps

he may make me feel too proud & indeed sometimes I feel so conscious that I am so inferior to his fond partiality for me".<sup>137</sup> By this point she was entering enthusiastically into the round of neighbourly visits and social responsibilities of the West Cornwall squirearchy – a very different life-style from that she had enjoyed at home in Lancaster with her mother.

Lady Plymouth after three years of marriage tells Fanny Felton "I assure you I have found each year happier than the last".<sup>138</sup> There is obviously, too, a strong degree of confidence between the married couple. While warning Fanny against the company of a Mrs Morall who is the "avow'd mistress" of an acquaintance of theirs, she reveals that "Long ago Lord P mentioned the scandalous intimacy to me".<sup>139</sup> These kinds of enthusiasms and openness, plus the regular use in contemporary correspondence of addresses such as "partner" and "friend", strengthen the idea of marriage for 'ordinary' husbands and wives in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- centuries as a shared and sharing experience and a more equal personal, if not legal, contract.

### ***Father***

In his influential *Essay on the Government of Children*, James Nelson wrote: "Nothing is more Evident, than that a Love of our Children is a great ruling Principle in Human Nature; and that it makes a large part of the Self-love which sticks closely to us".<sup>140</sup> This unequivocal statement of the psychological and social importance of children had important implications for what Anthony Fletcher called "Fatherly Performance".<sup>141</sup> In this section, I examine the evidence of parent and child relations demonstrated in the private material and show that the letters contain rich examples of affective relations between fathers and both sons and daughters. Both their style and content reveal closeness and a willingness to expose thoughts and feelings that is seldom observed in published literature. Contrast, for instance, Lord Grondale's expectation of his daughter Catherine Campinet in Robert Bage's novel *Hermisprong*, with Charles Burrell Massingberd's of his daughter Harriet. "Fathers in general", Grondale tells Catherine, "are accustomed to expect submission from their children, and obedience. I have a daughter who knows the rights of women, who stipulates the conditions with her father, who talks prettily about duties and attentions [...]".<sup>142</sup> Massingberd, conversely, tells Harriet about "the pleasure with which I see her enter upon the stage of life with so many prospects of happiness, the most secure of which arise from my dear child's own good and amiable disposition, which has already endeared her to all her family and many others who know her merit".<sup>143</sup>

With younger children, parental pride could be problematic. William Porden writes about the day he invited friends to hear his daughter Henrietta “perform music with Mr Clarke”. She complained that he had invited too many people: “I had been indulging paternal vanity in displaying my daughter’s musical abilities and, at the same time, giving pleasure to persons who were, in a great measure, strangers to me but of whom I had entertained a favourable opinion. I had offended and awakened resentment in a bosom that ought to have beat with delight in having the power of delighting me”.<sup>144</sup>

A rather more critical view of his child was taken by William Sandys, clergyman and amateur scientist from Lanarth in Cornwall. In a letter to his second wife, he complained about his nine year old son from his first marriage (also William) whom he had left at school.<sup>145</sup> “Many, many things in him must be altered,” he wrote, “ [...] he is inattentive and has more obstinacy than I thought, a total inability to do anything for himself or to be attentive as other Boys are. [...] he must forget his former indulgences. He cries upon the least thing being said to him, this is wrong”.<sup>146</sup> Nine years later, Sandys is reporting that the boy has “studied extremely hard since he has been here, never wishes to go from the house, and they are pleased with him”. Later the same month he is at Cambridge and his father reports: “We are all pleased with him so far as he yet goes. He has certainly got into the habit of study and has seen the error of his ways”. Sandys was a church minister and his grudging acceptance of his son’s improvement may reflect a form of religious paternalism that inhibited whole-hearted belief in the boy.

The many letters between Charles Mellish and his son Joseph, which cover thirteen years from 1779, contain no concerns of this kind.<sup>147</sup> These letters exemplify the idea that “Fatherhood was about combining the exercise of guidance and authority with the expression of the affection that fathers felt for sons and daughters”.<sup>148</sup> The series begins with the boy at prep school in Chiswick and, in the early years at least, frequently touches on questions of grammar. “Your letter was very well written and correctly spelt,” the father writes in September 1779, but points out ‘one false concord’. “In order to be correct,” he advises, “examine what is the Opinion of Mr Addison and Dr. Swift and others [...]. This will afford you a subject for a Letter and settle a point concerning which Grammarians are at present unsettled”.<sup>149</sup> He encourages ‘Joe’ to approach his teachers to help in criticising his (the father’s) grammar and later the same month, acknowledges criticism of an earlier letter. “It is very certain that to say umbrageous shade or frigid cold is Tautology [...] that is useless to the Reader, tho’ you will find when you make verses it is very convenient”.<sup>150</sup>

He also asks for “some account of those Epistles of Ovid that you have read & give me your opinion freely where the Passages gave you pleasure and if you can, why they did so”.<sup>151</sup> Father and son continue to correspond about Ovid and grammar but then, when Charles is at Eton, he displays the first signs of a social conscience. He tells of “a conversation I had with a Welsh woman” whom he found begging in the street. She and “her Gaffer” (husband) had come from Wales for the haymaking but there was little work because the very hot sun dried up the hay as soon as it was cut [...]. This immoderate heat she interpreted into the Vengeance & Indignation of God against those wicked and audacious progenies of the Human Brain, Air Balloons,[...] and said that poor people would starve for want of work on account of human impiety”. He then suggests that “if these People so dreading the Almighty’s anger & so honouring and loving God’s justice were but properly instructed in right notions of Religion, if that Superstition were removed so as to prevent their detesting their fellow creatures, the supposed cause of their suffering [...] they would become the best and happiest race of people on Earth”. He concludes “I should like to know your opinion on this, not considering this improvement politically and as a Minister, whether it tends to the better governing the state, but as a disinterested man and a Christian”. There is no record of the father’s reply but the question presupposes a degree of intimacy and compatible thinking between father and son. The remainder of the archive comprises letters from Joseph to Charles during his time at Eton and then at Cambridge, from where, in one letter, he chides his father for saying nothing about “the Geometrical Problem I sent you, can you demonstrate it? If you cannot, I can”<sup>152</sup>. They were still sharing academic questions but now there was some role reversal in which the son was making demands similar to those by the father years before.

Coningsby Waldo Sibthorp is “affectionate and dutiful” in letters to his father, an MP and commander of militia, but while still at prep school is not afraid to admit an “illicit excursion to a pie shop for which we could be flogged”.<sup>153</sup> His younger brother, Charles Delaet also reported “escaping out of bounds four or five times at night – never once found out”.<sup>154</sup> Henry, the youngest of the brothers whose parental letters survive, went to sea aged 16 in 1799 and four years later was “begging you to accept my sincere wishes that every blessing may attend the steps of my dear father & assuring you will ever find me a very dutiful and affectionate son”.<sup>155</sup> When promotion is slow to arrive he asks his father to intercede for him and “speak to Mr Pitt as they are now making lieutenants every day”.<sup>156</sup> Henry gives up the idea of his father’s getting him a promotion and instead is to rely on his current commander Captain Blackwood – a strategy which proves successful as

he becomes a lieutenant in December 1805. It seems clear from the Sibthorp letters that, like those between Joseph Mellish and his father, relations between Humfrey Sibthorp and his three sons were respectful, but open and affectionate and do not reflect an authoritarian or distant view of fatherhood.

In contrast to the examples above, an emotional, as well as physical, distance between father and son is demonstrated in Sir George Crewe's diary. While at Rugby, he was seldom permitted to go home to Calke Abbey in Derbyshire and, as soon as he finished there, was sent to stay with an acquaintance of his father's in Suffolk. In one letter he writes plaintively: "Oh how I do long to embrace again those dear Parents whom now I have not seen for nearly two years.[...] Perhaps my Father does not recollect that so long a period has elapsed since our last meeting... Time Passes with a Person of his age apparently with far more velocity than with a young prig of 20".<sup>157</sup>

So far we have been looking at fathers and sons; what about the relationship with daughters? There are several examples in the private correspondence. During his five year absence in China, Edmund Larkin frequently enquired about his three daughters, and when he read a pamphlet about smallpox, confessed "I feel a little uneasy for our dear girls." He suggests his wife Ann should consult their friends and "if the recommendation should be to inoculate them with the natural smallpox you have my free will and consent to do it."<sup>158</sup> Ann reassures him "from our dear Children having been inoculated by Men of such Eminence as Dr Jenner and Dr. Walker".<sup>159</sup> For a father so far away, his wife obviously thought it important he should know that the infant Eliza "will call you Papa as soon as she can talk [...] she is very fond of your picture"<sup>160</sup> and that: "Ann & Fanny beg their duty to dear Papa and send him a great many kisses".<sup>161</sup> Eighteen months later, young Ann is disappointed because "you mention sending a letter to Ann but she never received it".<sup>162</sup> In 1807 the three children write to their father. All address him as "My dear Papa"; the eldest subscribes herself "your dutiful daughter" and the other two "Your Affectionate Daughter".<sup>163</sup> The extent to which this is evidence of genuine feelings is difficult to judge because the children would almost certainly have been taught the proper form for writing to their father.<sup>164</sup> Even so, the picture emerging from this correspondence is of a caring and affectionate father who has travelled abroad to provide for his family and retains a lively interest in their development.

Closer to home, we have more examples of the close relationship of fathers and daughters. We know, both from William Porden's diary and his daughter's reaction to her

suitors' suggestion that she should give up writing, what a close and important relationship they enjoyed. They travelled abroad together on several occasions and presciently, as it turned out, on one of these trips to France, he worried about the "consequence to Eleanor if I should become worse and should die".<sup>165</sup> When, in fact, it almost happened she showed she could cope. In a letter to John Franklin, she wrote: "We have been on the continent, and I had to bring him back from Paris in a state of utter helplessness, not able to feed himself, scarcely able to speak. My most fervent prayer was that he might reach home alive. And it was granted but he died just three days after".<sup>166</sup>

Eleanor Porden was 27 at the time of her father's death. For a younger woman's relationship with her father we can return to the diary kept by Caroline Treby from 1808, when she was 17 until her marriage in February 1819.<sup>167</sup> Most years contains many references to her father's movement - "Papa dined at..." "Papa came home..." "Papa went to Plympton" etc. When he went to London she repined "we shall be very quiet until Papa's return"<sup>168</sup> but a few days later notes "Papa seems to like his visit to London. I am glad he went there as he was getting very churchly from going to Chaddeswood every day to work on his farm and talk to the men in those parts".<sup>169</sup> Father is mentioned less often in 1812 and 1813 but the following year resumes his regular appearance in the diary including, in 1815, "Papa had a severe attack of gout and sent for Mr Gunning who came immediately".<sup>170</sup> He still features extensively when Tom Phillips, the man she would eventually marry, appears on the scene in 1816. "Papa, Paul and my dearest Tom went hunting" she enthuses on October 9. When Tom stopped writing and appeared to have deserted her (see Chap 2) she was concerned to hide her distress from her father: "Since Papa came home," she wrote, "[...] I do all I can to conceal a grief that preys even more deeply every hour on my sad broken heart".<sup>171</sup> For the whole year of her misery, her father largely disappears from the diary. How aware he was of the situation it is impossible to judge as all of her entries, until the one quoted above, are about her own turbulent and devastated feelings. Finally, after Tom's return, they are married on Feb 2 and she notes: "All the family and Mr Carpenter went to the wedding". She has underlined very few entries in the preceding years which suggests some significance about her doing so on this occasion. Could her father have disapproved of Tom Phillips but be reconciled enough to go to church? Despite the gaps in his appearances, Paul Treby senior features more frequently in Caroline's diary than any other member of the family, including her mother and sisters, and while many of the entries are brief and a simple statement of facts, free of



comment, the cumulative effect is of a daughter very close to and very admiring of her father which, in turn, suggests he might be an attentive and loving father to her.

Childhood illness evokes powerful emotions, particularly in a father with strong religious feelings like Thomas Brocas. His journal contains the following record of a near fatal illness.

My little girl was taken very Ill of a bad cold and continued worse and worse for several Days till on Friday we began to be much alarmed for fear the Lord would take her from us and so began to Spread our Distress before Him. Saturday she still seemed worse & a dying Person. I went to her twice in the day and still found her in great pain. I said I would freely love to part with her to Him who gave her but would not love to see Her indure what she did. [...] I thought however of having part of a bottle of Dasselles in the House and, as she seem'd withal to be sadly troubled with the wind, was resolved to give her some and gave her a good teaspoonful in some sugar and water {He then describes how the family prayed, admitting their sins as parents and asking for forgiveness} [...] {before we went to bed} we saw a Blessed alteration in our Child & reason to hope the {??} we had used more likely to be effectual. Her body became more open, her cough loosened and after a Stool or two she seem'd quite at ease<sup>172</sup>

The overall picture of the relations between fathers and children represented in the private correspondence is a respectful but generally open and loving closeness particularly between fathers and older children. The fathers exercised “the keynote overall, of fatherly performance [...] responsibility”.<sup>173</sup> At the same time they could be indulgent and take delight in their children’s achievements. There is little evidence of the rather constrained culture of child development implied by Gisborne, Knox and Kitchener that was considered in the last chapter.

### *Widower*

At least three of the marriages considered in this chapter ended in the death of a wife. This highlights a third stage of married life which many men were obliged to face – widowhood. Some husbands also found themselves alone through divorce or separation but the figures for the former are so small as to be ignored and, for the latter, definition of ‘separation’ is too unspecific to warrant investigation at this stage.<sup>174</sup> For some men – including in this chapter John Andrews and Joseph Strutt – widowhood remained their status for the rest of their lives. For others, a second marriage became desirable or

necessary. When Matthew Flinders' wife died – “the dearest and most val friend I had on Earth”<sup>175</sup> – he believed – “there appears nothing for me but cares & troubles”, but added, “However God is infinitely Wise and Good and to him I resign myself & all my concerns”.<sup>176</sup> His prayers appear to have been answered within five months because, on August 9, 1783 he noted in his journal: “I have now to note a circumstance that will perhaps appear somewhat odd in my records after the real and extraordinary Grief which I have manifested for my late valuable partner whom I shall regret to my latest hour; as continual grieving can be of no avail but injurious to me, I begin to be not without thoughts of a 2nd marriage. I have pitched on the amiable Mrs E – late wife of E.H. of this place but since her Widowhood at her sisters at S...y”.<sup>177</sup> The new courtship continued with journal entries in August and October – “I believe almost everything with regard to our nuptials are [sic] settled”. He made two more journeys and then, on December 1, “I went to Spilsby in order to be united to my amiable friend having previously procured a licence of Mr Powell”.<sup>178</sup> On returning to his house at Donington they had three days of company and “have been a good deal harassed at returning our Visits but we have now got almost thro’ them”.<sup>179</sup> It would, though, be nearly four years before he decided to:

destroy by fire the letters (in number about 120 and which were transcribed into a book) that passed between myself and my first wife before our Marriage, as the Idea of anyone’s inspecting them after my decease is now truly Disagreeable, I thought it much the best way to annihilate them in my life time, they cost me many hours in transcribing several years ago – a further motive was the very sensible uneasiness they caused me every time I had recourse to them. I have parted with them with reluctance, tho’ I am satisfied it was best to burn them.<sup>180</sup>

He settled down to his business and the upbringing of Susanna’s children and eventually those he would have with Elizabeth. At least two of these births produced difficulties. With the first, in August 1786, Elizabeth had “a most tedious and severe labour; pains excessive but altogether ineffectual” for which the “dreadful expedient of using the Crochet” was necessary.<sup>181</sup> The second was “a favourable and expeditious labour” but then “after five days she was seized with a shaking and succeeded Fever very violent which returned 5 or 6 times, and she was brought extremely low and weak, I was alarm’d and called in Doctor Molton”. The third child arrived through “a severe Natural labour; she was taken ill in the morning & thro’ Divine mercy we got through by about 8 at night”. But tragedy was to strike later when, in 1799, “What we long foreboded has now taken place – my dear and good daughter finished her earthly course on Sunday Oct 27 between 7 & 8 o’clock in the

evening".<sup>182</sup> Flinders' journal remains one of the most detailed records of life after widower hood and demonstrates the necessity for a busy man left with five children to find someone to look after them, for which a second marriage was one answer. In John Andrews' case widowerhood produced "a strange Fracas with my sister El abt my management of my Children & Household Matters".<sup>183</sup> Within days he had appointed a Mrs Richards "to superintend my house" and "to live with me to take care of the children at 5.5.0 a year".<sup>184</sup> Of the other men in this chapter, only John Franklin remarried. After the death of Eleanor - only days after he left England on his second expedition in 1825 - he married her friend, Jane Griffin, in November 1828.<sup>185</sup> She became well known for persuading the Admiralty to mount searches when his last expedition failed to return.<sup>186</sup>

The Parkers of Saltram correspondence, provides two interesting commentaries on re-marriage among the nobility. The first concerns Lord Sheffield who, in 1794, at the age of 60 married the much younger Lucy Pelham. Anne Robinson wrote: "I make no doubt of their being very happy as they seem much attached to each other and have grown more so the more they have seen of each other".<sup>187</sup> Over the next three years there are hints of Lady Sheffield's growing indisposition and then: "Lord Sheffield breakfasted here the other morning in order to announce the Birth of another Granddaughter (Mrs Clinton having been brought to bed the night before) & his own Marriage. He seems just as happy and just as much in love as he was three years ago with Lady Sheffield. I am very glad of it because he is happy & 'tis a relief to the Pelhams, but I confess a sort of feeling that is far beyond my comprehension. I am told it is from excess of feeling, and I almost believe it but it is certainly a refinement that few people are blest with, that very few can understand it".<sup>188</sup> Sheffield's motivation is unclear but may be the need for companionship in his later years, a situation common to many men.

Theresa Villiers is critical of another lord's proposed re-marriage. In a letter to Anne Robinson, she wrote: "Lord Chesterfield's marriage is declared. What do you say to that? Husbands certainly do give themselves a great Latitude in these days – but how any Woman can have the courage (setting all their feelings aside) to engage to marry a man during the life time of his former wife & publicly announce it not three Months after her Death is to me very astonishing, as she can expect nothing but the same game to be played upon herself." <sup>189</sup> For Villiers, at least, the lack of a decent interval between the death of one wife and proposal to another offends her sense of appropriateness.

In their behaviour towards wives, children, servants and their wider family, the men in this chapter execute the different roles of the married man with sufficiently subtle understanding to unbalance any hegemonic construction of unchallengeable authority which, I have argued, is implicit in much of the writing about female subservience. With wives, there is evidence of marital partnership, devolution of authority, acceptance of challenge and, in one case at least, willingness to admit considerable weakness. Relations with children of different ages are predominantly open, friendly and instructive, and conform to complementary concepts of Authority and Nurture. Attitudes to servants retain, or perhaps because of the changes in traditional loyalties that we observed in chapter 3, reinforce the authority role. Commitment to civic and neighbourhood responsibility is evident in several instances.

This is a limited picture of a small number of men living between the last thirty years of the eighteenth-century and first thirty of the nineteenth. Their reported experience suggests continuity rather than abrupt change during the period - Mrs Mayow, for instance, was at least as much a part of her husband's life in 1770 as Eleanor Franklin was of hers in 1824. In some ways, they reflect the norms identified in conduct and other literature, but also give them day-to-day meaning. And this may be the principal benefit of this kind of small-scale research. It does not generalise but opens to view a reality devoid of political perspective or rhetorical intent. In so doing, it enlarges "the variety of masculinities"<sup>190</sup> available to our understanding of eighteenth-century married men.

## Chapter 4 - *Having and Holding – Unpublished*

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- <sup>1</sup> “On Matrimony” *Weekly Entertainer*, Feb 9 1778.
- <sup>2</sup> This was the method employed by Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, *Women’s Lives and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Novel*, (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991) to compare ‘ordinary women’ with the novels of seven “realistic” authors. But she used the correspondence of 250 women and then worried that the novel selection criteria “might prejudge the case”, 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Barker, 2008, 19.
- <sup>4</sup> Stone, (1977) 223.
- <sup>5</sup> Jones, (2009) 94.
- <sup>6</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) 71.
- <sup>7</sup> Stone, 1977, 223 “new definition of the old word ‘honeymoon’ [...] ignores “family” involvement with the new married couple.
- <sup>8</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).
- <sup>9</sup> Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997) 2.
- <sup>10</sup> See Tassie Gwilliam, Chap 1, 20. According to Maureen Waller, though “The incidence of premarital pregnancy rose steeply during the eighteenth century, to about 40 per cent of all marriages. In most cases the pregnancy precipitated rather than anticipate the marriage”. Writing mainly of plebeian practices she added “In a predominantly rural society, premarital sex was often regarded as a fertility trial: if the woman did not become pregnant the couple went their separate ways”. Maureen Waller, *The English Marriage: Tales of Love, Money and Adultery*, (London: John Murray, 2009) 112.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, August 12, 1791.
- <sup>12</sup> *Pamela*, 351.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, 352.
- <sup>14</sup> DDV FC/3/5 Sir VV to HR nd.
- <sup>15</sup> DDV 3/9 August 14 1799.
- <sup>16</sup> DDV FC 3/10 August 15, 1799.
- <sup>17</sup> DD FC 3/11 Aug 17, 1799.
- <sup>18</sup> This is quite possibly a reference to her parents’ courtship correspondence and brief marriage of which she is sure to have been aware.
- <sup>19</sup> Angus McLaren, *Reproductive Rituals: Perceptions of fertility from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century*, (London and New York: Methuen, 1984) 19.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> DDV FC 3/13, August 25, 1799.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> DDV FC 3/15, Sept 1, 1799.
- <sup>24</sup> Barker, 2008, 19, in her study of four north countrymen’s diaries concluded that all of the subjects in this study, apart from the relatively taciturn Moss, discussed their wives or potential wives at length in their writings”. Harvey, 2005, 304, identifies one of the Four Phases of Man as “Towards Etiquette, Taciturnity and Domesticity”. Cohen, (1996) 3, describes ‘taciturnity’ as “emblematic of English masculinity“. Andrews may have been conforming to a masculine code,

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although it is also possible that the limited space available in the diaries he made induced his awkward brevity.

<sup>25</sup> Modbury Diaries, 535/ 1781.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, April 3, 1781.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, May 9, 1781.

<sup>28</sup> Laurence Stone highlights the sexual exploitation of domestic servants by their masters, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 404.

<sup>29</sup> Lincolnshire Archives Smith 15/3; Benjamin Smith, a lawyer in the small town of Horbling in Lincolnshire maintained a sexual relationship with his maid-servant, Mary Newbat for the thirteen year's between his first wife's death and his second marriage. He frequently regrets the liaison but was reluctant to tell her when he decided to re-marry and she left him only a few weeks before the wedding.

<sup>30</sup> Vickery, (1998), 60.

<sup>31</sup> Edmund Harrold, *The Diary of Edmund Harrold Wigmaker of Manchester 1712-15*, ed. Craig Horner, (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Pepys diaries are the "fullest record we have of one man's sexual activities over a period of years" (Fletcher, 1999, 341) but were written long before the period under discussion here. The fourteen volumes of James Boswell's journals are a more contemporary source but are an unreliable guide to "ordinary" life because of his "unstable amalgam of vibrant self-advertising vanity and self-tortured insecurity" and being "a loving but erratic husband; a lenient, beloved, but overburdened father" (Gordon Turnbull, *Boswell, James (1740–1795)*, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2006).

<sup>33</sup> The Making of the Modern Family cit in McLaren, (1984) 13.

<sup>34</sup> E.A Wrigley, "Explaining the Rise in Marital Fertility in England in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century". *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 51, No. 3, (Aug. 1998) 435-464.

<sup>35</sup> 1259/2/438 Feb 12, 1799.

<sup>36</sup> Flinders 1 Fol. 9, Sept 24, (1775); Stone, (1977), 59, believed that part of the reason for the fall in child mortality lay in the "the strong hands of male midwives" [which] enabled them to develop the practice of, "turning babies so that if it did not come out headfirst it at least emerged breech first". The gradual improvement of forceps was another contributory factor.

<sup>37</sup> Modbury Diaries June 12, 1782.

<sup>38</sup> Fletcher, (2008) 135.

<sup>39</sup> McLaren, (1990) 114.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 156, 157, 160.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, Chap 4, "Abortion is a subject largely disregarded by early modern historians on grounds of the perceived danger to women – but in sexual terms, abortion has the advantage of keeping fertility control within the woman's power. The purpose is spacing of births rather than reduction in the total number. In the pattern of reproductive ritual [...], abortion figures centrally; a study of the practice reveals the existence and tenacity of a separate female culture".

<sup>42</sup> Boughton-Rous 6683/4/439, Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton Sept 22, 1791.

<sup>43</sup> Adriana S Benzaquien, "The Doctor and the Child: Medical Preservation and Management of Children in the Eighteenth Century". *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century Age and Identity*. Ed. Anja Muller, (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006) 13-24.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 14.

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- <sup>45</sup> Plymouth RO1259/2/430 15 January 1799 Letter from Theresa Villiers at Delrow to Anne Robinson.
- <sup>46</sup> Flinders 1, Fol. 22, July 19, 1777.
- <sup>47</sup> Flinders 1, Fol. 31, May 28, 1778.
- <sup>48</sup> Fletcher, (2008) 81, See also Chap 3, 194 which includes statistics of infant mortality collected by the physician and man-midwife, Robert Bland and published in 1781.
- <sup>49</sup> Vickery, (1995) 124.
- <sup>50</sup> Parkers of Saltram, 1259/2/437 Feb 15, 1799.
- <sup>51</sup> Modbury Diaries, June 4, 1783.
- <sup>52</sup> Linda Pollock, "Embarking on a Rough Passage: the Experience of Pregnancy in Early Modern Society" in Fildes ed. *Women as Mothers*, 39, 46, cit in Fletcher, 2008, 95, quotes from a tract of 1668: "Going with child is, as it were, a rough sea on which a big-bellied woman and her infant floats the space of nine months, and labour, which is the only port, is so full of dangerous rocks, that very often both the one and the other, after they are arrived and disembarked, have yet need of much help to defend themselves against divers inconveniences which usually follow the pains and travail they have undergone in it".
- <sup>53</sup> Mrs Wright, *An Essay to Instruct Women how to protect themselves in a State of Pregnancy from the Disorders incident to that Period, or how to cure them. Also some Observations on the Treatment of Children* (London: J.Baker; Lee & Hurst; and J.Kirby, 1798).
- <sup>54</sup> Martha Mears, *The Pupil of Nature: or Candid Advice to the Fair Sex, on the Subjects of Pregnancy; Childbirth; the Diseases Incident to Both; the Fatal Effects of Ignorance and Quackery; and the most Approved Means of Promoting the Health, Strength, and Beauty of their Offspring.* (London 1797 – printed for the author).
- <sup>55</sup> Wright, iii.
- <sup>56</sup> Mears, 26.
- <sup>57</sup> Flinders 1, Fol. 61, Dec 31, 1782.
- <sup>58</sup> Flinders 1, Fol. 63, Mar 23, 1783.
- <sup>59</sup> Plymouth & West Devon RO, The Modbury Diaries, July 31/August 1.
- <sup>60</sup> Galton Strutt papers MS3101/C/B/2/1, Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 1795.
- <sup>61</sup> See Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British writing and culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1996). Stone, (1977) 177, outlines the dilemma for moral theologians "between advising the resumption of sexual relations with a nursing mother – thus endangering the life of the child – or forbidding it – thus risking adultery by the sex-starved husband."
- <sup>62</sup> Boughton Rous 6683/4/439, Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton Sept 22, 1791.
- <sup>63</sup> Fletcher, (2008), paraphrasing Richard Allestree concludes that "it was generally accepted that motherly care lasted until around six or seven for boys". This was the age at which boys were "breeched" and entered the male world. In his chapter on "Maternity", he makes no mention of the father's role either at the time of birth or afterwards.
- <sup>64</sup> 4 Larkin 1/5 May 7, 1806.
- <sup>65</sup> See Vivian Bruce Conger, "There Is Greate Odds between A Mans being At Home And A Broad": Deborah Read Franklin and the Eighteenth-Century Home' *Gender & History*, Vol.21, No.3 (November, 2009), 592–607.
- <sup>66</sup> 4 Larkin 1/6, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1805.
- <sup>67</sup> 4 Larkin 1/5 Dec 30 1806.
- <sup>68</sup> 4 Larkin 1/6 Mar 24, 1807.

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- <sup>69</sup> 4 Larkin 1/6 Dec 12, 1807.
- <sup>70</sup> See Chap 2, 21.
- <sup>71</sup> 4 Larkin 1/5 May 7, 1806.
- <sup>72</sup> 4 Larkin 1/5 Nov 14, 1807.
- <sup>73</sup> 4 Larkin 1/6 Feb 1, 1806.
- <sup>74</sup> Cornwall Record Office WM 493 Dec 8, 1770.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid WM491 Nov 22, 1770.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid WM 497 Dec 27, 1770.
- <sup>77</sup> Galton Strutt papers, MS3101/C/B/2/1, May 1, 1788.
- <sup>78</sup> MS3101/C/E/5/16/12, Oct 25<sup>th</sup>, 1794.
- <sup>79</sup> MS3101/C/B/2/1, Feb 3, 1800.
- <sup>80</sup> MS3101/C/B/2/1, July 16, 1800.
- <sup>81</sup> MS3101/C/B/2/1, Oct 1802.
- <sup>82</sup> Lovell Family Correspondence, April 15, 1775.
- <sup>83</sup> Lovell Family Correspondence, Nov 10, 1775.
- <sup>84</sup> Lovell Family Correspondence, Apr 2, 1780.
- <sup>85</sup> Massingberd Mundy Correspondence, 2MM G/3/2 nd 1807.
- <sup>86</sup> Some of the problems he might have faced are included in Lelan J. Bellot's study of the 20 years that Richard Grenville, Lord Temple managed the estates formerly belonging to George Bubb Doddington. See Leland J. Bellot "Wild Hares and Red Herrings": A Case Study of Estate Management in the Eighteenth-Century English Countryside". *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1, (Winter, 1993)15-39.
- <sup>87</sup> Massingberd Mundy Correspondence 2MM G/3/2 Nov 9, 1813. In this analysis of himself, Mundy is displaying what Janet Todd regards as an Addisonian version of 'Sensibility' "to suggest delicate emotional and physical susceptibility" whereas the concept, as she points out, eventually came to "denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering" (Todd, 1986, 7).
- <sup>88</sup> Massingberd Mundy Correspondence 2MM G/3/2 Aug 14, 1813.
- <sup>89</sup> Michael Roper and John Tosh eds. *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) 9.
- <sup>90</sup> In Elizabeth Foyster's terms, Mundy may have "acquired" manhood when he married Harriet Massingberd but the extant correspondence demonstrates little evidence of his "asserting" it, (Foyster, 1999) 31.
- <sup>91</sup> D3311/8/4/8 EF to JF, Devonshire Street July 26<sup>th</sup> 1824.
- <sup>92</sup> D3311/8/4/8 EF to JF July 26<sup>th</sup> 1824.
- <sup>93</sup> Shropshire Archives 6683/4/332, Boughton Rous family letters Apr 24 1782 Mr Hall to CWBR.
- <sup>94</sup> Boughton Rous 6683/4/332 June 26, 1781 John Bradley to Boughton Rous.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid 6683/4/332 Oct 26, 1782.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid 6683/4/338 Apr 6, 1811.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid 6683/4/338 nd Apr 1811.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid 6683/4/332 Apr 17, 1820.
- <sup>99</sup> Wt C 2 /5 Henry Yeomans, Redcar, Aug 17 1798.
- <sup>100</sup> Wt C 2/20 Mrs Anne Yeomans at Leith to her father Randolph Marriott July 30, 1800.
- <sup>101</sup> Wt C 2 29/1 nd ns to Mrs Marriott.
- <sup>102</sup> Wt C 2 /32 Mrs Marriott to Mr Carter nd.



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<sup>103</sup> Lady Plymouth to Fanny Felton, Jan 1, 1791.

<sup>104</sup> Boughton Rous 6683/4/439 Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton Dec 1, 1790. NB It is not clear why Lady Plymouth's letters are contained in this archive; she was not related to the Rous family and their only connection seems to have been that both her father Andrew Archer (1761) and Boughton Rous (1796) had been elected for the rotten borough of Bramber in Sussex, although Andrews never took his seat.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> The children were from his previous marriage, theirs being childless.

<sup>107</sup> The notice would be similar to the following: "I, Edward Wood of Burneston, nr Bedale, in the county of York, *Do hereby give this public notice*, That I will not pay or be answerable for any debts my wife HANNAH WOOD may contract, she having absented herself from me. As witness my hand this TWENTY-SECOND day of May 1805." *The York Herald, Saturday* May 25, 1805. *The Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, March 4, 1799 carried the rather more dramatic notice. "ELOPED from her Husband William Atkinson, ELIZ ATKINSON late living with William Tatton Esq No 17, Lower Grosvenor street. – This is to give notice to all Persons that the said William Atkinson will not be answerable for any debts my wife Elizabeth Atkinson may contract. As Witness my hand this day, March 4, 1799.

<sup>108</sup> Boughton Rous 6683/4/439, Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton Jan 1, 1791.

<sup>109</sup> Boughton Rous 6683/4/439, Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton June 9, 1791.

<sup>110</sup> By alerting her sister in law to her marital difficulties, Lady Ann is conforming to a pattern identified by Joanne Bailey (*Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England 1660-1800*, (Cambridge:C.U.P.2003, 32), "Husbands and wives who could no longer effectively manage their own conflict turned first to their families, friends, neighbours, servants and clergymen for assistance"; Robert Shoemaker, "The Decline of the Public Insult in London 1660-1800." *Past and Present* No 169, Nov 2000, 97-131. The decline of the public insult, one of the mechanisms for community involvement in marital dispute and the regulation of reputation, resulted in part from an increasing reluctance for "those who sought respectability [...] to air their dirty linen in public."

<sup>111</sup> Shropshire RO The Journals of Thomas Brocas Ref 5492.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, Sept 1785.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, May 1786.

<sup>114</sup> Flinders 1 Fol. 5 May 13, 1775.

<sup>115</sup> Flinders 1, Fol. 14, May 12, 1776.

<sup>116</sup> Flinders 2 Fol. 3 March, 1785.

<sup>117</sup> For details see St James Chronicle or the British Evening Post, May 22, 1777. Whitehall Evening Post, May 7, 1785.

<sup>118</sup> Flinders diary May 10, 1778.

<sup>119</sup> MS3101/C/C/B/2/1/2 Derby St Peters Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 1800.

<sup>120</sup> MS3101/C/E/5/16/13 Derby St Peters Oct 28, 1794 This elopement resulted in *The Trial at Large of Robert Gordon Esq for Adultery with Mrs Biscoe wife of Joseph Seymour Biscoe, Tried before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury in the sittings after Michaelmas Term, 1794* (Lond: J. Ridgeway, York St 1794), and was another example in which a husband's friend was the adulterer: Biscoe and Gordon had been at school together.

<sup>121</sup> Parkers of Saltram 1259/2/ Anne Robinson Nov 16, 1789.

<sup>122</sup> Parkers of Saltram 1259/2/ Teresa Villiers Jan 15, 1799.

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- 123 Ibid, 532.
- 124 Vickery, (2009) Chap 4, *His and Hers*.
- 125 Ibid, p 118.
- 126 December 12, 1778. March 2, 1776.
- 127 Parkers of Saltram, 1259/2/358 Teresa Villiers to Anne Robinson, Dec 25, 1797.
- 128 Galton Strutt papers, MS3101/C/B/2/1 Oct 1, 1795.
- 129 Massingberd Mundy Correspondence, 2MM G/3/2, Aug 1813.
- 130 Modbury Diaries, Aug 15, 1781.
- 131 Flinders 1, Fol. 68, Dec 1783.
- 132 6683/4/332 Broughton Rouse family letters; Lady Templeton to CWBR June 6 1782.
- 133 4 Larkin 1/5 Jan 3, 1806.
- 134 4 Larkin 1/6 Sept 24, 1805.
- 135 4 Larkin 1/5 Aug 11, 1806.
- 136 DDV FC3/19 Sept 28, 1799.
- 137 DDV FC3/25 nd 1799.
- 138 Boughton Rous 6683/4/439, Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton, June 9, 1791.
- 139 Boughton Rous 6683/4/439, Countess Plymouth to Fanny Felton, Dec 24, 1790.
- 140 James Nelson Apothecary, An Essay on the Government of Children Under Three General Heads Viz Health, Manners and Education (Dublin William Williamson, Bookseller, 1763), 11.
- 141 Fletcher, 2008, Chap 10.
- 142 Robert Bage, *Hermisprong or Man As He Is Not (1796)* ed Peter Faulkner, (Oxford: O.U.P. 1985) 216.
- 143 2MM G 1/1/1-28 C.B.Massingberd to H Massingberd Nov 27, 1799.
- 144 Common place Book of William Porden D3311/4/5 1795 – 1820 nd.
- 145 The school was at Shelford in Cambridgeshire which confirms Fletcher’s view that fathers “did not balk at sending boys some distance, if it meant finding a sound education at a reasonable cost”, (2008) 81.
- 146 Shropshire Archive 484/804, W. Sandys to his wife 3rd Nov, 1804.
- 147 Nottingham University Manuscripts and Special Collection Archives Ref Me2 C.
- 148 Fletcher, (2008), 129.
- 149 Me2 C 13, Sept 2, 1779.
- 150 Ibid, Me 2C 15/2, Sept 21, 1779.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 Ibid, Me2 C, 26 December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1787.
- 153 Lincolnshire Archives 1 SIB/2/4/1, Coningsby Waldo Sibthorp, 12 Sept 1798.
- 154 Ibid 1 SIB/2/4/2, Charles Delaet Sibthorp, 29 Sept, 1798.
- 155 Ibid 1 SIB/2/4/10, Henry W.J. Sibthorp, 25 Jan, 1803
- 156 Ibid 1 SIB/2/4/35, Henry Sibthorp to his father, 5 July, 1805
- 157 Colin Kitching, ed Squire of Calke Abbey: Extracts from the Journals of Sir George Crewe of Calke Abbey, South Derbyshire, 1815-1834, (Derbyshire: Scarthin Books of Cromford, 2004) 8.
- 158 Lincolnshire Archives 4, Larkin 1/5 Letter 31, June 1, 1806.
- 159 Ibid 1/6 January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1807.
- 160 Ibid, August 22, 1804.
- 161 Ibid, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1805.

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1806.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, April 1807.

<sup>164</sup> Writing about elite family letters, Susan Whyman concludes, “One of the most common features in collection after collection is the survival of children’s first letters sending compliments to family members. These stilted formulaic epistles are then corrected, dissected, discussed, circulated, and finally saved by proud or unhappy kin.

She argues that, “these first epistolary efforts were a rite of passage that provided entry into polite society. These letters-in-training may seem artificial to us, but they taught self-discipline and served as models for courtesy letters in a society based on patronage networks. They also shed light on the process by which an increasing number of men and women learned how to use the English language in an elegant manner”. Susan Whyman, “*Advice to Letter-Writers: Evidence from Four Generations of Evelyns* Conference on John Evelyn and his Milieu.

<sup>165</sup> Derbyshire Record Office Ref D3311/4/8 William Porden’s Commonplace Book, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1818.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, D3311/8/1/16 October 19, 1822.

<sup>167</sup> Plymouth Record Office Ref 1148, Diaries of Caroline Treby of Goodamoor.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, Jan 17, 1811.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, Jan 28, 1811.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, June 6, 1815.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, September 1, 1818.

<sup>172</sup> Thomas Brocas, *Journal*, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1786.

<sup>173</sup> Fletcher, (2008) 135.

<sup>174</sup> Vickery, (1998), calculated the number of Parliamentary divorces between 1670 and 1857 at 325 (73) The Population Investigation Committee. “Marriage”, *Population Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2, *The Demography of the British Peerage: Supplement* (Nov., 1964), 8-28 calculated: Divorces of this cohort of peers’ children showed Divorces by men as 1750-1774 (total 18) % of marriages 2.7; 1775-1779 (total 15) % of marriages 2.0 Divorces achieved by women: 1750-1774 (total 13) % of marriages 2.1; 1774-1799 (total 8) % 1.1. Joint percentages male and female: 1750-74, 2.4; 1775-1799, 1.6.

<sup>175</sup> Flinders, Fol. 63, March 23, 1783.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Fol. 66.

<sup>178</sup> Fol. 68, Dec 2.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Fol. 27, Sept 21, 1787.

<sup>181</sup> Fol. 13, Oct 3, 1786.

<sup>182</sup> Fol. 36, Apr 6, 1789; Fol. 47, Jan 29, 1791; Fol. 100, Nov 1, 1799.

<sup>183</sup> Andrews, Sept 19, 1792.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, Sept 24 & Oct 25, 1792.

<sup>185</sup> B.A. Riffenburgh, ‘Franklin, Sir John 1786 – 1847’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> 1259/2/238, 29 December, 1794, Letter from Anne Robinson.

<sup>188</sup> 1259/2/358, 25 December, 1797, Letter from Theresa Parker.

<sup>189</sup> 1259/2/433, 31 January 1799, Letter from Theresa Villiers.

<sup>190</sup> R.W Connell, “The History of Masculinity”, 1995. *The Masculinity Studies Reader* ed. Rachel Adams and David Savran, (Maldon, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002) 257.

# *Conclusion*

*By the end of the eighteenth century, 'home' was understood to mean more than one's dwelling; it was a multi-faceted state of being, encompassing the emotional, physical, moral and spatial. New meanings jostled with old, though, and 'home' continued to encompass the political. This range of meanings was essential to the discourse of œconomy. Male œconomy insisted not only on homes as houses to keep and as households to manage, but also on homes as tools of management in a much broader context. As a meaningful discourse of masculinity, œconomy emphasised a man's managerial engagement with home. It made 'housekeeping' central to manly status. It also made men central to the home.<sup>1</sup>*

## *Conclusion*

The principal aim of this thesis has been to focus attention on the eighteenth-century married man, and to locate him in the evolving scholarly discourse around domesticity and the revised masculinities that flow from it. This movement is a change of emphasis from the predominantly feminist family and gender studies which dominated both history and criticism from the 1970s. It places “the home” in all its varied meanings at the centre of a united and broadened conception of male/female relations, and creates space for a theory that can incorporate new questions about members of this construction. Are, for instance, traditional power relations still dominant or can we detect a shift in the relative positions of husbands and wives? When history was populated and written by men, the focus fastened on political and economic man and the cultural and social development that followed.<sup>1</sup> Concentrating instead on domestic man not only puts “men back into the historical record of home,” but obliges us to consider “the revision of that historical record”.<sup>1</sup> Some unification of male and female histories and criticism may result.

The second and complementary aim was to assess the impact of marriage and the married man on the meanings of masculinity – what it was to be a man in the period. While the last 20 years has seen growth in masculinity studies, little attention has been addressed to the difference changed status makes to the conceptualisation of manhood. And yet it is obvious that the ‘cultural obligations’ imposed on the married man differ significantly from those of the bachelor, particularly in areas of responsibility and authority. As well as demonstrating some of the difference which life-span makes to conceptions of maleness, discussion of these obligations also helps establish the climate in which the whole institution of marriage is located and gives meaning to both the roles of husband and father and the performance of them by individual men.

A third aim of the thesis was to explore different literary representations as reflections of, and contributions to, the culture of marriage. Although many of these representations were designed to modify social behaviour, few attempts have been made so far to trace the performance of individuals to the precepts contained in either conduct literature or the fiction of manners – two sources from which we might expect

individuals to be exposed to the ideological imperatives of the age. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy came closest when she set seven contemporary texts against the letters and diaries of 250 women. She concluded that, “the novel gained respectability because it was thought to focus on the true rather than the fantastic” and that, “made it an instrument for imparting knowledge and encouraging moral improvement.”<sup>2</sup> Even so, she does not make the direct connection between individual text and behaviour. By examining a wide range of public and private documentation, I had expected to remedy some of this deficiency but, in fact, this has not been possible because, with the exception of some references to historical or scientific works and Lord Chesterfield’s Letters, none of the private correspondents or diarists in this study indicate their reading habits. In a broader context, this absence may explain the failure of historians of reading to uncover a connection. In his survey of reading scholarship, Ian Jackson identified the tendency of historians to concentrate on what is read, rather than who reads it as one of the factors restricting their ability to examine how, “the text, the reader’s experience and external factors interact”.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly the case with novels – what McKeon called “Only the latest in a long history of forms that teach precept by example”.<sup>4</sup> He quotes Eliza Haywood: “romancers of the previous age had found it most proper to cloath Instruction with Delight.” By this means, “precepts . . . steal themselves into the Soul . . . We become virtuous ere we are aware of imitating them”.<sup>5</sup> Whether novels or other published texts do have the power to influence personal behaviour continues to be a central phenomenological question. Hunter claimed that novelists themselves constantly tried to counter such fears “that, in Samuel Johnson’s phrase, novels were for ‘the young, the ignorant, and the idle’”, with claims about their own virtuous motives and promises of the power of novels to recommend and enforce good conduct, but questions about the effects of novels on behaviour remained open throughout the century, and novels generally - even though individual books were regarded as uplifting and profitable - had an unsavoury reputation well into the nineteenth century.”<sup>6</sup> This kind of generalised claim about literature’s impact on behaviour can be sustained but it is difficult to establish immediate correlation without direct evidence. What, for instance, encouraged Thomas Rawlinson to write to Hannah Satterthwaite as he did or Caroline Treby to express her anguish at Tom Phillips’s desertion in such a highly developed version of sensibility’s emotive power? Even in the absence of direct correlation, detailed examination of public and private material enables speculative links to be made between the many rhetorical influences available to ordinary people and the way they assign meaning to them in their personal writing

My interest in the subject arose from a MA dissertation in which I investigated the Marriage Act of 1753 and its ramifications for individuals and society. Important questions included: What were the different motives for men's decisions to marry and how do these affect the way courtship is undertaken and the marriage conducted? To what extent did the movement towards the marriage of 'mutual esteem' lead to a revised conception of masculinity? What was the nature of sexual relations experienced by men in and out of marriage? How was the relatively late age of first marriage by the end of the century explained psychologically? What does canonical and other literature contribute to our understanding of all these questions? My theoretical stance questioned the grand narratives of universalised, epochal and epistemic shifts in eighteenth-century sexuality and social and inter-personal relations espoused, in their different fields, by Foucault, Habermas, Laqueur and Stone. By concentrating on the personal records of individuals and families, and reviewing a variety of 'popular' and canonical fictions and other media I would confirm, as writers such as Foyster, Harvey, O'Brien have suggested, that hegemonic constructions fail to describe lived experience or fully to account for the range of cultural influences on the individual.

Most of the research into eighteenth-century marriage, whether socio-historical or literary, was focused on women's experience and generated a broad – although challenged<sup>7</sup> – consensus around the inevitability of women's subordination, personally and institutionally within marriage. Both fiction and conduct literature were claimed to determine women's behaviour and self-perception. Gonda linked the "sentimental family" in fiction to "the construction of a particular kind of female heterosexuality"<sup>8</sup> and Armstrong made a similar claim that "narratives which seemed to be solely concerned with matters of courtship and marriage, in fact seized the authority to say what was female."<sup>9</sup> She maintained that the conduct book assumed "that an education ideally made a woman desire to be what a prosperous man desires, which is, above all else, a female"<sup>10</sup> and also made the more political point that conduct literature, "by representing the household as a world with its own form of social relations [...] enabled a coherent idea of the middle class to take shape."<sup>11</sup> This middle class included the merchants who most sought the respectability of marriage but were less inclined than landed aristocracy to follow the rule of patrilineal descent.<sup>12</sup>

The age of much of the scholarship in this area requires caution. A significant number of studies of eighteenth-century male/female relations were conducted in the



1970s and 80s and convey some of the political priorities of their time. These are not always our current preoccupations but the lacunae of a particularly vibrant period of scholarship that cannot be ignored. By the late 1990s the first interest in men's experience had emerged. The appearance in recent years of historians with a keen interest in how men related to the home, and with it the family, has opened new opportunities. Harvey and Vickery in particular are investigating the developing domestication of adult males and how that might change concepts of eighteenth-century masculinity and relations between men and women within an institution that most were, or wanted to be, involved in. The viability of this project has to contend with the historiographical presence of Lawrence Stone and the limitations of "companionate marriage" as a defining motif for sexual and family relations in the Georgian period. "Companionate" should be seen less as an objective measure of the conduct of marriage and more a comparative description of marital construction. Late eighteenth-century marriages were contracted on the basis of *more* affection, *more* personal choice and *less* family interference than their seventeenth-century, aristocratic equivalents but this does not necessarily translate into a description of the way marriages continued. For Perry, "privatized" marriage relations and the incarceration of women are the inevitable results of assuming companionate marriage was about conduct rather than choice. By stretching the concept to include examples of joint responsibility and significant breaching of the gendered public/private barriers, I produce a model based on ideas of partnership where husband and wife worked together in the interests of the marriage and family. This is not the same as equality. Both public and private representations uphold male supremacy, but within a more benign framework than is generally recognised by those who support theories of female subordination. This framework is supported by the understanding of the heterogeneity of 'public' and 'private' activity. The male/female, outside/inside binaries so firmly rejected by Klein<sup>13</sup> and others are unrepresentative of the lived experience and "as an analytical tool for historians [do] not capture the range and complexities of women's or men's experience".<sup>14</sup> Nor should Spacks's "privacy" be confused with the "private". The 'competition' between public and private "tells us little about privacy which typically concerns the personal rather than the domestic".<sup>15</sup> And yet it can be shown that male engagement with domestic affairs and events – home selection, provisioning, child development, servant management – as well as the emotional and psychological support of wives, is matched by women's public involvement in a range of social, political and educational activities outside the home. The letters and diaries considered here contain examples of both:

Matthew Flinders' household accounts; Joseph Strutt's purchase of household goods, Charles Mundy's dealings with servants; Edmund Larkin's long distance support of Ann and their family; the attention to children shown by Charles Mellish, William Sandys and Humphrey Sibthorp. On the other side, Ann Larkin and Sarah Lovell's assumption of male responsibilities; Mrs Mayow's involvement in local politics and national bureaucracy; Eleanor Franklin's literary career. Isabella Strutt conforms to the stereotype of dependent wife, economically, socially and in terms of her medical and psychological health which helps demonstrate the inappropriateness of any generalised conclusion about relationships.

Any consideration of marriage and men's attitude must take account of the extensive literature of domestic violence. Foyster extends the concept of violence beyond the simple "wife-beating" employed by others to illustrate that cruelty perpetrated by husbands against wives encompassed more acts than physical blows, and included sexual, verbal and mental abuse as well as economic deprivation. Wives' defensive responses included "nervous" dispositions, "newly provided by the cult of sensibility to direct critical attention towards the abusive men".<sup>16</sup> There are a number of other issues superficially labelled 'women's' that cluster around childbirth, breast feeding and the care and education of young children. But, as I have shown in the thesis, each of these has a resonance for men and, ideally, requires some decision-making response.

Opposition to the 'mercenary marriage' in which property acquisition outweighed other considerations as a motive for matrimony gathered momentum during the eighteenth century. Women writers from Mary Astell at the beginning of the century to Mary Robinson at the end opposed the marriage of 'interest' or 'convenience' for its inevitable tendency to promote female subjugation<sup>17</sup> -- "Constrained obedience [which] is the poison of domestic joy".<sup>18</sup> Many male writers were equally antagonistic, although there was among many a distinction between moral opposition and pragmatic support. Despite the heavy negative rhetoric expended on the mercenary marriage, the principle remained potent. Individuals might have been influenced against the practice but society as a whole retained it. Both history and literature contain examples of the continuing power of the mercenary marriage. Jane Austen's Mr Elton quickly switched his attention from Emma Woodhouse to Miss Hawkins so that he could acquire a fortune, even one smaller than would have been forthcoming from Emma. A man seeking money from a marriage so that demolished fortunes and estates can be restored

remained a common literary trope.<sup>19</sup> As late as the novels of Trollope, money is a first consideration.<sup>20</sup>

Conduct books addressed directly to men focused on a limited range of social relations – wives, children, servants – to be found within a household but were, by and large, less clear about how the married man might manage relations with other groups – their closer friends, acquaintances, political allies and opponents, tenants, tradespeople and so on. Where advice exists, it maintains historical aristocratic practices which, in other areas, had been substantially superseded by domestic virtues. Alternatively, it focuses on people in trade or business, so that Robert Wallace’s *The Art of Letter Writing*, despite a frontispiece which lists a range of virtues including, Benevolence, Excellence, Fidelity, Honour, Integrity Piety and Truth addresses fewer than 10 of its 219 letters to or from “a gentleman”. The rest are either models for lovers or for various people in trade or business. Four letters deal with tenant requests for extension of rents due but both the requests and responses are so blandly phrased as to lack credibility. Those more directly located in the commercial world are both numerous and credible.

Periodicals and magazines such as *The Gentleman’s Magazine* and *The Lounger* promoted the same ideology of responsible domesticity within a culture that acknowledged temptations available to all men. *The Gentleman’s Magazine* created a forum for learned and sophisticated discourse over a wide range of topics but included some of the sexual deviance cases published elsewhere. This prompted one correspondent to complain about the tendency for some correspondents to “aggravate and censure the most minute and unforeseen circumstances that happens in public or private life”. This propensity to scandal should be prevented.<sup>21</sup> Other periodicals commented extensively on all aspects of marriage and acted as organs of advice. Their reporting of Breach of Promise cases reflected popular assumptions of virtue.<sup>22</sup>

Although not addressed directly to men, the adultery reports contain important guidance for husbands as managers of their wives’ sexuality. Many of the reports – including the case studies of the Williams/Peyton and Conner/Atkinson relationships – implicitly warn against unquestioning faith in male friendship and female fidelity. Masculine commitment to sport, business, politics and neighbourhood social life can be equally destructive of marital integrity. These embedded messages of the adultery reports echo the more explicit versions contained in conduct manuals.

As a potentially rich topic with little previous scholarship, men and marriage will generate new areas for research that have only been possible to touch on in this thesis. One of the most important is the nature of sexual relations between married couples in reality and literature. Although difficult to research, this is a crucial area without which our understanding of male and female relations during the period is significantly limited. Evidence of single men's sexual experience exists in diaries – for instance John Cannon and John Andrews – and scholars have shown extensive interest in sexuality, sexual health, obstetrics and child development. Both eighteenth-century and modern writers have developed versions of idealized sexual relations, but most work in this field relies upon the discourses of sexuality and gender, and ignores the experience of real individuals and couples. Where possible, research should focus on the activities of actual individuals with agency and answer questions about the nature of intimacy, degrees of mutual enjoyment, and resistance/rejection. These are difficult questions which – as in the cases of Lady Plymouth and Mary Hutton Vyell – may have to be inferred rather than directly evidenced, but are vital to real understanding and should be reinforced by reference to a body of literature.

The adultery reports which I have highlighted in this thesis are a rich source of evidence about the sexuality of participants, but a better understanding of the way the reports were received – who actually read them; were they shared among readers; how were the protagonists viewed; what effect did they have on behaviour – would be an instructive study.

Relations between mothers and daughters in literature have been well explored by Gonda, Greenfield, Perry and Wikborg. There is no comparable literature of fathers and sons (either in history or criticism). Nor, apart from Fletcher, is there an historical account of the relationships. Yet the small research contained in this thesis shows that, among those fathers and sons at least, there were close and affectionate relationships that were likely to have positive implications for the next generations of both. Even Fletcher claims that “fathers were always more stiff with boys than with girls”.<sup>23</sup> This is a claim that would benefit from more rigorous testing as would the response of caring fathers to the violence seemingly inherent in the schools to which many sent their sons. The reaction of boys is generally contained in adult reflections long after they have left school<sup>24</sup>. The more immediate reaction of fathers to violence, particularly if perpetrated

against their own sons, and to the quality of education would add to defining the father role and individuals performance of it.

Margot Finn and others have begun some analysis of men's spending on household goods and accounts but this is an area that requires further research. Some purchases, it is clear, would have simply required payment of bills; others would have required the husband/father to make decisions, either alone or with his wife, about what to buy. We saw in Chapter 4 that Isabella Strutt thought one of Joseph's purchases too extravagant and exchanges of this kind go to the heart of married life. Examination of these debates would enable us to get away from the assumption that "sex of things' is predominantly female, that the history of gender and consumption in the modern period is primarily a history of women's experience".<sup>25</sup> The difficulties are associated with the nature of the evidence. Focus on shop sales, as some researchers of reading have discovered, limits the scope of the enquiry. It is not always clear for whom particular objects – books in this case – are purchased even when the person paying the bill can be identified. There is also the wider area of the extent to which provisioning decisions – particularly over major items – were a function of mutuality ie arrived at jointly by husband and wife.

Susan Whyman has demonstrated how letters permeated the lives of literate and even not so literate, people and, in her view, interwove with epistolary fiction. There remains scope for deeper consideration of the love letter as a vehicle for expressing personal and intimate feelings within a context of 'public' ie family awareness. The language of the love letter enables the writer to face in two directions – towards the love object and the wider community. This requires a carefully judged ambivalence of sentiment and passion, which would then provide an important opportunity for critical analysis. Conduct literature engaged extensively with the love letter but most examples are noteworthy for their brevity and simplicity – the easy work of Grub Street hacks as Perry described them. The more complex expressions of supplication and determination are seldom evident in these models and yet, as we saw with Thomas Rawlinson, can be present in actual examples. By what experience did he learn to write in that way and with the confidence to be sure his sentiments would not be rejected?

The main conclusion of this thesis has been that a trend towards more equal partnerships in marriage was encouraged by the published literature and illustrated by the private. It arose within a continuing framework of patriarchal authority but with

sufficient strength to loosen the conceptualisation of universalised male dominance and female subjugation. Both remain features of the cultural landscape, with some modern scholarship linking contemporary and eighteenth-century women's loss of subjectivity and identity. For men, the focus of masculinity on a more feminised performance which displays the qualities of "sociability, civility, compassion, domesticity and love of the family, the dynamic exercise of the passions and, above all, refinement, the mark of modernity"<sup>26</sup> represents men's developing engagement with their own wives and with marriage as an institution.

## Conclusion

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Harvey, (2009) 536.

<sup>2</sup> Brophy, (1991) 231.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Jackson, "Approaches to the History of Readers and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4, (December, 2004) 1041-1054.

<sup>4</sup> McKeon, *Origin of the Novel*, 601.

<sup>5</sup> Haywood, *The Tea Table* (1725), cit McKeon, 601.

<sup>6</sup> J. Paul Hunter (1998).

<sup>7</sup> Vickery, (1995) 288.

<sup>8</sup> Gonda, 33.

<sup>9</sup> Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, 1987, 96.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>12</sup> Rogers, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Klein, 1996, 98.

<sup>14</sup> Foyster, 2005, 10.

<sup>15</sup> Spacks, 2003, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Joanne Bailey rev of "Marital violence: an English family history, 1660–1857," (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.) *Continuity & Change*, 21, (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Mary Astell, "Some reflections upon marriage" in *Astell: Political writings*, ed. Patricia Springborg. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Astell, "A serious proposal to the ladies for the advancement of their true and greatest interest in *The first English feminist*, ed. Bridget Hill, (New York: St.Martin's Press. 1986); Mary Robinson, *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination with Anecdotes by Anne Frances Randall* (London:T.N.Longman and O. Rees, 1799).

<sup>18</sup> Robinson, 1799, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Eg. Sir Robert Floyer in *Cecilia*; Capt Wilkinson in *The Way to Lose Him*.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, *Barssetshire Chronicles*.

<sup>21</sup> Gentleman's Magazine, July 1790; *The Lounger, a Periodical Paper Published at Edinburgh in the years 1785 and 1786 in Three Volumes*, Vol. I, the Third Edition Corrected. Dublin: 1887.

<sup>22</sup> In the case of Chadwin v Watson counsel told the jury "There cannot be a more flagrant injury to an amiable and virtuous young lady than to seduce her from her virtuous path."

<sup>23</sup> Fletcher,(2008) 129.

<sup>24</sup> Eg. Sir George Crewe.

<sup>25</sup> Finn, 334.

<sup>26</sup> Clery, 10.

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*The Trial of Sir Francis Blake Delaval, Knight of the Bath, at the Consistory Court of Doctors Commons for Committing Adultery with Miss Roach, alias Miss La Roche, alias Miss Le Roche. This Trial was instituted by Lady Isabella Delaval, wife of Sir Francis Blake Delaval and daughter of the Earl of Thanet. To which is added The Trial of George Fitzgerald Esq.* London: C.Etherington; G.Lister. 1782\*\*\*. *This trial was published at the earnest solicitation of many Ladies in the amorous Ton.*

*Trial in the Court of Kings Bench before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury between Edward Dodwell Esq Plaintiff and the Rev Henry Bate Dudley Defendant for Crim Con.* London: D. Symonds 1789.

*The Trial of Mrs Harriet Errington, wife of George Errington Esq of the Adelphi in the Bishop of London's Court, at Doctors Commons for committing Adultery with Augustus Murray Smith Esquire an officer in a Corps of Marines; Captain Buckely of the Guards; Captain Southey; the Reverend Thomas Walker, Clerk and many others.* London: F.Randall 1785.

*In the Consistory Court of London, Augusta Evans, the Wife versus Thomas Evans, the Husband. Sentence given by Sir William Scott, July 2, 1790.*

*The Trial Of Georgina Ann Fawkenner wife of Everard Fawkenner Esq of St James Street for Adultery with the Right Honourable John Lord Townsbend Late Member of Parliament for Westminster Tried in the Bishop of London's Court, Doctors Commons.*

*The Trial of Lady Ann Foley Wife of the Hon Edward Foley and daughter of William, Earl of Coventry for Adultery, with the Right Hon Charles Henry Earl of Peterborough in the Consistorial and Episcopal Court at Doctors Commons.* London: G. Lister/ E. Bentley, 1791.

*The Trial of John Belenden Gawler Esq for Adultery with Lady Valentia Sister to Lord Courteney and Wife to Lord Valencia Before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury in the Court of King's Bench on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 1796 Who Found the Defendant Guilty, Two Thousand Pounds Damages.* London: T.Lewis 1796.

*The Trial at Large of Robert Gordon, Esquire for Adultery with Mrs Biscoe Wife of Joseph Seymour Biscoe Esq Grandson of the late Duke of Somerset Who Was Found Guilty in Five Thousand Pounds Damages. And the Trial at Large of the Reverend Mr Scoolt, Curate at St. Olive's, Southwark for Seducing Miss Reddie, A Beautiful Young Lady of Nineteen Years of Age.*

*The Very Interesting and Remarkable Trial of Mrs Elizabeth Hankey (formerly Elizabeth Thomson, daughter of Andrew Thomson of the City of London, Esq) Wife of John Hankey, Esq, son of Sir Thomas Hankey Kt for Adultery at Brightelmstone, Worthing and Horsham, in Sussex; at Dorking in Surrey; and at Osburn's Hotel in the Adelphi with Turner Straubenzee Esq Lieutenant-Colonel of His Majesty's Fifty-second Regiment of Foot. London: 1783.*

*The Trial of John Hart Esq Alderman of London for Adultery and Cruelty in the Consistorial Court at Doctors Commons. London: G.Lister, 1780.*

*Hayes, George, Crim. Con. The whole proceedings on the trial, between Mr. George Hayes, a lieutenant in the navy, and Mr. Joseph Carter, laceman ... London, [1798?].*

*The whole of the Trial of the Hon Charles Wyndham on a Charge of Adultery with Sophia, the wife of Anthony Hodges Esq. Before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury When, After an Examination of Considerable Length Replete with Curious Matter, and in which was mentioned among others an ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE The Jury Gave a Verdict in Favour of the Defendant. London: Upham, 1791*

*The Whole of the Trial of the Hon. Richard Bingham for Adultery with Lady Elizabeth Howard, wife of B.E. Howard Esq, Presumptive Heir to the Duke of Norfolk and Daughter to the Earl of Fauconberg, Before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury, Feb 24, 1794 who found a Verdict for the Plaintiff Damages One Thousand Pounds. Embellished with a Striking Likeness of the Lady. London: J.Aitkin, 1794.*

*Mrs Inglefield's claim for restitution of conjugal rights; Doctors Commons 1786.*

*David Lockwood Esq against Elizabeth Lockwood Libel 14<sup>th</sup> May 1777 reported in Trials for Adultery.*

*Trial Of Mrs Ann Nisbett, Wife of Walter Nisbett, Esq for Committing Adultery with Thomas Totty Esq (A Capt in the Navy and Commander of His Majesty's Ship the Sphynx) At Doctors Commons. London: S. Bladon, G. Lister, 1783.*

*The Trial of the Hon Mrs Catherine Newton, Wife of John Newton Esquire and Daughter of the Right Honourable and Reverend Lord Francis Seymour at the Consistory Court of Doctors Commons Upon a Libel and Allegations charging her with the Crime of Adultery with Mr Isham Baggs, a Young Oxonian; Mr Brett, a Player at Bath; Thomas Cope, Mrs Newton's coachman; Isaac Hatheway, her Footman; John Ackland of Fairfield in the County of Somerset Esq and divers other Persons. With all the interesting Scenes fully, minutely, and circumstantially displayed. Containing the whole of the Evidence in that very Extraordinary Trial. London: G. Lister, 1782.*

*The Trial of Isaac Prescott Esq a Captain in the Royal Navy, Late Commander of his Majesty's Ship the Seaford, for Wanton, Tyrannical, Unprovoked and Savage Cruelty Towards Jane Prescott his Wife, Daughter of the Reverend Mr Walter, Chaplain of his Majesty's Dock-Yard at Portsmouth who gave with*

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