The role and relevance of negative passions in the conception of Eighteenth-Century sensibility

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The Role and Relevance of Negative Passions in the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility

by

Paschalina Minou

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

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Abstract
This thesis argues for the inclusion of negative emotions, and more specifically, of anger, resentment and envy in the discussion of eighteenth-century Sensibility. It stems from the fact that negative emotion is underemphasised in the context of Sensibility due to its connections to valorised victimhood, religious ideals of virtue and the argument for the reformation of manners. By contrast, this thesis reveals the role and relevance of these emotions to the study of Sensibility, finding evidence in three major kinds of discourses: the theoretical and philosophical discourse, the novel, and physiological theories of the time. Offering readings informed by recent insights from the study of the history of emotions it shows how these emotions are included in the discussions of Sensibility by virtue of necessity. The philosophical ideal of Sensibility, being defined in opposition to negative and egoistic passions, needs to include them, at the very least in order to discount them. In its turn, this creates strict criteria of expression that apply to these emotions which, nevertheless, find their place in the novel. In the early novels of Sensibility expressions of anger and resentment are included because they are connected to notions of moral injury, insult and injustice. These notions resonate deeply within a culture of specified codes of honour and virtue that simultaneously vests the domestic locus with utmost importance and defines female and sentimental virtue in strict terms. Envy is also included in the novel due to its connotations of social disruption and the disparity with social visions of Sensibility. In physiology, a comprehensive model that appeals to notions of balance and motion – and not solely focusing on the nerve – finds a desirable aspect in anger as invigorating. This idea is extended as metaphor to the novel as well. Following these considerations, the thesis finds that it is not the categorical exclusion but rare and firm instances of negative passions that sustain notions and the genre of Sensibility by offering extended versions of the sentimental. Furthermore, it notes that these instances of negative passions enhance the relatedness of these works to modern sensibilities.

Keywords: Eighteenth-century novel, sensibility, anger, resentment, envy, physiology
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This thesis is dedicated to his memory.
Note on Frequently Used Terms and Phrases

Sensibility and sentimentalism: generally, the term ‘sensibility’ is used to signify a quality of character and ‘sentimentalism’ to refer to the cultural and literary phenomenon. Here the term ‘sensibility’ is used in its broader sense to signify the quality of sensibility and also the literature, culture and the broader concept of sensibility when capitalized. This is because this study follows the notion that the discourse of Sensibility is earlier and precedes what we recognise as the phenomenon of sentimentalism. However, when citing from critical studies I maintain the authors’ terms.

Passions and emotions: the eighteenth century had recourse to a broader and more variant emotional vocabulary than the time after the nineteenth century with the creation of the secular and comprehensive term ‘emotion’ (see Dixon in bibliography). Here I use ‘passions’ as the main affective term when I talk about the eighteenth century because I want to emphasize the fact that in addition to the creation of new emotional terms, or the transformation of the meaning of existing ones, the long-established tradition of the passions still had hold in the eighteenth century. I also use the term ‘emotions’ so that present-day readers will find the terminology recognisable and also that they may be aware of the fact that today’s emotions, or some of today’s emotions, had a long life as ‘passions’.

Negative passions:
The phrase is not used as a qualitative characterisation but to signify within this context emotions contrary to those that Sensibility valorises. More specifically, it refers to anger, resentment and envy as emotions with qualities that oppose the basic premises of good-nature, benevolism and sentimental morality.
Part A: Introductory Premises, the Culture of Sensibility and the Passions
**Introduction**

This is a study about Sensibility and emotions, but unlike other studies of this kind, it will not focus on pity, sorrow, and praised melancholy, the sweet joy of doing good, or any other emotion that incurs the notion of softness or delicacy. On the contrary, this is a study that talks of negative emotions, such as anger, resentment and envy, and how they relate to the concept of Sensibility. At first, this association may seem odd or, even, paradoxical. After all, Sensibility is a concept that defines emotion in terms of refinement, of enabling sociability and connection with others and as leading to morality. Anger, resentment and envy, on the other hand, are emotions that can be violent and, for this reason, they can induce notions of coarseness and immorality. Moreover, they are emotions that hinder the sense of connection with others – as they hurt intimacy—they denote disruption of sociability and they seem to contradict, rather than be part of, the moral character. In short, they do not seem in place within a discussion of Sensibility.

However, as this study will argue, these emotions are not only relevant to the study of Sensibility but also particularly important to the understanding of the early stages of eighteenth-century Sensibility and of the novel of sentiment. Their relevance is attested through a simple syllogism. Sensibility is, in essence, a theory of emotions that rests on particular premises: a) it elevates emotion and makes it the means and basis of moral judgement, b) it focuses on certain emotions (pity, compassion, benevolence) which makes the markers of the good-natured person, and views their presence in general as evidence of the good nature of mankind, c) its accompanying literature has been understood as trying to elicit particular emotional responses in its recipients by exploring themes that suggest them (e. g. virtue in distress) or by presenting characters who enact them. In short, Sensibility defines the emotional blueprint of the subject it posits. But definitions seldom designate what the defined concept is without inviting subsequent connotations of what it is not. The emphasis that Sensibility puts on positive qualities of human nature means that the discussion is dominated by analyses of such positive terms as ‘sympathy’, ‘compassion’, ‘benevolence’, ‘delicacy’ and others similar to these. Studies do recognise the ambiguities or underlying contradictions in the use of these concepts that draw a less optimistic image than the basic tenets of
Sensibility connotes, but they rarely point to the negative. That is, studies seldom recognize the fact that to mark a sentimental person or character as ‘benevolent’, ‘compassionate’, ‘delicate’, ‘polite’ and ‘good-natured’ is also to mark them as not being, or at least not likely to be, prone to anger, resentment or envy. Various factors contribute to the proliferation of this idea.

**Sentimentalisation**

In part, this stems from a basic premise of what David Denby calls ‘sentimentalisation’. Denby’s study focuses on French sentimental narrative which he analyses formally and reads its qualities as bound with notions of equality, democracy and, by extension, with the very essence of Enlightenment theories of morality. Although strictly focusing on French fiction – the French Revolution being the event that brings together history and text – the study brings focus to some formal qualities of the sentimental narrative that can apply to eighteenth-century British fiction as well. For Denby sentimentalism is, above all, ‘a narrative structure’. More specifically, it is ‘a popular narrative structure dealing in happiness and misfortune’.¹ Denby suggests that sentimentalism is an essentially political discourse that shapes public attitudes to victimization, sympathy and compassion. It is linked to notions of equality and democracy, either by giving voice to previously underrepresented members of society or by stressing the universality of the experience of misfortune. Moreover, it is an essentially ‘dialogic narrative structure’ in that it represents the reaction of the observer. In their turn, these premises give shape to the model of the sentimental text, the major characteristics of which are: the centrality of misfortune (*malheur*); misfortune as a narrative function; the use of ‘tableaux’; the preoccupation with signs and the appeal to ‘abstract and eternal values’ of sentimental ideology.²

Denby finds that misfortune is the ‘main narrative event’ of sentimentalism and observes that, in this scheme, the narrative function of victim is equated with the ‘moral function of goody’, that is, ‘the character who is devoid of agency, the one to whom

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² Denby, *Sentimental Narrative*, p. 86.
things happen, is in this system, the bearer of the positive moral charge’.\(^3\) He further emphasizes the importance of the status of victim and makes this status, ‘closely associated with notions of powerlessness and innocence’, the ‘basis of the process of sentimentalisation’.\(^4\) Accordingly, the status of the victim is associated with certain emotions that nearly always exclude those of anger and resentment. In essence, these particular emotions can actually be part of the emotional experience of the victim. But they are not likely to be part of the concept of victimhood that sentimentalism describes. Victimhood in sentimentalism, as described by Denby, is innocent, powerless and valorised. Denby notes, in analyses of French fiction, that ‘misfortune can be seen as setting the victims apart from the rest of society and conferring them a superior status’.\(^5\) Above all, victimhood is an ‘accepted’ condition because it affirms and articulates the values of sentimentalism and its world view. Thus, passion enters sentimentalism primarily in the sense of pathos or suffering and its cognates. Its connection to excitement, intensity and agitation are also subsumed under this sense and its closeness to anger becomes underemphasized.

**Religion**

The centrality of positive affect within Sensibility also stems from our perception of religion as a shaping force of this phenomenon. The connection between religion and Sensibility is a long standing one. As early as 1934, R. S. Crane attempted to offer a historical explanation of the origins of the theme of the ‘man of feeling’, in the ‘combined influence of numerous Anglican divines of the Latitudinarian tradition’.\(^6\) He found four principal aspects in the ethical teachings of these divines, from about 1660 to 1725, that could be seen as constructive forces of the culture of eighteenth-century Sensibility. These were: ‘virtue as universal benevolence’, ‘benevolence as feeling’, ‘benevolent feeling as “natural” to man’, and the controversial ‘self-approving joy’. Later accounts centred on the specific spiritual experience of Methodism as more closely exemplifying the convergence between religion and Sensibility. With its open

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4 Denby, pp. 71-2.
5 Denby, p. 13.
6 R. S. Crane, ‘Suggestions Toward A Genealogy of the “Man of Feeling”’, *ELH*, 1.3(1934), 205-30, p. 207. See also Donald Greene ‘Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of the “Man of Feeling” Reconsidered’, *Modern Philology*, 75.2 (1977), 159-183, for a counter-argument.
air preaching, the emotional drama, the emphasis on charity and benevolence, Methodism was viewed as evoking and ‘teaching’ emotion in a way very close to sentimental drama. Barker-Benfield noted the resemblance between the two:

It was Methodism that seems most to have resembled the cult of sensibility, a resemblance noted by contemporaries. Wesley himself encouraged the convergence by his publication of sentimental novels and poems, albeit properly edited. In publishing his selection of *Moral and Sacred Poems* in 1744, Wesley declared, ‘There is nothing therein contrary to virtue, nothing that can offset the chastest ear, or give pain to the tenderest heart.’

This convergence between Sensibility and Methodism is often noted in their similar attitudes to emotion. A little further in the same chapter, he exemplifies:

Adherence to both Methodism and the cult of sensibility was demonstrated by the capacity to feel and to signify feeling by the same physical signs—tears, groans, sighs, and tremblings, both depending on and furthering the nerve paradigm. Scenes of pious group weepings in fiction and reform-minded audiences responding to Garrick-like actors performing sentimental drama may have resembled Methodist meetings.

This description is the common perception of the similarities between the two phenomena. Barker-Benfield continues to give a more ‘refreshing’ reading, being mindful of the fact that both phenomena ‘incorporated a striking combination of a rigid code and intense emotional release’. Other ways in which Methodism and Sensibility converge, include the preaching of ‘simplicity’ in clothing and deportment, the abandonment of all luxury, teaching of ‘morally superior feelings’, and philanthropy and attentiveness to the poor and social outcasts. *The Culture of Sensibility* goes on to offer a reading of Methodism as part of the culture of reform identified with the interests of women, both in terms of appeal to women as well as empowering women preachers. The analysis illustrates the fact that Sensibility and religion share similarities and converge in ways that are useful to be explored.

However, most of the arguments offered, in noting these particular similarities between Sensibility and Methodism, constrict the spectrum of emotions available to

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9 Ibid.
sentimental culture by failing to remark on the presence of negative affect within the movement. To begin with, the emotional characteristics of Methodism can be read and analysed without any reference to Sensibility. One of the earliest studies of Methodism, Sydney Dimond’s *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival*, explores the religious experience in all its emotional manifestations, such as the emotional experience of the audience, the religious sentiment, the psychology of conversion and notes that Wesleyan Methodism succeeds because either deliberately or by chance it ‘evoked all the mental states necessary for a revival’. In other words, many of the emotional attributes of Methodism are not bound to a place and a specific period but are part and parcel of the phenomenon of a religious revival in general. This suggests that ‘emotional excess’ is not unique as a characteristic of Methodism. For this reason, it may be less conducive to the convergence between the two phenomena than it is usually credited with being.

Secondly, it is significant to understand what is meant by the term ‘emotional excess’. The phrase is not restricted to the designation of an emotionally strong but positively coloured moment of divine revelation. In fact, what is perceived as ‘the moment of conversion’ was rare within Methodism (confined to a select few) and the moment of emotional affect was very often strongly ‘negative’. A valuable insight to these much discussed moments of both positive and negative excessive affection, survives, as Dimond notes, in Wesley’s own journal:

Apart from the instances in which the whole congregation is described as breaking forth into tears or cries or groaning, and those cases in which ‘many’ and ‘several’ are described as being affected in various ways. Convulsive tearings, violent trembling, strong cries and tears, and other physical effects are frequently recorded throughout the second and third volume of Wesley’s Journal. There are fourteen cases of madness and restoration, and nine of incurable madness.

Wesley himself attributed these cases ‘either to God or Satan’. This suggests that for every positive case of emotional excess signifying the opening of the heart to God there are others that need to be justified by a reference to Satan’s obstructive power and the

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12 Dimond, p. 131.
hindering of this ‘process’. The copious records in Wesley’s journal are very revealing of such instances of negative emotional excess. The various physical symptoms that he noted include:

face distorted into most terrible form /furiously gnashing teeth /gnashing teeth, biting lips /roaring as out of the belly of hell /roared aloud /raged beyond measure /strong or bitter cries /convulsive motion in every part of the body /Heaving breast /spitting, and all expressions of strong aversion /convulsive tearings.\(^{13}\)

Dimond read these instances as suggestive of the primary instincts, curiosity, fear, repulsion and anger. *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival* aims to be ‘an empirical and descriptive study’ of the mental processes behind this particular religious experience. As its title indicates, this is a study most akin to the discipline of psychology, limited for a contemporary readership because of its date. Despite the reference to outmoded psychological theories, the book offers some interesting observations. The most intriguing, with regard to Methodism and Sensibility, are these observations on negative emotions. These suggest the need to re-evaluate the relation between religion and Sensibility by taking into account both the different versions of Methodism (oral and written) and the extended gamut of emotions that it gives rise to. Such a study is, of course, much broader than the scope of this work and addresses a very specific aspect of the relation between Sensibility and religion. What is most important for this project is the consideration of religion, Sensibility and emotion in such a way that transcends particularities and focuses on the generic aspects of religion that influence its scope. The extent to which we find sentimental virtue to be tied to the concept of Christian virtue bears implications for the emotions and how they are being celebrated or stifled. This is because religious discourse – of many denominations within the long Christian tradition – acts as a controlling force on emotions in general and most importantly on the emotions that are of interest to this study.

Most of the information on the religious attitude towards emotions comes in either of two forms: preaching and core dogmatic beliefs or confessional writing. One very interesting example of confessional writing from the period was John Rutty’s spiritual diary. John Rutty (1698-1775) was an eighteenth-century physician, an active

\(^{13}\) Dimond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival*, Appendix II, symptoms recorded.
member of the Society of Friends, and was deeply religious. Over the years 1753 to 1774 Rutty compiled a spiritual diary, which was concerned with his religious practice and his self-criticism. The flaws that he seeks to correct in his character are proneness to excessive eating and drinking, a love and curiosity for the natural sciences, and outbursts of immoderate anger. In his diary Rutty meticulously noted every instance of provocation to anger, often cited the cause and its duration, and sometimes added a reflection or meditation. The result is a text of intense self-examination that records the struggle with, or, as he writes, the ‘war against anger’. Characteristic entries are as follows:

Twelfth Month, 1755
22. A vexatious day, partly from within, choler reigning, and partly from cross accidents; not much eruptions, but uneasiness, very short of taking all things equally, as Kempis describes his saint.

First Month, 1757
31. Dogged on provocation

Second month, 1757
5. Very dogged or snappish
26. Cursed snappiness to those under me, on a bodily indisposition.

Third month, 1757
11. On a provocation, exercised a dumb resentment for two days, instead of scolding;

Fourth month, 1757
29. Mechanically and sinfully dogged. 14

Instead of exciting piety, as the writer intended, the entries provoked the derision of such an important figure as Samuel Johnson, who is reported by Boswell as laughing ‘heartily at this good Quietist’s self-condemning minutes; particularly at his mentioning with such a serious regret, occasional instances of the “swinishness” in eating and “doggedness of temper”’. 15 A modern attitude towards this work, however, cannot afford to be derisive. Beyond the personal aspect of this case, Rutty’s diary provides a wealth of linguistic information on the conception of anger at the time. The painstaking

process of recording each instance and detail of anger as a flaw of character created the need for using language as diversified as the numerous cases of it. The diary uses a combination of words that belong to these clusters:

   Anger / transport of, fit of, passion/ passionateness / madness/ vexed, vexation / fretted, fretful /brittle, brittleness / snappish, snappishness / rash, rashly/choler, choleric /cross, crossnes / sourness of temper / fierceness, ferocity / ruffled / discomposed / disquieted / eruption/ commotion / emotion / irritated / dogged, doggedness / peevish, peevishness / resentment / impatience/ nervous disorder

These are often modified by adjectives that suggest duration, intensity, causation, or justification. Through this obsessive cataloguing of anger-instances, Rutty’s spiritual diary provides evidence for their discord with the religious temper. Much of Rutty’s emotional turmoil stems from the fact that these two characteristics, overindulgence in food and anger, are signs of non-moderation and non-regulation. Within a religious context, anger is a blemish of character and its control a sign of spirituality. Rutty’s admission to a ‘dogged temper’, and its record, is counteracted in the same publication by the fact that his friends vouchsafe for his character in the introduction to the reader. Although they admit that ‘there was something of a hereditary choler in his natural temper’ (I. xi) they also want to ‘assure the reader, from the testimony of many of his surviving friends now living in Dublin, that they never saw any cause to suspect him either of intemperance or moroseness’ (I.xi-ii). This introduction is accompanied by a testimony of his character, intended to be ‘prefixed’ to the publication of the Diary, signed by fifty-one people. Such eagerness to free Rutty’s posthumous reputation from anger, or excessive anger, betrays a perceived division between the emotion of anger and its cognates on the one hand and the sense of spiritual self as posed by the concept of Christian virtue on the other.

This is so because in the Christian theological framework significant virtues are denoted by certain emotions such as compassion or gratitude. Conversely, important vices are also emotions. Anger and envy are prominent within them. These two emotions
have a long-established religious background as part of the ‘seven deadly sins’.\(^\text{16}\) These are seven principal vices – pride, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, sloth and greed – that are most alien to the system of ethics posed by Christianity. The concept persisted in the eighteenth century, though it was past its peak. Despite this, signs of the rhetoric of the deadly vices were still visible in religious discourse against these passions. For instance, writing in 1702, from a religious perspective used for both religious and political objectives, John Bellers (1654-1725) a political economist, Quaker, and an active member of the Society of Friends, cautioned his readers that:

Anger is the parent of Murder, as Lust is the Parent of Adultery, and the Root of it, as an Acorn is of an Oak. Anger is an Intermitting Envy, and Envy is a continued Anger. Anger lies in the Mind; Wrath and Rage is Anger exposing itself to the view of others. Anger being the first degree of Wrath, Rage, and Envy. Anger is the worst Temper of the Mind, it being the directest opposite to Love, which is the best, because God himself is Love; which makes Love the greatest Character of a Christian.\(^\text{17}\)

Bellers did not write his *Caution* as a general religious admonition. On the contrary, he was responding to something very specific, as he makes clear, the strife and disharmony that anger caused within religious meetings: ‘And as the Mind cannot have a worse Quality than the Passion of Anger, so Religious Meetings have no greater Enemies, when it breaks out’ (5). As the editor of his writings, George Clarke, notes:

It would appear that in this time of changing social values and the temptations of an increasingly secular world not all Friends’ meetings were harmonious. Discussions would become heated and passions would rule. In 1702 John Bellers issued an essay to Friends on the dangers of uncontrolled anger.\(^\text{18}\)

Due to the nature of the audience, Bellers’ rhetoric is ostensibly religious. Indeed, in its connection between anger and envy it actually looks back to a long religious tradition.

\(^\text{16}\) For the origins and history, through to the fifteenth century, of the concept of the seven deadly sins, and also their differentiation from ‘cardinal sins’, see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1952).

\(^\text{17}\) John Bellers, *A Caution Against all Perturbations of the Mind: But more Particularly against (the Passion of) Anger as an Enemy to the Soul, by making it Unfit for the Presence of God, and Unable to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven* (London, 1702), p. 3.

that attributes evil to both of these emotions.\textsuperscript{19} Thus, his essay usefully summarizes the religious attitude towards the emotions of study. They are objectionable for two reasons: for their detrimental consequences towards others, and to society in general, due to the discord and disharmony they create; for their detrimental consequences to the Christian self. As Bellers notes above, anger and envy are antithetical to the Christian character and the state of love that it represents.

To understand this opposition we must turn to emotions as part of the Christian tradition. Writing on emotions as Christian virtues, Robert C. Roberts states an important premise of the Christian emotional discourse that is of great significance here. Epigrammatically, Roberts notes that passions within the Christian tradition lose their ‘episodic’ traits. Passions are episodic because they occur within particular circumstances and then cease. Virtues, on the other hand, denote more lasting and settled personality traits. Emotions-virtues would combine the two premises. Hence, Roberts notes the ‘gratitude-virtue’ would be a disposition to feel gratitude in appropriate circumstances. However, he cautions, this formula does not take into consideration the Christian virtues as response to the gospel. He continues:

For in that context, the emotions that exemplify these virtues take as object something that does not change with the “local” circumstances of the believer. The believer’s circumstances are always right for gratitude, hope, joy, contrition etc. [...] These emotions as specifically Christian, are not contingent on the vicissitudes of local circumstances, as their secular counterparts; in this sense these virtues anchor the believer outside the present temporal order.\textsuperscript{20}

That is, Christian emotions always refer to a constant and unchanging narrative, that of the gospel, and are essentially a response to a message of love. It is in this sense that Bellers makes anger and envy the opposite of love. The circumstances for these passions will always be negated once elements of this narrative are considered. Strictly speaking, within a religious context there is no place for negative passions irrespective of their conditions or justifications. One of the reasons why the list of Christian...
emotion-words is overwhelmingly positive, according to Roberts, is the fact that negative passions, even in their ‘rightful’ conception, are frustrations: ‘a virtuous disposition to feel a negative emotion is a disposition to be frustrated in a virtuous concern.’

It follows, then, from the short account given above that the answers to the questions posed in this project will not be found within a religious framework. Firstly because the religious rhetoric restrains negative affectivity whereas this project actively seeks to find points of convergence between Sensibility and the negative passions. Moreover, Christian emotions do not lend themselves to stories. The particularities of plot that lead to the anger of David Simple or Clarissa ultimately have no bearing on the demand for its extinction through the transformative thoughts that stem from the Christian message. And, although a religious-centred reading would, by necessity, emphasize the moment of forswearing anger, our reading attempts to hold in view the very moment of anger within the sentimental narrative. In the analysis of these instances the religious concept may be invoked and its influence recognized, but it never becomes an analytical tool or a frame of reference for the emotional experience portrayed.

Reformation of Manners

Finally, a very important part of Sensibility’s positive emotional charge stems from the fact that it has been connected to the argument for the reformation of manners. This suggests an organized and multifaceted reaction to, and attempt at correction of, what were seen as specifically male activities and habits with the potential for social disorder: heavy drinking, sexual promiscuity, and the fighting of duels. G. J. Barker-Benfield and Jean Hagstrum both find that the anxiety over this kind of behaviour stems from a reaction to the memory of the unrest of the relatively recent social revolution and civil war. Furthermore, Hagstrum also finds this move towards reformation and gentleness reflected in the lexical changes that the word ‘sentimental’, and its relevant clusters, undergo during the eighteenth century. More specifically, he notes:

In summary, the three most characteristic eighteenth-century terms for the emotions

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(“pathetic”, which began by referring to all the passions; “sentiment”, which originally signified the product of intellect; and “sensibility,” which at first included all feeling) came to refer specifically to the gentle, tender, loyal, courteous emotions, precisely those most amenable to domestic needs and desires. It is difficult not to believe that these and their cognate terms were being altered by the powerful tides of social and psychological change, an understandable drive toward civilizing gentleness in a culture tired of the aggressive emotions provoked by the civil war and religious fanaticism.\textsuperscript{22}

Under this scheme, anger is obviously at the epicentre of emotions that are considered deleterious. Traditionally viewed as ‘masculine’, with its connotations of violence and roughness, it epitomized anything that was not genteel, tender, refined, and, most importantly, ordered. This suggests that the culture of Sensibility operates precisely by excluding anger, as violent and disruptive, and resentment along with it, as its synonym or as problematic in itself.

This, though, is an argument that significantly restricts our idea of the emotional spectrum of Sensibility, male and female alike. The issue at hand is not its validity. There is cultural evidence that indeed suggests a form of campaigning for the reformation of manners. Barker-Benfield finds ‘that there were something like twenty reform societies in London by the end of the century’,\textsuperscript{23} and a lot of the writing of the time is in the form of ‘cautions’, ‘appeals’, and conduct advice. However, accepting the fact that there is an ongoing discourse on reformation and gentleness at the time, does not justify an analogous and complete attempt at ‘eradication’ of any discourse on anger. The fact that these two discourses are viewed as opposing derives from a conception of anger as only violent, irrational, dangerous and immoral. Yet the study of the history of emotions reveals another picture: a multiplicity of discourses and traditions that recognize many aspects of negative passions, many of which are amenable to the values of Sensibility.

The reason why this is not an easy observation to make is the fact that studies tend to speak of the emotional experience of Sensibility in terms of feeling and style. That is, the analysis revolves around the psychological, the physiological and its aesthetic


\textsuperscript{23}Barker-Benfield, \textit{The Culture of Sensibility}, p. 57.
representation. The main considerations are located in bodily manifestations: swooning, tears, sighing, interrupted voice, the inability for speech. These are then confirmed by textual evidence. Works, such as Erik Erämetsä’s compilation of stylistic devices, and the aptly titled *Framing Feeling* by Barbara Benedict, point to the wealth of tools that sentimental texts use in order to portray feeling.\(^{24}\) Dashes, exclamation marks and various other typographic marks, the use of hyperbole, constructs of repetition and modes of intensification, are all used to suspend feeling, to hold its symptoms in view, to reproduce it. This part of the emotional register of Sensibility is not the focus of this study. Instead, anger, resentment and envy are here considered as emotions discernible through their objects, their causes and the cultural codes they are informed by. In short, the situation in which the emotion arises will be central to our analysis, not the backdrop for the manifestation of feeling.

In order to elucidate this ‘situation’ the analysis will contextualize emotion in the discourse and the novels of Sensibility by taking into account the discourse of the passions at the time; the traditions that inform its shape in the eighteenth century; insights from recent scholarship on the history of emotions; discussion of each of the specific passions that are of concern here, and their relation to Sensibility and the specific circumstances drawn in the novels. With regard to the novels, which are the most abounding source of data, the study of each emotion will look beyond the main story and include conclusions that writers added later in sequels to their texts, and also important elements from the embedded narratives of the novels themselves. This is because, in most cases, the story itself does not exhaust the possibilities for development latent in the representation of the emotion. The conclusions or sequels that writers add to their original stories can unlock new meanings that enhance the study of emotion they offer in their work. The consideration of inserted narratives is a requirement, almost, on account of their function. More than digressions, embedded narratives have an effect that often has implications for the themes presented. As William Nelles explains, ‘all embedded narrative has a dramatic impact, if only that of

deferring or interrupting the embedding narrative, and all embedded narrative has a thematic function, if only one of relative contrast or analogy. In eighteenth-century narrative, and in the particular novels studied, inserted narratives are a common and prominent feature. The contrasts and analogies they offer, and they usually are such, extend the thematic exposition of emotion. Thus variously informed, the analysis aims to present an examination of these negative passions within Sensibility and its novel.

Freed from a religious apologetic, the perception of valorised victimhood and the restrictive account of ‘civilized’, tender feelings, this project seeks to enhance our understanding of the genre of eighteenth-century Sensibility. The analysis will show how the variety of discourses that inform Sensibility and the inherent contradictions of the genre, make the expression of negative affect a part of its conception. More than that, it will show that negative affect within the culture of Sensibility and its narratives is not an undesirable or unfortunate ‘by-product’. On the contrary, the expression of negative passions reveals the genre as having greater representational potential than previously thought. By including the negative passions, different or extended versions of Sensibility can be articulated, even if, at first, these seem to run counter to its basic tenets. By acknowledging, and focusing on, the moment of anger, we can recognise a different dimension to the emotional experience that Sensibility presents. Making the negative passions the epicentre of our focus, the emotional experience of Sensibility is revealed not as hyperbolic, unproductive and conventional, as it has been viewed. Seen under this light, the narratives of Sensibility can be viewed with a renewed interest by a modern readership. Instead of a highly stylized genre, sustained by period- and place-specific conditions, it can be revealed as related to more enduring issues.

The thesis is divided into three main parts. The first part is concerned with the theoretical discourse of Sensibility and lays out the foundational premises of this project. It discusses the concept of eighteenth-century Sensibility and introduces a new parameter in this analysis: the study of the history of emotions. Further, it offers accounts of each of the specific passions studied here: anger, resentment and envy, before analysing how they are included in, and modified by, the philosophical discourse

of Sensibility. Its latter section forms a preamble to the part on fiction that follows. This focuses on specific features of the genre that give cause to these emotions, and the importance of the domestic environment as one of them. The second part looks into novels of sentiment, analysing them with a view to delineate the significance of negative passions within their plots, and the concepts of Sensibility that they express. This part aims to show the relevance and role of negative passions within these novels. The third part is dedicated to the concept of bodily sensibility, and the physical effects of the negative passions. This part will help show the desirability of negative passions as part of a greater scheme of balance and order in the body. The last novel discussed in this project is part of this chapter on the body and will show the extension of this medical paradigm, as a metaphor, to fiction. A final section offers concluding remarks on this project and thoughts on the renewed interest with which these works can be viewed.
Sensibility: An Overview of Critical Writings

In 1946, Walter Jackson Bate made the claim for an ‘age of feeling’. More than a decade after R. S. Crane’s attempt to delineate the genealogy of a man of feeling through the influence of the Anglican divines, Bate posits a broad thesis that accounts for a whole literary period, not only a theme. The words he used to describe this thesis account now for commonplace knowledge:

A rather general reliance on feeling as a valid means of insight and communication accompanied the earlier stages of the increased relativism which, in varying guises and degrees, has tended to dominate western art since the latter part of the eighteenth century. It is an ironic commonplace of intellectual history that one of the major sources of the romantic stress on feeling was ultimately the mechanistic psychology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Empiricism, having disposed of the mind as a strictly rational instrument, was increasingly forced to fall back on the immediate feeling of the individual.\textsuperscript{26}

Stressing the influential power of associationism, Bate talked about the broken barrier between thought and feeling, the associations not only of ideas but also of sensations, sentiments and emotions and the possibility for benevolence and universal sympathy to be achieved through the refining effect that association and formation of good habits can have on primitive instincts. The whole discussion of this ‘age of feeling’ though, was made under the prism of a transitional period that sprung up as a reaction to neoclassicism and in anticipation of Romanticism. It was this fallacious approach to the period as transition that Northrop Frye’s article sought to amend. In his article ‘Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility’, Frye’s starting point is the problems and the limitations arising from studying the literary period ‘after Pope and before Wordsworth’ in terms of transition only. Despite the fact that the definition the title promises is never delivered, Frye’s discussion offered a very influential term for the description of this period; he called it the ‘age of sensibility’. He also provided us with an interesting note on the key characteristic of the literature of the time: literature as process and not as finished product. In the literature of Sensibility, he notes, we follow the process of literature in

the making, ‘created on the spot out of the events it describes’. In this process emotion is ‘kept at a continuous present, through various devices of repetition’.27

After these discussions and the language study by Erik Erämetsä 28 which still remains indispensable, the concept of the novel of Sensibility was soundly established in the early 1970s. In this decade, Brissenden’s *Virtue in Distress* (1974) analysed not only the centrality of pathos that distinguishes the sentimental novel but also turned attention to one of the most important themes of pathetic representation. The depiction of distressed virtue stemmed, according to Brissenden, from the disparity between an optimistic, moralised worldview and observations on the crude reality of everyday eighteenth-century life.29 Around the same time George S. Rousseau was arguing for the physiological origins of the novel of sentiment. Rousseau posited that the sentimental novel could not have occurred without the scientific revolution that located the soul in the brain, in the work of Thomas Willis (1621-1675) and his followers in the 1660s, and opened the discussion for the structure, function and disorder of the nerves that infiltrate the literature of Sensibility.30

By 1979, with the term established and its various implications further explored, its linguistic complexities became more apparent. William Empson in *The Structure of Complex Words* analysed the pairing of ‘sense and sensibility’. What is particularly interesting in this analysis is the fact that the term ‘sensibility’ is now discussed alongside ‘sense’, a term of the same family but with antithetical connotations; sense being connected to reason and the use of the senses. Through this juxtaposition, the notion was revealed that ‘sense’ is in agreement with the ordinary, the average and the basic use of the senses whereas ‘sensibility’ denotes a ‘higher degree’, an extended and special capacity of sensing: ‘Sense is the simple and general word for all degrees of a capacity, whereas sensibility brings in, through “ability” or what not, an idea of a high

Indeed, Sensibility was always closely linked to ‘special’. It required a particular kind of nerve, as finer nerves are fit to receive the right impressions and react to them, special education, and generally connoted a special kind of woman or man to experience it, bodily and mentally susceptible to the notions and sensations it posited.

In 1986, Janet Todd introduced Sensibility as a literary phenomenon directly linked to social, religious, philosophical and gender discussions of the time. Todd offered a very useful and elucidating distinction between the novel of sentiment and sensibility, the former denoting ‘a moral reflection on the rights and wrongs of human conduct’ and the latter ‘an innate sensitiveness of susceptibility revealing itself in a variety of spontaneous activities such as crying, swooning and kneeling,’ which, as defined ‘in the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1797, as far as it is natural, “seems to depend on the nervous system.”’

Sensibility: An Introduction read the optimistic view of human nature posited by the influence of the Cambridge Platonists in religion, the enthusiasm of Wesleyan Methodism, the argument that affective family ties reinforced in the new nuclear family were formed on the basis of a compassionate, affectionate marriage and the focus on discussions of virtue as constructive forces in the literature of Sensibility. Two years later, in Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century, John Mullan argued that texts of moral philosophy and Sensibility of the mid-eighteenth century do not simply ‘reflect social conditions and [their] relation’ but ‘seek to produce society, to make society on the page’. In 1992, G.J. Barker-Benfield developed the argument of Sensibility as a cultural phenomenon; a complex ‘new psycho-perceptual paradigm’ in light of new conceptions of consciousness, gender and consumerism. Subsequent contributions to the discussion further explored the phenomenon, now, of ‘Sensibility’. In 1996 Markman Ellis brought attention to the connections of Sensibility with the political controversies of the eighteenth century, such as the anti-slavery movement, the foundation of organised charity practices and establishments. His study made the case for an overtly political

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function of the sentimental narrative.\textsuperscript{34} Jerome McGann’s study of the poetics of Sensibility aimed to reconstruct the ‘lost world’ of the poetries of sentiment and sensibility and the ‘lost art’ of reading such poems. Although this book concentrates on the poetry of Sensibility it has addressed some wide resounding ideas such as the difficulty of the modern reader in approaching the literature of Sensibility and the insightful observation that ‘in terms of the crucial mind/body diad that shaped the originary philosophical discussions, sensibility emphasizes the mind in the body, sentimentality the body in the mind’.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to studies that are devoted to the analysis of the concept of Sensibility, as such, the discussion of Sensibility is also continually enhanced by studies which address different but no less relevant aspects. One of the most important examples is Jean Hagstrum’s exploration of the theme of ‘ideal and erotic love’ which provides important insights into the meaning of sensibility and the concept of sentimentalism in love and marriage. It also explores the aftermath of Sensibility, in discussing works of the later eighteenth century, and marks as the legacy of the ‘age of reason’, the sentimental heart (coeur sensible).\textsuperscript{36}

Three important conclusions may be drawn from this cursory overview of the study of sensibility. The first is that it expands in meaning. As the discussion recognises implications, connections and connotations of the basic tenets of sentimentalism its meaning is extended. Originally a name for a literary genre, in recent criticism Sensibility has expanded to include considerations of social and cultural realities. The second conclusion is that it denotes transition. There is a clear line of thought within critical discussion that correlates Sensibility with the assertion and propagation of ideas of benevolence, moral sense, compassion and generally good qualities of human nature. The central figure of the theoretical basis of this discussion is considered to be Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury(1671-1713). His work provides at once the evidence for the emergence of the new sentimental view and a temporal point of reference. Critics can use his work as evidence of the early occurrence of the term in

\textsuperscript{34} Markman Ellis, \textit{The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).  
eighteenth century. However, as early as Crane’s article of 1934, which, tellingly, proposes a ‘genealogy’ for the man of feeling, critics have become sensitive to the fact that the transformation of thought that Sensibility expresses may have been in progress long before it found its clear expression in the philosophical writings we recognise as central to it. This factor, combined with the fact that ‘sensibility’ is a term which bears its own long history of use, reveals that changes to its meaning mark the broader social and other transitions that affect them.

The third conclusion is that it is a concept in transition itself. Janet Todd’s useful distinction between the novel of sentiment and Sensibility shows that we understand the development both of the literary aspects and the cultural aspects of Sensibility as coming in more or less distinct stages, each with different emphasis. For instance, we recognise a novel of sentiment that flourishes in the middle of the century, as emphasizing moralized sentiment which is represented mainly by Samuel Richardson’s work. We differentiate this stage from the sentimental novel of the later period, which critics describe as more stylized. Indeed, R. F. Brissenden even describes this latter stage as ‘morally bankrupt’.37 In addition, Barker-Benfield’s study of the culture of Sensibility also traces stages of evolution from the very opening sentence of the book as ‘sensibility signified revolution, promised freedom, threatened subversion, and became convention’.38 All the above characteristics of the discussion of Sensibility in their turn have an influence on the way Sensibility and the study of emotions merge in this project, as the next section will show.

37Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, p. 117.
The Study of the History of Emotions

As it is evident from the previous section, the study of Sensibility involves the study of various other correlative discourses. In the words of Markman Ellis:

Sensibility operates within a variety of fields of knowledge, beyond the strict confines of the history of literature. These include: (1) the history of ideas (moral sense philosophy); (2) the history of aesthetics (taste); (3) the history of religion (Latitudinarians and the rise of philanthropy); (4) the history of political economy (civic humanism and *le doux commerce*); (5) the history of science (physiology and the optics); (6) the history of sexuality (conduct books and the rise of the domestic woman); and (7) the history of popular culture (periodicals and popular writings).\(^\text{39}\)

This project argues for the addition of an eighth part to this mosaic of relevant fields of knowledge: the history of emotions. Although the relation of emotions to Sensibility is somewhat of a tautology, the outcomes of the consideration of their interrelation are not to be taken for granted. New ways of thinking about the emotions can further promote the understanding of the concept of Sensibility, which is, by definition, linked to this field of study. This is especially true in light of the renewal of interest in the field.

The study of emotions has seen a surge of interest in the last decades with findings from psychology, anthropology, literary criticism and other fields challenging and questioning established views. The category presents great difficulties in its definition, and the ongoing debate about what is an emotion is certainly open-ended. With regard to that aspect of the study of emotions which is concerned with emotions in history, the change in treatment is substantial, ground breaking and proves ever fruitful. Works by Barbara Rosenwein, William Reddy and Thomas Dixon, among others, have provided us with a new approach, and new tools, for studying the history of emotions. This approach is characterised by the abandonment of reductionist and anachronistic views and the continuing realisation of the richness of expression in the use of emotions in the past. ‘Worrying’, as she puts it, for the treatment of emotions in history, Barbara Rosenwein seeks to problematize the parochial ‘grand narrative’ of emotions that casts a long shadow over the historiography of emotions in western history.\(^\text{40}\) This narrative,


based on Norbert Elias’s *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization* (1939, trans. 1978, 1982), describes a history of increased emotional restraint, which attributes to the Middle Ages, as Rosenwein notes, ‘the emotional life of a child: unadulterated, violent, public, unashamed’, and views the modern period in contrast as one of ‘self-discipline, control and suppression.’ In its place Rosenwein suggests a new way of looking at emotions in history, one that recognises the richness of emotional life. Central to this new way of thinking that she proposes, is the concept of ‘emotional communities’:

People lived—and live—in what I propose to call "emotional communities." These are precisely the same as social communities—families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships—but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.

This new approach, then, recognises the complexity of emotional life, precisely because it recognises the simultaneous co-existence of various ‘emotional communities, emotional styles, emotional outlets and emotional restraints in every period’. In a subsequent publication, entitled ‘Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions’, Rosenwein proposed a relevant methodology for writing the history of emotions. She challenges the shortcomings of universalist theories, which maintain that particular facial behaviour is universally associated with particular emotions, and presentist theories, which project notions of the emotions as they are viewed in the present to the emotions of the past, and, expanding on her idea of emotional communities, she suggests ways of accessing their modes of emotional expression. An important part of this methodology is the need to be attentive to the terminology and sources of the period of study. To begin with, a researcher must recognise that, as

42 Rosenwein, ‘Worrying’, para 35 of 45.
43 Rosenwein, ‘Worrying’, para 44 of 45.
Rosenwein puts it, ‘many words and ideas have only fuzzy equivalents in the past.’

Therefore the first task, or the first research goal, is the problem of defining the emotion under study. A part of the answer, Rosenwein’s approach suggests, may be found in consulting theorists of emotions writing during a particular period of study. But more than that, this approach encourages engagement with content. The correct vocabulary is only the beginning. The historian of emotions must view the words in context, to weigh their relevance and importance, be sensitive to metaphors, ironies and not disregard silences (emotional communities stressing some emotions while avoiding others, or avoiding certain emotions in particular contexts). Moreover, it must not be forgotten that emotions bear a social role. In addition, the methodological approach is, of course, informed by the objective of the study. There are studies that focus on a particular emotional community and a particular emotion, and others that trace changes in the emotional lexicon over time. Sensibility is a phenomenon that lends itself to both kinds of studies. However, this is not meant to be a dichotomy. On the contrary, historians of the emotions, even when engaging in a more specific study, must be aware of the sense of transition. As Rosenwein notes, ‘historians need to trace changes over time, either because an emotional community itself changes or because a new and different one comes to the fore.’

Such changes are important to take into account because they generally reflect broader social and cultural transformations. In essence, Sensibility reveals such a change. It signifies a point of transition in the historiography of emotions, having a distinct emotional lexicon.

For William Reddy change in the history of emotions comes through the interrelation of ‘emotional regimes’, ‘emotional suffering’ and ‘emotional refuges’. Reddy defines an ‘emotional regime’ as ‘the set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime’.

According to this definition, emotional regimes usually coincide with political regimes which prescribe the prevailing norms. Emotional suffering occurs in the case when the prescribed norms by the dominant

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emotional regime are too confining. Intense emotional suffering, in its turn, creates the need for emotional refuge. Reddy contends that the ‘flowering’, as he puts it, of sentimentalism in France is owed to the fact that it offered an emotional refuge to the restrictive emotional regime of the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV. The characteristics of this regime, as analysed by Reddy, were an extensive authority over the individual, and ‘a certain religious, governmental and familial system of authority’ that was reinforced by the ‘set of norms of emotional expression known as “civility”’.¹ To this sentimentalism offered an outlet: chances for unconventional emotional expression (in the salon, the theatre and other spaces beyond the court which allowed and encouraged tears for example, an emotional expression not fit for the court). More than that, it offered a new way of defining a new political subject with its contentions of the innate goodness of human nature, that virtue is found in simplicity and that it is an extension of the sentiments that are shared by all. The first stage of the Revolution was brought about, as Reddy suggests, when the emotional refuges overpowered the emotional regime. However, sentimentalism, although it promises the surge of natural, free-flowing feeling, bears its own restrictive norms. That is, it bears the potential to produce intense emotional suffering in the way an emotional regime does. The reaction against this suffering brought about the horrors of the Revolution and led, according to Reddy, to the ‘erasure’ of sentimentalism. That is, talk about sentimentalism faded and the narrative of the age of reason took its place. The eighteenth century was subsequently recast as the age of enlightenment and of scientific inquiry.

Reddy’s analysis recognisesthe fact that the discourse of Sensibility bears implications in the negative from its very beginning. The same discussions that posit the argument for the goodness of man suggest, Reddy notes, as the logical next step that ‘any deviation from good appear [s] unnatural’.⁴⁹ Therein lies the repressive potential of Sensibility’s emotional expression and the danger to become an emotional regime instead of an emotional refuge. This line of argument allows for proponents of Sensibility to define the non-sentimental in such ways that it can be excluded and rendered irrelevant because it is labelled ‘unnatural’. But Reddy’s study, as its title

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suggests, is a macroscopic study, one that is concerned with establishing a framework for the history of emotions of which sentimentalism is a stage, a part. It refers to sentimentalism denoting transition within the greater scheme of the study of emotions. This study is a microscopic one. It does not seek to account for the reasons that brought sentimentalism to the fore or the reasons for its decline. This study takes as a starting point the fact that the eighteenth century saw the flowering of sentimentalism, a cultural and literary phenomenon that revolves around the concepts of goodness and morality and which posits certain, positive emotions as central to the process of attaining the moral existence it describes. By taking into account research findings from the history of emotions, the discussion of benevolence, goodness and moral sense of the time, and some of the most important novels of sentiment, it seeks to establish the fact that the phenomenon of Sensibility is not, and cannot at its early stages, be discussed without reference to negative emotions.

The Eighteenth Century: Passions and Sentiments
Whereas our current view of the emotions tends to be segmented – we often view them as distinct phenomena to be studied or scrutinized on their own – in the eighteenth century the discussion of emotions, or the passions, as they were still called, pervades many fields of inquiry and thought. In the eighteenth century the passions do not only form part of philosophical discussions, but relate also to ethics, epistemology and metaphysics. In addition, there are links to medical theories, art, literature, conduct books and even practical guides addressed to apprentices. In short, the passions are not viewed as distinct phenomena but are part of a comprehensive view of human nature and society. On the one hand this is advantageous: the historian of emotions and the literary student have at their disposal a wealth of sources on which to base their research of the emotional life of the period. Paradoxically, and despite the availability of diverse sources, discussions often make generalized statements about the attitude towards the passions in the period as either positive or negative. Recent research is in the way of amending this way of thinking. In tracing elements of the transition away from classical Christian psychology to a more secular one in the eighteenth century, Thomas Dixon cautions against analyses which ‘misrepresent eighteenth-century thinkers by trying to
force a range of views regarding different faculties and feelings into a single view.\textsuperscript{50}

And he continues:

Writers of this period could (and usually did) have one attitude to moral sentiments, another to sentiment and sensibility more broadly, another to affections, and another to passions. This was not merely an ‘Age of Reason’, but nor was it merely an ‘Age of Passions’. It was an age of reason, conscience, self-love, interests, passions, sentiments, affections, feeling and sensibility.\textsuperscript{51}

In the truth of this description lies the problematic that this study addresses. Emotional ‘cultures’ do not replace one another in a linear, straightforward manner of transition that leaves no traces behind. Thus, the eighteenth century is not only ‘the age of sensibility’, nor is it the time when Sensibility flourished in a fixedly consistent way. In a sense, every writer of the fiction of Sensibility gives his or her own definition of it. Moreover, given the fact that various emotional cultures co-exist at every period, we cannot treat the culture of Sensibility as one that wholly substitutes previous attitudes to emotions.

To a great extent the narrative of the emergence of eighteenth-century Sensibility is one that includes a statement on the change it brought to the emotional landscape. This change is mainly denoted by the substitution, as it were, of the term ‘passion’ with the term ‘sentiment’. The two terms carry very different connotations. The term ‘passion’ carries with it a semiotic heritage that goes back a long way and can suggest sin, the Fall, brutishness, excess and violence. ‘Passions’, as Thomas Dixon notes, ‘were sins, diseases, natural disasters, wild animals, demons, tyrants, rebels. When not pictured naturalistically as gales, eruptions, storms, or earthquakes, passions were personified as advocates of vice, or as a rowdy and ungoverned mob clamouring to have their wicked way.’\textsuperscript{52} The term ‘sentiment’, on the other hand, was free from any of these nefarious connotations. What is more, due to its base on the verb \textit{sentir}, it was perceived not at war with conscience but actually enabling perception and morality. Sensibility seems to register emotional experience in terms of sentiments. Indeed, not only ‘sentiments’ but


\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

qualified sentiments as in phrases such as ‘soft sentiments’, ‘delicate sentiments’, or ‘tender sentiments’ that occur often. In its essence and its many qualifications ‘sentiment’ conveys basic premises of Sensibility, such as moral sense or virtue, and also its central themes, such as affectionate love or friendship, as it is close to the term ‘tenderness’ which is used increasingly to suggest the emotional experience of these relations. The term ‘passion’ on the other hand, is not only unsuitable to convey these notions, but actually negates the qualities of ‘tenderness’ and ‘delicacy’ so central to sentimental discourse. Indeed, in discussing the ‘invention of sentiment’, Philip Stewart notes that ‘the word passion is not suitable to this genre of sensibility, which flourishes as we see it in the first decades of the eighteenth century.’ 53 This is further confirmed by the fact that within the discourse of Sensibility the term ‘passions’ is often used qualified, as in the phrase ‘tender passions’. Also quite telling is the rather awkward– and for this reason short-lived– term ‘sentimented passion’ that Eric Erämetsä records in his lexical study.54

It was not only conceptions of the emotional category ‘passions’ that had shifted. It was also specific passions themselves that were ‘substituted’ within this paradigm of affective change. As Amélie Rorty writes in her article that traces the change from passions to emotions and sentiments, ‘as conceptions of the passions change, the prime examples of the passions change, and their relations to the other activities of the mind also shift. When fear and anger are the prime examples of invading passions then we are ‘overcome by love, pity or compassion.’ 55 Indeed, the characterisation of ‘passionate’ within the context of Sensibility frequently occurs in relation to these.

For these reasons the discussion of Sensibility focuses mainly on ‘sentiments’, and also on the specific passions of love and pity, whereas ‘passions’, and especially negative or violent ones, such as anger, resentment and envy do not form part of it. This study suggests that it would be fruitful to bring them together and to discuss one in the

54 Erämetsä, *A Study of the word “Sentimental”*, p. 61. Erämetsä’s example of the word comes from The Prompter no 85, September 1735.
55 Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, ‘From Passions to Emotions and Sentiments’, *Philosophy*, 57(1982), 159-72, p. 159.
light of the other. Firstly, it is worth bearing in mind the point made earlier. Different emotional categories, and attitudes to these categories, co-exist and the transition from passions to sentiments and emotions was slow, gradual and not completed in the eighteenth century. Secondly, this approach can offer more nuanced readings as we take into account that a writer of the period may use emotional terminology that invokes one or the other traditions (the word passion bearing different connotations from the word sentiment, as has been noted). More importantly, works which we generally and confidently associate with the genre of Sensibility – and thus with a certain emotional register – refer also to the tradition of the passions. Hence, it is of importance to note, for example, that in Richardson’s *Clarissa*, a definitive sentimental work, word is made both of tender sensibilities and of violent passions. It is also important to note that the word ‘stomachfulness’ is used in that text to signify resentment. The word is obviously an anachronism but a meaningful one, as the analysis will show. That is, it would be more productive to stop regarding ‘tender sentiments’ and ‘violent passions’ as mutually exclusive and to study, instead, the extended possibilities that their interrelation offers. Indeed, writers of the time used them as such. Although these general categories and the particular passions of anger, resentment and envy, seem at odds with Sensibility, their relation, after a careful consideration, may even be viewed as complementary.
Anger

Anger is, at first, difficult to relate to Sensibility. It is almost intuitively wrong to draw the image of a delicate sentimental hero or heroine in anger. The reason for this is not only that anger is a passion but, more than that, that it serves metonymically to denote the passions. Isaac Watts, in his influential *Doctrine of the Passions* (1729), equates the word passion in its popular sense with anger.\(^{56}\) Anger is connected to disease, as it is a temper that consumes the body. It relates to extreme pathological disorder, madness and frenzy, deformity, to wild beasts, and to demons. It signifies excess and loss of control, and emblematically is pictured as an earthquake, a storm, a torrent, or a wild animal. In short, it shares the same characteristics as the category ‘passions’. Demonstrating the same characteristics, the ability to conquer anger signifies the ability to conquer the passions.

Regulation of the passions is held in high esteem and regulation of anger provides the most palpable proof of this. This is due to the conspicuous externalisation of anger. The representation of anger in art provides a set of indicative keywords. In 1734, John Williams, translating Charles Le Brun, uses these phrases to describe how anger is to be represented in painting:

Red and fiery eyes / wild and flashing pupils / open and extended nostrils/ gnashing teeth / foaming mouth/ veins in the forehead, temples and neck swelled and extended.\(^{57}\)

Aaron Hill, in his *Essay on the Art of Acting* (1753), speaks of ‘the violent motion of the body, the gnashing teeth, the hard breathing, the shrill and exclamatory loudness’.\(^{58}\) The use, and indeed abuse, of the body described here can be particularly unsettling within a culture that, as for example Paul Goring shows in *The Rhetoric of Sensibility*, reads the body as an instrument for the expression and assertion of politeness (that is, the

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\(^{56}\) Isaac Watts, *The Doctrine of the Passions Explained and Improved* (London: Printed for E. Matthews, 1732), p. 2: ‘Here we may observe, that the term *passion* is often used in conversation in a more limited sense, to denote one of these particular affections, viz. *anger or sudden resentment*.’ Further references are to this edition. This work was first published in 1729.


values of polite culture). Furthermore, this particularity of the externalisation of anger, so blatantly and intensely realised in the body and voice, and the inability for it to be contained inwardly, means that anger can be made into a symbol of disorder when it is immoderate, or of regulation when controlled. The words of John Tillotson in praise of the deceased Reverend Wichcot attest to this: ‘He had attained so perfect a mastery of his passions that for the latter and the greatest part of his life he was hardly ever seen to be transported by anger’. Tillotson’s praise comes from this evidence: Rev. Wichcot was hardly ever seen to be transported by anger.

However, as it will be discussed, in every period, as in the eighteenth century, there is not a unified moral approach towards anger. For example, a survey of anger in classical antiquity, in a compilation of essays entitled Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen, presents what is recognisably the basis of the ‘moralistic anti-anger tradition’ but also, as W.H. Harris cautions, this cannot be regarded as ‘absolutist’. Moreover, Harris states that ‘there was no single morality of anger in classical antiquity. There was however a strong and continuous tradition of both philosophical argument and therapy directed toward the limitation and elimination of the stronger anger-emotions’. This therapy of anger, when achieved, was viewed as a sign of moral worth. However, there is also a strong tradition that makes anger concomitant with the incentive to battle, and as such part of the making of an epic warrior. Indeed, Susanna Braund and Giles Gilbert write that this desired aspect of anger was even induced in men destined for the battle through diet. Indicatively, it was written that Achilles’ diet included the meat of wild animals or even raw meat, in keeping with the image of the angry warrior as wild beast. Galen in his On the Passions and Errors of the Soul set out a method for gradually eliminating anger

through the help of a person who monitors and prevents one’s angry outbursts. In the
other hand, as W. V. Harris notes, it was approved and expected that in oratory it was
required to ‘stir the audience’s anger’. In addition, although female anger was
problematic – angry women, fictional or real, were more likely to be characterized as
irascible or ‘masculine’ – there were also cases when virtue made it necessary to be
angry, as well as recorded appeals to women’s anger as evidence of a behaviour that
went against virtue. Glenn W. Most offers an interesting argument for the
interdependence of pity and anger in Homeric characters. That is, the idea that ‘a
Homeric character cannot even feel pity, at least for the suffering provoked by humans,
without at the same time actually feeling some degree of anger at the agent or agents
who caused that suffering’. 

A valuable study that traces the more recent past of anger, entitled *Anger’s Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, provides further illumination on the
uses of this emotion, with many of the essays revealing its complex nature. It discusses
the origins of the distinction between sinful and righteous anger, the influence of which
can be seen in many eighteenth-century texts concerned with anger as well. The gist of
this notion is expressed by Lester K. Little: ‘the standard view of anger developed by
Christian theologians distinguished between a vice that was self-indulgent and could be
recklessly destructive and a righteous zeal that could marshal passion and thus focus
energy to fight constructively against evil.’ One of the most interesting parts of the
study focuses on the politics of anger, and another on the ritual expressions of it. These
parts reveal that what, on appearance, is a very negative experience of this emotion can
be thought as having very positive social effects. For instance, Richard Barton contends
that in ritual expressions of anger, especially ecclesiastical ones, such as those found in
monastic maledictions, ‘anger was portrayed as a positive social force for bringing

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peace and punishing the sinful." Royal wrath was also viewed in this light, as acceptable and useful. There is also the idea of decorum in anger, with distinctions made in the way anger is expressed by a king, a person of authority, and a peasant. More interestingly, uses of anger in the past present the emotion not as a sign of irrationality and emotional instability, but as part of enduring, acceptable political processes. Anger, Barton explains, was:

an acceptable and viable method by which Aristocracy signalled their displeasure with existing social and hierarchical relationships, a sign that a relationship is in need of restructure and the start of negotiation and compromise [...] such anger usually commenced a process by which these relationships were reconceived.

Instead of dangerously disruptive, then, anger can be seen as conducive to social stability. When we come to study anger in its eighteenth-century context, in order to determine its relation to sensibility, we have to bear in mind the rich heritage of classical and Christian notions that still influence the discussion, but also remain aware of the period’s unique causes of objection to, or endorsement of the emotion.

The eighteenth century saw the proliferation of its own literature of advice against anger. In the period from the 1690s to the middle of the century – a definitive period for the development of key premises of Sensibility – texts appeared on the subject frequently. They were often religious in scope, but also generally advisory appearing in newspapers and conduct books of the time. One of the basic common characteristics of these texts is the reference to the distinction between just and sinful anger. They aim to provide clear lines of division between the two – which are commonly based on cause, duration and appropriateness of expression and degree – to provide cautions and ways of remedy for the passionate temper. Yet, there is a marked difference from the traditional aspect of this discussion, which is mainly apparent in the language used. These texts often write about anger in a way that goes beyond its description. It is as if they write about it in order to ‘disgrace’ it.

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69 Barton, “‘Zealous Anger’”, p. 167.
In 1693 Henry Newcome notes the damage of rash and sinful anger to one’s honour and reputation:

It is a great abatement to any man that he is a rash and passionate man.
It is a blemish to him to be under such character [...] Men have no pleasure in converse with such man.\(^70\)

He also writes that ‘it is want of discretion to be angry’\(^26\) and that ‘fine life is to have all things done in quiet’\(^41\). One of the remedies that he suggests is ‘to study sweetness of conversation with all men’\(^63\). A year later Lancelot Blackburne warned against the ‘mischiefs of this violent temper not only between man and man’ but ‘if we consider him as a Member of Society [...] they threaten and offend the whole community’.\(^71\) He also ended his sermon by stating that ‘Charity behaves itself not unseemly, breaks not into opprobrious contumelies, and disgraceful ill language’ \(^17\). In 1698, Daniel Burgess used language previously associated with the tabooing of sexual misdemeanour to say that ‘Hastiness to be angry, is a most notorious sin against your body; a base self-pollution, and sort of sodomy, for it is quite contrary to that divine vertue which gives Health’.\(^72\) He continues with a dyadic construct that conveys the meaning epigrammatically: ‘Hastiness to be angry makes a man base’ / ‘suppression of anger makes a man of honor’ \(^52-53\). In 1725, the author of the Dissertation Concerning the Evil Nature of Immoderate Anger prefaced it by stating that ‘all natural and tender Sentiments are in Danger of being wholly extirpated and entirely destroyed by the fierce Flames of implacable Anger’.\(^73\) Other texts speak of the ‘indecency’, ‘unseemliness’, ‘shame’, ‘indignity’, ‘uneasiness’ and injuriousness connected with anger.

The vocabulary with which anger is represented, and indeed the whole discussion of anger in these texts, is based on the concept of just anger but it moves away from issues

of authority and just cause. Instead, it includes, or is included in, the discourse of such concepts as honour and reputation, conversation, and core concepts of sociability and sensibility. It is worth noting the repetition of words to describe it that mean ‘low’ or, rather, ‘lowly’ such as ‘below virtue’, ‘beneath wisdom’ (Black. 11), ‘great abatement to any man’. The message is that anger debases one. The controlling paradigm in these texts is not so much justified anger as the discord between anger and decency. The concern is very practical and well defined; to control anger’s disturbing effects on sociability and the function of the community. Characteristically, Samuel Johnson’s relevant article in The Rambler in 1750 makes it clear that the anger he discusses is not the one connected with ‘basilisks and lions’ but with ‘hornets and wasps’. In other words, it is not the warlike anger that brings destruction, but the anger that ‘disrupts domestic and public tranquillity’.\(^{74}\) As agreeable co-existence depends on agreeable character, the process of associating angry behaviour with negative social concepts, such as ‘disorder’, ‘unseemliness’, and ‘indecency’, constitutes an attempt to control anger by equating it to the devaluing of the main social property of the time; good character. This anxiety about the effects of anger on social harmony and the safeguarding of reputation is also further confirmed by a statement in Jabez Earle’s sermon on anger being contrary to charity. According to him the most harmful consequence of immoderate anger is not physical injury, as would be expected, but the disclosure of secrets: ‘How often has passion put men upon doing their Neighbour great, and sometimes Irreparable Injuries! The Reputation of a useful Person has often been sacrific’d to a sudden Resentment, by disclosing Secrets that should have been bury’d in everlasting Oblivion’.\(^{75}\) The author of the Earnest Appeal to Passionate People wrote in 1748 that ‘a whole life is too short to atone for injuries to reputation committed in


\(^{75}\) Jabez Earle, Sinful Anger Considered as Contrary to Charity, A Sermon Preached in Hanover-Street (London: Printed for John Clark, 1721), p. 18.
anger’. The anxiety is emphasized because the unpredictability of a person’s behaviour under the influence of anger is in contradiction to the codes of social conduct that demand discretion. The particular resonance of notions of reputation and character within eighteenth-century society makes this an issue of great concern.

Even more specific to the eighteenth-century discussion of anger is the notion of, the oxymoronic sounding, ‘good-natured angry’ person. A paper in *The Spectator* (23 July 1712) is one of the earliest sources that is concerned with this. Richard Steele begins this piece by seeking to correct a misconception:

> It is a very common Expression, That such a one is very good natur’d, but very passionate. The Expression indeed is very good-natur’d to allow passionate People so much Quarter: But I think a passionate man deserves the least indulgence imaginable.  

After a description of the various types of angry behaviours, not uncommon in these discussions, the paper concludes by stating that angry people live only as ‘pardoned men’ and that they are ‘suffered’ by others, thus making anger discordant with good nature and respectability. In 1756 the argument against the coexistence of good nature with anger was repeated in the publication *The World* (1753). This journal, which addressed a general audience and included commentary on a wide range of subjects, ran an article on the thirtieth of September in which Edward Moore (1712-1757) opposed the falsity and absurdity of the notion ‘choleric good-natured people’. The article was reprinted in *The Literary Magazine, or Universal Review* surtitled ‘passionate People not the best natured’.

Years earlier, in 1748, the issue of anger and good nature received a lengthy examination by the author of *An Earnest Appeal to Passionate People*

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76 Anon., *An Earnest Appeal to Passionate People* (London: Printed for W. Owen, 1748), p. 50: ‘but it is not by blows, and corporal mischief only, the outrageous class of passionate People injure their fellow-subjects; [...] [they] frequently commit errors in their passion, for which their whole lives are of too short duration to atone. They reveal secrets in their Rage entrusted under the most solemn obligations of secrecy’. Later references, given in parentheses, are to this edition.


(mentioned above). This is one of the most interesting texts on anger as it glosses every type of anger by a story that features a person or representation of that type. In it there are stories about: anger in babies who have acquired a passionate temper by being breastfed by an ill-chosen nurse; anger in children due to over-indulgence; angry wives; women who due to passionate temper remain unmarried and thus marginalised unable to fulfil their social role; angry merchants who even physically harm their servants; angry gentlewomen who abuse their maids, and friends who kill each other in duels due to misunderstandings that anger prevented from being cleared up. Anger’s potential for social disruption is realised in almost every social setting and with special interest within domestic circles. The only extenuating feature of these angry characters, the author says, is their good nature. These ‘tolerated lunatics’, are allowed to be part of the community only because ‘when they are out of their epileptical fits, they show that there is in their character a mixture of good nature; they can be compassionate, forgiving and disposed to charitable gestures(2). This type of passionate people is the only type still allowed a place within society.

The discourse on anger, as is revealed by these texts revolves at the time around these principles. Firstly, anger is set against resonant ethical concepts. At a time when Isaac Watts, in his influential *Doctrine of the Passions*, made anger the opposite of gratitude, even a cursory examination by title shows anger as also opposite to ‘charity’ or ‘charitableness’, decency’, and ‘conversation’. Furthermore, it is posited as a threat to sociability and to social harmony, and also to reputation and good character. In short, it is the opposite to this kind of behaviour that ensures social harmony. Secondly, people who lose their temper bear the status of social outcasts. This is further confirmed by emphasis on the fact that they are not part of the harmonious societal machine, they are ‘allowed’ a place within society, they are ‘tolerated’, ‘suffered’, ‘pardoned’. Thirdly, here is a special concern or anxiety about the extent to which anger and good nature can coexist or may result, due to their antithesis, in negating each other. What is more, this concern is part of a predominantly secular discourse of emotional control that bears little connection to religious considerations. The written pieces that handle the issue belong to the category of social customs, or are so wide-ranging as to defy classification. For example, Edward Moore of *The World* wrote on travel, Italian opera,
actors’ makeup, hair fashions, and happiness. William Faden (1749-1836), the editor of the Literary Magazine (1756-8), who reprinted Moore’s article on anger was an engraver and cartographer, and the publication involved writing on travel, natural history and politics. The author of the Appeal made no reference to religion in the diverse stories he cited. These publications, therefore, have no clear objective on reform or refinement, but they view anger and its consequences as a fit subject for their audiences.

All the above considerations, though, do not signify that anger has no place within the discussion of Sensibility or the novel of sentiment. But that each instance of anger in the novels is judged according to the criteria set in the discussion of the time and conditioned by it. Furthermore, any instance of anger expressed by a hero of Sensibility must, if it is to be acceptable and in keeping with character, be presented under conditions that supersede the criteria that connect it to moral weakness and social disruption. This has also an effect on how we view emotion within Sensibility. Since Northrop Frye’s article, studies focus on the way Sensibility ‘maintains’ emotion. Frye himself, discussed the literature of Sensibility as literature ‘in process’ and he noted that, for example, Clarissa is a long novel not because it has a long story to tell, but because ‘the emotion is being maintained at a continuous present by various devices of repetition’. While this is certainly a true observation, it is not, however, comprehensive. The emotional register of the novel of Sensibility cannot be understood only in terms of the fragmented, interrupted ineffable style that frames emotions and indulges in them for their own sake. Rather, it must be an articulate, detailed and masterful exposition of causal links, exposition and character so that it can provide the reader with the tools to make a moral decision and cast the hero’s anger as either objectionable or justified.

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Resentment

Resentment is defined by the *OED* as ‘a sense of grievance, an indignant sense of injury or insult received or perceived; (a feeling of) ill will, bitterness, or anger against a person or thing’. Previous, older meanings of the term bear neutral connotations, as resentment was defined as the remembrance of both injuries and kind deeds, or an intense feeling.\(^{81}\) A change in meaning can be recorded in 1730 when Nathan Bailey defines resentment as ‘a sensible apprehension of an Injury offered, or a revengeful Remembrance of it’.\(^{82}\) In his *Dictionary* (1755-6) Johnson notes that the most usual sense of the verb ‘to resent, ‘is now to take ill; to consider as an injury or an affront’.\(^{83}\)

In the period there are texts that make use of either of these meanings, and others which present all definitions and the synonymous phrase ‘to take ill’.\(^{84}\) The most usual synonymous correlation, though, was between resentment and anger. In the *Doctrine of the Passions*, for instance, Isaac Watts does not make a distinction between the two. He talks of ‘anger or sudden resentment’.

The discussion of resentment was separated from that of anger by Joseph Butler’s influential account of resentment in his *Fifteen Sermons* (1726). Butler’s sermon ‘Upon Resentment’, which is often the starting point for modern analyses of this emotion, makes a very important distinction between ‘the hasty and sudden passion of anger’ and ‘settled and deliberate anger or resentment’. Sudden anger, he writes, can be raised to resist ‘Sudden force, Violence and Opposition’, in a state of self-defence, ‘without Regard to the Fault or Demerit of him who is the Author of them’.\(^{85}\) On the other hand, resentment, according to Butler, is raised in cases of moral wrong: ‘it seems in us plainly connected with a sense of Virtue and Vice, of Moral good and Evil’ (74).

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\(^{81}\) Previous definitions include: ‘Ressentiment: a full taste, a true feeling, a sensible apprehension of, a resentment’ (*Glossographia*, 1656), ‘resentment: a sensible feeling, or true apprehension of any thing’ (New World of Words, 1678), ‘sentiment d’un mal qu’on a eu. Il signifie aussi le souvenir qu’on garde des bienfaits ou des injures’ (Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française, 1694) ‘it signifies also the remembrance we have of kind deeds or injuries).


\(^{83}\) ‘To resent’, in Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language in Which the Words are Deduced from their Originals*, 2 vols (London: Printed by W. Strahan, 1755-6).

\(^{84}\) A good example of this is Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*, which will be discussed further on.

\(^{85}\) Joseph Butler, *Butler’s Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and a Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue*, ed. by T. A. Roberts (London: SPCK, 1970), p. 74. All subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the body of the text in parentheses.
further notes ‘that it is not natural, but moral Evil; it is not Suffering but Injury, which raises that Anger or Resentment, which is of any continuance’ (75). By connecting resentment to moral injury, Butler makes resentment a ‘defensive’ emotion that is, in some cases, appropriate to be expressed and in keeping with moral worth.

Thus, resentment stands at the time between two conflicting discourses. On the one hand it is discussed in terms of moral weakness. Resentment and its derivatives are progressively associated with terms such as ‘injury’, ‘offence’, ‘long-retained anger’, ‘malice’ and ‘revenge’. Signifying the remembrance of injury, resentment also connotes inability to forgive, or rather, the withholding of forgiveness. And this is an attitude that contradicts basic principles of Christian ethics. The experience of resentment raises suspicions about the essential goodness of one’s character, especially because it is perceived as an emotion harboured in silence. Unlike anger, resentment does not generate a distinct and discernible emotional expression. It works inwardly and covertly, making the person who experiences it cling on to painful memories, toy imaginatively with thoughts of revenge and harm, which, in their turn, open the possibility of experiencing other, graver and more vicious emotions, such as malice.

On the other hand, resentment, when connected to moral wrong, bears positive connotations, because it signifies the capability to make important moral judgements, such as perceiving injustice, suffering and injury towards the virtuous and the weak. Butler describes this sense also as the fellow-feeling of resentment that binds the species. That is, the kind of resentment felt by all those who share the same moral standards, when perceiving around them acts of injustice and the infliction of suffering on others that they understand as morally wrong, even though they are not themselves the recipients of the harmful deed. This notion will be further expanded upon by Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), in which resentment is an emotion that plays an important role in moral judgement and the notion of sympathy. 86 In addition, the expression of resentment can be part of the codes that inform the notion of virtue. Often, texts of the time make a point of informing the reader that a virtuous woman

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86 According to Smith we can sympathize with situations where gratitude is expressed, but also we can ‘heartily go along with [one’s] resentment’. This is especially so where fictional paradigms are concerned. See pages 15-16 of Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* ed. by Ryan Patrick Hanley and Amartya Sen (London: Penguin, 2009).
resented’ the advances of a man. But resentment can also be a way for a heroine to define her own code of morality, often in opposition to the established codes of female conduct, by resenting repressive authority, or harmful male behaviour, even if it is considered ‘acceptable’ by social codes of the time.

Apart from the philosophical and ethical discourse, the expression of resentment, or talk about resentment, is part of certain social codes of the time. For instance, the expression ‘to resent an affront’ is an expression that signifies an impending duel between gentlemen. Resentment is also part of the language of adultery of the time with the expression of ‘the resentment of an injured husband’ occurring repeatedly in novels. Resentment is also used to signify the disruption of social relationships and displeasure with transgressions of etiquette. Even this cursory discussion suggests that there is more than one way in which resentment can be understood during the time. One is that it is at odds with Sensibility because it is associated with notions of malice and viciousness. But there can be no talk of resentment without reference to the concepts of injury and offence, notions that bear a particular resonance within a culture that defines behaviour according to elaborate and highly conventionalized conceptions of honour and virtue. Hence, resentment is an emotion that in many ways relates to the definition of sentimental character.
Envy

In our list of emotions of study envy occupies a unique place. Envy is problematic precisely because it is beyond redemption. Envy is irredeemable, destructive and more closely connected to cruelty and malice than any other passion (dictionaries of the eighteenth century connect it to ‘ill-will’, ‘spite’ and ‘malice’). It is irredeemable because it is very difficult for it to be connected to any moral claim or complaint. It is destructive because it desires the eradication of the enviable quality but it is also destructive to the envier as a source of emotional torment. One of the most compelling accounts of envy is its personification in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* where it is shown ‘eating viper’s flesh’ with ‘sallow cheeks’, ‘shrunken body’, ‘black decay befouls her teeth/ her bosom’s green with bile’. Paleness and thinness remain the physical attributes of the envious person in many later texts. Ovid notes the destructive and also self-destructive qualities in the line ‘she wounds, is wounded, she herself her own/Torture’. As a deadly sin, envy has been noted for its singularity, in that all the other sins oppose one virtue but envy opposes all of them. Isaac Watts warned that one who dies being envious and malicious - that is, he who has made no effort to regulate these passions in life – will remain in the dreadful state of ‘everlasting torment of inward Malice and Envy, to fret and rage among fretting and raging Spirits’ without hope for eternity.

Jeremy Collier’s (1650-1726) *Essays on Several Moral Subjects*, which was frequently reprinted after its appearance in the late seventeenth century, talks of envy by putting emphasis on its qualities of destruction and disease, and paints a picture of envy as the miasma that bears the potential to ruin all:

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87 Envy is defined as ‘hatred, ill-will, or spite’ in John Kersey’s *A New English Dictionary: Or, Compleat Collection of the Most Proper and Significant Words* (London: Printed for Henry Bonwicke, 1702), p. 69. The same work also defines ‘ill-will’ and ‘envy’ as synonyms (p. 103) and also groups together malice, envy and hatred (p. 128). In other dictionaries envy is connected to malice and spite and also to ‘livor’ and to ‘leaden colour’, see Edward Cocker, *Cocker’s English Dictionary, Containing an Explanation of the Most Refined and Difficult Words* (London: Printed for T. Norris, 1724), p. 170 and Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary* (London: Printed for R. and J. Bonwicke, 1724), p. 190.


90 Watts, *The Doctrine of the Passions*, p. 121.
Envy is an Ill-natured Vice; ’tis made up of meanness and malice. It wishes the force of goodness restrain’d, and the measure of happiness abated. It laments over prosperity, and sickens at the sight of health. Had envy the governing of the creation, we should have a sad world on’t. How would it infect the air, and darken the sun; make the seas unnavigable, and blast the fruits of earth? How would the face of nature be over-cast? How soon would peace be banished, and pleasure languish and expire? We should see confusion without settlement, madness without intervals, and poison without antidote. Discord, and disappointment and despair, would then be the only blessings and entertainments of life.

In short, as Helmut Schoeck remarked, ‘almost all the fragmentary literature which has hitherto dealt with envy (essays, belles-lettres, philosophy, theology, psychology) has constantly seen its destructive, inhibitory, futile and painful element’. Schoeck used the word ‘hitherto’ here in order to demarcate the decidedly different stance that his own study took on the discussion of envy. The eighteenth century, though, found nothing justifiable in this emotion. 

Edward Young(1683-1765), considered it a ‘deformed’, ‘detestable’ and ‘least natural’ passion. Unnatural because, as he says, there is in our nature a necessity and just occasion for all passions, but ‘no necessity of our Nature obliges us to envy, nor is there any just occasion for it’.

For this reason, envy is ‘properly unnatural’, and because unnatural, it works such terrible effects in us. ‘How pale, Keen, Inhuman, and Emaciated is its look?’ (43), he asks and goes on to moralise that ‘a cheerful heart does good like a medicine, but envy corrodes like poison; it is so sharp that it cuts the body which sheaths it’ (43). The same notion was expressed by Patrick Delany(1685/6-1768) in his sermon on envy, which was added as a supplement to his popularconduct book Fifteen Sermons on Social Duties (1744). But the emphasis there is more on the opposition with good nature. Reminding his readers that, proverbially, envy is ‘the rottenness of the bones,’ Delany goes on to explain how good nature operates agreeably, both upon the body and soul; whereas envy wastes and distracts: ‘the eyes

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93 Schoeck’s study and its originality will be further discussed in connection to Sarah Fielding’s writing.
94 Edward Young, A Vindication of Providence: Or, a True Estimate of Human Life in which the Passions are Consider’d in a New Light (London: Printed for Tho. Worrall, 1728), pp. 42-3. Subsequent references are to this edition. The text was first published in 1727.
are sunk by it, and the countenance becomes haggard and livid: a secret canker gnaws the heart, and eats into the bones, like a moth fretting a garment’. This sharp distinction between good nature and health, on the one hand, and envious disposition and disease, on the other, is emphatically maintained in his text. Delany tries to imprint onto the readers’ minds the notion of the desirability of good-nature not only as a moral but also as a health ideal. He notes that ‘a benevolent, good-natured disposition is a kindly, genial, vital principle, that infuses balm and healing into the blood, and produces a strong pleasure, like that which results from good health, and right temperament’ (50). This is the image and description of wellbeing: not only is the body ‘healed’, in other words in good order, but emphasis is also on the specific emotional benefits of being in this kind of healthy state and temperament. On the other hand, envy is a ‘leaven, that sours, corrupts / and is the direct contradiction to health and happiness’ (50).

In addition to the wellbeing of the individual, Delany and other authors of similar texts, write with social welfare in mind. The image of envy as poison serves well to illustrate its disruptive effects on the harmony of society. In such discussions envy is connected to detraction, strife, murder and disruption of public peace. Envy, of course, is a matter of concern for societies and social studies. In the eighteenth century the particular concern with envy within society was twofold. On the one hand, envy registers a complaint and a sense of deficiency that is profoundly personal; it has to do with one’s own prosperity whereas all literature and writings on ethics and conduct always made the point that in a harmonious society of benevolent, sociable, and agreeable individuals the greatest pleasure and the sole view is the prosperity of the public. On the other hand, the eighteenth century, with its rise of the new moneyed economy creates more potential for the experience and spread of envy, because now prosperity and wealth can be possessed without being inherited. In other words, people of the middle rank, could see their peers being raised financially and socially. Edward Young registers this anxiety when he writes that envy is raised among ‘New Men, the

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makers of their own fame and fortune. For rising glory occasions the greatest envy as kindling fires the greatest smoak’ (30).

Sentimental characters would not be shown to experience envy, as this negates the very qualities of goodness and charitableness that are central to both Christian and sentimental ethics. Moreover, envy is an emotion that hinders the very processes of sentimental exchange as they are represented in the offering and reward of good, benevolent actions. For instance, in the same essay quoted above, Collier notes: ‘the envious are always ungrateful; they hate a noble temper, though shewn upon themselves. If you oblige them, ’tis at your peril: they’ll fly in the face of a good turn, and out-rage where they ought to reward’ (114). However, whereas sentimental characters would not, by definition, show envy, they often inhabit a world where envy is constantly and painfully present. In their turn, they must withstand the pressures and dangers of this world and always remain true to the principle that the only enviable state of existence is to be virtuous, simple and innocent, even if this state brings distress and hinders economic prosperity.

The following sections will reveal how the necessary inclusion of negative passions within the theoretical discourse of Sensibility recognised them and created niches that allowed their expression. They will further discuss the specific reasons why these emotions hold a place within novels of sentiment and how the strict particularities of their expression beget their significance within the genre.
Philosophy: The Necessity of Negative Passions

The notions of benevolence, moral sense and the argument of the essentially good nature of man, central to the culture of Sensibility, were given shape and theoretical substance in the works of moralists who sought to refute Thomas Hobbes’s (1588-1679) ideas of humanity. Gardiner, Metcalf and Beebe-Center note, for example, that:

the point of departure for a good deal of the discussion is Hobbes’s conception of human nature as essentially self-seeking, a conception expressed with brutal cynicism by Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) in the *Fable of the Bees* (1724), which represented man on his spiritual side as nothing but a compound of passions, and the moral virtues as “the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride”. ⁹⁶

Janet Todd in her introduction to Sensibility also notes as one of its shaping forces the argumentation against Hobbes. ‘Refuting Hobbes’, she writes, ‘became the convenient starting-point of many sentimental and Christian philosophers.’ ⁹⁷ This is indeed a logical narrative. The reaction against the conception of nature that Hobbes, and later Mandeville (1670-1733), posit is a source of great influence on the development and emphasis of basic concepts of Sensibility. It was not only the content of these theories that influenced notions of Sensibility but also the specific way in which this content was exposited. The meticulous study of Isabel Rivers into the language of ethics and religion in the eighteenth-century with its unrivalled attention to elements of the text, use of rhetorical devices and details of publication in relevant eighteenth-century works has proved how fruitful it is to consider, when discussing complex eighteenth-century notions, the element of rhetoric entailed in their formation. ⁹⁸

Refuting Hobbes and Mandeville means that the works of sentimental theorists make up part of a dialogue between opposing views, or rather they constitute something like a retort, an ‘answer back’. In its turn, this means that these works are written with certain, well-defined objectives: to present an alternative image of human nature to the Hobbesian or Mandevillian one and evidence for its validity in a way that refutes the validity of the other. The first obvious implication of this is the use of rhetoric.

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of these philosophical texts that seek to establish their impact on Sensibility must be sensitive to the fact that some of their parts are masterful, rhetorical answers. This rhetoricity is important for the shaping of the discourse of the negative passions within sentimental moral theories.

Also of importance is the main issue this ‘dialogue’ revolves around. As Gardiner et al. note in their analysis, ‘opponents of this view [Hobbes’s], seeking to vindicate the honor of virtue, were led perforce to consider the origin and bearing of the affecdional impulses. The line of least resistance was to claim for the altruistic sentiments and impulses the same originality that belonged to the egoistic’. To understand this statement more fully one needs to bear in mind that the proponents of benevolence and goodness cannot altogether reject the presence in human nature of negative, violent and egoistic emotions. This is especially difficult because of the way moralist writers supported their ideas. ‘The method adopted for settling all disputes in this field’, Gardiner et al. say, ‘was the appeal to introspection and to common observation of life’. This is a method that would easily furnish with examples of egoistic behaviour. On the face of it, then, proponents of the egoistic view have quite a strong case, one that could be supported by real life situations much more easily, or forcibly, than the benevolent view. This means that the analysis of those who seek to refute the egoistic view must evolve along these lines: to emphasize goodness and to find examples for its power and validity and, simultaneously, to condition the egoistic passions and find ways of diminishing their hold on human nature. The discussion cannot evolve without this latter underside and this is the basis of the relation of Sensibility to negative emotions. A close consideration of works by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) and Francis Hutcheson (1694-1740) will reveal that the negative passions make up an important part of the discussion and play a complementary role in the definition of basic premises of the benevolist view. It will also help to explain some of the inherent contradictions within the concept of Sensibility, and will assist in accounting for the fact that its language defines what opposes it in the extreme.

100 Gardiner, p. 214.
In this following section I deal mainly with works by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson and not with later sentimental theorists such as David Hume (1711-1776) and Adam Smith (1723-1790) in detail. The reason for this is that I understand the shaping of the phenomenon of Sensibility as a gradual process. All theorists contributed to our idea of it, but they did so at different times and under different circumstances. It is more important for this study, that seeks to find the shaping forces that influenced the emergence of Sensibility, to be concerned in detail with writers such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Joseph Butler because in them the need to reply to Hobbes and Mandeville and to refute the hold of the negative passions is more pronounced. As Isabel Rivers notes, ‘Hobbes was an easy and obvious target identified by Shaftesbury’. Following Shaftesbury, Hutcheson’s early work also targeted the same opponent:

Hutcheson’s chief objective in his earliest published work was to uphold the ancient view of man as an essentially sociable being, of which Cicero and latterly Shaftesbury were the most important representatives, against the notorious self-love theorists old and new, Epicurus, Hobbes and Mandeville. Further, Joseph Butler also identifies Hobbes as a target in his work that accepts and modifies Shaftesburian thought and promotes the Christian ethic.

A work like Hume’s, on the other hand, whereas it identifies predecessors or gives praise to these influential philosophers can be more easily self-standing. According to the foundation of his morals Hume certainly forms part of this group of philosophers and his work is a significant bulwark of the concept of Sensibility. However, with regard to the antithetical premises that form part of this analysis Hume’s work is not as telling as the ones selected. Reading Hume and his work on the passions, one does not necessarily feel, as happens with the philosophers studied here, that the passions are categorised in ‘sides’. To be more precise, particular passions or groups of passions can, in the form of synecdoche, connote the self-love theory or the theory of benevolism. In

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102 Rivers, p. 159.
103 ‘Of the Passions’ in Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) which was later to form the basis of his *Dissertation on the Passions* (1757), a comparative and critical edition is offered by Tom L. Beauchamp in *David Hume, A Dissertation of the Passions; The Natural History of Religion* ed. by Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007).
Hobbes’s view of psychological egoism for instance, there is talk of pride and of ‘vain-glory’, anger is defined as ‘sudden courage’ and the passions are discussed as connoting the ‘insatiable desire for self-preservation, power, success, acquisitions and selfish satisfactions’.\(^{104}\) In Mandeville pride and envy become central to the essence of his morals. Conversely, the sentimental philosophers who defend their morals against the self-love theorists ‘group’ the emotions in categories more or less according to their conduciveness to benevolence and morality. Shaftesbury divides up natural and unnatural affections, Hutcheson, as the following will show, particularly makes a point of defending the presence of negative passions within human nature. From the latter group, Joseph Butler can be associated, straightforwardly, with the negative passion of resentment. However, his analysis specifically selects this passion for exploration because it appears as evil in itself and Butler wants to prove otherwise. All the above philosophers refer more clearly to an antithesis that bears implications for the character of sensibility and also the counter-concept of insensibility. However, Hume’s analysis of the passions is different. Consider for example the following part on benevolence and anger:

> The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoined with, benevolence, and anger. [...] But love and hatred are not complete within themselves, nor rest in that emotion, which they produce; but carry the mind to something farther. Love is always followed by a desire of happiness to the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery: As hatred produces a desire of the misery, and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated. [...] Compassion frequently arises, where there is no preceding esteem or friendship; and compassion is an uneasiness in the sufferings of another. Malice and envy also arise in the mind without any preceding hatred or injury; though their tendency is exactly the same with that of anger and ill-will. [...] The similar tendency of compassion to that of benevolence, and of envy to anger, forms a very close relation betwixt these two sets of passions; tho’ of a different kind from that insisted above. It is not a resemblance of feeling or sentiment, but a resemblance of tendency or direction.[...] Compassion is seldom or never felt without some mixture of tenderness or friendship; and envy is naturally accompanied with malice and ill-will.\(^{105}\)

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\(^{105}\) David Hume, *Dissertation on the Passions*, 3.6-3.9, edition by Tom L. Beauchamp, pp. xciii-xcv.
The passage analyzes all the passions that this discussion pivots around; anger, malice and envy, love, compassion and tenderness. Yet what differentiates this passage from the ones by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, that will be discussed here, is the distinct lack of pejorative language regarding the negative passions and the absence of any characterizations of cruelty or inhumanity. In this extract the passions may be ‘categorized’ according to ‘similarity of tendency’ but there is no division that suggests negativity. This characteristic is owing to what Thomas Dixon described as: ‘The tacit ontology of Hume’s Treatise [which] was one where passions or emotions were not of anything (such as a soul or will or even perhaps of a body) but were those mini-agents that comprised the entirety of what was meant by “I”.’

Rather than being of the will, soul or body, the passions, for Hume, are plainly a part of human nature that can be analysed according to observations that need not refer to the metaphysical. Both the language and the essence of analysis in the above passage show that in Hume’s account the passions are described for what they are (or perceived to be) rather than judged for what they connote. In Hume’s work the passions are given an integral, and, most importantly, valid part, within human nature. Thus, by breaking with the long-established tradition of negatively assessing the passions, Hume also separates his analysis from that view that categorises passions in a dyad of positivity versus negativity according to religious and other considerations. As such, Hume’s analysis is an important landmark in the progressive secularisation of the passions and the emergence of emotions, and this is the way it is read by Dixon. His work is also an integral part of our concept of Sensibility. However, his original thought differentiates his study from the issue at hand which rests on this particular dyad of positivity and negativity in the account of the passions and the ways it informs the sentimental ideal. For this reason, the selected philosophers offer both thematically and temporally more relevant observations.

Following this digression, the sections on Shaftesbury and Hutcheson will demonstrate both the inclusion of the negative passions within the theoretical discourse of sensibility and also how they are delineated and modified as part of the rhetoric.

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106 Dixon, From Passions to Emotions, p. 106.
against self-interest. My analysis does not aspire to be a comprehensive account of these philosophers’ systems of thought. Rather, it etches out the basis for the discussion of negative passions within the theoretical framework of Sensibility.

Shaftesbury’s An Inquiry Concerning Virtue

There are two versions of Shaftesbury’s (1671-1713) An Inquiry Concerning Virtue. One was published in 1699 anonymously, and, as it is reported, without the consent of Shaftesbury himself. It makes up what has become known as the Toland edition; a rare text which presents the core of basic aspects in Shaftesbury’s philosophy. The other version is the polished text that forms the basis of his celebrated Characteristics of 1711. A photo-reproduction of the Toland edition introduced by Joseph Filonowicz was published in 1991. Filonowicz argued that this edition, and not the version of the Characteristics, is ‘better for the purposes of moral theory’. He further commented that ‘the clumsiness of the Toland edition is more than compensated by its sincerity, straightforwardness and moral urgency’ and that ‘it is difficult to find a major idea at work in Characteristics that is not at least foreshadowed in the 1699 Inquiry’ (47). The present analysis consults both texts, but emphasis is put on the 1699 edition. In addition to Filonowicz’s arguments this text highlights the fact that Shaftesbury’s philosophy had already begun to take shape at the same period when many critics locate the onset of ideas that shaped Sensibility, that is, the late seventeenth century.

In writing the Inquiry, Shaftesbury set out to show, in contrast to Hobbes, that human beings are ‘social creatures by nature prior to any mutual bargain’ (11). In doing so, as Filonowicz notes, Shaftesbury distinguished himself from earlier critics of Hobbes, ‘most notably the Cambridge Platonists, by accepting the premise that all human activity is motivated by passions in order to better refute Hobbes’s assumptions of psychological egoism’ (12). That is, Shaftesbury tried to refute Hobbes by arguing that passions can generate genuine altruism instead of aiming solely at the benefit of the self. The Inquiry did not argue that virtue is achieved by entirely suppressing self-

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107 Antony Ashley Cooper Shaftesbury, An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, in two Discourses 1699: A Photoreproduction with an Introduction by Joseph Filonowicz (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholar’s Facsimiles and Reprints, 1991), p. 46. All subsequent references given in parentheses in the body of the text are to this edition. Please note that the page number after the abbreviation ‘Inq.’ refers to the text of the Inquiry itself and not the page number of Filonowicz’s book. His introduction runs from page 1 to 56 of the book.
interested passions. In Shaftesbury’s system, virtue is ‘a suitable balance or harmony among the self-interested and the altruistic passions. Vice, on the other hand, was a kind of emotional unhealthiness or psychic imbalance.

The notion of balance is central to Shaftesbury’s thought. It is worth noting that his metaphor for the passions was that of the cords or strings of an instrument, which if strained beyond a certain degree causes disproportion and disharmony. Consequently, with the exception of a group of extreme disorders, passions are either connected to virtue or vice according to considerations of proportion and moderateness. Passions that are ‘unconsonant with’ or ‘disservicable to’ the good are called vicious but these are not necessarily negative as the following shows:

I need not instance in Rage, Revengefulness, and other such (where it is so obvious) to shew how they are ill, and constitute an ill creature: but even if kindness and love, though rightly placed and towards a proper object [...] if it be immoderate and beyond a certain degree, it is vicious. (Inq. 26)

Shaftesbury further conditions this idea of the appropriateness and degree of passions by making it an issue for the individual constitution. The idea of the economy of the passions means that a passion, even if it is strong and forcible, is ‘not blamed as vitious’, when it is such as ‘the constitution can bear without disturbance and sufferance and if it is proportionate to the other passions within it’ (Inq. 96). On the other hand, passions are excessive when raised to a height that surpasses the others of the same constitution, even if the creature can bear them. In a system that defines virtue as balance, it is cautioned that ‘passions being in unequal proportion to others, and causing an ill balance in the Affection, must be the occasion of inequality in the Conduct, and must incline to a wrong moral practice’ (Inq. 94). A wrong balance in the affection leads in general to uneasiness and disturbance in the mind and body. Generally, in the Inquiry the language used to describe the tempers that are connected to non-benevolent passions is highly pejorative. Some of the words and phrases include: ‘uncalm’, ‘disquiet’, ‘dissociate, obnoxious, averse to all humanity’, ‘disturbance’, ‘disease’ (Inq. 102-3). Progressively Shaftesbury makes virtue not only beneficial to the individual and the community but also pleasurable. On the other hand, to have egoistic passions is misery and suffering. Towards the end of the Inquiry he exclaims: ‘for who is there but
knows that to hate, to be envious, to be enrag’d, to carry Bitterness and Malice, is to suffer? This it is which we properly call Displeasure; and to conceive Hatred or Displeasure, is all one as to conceive Pain, Anxiety, Misery (Inq. 191-2).

There is, though, within this system a place for such passions as anger and resentment. Indeed the very notion of virtue as balance means that they cannot be excluded but confined. Anger, for example, is required, to a certain degree, in order to repel injury and resist violence:

It is by this that a creature offering an injury, is deter’d from it, as knowing by the very signs which accompany this Passion whilst it is rising and gathering strength, that the injury will not go with impunity. And it is this passion which, when violence is actually us’d, assist us more effectually to struggle against it, and adds force to us, both in supporting it and in returning it to the inflicter. For thus, as Rage and Despair increase, a creature grows still more and more terrible; and being urged to the greatest extremity, finds a degree of strength and boldness unknown till then, and which had not risen but through the height of provocation. [...] a certain degree of that Passion (whether that degree be properly call’d Anger or no, it matters not) is most certainly requisite in the Creature for his performance even of the better sort of moral Actions, whether tending to the good of Society, or to his own preservation and defence. (Inq. 157-8, emphasis added)

Anger is, in some cases, acceptable, and even requisite as it retains here the element of use in self-defence that characterises many discussions of the emotion. However, these instances are clearly distinguished further in the text from the angry temper that is equated to disease. This distinction is expressed through lexical boundaries as well. Already in the text, as shown in the quote above, it is noted that the kind of anger referred to here may not be recognisable as the common definition of the emotion. Further on, Shaftesbury clearly states that what he describes as the kind of anger that is conducive to self-defence and moral action is not what is commonly denominated by the term. Anger is mischievous and destructive ‘if it be what we commonly mean by that word; if it be such as denominates an angry temper’ (Inq. 158). The corresponding passage in the text of Characteristicks that runs through pages 144 to 146 of the second volume bears no such anxiety over names. There, Shaftesbury firmly talks of anger and
he also makes the immoderate, settled degree of anger not the ‘angry temper’ but the concept of ‘revenge’.\textsuperscript{108}

Generally, the later text reads better and is certainly more refined\textsuperscript{109} but Filonowicz is right about the ‘urgency’ of the Toland edition over the 1711 version. The main points about the passion of anger are there in both texts. However, in the 1699 version there is a greater fervency in the argument. The 1711 text argues for the necessity, to a degree, of anger but it entirely omits the part on the conduciveness of anger to ‘even the better sort of moral actions’. In the Toland edition the passage continues further from the quotation above: ‘For, who can resolutely enough divide from, or resist ill and detestable men; or who can fight either singly against a privat enemy, or for the public against a public one, without feeling in some measure, and being arm’d as it were with a certain degree of this passion? (\textit{Inq.158}). On the one hand, the specific part bears obvious political resonance. The words ‘divide’, ‘resist’ and ‘public enemy’ can be taken to allude to the political upheaval of the seventeenth century and the factional politics in which the First Earl of Shaftesbury played an important role and which influenced the writer of \textit{Characteristicks}.\textsuperscript{110} After all, the Toland version appears in 1699, a time significantly closer to seventeenth-century politics than the \textit{Characteristics}. For the purposes of this project, it is more important to note how Shaftesbury changes the connotations of anger and seeks to dissociate it from destructive or selfish actions. The argument may be political or have sprung from a need to interpret political actions in a certain way. But it also showcases the need for sentimental morality to include and transform the discourse of negative passions.

Resentment is also discussed in the \textit{Inquiry} with a similar emphasis on resisting injury. In fact the two emotional terms are almost synonymous within the work.

\textsuperscript{108} Anthony Ashley Cooper Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times}, vol. II. IV \textit{An Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit} (London: Printed by John Darby, 1711), pp. 144-146.

\textsuperscript{109} For the notion that the Toland version is a text contradictory to the concept of politeness, see Lawrence Elliot Klein, \textit{Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{110} For the treatment of the relationship between the First Earl of Shaftesbury and the writer of \textit{Characteristicks} as well as the connection of factional politics, masculinity and sensibility, see Julie Ellison, \textit{Cato’s Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion} (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), and more specifically pages 23-47.
However, Shaftesbury recognises an aspect of resentment as a kind of binding force that unites the human species in opposition to this injury:

There is in effect no rational creature whatsoever, but knows that when he offends or dos harm to any one, he cannot fail to create an expectation or fear of like ill, and consequently a resentment and animosity in any creature looking on; and therefore must be conscious to himself of being liable and exposed in some manner to such a treatment from every one, as if he had in some degree offended all. (*Inq.* 42)

This notion is repeated in Butler’s sermon as well and, of course, it is recognisable in Adam Smith’s later theory. But in its early description here it is forcefully presented as a means of establishing social bonding: a single offence, an offence to a particular person, is considered as an offence to all the people bound by the same moral standards.

Further to this point, this presentation of parts of the *Inquiry* shows that the first step towards refuting Hobbes was accomplished by arguing that people do not form societies in order to protect themselves from the consequences of their brutish passions, but that human nature is invested with passions that tend towards the common good, passions that are both beneficial and pleasurable and that to be under the control of egoistic passions is to be in misery. Instances, though, of negative passions are permissible as long as they serve a clear purpose, as is the case of anger and self-defence. The second step, which will come with Hutcheson, is that the negative and egoistical passions are discussed in such a way as to make their very function not a point against, but evidence of, the essentially good nature of man.

However, from very early on in the discussion of the negative passions within sentimental morality the optimistic promise of their beneficial purpose was undermined by a corresponding repressive potential. The *Inquiry* also includes this statement: ‘It is most certain that by what proportion the natural and good affections are lost or wanting in any creature by that proportion the ill and unnatural ones must prevail’ (*Inq.* 123). This idea opens up the discussion to an unsettling, and actually repressive, notion: the definition of insensibility as the utmost moral depravity. As Reddy notes, when quoting a passage of similar implications from the *Characteristics*, ‘it was optimistic to see goodness as natural, to be sure, but the same move made any deviation from goodness
That is the reason why the pejorative language of sensibility includes – in addition to the practice of creating words that negate the qualities that it praises (feeling-unfeeling, generous-ungenerous) – the deprecatory characterisations ‘base’, ‘cruel’ and ‘inhuman’. Their use is not only aimed at increasing emphasis. They are logically derived from the notion of deviation from the emotional blueprint that sensibility is based on. Hutcheson’s discussion of the negative emotions will further contribute to this. This negative underside of the theory of Sensibility is the reason why, although sensibility promises emotional freedom it can, in reality, become stylized and actually suppressive. In terms of Reddy’s theoretical framework, it promises to be an ‘emotional refuge’, but it transforms into an ‘emotional regime’.

This notion also becomes a means of expressing exclusion from the ‘community’ of sensibility. Exclusion is important to the way the concept of Sensibility operates. In fact, any definition of Sensibility that seeks to establish it with accuracy must incorporate this element. One definition that achieves this kind of accuracy to a great extent is given by Wendy Motoooka in her book The Age of Reasons:

sentimentalism is a mode of representation, reading, and/or understanding that assumes—in the face of plausible alternatives—the empirical existence of an empirically unverified moral truth that can be denied only by those willing to be excluded from the community that testifies to this moral truth.\(^{112}\)

To be more precise, the concept of Sensibility evolves based on two defining and, to a degree, complementary foundations: empiricism and theories of emotion. As Motoooka has shown, the moral truth that sensibility posits is empirically unverified, that means that although all people have the same means, i.e., their senses, to reach that moral truth, precisely because knowledge is based on one’s own sensory experience its outcome cannot be the same or constant. This is one of the reasons why the category of ‘rational’ is so unstable in the period, a notion that Motoooka expresses in her title by changing the conventional appellation ‘age of reason’ to ‘age of reasons’. In order, then, for Sensibility to withstand opposition it resorts to exclusion: the moral truth that it posits can only be denied by those who are excluded by the community that expresses

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this moral truth. This means that their opinion or experience does not matter. The same applies, to a great extent, to the theory of emotions. Sensibility includes negative and egoistic emotions, which, on the face of things, contradict its very core premises. It includes them, though, under conditions which posit, with rhetoric skill, the limits of their function, so as not to negate the essentially good nature of man and to account for the verifiable presence of them in real life. When these emotions function in ways that threaten to contradict the ideal that it posits, it excludes them by casting them off as verging on the ‘inhuman’. That is, it claims that they are abnormalities that need not be included in the scheme of things described, because they do not apply to the core of what is meant by ‘nature’. Hutcheson’s discussion, as will be shown below, makes use of this framework.

**Hutcheson’s Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions**

Where Shaftesbury uses the strings of a musical instrument as a metaphor for the passions, Hutcheson uses a metaphor of the body. For him, the passions exist in an antagonistic yet complementary state:

> Our passions no doubt are often matter of uneasiness to our selves, and sometimes occasion misery to others, when any one is indulged into a degree of Strength beyond its proportion. But which of them could we have wanted, without greater misery in the whole? They are by Nature balanced against each other, like the Antagonist Muscles of the Body; either of which separately would have occasioned Distortion and irregular Motion, yet jointly they form a Machine, most accurately subservient to the Necessities, Convenience, and Happiness of a rational System.\(^{113}\)

Hutcheson’s metaphor retains the notion of balance that occurs in Shaftesbury’s scheme, which he tries to defend, but the specific imagery he uses suggests a different function for the negative passions. Hutcheson needs to account differently for the egoistic passions because of the circumstances in which his works appear. His objective is not only to defend and reinforce Shaftesbury’s scheme but to do so specifically against Mandeville. This is the reason why it is fruitful to consider the theoretical works of sensibility in the time they appear. Hutcheson has to deal with opposing

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argumentation of a different kind to that of Shaftesbury. The most important, influential and damaging aspect of Mandeville’s work was the way it presented and referred everything good to an essentially selfish motive. In the preface to the Essay, Hutcheson speaks of those who ‘treated our Desires or Affections, making the most generous, kind and disinterested of them, to proceed from Self-Love, by some subtle Trains of Reasoning, to which honest Hearts are often wholly strangers’ (Essay, vii). Mandeville’s scheme is dangerous because his ideas can be convincing and even if ‘honest hearts’ are strangers to them, his main contentions were accessible and part of popular discussion. As Philip Harth notes, in his introduction to the Penguin edition of the Fable of the Bees:

During the five years following the appearance of the ‘Vindication’ [Mandeville’s vindication of the Fable, 1724] no less than ten books were published attacking the Fable of the Bees, by such important divines, philosophers and critics, as William Law, John Dennis, Francis Hutcheson, Archibald Campbell, and Isaac Watts. During the same period the book was the subject of numerous attacks in pastoral letters, sermons, and letters to the press.  

This outrage was provoked by the fact that, as it was interpreted, the Fable ‘denied mankind its most estimable qualities’ (26). For Mandeville man is ‘essentially selfish’, ‘the least naturally sociable’ of all animals. He is ‘teachable’, however, and when forming societies, in order for these societies to exist and prosper, he must learn to ‘associate selfishness with shame and the pursuit of public interest with honour’ (27). This, in its turn, signifies that virtue is not natural or sincere but an artificial construct based on the manipulation of one’s pride by flattery. As Philip Harth explains:

Observing that those who were public-spirited and given the name of virtuous were held up to honour and praise while those who were selfish and labelled vicious were the objects of shame and detestation, men were forced by pride to curb their predatory impulses. (28)

Within this scheme the negative passions were given prominence and also counter-intuitive functions. For example, envy, for Mandeville is not a self-consuming passion of moral depravity and suffering but a buttress of economic prosperity as it constantly

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creates want. Moreover, anger is discussed in a way that overlooks its aspect as a defensive emotion and reveals it as almost predatory:

Anger is that passion which is rais’d in us when we are cross’d or disturb’d in our desires, and that as it sums up all the strength in creatures, so it was given them that by it they might exert themselves more vigorously in endeavouring to remove, overcome, or destroy whatever obstructs them in the pursuit of self-preservation. (216)

The language here is markedly different from the way anger is discussed in works of morality generally. In those texts anger is raised to repel injury, in a state of self-defence aiding self-preservation, but in a ‘modest’ way. Here anger is invested with a motivational power that may even be offensive or injurious in the attempt to ‘remove’, ‘overcome’ and ‘destroy’ (note both the strength of meaning and the fact that they are all active verbs). To this kind of statement Hutcheson’s analysis must serve as a counter-argument.

The first thing which Hutcheson’s analysis insists on with regard to the passion of anger is that it exists within human nature for a good reason: ‘there could not therefore be a wiser Contrivance to restrain injuries, than to make every mortal some way formidable to an unjust invader, by such a violent passion’ (Essay, 54). It should be noted, in passing, that in the Inquiry anger was useful for the same reason because it makes the person who experiences it appear ‘terrible’ to the injurer. The second step is the argument that anger is naturally extinguished the moment it achieves the purpose of reformation which it serves:

Now as is plainly necessary, in a System of Agents capable of injuring each other, that every one should be made formidable to an Invader, by such a violent passion, till the invader shews his Reformation of Temper, as above, and no longer; so we find it is thus ordered in our Constitution. Upon these Evidences of Reformation in the Invader, our Passion naturally abates or if in any perverse Temper it does not, the Sense of Mankind turns against him, and he is looked upon as cruel and inhumane. (Essay, 76, emphasis added)

This means that Hutcheson not only states that anger is implanted in human nature for a reason, but attempts to provide verifiable evidence for it. Moreover, he does so in a way that is difficult to be refuted since no one would admit to prolonged anger and thus to
‘inhumanity’. For the same reason the assertion would withstand the test of introspection and common observation that is the usual method of confirmation for eighteenth-century ethics. In addition, this statement further showcases that line of reasoning within the theory of Sensibility that serves as a way of excluding opposition by making any deviation from the defined function of emotion unnatural. But Hutcheson’s scheme goes further and aims to justify even this ‘perversity’:

Our Nature scarce leads us to any further resentment, when once the Injurious seems to us fully seized with Remorse, so that we fear no farther evils from him, or when all his power is gone. Those who continue their Revenge further, are prepossessed with some false opinion of Mankind, as worse than they really are; and are not easily inclined to believe that their hearty remorse for injuries, or to think themselves secure. (Essay, 142)

Here he offers an added saving line that helps to doubly secure the idea of essential goodness. Correct the ‘false prepossessions’ and resentment will resume its appointed function, that is within the limits, to serves an essentially socially beneficial purpose; not to revenge but to repel injury and reform the injurious. Hutcheson’s scheme even succeeds in modifying that most unjustifiable of passions; envy. Maybe the most emphatically expressed assertion in the Essay is that there is no ‘disinterested malice’ in human nature, that is, no ‘calm desire for misery for its own sake’. This idea is not unique to Hutcheson. Moralists who sought to refute bleak images of human nature would argue that human nature is essentially benevolent or, at least, not essentially malevolent. This was a convincing argument of least resistance, because, as Paul Scott Gordon argues, the weakness of the Mandevillian, and by extension similar propositions, is its absolutism. That is, the assertion that all behaviour can be referred to selfish motives. This means that even a ray of benevolent behaviour can discredit the basic suggestion. By bringing disinterested malice into the discussion Hutcheson creates another ‘place’ for envy:

This sort of malice [the desire of their misery abstractly from any approbation or condemnation by our moral sense] is never found in our nature, when we are not transported with passion. The propensities of anger and envy have some resemblance of it; yet envy is not an ultimate desire of another’s misery, but only a subordinate desire of it; as the means of advancing our selves, or some person more beloved than the person envied. (Essay, 66)
In the *Inquiry* envy held a position among the extreme disorders. Here it is almost justified, its potency is diminished, and its ‘ability’ to cast people as vicious is manipulated into invalidity.

In essence, Hutcheson’s scheme is more optimistic than Shaftesbury’s because it provides both a justification for negative passions and a way of achieving the moral ideal. As Klein notes, the *Inquiry* was interested in the criteria which established moral action but it ‘avoided questions of moral struggle’.\(^{115}\) There is a great deal in Shaftesbury’s text about the pleasantness and ‘healthiness’ of a benevolent temper and, conversely, much about the suffering cause by the negative passions, but little about how one could go from the latter to the former. In Hutcheson’s analysis, the justification of the negative passions offers also a way for their ‘remedy’, as the section below shows:

> when we rashly form opinions of sects, or nations as absolutely evil; or get associated ideas of impiety, cruelty, profaneness, recurring upon every notion of them: when by repeated reflection upon injuries received, we strengthen the dislike into an obdurate aversion, and conceive the injurious as directly malicious, we may be led to act in such a manner that spectators who are unacquainted with our secret opinions or confused apprehensions of others, may think we have pure disinterested malice in our nature; a very instinct toward the misery of others, when it is really only the overgrowth of a just natural affection, upon false opinions, or confused ideas. (*Essay*, 100)

By making even the most apparently malicious emotion the ‘overgrowth’ of a just and natural one, Hutcheson firmly establishes the core of human nature as benevolent. Secondly, the notion of ‘overgrowth’ suggests something pathological and the implication would be that there is also the cure that would reinstate the just and natural degree. That is his idea of the ‘most favourable conception of others’ (*Essay*, 191).

The significance of Hutcheson’s analysis is that it takes the argument a step further. When confronted with the need to reconcile the negative passions to the ideas of sentimental morality, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and other analysts have a long-established tradition to fall back on. The idea that the violent passions are implanted in our nature for a good reason, which is mainly self-preservation, goes as far back as the

\(^{115}\)Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness*, p. 59.
Christian theologians and their need to account for the presence of anger in the Bible. Hutcheson makes use of this tradition but he modifies its focal point. Instead of insisting on the necessity of negative passions for the purposes of preserving the self against injury, he encourages people to ‘observe’ the seemingly perfect correlation of their limited duration with the necessity they respond to. By using the eighteenth-century method of appealing to common observation in order to establish a moral truth Hutcheson makes the function of negative passions an argument in favour of sentimentalism. However, in order to achieve this, Hutcheson’s argument posits a very restricted function of negative emotions, one that allows their expression only with certain causes and within certain time limits. More importantly, it is also one that constantly threatens to label any deviation from the prescribed limits as ‘cruel and inhumane’. Although rhetorically this is very apt, in essence, it stigmatises the experience of all but the positive and ‘soft’ emotions, leaves a very restricted function of ‘justified’ negative passion, and creates sharp dichotomies between sensibility and insensibility.

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This section has demonstrated that the discourse of Sensibility had to take the negative passions into account and modify them in order to define and defend its basic foundations. The most usual line of argument was that negative passions were implanted in nature for a purpose. In traditional ethics this purpose is self-preservation. The discourse of sentimental philosophy emphasizes morality in the purpose of negative passions. Hutcheson makes the outcome of anger and resentment the reformation of the injurer. Joseph Butler, in the two footnotes on Hobbes that D.H. Monro cites, after discrediting, point by point, Hobbes’s main contentions, concludes:

[...] and should anyone think to assert, that resentment in the mind of man was absolutely nothing but reasonable concern for our own safety, the falsity of this, and what is the real nature of that passion, could be shewn in no other ways than those in which it may be shewn, that there is such a thing in some degree as real good-will in man towards man.\(^{116}\)

Butler’s statement attributes almost the same importance to negative passions as to positive for the proof of good-will. Going on to give his influential discussion of resentment and its moral purpose, Butler makes this emotion a valuable contribution to the general good, by diminishing the cases of injury in the world. But, as this analysis has already pointed out, the discourse of negative passions is, in this context, double-edged.

Where the older sermons that advice against anger posit the threat of sin when the emotion exceeded the prescribed bounds, the discourse of sensibility ‘threatens’ with the characterisation of ‘cruel’ and ‘inhumane’ behaviour. Partly, this is a testament to the progressive secularisation of ethics that was ongoing in the eighteenth century. The consequences of this particular discourse, though, are different to the ones discussing justified and sinful anger. The threat of sin incurs the anxiety of damnation and the spiritual agony of falling from grace. Being characterised as ‘inhumane’ brings forth different connotations. Sin is a concept which, to a great extent, involves a sense of responsibility primarily to the divine and then to fellow beings. The word ‘inhumane’ incurs a responsibility first and foremost towards one’s fellow human beings. This line of reasoning prompts novelists to describe insensibility or unsentimental behaviour in terms of exclusion from human fate and society. The anger of sentimental heroes must be defended against this severe accusation. As in the philosophical discussions, novelists also tend to present the anger of sentimental characters as something different from what we commonly understand by the word.
Heroism and Sensibility: Negative Passions and the Novel of Sentiment

There is, due to reasons of themes and genre, a firm connection between sensibility and romance. In The Culture of Sensibility, Barker-Benfield notes that ‘sentimental fiction was “pervaded” by romance throughout the century’.\(^{117}\) He also observes that the ‘heroism of sentimental fiction was shaped in part by its legacy from romance as well as sixteenth- and seventeenth-century anti-romance, of which Don Quixote is the best known, although it looked back to Orlando Furioso.’\(^{118}\) The literary discussion of the time is concerned with the debate over romance and the novel, and attempts to define the latter through its differences to the former. However, there is also in the novel, in general, and the sentimental novel, in particular, continuity between the two. One reason for this is that both categories, ‘romance’ and ‘novel’, are difficult to define in definite terms. But it was also not necessary to do so. As Laurie Langbauer writes, ‘romance was what the novel was not [...]. The utility of romance consisted precisely in its vagueness; it was the chaotic negative space outside the novel that determined the outlines of the novel’s form.’\(^{119}\) The sentimental novel incorporated elements that both distinguish it from and, in many ways, connect it to romance. One of the most telling characteristics is the similarity of themes. Barker-Benfield records the most salient: ‘courteous, mannerly males, governed by a deeply internalized code of sexual morality, making the relief of distressed and reverenced women their highest purpose, fighting off monstrous and bestial figures who capture and assault women.’\(^{120}\) This connection can be further clarified and explained if we look into the history of the term ‘sensibility’ and take into consideration an account of it that is largely under-emphasized. That is, its early origins in romances.

To begin with, the term ‘sensibility’ is not an eighteenth-century one. The special connotations by which we generally understand it are. But the term had been in use long before. In an essay published in 1941 Lucien Febvre was an early advocate of the need for a history of emotions. In ‘Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the

\(^{117}\) Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility, p. 317.
\(^{118}\) Barker Benfield, p. 316.
\(^{120}\) Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility, p. 319.
Emotional Life of the Past’, Febvre set forth some of the basic questions and aims of the ‘new kind’ of history he proposed. This history asked for ‘a vast collective investigation to be opened on the fundamental sentiments of man and the forms they take’. In this essay, Febvre chose the word ‘sensibility’ to signify ‘the emotional life of man in all its manifestations’, but before this clarification he offered a historical account of the term, with which he justified his choice:

*Sensibilité* (sensibility, sensitivity) is a fairly ancient word. It appeared in language at least as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century; the adjective *sensible* (sensible, sensitive) had proceeded it by a short interval, as is often the case. During the course of its existence, moreover, as often happens, *sensibilité* has taken on various meanings. Some of these are narrow, some are broad, and they can to a certain extent be situated in time. Thus in the seventeenth century the word appears above all to refer to a certain responsiveness of the human being to impressions of a moral nature – there is at that time frequent mention of sensibilité to the truth, goodness, to pleasure, etc. In the eighteenth century the word refers to a particular way of experiencing human feelings – feelings of pity, sadness, etc. [...] But the word has other meanings. There are semi-scientific and semi-philosophical meanings.

This short, yet far-reaching, passage offers an overview of the variety and richness of meaning and of the word and connotations that it carries. Although, as Febvre notes, some meanings can be located in certain times, this is by no means a clear process. Some of the most significant and popular uses of the term owe their success to this lexical heritage that creates the meaning-laden term of the eighteenth century.

Forty years after this account, an article by Frank Baasner discussed an important stage in the history of this term and its transition; its use in the language of romance. In ‘The Changing Meaning of Sensibilité’, Baasner explores the term as it appears in seventeenth-century romances and then in the early eighteenth century. He begins with a straightforward statement: ‘first of all, it must be emphasized that the context of love (this is true for the noun as well as the adjective) is the most normal and frequent one in the use of “sensibilité” and “sensible” during the seventeenth century’. He further adds: ‘the great number of examples [...] shows that “sensible” in the meaning of “being in

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122 Febvre, p. 13.
“love” was frequently used and had become part of the semantics of love during the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{123} Illustrative of this meaning are the romances of Mme de Scudéry’s because she uses ‘sensibilité’ as part of her love theory. ‘Sensibilité’, ‘tendresse’ and ‘honnêteté’ are all very important terms within her works and Baasner refers to excerpts from \textit{Clélie} where he finds the more precise definitions of ‘sensibilité’. One of the most important examples he gives is this:

Mais pour bien définir la tendresse, je pense pouvoir dire, que c’est une certaine sensibilité du Coeur, qui ne se trouve presque jamais souverainement, qu’en des personnes qui ont l’ame noble, les indications vertueuses et l’esprit bien tourné; et qui fait que lors qu’elles ont de l’amitié, elles ont sincere, et ardente.\textsuperscript{124}

‘Sensibilité’ is not only a guarantee for the intensity and sincerity of the relationship; it is, furthermore, a quality to be found only in morally outstanding, virtuous individuals.\textsuperscript{125} Baasner’s study reveals an important sense of the term that is different in meaning and implications from that of the eighteenth century. Firstly, sensibility here is a proof of sincerity whereas in the eighteenth century there is a growing anxiety over the potential theatricality of the emotional experience that sensibility endorses. Indeed, critical discussion revolves around the way the literature of sensibility seeks to educate readers on how to feel, and this, by itself, implies artificiality. Secondly, being part of the romance genre, the term refers to a quality of ‘extraordinary individuals’, whereas in the eighteenth century it is the quality of ‘simple’, ‘ordinary’ characters. Conversely, the only thing that makes these ‘simple’ eighteenth-century characters, in some ways, extraordinary, is their increased sensibility.

The considerations above can help account more fully for the term ‘sensibility’ which has a rich past. A significant part of this past, which maintains a strong presence in its eighteenth-century use, is its connections to romance. It is connected through a


\textsuperscript{124} ‘But better to define tenderness. I think I may call it a certain sensibility of heart, which never soveraignly operates, but in those which have noble souls, vertuous Inclinations, and well weighed spirits, and which makes them when they have friendship, to have it sincerely and ardently.’ The translation is taken from Madeleine de Scudéry, \textit{Clélia, An Excellent New Romance} (London: Printed by H. Herringman and others, 1678)

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
particular sense and use in the seventeenth-century romance and by the use of romantic themes in eighteenth-century sentimental novels. An additional, and affirming, factor in this interrelation between romance and Sensibility comes through the opposition of sensibility to egoistic views of human nature. As has been discussed in the previous section the theoretical foundation of sensibility lies in the philosophical writings that defend the essential goodness of human nature against the selfish views of the theories proposed by Hobbes and Mandeville. Going back a step further we must take into account the fact that when they appeared, these egoistic views, and especially Hobbes’s, refuted established opposing views. As Paul Gordon argues, one of these views was the discourse of heroism in romances. Gordon convincingly argues that Hobbes purposefully and fiercely attacks romances and insists on their non-realism because their representation of heroic, and most of all, ‘other-directed action’, is dangerous and potentially subversive to the foundation of his philosophy. In addition, a study by Victoria Khan also argued that Romances ‘chart a trajectory from a politics of narrow self-interest — which contemporaries identified with Hobbes — to a politics of aesthetic interest. In response to Hobbes’s critique of vainglory, they extend an invitation to imaginative identification’. In this way, Khan argues, they anticipate the cult of sensibility. In its turn, Sensibility, by opposing the views of Mandeville and Hobbes, and insisting on goodness, benevolence and acting for the sake of others, is in dialogue with and reinstates romantic themes. Moreover, romances are important in the way they register emotions. There is in them the same preoccupation with registering the inward emotions that lead to virtuous, sympathetic actions as well as the actions themselves. In the words of Victoria Khan, ‘just as important as the representation of virtue is the representation of the psychology and motivation of virtue’.

With these deliberations in mind the section below centres on Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* (1752). This work, which serves as a preamble to the part on eighteenth-century fiction that follows, best illustrates the convergence between

128 Khan, (p. 636).
Sensibility and romance. Although according to its publication date this novel clearly belongs to the time of the flourishing of Sensibility, its preoccupation with romance allows us to cast our minds back to the conception of Sensibility and its continuity with that genre. Its heroine, Arabella, is paradigmatically drawn upon an ‘imaginative identification’ with romance heroes, and the novel itself draws attention to generic questions about the categories of ‘novel’ and ‘romance’. Moreover, it bears significant connections to sentimental values. This, in combination with the centrality of the emotion of resentment, will serve to show how the emotional making of romance heroes, including, as it does, recourse to the negative passions, is part of the history of the novel of sentiment and is appropriated by it.

The Female Quixote: Resentment, Romance and the Novel

Lennox’s novel presents Arabella, a young and virtuous woman, who lives in seclusion with her father. Arabella finds alleviation from the harshness of this secluded life in the romances she finds in the library and which belonged to her mother (evidence of her seclusion and repression as well). She reads them avidly and, as a result, she becomes totally immersed in a fictional, romantic world, fancies herself a heroine of romance and lives her life according to the principles laid down in the most popular of them. By deferring her arranged marriage to Glanville, the suitor her father proposes, she manages to experience a series of real-life incidents as ‘adventures’, much to the frustration and embarrassment of the men in her life. Finally, through the intervention of a clergyman, Arabella becomes ‘cured’ and is married to Glanville who has been presented, all along, as both a suitable match and a sincere lover. On the face of it, then, The Female Quixote is an anti-romantic novel, which attacks the reading of romances and its consequences by ridiculing Arabella and her strange ways or ‘fancies’. However, thanks to a series of articles that focus on the novel and its patriarchal elements, a far more nuanced re-reading of the text has been possible. The fact that Arabella lives her life through romance, it is argued, permits her to command her own life and destiny with far more power than the codes of eighteenth–century female conduct would allow. Jane Spencer, in The Rise of the Woman Novelist, writes that by appealing to romance The Female Quixote gives Arabella ‘a refuge from a reality that deprives women from
power; her belief in the despotic power of her charms making up for her lack of power in real life’. Margaret Anne Doody, in her introduction to the Oxford edition, notes that:

It is through assuming the powers the romances offer that Arabella can command a space, assert a woman’s right to ‘a room of one’s own’, and take upon herself the power to control the movements and behaviour of others. She succeeds amazingly in making her male kinsmen pay attention to her wishes and not assume that she is automatically under their control.

Indeed, the passages that narrate the ‘adventures’ of Arabella are characterised by agency, power, and determination. These elements are felt to be missing from the concluding scenes of her reformation, making several critics speak of Arabella as ‘tamed’ and submissive or, as Wendy Motooka puts it, of ‘coming to a bad end’. Motooka also makes a very important observation: that Arabella’s conversion is achieved through sentimentalism. That is, that the convincing argument that finally wins Arabella over is essentially an appeal to sentimentalism, as it presents romances hindering the inward function of its basic premises:

These books soften the Heart to Love, and harden it to Murder. That they teach women to exact vengeance, and men to execute it; teach women to expect not only worship, but the dreadful worship of human sacrifices [...] it is impossible to read these tales without lessening part of that Humility, which by preserving in us a sense of our alliance with all human nature, keeps awake to tenderness and sympathy, or without impairing her compassion which is implanted in us as an incentive to acts of kindness. (FQ 380)

Arabella cannot resist this argument, and as a result, Motooka writes, ‘what had been an insurmountable difference between Arabella and the other characters melts away before the soft reforming power of fellow feeling. Where reason and experience were ineffective, sentimentalism prevails, thereby resolving the novel’s plot.’

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130 Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, ed. by Margaret Dalziel, Margaret Anne Doody and Duncan Isles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. xxv. All subsequent references to this text are to this edition and are given in the body of the text in parentheses.
132 Motooka, ‘Coming to a Bad End’, p. 264.
the winning argument puts forward transparently sentimental values, but Arabella’s conversion from romance to reality is not also a conversion to Sensibility. Arabella refers to her sensibility all the way through. The difference is that this sensibility is intertwined with her sense of power and that sense of power, in its turn, with certain passions. When Arabella submits to the prescribed role of eighteenth-century womanhood, both her sensibility and her emotional expression will change. For this reason, the novel is helpful in recording the changes in emotional experience from the romance to the novel of sentiment.

Arabella, to a great extent, shows her power through language. As Deborah Ross notes, ‘she speaks like a goddess, to whom her lovers must give “signs of contrition” and “true repentance”’. One of the most characteristic practices of Arabella is to ‘command’ her lovers to live when she fancies them pining away for her love. Arabella considers herself to have absolute power over the men who are, or who she thinks they are, her lovers. When Glanville falls ill with a fever Arabella, attributing his illness to despair due to his love for her, commands him, with imperative, loud voice and language, to recover saying: ‘I do not wish your Death [...] , by all the power I have over you, I command you to recover’ (FQ 134). Miss Glanville, his sister, thinks her ‘insensible, but Arabella thinks her action ‘charitable’ (17). When she thinks Bellmour, who is a rival to Glanville, but from monetary motives, is languishing away with love for her, she is prepared to pay him a visit, stand by his bed and command him to recover as well. When the indecency of the action is pointed out to her – women should not pay visits to men at their beds – she is taken aback that such a charitable action could be questioned. Very early on, the novel shows that Arabella functions on a different register from the other characters and is often misunderstood. For Arabella herself her power is absolute and unquestionable because it is sanctioned by the laws of romance – she always finds examples and parallels in romances and bases her own actions on the behaviour of heroines in similar situations – and also because her lovers have given her through their love ‘authority’ over them (FQ 320).

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Her authority and her goddess-like status are not only evident in these commands. Arabella threatens others with her anger and displeasure, forbids people from her presence and has a clearly established code of conduct towards her. This code involves taking offence with people who fail to recognise her principles, expression of resentment and demand of repair of affronts and injuries. But as Arabella’s principles derive from a source that is not available to all, people always fall short of her expectations. As a result, people who interact with her find her ridiculous and laughable, or are frustrated and take offence at being treated with insolence. This asymmetry and disjunction of social behaviour drives the plot and creates situations that induce anger and resentment.

Resentment and anger are the emotions that most often occur within the first part of the novel. There is an instance of either of them in almost every page. The text not only makes use of resentment and its synonyms (‘to take ill’) but also features both meanings of it, as in ‘to feel’, and ‘to feel as an affront’. When Glanville is introduced to Arabella’s life what best describes their interaction are rounds of affront and resentment on the part of one or the other. Before Glanville arrives, the reader has already had a preview of Arabella’s code. When a Mr Hervey takes a liking to her and endeavours to contact her by letter, Arabella, although not displeased, ‘chid her woman severely for taking it’ (FQ 13). It is worth noting here that Lucy, Arabella’s maid, almost repeatedly appears ‘trembling’ at the prospect of her lady’s anger and displeasure (121, 349). Arabella’s first reaction towards a lover, real or imagined is to show a kind of ceremonial anger at their ‘insolence’. Their great offence is that they approach her. That is, they have the audacity to think themselves worthy of her without proving themselves in feats of bravery. When her lovers do not behave the way she expects them to, she appears resentful. In the case of a serious offence, often imagined by her, her anger becomes more palpable. When she falsely thinks that Mr Hervey intends to be her ravisher she retorts:

A little more submission and respect would become you better; you are now wholly in my power; I may if I please carry you to my father, and have you severely punished for your attempt: but to shew you, that I am as generous as you are base and designing, I’ll give you freedom, provided you promise me never to appear before me again. (FQ 20)
This passage showcases Arabella’s sense of power, at the same time that it reveals its limitations. Arabella demands deference, threatens with punishment and banishes from her presence. All are actions of authority, and are actually reminiscent of regal authority and practices. The actual punishment, though, is left to the hands of her father, the real-life authority figure. Nevertheless, Arabella still remains an exception, an eighteenth-century heroine who does not fear her father’s resentment, but summons it and submits it under her own concept of power. Arabella, out of generosity, does not ‘deliver’ him ‘to her father’s resentment’ (FQ 20), an act of mercy that also bears connotations of regal authority. Further, she also dares to speak her mind in the presence of her uncle, another stock representative of patriarchal authority. ‘Blushing with anger’—Arabella mostly ‘blushes with anger’ (FQ43), never out of submissiveness or embarrassment—she reproaches him for ridiculing romances: ‘all the respect I owe you cannot hinder me from telling you, that I take it extremely ill you should, in my presence, rail at the finest productions in the world’ (FQ61-2).

When her father presents Glanville as her intended husband Arabella does not dislike him, but only the fact that she must have an arranged marriage. She finds it mundane and anti-romantic. For Arabella a woman gives her hand as the final and utmost reward to the hero who has proven worthy of her by brave feats and adventures in her name. Consequently, she is constantly out of humour with him and treats him angrily. The words now change to ‘wrath’, ‘rage’ and ‘violence’ (FQ32) as Arabella becomes more and more impatient with him. While, at first, Glanville smiles at her resentment, belittling its importance, his mirth also turns to resentment as the situation becomes increasingly charged. At the core of the continuous misunderstanding between Arabella and the other characters is a gap of interpretation. Arabella interprets the behaviour of others as negligent and insolent according to romantic codes, and finds them negligent and insolent according to social codes. For both sides this situation continuously creates circumstances for affront and resentment:

As he had no notion of his cousin’s heroic sentiments, and had never read romances, he was quite ignorant of the nature of his offence; and supposing the

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134 See also the chapter on Clarissa, especially the section on the background of the novel and paternal anger.
scorn she had expressed for him was founded upon the difference of their rank and fortune, his pride was so sensibly mortified at that thought, and at her so insolently forbidding him her presence, that he was once inclined to shew his resentment of such ungenteel usage. \(FQ\ 33\)

During the first sequences of the courtship between Arabella and Glanville resentment, injury and offence are frequently used terms. Arabella talks of her ‘resentment’, and how she would suffer the injury patiently \(FQ\ 36\). Glanville repeatedly asks what his offence is and how he disobliged her, and finally becomes ‘wholly engrossed by his resentment of the usage he had received from her’ \(FQ\ 37\). Arabella even banishes Glanville from her father’s house, in demanding ‘repair for the affront’ \(FQ\ 33\).

This action incurs her father’s fury who reminds us of the reality of patriarchal authority. He orders Arabella to write a letter asking Glanville to return. Deborah Ross reads this scene as ‘painful’ and essentially confirming Arabella’s lack of true authority and power. Whereas the scene does invoke a patriarchal reading, Lennox manages to maintain the strength of her heroine. Ross does not cite the continuation of the passage which reaffirms Arabella’s power. She writes because ordered, but she writes in her own style, and when her father asks her to change her address she replies: ‘Pray, my Lord, [...] content yourself with what I have already done in Obedience to your Commands, and suffer my Letter to remain as it is: Methinks it is but reasonable I should express some little Resentment at the Complaint my Cousin has been pleased to make to you against me’ \(FQ\ 40\). Even when submitting to her father’s authority Arabella maintains her right of self-determination and her right to resent the behaviour she feels is failing her standards.

Arabella does condescend to show favour to Glanville after he interferes and saves her beloved books from her father’s intention to burn them. Significantly, he thinks that a considerable ‘affront’ towards her. Glanville understands Arabella’s ‘language’ after he learns that her code derives from the reading of romances. Arabella actually ‘lays commands’ \(49\) on him to read a selection of her most beloved ones. Glanville finds the task onerous, but he is also quite sensible of the danger of ‘incurring her anger’ \(FQ\ 49\) with his refusal. Glanville spends the rest of the narrative feeling mortified by the
ridicule Arabella exposes herself to, and in a constant anxiety of being embarrassed over her behaviour.

In short, the emotional map of the novel is sketched around certain intense emotions. Arabella’s resentment is caused by the fact that people fail to behave in the way she expects them to. Glanville’s resentment is caused by being the recipient of her insolent behaviour, and also because he resents Arabella being the object of ridicule. Other characters interpret Arabella’s behaviour as offensive because it fails to meet the approved social standards. For instance, her uncle thinks her insolence is an attempt on Arabella’s part to question the limits of authority he has over her as her guardian. The world of romance that Lennox describes revolves around heightened and, also, violent emotions. There is anger that instigates heroic action,\textsuperscript{135} anger that is part of the ceremony of power that Arabella exhibits when she shows displeasure with her lovers’ advances and when she threatens that failure to conform to her wishes will incur her anger for both lovers and servants. There is, also, a demand for worship towards women that, as the clergyman of the conversion scene notes, creates in them a sense of being extraordinary. Arabella must exchange this emotional code with the one prescribed by Sensibility and which is epitomised by the calmness of affectionate marriage in the resolution of the novel.

Arabella, though, has shown signs of sensibility before her conversion. From very early on in the novel, we are reassured that she is ‘possessed of great sensibility and softness’ (\textit{FQ} 15) and also of ‘delicacy’ (\textit{FQ} 27). Most importantly, Arabella’s sensibility causes her to feel deeply for her desperate lovers. ‘I must comfort myself’, she says, ‘under the uneasiness, which the sensibility of my temper makes me feel, by the reflection, that, by my own consent, I contribute nothing to the misfortune of those who love me’ (\textit{FQ} 175). If she is a goddess, Arabella is both a fierce and sympathetic one. Arabella is redeemable and curable all along because she does not triumph in her conquests, she does not cause, willingly, the misfortune of her lovers and is always ready to carry out a ‘charitable’ action and bestow her favour on them at their most

\textsuperscript{135}A good example of this is given in the text in Sir George’s romance narrative: ‘Ariamenes then inform’d me, that being enflamed with rage against these impious villains, he rose from the ground, remounted his horse, and defy’d the two traytors aloud, threatening them with death, unless they abandon their impious design’ (345).
despairing moments. In short, Arabella’s heart was not actually ‘hardened to murder’—she caused none—and it was ‘softened’ only to the right kind of love, that of Glanville. Generally, while the novel plays with the representation of violent emotion, there is a very clear line drawn as to its hold and effect on the characters. A repeated motif in the novel is that a negative passion, although it will rise to considerable levels, will also fail to cause any of the intended consequences to others or to the person experiencing it, because it becomes ‘insensibly lost’. A good instance of this is Arabella’s reaction to Lucy’s tears:

Lucy, who never saw her Lady so much offended before, and knew not the occasion of it, burst into tears, which so affected the tender heart of Arabella, that losing insensibly all her anger, she told her with a voice soften’d to a tone of the utmost sweetness and condescension that [...] she would pardon and receive her again into favour. (306)

Arabella’s own tears had previously had the same effect on her father, who also ‘insensibly’ lost his resentment. Great anger and deep resentment are assuaged, instantly, when the characters are confronted with an affecting sight and this is their main sentimental characteristic. So in the norm it is not the absence of negative passions that is relevant but the fact that these do not have the same ‘hold’ on the sentimental heart.

The main difference in Arabella’s ‘cure’ is not the adoption of sentimental values but the fact that she is now firmly located within the domestic realm. Romances helped Arabella escape the repressive world of domesticity by extending its meaning and potential. They helped her create a world where she could assume importance and power, and in which ‘adventures’ called for a certain emotional constitution. Anger, resentment, and intense passion were part of its scenes. The domestic realm, on the other hand, operates on other principles and generates a different emotional experience. Arabella’s conversion, in a sense, epitomizes the transition of the concept of Sensibility. From an extraordinary individual with power and sensibility, as a character quality, she becomes a sentimental heroine, defined by calmness and affection. In the process she abandons the linguistic discourse and the principles of romance, loses her power and submits to a different emotional register that does not include the expression of anger
and resentment. That is also a change that can be perceived to happen in the transition from the romance to the novel of sentiment.

To a great extent, this emotional register is determined by the different context within which the characters and the action are presented. Arabella lives in a world full of adventures and potential dangers, heroism, fighting, threats and escape attempts. Intense love and also anger and resentment are part of this world because they are part of its situations. When converted, Arabella needs to be persuaded to enter the world of a woman as described by the countess, a world that operates upon one principle. In the words of Margaret Doody, this principle is that ‘good women have neither history nor adventures’ (xi). The world of domesticity, which is also the main context of the novel of sentiment, is praised, above all, for the quality of tranquillity. The bulk of advice literature and the writings concerned with the regulation of the passions, especially when advising against anger, are concerned with the creation and maintenance of a tranquil domestic environment. Johnson’s The Rambler discusses the passions in this light as does The Spectator. But it is wrong to suggest that the ordinary domestic realm does not generate the same intense emotions as the extraordinary world of romance.

One of the definitive differences between the romance and the novel was perceived to be the latter’s engagement with realistic content. In many ways this is an observation that begs more questions than it gives answers. It is not easy to define what makes a work realistic and I do not wish here to discuss the broader issue of novel or how Watt’s construction of ‘formal realism’ tackles the problem. I am of the opinion that Doody’s premise fits the purpose well. ‘The new standards’, she writes, ‘demanded an application of a revised notion of probability, extending far beyond the meaning of that term in the seventeenth century’ (xvii). It is not that case that the heroes of the novel do not have adventures or do not play with the limits of probability. On the contrary, the novel of sentiment is full of adventures but they are kept largely within familial settings.

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136 The relevant excerpt is on page 327 of the book where the countess says to Arabella: ‘the word Adventures carries in it so free and licentious a Sound in the Apprehensions of People at this Period of Time, that it can hardly with Propriety be apply’d to those few and natural Incidents which compose the History of a Woman of Honour.’

137 Refer to section on Anger in the first part of this work.
David Simple in Sarah Fielding’s novel probably experiences more adventures than he bargains for, all of them within the limits of the city. Miss Sidney Bidulph in Frances Sheridan’s novel operates within a restricted and closely prescribed domestic space, but her life is far from tranquil. Clarissa, in Samuel Richardson’s novel even before she is made to leave the house, has experienced persecution, despair and the effects of conspiracy. By setting the action within the domestic realm or, largely, within familiar settings, the novel of sentiment changes the emotional investment and the emotional gravity of the situation. The stories in which sentimental heroes of the eighteenth century feature present situations that are a matter of great concern at the particular period: the duties of the sentimental heroine, paternal affection or paternal anger and the choice of husband, a husband’s adultery and wifely submission or resentment, new forms of financial exchange and anxiety over the trustworthiness of people, sibling envy and arguments over inheritance are some of them. In short, the domestic space and its relevant matters of concern are invested with a value of particular significance for the time and this means that these stories will not fail to generate intense emotion. As Rosenwein notes, people express emotion about what they find valuable or harmful. Within a patriarchal society that experiences a change in social structures, and the substitution of the long established landed economy for the money market, issues like those stated above essentially hallmark the ‘valuable’ and the ‘harmful’. What is more, these stories will not fail to generate intense negative emotions, both within the plot and in the way they are received, because sentimental heroes are defined by opposition and that means that they hold different things valuable and harmful. Clarissa’s story cannot be told without referring to the violent passions of the family, her father’s anger, her siblings’ envy, Lovelace’s resentment, and her struggle with her own negative passions. Without this information we are not sufficiently equipped to make the moral judgements the book requires. David Simple cannot show his good heart without expressing sadness and also anger at the unsentimental world he is exposed to.

In addition, the readers’ emotional experiences may also involve negative emotions. Generally, the distinctive fragmentary style of the literature of Sensibility is thought to

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serve the purpose of eliciting a particular emotional response from the reader. As Janet Todd explains ‘the result of these various devices – asterisks, dashes, meandering narrative and fragmentation – is that readers are to some extent prevented from indulging in an identifying fantasy with a character and are forced to respond to the emotion conveyed.’ The implication here is that the literature of Sensibility is, in a way, training the emotions as it indulges them. But that does not necessarily mean that the emotional experience will be the one expected, that is that readers will be swept away by soft feelings of pity and compassion and shed tears that prove them to be as sentimental, moralising and refined as the characters they read about. The wealth of anecdotal evidence on the readership of *Clarissa* attests that, to a certain extent, this was true: people did experience emotions of sadness and melancholy over it. However, as Thomas Keymer aptly notes in his analysis, the peculiarity of the circumstances of the publication of *Clarissa* also created opposite reactions. *Clarissa*’s success meant that readers had a deep emotional investment in it. As they waited for the next instalment and the continuation of the story that was interrupted at crucial points, they were full of anticipation and were forming their own versions of the continuation of the narrative. Thus, when the subsequent instalments appeared with Richardson’s own version of the action, readers, whose expectations were failed, felt, as Keymer rightly assumes, resentment towards him. Furthermore, although evil, the character of Lovelace also bears a peculiar quality of attractiveness and ‘heroism’. In the process of reading, as the new letters present new information or new viewpoints that modify the readers’ assumptions, Lovelace’s character is progressively revealed in his true colours. Keymer cites a comment by Samuel Johnson that suggests precisely this struggle on the part of readers. Little by little they painfully abandon their positive view of him and recognise him as a villain. Johnson’s comment is interesting to us for yet another reason; he found that central to this process is the emotional experience of increasing ‘just resentment’. Johnson writes: ‘it was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once the esteem and detestation, to make *virtuous resentment* overpower all the benevolence, which wit,

139 Todd, *Sensibility*, p. 6.
eloquence, and courage naturally excite and to lose at last the hero in the villain’. Examples like these help show that the experience of reading sentimental works may not be as ‘positive’ as we intuitively expect. Although the focus undeniably is on refined emotion and on particular emotions such as pity and compassion, we need to allow for the fact that the process may also raise deeply negative emotions. This is especially because these negative emotions, such as resentment, bear a role in the making of moral judgement.

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Sensibility and the negative passions converge in many ways. The theoretical discussion of the concept of sensibility is not, and cannot, be free from reference to the negative passions that contradict its assertions. Theorists of Sensibility include the discussion of these passions in their works, and with rhetorical skill present them as functioning in favour of the greater argument of essential goodness and morality. In doing so, they affirm human nature as essentially benevolent but they also create the underlying discourse of ‘insensibility’ and ‘inhumanity’. Hence, works of Sensibility are filled with the most virtuous and temperate characters and also those ‘wretches’: the ‘cruel’, the ‘insensible’, the ‘base’, the ‘inhumane’ characters. The making of one or the other kind of character with regard to their violent passions is determined by considerations of the tradition of the passions, the new category of sentiments, the particularities of the discourse of anger, resentment and envy of the time, as well as their modification by sentimental philosophers. As well as the concept of Sensibility, the fiction of Sensibility, especially of the eighteenth century, cannot be dissociated from negative passions due to its background and its purpose.

Works of Sensibility include situations that generate negative emotion due to being associated with other forms of writing, such the romance and also the novel of the early eighteenth century. As Ellis notably remarked, although Sensibility is the amalgamation of several discourses, ‘no one other discourse can account for the sentimental novel. Rather, it is the sentimental novel that must account for itself. Sentimentalism discovers

141 Keymer, Richardson’s ‘Clarissa’, p.195.
its power in the novel’s freedom to mix genres and discourses freely. In the novel, in other words, sensibility comes together. By coming together through the mixture of genres and discourses that constitute the novel, Sensibility also ‘comes together’ in the backdrop of themes that are their concern.

As the chapter on *Clarissa* will show, Richardson had reference to a rich background of themes that featured in early novels and included scenes of paternal and daughterly anger. Sheridan’s *Sidney Bidulph*, in dealing with adultery, also invokes the issue of resentment and the extent to which a wife’s adultery is justified, which is also present in earlier novels. This work also features a character that attains a balance between sensibility and resentment and questions the desirability of a character completely devoid of negative emotion as Sidney is. Moreover, Sarah Fielding’s *David Simple* is a work concerned with the presence of envy in the world and more particularly sibling envy, a theme that was also a matter of concern for Johnson. In short, the negative passions are not de-emphasized within works of the early stage of the ‘age of Sensibility’. Indeed, there is more reason for these emotions to feature in them than not. Arabella’s conversion from romance to Sensibility does not necessarily require that she loses all claims to anger and resentment. These emotions continue to have a reason for existence within the work of sensibility but they are now appropriated to it. In romance anger and resentment are part of the politics of power. In novels of sentiment anger and resentment are part of the plot because they are political. In romance they emanate from power and the codes of honour, virtue and heroic action. In novels of sentiment they derive from suffering and moral wrong.

It would be useful here, to return to Denby’s notion that misfortune is the central event of sentimentalism and to stress the fact that this description cannot fully account for the British sentimental works of the middle eighteenth century. The problem is that the notion of misfortune rather closes than opens the discussion. It suggests that there is a possible alternative scenario for the victims of *malheur*. More importantly, Denby’s analysis makes the epitome of the tableau the encounter of innocence with misfortune. While this is true for that sentimental fiction that is a predecessor of

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melodrama, it is not so with the works that follow Richardson’s, temporally and thematically. In many of these works, the victims of misfortune are not innocent, or at least their innocence is a matter of contention, as with Clarissa, and their misfortune is not a matter of luck, or the outcome of an abstract idea of the cruel world but the calculated effect of the clash of opposing social codes. The source of misfortune in them is more often than not a kind of social injustice: restrictive social codes for women and overly oppressive patriarchal authority, deprivation of lawful inheritance, and lawful social status. One has to be careful, as Denby cautions, not to invest these works with a kind of mimetic power. They do not straightforwardly reflect changes in social order. However, early works of sensibility serve a social purpose by voicing social argument. Or, in the words of John Mullan, they ‘seek to make society in the page’. To achieve this, the texts have recourse to emotions such as pity, compassion and benevolence, which serve as the binding forces that hold together the best possible human society and to anger and resentment.

Once this purpose is abandoned, other emotions, recognizably ‘sentimental’, are brought to the fore. For instance, through the whole narration of this definitive work of sentimentalism, Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), one does not encounter a scene of anger or resentment. The closest we come to these emotions are scenes that describe a sense of irritation. For example, when a postillion rides quicker than Yorick desires so that he can indulge in his thoughts, he appears exasperated: ‘the deuce take him and his galloping too — [...] he’ll go on tearing my nerves to pieces till he has worked me into a foolish passion, and then he’ll slow, that I may enjoy the sweets of it’. In addition to being comical, this case of becoming ‘out of temper’ serves to showcase the fineness and susceptibility of Yorick’s nerves and to prove his sensibility more than it does to showcase anger. Somewhat graver is the episode of ‘the dwarf’, which depicts Yorick’s displeasure at the theatre when a large man positions himself in such a way that entirely blocks the view of a short man sitting behind him. When Yorick finds him completely insensible to the poor man’s complaint, he moralises: ‘an injury sharpened by an insult,

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143 John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, p. 25.
be it to who it will, makes every man of sentiment a party: I could have leaped out of
the box to have redressed it’ (61). The statement has its basis in the discussion of
resentment as a fellow feeling raised on behalf of all humane subjects when an injurious
action is observed. The statement implies Yorick’s sensibility but, due to the mildness
of the offence, resentment, if suggested at all, is not a matter of gravity. Although
Sterne’s work probably merits an analysis of emotions on its own, these cases serve to
show that in later works the negative passions are subsumed under the paradigm of
Sensibility, and are expressed to prove an aspect of it. A different account of the
emotions would better serve for them. But for that particular current of Sensibility that
is recognised as more ‘sober’, by critics such as Baasner, Brissenden and Barker-
Benfield, the negative passions constitute an integral part of their making. For these
works, deflected one way or another by Richardson’s writing, Sensibility has ‘a
foundation in reality’\(^\text{145}\) and emotions are expressed in their multiple dimensions, still
influenced by the discourse of the passions within theological, advisory and literary
writings. Above all, these works are still influenced, and actually shaped, by the
question of how the best possible society is construed. In its turn, this suggests that the
literature of the period seeks to define both the concept of Sensibility and the emotional
making of the sentimental character as the best possible political subject. These are
questions that necessarily invoke discussion of the most positive of all emotions and
also the most negative of them, as the following chapters will show.

\[145\] Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, p. 163.
Part B: Novels of Sentiment
The Adventures of David Simple and Volume the Last

In the course of three chapters, the titular hero of Sarah Fielding’s The Adventures of David Simple (1744), is modified ‘from an elder brother and heir to wandering sentimental picaro’, as Betty Schellenberg puts it. However true this statement is, and crucial to the plot, it is also a summary of the modification process that overlooks its various stages. Because David does not go from brother and heir straight to sentimental wanderer, there are phases in his modification. He goes from mourner, to being dependent on his younger brother, to being excluded from home; he spends a day close to being destitute and not far from the beggar he gives money to; he then remembers his uncle, he is ‘rescued’ by him, and in getting his inheritance back (due to his uncle’s actions) he is restored to his previous financial and social status. It is after the death of this uncle that David is left with the two conditions that set his journey in motion: he has a property to share and he is, at this point, genuinely friendless. His two closest male relatives, his father and uncle, have died, and his mother has retired to the country and is never referred to again in the course of the narration. His only brother is described as having been ‘unnatural’ to him. David actually thinks of sharing his fortune with his brother but he is deterred by the memory of his ‘cruel usage’ (20). In three fast-paced chapters, David undergoes all the changes that make his quest necessary. More importantly, each stage of this process of change, the reasons behind it and the possibilities it entails, also foreshadows the themes that will be further developed and explored in the rest of the narrative. For this reason, my study of the plot of The Adventures, and especially of the various emotional aspects of the novel, begins with a close examination of the events of the first three chapters and the responses to these events. It will highlight the most important themes of the novel and the most significant emotions in the plot as they are introduced in this exposition. What readers need to know about David Simple, his world, and his quest, is already provided in these introductory sections, before his journey begins.

147 Sarah Fielding, The Adventures of David Simple and Volume the Last, ed. by Peter Sabor (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1998), p. 12. All subsequent references, given in the body of the text in parentheses, are to this edition, which reprints Sarah Fielding’s text and not the revised version of Henry Fielding.
Setting off: Serenity, Uneasiness and the foreboding of Envy
The first information about the protagonist of the story comes not from a portrayal of David as an individual, but as part of a ‘friendship’ between himself and his brother. David and Daniel Simple are introduced as two brothers in ‘strict friendship’ (7) and alliance. Shortly after their presentation as a team, the narrator goes on to describe the personal qualities of each one. The eldest, David, is of a ‘sober prudent disposition’ (7) and finds pleasure in supplying and assisting his brother whenever he has occasion or money. Daniel, on the other hand, is ‘a much sharper boy, that is, he had more cunning’ (7-8) and can recognise the boys who misbehave. David, we are told, who ‘had never had any ill designs on others’ and ‘never thought of their having any upon him’ (8), paid ‘perfect deference’ (8) to his brother’s worldly wisdom. Whereas this is described as a ‘perfect unity and friendship’ (8) by the narrator, the reader cannot help but become suspicious of the obvious disjunction between these two characters. It comes less as a surprise to the reader, then, than it comes to David, when the true colours of Daniel’s character are revealed in the opening paragraph of the second chapter. As the narrator informs us, ‘Daniel, notwithstanding the Appearance of Friendship he had all along kept up to David, was in reality one of those Wretches, whose only Happiness centres in themselves’ (8). David has to find out this by making sense of the events of Daniel’s betrayal. What is important, and more relevant at this point of the analysis, is the fact that by presenting David as part of a ‘unity’, familial and social, Sarah Fielding presents the first theme of the novel and the most important instigator of the plot. At the beginning of the novel, David is not without friends. And this statement is suggestive of the eighteenth-century connotation of the word ‘friends’ that can signify near relations and their support as well as the social connotations of this relationship. But this unity is condemned to fail because there is dissociation from within. The people who hold it, the two brothers, are of incongruous dispositions, too antithetical to be compromised. After it falls apart, by the same force that will tear other families apart in the course of the novel, David will seek to replace it. In doing so, he will find out, as will also the reader, that a perfect unity of hearts cannot last either, but for different reasons. The first theme, then, that will later be explored in its many aspects, is that of belonging to a community and what enables or hinders the unity of the parts of this community and, ultimately, its
success. The first step towards the exploration of this theme is the dissolution of the first, unsuccessful, unity presented in the novel.

The initial important event within these opening chapters is the death of David’s father. This loss not only sets in motion the scheming that will deprive David of his familial status but also helps reveal David’s character by contrasting his attitude with mourning to that of Daniel’s. The narrator notes:

The Loss of so good a Father was sensibly felt by the tender-hearted David; he was in the utmost Affliction, till by Philosophical Considerations, assisted by natural Calmness he had in his own Temper, he was enabled to overcome his Grief, and began again to enjoy his former Serenity of Mind. (8)

The ‘tender-hearted’ David feels the impact of this grievous event greatly, but he is able to control or effect a change in his emotions by ‘Philosophical Considerations’. In *The Adventures* deep grief is transformed into calmness by the consideration that death means also the end of suffering. This is an essentially religious attitude, which will be put to the utmost stress in *Volume the Last*, especially in the death of David’s children. It is important to note, at this point, that the natural state of David’s mind is ‘Serenity’. In the course of these first chapters, this calmness will be replaced by uneasiness three times in total (one being the death of his father), and David will remain in a state of ‘uneasiness’ until the formation of the ‘ideal’ and short-lived community between him, Cynthia, Camilla and Valentine.

While David is immersed in deep grief, Daniel finds the perfect opportunity to put his plans of seizing the family property into action. The way he achieves his purpose, though, involves not only his own cunning but is also facilitated by David’s key characteristics. The narrator comments that ‘the real Affliction of David, on the old Gentleman’s Death, prevented his immediate thinking of the Will’ (10). This provides Daniel with the necessary time required to put into action the practicalities of his plan: to find and bribe the ‘witnesses’, forge the will, and so on. Having ample time, Daniel now needs access to the will and opportunity to take it from David’s room and alter it. This does not take long to appear: and ‘Daniel took the first Opportunity (which quickly offered, every thing being common between him and his Brother) of stealing the will’ (10). My emphasis exemplifies the point that the same disregard for what is ‘mine’ or
‘yours’ will be one of the main constructive forces of David’s ideal community. It is already present from the beginning as is also the warning of its precariousness. This warning is not only about exposing the simplicity of David, in the sense of his gullibility, and presenting tenderness as inconsistent with the corrupt world. It has more far-reaching implications in showing that David’s way of life cannot, in fact, be operative in the world. This point will attain its full force in Volume the Last. In addition, David’s own kindness to the supposed witnesses further promotes the success of the betrayal:

The Man and Maid were soon married; and as they lived some time in the Family, David gave them something to set up with, which was thought very lucky by the Brother, that it might create no Suspicions how they came by Money. (11)

With the opening of the forged will, David once again loses his serenity of mind and falls into uneasiness. But he does not leave the house at this point. On the contrary, what follows is the settlement of the family as things stand. His mother retires to the country to live with her sister, and the two brothers ‘agreed to live off their Father’s business’ (11). The narrator informs us that David ‘was very happy in the proofs he thought he had of his Brother’s Love’ (12), while Daniel ‘was greatly satisfied in thinking his Brother was a dependant on him’ (12). Although David, from elder son and rightful heir, has now become a dependant, his mind is at ease and he is able to be happy because he feels a part of a familial, loving community and also because he does not understand the concept of someone being ‘dependant’. In David’s sociable and communal perception of the world there is no division of wealth. Schellenberg in discussing David and the construction of his society of friends notes that ‘David treats property in its undispensed form as belonging equally to all members of the circle’. She contrasts this principle with Richardson’s characters, whose ‘generosity functions to reward or encourage the performance of specific duties within well-defined structures of dependency’.  

Essentially, what this note suggests is that David lacks the frame of reference for the concept of ‘dependant’. This is further confirmed by his ignorance of the term ‘toad-eater’, which he asks Cynthia to explain ‘for he said it was a term he had

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never heard before’ (89). As Cynthia relates to him what it is like to be a female dependant he cannot recognize similarities between his story and her much darker version, as he cannot recognize his brother’s action as making him dependant. Indeed, it is not David, but Daniel, who becomes uneasy with the way things are:

One thing quite stung him to the quick, viz. That David’s amiable Behaviour, joined to a very good Understanding, with a great Knowledge, which he had attained by Books, made all their Acquaintance give preference to him: and as Envy was very predominant in Daniel’s Mind, this made him take an utter Aversion to his Brother. (12)

Within this passage is introduced one of the most important emotional aspects of the plot: envy. Presented here as sibling envy, all the other manifestations of this emotion will be referred to in *The Adventures* which ultimately prevents the realization of an ideal society. In *Volume the Last*, it will acquire its full blown proportions and contribute to the markedly darker tone of the sequel.

Instigated by envy, Daniel finds an opportunity to turn David out of the house. David observes that after the servants find out that the family’s money belongs exclusively to Daniel, they practically ignore him and respond only to Daniel’s wishes. At this point we get a glimpse of what Linda Brees describes as David’s non-confrontational qualities.¹⁴⁹ David does not act by himself but turns to his brother for advice. At this scene Daniel uses the term ‘my servants’. This phrase forces David to reluctantly become disillusioned about the state of affairs in the house. The stages of the episode evolve as follows:

*Daniel* knew that although his Brother was far from being passionate for Trifles, yet that his whole Frame would be so shaken by an ill Usage from him, he would not be able to command himself: And resolved therefore to take this Opportunity of aggravating his Passion. […]This had the desired Effect, and threw David into that inconsistent Behaviour, which must always be produced in a Mind torn at once by Tenderness and Rage. That sincere Love and Friendship he had always felt for his Brother, made his Resentment the higher, and he alternately broke into Reproaches, and melted into softness […] Daniel had now all he wanted; from the moment the other’s Passion grew loud, he had set open the Door that the Servants might hear

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how he used him, and be Witnesses he was not in fault. He behaved with the utmost Calmness, which was easy for him to do, as he felt nothing. (13)

This passage, interesting in itself for the intricacy of passions it describes, introduces an important aspect of David’s character. Intermingled with his good nature is a capacity for rage and anger. More importantly, the passage also succeeds in expressing the fact that it is only in a particularly demanding circumstance that these qualities would be awakened in him. Further instances within the novel will reveal that the cause of David’s negative emotions always involves the frustration of his good-natured perception of the ways of the world and of friendships or relationships. In this way, they also perform a function in identifying the sources of insensibility within the world that David enters into. In this sense, as the passage above suggests, ‘calmness’ is not an appropriate response.

After this episode, David is at the lowest point of his adventures. He is destitute and friendless and wanders without purpose and without a sense of direction. Interestingly, at this point he uses a part of his very little money to relieve a beggar ‘who told him a Story of having been turned out of doors by an unnatural brother’ (15). This story or, rather, side note does not have the same function as the other stories that David listens to and interferes to relieve. It is not here to serve as an exemplification of David’s character but at this point in the novel presents the very real possibility of how David’s own story could end. Its function is to remind the reader of and deflect the dangers entailed in David’s personal narrative.

From the moment David remembers his uncle - that is, he remembers that he is not entirely friendless - the resolution of the crisis begins. David’s role in the process of this resolution is characterized by passivity. Leaving David in a state of physical and mental exhaustion at his uncle’s house, the narrator invites the readers to turn their attention to the couple who posed as witnesses of the forged will. They are presented as leading ‘an uneasy life’, constantly quarrelling. Upon hearing the story of David leaving his brother’s house and how misrepresented David’s character is in the telling of this story, the man cannot bear his guilt and he reveals the true account of the forged will to David’s uncle. At this point David faints and remains inactive and practically uninvolved in the process of the re-acquisition of his wealth and status. The uncle
initiates and completes all the necessary actions, from protecting the witnesses against further bribing to alter their story, to negotiating with Daniel. Although this particular episode is strikingly representative of David’s non-confrontational and non-combative qualities, it is also suggestive of another kind of retribution that is realised in the uneasiness that follows as a consequence of malfeasance. The fact that the couple leads an ‘uneasy’ life as a consequence of their wrongful act is, in essence, the avengement of this act. Towards the end of the novel we find out that Daniel receives his comeuppance for the cruel usage of his brother, and his generally malevolent and scheming nature, as loss of tranquillity and uneasiness. The theme will be further explored in the novel and will have significant connections to David’s anger.

With the crisis now resolved and David reinstated to his former status, this still is not the point of departure. David decides to live with his uncle:

David now resolved to lead an easy Life, without entering into any Engagements of Friendship or Love with any one; but to spend his time in reading and calm Amusements, not flattering himself with any great Pleasures, and consequently, not being liable to any great Disappointments. (20)

Instead of a quest and a journey, he desires retirement and a tranquil life that avoids major fluctuations of emotion: he desires not movement but rest. The death of his uncle causes ‘a fresh disruption to the ease he had proposed’ (20) and sets himself and the plot in motion. It is uneasiness and the search for tranquillity that instigates the plot and the quest, because David, as a deeply anti-individualistic character, cannot find tranquillity in the state of friendlessness that the death of his only close relative leaves him. In fact, he is presented toiling with uneasy reflections of his situation before he takes the decision to search for a friend. The search, as the reader of The Adventures knows, will end with the finding not of a friend but of a group or circle of friends, with whom David will live in ‘agreeable tranquillity’. This prompts the comment that David is actually looking for a wife and not a friend. Richard Terry analyses the story from this perspective in an article entitled ‘David Simple and the Fallacy of Friendship’ where he commented on the fact that there is ‘a shift in the gender identity of David’s idealized
friend’. But he does not mean to suggest that the ‘book drops its interest in friendship per se to become concerned essentially with courtship and marriage’. He recognizes that the marriages entered into in the novel are ‘based on friendship rather than any well-developed romantic or sexual interest’. However, there is also not a real inconsistency within the novel because, despite the shift in gender, there is no change in scope. David begins his quest being actually friendless in every sense that the eighteenth-century word suggests: no kinsmen, no one ‘joined to him with mutual benevolence and intimacy, and no one who realises the bond of friendship in love’. He ends his quest having found a group of people who realise every potential and every meaning that the eighteenth-century word ‘friend’ can connote. In the process, the issues of unity and disparity, uneasiness and tranquillity, and the emotions of anger and envy which were set out in the exposition will be further developed and account for Sarah Fielding’s euphoric but unsustainable view of social union.

**The Quest and David’s Anger**

The beginning of *The Adventures*, then, is connected to the loss of tranquillity due to the dismantling of the domestic union and the loss of the potential to restore this. The end of *The Adventures* is effected through the establishment of a community that realises the good and ‘easy’ life. One of the characteristics of David’s circle of friends is that they live in ‘agreeable tranquillity’ (247). What is meant by the term ‘tranquillity’ is the avoidance of violent emotions. David desires ‘calm amusements’ and not to be subject to ‘great disappointments’. However, throughout his adventures he will be subject to continuous disappointment and even despair – often connected to loss of sleep– and also to that specific kind of uneasiness that is linked to violent passions. It has to be noted, at this point, that the term ‘uneasiness’ is a term frequently used in the very definitions of intense, negative emotions such as anger, envy and hatred. At key points of the plot, David both experiences and expresses his deep uneasiness and anger at the behaviour he meets.

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151 Terry, (p. 527).
152 Ibid.
153 From the definition of ‘friend’ in Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary* (1755-6).
The first instance of David’s anger has been already referred to and comes as a result of the manipulation of his emotions by his brother. Daniel induces David’s anger by articulating David’s dependency, that is, by separating him from what David believes is a family union. Daniel’s ill usage aggravates David’s passion so that he is thrown into an uneasiness which is the result of a mixture of anger for the insult sustained and his tenderness for his brother. The next case is when David finds himself in a commercial environment, alien to him, his way of life and his principles. The narrator informs us that the abuse of language (a ‘good man’ is a financially adept man) and the interest-driven relationships infuriate him: ‘David was now quite in a Rage; and resolved to stay no longer in a Place, where Riches were esteemed Goodness, and Deceit, Low-Cunning; and giving up all things to the love of Gain, thought Wisdom’ (23).

But by far the most intense moment of anger comes with the betrayal of Nanny Johnson, the lady who he is about to marry, when she decides to leave him for the prospect of marriage to a much richer man. Nanny’s envy of her sister’s marital position and the fact that she can surpass her by marrying a wealthier man leads her to betray David, whose reaction is worth quoting at length:

He went back to his own Room, where Love, Rage, Despair, and Contempt alternately took possession of his Mind: He walked about, and raved like a Madman; repeated all the Satires he could remember on Women.[...] In short, the first Sallies of his Passion, his Behaviour and Thoughts were so much like what is common on such Occasions, that to dwell upon them, would be only a Repetition of what has been said a thousand times. The only Difference between him, and the generality of Men in the same Case, was that instead of resolving to be her Enemy, he could not help wishing her well: For as Tenderness was always predominant in his Mind, no Anger, nor even a just cause of Hatred, could ever make him inveterate, or revengeful. It cost him very little to be a Christian in that point. (30)

The most distinctive characteristic of David’s anger is the fact that no action stems from it. In all the cases cited above David decides to leave directly after the episode of anger. In his brother’s case he decides ‘never more to set his foot into any Place, which was in the possession of so unnatural a Wretch’ (13), at the Royal Exchange he ‘resolves not to stay’, and in Nanny Johnson’s case we are informed that as soon as ‘his Rage was somewhat abated, and his Passion a little subsided, he concluded to leave his Mistress to
the Enjoyment of her beloved Grandeur’ (30). Paradoxically, David can have an emotional experience of such intensity and force as being in a rage, and yet all this energy results in inactivity, as if dispersed. This is a paradox because the emotion of anger is involved, but is generally viewed as an appropriate quality of David as the ‘non-confrontational’ man of feeling who operates under principles associated with meekness. One of the earliest critics to read The Adventures as a novel of Sensibility sees David as exemplifying a specific type of man of feeling, namely the ‘naïve’ as opposed to the ‘worldly’ man of feeling. The difference between them lies in action as opposed to reaction:

The worldly Man of Feeling is an idealized figure designed to be emulated and to expound traditional moral principles, whereas the naïve Man of Feeling is more indirectly didactic in that his goodness of heart dramatically undermines the malevolence of those who abuse him, even though his own qualities make him vulnerable to deception. While the worldly Man of Feeling is distinguished by his exemplary actions, the naïve Man of Feeling is characterized by his reactions to the crass reality that surrounds him.\textsuperscript{154}

The distinction articulated here is significant with regard to fiction of the time and certainly David can be classed as a naïve man of feeling. On the other hand, this very characterization can be too close to ‘typecasting’, making David’s behaviour ‘expected’ and fitting and thus not open to question or further consideration. Instead, it would be fruitful to study David’s inactivity as part of the system of action and reaction as it operates within the novel. David may not retaliate against the actions that caused his anger but this does not mean that they remain unavenged.

Here by revenge is not meant an active seeking of injury to the evil-doer that opposes Christian and sentimental ethics. On the contrary, Sarah Fielding’s hero exemplifies not only a distinctive sentimental ideal, but also shows how this is informed by religion. David experiences intense negative emotion, with good reason, but stays decisively apart from its manifestation as revenge. He also makes the point that the forswearing of revenge is due to religious considerations; as ‘It cost him very little to be a Christian in that point’. What particularly attests to David’s virtuous, and distinctively

\textsuperscript{154}Gerard A. Barker, “‘David Simple’: The Novel of Sensibility in Embryo”, \textit{Modern Language Studies}, 12(1982), 69-80, (p. 69), original emphasis.
sentimental, emotional disposition is the easiness with which he relinquishes his desire for revenge. Analyses of emotions within the Christian tradition, such as the writings of R. C. Roberts discussed above, clearly show a dichotomy between positive emotions that are endorsed within religious discourse as ‘virtues’, and negative emotions, such as anger, which are restrained as alien to the Christian self. However, as confessional writings such as the Spiritual Diary of John Rutty make plainly obvious, controlling the negative passions is a continuous, painstaking process that requires significant effort. By contrast, the narrator’s comment shows that this process does not necessitate or involve suffering or sacrifice on David’s part, as is suggested by the negation of the verb ‘cost’. In this sense, David is not cast as a religious example. Had it been so, the focus would be more on his effort. Rather, he emblematizes the sentimental ideal through his virtuous disposition that already incorporates the concept of Christian virtue. Sentimental characters are not usually striving for the attainment of virtue, but are presented as extraordinary individuals already in possession of a particular emotional disposition which is then contrasted to the wickedness of the world around them. Bound by his religious and sentimental ethic, David does not seek revenge.

However, the sense of equilibrium that revenge promises is here satisfied differently, by a system of equity that is largely based on emotional harm and emotional benefit. One by one the perpetrators of evil acts are shown in the novel to be suffering emotional and bodily distress as a result of their actions. The couple who helped Daniel with his scheme to forge the will by acting as false witnesses lead an ‘uneasy life’. Nanny Johnson is shown suffering at the side of an increasingly peevish husband, a situation that causes her own emotional transformation and suffering and denies her any sense of satisfaction. As the narrator notes, ‘the uneasy State of her Mind made her peevish and cross to all around her; and she never had the pleasure of enjoying that

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155 I refer here to the notion of revenge as an act of restoring social balance that has been suggested in analyses. For a discussion see Linda Woodbridge, English Revenge Drama: Money, Resistance, Equality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), which seeks to correct the notion that revenge is always viewed as objectionable and focuses on the fact that revenge drama also appealed to ‘an increasingly widespread fantasy of social equality’. That is, revenge can serve to correct social injustice and inequality. The phrase ‘the desire for vengeance is a desire for essential equilibrium’ (always imaginary), belongs to the philosopher Simone Weil. See Simone Weil, An Anthology ed. by Siân Miles (London, 1986) and also the analysis of the phrase by John Kerrigan Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 10-1.
Fortune, which she had been so desirous of obtaining’ (34). At the end of the novel, Daniel, David’s brother, admits to having led a life of misery and infirmity, saying: ‘tho’ in reality I was but a young Man, I had all the Infirmitities and Diseases incident to old Age’ (226). He continues:

I cannot say I ever enjoyed any real Happiness in my Life; for the Anxiety about the Success of my Schemes. – and the Fear of being found out, - and the Disappointment which always attended me in the End, - joined to the Envy which continually preyed on my heart, at the good Fortune of others has made me, ever since I came into the World, the most wretched of all mortals. (227)

There are constant reminders within the plot that the perpetrators of evil acts do not enjoy or reap the intended benefits of their acts because of the impact that these acts have on their physical and mental health. In a sense, the avengement of the evil-doing is the uneasiness that comes with it, its impact on the mind. Indeed evil is represented primarily by its emotional effects. The reader of *The Adventures* never comes across the actual names of the wrongful actions, of betrayal, being jilted, being driven by self-interest. The emphasis is on the emotional effect that the action has on the victim and most emphatically on the evil-doer. Within this system, revenge can be viewed as a kind of retributive uneasiness, loss of tranquillity, and of one’s bodily and emotional wellbeing.

This scheme of retribution is further reinforced with apt use of an inserted narrative. There is only one instance of ‘active’ revenge in the novel. And, as readers know, it is a case of ‘false’ revenge. In the story that Isabelle narrates (180-93), Dorimene’s illicit passion for Dumont, a friend of her husband Marquis de Stainville, has been viewed by Linda Bree as denoting that ‘sexual desire is often portrayed by Fielding not as an aspect of romance but as a destructive passion, closely allied to other destructive passions involving loss of self-command’. In Isabelle’s story the passions are allowed their full sway. Dorimene, overwhelmed by her passion, reveals her desire to Dumont who, loyal to his friendship and his principles, tries to talk her into sense. However, a servant grows suspicious of their often meeting alone – always instigated by Dorimene –and considers it an act of principle and gratitude to inform the husband about the

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156 Bree, *Sarah Fielding*, p. 43.
‘betrayal’ of his wife and friend. Blinded by his jealousy and his anger—which also prevents a resolution, as he will not talk openly about the cause of it—Stainville kills the innocent Dumont in what he considers to be rightful revenge of a wronged husband, but his action is, in fact, no less than murder. There is no cause for revenge. Alongside other stories, such as Cynthia’s who was excluded from her father’s will in a fit of his anger, Fielding insists that intense passions are untrustworthy instigators of action. More to the point, the kind of active retaliation instigated by uncontrolled emotion bears the potential to incur, and multiply, injury, whereas the system that operates in The Adventures counterbalances the effects of injury. In the light of the above it is appropriate that David’s anger does not result in action. It bears, though, a distinct role in identifying the hindrances to his sentimental quest and thus the insensibility of David’s world. The instances of David’s anger are not dynamic. On the contrary they provide moments of stasis, of immersion into emotion and, in this way, an opportunity for social commentary. The fact that David leaves the place after each one of these moments and returns to his quest—and movement—confirms this. Each one serves to identify the place or person as different to Sensibility and the principles that David exemplifies.

Indeed, what significantly contributes to the sense of dissolution of Volume the Last is the fact that this very system of justice ceases to operate. In Volume the Last, people like Mrs. Orgueil can operate under the influence of such self-consuming and uneasy passions as envy and ‘survive’ without major consequences, whereas David and his family cannot survive being the objects of them. The compensating and balancing consequence of uneasiness is lost on perpetrators of evil acts. Equally, as David now stops being an itinerant hero and represents an ideal of settled domesticity and tranquillity, he loses his ability to abandon the place or the person of insensibility and along with it his anger. In that text, his patience acquires biblical proportions as he and his family suffer distress without the means to ‘escape’ to an alternative sentimental setting. Moreover, the darkness of the Volume is emphatic due to the changed perspective from the Adventures. In that novel we have David’s perspective and his angry rejection of anything unsentimental. In the sequel, we are given the perspective of
the unsentimental world that defines David’s family as on the margins and progressively excludes them, at best as a curiosity, at worst as irrelevant.

**Envy in the Plot of The Adventures**

Generally, forms of vice in *The Adventures* are represented through their exemplification by a character. Every new person that David meets is unsuitable as a friend due to having one irredeemable quality. These characters are the source of David’s disappointment, the cause of his despair for the outcome of his quest, and consequently the state of the world. The source of evil in the plot, that actually has an effect on lives and relationships, is not represented by a single character, but recurs pervasively as the quality of many. It is the passion of envy which permeates social life from its originary basis in the family. As noted earlier, it is not actually disinheritance that makes David leave the house. David is content in living with his brother, unaware of his treachery, and his brother is, for a short time, content in having David as a dependant. Daniel’s attitude changes when he realises that David, even in this ‘inferior’ role of dependant, is in a position to hold other people’s love, affection or sympathy due to his ‘amiable behaviour’. The narrator makes it clear that ‘envy is predominant in Daniel’s mind’ (12) as indicated by the title of the second chapter: ‘The Consequences of Envy and Selfishness’. After this first instance, envy, in its various forms, will recur in key parts of the plot.

Upon beginning his quest for a friend, David has a ‘false start’ by finding himself in a place where the very name of friend is abused: the Royal Exchange. In a way, though, this may be the most suitable beginning to this sentimental quest, as the stock-market environment and its workings can summarize the ethical adversities and hindrances posed to this quest by a commercial age. Here, David receives a valuable insight into the self-interest and envy that drive relationships in this environment, and also he is confronted with the main issue of trust and suspicion:

David was amazed at this Treachery and began to suspect everyone about him, of some ill Design. But he could not imagine, what Interest this Man could have in warning him, of trusting the other, till by conversing with a third Person, he found out, that he was his most inveterate Enemy, from Envy; because they had both set out to the World together, with the Views of sacrificing everything to the raising of
a Fortune; and that either by cunning or accident, the other was got rich before him. (23)

This passage demonstrates effectively the operating principles of the world David is entering; the logic of the stock market pervades the whole of social life. Until Cynthia, who provides her own narrative of her story, David always relies on the accounts of other people in order to shape his opinion of the characters he meets. This very passage exemplifies how untrustworthy these narratives can be, as the logic of the market influences them as well. As James Kim aptly notes:

The logic of the market even structures David’s search for a real friend. Until Cynthia appears, each of David’s potential friends ends up affirming the citational logic of the market value. Like the stock-jobbers at the Exchange, each attempts to establish his own credibility by discrediting his immediate predecessor.157

But more than a comment on the state of affairs that derives from the new moneyed economic practices, Fielding also goes further to note the change in the emotional realm as well. She finds that the new aggressive commercial culture can be a fruitful soil for specific ‘uneasy’ passions, and predominantly envy.

Envy is ubiquitous in the plot of *The Adventures* and it appears in many forms. At first there is the connection to the logic of the market. The new economic practices may offer opportunities for prosperity to middle-class people, thus closing the gap between them and the aristocracy and diminishing or eliminating the envy (if any) that existed in this relation, but, as the quotation above illustrates, they can widen differences between people of the same class or social group when some of its members succeed and others do not. This difference in prosperity is in this case much more dangerously inducing of envy, as people perceive the ‘inequality’ more strongly due to their closeness; ‘they had both set out to the World together’, notes the narrator. The scene of social disunity is completed by the fact that envy also leads to detraction and David cannot trust the account one person gives of another.

This motif of envy as a source of evil and disunion is further reinforced and expanded in the course of the novel. Envy is presented as a key emotion in various

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social settings, and it is so pervasive that David is forced to lament the miseries of mankind ‘when people could rise to that height of Malignity, as to bring spite and envy with them into their very Diversions’ (53). David’s comment comes when he finds himself at a play with Mr. Orgueil and, in amazement, notices that some of the viewers are there not to divert themselves, but with the purpose of criticising the play and they do so before it has even begun (53). The worldly Mr. Orgueil informs David that the reason behind this is ‘envy and anger at another’s superiority of parts’ (53). This notion of criticism due to envy is repeated in the novel when the narrator informs us that David’s pleasure in hearing a worthy speech is ‘pure and unmixed’ precisely because he is devoid of such ‘low, mean qualities’ as to be envious of, or angry with, a person on account of their creative or intellectual abilities. The theme itself is not novel. Frederick Tupper, in an article entitled ‘The Envy theme in Prologues and Epilogues’, noted the usual and conspicuous practice of writers to attribute, and thus justify, criticism of their work to the envy - and not the knowledge - of their critics. This notion is presented as fear of envy and the wish, often expressed in the prologue or epilogue, for the piece of writing to avoid being the object of it.\footnote{Frederick Tupper, ‘The Envy Theme in Prologues and Epilogues’, \textit{The Journal of English and Germanic Philology}, 16(1917), 551-72. For a more recent account and also one that provides the origins of the theme of envy in intellectual criticism see: Bridget K. Balint, ‘Envy in the Intellectual Discourse of the High Middle Ages’, in \textit{The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals}, ed. by Richard Newhauser (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 41-55.} Tupper notes that the practice had faded away by the eighteenth century, due to different perceptions of the writer, the critics and the audience, and envy is no longer such a prevailing topic in prologues and epilogues. The fact that criticism due to envy is not a characteristic of a closed system (writers and their critics) any more, but a practice that has passed on to the general audience, as presented in scenes of the novel, and now interfering with the audience’s amusement, as David notes, attests to the pervasiveness of the emotion. Indeed, David at the beginning of the novel makes generalized comments on the ubiquitous presence of envy within society. In addition to finding it a part of people’s diversions, the first conclusion he comes to, after some time spent wandering the capital, is that all women are ‘tearing each other from envy and all men sacrificing each other for interest’ (36).
Sarah Fielding suggests, anticipating Johnson’s comment (384, n. 77) that the envy that pervades society originates in its very building block, the family. This is a recurrent theme in her writing.\textsuperscript{159} The first instance of envy is Daniel’s envy of David’s amiable qualities. Moreover, early in his adventures David meets three sisters who tear a carpet to pieces so none of them can own it. Further on, he meets Nanny Johnson who, as the narrator informs us, for all her good qualities also has ‘a great Share of Vanity, with some small Spices of Envy (29). Nanny’s preference for the old wealthy merchant over David is, above all, informed by sibling rivalry:

Tis true, my lover can indeed keep me very well, I shall not want for any thing he can procure me; for I am sure he loves me sincerely, and will do all in his power to oblige me; and I like him very well, and shall have no Reason to envy any other woman the possession of any Man whatever: But then, he can’t afford to buy me fine Jewels, to keep me an Equipage; and I must see my Sister ride in her coach and six, while I take up with a Hack, or at best with a coach and Pair. (28, my emphasis)

Even though the word envy is not used, this last sentence effectually conveys the very meaning of it as Latin \textit{invidia}: the hostile look directed at the object of one’s envy.

Cynthia is, like David, on the receiving end of sibling envy. But Cynthia’s case is also unique because of what she represents in the novel: the woman of wit and understanding. Early in her story she notes how her sisters were, as indeed the generality of people are, ‘envious and angry to see any one above them’ (84) and that ‘every new acquaintance we had increased my sisters Aversion to me; for as I was generally liked best, they were in a continual Rage at seeing I was taken so much notice of’ (84). It has to be noted that Cynthia prefaces her story with this motto: ‘I have been so teazed and tormented about Wit, I really wish there was no such a thing in the World. I am very certain, the woman who is possessed of it, unless she can be so happy as to

\textsuperscript{159} Envy is a recurrent issue in her works that follow \textit{David Simple} such as the sequel \textit{Familial Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple}, 2 vols (London: for A. Millar, 1747). In that text it is often an emotional state in many characters and is referred to as the ‘gnawing vulture’ (I.75). In Fielding’s educational writing, \textit{The Governess: Or Little Female Academy} (London: Printed for A. Bradley and R. James, 1749), envy is a cause of concern and a hindrance to domestic happiness. By contrast an image of childhood felicity rests upon the elimination of envy: ‘our parents had no partiality to any of us; so we had no cause to envy one another on that account; and we lived tolerably well together’ (110-1). She stresses again its pathological aspect; envy preys upon the vitals, brings ill health and shortens life (108). In these texts also, that precede \textit{Volume the Last}, envy is a domestic concern, its causes begin in childhood and if it is not ‘cured’, a word that Fielding uses, can lead to pathology. The theme is further explored in the conclusion of David’s story.
live with People void of Envy, had better be without it’ (81). What is interesting in this last sentence is that wit is presented as an enviable quality in a woman, but not in a favourable sense. The message still is that wit, as Cynthia herself perceives, can be a source of distress. And it will be even more so in Volume the Last, when Cynthia will be the object of Mrs. Orgueil’s envy.

The issue at hand, though, is what the term ‘enviable quality’ signifies. An interesting answer may be found in Helmut Schoeck’s Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour which is one of the most extensive books on the subject. In it, Schoeck notes the inherently social aspect of envy and, by implication, its political status as an emotion that registers inequality. However, instead of seeing it as a source of social disruption and solely negative, Schoeck acknowledges its inherentness in human nature and he makes the extraordinary claim that envy realises the social impulse in many ways. Our awareness and fear of becoming objects of envy, Schoeck notes, strongly modify our social behaviour. In addition, by marking the ‘unequal’, the quality or object that deviates from the norm, envy helps form the social group. In this sense, Cynthia’s wit ‘marks’ her as a deviation from the social group. That is the reason why Cynthia, or a woman of wit at the time, deals with a double barrier: she may be looked on with suspicion and even provoke the anger of men, and at the same time provoke the envy of other members of her own sex and also the envy of members of her more immediate social setting, her sisters, who exclude her from their family union because of the quality that ‘marks’ her as superior to them, or simply different from them.

Cynthia’s case of sibling rivalry comes to complete a line of examples of siblings - Daniel and David, ‘the three furies’, Nanny Johnson and her sister- whose relationship is marked by envy. The next pair of siblings who are introduced in the novel are Camilla and Valentine and they are the only siblings who have a loving, unenvious relationship. Ironically, their relationship, although based on caring and void from negative qualities, is viewed under the distortive lens of the false incest accusations. Whatever other connotations critics may read in this episode, it seems to me that it is there to complete, very eloquently, the image of a society so inundated with envy that

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whereas all sibling relationships are characterized by ‘unnatural’ behaviour due to envy, the only ‘normal’, un-envious sibling relationship in the novel is cast as the utmost unnaturalness.

As we draw closer to the happy ending of the novel and the circle of friends around David is formed, the world of sensibility that they represent is contrasted to its main opposing principle. While they make their observations in their walk around the capital, we learn through the mouth of the worldly, witty Cynthia that at the bottom of all evils is envy (150). Up to this point, Sarah Fielding has shown financial, intellectual and domestic environments to be rife with envy and, unlike Schoeck, sees nothing ‘positive’ about it. In a remark that goes beyond the purpose of the novel to express a social vision, Fielding borrows a metaphor from mechanism to represent a society that is held together by extirpating the causes of envy:

Let every Man, instead of bursting with Rage – and Envy- at the Advantages of Nature, or Station, another has over him, extend his Views far enough to consider, that if he acts his Part well, he deserves as much applause- and is as useful a Member of Society-as any other Man whatever: for in every Machine, the smallest Parts conduce as much to the keeping it together, and to regulate its Motion as the greatest. (23)

Without this remark, David and his circle of friends are ‘oddities’ within a society that operates on the exact opposite principles. Without the admonition to follow their paradigm the circle of friends must retire in order to exist. Other novels comment on the noise and bustle, the envy and anger that exists in society, but the character commenting is often in the role of the retired ‘spectator’ who finds the life of the city too incompatible with goodness, virtue and simplicity. A sentence that concisely expresses this notion is uttered by Mr. Wilson in *Joseph Andrews* who is retired from ‘a world full of Bustle, Noise, Hatred, Envy, and Ingratitude, to Ease, Quiet and Love’.161 Emphasizing the contrast is also the fact that his paradigm is offered as distant, retired and thus outside the society it criticizes. In *The Adventures* the couples do not yet retire from society. Because they exist within this society, while at the same time exemplifying a way of life that is different from the source of all its evils, that is, envy,

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the end is euphoric and hopeful. For this reason, the darkness of Volume the Last is essentially a lament for a lost social cause. The reality of society forces David’s family first to retire in order to maintain their different way of life. At the end they are not going to survive as a union, and as a feasible paradigm of social existence, because of their main differences to the rest of the society from within and the destructive force of envy from without.

Envy and the Utopia of Sensibility
Several readings of David Simple and his circle of friends agree on the fact that it is a utopian community that self-destructs, although they find different utopian attributes in it and thus reasons for its failure. Carolyn Woodward reads it as a utopia based ‘on true feminine values’ which is destroyed by the ‘debilitating underside of femininity in which it is founded’.\textsuperscript{162} Joseph Bartolomeo, in a chapter befittingly entitled ‘A Fragile Utopia of Sensibility’, notes that the utopia constructed by Sarah Fielding is also founded upon ‘the less obviously gendered attributes of idealistic naiveté, benevolence and sympathy’, in short, those attributes that make David ‘a prototypical man of feeling’.\textsuperscript{163} Bartolomeo argues that the utopian community which is based on David’s sentimental attributes is effectively destroyed because of the inherent incongruity of the features that constitute it. Specifically, it becomes increasingly difficult for David to continue actively searching for stories of distress and the pleasure he finds in relieving it, due to the ties he develops with his circle of friends. Bartolomeo notes that David’s case contradicts the development of the concept of sympathy in the eighteenth century as John Mullan delineates it. John Mullan’s argument, as Bartolomeo summarises it, is that in the eighteenth century, sympathy was ‘transformed from an individual’s automatic, immediate identification with another to a process of detached observation and reflection— from “natural mutuality of passions and sentiments” to “spectatorial

He continues, ‘distance and Judgement combine with open-heartedness in David’s genuinely disinterested acts of benevolence, but personal involvement with the characters with whom he eventually forms his ideal community makes sympathetic action more “natural” and more difficult’.\textsuperscript{165} In addition, Bartolomeo notes that David’s view of shared property is simultaneously in keeping with his sensibility ethos but also gravely undermines his ability to continue being a benefactor. As he notes, the text itself, through its various references to money, emphasizes ‘the extent to which a non-hierarchical and communal future would be impossible without the ultimate indulgence of a sentimental benefactor’.\textsuperscript{166}

The ending of The Adventures signifies the creation of a utopian community that is destroyed in the sequel, but David’s utopia of sensibility is not a utopia only due to the sentimental values it represents. It also bears the two most distinctive characteristics of the genre: a form of equality and freedom from envy. Within the various aspects, influences and attributes that characterize utopian ideals, there are some constants. These are some basic characteristics that are necessary for a social structure to be deemed utopian. Many visions may inform such a structure, the Christian ideal for example, but in essence, as Gregory Claeys notes, utopia rests upon ‘a concept of property and society, indeed a particular construction of the communal, in which poverty and scarcity are avoided by restricting inequality, greed and injustice’.\textsuperscript{167}

In addition, as Schoeck remarks, utopia expresses the ideal of a society redeemed from envy exactly because the equality it promises removes or greatly diminishes the causes of envy. The ideal is, although never attained, a society of ‘unenvious equals’. The concept of a society redeemed from envy as ideal is based on the notion of envy as connected to egalitarian concepts of justice: that is the source of envy is unequal distribution of goods within society. Helmut Schoeck remarks that utopias are constructed on the frame of unenvious equals, but this ideal is doomed to fail as the source of envy is more extensive than just material possessions. He notes:

\textsuperscript{165} Bartolomeo, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{166} Bartolomeo, p. 47
Many well-meant proposals for the “good society” or the completely “just society” are doomed because they are based on the false premise that this must be a society in which there is nothing left for anyone to envy. This situation can never occur because, as is demonstrable, man inevitably discovers something new to envy. In the utopian society in which we would all have not only the same clothes but the same facial expressions, one person would still envy the other for those imagined, innermost feelings which would enable him, under the egalitarian mask, to harbour his own private thoughts and emotions.¹⁶⁸

David’s familial circle represents a utopia precisely because it conquers this ultimate barrier towards communalism. Consider, for example Camilla’s attitude towards Cynthia’s supremacy of wit:

If Cynthia knew her understanding without being proud of it, Camilla could acknowledge it without Envy […] And every Advantage of Pleasure arising from any Faculty of the Mind, was as much shared in this Society, as any other Property whatever. (259)

It is not the action of sharing that marks this as a society of equals but its authenticity. The genuineness of this equality is confirmed by the fact that the nature of what is sharable is extended to include both material and mental qualities. After singling out envy as ‘the root of all evils’, Fielding proposes to uproot it by nullifying its object; the idea of an enviable quality. Having achieved her utopian union she will later dismantle it because although liberated from envy within, it cannot be liberated from envy without.

**Volume the Last: Mrs Orgueil’s Envy**

When Sarah Fielding returns to David and his family, in the sequel of 1753, the reassuring tone changes to profound distress and sadness. David and his now extended family will endure great financial distress, separation and death. Two members only survive at the end, as one by one, David’s wife, children, Valentine, and finally David himself, dies unrelieved from earthly disappointments. Fascinated by this stark contrast, critics have discussed the different tone of the sequel, as an altogether separate novel, as a study on the chimerical notion of poetic justice, and as an exemplification of the

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¹⁶⁸ Schoeck, *Envy*, p. 11.
inherent impossibilities of the sentimental union of David’s family.\textsuperscript{169} In any case, the message of \textit{Volume the Last} is that not only David’s family, but his sentimental mentality cannot survive as it becomes progressively incomprehensible and quaint and for this reason isolated. The source of the overwhelming distress in the sequel is that others either do not understand the way David’s family operates, or the fact that they are unsentimentally unwilling to help them. The family’s financial distress stems from the fact that the idea of family wealth shared equally is not deemed financially sensible in the new economic climate, or the fact that what for David’s circle are considered charge-less actions of friendship for others incur a price and a moneyed debt, not a kind obligation.

In many ways, the volume is a reversal of \textit{The Adventures}.\textsuperscript{170} The same elements that constitute the account of David Simple’s adventures are used in \textit{Volume the Last}, but they are twisted; their evil potential is magnified or their ability to effect good stops being operative. David’s inheritance in \textit{The Adventures} is given and results in good; it aids the resolution of the crisis. In \textit{Volume the Last} it is taken, as the uncle’s will is contested, and marks the beginning of distress. In \textit{The Adventures} David’s comments on the market practices serve to showcase their corruption. Speculators and financiers are criticized for their self-interest, while David’s comment on their anxiety-ridden faces showcases the undesirability of their attitude. By contrast, in \textit{Volume the Last} the voice of the financier is more prominent and the focus is on the unintelligibility of David’s

\textsuperscript{169} Peter Sabor, the editor of the edition of \textit{David Simple} used here, notes that the story of David Simple is ‘concluded by the double marriage’ whereas, ‘\textit{Volume the Last}, a tragic novel’, has a grim conclusion of its own’ (xxxi). Thus, he suggests that the two texts are so markedly different that it is ‘misleading’ to read the \textit{Volume} as the conclusion to the \textit{Adventures}. The argument for the inherent impossibilities of this union is treated by the critics that view David’s circle as a utopia that fails: Woodward, and Bartolomeo. Gary Gautier, in ‘Henry and Sarah Fielding on Romance and Sensibility’, \textit{Novel}, 31.2(1998), 195-214, also argues that the story of the Adventures was ‘concluded but not resolved’ because the notion of Sensibility is not reconciled with the real and often predatory world.’ (207). Linda Bree reads \textit{Volume the Last} not separately from the \textit{Adventures}, but certainly on its own, as Sarah Fielding’s ‘rejection of the principles of poetic justice’, Bree, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{170} Indeed, As Jane Collier (considered to be the author of the preface) notes: ‘Suppose in real Life (which these kinds of Writings intend to represent) you knew a Man of a uncommon Turn of Mind, who had gone through Difficulties with Resolution, or had in Prosperity shewn such a noble Spirit of Generosity and Beneficence, as had highly raised your Admiration, \textit{would it not more awaken your Curiosity,} to know how that same Man behaved \textit{in a Reverse of Fortune}, than to hear any thing of a new Acquaintance? It is on this Supposition that our Author has ventured once more to bring her \textit{David Simple} into Public.’ (Fielding, ed. by Sabor, 242, my emphasis).
practice in holding everything in equal sharing with his family. David, abandoning all effort for communication with him, remarks: ‘you don’t talk our Language, Sir’ (290). Even the stock episode of immigrating to the colonies in pursuit of financial gain that provides resolution in many of the novels of the time, in *Volume the Last* leads to the death of Valentine and the distress of Cynthia.

By far the most important depiction of the reversal of fortune that the text exposes is with reference to emotions. In the course of *Volume the Last* David exchanges anger towards anything unjust, for endless patience and, along with his family, withstands the effects of negative emotions that now are really more pernicious to them than to the ones who experience it as is the case with Mrs Orgueil’s envy. Mrs Orgueil is a new addition as a character; she bears no connection to the first novel but she acts as a great force of distress in the sequel. As Bree notes, she is purely malevolent and her envy and hatred are the source of great evil to David’s family.\(^{171}\) Despite her superior riches, and social standing Mrs Orgueil cannot stand the fact that people recognize Cynthia’s wit and prefer her company. Pained by this awareness, she makes Cynthia and also Cynthia’s child, the object of her inveterate and powerful envy. In Mrs Orgueil’s hands, Cynthia’s daughter suffers the effects of anger, and such maltreatment that she will contract the fever that costs her life (270-2).

In addition to directly harming the family, Mrs Orgueil’s envy also prevents their relief. When David asks for Mr Orgueil’s help, fearing that her husband may change his decision and help David she succeeds with her rhetorical skill in maintaining her husband’s unsentimental disposition. As Mr Orgueil is ‘in debate with himself’, his wife enters the room and delivers a speech to prevent ‘her husband ruining himself by Generosity to David and his family’ (282). Bree correctly notes that Mrs Orgueil’s weapon is words. She uses all the right concepts or keywords to influence her husband’s thinking and she succeeds.

\(^{171}\) Bree, *Sarah Fielding*, p.86.
As the narrator informs us, Mrs Orgueil’s motive is rooted in envy:

[…] but she would not have been so extremely anxious to have prevented Mr. Orgueil from relieving David and Camilla in some very small Degree, had she not known it impossible for any Part of that Family to have any Enjoyment, without the hated Cynthia’s having an equal Share at least in the pleasure. (282)

Cynthia is the envied person for Mrs Orgueil, and it would be painful for her to be the cause of any pleasure or good that might befall her. David and Camilla are thus denied help because aid to them benefits Cynthia as well. It is not suggested here that Mrs Orgueil would altogether deny help. Rather, her character is meant by the writer to exemplify the cruelty of an older ethic that would have been available to Fielding through her reading. The motivations and actions of Mrs Orgueil represent Fielding’s criticism of the classical ‘helping friends and harming enemies’ ethic. Mary Blundell in her study of the theme notes:

Greek popular thought is pervaded by the assumption that one should help one’s friends and harm one’s enemies. These fundamental principles surface continually from Homer onwards and survive well into the Roman period […] They are firmly based on observation of human nature, which yields the conclusion that most human beings do in fact desire to help their friends and harm their enemies and derive satisfaction from such behaviour. Thus Xenophon’s Socrates can count benefitting friends and defeating enemies as one of the things that bring ‘greatest pleasures’.  

Of course, this is a discussion very much connected to the definitions of ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ in ancient Greek thought, but what is significant is that it does express an ethic of social behaviour that would have been accessible as an idea to Sarah Fielding. These quotations from her translation of *Memoirs of Socrates* suggest this as well: ‘the power of defending our friends and subduing your enemies’ / ‘we are indeed unjust when we are ungrateful to our friends, but not so when only ungrateful to our enemies’.  


[173]One may argue about the chronological inconsistency. *Memoirs of Socrates* comes after *Volume the Last* but I do not use as a premise the translation *per se*, rather Sarah’s classical learning. According to Peter Sabor, Sarah’s friendship with Arthur Collier, Jane’s brother and Sarah’s tutor in Latin and Greek, goes back to the years 1722-1733. The quotes come from *Xenophon’s Memoirs of Socrates. With the Defense of Socrates before his Judges. Translated from the Original Greek by Sarah Fielding* (Bath: C. Pope; London: sold by A. Millar, 1762), pages 97 and 103 respectively.
Mrs Orgueil represents a twisted version of this motto. Her envy of Cynthia makes her ‘harm friends so that enemies will not benefit’. The single most important characteristic that is conducive to unity and sentimentality in *The Adventures* is reversed here to detrimental effect. The strength and perfection of their unity makes David’s family the object of negative emotion as a whole. Although Cynthia is the true object of envy, she cannot be separated from the family. In this sense, Fielding’s condemnation of this ethic goes beyond admonition to highlight its unsettling potential for society in general. The interconnections created by a social vision that binds people harmoniously within a well-ordered ‘machine’ make it difficult for the fate of ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’ to be considered entirely separately. One’s motivation to harm one’s enemies, allowed within this code of morality, may end up harming friends as well, as is the case here. The inherent image suggested by this is one of disruption and disharmony through the multiplication of evils.

Indeed, Mrs Orgueil’s envy is so forcefully destructive because it combines the factors of wide adverse effects in the community she acts within, with the least possible effects of uneasiness for her as an envier. Although people around her suffer distress, agony and infirmity, and even though illness befalls her own family, she herself remains to the end, strong, talkative and healthy. There is no scene of repentance, no signs of exhaustion, no lamentation on the unbearable uneasiness of envy. That is not to say that Mrs Orgueil is the image of wellbeing. But she represents something deeply unsettling. Contrary to writings on envy discussed above, and the plot of *The Adventures*, Mrs Orgueil can physically withstand envy. She does not experience envy as a disease that wastes and destroys the body and mind. Stripped of the pathological consequences for the one who feels it, envy now becomes primarily a threat to society because the envier is not in any way weakened. In this way, the system of equity that operates in *The Adventures* collapses, as the consequences of evil actions and negative emotions are not more pernicious to their perpetrators than they are to their objects.
In light of the above, Sarah Fielding’s work provides a fruitful basis for the analysis of negative passions and Sensibility. Various factors contribute to this, such as the novel’s concern with passions in general, and their apt representation, which earned praise for Fielding, as well as its status as an early example of the novel of sentiment and the many themes within it that define the genre. Most importantly, it is Fielding’s preoccupation with a wider social vision that makes her work important to this study. Through it, the emotion of envy is revealed as fundamentally antithetical to social constructions of Sensibility, and not only for the reasons posed by religious or philosophical discourses. Envy in Sarah Fielding’s scheme is a cause of evil not only for the individual, but also cumulatively for the group and the very essence of the sentimental social ideal.

Anger, however, does not share the same status as envy. Fielding did not fully embrace anger as part of David’s character, but she did give it a purpose. Although both emotions, anger in its manifestation as rage, are named for exclusion from a well-ordered society, anger is not categorically condemned in the way that envy is. The two are not linked together, as in the religious discourse by Bellers for example. The reason for this is that anger is, in fact, conditioned in the novel. It may seem that anger is as permeating as envy, with David expressing it in many social scenarios, but the causes of David’s anger follow a pattern. In the first case, David’s anger is aimed at his brother’s ‘unnaturalness’, his betrayal, and the severing of the bond between them. This signifies the severing of the unity of the most basic of communities where Sensibility can be expressed; the family. In the market exchange his anger is caused by the abuse of the name of friend, friendship being another stronghold of the Sensibility ideal. Finally, David’s most intense expression of anger at the betrayal of Nanny Johnson may seem selfish, but once again his anger is caused by the thwarting of his expectations of union, friendship and companionship, also manifestations of the ideal of Sensibility. What justifies David’s anger, therefore, is the fact that it does not stem from the frustration of a personal desire. All these cases signify the frustration of an aspiration greater than him and his specific circumstances; the frustration of expectations of Sensibility.
In the other works studied here, the anger of characters of Sensibility will also be attached to something greater than themselves. In those works, though, the fraught situations that cause it do not derive from a general ideal of Sensibility but from a very specific aspect of it; its definition of female virtue. In that context as well, the expression of anger will also be revealed as sustaining the ethos of Sensibility.
Richardson’s Clarissa

‘The story of a virtuous woman trapped in an ambitious and avaricious family, dominated by a choleric father, a spiteful sister and a bullying brother.’ These are the words Janet Todd chose to outline the history of Clarissa Harlowe. Some years earlier, in his work, Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist, Mark Kinkead-Weekes talked of the family in ‘tumults’, the ‘gouty father’, the ‘irate uncles’, the ‘festering resentment’ and the ‘ugly passions’ that cupidity unleashes in the Harlowe household. Almost concurrently Margaret Anne Doody was arguing, in her thorough study of the psychological aspect of Richardson’s work, that ‘in Richardson’s novels “love” is a natural passion, but there are other passions which are also “natural”. Some are less estimable than love or even lust (such as aggressiveness, and cruelty), others more admirable (benevolence, devotion to God).’ More recently, Victor Lams offered a reading of Clarissa as the study of the operation of ‘the irascible passions’ within Harlowe Place. Lams finds that Lovelace acts to ‘destabilize’ the Harlowe family purposefully, exciting their passions, and especially raising and manipulating their anger, so that Clarissa has no recourse but him. At first the ‘irascible passions’ stand in defence of Harlowe Place, in the family’s attempt to protect their valuable member, Clarissa. When they feel they are failing, they turn against her in what becomes, according to Lams, a ‘persecution narrative’. Lams also finds that Clarissa is a paradigm of the quenching of passion, for he writes: ‘Although Clarissa appears to be a story about courtship and attempted seduction, it is really a narrative phenomenology which examines the operations of anger on Lovelace and the Harlowes and its quelling extinction in Clarissa’. In addition, Geoffrey Sill, in The Cure of the Passions and the Origins of the English Novel, discusses the methods by which Clarissa attempts to cure herself from the irascible passions, the signs of spiritual illness which Lovelace

174 Todd, Sensibility, p. 68.
introduces into her family life and her mind. These are works which make the study of the passions that operate in the novel central to its analysis. Generally, the story of Clarissa Harlowe is difficult to be told, analyzed, criticized or made sense of without reference to the passions that instigate the plot.

All the descriptions of the story given above consistently recognize the prevalence of negative emotion as a factor in the development of the story. It is interesting to note the words and phrases that are associated with it: ‘choleric’, ‘irate’, ‘gouty’, ‘tumults’, ‘resentment’, ‘aggressiveness’, ‘irascible passions’, ‘spiritual illness’. All of the above are terms with strong connotations of their own and strong connections to particular ethical, psychological and also physiological discourses. More importantly, all of them are terms that are given within the novel. They are given as tools to help the reader understand and judge the position of Clarissa, her action, or inaction, and the steps to the climax and end of the story. That is, as long as we recognize the situation of Clarissa as created by ‘irascible’ forces we also understand her actions in a certain way; either as defence against these forces or as desperate measures in response to them. It is this point that Richardson explores and, in doing so, complicates. In Clarissa’s story Richardson disrupts the linearity of cause and effect – irascible passion the cause of defensive action – by adding variables such as to what extent the situation is indeed ‘irascible’; to what extent it is justifiably so; when the action or decision taken against it is defensive, or stops being so, and becomes, or is perceived as, offensive. An important determinant of this latter relation is sensibility. In line with the above, what follows aims to be a study of negative emotion in *Clarissa*, and as experienced by Clarissa, with a view to determine the way in which negative emotions such as anger, envy and resentment co-exist with Sensibility. In other words, it explores the ways in which Richardson offers a different account of Sensibility, by making it operative through negative, indeed irascible, passions.

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The Father’s Anger in Earlier Novels: the Background of Clarissa

The importance of the first sequences of the novel to the development of the story is commented upon by Samuel Richardson in his Postscript, where he answers objections about the length, and the slow movement of the novel, made by readers of the time:

They were of the opinion that the story moved too slowly, particularly in the first and second volumes, which are chiefly taken up by the altercations between Clarissa and the several persons of her family. But is it not true that those altercations are the foundation of the whole, and therefore a necessary part of the work?\(^{179}\)

Richardson provides a foundation so thorough that every action can be referred back to it and understood through it. More importantly, every emotion that moves plot and characters is generated here. As Brissenden has remarked in *Virtue in Distress*:

Richardson’s handling of the exposition of his story is masterly; and it is because the groundwork is laid so firmly here that the powerful emotions generated by the subsequent action and the wider significances it is made to bear seem so eminently justified.\(^{180}\)

For this reason, an understanding of how emotion operates within the story must begin by a close examination of the drama as it unfolds in Harlowe Place, from Anna’s request to hear the story of Lovelace, the duel, and how the elder sister lost a suitor to the younger, through to the ‘garden scene’ and Clarissa’s leaving of her father’s house.

The main issues that are exposed in this sequence are: the socio-economic background of the Harlowes’ ambition to ‘raise a family’, how this ambition affects familial relationships, the factors that feed sibling rivalry, the social and ethical codes that inform the correspondence of a woman with a suitor, paternal authority, filial duty and freedom of choice according to inclination in marriage. The main negative emotions that are generated are envy, anger and resentment.\(^{181}\) The main source of contention, and of the generation of negative emotion, is the tension between patriarchal authority

\(^{179}\) Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady*, ed. by Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985), pp.1498-9. All subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the maid body of the text in parentheses.

\(^{180}\) Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, p. 163.

\(^{181}\) Other emotions generated here can be considered as ‘negative’ such as despair or fear, but I am concerned with the ones that bear implications to morality and corruption of sensibility.
and freedom of choice, or refusal in marriage. In order, therefore, to understand to what extent the situation in the Harlowe Place is ‘irate’, and the politics of negative emotion in *Clarissa*, I will draw a comparison with earlier novels that present similar situations, that is, that expose a heroine to the father’s anger as a result of an unwanted match.

A clarification is required here as to what is meant by the term ‘earlier novels’. Discussions of the novel that seek to rectify the monolithic view of the development of the genre at one point in time, by an all-male line of tradition have already established the connection, and even indebtedness, of novelists like Richardson to a group of texts that deal with the same issues of love, patriarchal authority, and also virtue, written during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries predominantly by female writers. As Doody notes, by the time Richardson began to write novels, ‘English prose fiction had already developed manners and conventions of its own, and such fiction must be considered as part of the background of *Clarissa*.’

In the course of the same analysis, Doody identifies the conventions of earlier novels of love and seduction that Richardson makes use of, such as the letter as a method of narration, the position of the heroine’s confidante, and the theme of ‘problems in courtship due to family opposition’. Furthermore, she remarks on the connections of Richardson’s work to earlier novels by Eliza Haywood. For the purposes of the present analysis the most important point in Doody’s discussion is that it articulates the specific way in which the novel becomes a suitable medium for the depiction and examination of family pressure:

In traditional stage comedy, rules of conduct and of social duty can be flouted with impunity. A father’s choice can be brushed aside: ‘Fathers seldom chuse well’, remarks Hippolita in *The Gentleman Dancing-Master*. In some of the sentimental plays, such as Steele’s *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), family duty is presented with exaggerated seriousness, but it is more usual for the father to be presented as comically or repellently short-sighted, and for young love to triumph by somewhat disingenuous means [...] The novelists were more realistic in presenting the problems of behaviour within the family in a manner neither exaggeratedly sentimental nor comic.

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182 Doody, *A Natural Passion*, p. 128.
183 Doody, *A Natural Passion*, p. 132.
Accordingly, Doody presents a background of father-daughter contention in Mary Davys’s *The Lady’s Tale* (1725), in which she finds similarities to *Clarissa* such as the same social status, the use of similar arguments and the heroine’s offer to remain single. Essentially, the analysis provides two conclusions: that in depicting the family altercations, Richardson makes use of already established conventions of fiction, but develops them more fully, and, secondly, that this depiction is realistic. To further support the argument that the novel is a medium of realistic examination of the pressures of familial duty, especially as presented in *Clarissa*, she draws attention to the real-life examples of women who saw similarities between the first volumes of *Clarissa* and their lives: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Mrs Delany.

My interest is specific to the intense emotions generated in the situation of familial dispute as presented in fiction and how *Clarissa* configures them. Hence, I will follow up with the line of thought that finds in Richardson’s treatment of familial altercations a continuation and connection to earlier texts. But my purpose is to examine the similarities or meaningful disparities between *Clarissa* and earlier treatments of the subject. For this reason, my comparison will focus on various fictional paradigms. This is firstly because it is established as reasonable to treat earlier novels as a background to *Clarissa*. Secondly, it is because real-life examples may assert the realism of the depiction, but they do not provide clues as to the justification of negative emotion such as anger. Moreover, Abaliza’s father in the *Lady’s Tale* is an affectionate father. The anger of the Harlowes and the absence of anger, or its offensive or defensive use in *Clarissa*, must be examined in relation to texts that provide similarly anger-inducing situations.

The background of the father-daughter contention and the criteria that establish the reasonableness or inflexibility in the behaviour of the one or the other party has been discussed by Thomas Keymer in *Richardson’s Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*. In this book Keymer discusses the scenes of family altercation in *Clarissa* with reference to the casuistical traditions that inform them. To be more precise, casuistry here means that part of ethical discussion that resolves a situation by analysis of its own peculiar circumstances and suggests that moral codes are not unequivocal but that circumstances can alter cases. The ‘case’ in the theme of father-daughter dispute is
provided by conduct books, which would have been the depository of social and moral codes regarding the subject at the time. Keymer refers to such texts as Defoe’s *New Family Instructor* (1732), printed by Richardson, or Patrick Delany’s *Fifteen Sermons upon Social Duties* (1744). Conduct books like these put emphasis on the dictates of filial duty and the implications and gravity of a father’s choice of a potential husband for his daughter. As Keymer notes, this is a theme ‘of obvious centrality in patriarchal ideology, and thus of an importance that goes far beyond the merely domestic sphere’. Indeed, Keymer further notes that the harmony within the family, and the authority of the father, were metaphors for a conversant social and political harmony, as the family was seen as the epitome of society. In this context the idea of duty is perceived as reciprocal—parents have a duty towards their children to choose well for them – but the fact that an unsuitable marriage could produce heirs without the official sanction of the guardians, meant that filial duty was more significant to be upheld. Filial disobedience, then, was vested both with a dangerous power to unsettle the domestic sphere and was also connected to the idea of restless, disobedient citizens. The case was that daughters had an all-important duty to obey their parents and in no other matter was that obedience as important as in that of marriage. On the other hand, there was a point when these same conduct books had to account for the occasions of discrepancy between obedience and inclination, as well as the issue of a parental authority that compels. These were discussed as particular situations or ‘circumstances’ that came to upset the commonly accepted case of filial obedience. Keymer discusses the way situations were presented in sources that had been available to Richardson, such as Aaron Hill’s *Plain Dealer* (1730) and the arguments they exposed. Most importantly, he reveals Richardson’s involvement in the debate, and his approach as it is presented for example in his *Familiar Letters*. In this text Richardson presents not a dispute but a disagreement between father and daughter on the theme of the choice of a husband for her in letters 91 to 93. The daughter’s argument is that the disparity of age between her and the suitor will make for an unhappy marriage, but the father insists on his choice by emphasizing the great qualities of the man, which, he thinks, are enough for the age

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185 Keymer, *Richardson’s ‘Clarissa’*, p. 86.
difference to be surmounted. Richardson emphasizes in this exchange that the father ‘urgently inforces’ but does not ‘compel’. However, this particular example is markedly different to the fraught situation of Clarissa. In the words of Keymer:

Here, however, the exemplary reasonableness of both parties enables Richardson to avoid the problems latent in an ethical system which forbids the parent to compel his child but refuses to waive the child’s duties of obedience if he does compel her.

Another very important source on the theme, which Keymer discusses, is The Lady’s Lecture (1748) by Colley Cibber, which Richardson had read in manuscript and to which expressed opposing views. Keymer’s discussion not only contextualises the theme of father-daughter dispute by reading those contemporary sources that expose its basic tenets, but also reveals Richardson’s own interest in the subject. In doing so, he offers an insightful analysis of the background of the family altercations in Clarissa. Keymer is primarily interested in the arguments that are available to each party in the father-daughter dispute in order to establish the reasonableness or obstinacy of the Harlowes and Clarissa. In other words, he reveals that caveat that allows Clarissa to plead her special circumstances, in opposition to the general case of filial obedience.

I am more interested in the emotions generated by such a dispute and especially the emotion of anger. The exemplary reasonableness of Polly and her father in the Familiar Letters does not generate any such emotions, while in Cibber’s The Lady’s Lecture, the word that comes closest to negative emotion is ‘saucily’, as in ‘to treat one saucily’, or respond ‘saucily’. As with Abaliza’s father the contention between father-daughter here is one of harmless raillery, whereas I am interested in situations that depict or clearly refer to anger. The texts I am going to refer to are Eliza Haywood’s early novel The Distress’d Orphan, or Love in a Mad-house (1726), a novel entitled The Prude (1724), published under the initials ‘MA. A.’ with a dedication to Eliza Haywood printed for J. Roberts, a publisher associated with Haywood’s work, and others that are lesser known. These are all texts that style themselves as ‘novels’ or that would be recognised as

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186 The father’s letter is entitled: ‘His Reply, urgently inforcing, but not compelling, her Compliance with his Desire.’ Samuel Richardson, Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the Most Important Occasions (London: Printed for C. Rivington, 1741), p. 130.

187 Keymer, Richardson’s ‘Clarissa’, p. 95.
such, and the following issues are prominent in them: the tension between a father and a daughter, or a young woman and a representative of patriarchal authority; the issue of oppressive authority; the issue of duty and the dictates of virtue; the independence of women as depicted in the freedom to choose or to act; and finally, the experiences of being on the receiving end of anger and, conversely, of showing anger.

Haywood’s *The Distress’d Orphan* (1726) is a text usually referred to for its compelling description of the madhouse, and its criticism of the deliberate use of the madhouse as a place of confinement for young women who would not comply with the wishes of their family, and, in doing so, become a hindrance to its economic plans. It seems, therefore, somewhat unconventional that this text is included in a discussion of *Clarissa*. However, in the sequence of events that leads to the heroine’s confinement, one can find interesting similarities with, and, more importantly, telling differences from, the emotional situation of Harlowe Place.

Annilia, the heroine of the story, is the daughter of an eminent merchant. She is orphaned at a young age and is under the legal care of her uncle Giraldo. We are informed that this uncle is good to her and very careful with her education. Annilia has a ‘Genius rare to be found in a person of her sex’ (2) and Giraldo has the ‘best masters to instruct her’ (2) in French, Latin and Italian as well as other more ‘ordinary accomplishments of her sex’ (2). Soon we learn that the uncle’s supposed care for Annilia’s education stems from his plans to marry her to his son Horatio. This is a choice based on his wishes for property aggrandizement: to add Annilia’s fortune left to her by her parents to his. Giraldo has been working on this plan all along by endeavouring to inspire in them mutual tenderness, as he makes sure they do everything together: ‘the same tutors and masters instructed both’ (2) and they had ‘equal share’ (2) in diversions of youth. When he decides that they have reached the appropriate age he

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188 As Deborah Nestor remarks in her introduction to the text, ‘a growing controversy, however, surrounded these institutions, which several contemporary critics accuse of abuses like the one Haywood represents in her novel. Daniel Defoe, among the earlier such critics, addresses the issue in the *Review* (1706) and in *Augusta Triumphans* (1728) where he documents several cases of women incarcerated in private madhouses by their relatives for financial or sexual convenience.’ Deborah Nestor, ‘Introduction’, in Eliza Haywood, *The Distress’d Orphan: Or Love in a Mad-House*, ed. by Deborah Nestor, 2nd edn (London: J Roberts, 1726; repr. New York: AMS, 1995), p. viii. All subsequent references are to this edition.
encourages them towards this plan. Both are surprised and comment on their brotherly and sisterly affection and blood ties, but the uncle insists, dismissing their objections.

While Giraldo feels secure for the success of his plans a complication arises to upset them. This complication is none other than an alternative, ardent, sincere and much more suitable suitor: Colonel Marathon. Marathon and Annilia see each other and fall in love at a dance. Marathon, after enquiring about her and finding out that she is unmarried, attempts to deliver a note to her expressing his admiration. But he fails. When he attempts to sneak the billet into her hand, as one supposedly already hers that has from her pocket, she responds saying: ‘It cannot be mine, Sir! [...] I receive no Letters directed in this manner’ (14). Notably, Clarissa also refuses to acknowledge and participate in a correspondence with Lovelace. When he enquires about the ‘particular’ letters meant to be seen only by her, that he sneaks in with the general ones that are exchanged by the family’s approbation, she responds: ‘I should never answer one so sent’ (48). Marathon’s other attempt to initiate a correspondence also fails as the narrator informs us that for Marathon to expect an answer to his letter, is to not know her heart. And it should be so because, as Deborah Nestor remarks, this is not a story about unlawful love: ‘The Distress’d Orphan is notable among Haywood’s novels for its lack of unlawful sexual behaviour’ (iv). The first crucial development comes when Marathon finds out the uncle’s plans. He does so through ‘gossip’ as people don’t fail to see that Giraldo operates for his own interests and, in essence, undermines Annilia’s prospects; her qualifications and property entitle her to a superior choice than Horatio. At this point Marathon visits the house of Giraldo under pretence of enquiring about her health, but is obviously recognised as a rival by both Giraldo and Horatio. From this moment on the situation becomes irate and from this point it is useful to start exploring the connection to Clarissa.

In this story, where patriarchal authority is represented by the father’s brother, familial bonds are superseded by financial greed (as also happens in Clarissa). This is conveyed especially strongly by the uncle’s attempt to transform the affectionate, brotherly bond shared by Annilia and Horatio into a marital bond in order to serve his plans. A young woman, of equal social status as Clarissa, and nearly as attractive as her in terms of prospects, is forced to make a choice because she is instrumental to the
achievement of a greater economic plan. Moreover, Annilia is a woman of not equal but
certainly similar qualifications to Clarissa, such as her extraordinary intelligence, her
education and her virtue. Annilia is, like Clarissa, aware of the dangers of a clandestine
correspondence and they are both averse to it. More importantly, the escalation of the
situation towards a crisis presents similarities with Clarissa. Marathon is introduced to
the family when there is already a plan to which he is perceived as a threat. Lovelace is
not actually a threat to the Harlowe ambition but he is progressively presented as such
by James. Marathon’s visit, and as we will see his letter, act as agitating factors that lay
the foundation for altercations between Annilia and her uncle. In the same way
Lovelace’s visits and the supposed correspondence with Clarissa act – or are used by
James–as agitating factors. Richardson’s foundation for this story, which he defends in
his ‘Postscript’, is extensively and advanced, and, for this reason, becomes a study of an
intractable situation and the dangerous emotions it produces. Haywood, on the other
hand, develops the crisis in a matter of pages. She presents it, however, in clearly
defined stages.

In Annilia’s story we move from railing on the family’s part after Marathon’s visit
to disputation. The day after this visit, a servant comes to deliver a letter and insists that
it must be handed to Annilia personally. Giraldo, who suspects who the letter is from,
dismisses him by saying that Annilia receives only letters that are communicated
through him. To this she answers:

I think, Sir! said she, with a countenance which sufficiently denoted the highest
Discontent, the Message you have sent a pretty odd one -------I am now past my
Childhood, and People must imagine that I am either very deficient in
Understanding, or you in the Care of improving it, when they shall be told I am
incapable of judging what Answer is fit for me to give to any letter which is sent to
me. (21)

Italics are used by the narrator throughout the story to convey information about tone
and emotion. And in this case the tone is an angry one, or at least a gradation of anger.
The uncle remarks that this is the first time he has seen such ‘spirit’ and ‘vehemence’ in
her. In addition, he identifies her response as resenting his behaviour.
In his attempt to pacify her, he insists that his prohibition stems from his care, arguing that a letter is dangerous if it is not fit to be seen by her uncle or ‘the Man intended for her husband’:

The mention of that Name threw off all the little Remains of Patience Annilia had preserved. And with an Air wholly composed of Fierceness, He is not yet so, answered she, and to whatever Subjection I may be destined after Marriage, I take it ill that my liberty should be restrained till then. With these words rose from the table, and retired to her Chamber and she shut herself in and would not come out to all entreaties. (21-2)

This passage is an example of what Richardson does not show in the family altercations – that is a direct disputation on the part of the woman. Annilia’s emotions grow from ‘discontent’ to anger (‘fierceness’) and resentment of what she feels is an infringement of her liberty. The phrase ‘I take it ill’ that she uses is a synonym for ‘resentment’ and, indeed, is used in Johnson’s Dictionary as the definition of that word. Effectively, what she resents is repression that derives from false authority. Just as Clarissa reminds her brother that he is her brother only, Annilia reminds her uncle that Horatio is not her husband yet and hence has no right to dominate her in any way. She further emphasizes her right to act at liberty by withdrawing herself. In a direct inversion of what happens at Harlowe Place, Annilia’s chamber does not represent confinement but escapism. By willingly isolating herself and rejecting all entreaties she conveys her disapproval of her uncle’s behaviour. She will continue to use her room in such a way while she is at her uncle’s house, as he remarks that ‘sometimes [She] shut herself in her room for half a day together’ (28). Eventually, this room will become the place of her confinement, no less than a prison fitted with iron bars, but at this stage her room is marked as her own place where her own terms operate. Her unwillingness to leave it testifies to her reluctance to join her uncle’s household and his terms. Haywood continues to escalate the situation and, in her next stage, offers a bold and direct confrontation between niece and uncle, through an exchange that Clarissa is never to have with her father, who is admittedly a shadowy figure:

I know of no such Promise, reply’d she peevishly; I said indeed, that I would endeavour to be conformable to your Desires— and in what, interrupted he, is
Horatio deficient, that those Endeavours should not be all that is requisite for his Wishes?

Perhaps I yet have never ask’d myself the Question, *Said she haughtily* [...]. Nor will I give any direct Answer, till you resolve me for what reason you have discharg’d my Servant.

You will not? *Cry’d he in an angry tone*

No, Sir! I will not, return’d she, in one which demonstrated she was equally incensed. (31-2)

Matched sentence to sentence and emotion to emotion, this exchange shows that Annilia’s expression of anger means that she refuses to be pressurised into consent. She angrily retorts when the giving of a ‘promise’ is attributed to her. Clarissa, on the other hand, is denied a face-to-face confrontation. Where Annilia spiritedly denies giving consent, Clarissa remains silent lest her words will be taken to mean consent. In the continuation of the story, the Harlowes are discomposed by Lovelace’s visits to the church and his feared communication with Clarissa, in the same way that Giraldo also becomes anxious when he realises that Marathon finds ways to be present in the same places as Annilia and he also manages to sneak in a letter to her. This anxiety accelerates the course of events to a pivotal moment as Giraldo now does not discuss the marriage but seeks to impose it on her. In essence, Annilia understands her fate in the same way as Clarissa: ‘The Love of Liberty is natural to us all, and I should have more reason to regret, than be pleased with the large Fortune left me by my Father, if it must subject me to eternal slavery’ (32). The same fear of being forced into a marriage that equals slavery motivates the two women, Annilia and Clarissa, to respond to the letters of their suitors. They both follow the dictates of virtue and decorum and refuse to participate in a clandestine correspondence, until the situation becomes so desperate that it seems the only recourse. But they approach this situation in markedly different ways, as their letters indicate. Annilia writes to colonel Marathon:

*My own Reason informing me, that to hold a Correspondence of this Kind, without the Privity and Approbation of the Person to whose Care I am entrusted, is among the things which are *justly esteem’d blameable*; I must *in vindication* of myself, as well as to comply with your Request, acquaint you, that the visible Self-Interestedness of my Uncle has destroy’d that Confidence I should otherwise repose in so near a Relation, and obliged me to take a Resolution never from henceforward to consult him in any Affair, in which there is a possibility of his being byas’d by a sinister View[...]. I am inclined to believe you have Honour and Good-nature, and*
am half afraid I shall soon have occasion for a Friend possessed of these Qualifications; If such a Time arrives, I shall make trial how far you are desirous of obliging ANNILIA. (25-6, emphasis added)

Clarissa to Lovelace as she reports to Anna Howe:

That although I had given him room to expect that I would put myself into his aunt’s protection; yet, as I have three days to come, between this and Monday, and as I hope that my friends will still relent or that Solmes will give up a point they will both find it impossible to carry; I shall not look myself as absolutely bound by the appointment [...] that if, by putting myself into Lady Betty Lawrance’s protection, he understands that I mean directly to throw myself into his power, he is very much mistaken: for that there are many points in which I must be satisfied[...] in the first place, he must expect that I will do my utmost to procure my father’s reconciliation and approbation of my future steps: and that I will govern myself entirely by his commands in every reasonable point, as much as if I had not left his house. (345-6, emphasis added)

In the first letter, the woman admits to the illicitness of the act but feels entirely justified in choosing it. The uncle’s self-interestedness constitutes an abuse of his power over her and a breach of her trust in him. Consequently, her resolution is to release herself from what she feels is unlawful authority. The fact that the uncle’s behaviour is offensive and culpable is also conveyed through the phrase ‘in vindication of myself,’ which bears connections with revenge and justification, defence and acquittal. But, unlike Clarissa, Annilia resolves to entirely break the family ties and actually throws herself in Marathon’s power without proposing any terms. Indeed, Marathon is almost challenged to prove the sincerity of his love by ‘obligeing’ or ‘serving’ Annilia, much like a hero who helps effect the heroine’s liberation in a kind of knight errantry. Clarissa, on the other hand, writes a letter to clarify that she may be considering leaving her father’s house to escape repressive authority, but this will be only after all other possibilities of resolution have failed. Secondly, her aim is to delineate the exact terms to which this departure will be subjected if it takes place and, most importantly, that her leaving of her father’s house does not mean that she is breaking any ties to her father’s authority. Annilia eventually will not leave the house and she will not escape her uncle’s repressive authority, which leads to actual imprisonment and finally committal to the mad-house. But the fact that the action is not completed does not alter the
intention. Annilia resolves to leave the house. She is, the narrator declares, ‘involv’d in a mixture of Surprize, and Rage, and Grief---so violent were all these Passions, that for a time she had not the Power of forming any Resolution; but when she had; it was to quit the House of this injurious Uncle with all imaginable speed’ (33, emphasis added).

Clarissa is made to leave ‘unwittingly’, as Doody puts it, so that her intention to remain her father’s daughter will be her comfort in the events that follow.

So far, this analysis offers two premises. Firstly, that by the time Richardson is writing Clarissa, English prose fiction has already offered paradigms of familial disputation generated between a young woman and a representative of patriarchal authority that operate along similar lines. Secondly, I contend that Richardson exploits the situation differently. Primarily he develops it but he also chooses to include or avoid certain stages. Angus Ross in his introduction to the Penguin edition of the novel attributes this to uneasiness or uncertainty on the part of Richardson:

Richardson never brings the angry father into a directly reported scene of action; he is left growling downstairs, raging through the claustrophobic interior of Harlowe Place in terrorizing proximity to his tormented younger daughter, a sign perhaps of the difficulty Richardson had with the representation of such a complex and contradictory situation. (21)

I think that this is not due to uneasiness, but, on the contrary, that there is something to be understood from Richardson’s different handling of the situation, the full significance of which can only emerge effectively from a fuller consideration of the theme.

The Prude (1724) is a novel with many characters and intermixed narratives. Two of these inset narratives are of particular importance for our understanding of these main topics: patriarchal anger, and the anxiety over the independence of women who own property. Lysander is attracted to Bellamira. In order to raise his chances of success in courting her, he attempts to earn her brother’s, Bellgrand’s, good will by introducing Ariana to him. Lysander thinks that Ariana is a suitable match for Bellgrand. Bellgrand himself is very impressed with her, and Ariana finds that his social position and wealth match her ambition. Since it is established that the two lovers take a liking to each

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189 Doody, A Natural Passion, p. 137.
other, Lysander carries the news to Ariana’s father, Le Merchant, who approves of the match. Bellgrand is now visiting Ariana with the father’s approbation and the marriage settlements are under discussion. But before the matter is happily concluded, a new character is introduced. Honorius is revealed to be a former lover of Ariana, who after learning of her plans to marry Bellgrand comes forth to claim her as ‘contracted’ to him; that is, he alleges that she promised herself to him in writing. It is further revealed that Honorius had had considerable wealth which he squandered, spending considerable sums on Ariana as well, who became disaffected due to his financial distress. It was at this point that Bellgrand entered her life and, his prospects being much more appealing to her, she turned her attention to him. The unfortunate Honorius, an affecting figure still infatuated with Ariana despite her betrayal, recounts their story to Lysander. The scenes that follow this revelation are all male-dominated, yet are very strongly poignant and distinctly sentimental. Noticeably resembling of a ‘man of feeling’, Honorius is a pathetic figure whose love for Ariana conquers his rage: ‘he raged, storm’d, he swore, he rail’d calling her ten thousand times perfidious, deceiving, base, unworthy, all the Names his Anger could suggest: But in vain, Love was still predominant’. In the midst of this mixture of emotion he writes to Ariana to complain of her ‘inhuman inconstancy’ and cruelty. This letter falls into the hands of her father who becomes, by this means, disillusioned about his daughter’s behaviour:

Le Merchant read this Letter with an Astonishment natural to a Father, that never had suspected his Daughter guilty of such an indiscretion. The confidence he always had in her Conduct, caus’d him to leave her the entire Mistress of her own Actions; the oftner he look’d it o’er , the more he was incens’d against her. (58)

However, he controls his anger, leaves her and seeks Lysander to learn more. From the betrayed lover the reader’s sympathy is now focused on the figure of the father who, in his disappointment, laments his situation:

Lysander, added he, who would be a Father? I thought Ariana never would have given me Cause of Grief of Discontent; how has she lost, in one moment, my Value, my Confidence, the fond Pleasure with which I flatter’d myself, she was Mistress of

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too much sense to fall into those Follies, which I often found perplex’d other Parents? (59)

Clearly an affectionate father, Le Merchant is not incensed about the insult to his pride or authority that his daughter’s indiscretion represents. The story, closely connected to the sentimental ethos, highlights the affliction of the father rather than the disobedience of paternal authority. This becomes even more affecting when Le Merchant meets Honorius and learns the story from him. Honorius shows him all the letters exchanged between himself and Ariana and her vows. The first letter that Le Merchant opens reads: ‘As soon as Daddy is retired to his Chamber, I’ll fly to you’ (64). Almost ignoring this rather blatant offence to paternal rule, Le Merchant again focuses on the disappointment he feels about his daughter’s actions. He is shown enraged and with just provocation, but his rage is never above his fatherly concern and is intermixed with grief (59). One of the most strikingly sentimental scenes in the narration comes when Honorius pleads with him not to vent his anger on Ariana:

Inconstant as she is, I cannot bear the Thought, that her gentle Nature should be ruffled by so terrible an Affliction as I know her Father’s anger must needs prove. How is it possible she should bear it, pursued he, when my rough Nature sinks beneath the weight? (63)

In sharp contrast to Lovelace, who is unable to understand and thus mockingly diminishes the effect of the father’s anger on Clarissa, Honorius is conscious of the burden of it and intervenes to save her from the affliction. Of course, Honorius is not Lovelace, even the names suggest as much. When Honorius has Le Merchant’s promise to give him the hand of Ariana and his uncle’s approval, the emotion he shows proves his honour and sensibility:

Here the Passions crowded too thick for further Utterance, and unable longer to support the Tumult they had rais’d with him, his Head fell negligently on his Uncle’s knees, bedewing them with Tears which forcibly broke their Passage from his Eyes. (72)

After this, the scene changes to Le Merchant’s house where the father brings Honorius as an intended husband. Focusing on Ariana, the narrator informs us of the anxiety she feels in anticipation of meeting her father, who, as she rightly suspects,
knows about her indiscretion. Her father’s anger, the narrator comments, ‘was the only thing that she ever dreaded’ (74). Le Merchant meets her with a ‘sternly sedate’ countenance and he informs her that she must look now upon Honorius as a husband, emphasizing that she should be thankful to him for safeguarding her from his anger by his entreaties and cautioning her to know her wifely duties better than she has done her filial duty. As for Ariana, ‘Unable to bear his Look and Words, so full of Resentment so different from that paternal Tenderness with which he always met her, she fell on her Knees without uttering a word’ (75). In this submissive position she remains until Honorius pleads with her father to raise her.

Many interesting points mark this exchange. For instance, Ariana reportedly ‘dreads’ her father’s anger but it does not stem reasonably from the narration that she must do so. Even excluding his behaviour in the episode between himself and Honorius, for which Ariana has no information, Le Merchant has been generally shown to be ‘a man of virtue’ and a very fond and over-indulgent father. Indeed, we are informed that she is ‘a perfect Mistress of her own Actions, having no Mother, and a Father infinitely fond of engaging a Wit in an only child, [who] indulg’d her in every thing she seem’d to like’ (53-4). In addition, the only instance of Ariana referring to her father is by the fond name ‘daddy’. Narratively, there is also no reason for Honorius to be so unnerved by the idea of Le Merchant’s anger. Before the episode of their conversation unfolds the narrator informs us that ‘Le Merchant accosted him [i.e. Honorius] with Softness not usual in Fathers on such occasions’ (62). Yet, Honorius’ manly, ‘rough’ nature ‘sinks beneath the weight’ and he passionately entreats the father to spare the more delicate and thus less resistant nature of his daughter. In other words, Le Merchant is no James Harlowe. He is not threatening, he is concerned mostly with his daughter’s wellbeing, he is not ‘growling downstairs’, as Ross says of James Harlowe, and he does not demand to be obeyed. In short, he is not an irate father but his anger, and its consequences, are equally feared. This suggests that the concept of the father’s anger bears specific cultural significance that is not necessarily connected with the actuality of anger itself. Le Merchant’s anger is not a matter of temperament, for nothing that is told about his character leads us to expect a violent outburst. The gravity of the situation does not derive from the person, Le Merchant is affectionate and in many ways the opposite of a
man disposed to anger, but from the position: his being a father. In other words, it is not her father that Ariana has reason to fear but the idea of being at the receiving end of a father’s anger.

Put into context, amidst narratives of women who were disinherited or driven away from the family home due to provoking a father’s anger, that very phrase acquires a sense of performative language. Ariana dreads her father’s anger because it has the power to effect change; it means falling into disfavour, losing her previous status within the family and probably also the loss of family and social status, as it isolates a woman and removes her from the support of friends. In these cases the instance of anger is distinguished in the features of the face or the voice, or else in a threatening countenance and followed by an act that is distinctively non-physical but administrative. The anger of Cynthia’s father in *The Adventures of David Simple* is followed by her being disinherited, a legal alteration (87). The anger of Annilia’s paternal uncle is followed by her confinement first in her room by the putting up of iron bars, and then in the mad-house, an act that also changes her social position and her legal status as an owner and manager of her own funds. The anger of Ariana’s father, mitigated by Honorius’ appeals, is shown in a stern countenance and is followed by the announcement of her change in status from daughter to wife and the admonition to honour her new duties. She receives the news in a supplicating position and in silence.

Cases like these present a marked similarity to expressions of authoritative anger; a person who has provoked what might be termed ‘Ira Regis’ stands in fear of the consequences, defers to authority, either supplicates, bargains or argues for a merciful treatment, and finally receives a commandment that either banishes them or redefines their relation to this authority. To further understand the features of this concept of the father’s anger a comparison may be made to the other extreme: the controversial scene of the father’s anger in Rousseau’s *Julie: Or the New Heloise*. In the particular scene none of the above steps take place. The scene is made of a blatantly violent episode, the severity of which is easy to be missed due to the manner it is reported. But very clearly other forces move the episode. This is not predominantly a matter of authority. Julie’s father enters the room clearly agitated by the news of a suspected relationship between his daughter and her tutor, who despite his good qualities is not considered a suitable
match for Julie, who is already promised to another man. He obviously asks for
provocation to vent his emotion and he directs the conversation in such a manner that
his wife will be forced to comment. Then, the first step is verbal outburst: ‘picture an
angry father’, writes Julie to Claire, ‘overflowing with offensive epithets’. The
episode escalates when Julie breaks her ‘respectful silence’ and asks him to ‘compose’
himself and trust in her:

I received a box on the ear which was not the last, and yielding to his transport with
violence equal to what its containment had cost in effort, he beat me mercilessly,
although my mother had thrown herself between us, covered me with her body and
received some of the blows that were intended for me. Recoiling to elude them, I
stumbled, fell, and my face hurtled into the foot of the table, making me bleed.
(143)

Realising the extent of his violence and its effects, the father’s attitude and tone
changes to concern and remorse and the physicality of the anger scene is matched with
an equally passionate scene of reconciliation with Julie sitting on her father’s lap, both
in tears, kissing him. Undoubtedly, this is an intensely visceral scene that recalls
nothing of the confrontation between a young woman and paternal authority as it is
presented in earlier novels. In these novels the relevant scenes are distinctly concerned
with anger that derives from insults to authority, that is, from position, rather than the
deep psychological operation of anger. Anger is part of a particular semiotic system that
is defined by issues of financial concern, decorum and anxiety over female
independence. That is the reason why the representative of patriarchal authority in these
cases can be altered from a father to a paternal uncle or any other legal guardian with
the effects of anger remaining the same. In Julie no other character can replace the father
without dramatically altering the scene. There the operation of anger derives partly from
position, but mainly from the particular and unique father-daughter relationship.

Other issues that Richardson is concerned with in his story are also present in these
earlier novels. The Prude, for example, offers examples of concern over female
independence. Le Merchant is an over-indulgent father to Ariana, as an only child, who

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191Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Julie: Or the New Heloise: Letters of Two Lovers who Live in a Small Town at
the Foot of the Alps, trans. by Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché (Hanover: University Press of New
has lost her mother. Ariana is at her father’s house, but practically ‘mistress of her own actions’. And she is not the only woman in the narrative to be so. Elisinda is sister to Bellgrand and Bellamira, a woman of apparent virtue, deemed by many as exalted and excessive, apparently modest and unwilling to participate in compromising social diversions such as the masquerade. Elisinda enjoys a special position of independence, as she ‘has a vast Fortune left her by a Grandmother; and as soon as she became of Age, she had her own Equipage and Servants, living by herself’ (5). Her strict virtue and her economic assets make her attractive to many suitors but she rejects all under the pretence of being, as she is so modest, so religious and so virtuous, more fitted for a single life. Soon we learn that the pretence of a single and virtuous life is a facade that allows her to lead a life of moral depravity, ‘experiencing’ one lover after another and even sharing lovers with her companion Stanissa:

But Alas! How different were the real Sentiments of her Heart, being fill’d with Desires quite contrary to this outward Piety? It is not to be determin’d whether it be owing to her Constitution, that certainly has more Fire in it than is natural to so cold a Climate, or the good Instruction of Stanissa, who has experience’d as many Lovers as Religions. (15)

Two factors enable Elisinda to lead this kind of life. One is the perfect appearance of virtue; she always appears shy, with eyes fixed to the ground, praying and fasting. The other is the independence of action that her inheritance affords her. Together these two factors delineate the narrow limits of female financial independence. Elisinda can be financially and personally mistress of herself as long as this independence is used to sustain a single, virtuous life. By being single Elisinda does not upset the social network of socioeconomic exchange; she withdraws herself from it. But if this is acceptable in theory, it is hard to achieve practically because there will always be doubt as to the sincerity and disinterestedness of her behaviour. Elisinda proves the exact opposite of what she purports to be and the most unsettling thing of all is that she uses virtue as a strategic device. Notably, every woman in the narration that is entrusted with power over her own actions abuses that power: Ariana is also mistress of her own actions and she uses that power to deceive both father and lover. This is a period deeply concerned with the issue of disinterested action and with the issue of whether virtue is sincere or
used as a ‘mask’ and adopted to promote one’s interests, as the *Pamela* controversy shows. In this light, Clarissa’s inheritance, the possibility that she might achieve a measure of independence,\(^{192}\) and her offer to lead a single life, bear significant connotations. Her brother James can misrepresent her intentions, making her refusal to marry Solmes into a choice to marry Lovelace, by manipulating these exact premises: the use of virtue and the offer of single life as a facade for the achievement of one’s own purposes.

It becomes apparent, then, that the readership at the time when *Clarissa* was written was not only ready ‘to read tales dealing with ‘problems in courtship due to family opposition’, as Doody observes,\(^{193}\) but was actually ready for a more complex, more developed and darker kind of narrative. Richardson not only had a fictional precedent for family altercations – one that also included young men being torn between inclination and duty\(^{194}\) – but also a background on topics like sexual force and the fear of a daughter’s abduction from the family home. One such story is Lominia’s in *The Forced Virgin: Or the Unnatural Mother* (1730). Lominia is the accomplished daughter of a wealthy merchant who is being courted by Arastes, her lover, with the approbation of her parents. The scene that opens the story is one of family happiness: a worthy child, fond parents, a suitable suitor. The only grim aspect is that Arastes has a rival, Lysanor, ‘a Man so universally feared, that scarce any Ear was a stranger to his Villainies’.\(^{195}\) Lysanor is, in fact, appalling to Lominia but he attributes her repulsion for him to maiden coyness. The narrator informs us that he has tried many ‘snares’, but the lovers were, until this point, lucky to escape them all. However, matters take a different turn when one day the two lovers are found in the garden, and unsuspecting and absorbed in

\(^{192}\) Clarissa’s grandfather has singled her out in his will and bequeathed her control of an estate, called The Dairy House, see page 41 of the edition used here. This action bears implications for the whole family dynamic firstly because it circumvents patriarchal rules of inheritance and also because it provokes the jealousy of her siblings and their fear that this act of favouritism could be repeated in their uncles’ wills.\(^{193}\) Doody, *A Natural Passion*, p. 132.

\(^{194}\) For example, in *Cynthia* (1709), also a novel of multiple stories there is a case of a young man being confronted with the father’s anger because his inclination does not conform to his duty. His language is similar to that of heroines in the same situation. Done by an English Hand, *Cynthia: with the Tragical Account of the Unfortunate Loves of Almerin and Desdemona: Being a Novel* (London: Printed for Eben. Tracy, 1709), p. 47. This text was first published in 1687. See also the advice to curb paternal anger in the preface, A4.

\(^{195}\) *The Forced Virgin: Or the Unnatural Mother: a True Secret History* (London: Printed for W. Trott, 1730), p. 3. Subsequent references are given in parentheses.
their love, are attacked by Lysanor and his accomplices. Arastes is wounded and Lominia abducted and carried to Lysanor’s house. The scenes that follow are intensely claustrophobic, dark and unsettling, as Lominia is shown to be carried away unable to see anything, only feeling hands all over her as she is being dragged from place to place and room to room. She is finally taken to Lysanor’s bedroom and realising what is to be her fate, pleads with him to spare her honour. Quite unexpectedly, it seems for a moment that Lominia will be saved, as her would-be violator ‘melts’ under the influence of her pathetic entreaties:

Lysanor’s Soul, however before hardened to her Speeches, now melted; he could not indure to see the Desire of his Wishes in so sore an Extremity; whenever she prayed, his Heart bid him to forgive; he could not see her weep without accompanying her Tears Her Intreaties were of such Force, and so powerful her Intercessions, that he would again have carried her to her Father, would it not have strengthen’d his already too powerful Rival. (13)

He promises to free her if she consents to be his wife, but she refuses and he, as the title indicates, rapes her. Lominia’s will, like Clarissa’s, remains unviolated as she falls in and out of consciousness and during the intervals of thought she turns herself to Heaven ‘to quit the filthy deed’. After the act Lysanor still proposes marriage, and contrary to the accepted line of thought that women would have no choice but marry their violators, she proudly answers: ‘Thee, Traitor! [...] what! Shall the Ruiner of my Peace, the most Detested Fiend of Friends, triumph over my Fall, and in my parents’ view?’ (16). Lominia kills Lysanor with a dagger, disguises herself in his clothes, escapes and heads to her father’s house. Her distressed parents receive her with great relief and affection. Lominia recounts all her story. On hearing of the killing her father regards it as ‘so glorious, so noble, so godlike a revenge’ (20). She is led to Arastes who is still recovering from his wounds, and is decided that it is best for him, due to his present weakness, not to know what has happened. Lominia has to deal with the emotional after-effect of her ordeal, but being in her father’s house and reunited with her beloved suggests an optimistic turn. However, Arastes subverts all expectations. He grows impatient of waiting for her consent and decides to attempt other means. While Lominia is at his home he drugs her wine. Lominia drinks freely as ‘she thought herself in this house as secure as in her Father’s’ (26). When she recovers she has absolutely no
awareness or recollection of the fact that Arastes has raped her while she was unconscious. When she discovers that she is pregnant and she deduces that the child must be Lysanor’s, she grows more and more distressed under the weight of her ruined virtue, and her ‘unnatural’, non-existent motherly feelings for the child (hence the subtitle). Although the story makes a feeble attempt to present it as a fortunate turn of events that the child is Arastes’, the undeniable atrocity of the events takes its full force and she ends up killing herself.

This is a fictional heritage that presents angry fathers, irate paternal uncles, confinement, angry daughters, daughters who resent instances of oppressive patriarchal authority, daughters who remain silent and supplicating, women who abuse financial independence and virtue to lead a life of moral depravity, violators who shed tears with their victims, and accepted suitors who can have both parental and female consent but choose to become violators of an unconscious woman. Richardson can look back to a variety of ways in which he can present and explore the themes that he lays out in his exposition. Earlier works of fiction deal extensively with issues such as paternal authority; when and if a correspondence that is considered clandestine can become justified; the father’s anger and what it represents; a woman’s right and obligation to resent the infringement on her liberty; female independence and the anxiety over the disinterestedness of action; the parental fear over a possible abduction of a daughter and also with will and violation or consciousness and violation. He sets out to re-write these themes and draw the lines of probability and acceptance. Essentially, what he discusses is what can be forgiven and what must be resented.

The Stages of Family Contention in Clarissa
One of Richardson’s main concerns in the exposition of the story of Clarissa is to maintain the ‘air of probability’. As he writes in the postscript: ‘there was frequently a necessity to be very circumstantial and minute, in order to preserve and maintain that air of probability, which is necessary to be maintained in a story designed to represent real life’ (1499). And this is a very important point of differentiation with earlier novels. It is not that earlier novels presented improbable situations, but the quick development of the story can leave room for doubting the motives and actions of the heroines. For instance,
if the narrator of *The Distress’d Orphan* did not intervene to inform readers of hidden motives and inner feelings, they might criticise Annilia’s decision to write to Marathon, and thus directly defy authority, only ‘after a quick consideration’ (25). Richardson knows that exemplary women do not light-heartedly defy parental authority and they do not step out of their father’s garden unless there are very particular extenuating circumstances. R. F. Brissenden sums up Richardson’s difficult task in these words:

Richardson’s problem is to make his reader understand how a girl of Clarissa’s reserved and modest nature should find herself in the extraordinary situation she does – and preserve throughout her integrity – and also how her family could bring themselves to act with such appalling selfishness, cruelty and stupidity. Richardson does make us understand these things; and what is more he makes us accept and believe in a state of affairs, a series of events, which on the face of it, is rather incredible.\(^\text{196}\)

It may seem so from a modern point of view. But, compared to a Giraldo who fits his niece’s windows with iron bars and commits her to a mad-house, an Annilia who quickly decides to leave her uncle’s house, an Ariana who easily betrays both a father and a lover, an Elisinda who appears to be virtue personified but actually is immoral, a Lysanor who ‘melts’ in response to a maid’s passionate entreaties before he violates her, and an Arastes who, despite being an intended husband, drugs Lominia’s wine, rapes her and still continues to be accepted in the paternal house, the credibility of the situation in *Clarissa* is certainly better established. Indeed, Richardson works hard to establish grounds for accepting the probability of every aspect of his novel’s action.

Every stage of the development of the crisis at Harlowe Place is very carefully laid out and each one contributes to making Clarissa’s situation more fraught. At first, the main issue is the change in the family condition of the Harlowes. The contention between James and Lovelace, and the shift of Lovelace’s wooing from Arabella to Clarissa and its consequences, unleash the irascible passions in the household. The father shows the first signs of letting authority slip from his hands when he waits for his son to make a decision on Lovelace’s address to Clarissa. The climactic scene of this stage of events is the direct affront made by James to Lovelace, as he blocks his way to the entrance when Lovelace comes to visit (51). The violent contention that follows

\(^{196}\) Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, p. 164.
causes Clarissa to faint. In its aftermath, Clarissa’s mother falls ill. Her disorder is attributed to ‘the violent contentions of these fierce, these masculine spirits’ (54). Soon, it is the whole Harlowe household which is in disorder and disarray. Her mother fears the consequences of her family being the object of resentment to a man like Lovelace. The uncles do not venture outside unless they are armed, or accompanied by armed servants (54) and the family dynamics change. Arabella and James, hitherto often in disagreement, are joined in their resentment. The most important effect of this contention is that Clarissa, in order to prevent mischief, is drawn into a private correspondence with Lovelace. The contents page of the 1749 edition reads: ‘her mother connives at the private correspondence between her and Lovelace, for the sake of preventing greater evils’. At this point, Clarissa is still part of the family, not segregated from it, and her letters, as Ruth Perry notes, are a collective offering for the appeasement of anger:

In traditional societies the purpose of exchanging women was not to accumulate property and capital, but rather, according to Levi-Strauss among others, to forestall violence, create alliances between clans, cement peace treaties, and the like. Clarissa’s letters function as a kind of propitiatory offering, maintain the balance of power between the two families, ensuring that their individual male representatives will not fight a duel and spill blood. But what begins as a collective tribal offering ends up as the sacrifice of an individual on the altar of Mammon, as the meaning and functioning of the Harlowe family changes before our eyes.

The most important change in ‘the meaning and functioning’ of the family is what defines the next stage: the splitting of patriarchal authority between the father and the son. The definitive moment that marks James’ assumption of the father’s authority is at the family meeting which will decide whether Clarissa can visit Anna’s house (57). In this scene James dictates to her the terms of her going to Anna in a manner that is clearly authorititative, while the rest of the family members remain silent. Clarissa retorts by reminding him that he is ‘only her brother’ (57), meaning that he has no authority over her, and appeals to her father, whose authority she always recognises as lawful. At

this point the father does intervene, but James’s new function is consolidated further down in the narration. Clarissa has already recognised the first signs of James’ change when he approves of his father’s refusal to take a decision on Lovelace’s address to her without his advice, in the manner of somebody ‘superior’ (48). Later on, she notices that her brother can swear in front of their father and other, senior members of the family ‘unchecked by eye or countenance’ (59). As James becomes more and more ‘unchecked’ he is joined by Bella and together ensure that Clarissa falls out of favour with their father: ‘what my brother and sister have said against me I cannot tell—But I am in heavy disgrace with my papa’ (63). At this point, Clarissa is allowed her one and only direct altercation with her father. But this proves fruitless because she is actually prevented from speaking. Every utterance, every effort to present an argument remains incomplete and suspended:

I was going to make protestations of duty—No protestations, girl!—No words—I will not be prated to!—I will be obeyed—I have no child—I will have no child but an obedient one.
Sir, you never have had reason I hope
Tell me not what I never had, but what I have, and what I shall have
Good Sir be pleased to hear me- My brother and my sister, I fear-
Your brother and sister shall not be spoken against, girl! [...] And I hope Sir, -
Hope nothing—Tell me not of hopes but of facts. I ask nothing of you but what is in your power to comply with, and what it is your duty to comply with.
Then, Sir, I will comply with it—But yet I hope from your goodness—
No expostulations! – No but’s girl! – No qualifyings. (64-5)

Realising that her efforts are in vain and that this in fact, not an exchange, but an announcement of orders, Clarissa drops down on her knees to beseech her father that it is only his will that she must obey and not her brother’s. But even this, an act of deference that would grant favour to the pleader in most cases, fails, as her father withdraws leaving her on the floor (65).
The next phase is marked by Clarissa’s progressive isolation from the father. A series of mediators of good will, and agitators of ill will, come more and more between them. Her father changes from her ‘papa’ to ‘Mr Harlowe’ (102) and he becomes an increasingly threatening figure precisely because he becomes more remote: ‘For Clarissa herself the most terrifying figure is the one with whom she has least immediate contact; her father.’ One of the most important factors that helps create this atmosphere of intimidation is that the father’s anger ceases to be something direct, detected in the countenance and voice, and becomes reported, as in: ‘she told me that to this my papa angrily said, let her take care—let her take care—that she give me not ground to suspect her of a preference somewhere else’ (94). Another example is, ‘Hannah informs me that she heard my papa high and angry with my mamma, at taking leave of her, I suppose for being too favourable to me’ (106). It becomes a threat, as in ‘she threatened to turn me over to my papa and uncles’ (97) and more feared as it becomes more distant; ‘my father is more and more incensed with me’ (144) she notes. This is a realisation that is not directly experienced by her but comes to her through ‘second-hand’ reports which build up the tension. The situation becomes more intimidating and disconcerting as prohibition and confinement are also threatened and reported: ‘tis true, your father threatened to confine you in your chamber, if you complied not, in order the more assuredly to deprive you of the opportunity of corresponding with those who harden your heart against his will’ (115). Finally, James writes to inform her that she is prohibited from her parents’ presence (120).

Being banished from her parents’ presence, Clarissa writes to them. Her father’s reply comes signed by ‘a justly incensed father’ (125). Her attempt to reach across to

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199 Peggy Thompson when discussing the passion of Clarissa Harlowe, comments on Clarissa’s father being ‘distant’ and present mainly through his angry voice. This discussion refers to passion as ‘suffering’ and to Clarissa as a Christlike figure. Thompson’s aim is to elucidate Clarissa’s way of atonement by reading it alongside the three main theories of atonement preached at the time. One of them poses a tyrannical god, appeased by the sacrifice of a worthy ‘child’. She argues that the characteristics of Mr Harlowe, ‘despot, absolute, not easily forgiving’ make him a metaphor for this tyrannical god and Clarissa the worthy, sacrificed child. The metaphor also reinforces patriarchal notions by posing the man (the Father) as the one demanding appeasement and satisfaction and the woman as passive and suffering. See Peggy Thompson, ‘Abuse and Atonement: The Passion of Clarissa Harlowe’, in Passion and Virtue: Essays on the Novels of Samuel Richardson, ed. by David Blewett (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp. 152-169.

200 Brissenden, Virtue in Distress, p. 169.
what she views as the real source of authority fails. This inaugurates a phase of letter-writing by which Clarissa attempts two things: to defend herself against her brother’s false authority, and to continue her appeals to the one she accepts as lawful. As James takes over her communication, insisting that she must write to him, Clarissa retorts by writing to him letters in which she ‘deal[s] freely with [him]’ (137) as the occasion demands and by circumventing his authority. She does so by addresses to the second ‘rank’ of patriarchal rule: her paternal uncles. She writes to them, calling them by names such as ‘my second papa’ or ‘my papa-uncle’ in order to remind them of their obligation to her as her close relations and protectors. She goes on writing despite being expressly forbidden to do so – she is told that she ‘must send no more letters’ (158) – but, as she notes, she writes ‘notwithstanding the prohibition’ (266). The most characteristic moment of this practice comes when she cleverly bypasses her brother’s control by actually making her parents the addressees of the letter that she must write to him (221). The particular peculiarity of Clarissa is that the correspondence that takes place within the house also bears the characteristics of an illicit correspondence: prohibition of address, servants bidden to slip the letters into the addressee’s hands without others noticing, letters that are torn in reply, replies that note the anxiety and illicitness of the very action, and a letter that reaches its intended recipients ‘masked’ as a letter to another. This happens because the splitting of authority between the father and the son allows Clarissa, as it has been noted by critics, to challenge the repressive, unlawful side of paternal authority in the excesses of the brother, but also never to renounce the core of paternal authority, the father. In contrast, when Haywood’s Annilia writes to Marathon, she writes to vindicate herself, to protect herself from

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201 Clarissa always accepts her father’s authority and challenges her brother’s. She insists that marrying Solmes was not originally her father’s will and pleads that it should be only her father’s and not her brother’s will that she has to obey.

202 In Haywood’s story, Annilia also highlights the paternal uncle’s obligation to protect her: ‘She upbraided him with his abusing the Names of Uncle and Guardian’ (38). Also, ‘is this the Treatment I expected from the Brother of my Father? (33). Clarissa does the same with her letters and she also upbraids her uncle: ‘How dare you Sir, you my papa-uncle?’(295).

203 Ruth Perry in Novel Relations notes that this is the main contention of feminist critics of Richardson. By splitting patriarchal authority Richardson, Perry writes,’simultaneously represents his heroine as obedient and independent, respectful of her father but scornful of her brother, fully aware of the illegitimacy of male power but never ‘unnaturally-ungenteely, unfemininely-disrespectful of patriarchal authority’ (67-8). I make the point that this also detaches Clarissa from what she recognises as lawful authority.
repressive authority, and she reaches for protection outside the family, to a generous friend who will help her where her relations have failed. When Clarissa writes she firstly looks for protection and vindication from within the familial circles, to the people whose authority she accepts.

During the development of this stage the father’s anger escalates, its physical and other consequences become almost tangible. Clarissa reports on how she hears him ‘storm’ (151) and twice her father is prevented from ‘coming to her’, on one occasion threatening to ‘turn her out of his doors’ (220), on the other ‘in a great wrath’ (251), a phrase that implies a possible physical outburst. However, the most physical outbursts of anger are displaced and actually expressed by her brother, who ‘grasps her hands with violence’, and her uncle:

My uncle was in a terrible rage upon this. He took Mr Solmes by the hand, shocked as the man seemed to be, and drew him to the window [...]. Then coming up to me (who had thrown myself, very much disordered by my vehemence, into the contrary window) as if he would have beat me; his face violently working, his hands clenched, and his teeth set-Yes, yes, yes, hissed the poor gentleman, you shall, you shall, you shall, cousin Clary, be Mr Solmes’s. (305)

Clarissa eventually becomes so terrified by the prospect of an imposed marriage that she begins to contemplate leaving the house as the only way of escape. Pressure rises with the talk of marriage settlements, an agreed upon date for the wedding, her uncle’s moated house, as the continuous reminder of how strongly determined they are, and Lovelace’s own emphasis on the impossibility of escaping this fate if she is to remain in the house. Despite the mounting pressure Clarissa must be shown to leave Harlowe Place, in the phrase of Margaret Doody ‘unwillingly, almost unwittingly’. For this reason, Clarissa never actually resolves to leave her father’s house. She may contemplate leaving, under carefully specified terms and as the last resort, but it is never her resolution, as it is for example Annilia’s resolution to leave her uncle’s house. While this settles the issue of Clarissa not voluntarily following a rake, it is also the case that she is never turned out of the house. In the fine balance between these two premises lies

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204 Doody, A Natural Passion, p. 137.
the point that Jonathan Kramnick discusses: the fact that she apparently ‘does horrible actions but her intention remains “unfaulty”’. 205

Had Clarissa been turned out of the house in a fit of paternal anger a resolution might have been possible. As it turns out, a resolution cannot be attained except through a tragic outcome. To clarify the argument, I will turn attention once more to the issue of anger and authority and then to the representation of the father’s anger in earlier novels. Florian Stuber, responding to the argument by Thomas Eaves and Ben Kimpel that it is a weakness of the text that Mr Harlowe, on whom Clarissa’s fate depends, is relatively ‘absent’, noted that:

While Mr Harlowe is certainly “necessary to the plot”, it is not his anger that is so necessary, nor is it that psychological trait which “needed to be imagined” and “convincingly motivated.” The issue raised by Mr Harlowe concerns authority. Indeed, Mr. Harlowe’s anger is in itself merely an affect generated by Clarissa’s challenge to a principle he holds most dear, the principle of parental, or more particularly, paternal authority. Consequently, it is the character’s insistence on his authority that Richardson needed to establish and explain and that needs our critical attention. 206

The point that Stuber makes in this passage is central to this analysis. He rightly shifts attention to the issue of authority, but as this discussion has already shown, anger and authority are not to be treated separately. Mr Harlowe’s anger is not an affect nor is it purely an emotive matter. It is a case of paternal anger, and as such is close to and bears the characteristics of anger expressed by authority, and this is at once a matter both political and emotional. The scenes of paternal anger in earlier novels exemplify this. In these texts, the development moves towards a climactic scene, or series of scenes, of direct conflict and disputation, in which paternal anger is allowed its full expression and the heroine either retorts or submits. This is an essential step to resolution (happy or not) of the crisis that drives the story. This is because ‘ceremonial’ anger, anger that

205 Kramnick resolves this by positing two accounts of intention in Clarissa: Clarissa separates intention from action and feels responsible only for the actions she intended. However, often there is no definite action to which we can ascribe Clarissa’s intention. This leaves room for the Harlowes and Lovelace to ‘read’ faulty intentions in what they perceive as her own actions. This discussion also provides a good analysis of what Clarissa considers freedom. See Jonathan Kramnick, ‘Action and Inaction in Samuel Richardson’s Clarissa’, in Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 194-230, p. 195.

derives from (perceived) insult to authority, is not predominantly a visceral fit of instability and disorder. It is, as its history of social use shows, to a great degree political. In Barton’s analysis, mentioned above, anger signalled a process of renegotiation of relationships. Many of the analyses that are concerned with the King’s anger, or anger on the part of a person of authority, in *Anger’s Past* also recognise this. In addition, Sill discusses an eighteenth-century example in which Dr Alexander Monro uses writing to quench his anger and also ‘uses his anger, and particularly the text that results from it, as means of re-signifying the terms of that relationship, which he thinks have begun to slip from his control’. There is, then, in such cases of anger the element of redefinition. A good illustration of this is Le Merchant’s anger in *The Prude*. There, the episode results in Ariana being actually redefined from daughter to wife and the situation is resolved.

In *Clarissa*, as the discussion above shows, the movement is not towards, but away from a scene of direct conflict. Progressively isolated from her father, Clarissa is deprived of the opportunity to reason, argue or supplicate in order to appease her father’s anger, which becomes the more terrifying as it becomes more distanced. Clarissa herself does not wish this separation. When her brother James announces to her that she is prohibited from her parents’ presence she comments: ‘I can no longer defend myself as if I were dead’ (121). Separation deprives her from opportunities to defend herself as it deprives her from that aspect of anger that bears the quality or capacity of redefinition. All she is exposed to is a series of incidents of displaced anger that raise the tension and escalate the situation, without being able to provide resolution. No matter how violently James grasps her hand, and how threatening her uncle’s countenance becomes, they have no authority either to dispose of her hand, or turn her out of doors, or decide in the aftermath of an angry debate to listen to her arguments, or be moved by her supplication and reinstate her in the previous status as a beloved daughter. The crisis in *Clarissa*, then, is not an issue of being exposed to irascible passions. Other heroines before her have met similar and even darker fates. The psychological intensity of the situation derives from the fact that, as is shown above in

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discussing anger, they are never allowed to progress but always remain festering, fuelling ‘flames insatiate and devouring.’

The Problem of Clarissa’s Anger and Disinterested Action

Thus far, this chapter has presented the wealth of irate situations which form the background of the novel and how their parameters change in the story of Clarissa. At this point the focus of the analysis will shift to the important matter of Clarissa’s own anger. The interpretation of Clarissa’s anger stands between two opposing discourses. On the one hand it can be seen as justified and acceptable as the anger of the series of female heroines that came before her who were placed in similar situations. On the other hand, it can become a token of self-interestedness, a sign of her fight for self-preservation, and for this reason can be objectionable. Clarissa, after all, is meant to represent the sentimental ideal, to be a paragon of virtue who exemplifies the basic tenets of sentimental morality. The passion of anger, as has been discussed, has significant connections with the contrary discourse of self-interestedness. To Mandeville, for example, anger is a passion that inspires an individual, ‘summoning all his Strength, to overcome the Obstacles that hinder him in his great Work of Self-Preservation’ (193). Positing self-preservation as the ultimate end of all action, anger also acquires a particular place within this scheme as one of the passions most conducive to this end. It is certainly not coincidental that Elisinda, the character in The Prude who personifies most aptly the anxiety over disinterested action, is shown involved in a scene of great anger that even includes ‘calling names’ and ‘hitting’ (45). To retain her status as sentimental heroine Clarissa’s anger must hold off against this second interpretation. She must, in the words of Scott Gordon, avoid ‘Mandevillian (mis)reading’ and prove her action disinterested.

Gordon offers a solution by noting Clarissa’s passiveness; he seeks to defend Clarissa from the accusation of a self-interested motivation behind her actions by denying motivation altogether. He further notes that ‘in a Mandevillian environment the Harlowes damage Clarissa merely by positioning her as an agent in this story, for

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208 This is how Anna describes also the envy and avarice of the Harlowes, p. 67.
establishing any active participation provokes questions about motive.\textsuperscript{209} Clarissa, he says, is not freely moving, but moved.\textsuperscript{210} Gordon goes as far as to say that Clarissa does not contend with anyone:

Typically, Clarissa \textit{refuses} rather than \textit{asserts}, a practice of negativity that the text seems to equate with no action at all. […] This “negative” that Clarissa wishes to “be allowed”, could, of course, be read as an assertive act, since in claiming it she opposes her family’s desires. When she asks her uncles, “Do I contend for anything more than a mere negative?” , Clarissa’s words simultaneously admit and deny that she “contend (s)” for anything, since a “mere negative” seems collapsed, here, into “nothing” itself. Construing her actions as “negative”, that is, obscures the activity behind them – and more positively contends that she has not entered into contention with anybody at all.\textsuperscript{211}

To present Clarissa as not contending is also to make her unrhetorical, while there are instances that would prove the opposite. Clarissa’s letter to her brother, a letter ‘struck off while the iron was red hot’ (226), meaning in anger, is an act both of rhetoricity and contention. To bypass her brother’s rule, by addressing her parents in a letter meant for him, is also to contend. But the nature of her contention and her anger need to be qualified.

To the Harlowes Clarissa’s anger is a sign of self-interestedness. This is how they perceive it, or want to make it seem. When Bella talks of Clarissa’s ‘stomachfulness’ (265) she uses a synonym for ‘resentment’, but one that is markedly different from the definition of resentment as a response to moral injury. The term ‘stomachful’ is defined at the time as ‘resentful, angry’ and ‘self-willed’. From this derives also the insistence on ‘perverseness’ and ‘obstinacy’. Characteristically, the word ‘obstinacy’, which is used for Clarissa, is not recognized at all as steadiness but is equated to passion: ‘your obstinacy is equal to another’s passion’, says her mother (124). She is often referred to as ‘obstinate’, ‘perverse’ and ‘sullen’ and her distress is constantly devalued and misinterpreted. It is worth mentioning here that ‘sullenness’ was defined in 1744 as ‘a

\textsuperscript{209} Scott Paul Gordon, ‘Disinterested Selves: Clarissa and the Tactics of Sentiment’, \textit{ELH}, 64:2 (1997), 473-502, (p. 483). This is an article that forms the basis of the relevant chapter in the book \textit{The Power of the Passive Self}, but there is a minor change in the same sentence in the book, so I refer to the article instead, as it conveys more clearly what is relevant to my point.

\textsuperscript{210} Gordon, ‘Disinterested Selves’, (p. 483).

disposition that carries resentment high, that refuses to speak’.\textsuperscript{212} This is particularly resonant when one considers that the very core of Clarissa’s lack of compliance is that she does not speak, that is, she does not express consent. However, Clarissa’s silence, as Kathlyn Steele points out, is a rhetorical silence.\textsuperscript{213} She remains silent so that her words cannot be made into consent. Moreover, when Clarissa’s servant comments that she lately survives on nothing but air, Clarissa’s sister is reported as saying that: ‘stomachfulness, had swallowed up [her] stomach; and that obstinacy was meat, drink, and cloth to [her]’ (265). The comment devalues Clarissa’s claim to resentment, as the word suggests that Clarissa’s behaviour is visceral and detached from principle. The difference between the terms ‘resentment’ and ‘stomachfulness’ is significant. One cannot talk about resentment without invoking the concept of injury. But when one talks of ‘stomachfulness’ the emphasis clearly shifts to disposition and character. Thomas Dyche defined ‘stomachful’ as ‘angry, dogged, cross, peevish, proud, loth to submit or comply’.\textsuperscript{214} The repetition of words that suggest anger and the term ‘loth’ used in Dyche’s definition suggest that to be stomachful is to be unnecessarily incompliant and that it is a quality that unsettles both the notion of sociability that pervades eighteenth-century thought and the notion of filial duty. The word ‘resentment’ brings into question the family’s cruel behaviour, but the word ‘stomachfulness’ centres on Clarissa, revealing her as the defiant daughter whose behaviour breaches filial obedience, not out of principle but out of stubbornness. This discourse signifies that her refusal is perceived as a determined, conscious and purposeful assertion of self-will; a deliberate action of self-interestedness.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to understand the anger that Clarissa expresses –when she admits to her ‘angry passions’ (231), when she ‘speaks and writes in spirit’ (271), and also when she ‘stamps her foot’ (573) in opposing Lovelace – entirely as a matter of self-defence. That is, as a temporary instance of passion provoked by the offence. The quality that Clarissa owns when she says: ‘I have almost as much in me of my father’s as of my mother’s family’ (65), is not fleeting but a quality of her

\textsuperscript{212} Thomas Dyche, \textit{A New General English Dictionary} (London: Printed for Richard Ware, 1744).
\textsuperscript{213} Kathlyn L. Steele, ‘Clarissa’s Silence’, \textit{Eighteenth-Century Fiction}, 23.1 (2010), 1-34.
\textsuperscript{214} Dyche, 1744.
character. And it is a quality that is encouraged. This is a point that analyses do not take account of, emphasizing, as they do, the martyr-like qualities of Clarissa and the religious paradigm of suppressing or ‘curing’ the sinful angry passions. It is interesting to note that what Sill discusses in The Cure of the Passions is not entirely operative in Clarissa. According to Sill, the cure of the passions in a person of inherently good nature, whose sensibility is corrupted, that is, destabilized by an agitating factor, is effected by the intervention of a friend. But when Clarissa writes to Anna, and bestows her with the task of a ‘cure’ (‘be it in your part to soothe my angry passions’, 134), she actually encourages her to behave in the opposite way. Anna encourages Clarissa to ‘speak out’, to pull up a spirit and also, very drastically, to ‘resent’ the treatment she meets with:

Only, let me advise you, to pull up a spirit, even to your uncle, if there be occasion. Resent the vile and foolish treatment you meet with, in which he has taken so large a share, and make him ashamed of it, if you can. (279)

Whereas, on the face of it, the existence of anger or resentment in the makeup of a heroine of sensibility seems rather contradictory, matters become more legible if one considers the concept of sensibility not only as an eighteenth-century phenomenon, but in continuity with the different traditions that may have influenced its development. The literary origins of Sensibility take it from romance, where it is the quality of extraordinary individuals that combine virtue and strength, through to the novel where it starts to acquire a different, more expanded meaning. But the novel itself, as a genre, bears conventions of its own. Clarissa comes after a line of heroines who show strength in protecting their virtue, such as Lominia who uses a dagger to kill her rapist. There are also previous heroines who conventionally prove their modesty and virtue by expressing resentment at insolent behaviour. The narrator of The Prude makes it very clear that Emelia, the virtuous guardian of Bellamira, expressly shows resentment at the liberties taken by a young man in a public place. It is very important that the reader must be informed that Emelia felt resentment, while women were ‘denied’ anger as an emotion that was too dangerous and too revealing of their opposition, they were ‘required’ to show resentment of improper behaviour. Anything less could be construed as offering a man an opportunity. In addition, Annilia marks her resistance to oppressive authority by
expressing her ‘resentment’ of it, and her uncle also recognises it as such. The encouragement in *Clarissa* to verbally express resentment is owing to the fact that resentment here is part of the argument against oppressive rules of female conduct. In essence, Clarissa argues for an exception to the social and cultural codes that bind female behaviour. The general rule is that children owe obedience to their parents, and in no other case is this notion of filial duty more binding than in that of a daughter’s marriage. However, while parental authority is binding, it is also bound by obligations towards the children, and it can become unlawful when oppressive.\(^{215}\) When Clarissa is encouraged to resent her family’s treatment expressed in anger, pressure and confinement, her resentment also confirms this behaviour as vile. Consequently her own behaviour will not be a breach of the laws of filial duty, but a justified exception from them.

By turning attention to generic and thematic elements in this analysis of *Clarissa* a more general remark can also be made. Sensibility cannot develop separately from the conventions of the novel, nor from the features of the discourse of the passions that are relevant to it. It is informed by the concept of virtue that includes connections to strength, and by the concept of the justified aspect of negative emotions as it was appropriated by moral sense theory. Hence, there is in its development a point when Sensibility becomes operative through negative emotions such as anger and resentment. Richardsonian Sensibility illustrates this point. The scenes of anger in *Clarissa* do not invite us to ponder over the emotion, that is, they do not suspend action so that the reader will be immersed in the feeling as it happens in *Julie* for example. Admittedly, in *Julie* a great factor is the sense of the heroine’s own guilt, but it can be generally observed that the episode revolves around emotion. The particular scene pins the reader down to the present, absorbs them in the manifestation of the passion and the physicality of the situation. The focus always stays in the present and always on emotion: the father’s irritation, the escalation of anger, Julie’s remorse read in her ‘deportment, downcast, frantic, humiliated’, then the outburst, the beating and finally, the change: ‘here ended the triumph of anger and began that of nature.[…]. I perceived

\(^{215}\)For a discussion of the codes of parental authority informing *Clarissa* see Thomas Keymer’s *Richardson’s ‘Clarissa’ and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* and especially pages 98-120.
from my father’s attitude and voice that he was displeased with what he had done’. But in *Clarissa*, the scenes of anger, her ‘angry passions’ when at Harlowe Place, and her ‘angry commands’ to Lovelace when she has left it, always make the reader regress, inviting us to look for the causes behind them, that is, to refer to the ‘foundation of the whole’. This is what the text invites the reader to do from the very beginning. As Brissenden remarks, ‘Clarissa’s sensibility always has a realistic foundation’, and as Jean Hagstrum notes, in the text the very term sensibility acquires a darker meaning that most characteristically comes to be associated with the measure of human dignity.

Examining the cause of Clarissa’s anger, her response to anger, and Anna’s call for resentment, are important and necessary steps toward recognizing both this realistic foundation and also, above all, her sense of dignity. In this way, her negative passions are not incongruous, but actually part of her definition of virtue and Sensibility. In no way is this aspect of Clarissa’s negative emotions more confirmed than when the claim to them is denied. Further, the definition of sentimental virtue that Clarissa embodies that includes but modifies the negative passions, is, in essence, a more successful paradigm of Sensibility than the one that categorically excludes them. This latter paradigm and its questionableness will be the subject of the following chapter on Frances Sheridan’s *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*.

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217 Richardson refers to this first part of the novel and its detailed representation of the family altercations as ‘the foundation of the whole’, see pp. 1498-9 of the Ross edition of *Clarissa*.
218 Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, p. 163.
Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph

Frances Sheridan’s *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* appeared in 1761, bearing unquestionable credentials as a novel of Sensibility. Not only was Sheridan encouraged in her endeavours by Samuel Richardson himself, but also her heroine, Sidney, is of exemplary virtue. Her sufferings, as Jean Coates Cleary observes in the introduction to the 1995 Oxford edition, ‘struck a deep cord in an era which took pride in its enlightened capacity to empathize with suffering and to respond feelingly, from the heart and with tears, to the plight of the afflicted and the distressed’. However, reviewers were from the start hesitant to endorse its moral pattern, due to the fact that Sheridan’s heroine endures relentless suffering, despite her virtue and blameless behaviour. As Jean Coates Cleary notes, *The Monthly Review* showed appreciation of the book, but:

questioned Sheridan’s moral purpose, suggesting that the distressing of goodness as faultless as Sidney’s was ‘by no means calculated to encourage and promote virtue’. The *Critical Review* declared the ‘highest opinion of the genius, delicacy, and good sense of Mrs S—’, praising her novel as chaste, natural, simple, and beyond measure affecting and pathetic’. But it was ambivalent as to the moral influence of Sheridan’s failure to provide poetic justice for its heroine. (xii)

Recent criticism has read, in this absence of ‘poetic justice’, a novel that challenges eighteenth-century codes of female behaviour exactly as it applies them. Cleary interprets the heroine’s distress as the ‘direct, systematic, and inescapable result of Sidney’s virtuous adherence to the three laws by which the good Georgian woman governed her life’ (xx). These were: adherence to ‘filial obedience’, ‘religious piety’, and ‘rigid observance of the ethic of female delicacy’ (xix). Indeed, during the narration, Sidney endures a broken engagement and disappointment when it appears that her suitor, Faulkland, has seduced and impregnated a young lady by the name of her Miss Burchell; a quick marriage to a man she tries hard to like, and which is the result of strict observance of filial obedience; the adulterous affair of her husband, which brings unfair damage to Sidney’s reputation and serious financial distress; and

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220 Frances Sheridan, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, ed. by Patricia Köster and Jean Coates Cleary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xi. All subsequent references to the text and introduction are to this edition and are given in parentheses.
finally, when in the last part Sheridan unites the widowed Sidney with Faulkland, who has caught and, as he believes, killed his adulterous wife, the apparently seduced maiden Miss Burchell, the marriage is annulled as it transpires that she is in fact only wounded. Faulkland commits suicide and Sidney is left to lead a lonely life, her only comfort being the financial help she receives from a long lost cousin, Ned Warner. During these events Sidney shows unbending patience and resignation to her fate, and never admits to or fully allows the expression of negative emotion.

The heroine may, of course, be shown in deep sorrow or despair, but she never demonstrates any resentment or anger at these events and the offences she bears. At the same time, almost all the other characters around her are permitted to feel and express the full force of their resentment, very often with consequences that add to Sidney’s distress. For example, her mother’s repressed resentment that stems from her disappointment in her first love, is a major factor as to how Faulkland is judged and irrevocably rejected as a suitor to Sidney; her husband is manipulated into resentment towards Sidney by his mistress, Mrs Gerrarde, to the extent of turning her out of doors; her brother, Sir George, resents Sidney’s rejection of Faulkland and her submission to their mother’s inflexibility, and he also resents Mr Arnold’s adultery and Sidney’s forgiveness of him, resulting in his estrangement from Sidney and consequent misinformation about Sidney’s dire financial circumstances, for which he offers no relief. Minor characters also show resentment as can be observed in the inset narratives of the novel: Lady Grimston’s resentment of her daughter’s choice of husband (65-76); the ‘old pique’ between Mr Main’s father and the brother of the woman that Mr Main loves (272); the resentment of the doctor who wants to operate on Mr Main’s lover towards Mr Main, who in his professional capacity as a physician, challenges the ‘unfeeling operator’ (274-5); Mr Ware’s defamation of the young Miss Price and her father because of his resentment that the maid escaped his designs. In the Conclusion to the Memoirs (1767), the sequel to the novel, resentment, as it is felt by young Faulkland and Sir Audley, plays an important role in the distress suffered by the

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221 Sir George admits this behaviour as stemming from ‘resentment’ (p. 382) and Sidney understands it as such (p. 373). In the inset narrative of Mr Ware, referred to later, I read his behaviour as stemming from resentment.
next generation of Sidney’s family. Fittingly, Sidney’s last act in the Conclusion is to forgive young Faulkland. In short, what characterises Sidney, in contrast to other characters in the novel, is forbearance, absence of resentment and great capacity for forgiveness. All of these qualities are pertinent to the three laws that Cleary notes as criteria for female behaviour.

In theory, then, Sheridan’s heroine showcases virtue and embodies sensibility (mainly manifested as delicacy). In practice, though, she actually renders them problematic, not only because of the absence of poetic justice in the novel, but also because she displays a definition of sensibility that is too constrained, and for this reason non-operative. What follows is an analysis of resentment and forgiveness in Sidney Bidulph informed by the main eighteenth-century analysis of resentment and forgiveness by Joseph Butler, as well as later discussions. I will argue that Sidney disavows resentment of injuries, and for this reason she renders problematic the issue of forgiveness. Moreover, I will argue that there is a temporal displacement in the novel, as observed by critics such as Travers and Doody, which results in older offences being resented or forgiven at the wrong time or by the wrong people. The focus on these particular emotions will reveal patterns in the making of the novel that account for some of the basic critical questions that it raises. In doing so, it will also give an account of sensibility that is problematical exactly because it excludes them.

Resentment and Forgiveness: Some Key Points

It must be evident from the above that Sheridan’s novel is informed by strict notions of virtue. In addition, there is clearly the influence of the religious ethic—especially in the sequel—that firmly advocates forgiveness and condemns resentment. However, the attitudes towards resentment in the eighteenth century are not only informed by religious ethics. Indeed, writers on the passions who also have a definite religious background, such as Isaac Watts and, most importantly, Joseph Butler, recognise an acceptable

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222 This section is informed by Joseph Butler’s sermon, which is an important eighteenth-century text, and the later exploration of the subject by Murphy and Hampton. I use these analyses because I find significant parallels and inconsistencies with Sheridan’s novel. I do not make the case here for the study of forgiveness as a subject in general, nor do I attempt a wider commentary on Butler’s work. The reader who wishes to pursue this should also refer to the recent study of forgiveness by Charles Griswold. The book also refers to Butler’s notions of resentment and forgiveness. Charles L. Griswold, Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
aspect of resentment. Consequently, Sidney’s lack of resentment, whereas seemingly in keeping with notions of religious and sentimental virtue, is systematically inconsistent with the main points of analysis of this emotion, as given by the ethical philosopher Joseph Butler and others. In its turn, this antithesis bears consequences for Sensibility as well.

Butler’s influential discussion was based, as mentioned previously, on a dichotomy. Namely, that anger is connected to violence, force and opposition, whereas resentment is a response not to general kinds of injury but specifically to moral injury. By making this distinction, Butler effectively achieves the dissociation of resentment from the discourse of anger. To dissociate resentment from anger is also to differentiate it from that aspect of anger that connects it to madness, unreason, and excess. Essentially, Butler’s discussion counters the notion of resentment as a reproachable emotion in itself by conferring to it the status of justified emotion, and not according to circumstance but as a norm. That is, he attaches it to a permanently harmful object, moral injury, and thus renders it acceptable and even positive. Butler further confirms the status of resentment as positive, by arguing, counter-intuitively, that it serves a social purpose. This is because resentment is raised against vice and wickedness and all people are bonded by a ‘fellow-feeling’ of resentment on behalf of the species. Therefore resentment occurs in all people who are bound by the same moral standards, when confronted with cases of injustice or moral injury. In its turn, the fear of provoking this communal feeling of resentment acts as a deterrent for evil actions. In Butler’s scheme, then, resentment can actually contribute to counteracting injuries.

Other ethical writers have also recognised a degree of acceptable and, even, desirable expression of resentment. Isaac Watts, for example, in his *Doctrine of the Passions*, another significant eighteenth-century ethical work, notes that ‘it may be proper and necessary to shew some Degrees of Resentment, and let your Enemy know that you are not a senseless Block, or a stone without feeling, in order to guard you from universal Insults and continual Injuries’.

In addition, resentment can be said to bear a judicial aspect, understood in this discourse as protective of the eighteenth century’s...

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most valuable social currency: reputation. William Webster, writing on the consequences of immoderate anger, states that we can take the ‘Course of law for any injuries done to our good Name, Estates, or Person, where the injury is of consequence enough to justify our resentment’. Accordingly, resentment can be deemed reasonable because one can present the case, the instance of resentment towards others, and also within a formal institution such as a court as is suggested here, and validate it as such.

Of course there is no denying that there is a more dangerous and darker side to resentment, and writers were eager to emphasize the value, use and virtue of forgiveness. Butler’s sermon ‘Upon Forgiveness of Injuries’ follows the one of resentment and in it he paints a gloomy picture of a society that allows resentment to operate out of bounds. Malice or resentment, he says, have the tendency to ‘beget the same passion in him who is the Object of it’ (81). In addition, people are from a ‘partiality’ to themselves, very apt to interpret minor injuries or even non-injuries as great insults. For these reasons, if resentment is let loose and people do not practise the valued lesson of forgiveness of injuries, there would be, he says, ‘no going on to represent this scene of Rage and Madness’; there would be no Bounds, nor any End’ (82). Butler insists, in the preface to the 1729 edition of his work that the two sermons must be read in conjunction, because the one on resentment is ‘introductory’ to the one on forgiveness. According to this analysis, then, there is both a good reason for resentment and also a good reason for the forsaking of resentment and the forgiveness of injuries, as well as deviations between the two.

Much more recently, in 1988, the philosopher of law, Jeffrie Murphy, and the political philosopher, Jean Hampton, published a volume entitled Forgiveness and Mercy. In this, Murphy reads Butler’s analysis and revises some of its key points, offering important considerations on the concepts of resentment and forgiveness. Murphy begins with Butler’s definition of forgiveness as: ‘the forsaking of resentment – the resolute overcoming of the anger and hatred that are naturally directed

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toward a person who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury’.225 This forsaking of resentment protects one, and society, from the undesirable consequences of resentment, and so it is viewed as always good and always a virtue. Murphy, on the other hand, makes the point that ‘resentment (in its range from righteous anger to righteous hatred) functions primarily in defence, not of all moral values and norms, but rather of certain values of the self. Resentment is a response not to general wrongs but to wrongs against oneself.’226 In short, Murphy ties resentment to self-respect, in that he makes self-respect the ‘primary value’ defended by resentment. In this sense, forgiveness is not always a virtue. A tendency to readily forgive, which in turn means an inability to show resentment in response to a violation of our rights, may show that ‘we do not think we have rights or that we do not take our rights seriously’.227 It follows, then, from this discussion, that resentment can be a valid, and in some cases required response to injury, more so than forgiveness is. Although, on the face of it, forgiveness is a virtue and a desirable quality, it needs nevertheless to be circumscribed in order to actually count as one.

The most important point about forgiveness is its definition. Forgiveness is likely to be used as a synonym for such concepts as pardon, justification, excuse or even mercy but all of them convey markedly different ideas. To pardon, for example, can be an act of political power, in a sense that forgiveness is not, as in to nullify a punishment. To justify is to conclude that subsequent factors or events have rendered the initial moral wrong possibly the right thing to do. To excuse is to take into account certain extenuating factors or circumstances that may acquit the wrongdoer of responsibility (for example, insanity). To show mercy is to be more lenient towards a wrongdoer than certain moral standards normally permit one to be. Indeed, mercy is connected to different emotions such as compassion and pity. Forgiveness, as defined by Butler and subsequent discussions, is connected to resentment. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines it thus: ‘The term ‘forgive’ derives from ‘give’ or to ‘grant’, as in ‘to give up,’ or ‘cease to harbor (resentment, wrath)’ More specifically, ‘forgive’ refers

226 Murphy, ‘Forgiveness and Resentment’, p. 16.
227 Murphy, p. 17.
to the act of giving up a feeling, such as resentment, or a claim to requital or compensation.\textsuperscript{228} In Murphy’s words, which cogently convey the meaning, ‘we may forgive only what it is initially proper to resent.’\textsuperscript{229} In addition, it must be emphasized that only the one who has the right to resent the moral wrong has also the right to forgive the wrongdoer. That is, only the victim of the wrongdoing is able to grant forgiveness. Others may resent the wrongdoing also, in the sense of Butler’s ‘fellow feeling’ of resentment when observing moral wrong around us, but there is philosophically, ethically and practically great difficulty with the concept of ‘third-party forgiveness’.

Furthermore, forswearing of resentment does not always signify forgiveness. Murphy’s example is that a victim of a wrongdoing may choose to deal with and forswear resentment, because it is a self-consuming emotion and thus a person may decide to be freed from it. But that does not mean that this person has in fact forgiven the wrongdoer. Forgiveness is the forswearing of resentment for moral reasons. These moral reasons may be, according to Murphy: repentance on the part of the wrongdoer; the fact that the wrongdoer has suffered enough; the fact that the wrongdoer has undergone a ritual of ‘humiliation’, as an apology ritual; or the fact that the wrongdoer has been forgiven for ‘old times’ sake’, that is, owing to good behaviour in the past.\textsuperscript{230}

There also other reasons for forgiveness: the arguments that stem from religion. Murphy understands these arguments in this way: ‘Just as charity requires that I sometimes ought to assist those having no right to my assistance, so does forgiveness require that I sometimes ought to forgive those having no right to my forgiveness.’\textsuperscript{231} The religious arguments for forgiveness are that we should forgive in order to reform the wrongdoer (not because he actually repented but as a step towards his repentance) and, mainly, that we should forgive because we ourselves need to be forgiven.\textsuperscript{232} Murphy understands the values of these, beyond their strictly religious purpose, and he encourages their application, but he cautions that he does not mean forgiveness in the

\textsuperscript{229} Murphy, ‘Forgiveness and Resentment’, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{230} Murphy, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{231} Murphy, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{232} Murphy, p. 30.
sense of the ‘flabby sentimentality of forgiving every wrong, no matter how deep or unrepented.’ Drawing on main points of this analysis, what follows is a consideration of the concepts of resentment and forgiveness in *Sidney Bidulph*, and by Sidney herself, with special notice of her sentimentality, ‘flabby’ or not.

**Courtship and Conflated time: Reliving the Injury**

In an essay on Sheridan’s novel, entitled ‘Morality and Annihilated Time’, Margaret Doody makes a most perceptive observation when she notes that all action springs from a single event that precedes the story: the disappointment of Lady Bidulph, Sidney’s mother, in her first love. The opening of the novel is the opening of a courtship sequence between Sidney and Faulkland, a friend of Sir George, Sidney’s brother, who recommends Faulkland as a very good match for Sidney. Faulkland does not disappoint expectations and is accepted by both Sidney and Lady Bidulph as a suitor. As the courtship continues and events seem to progress towards a happy wedding, Lady Bidulph reminisces and shares the story of her first love. The reader, and actually Sidney as well, learns that Sidney’s deceased father, was not the first man who courted Lady Bidulph. At the age of twenty-one she had been courted by a man she loved and who was approved of by her parents. After a whole year of courtship a wedding date was fixed. But on the wedding day, instead of the groom himself, a letter arrived from him revealing that he had made vows to another lady before he ever saw Lady Bidulph and that he had decided, overcome by guilt, to honour his previous engagement to the first lady who was exceedingly distressed by this affair. When narrating this remarkable story, Lady Bidulph emphasizes the emotions of the other people involved in it, but remains quite restrained with regard to hers. She notes how distraught her parents were, for example, and the distress of the other woman, but she only says about herself that she bore it with ‘a becoming resolution’ (31). Hers is the only peculiarly dispassionate reaction to a situation that gives rise to very strong emotions. The man involved in this story is also represented as being in great psychological turmoil. The ‘very long’ letter

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233 Murphy, ‘Forgiveness and Resentment’, p. 32.
that Lady Bidulph received from her lover was phrased in the most pathetic terms and in it the wrongdoer repeatedly pleads for forgiveness:

He intreated mine, and my family’s pardon, in the most pathetic manner, for having engaged our esteem so far as to consent to an union, of which he found himself unworthy, and which it was impossible for him to accomplish […]. He enlarged greatly on the sufferings of his heart, in the struggle between his love for me, and his duty to the person who had his first vows; and whom, he declared, his infidelity had almost brought to the grave. He claimed my pity, both on his own and her own account: and repeatedly intreated my forgiveness of his fault. (31)

The distress the young man suffers – the signs of which are present from the very day that he has to write the letter – affects him to such a degree that it results in madness and confinement. The young lady whom he was supposed to marry dies after all of a ‘broken heart’ because of the ‘melancholy fate of her lover’ (31). Lady Bidulph herself thinks that she was fortunate to find out about the previous engagement before she was married to him, because she could not have borne the burden of being, even inadvertently, the cause of the other woman’s distress. The story may be concluded, but it is not actually resolved, at least not as far as emotions are concerned. The young Lady Bidulph shows neither anger, nor resentment, nor forgiveness of the betrayal of her suitor. The tragic development interposes and there is no opportunity, no room, for resentment to be expressed or forgiveness to be granted. The event and particularly its emotional aftermath is left lingering on and is allowed to have an important influence on the future and in Sidney’s story.

This is the history of the woman from whom Faulkland must seek approbation, a woman the editor of the journal describes thus (and in doing so also delineates Sidney’s character):

Lady Bidulph was a woman of plain sense, but exemplary piety; the strictness of her notions (highly commendable in themselves) now-and-then gave a tincture of severity to her actions, though she was ever esteemed a truly good woman. She had educated her daughter, who was one of the greatest beauties of her time, in the strictest principles of virtue; from which she never deviated, through the course of an innocent, though unhappy life. (11)

Because of Lady Bidulph’s asserted ties to virtue, Faulkland is introduced into the family on the basis of his ‘unobjectionable morals’ (20). For all his good qualities,
though, he has a recognisable fault; he is of too warm a temper when provoked. An instance that confirms this comes early on in the novel, when a footman, in Faulkland’s service, whips the horse Sidney is riding so hard that it makes the animal plunge and throw her off its back. Sidney is not much hurt but Faulkland, on seeing this, becomes ‘so enraged’ that he whips the footman (34). It is because of this servant’s resentment, caused by the above incident, that the letter of the apparently seduced Miss Burchell reaches Lady Bidulph’s hands. The servant leaves the house, but not before he robs Faulkland of the incriminating letter written by Miss Burchell. In it Miss Burchell refers to their affair, reveals that she is pregnant by him, that she has found out that he is about to marry and implores him not to complete her destruction with this marriage. As Sir George later says, ‘the letter which was sent [to Sidney] had come from this revengeful dog who had robbed his master’ (43, my emphasis). In saying so, Sir George adds to his argument that the Faulkland-Burchell affair is a ‘trivial’ matter, the point that its disclosure is an act stemming from resentment, and because of this there is an added and pressing need to hear him defend himself. But Lady Bidulph has already made up her mind.

When the letter arrives, Sidney is gravely ill and thus unable to open and read it. Lady Bidulph deems it proper to do so herself (40). She opens but does not read the letter through: ‘to say the truth, I but run my eye in a cursory manner over it; I was afraid of meeting, at every line, something offensive to decency’ (45). At first this seems very much in keeping with character. Lady Bidulph is a woman of strict virtue and exemplary piety, so it stands to reason that she would feel uncomfortable with the subject of the letter. But more than that, this refusal to establish the facts is consequential in the novel. Lady Bidulph makes up her mind to reject Faulkland and side with the cause of the woman whom she recognises from the start as a victim. But this apparently moral decision is to a great extent dictated by morally questionable emotional drives. Doody offers a reading of this decision that reveals a great deal about the psychology behind it:

Her moral position also has, very clearly, particular psychological roots which Lady Bidulph does not want to examine. She has had to justify the wronged woman in order to justify her lover’s choice to have her, while at the same time her anger at
her lover, which she has never allowed herself to express fully, has emerged in her quick reaction of hostility at another man who allowed himself to get sexually entangled. It’s all the man’s fault. […], although at the same time we may wonder if subdued feelings of resentment, not permitted and not acknowledged, may have emerged in an elaborate and compensatory desire for kindness to fair play to the seduced woman.\(^{235}\)

Indeed, the aftermath of this disclosure and the altercations with Sir George, who insists on disregarding the ‘trifling affair’, is the only time during which Lady Bidulph is shown progressively more agitated and emotional, and quite tellingly, often in anger. She admits to her ‘vexation’ at having her expectations of Faulkland disappointed (50), she treats Sir George ‘angrily’ for the levity he shows at what she considers a ‘crime’ (51), she is shown twice to grow ‘down-right angry’ (43) or ‘downright in a violent passion’ (52) and, finally, she owns her ‘resentment’ towards Faulkland (47). During these events, this woman of ‘plain sense’ does not actually act from sense, from sound judgement, but from deeply suppressed negative emotions: ‘I own to you’, she says to Sidney, ‘that the recollection of that melancholy event which happened to me, has given me a sort of horror at the very thoughts of a union between you and Mr Faulkland’ (49). This line will be impressed on Sidney’s mind as she later repeatedly refers to it. This is the first and most important instance of what Doody calls the issue of conflated time in the novel. In her words, ‘time is conflated in Miss Sidney Bidulph, […]. The past is simultaneous with the present.’\(^{236}\) Resentment, and its repression, is so central to this first major event, from which all else emanates, that the rest of the novel is a continuous act of ‘resentir’,\(^{237}\) of feeling again or reliving past injuries. Faulkland is not, strictly speaking, rejected for his fault (in any case there is clearly lack of evidence to fully support a condemnation). In the case of Faulkland’s moral lapse, Lady Bidulph allows the expression of the resentment that she suppressed under her ‘becoming resolution’. That is, she temporally displaces her original negative emotion and resents in the present an injury from the past. Faulkland is judged not because, or rather, not only because of his own past, but also because of Lady Bidulph’s past and that is the reason why any attempt at defence is fruitless. In being identified as the same ‘type’ of man as

\(^{235}\) Doody, ‘Morality and Annihilated Time’, p. 331, added emphasis.


\(^{237}\) From the etymology of the verb resent : re (prefix) + sentir (to feel), French ressentir, to feel again.
Lady Bidulph’s first lover, Faulkland is essentially silenced because she has already, in the contents of her lover’s letter, heard the pleas of the wrongdoer but deferred her judgment. Her verdict is finally pronounced in Faulkland’s case at the wrong time and on the wrong person.

In the meantime, Sidney regains health and consciousness to find herself transformed from a potentially happy bride to a woman who has had a lucky escape from a ‘villain’ who ‘had flagrant crimes to answer for’ (43). She is informed about the letter and its contents and about her mother’s rejection of Faulkland. Initially, she tries, unlike her mother, to establish facts and the truth behind the story, but quickly submits to her mother’s will: ‘Ah! Dear madam cry’d I, scarce knowing what I said, I rely on your maternal goodness; I am sure you have done what is proper’ (42). But the motives behind Lady Bidulph’s actions do not derive entirely from ‘maternal goodness’. For this reason whether what was done was appropriate is questionable. Sir George condemns it as a harsh and rushed decision. The development of Sidney’s story also reveals it as such when it transpires, belatedly, that Miss Burchell is not actually the faultless, seduced maiden for whom Lady Bidulph takes her, and, even worse, that she has been a lover of Sidney’s brother as well. Along with the truth, Lady Bidulph’s behaviour is revealed as rushed, unfair and guided by resentment.

Undeniably, there is much reason for resentment in this case. Faulkland, even if he is not the seducer that appearances make him seem to be, has impregnated a young woman and bears responsibility for her and the child. He also bears responsibility for personal wrongdoing towards Sidney, and by extension her family. Lady Bidulph can rightfully resent Faulkland for the injury he has caused to her family. But she cannot rightfully resent Faulkland because of the remembrance of the injury she received in her youth. At the same time, Sidney shows forbearance and no sign of resentment at the disclosure of the affair. However, this deferential attitude derives mainly from her submission to maternal authority and is, for this reason, problematic. In waiving her right to resent an injury, and allowing her mother to express the main emotional response to it, Sidney extends a right that is not transferable. According to the previous analysis, only the victim of the moral injury bears the capacity to resent or forgive the wrongdoer, and because Faulkland is Sidney’s intended husband, she is the primary
victim of this offence. This is also confirmed by the fact that Sidney must bear the social consequences of this injury. As Lady Grimston remarks, the abrupt breaking off of the engagement may suggest to people that there was something objectionable in Sidney’s character. It is this preoccupation with safeguarding her reputation that hastens her into a marriage with Mr Arnold. Sidney shows neither resentment nor intention to forgive, but this is not out of resolution, as her mother did in the situation that she treats as similar to Sidney’s, but out of submission to maternal authority. As a result, neither woman actually has a ‘lucky escape’. On the contrary, Lady Bidulph’s resentment resurfaces and is directed towards the wrong object, leading her to separate her daughter from an imperfect but in reality suitable husband, and to marry her to an apparently perfect but unworthy one. Sidney’s failure, or inability, to express resentment or forgiveness does not provide resolution to her own story and for this reason Faulkland retains the capacity to plead for the forswearing of resentment and forgiveness even after Sidney’s marriage. Because of that, both cases, instead of remaining in the narrative past, are effectually allowed a continuing influence on the story’s present.

**Marital choice: Resentment and Forgiveness in a Cautionary tale**

Confirming the emotion of resentment as a significant driving force within the plot, the inset narrative of Grimston Hall comes at a crucial point in the novel to provide a cautionary tale of maternal resentment and failed forgiveness. Sidney’s marital fate is decided at Grimston Hall where she goes with her mother to pay a visit to Lady Grimston, a friend of Lady Bidulph’s. Lady Grimston is a formidable and strikingly unmaternal figure. She is a widow of significant independence and is austere and very ‘regular’ in her daily activities, with strict notions on filial obedience. A true matriarch, with absolute power over her well-intending but intimidated husband, she has married off her first daughter contrary to her own liking and condemned her to unhappiness. Her husband is determined not to sacrifice his other daughter and supports the choice of Mr Vere. At the same time Lady Grimston presses on with her own choice for their daughter and becomes very agitated at her husband’s failure to assert his authority in the matter:

My mother, unused to be controouled, was filled with resentment both against him and me; she said, he encouraged me in my disobedience; and that, if he did not unite
his authority to hers, in order to compel me to marry the gentleman she approved of, it would make a total breach between them. (67)

Faced with such strict determination, the father encourages a secret marriage between his daughter and Mr Vere. When Lady Grimston finds out about the marriage she bursts into a ‘rage little short of phrenzy’ (69), disowns her daughter and makes her husband tear up the will that secures her daughter’s financial interests. Later a young widow in emotional and financial distress, Mrs Vere wishes only for her mother’s forgiveness. Eventually this comes through the mediation of a clergyman. He succeeds, with difficulty, in appealing to her maternal, as well as her Christian side, but the scene of forgiveness described by Mrs Vere bears none of these characteristics: ‘My mother did not depart from her usual austerity; she gave me but her hand to kiss, and pronounced her forgiveness and her blessing in so languid a manner, as greatly damped the fervor of my joy’ (76). This despotic act of ‘pronouncing forgiveness’ is detached from the real end of forgiveness, which is the resumption of a ruptured relationship. Mrs Vere may be pronounced forgiven, but Lady Grimston never actually forswears her resentment. Even after years of marriage to Mr Vere she still calls her daughter by her maiden name (77) and still retains ‘coldness’ towards her (65).

It is a matter of great significance that Sidney finds herself, so quickly after the breaking off of her engagement to Faulkland, at Grimston Hall listening to Mrs Vere’s story. Lady Grimston frequently lectures on filial obedience and stresses the consequences of disobedience. In addition, Mrs Vere remarks on how much easier it would have been for her to show filial obedience had her mother been as ‘tender’ as Lady Bidulph, and that marrying for love did not have the happy ending she thought it would have. When, then, Mr Arnold is presented as Sidney’s lover, approved of by both Lady Bidulph and Lady Grimston, Sidney tries to like him ‘as fast as [she] can’, submitting to maternal authority and hiding her resentment. She chooses to hide her anger at him, saying, ‘I should think the man handsome I think, if I was not angry with him’ (79) and expresses her resentment only ‘inwardly’; that is, only to Cecilia, whom she considers her ‘second self’ (136-7). The marriage takes place at Grimston Hall with Lady Grimston and her estranged daughter serving as strong reminders of the dangers of provoking maternal resentment. That is, the resentment of a figure of authority.
addition to having consequences for a daughter’s social status, this also results in spiritual turmoil. By not granting her true forgiveness, Lady Grimston has condemned her daughter to suffer regret without providing any opportunity for redemption. More than that, her status highlights the privilege of authority to withhold forgiveness. As a consequence, Sidney defers to her mother’s authority.

In spite of the appellation of ‘tender’ that Mrs Vere bestows on her, the reader notices that Lady Bidulph is not so very different from the austere Lady Grimston. The two women have many similarities, and Sir George has already told Sidney, ‘in his resentment’, that their mother is ‘like Lady Grimston’ (77). More than that, Lady Bidulph’s motives in dictating her daughter’s marital choice, influenced as they are by resentment, renders her authority problematic. In essence, Sidney submits to what Clarissa is encouraged to resent.

**Marriage: the Resentment of an ‘Injured Wife’**

The same deferential attitude and absence of resentment that characterises Sidney as a daughter, defines her as a wife. Whereas the unity between Sidney and Arnold is questionable, he is actually perceived to be a safe choice as he is ‘not a man of an amorous complexion’ (82). With Arnold as husband, Sidney can expect to have a calm life and avoid such disappointing and indecorous incidents as happened with Faulkland. However, expectations are once again overturned when Arnold proves to be an adulterous husband. Sidney discovers Arnold’s adultery by accident. She overhears the coupletogether and understands the nature of their relationship. Her attitude towards the adultery is markedly dispassionate, well-composed and very tolerant. Characteristically, when she first finds out she feels as if her presence there is intrusive and her language is markedly polite: ‘I have heard enough to convince me that *my presence would be very unacceptable* to both Mr Arnold and *his companion*, and I resolved not to interrupt them; nor, if possible, ever let Mr Arnold know that I had made a discovery so fatal to my own peace, and *so disadvantageous* to him and *his friend*’ (134-5, added emphasis).

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238 Margaret Doody observes that Sidney ‘resents with spirit’ Arnold’s suggestion, when they first meet, that she should be more concerned with her needlework than the book of Horace he sees her reading. Doody also remarks that this episode may suggest disunity between Sidney and Arnold. Doody, ‘Morality’, p. 333.
Sidney resolves to ‘depart in silence’ (151) and suffer this affliction in silence. But her forbearance results in yet more distress for her. Mrs Gerrarde, Arnold’s lover, ensnares her and makes it appear that Sidney was at her home with the intention of meeting with Faulkland. This appears to directly deviate from her husband’s forbidding of any kind of social communication between Sidney and Faulkland – who has reappeared in her social circle – due to his prior status as her suitor. When he is led to believe that Sidney has disobeyed that order, Arnold, in marked contrast to Sidney shows his resentment and exercises the ‘rights’ of the ‘injured husband to the extreme by turning Sidney out of doors: ‘I have left home to avoid expostulations, nor shall I return to it till I hear that you have removed yourself. Spare the attempt of a justification, which can only aggravate the resentment of an already too-much injured husband’ (145). Sidney leaves her home and her daughters behind her and moves in with her mother.

Not all eighteenth-century heroines adopted such forbearance though. Eliza Haywood’s Betsy Thoughtless left home on her own accord when she discovered her husband’s adultery. This action led to a series of events that finally united her with her true love, Mr Trueworth. It is also interesting to note the way in which Betsy makes the discovery. Mademoiselle de Roquelair is a guest at Betsy’s house while she waits to begin her journey to France. She is going there to enter a convent, supposedly in repentance for her previous life; she has been a lover of Betsy’s brother and also of a Duke. Betsy’s husband, Mr Munden, knowing her past, thinks that he has a sure conquest in her and makes his advances. Mademoiselle de Roquelair, who was never truly repentant, accepts him as a lover and is hopeful that he will also, in that role, provide for her. Betsy is unaware of this, but she grows impatient with the continual postponement of her journey, so she asks her to leave the house. Mademoiselle de Roquelair responds audaciously and refuses to leave the house, as she feels she is not ordered to do so by its rightful master, that is, the man of the house. Betsy, greatly offended and agitated, turns to her husband for support and, indeed, confirmation of her rightful place to refuse guests in her own house. Her husband wants to be left out of women’s quarrels. But despite her husband’s attempt to trivialize matters, Betsy realises that ‘nothing less than a criminal Correspondence between her husband and this French Woman, could induce the one, or embolden the other, to act as they had done towards
That is, Betsy intelligently deduces the truth. She decides to leave the house immediately and to impose on herself a ‘voluntary exile’ (228), in contrast to Sidney who is ordered out of her own house. In doing so, Betsy exercises the right of the ‘injured wife’ (234). She goes to her brother’s house where she is warmly accepted and they consult a lawyer together.

The comparison between Sidney’s and Betsy’s reactions is fruitful, not only because they are markedly different, but more importantly because they are different within the operation of the same social and moral codes. Haywood’s novel is concerned with issues such as a husband’s adultery, a woman’s struggle within an unhappy marriage, marital separation and the law, and the workings of the double standard. It deals with these issues by representing a heroine who is not far removed from the principles of the sentimental novel. Indeed, *Betsy Thoughtless* belongs to the time when Haywood had already turned her skill from what is termed amatory fiction, to writing for moral and advisory purposes. In addition, and more importantly for the present analysis, *Betsy Thoughtless* is a work that especially captures this change in purpose. In the words of Bill Overton, ‘what makes *Betsy Thoughtless* especially significant is the extent to which it represents a reshaping of Haywood’s previous fiction along lines drawn by Richardson’s *Pamela’.*

The argument, of course, goes beyond this statement to recognise, within the novel, the co-existence of both the old mentality of Haywood’s writing and the new codes of manners popularised by such writers as Richardson for example. One of the most important observations for the purposes of this analysis that Overton makes is that: ‘when the narrator refers to female sexual transgressors, in phrase after phrase she links a word of condemnation with one of sympathy’. This is very interesting for noting a dyadic approach to sexual illicitness, especially in the light of Sidney’s approach to male adultery as being singularly in terms of sympathy (for reasons that do not only have to do with social codes as my analysis will show).

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239 Eliza Haywood, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, 4 vols (London: Printed by T. Gardner, 1751), IV.225. All subsequent references are to this edition and to this volume (volume 4 of 4) and are given in parentheses.
Thus, when Betsy decides to leave the house she does not do so lightly. Before she leaves she carefully examines the situation and resolves that she has fulfilled her duties as a wife, while her husband did not honour his. She finds that her action does not break the laws of propriety:

...Neither divine, nor human Laws,’ said she, nor any of those Obligations by which I have hitherto looked upon myself as bound, can now compel me any longer to endure the cold Neglects, the Insults, the Tyranny of this most ungrateful–most perfidious Man.–I have discharged the Duties of my Station; I have fully proved I know how to be a good Wife, if he had known how to be even a tolerable Husband. (226)

Betsy’s thoughts, very significantly, also bear the seal of approval of Lady Loveit, a woman of scrupulous ethics:

Lady Loveit replied, that though she was extremely sorry for the Occasion, yet she thought if she [Betsy] had acted otherwise, it would have been an Injustice not only to herself, but to all Wives in general, by setting an Example of submitting to Things required of them neither by Law nor Nature. (237)

The novel condones Betsy’s reaction as rightful and also confirms the heroine as virtuous, by voicing through her own doubts the very objections that might be raised against her behaviour which articulate the double standards of the period:

...the Violence of that Passion, which had made her resolve to leave Mr. Munden being a little Evaporated, the Vows she had made to him in the Altar were continually in her Thoughts;–she could not quite assure herself, that a Breach of that solemn Covenant was to be justified by any provocations; nor whether the worst Usage on the Part of the Husband could authorize Resentment in that of a Wife. (248, my emphasis)

However, the development of the story ensures that Betsy will not be judged by the premises of this double standard. Her husband is taken seriously ill and in his affliction sincerely repents his behaviour and asks for Betsy’s forgiveness. Betsy forgives him, cares for him, and honours him as a widow for a decent amount of time after his death. Finally, having proven her virtue, she is rewarded by marrying Trueworth.

Certainly one can argue, and critics have, against the idea of Betsy’s reaction representing an act of resistance or challenging the double standard that treats a
husband’s adultery lightly and takes its forgiveness or dismissal as granted. Christopher Flint, in *Family Fictions*, remarks:

These reflections [i.e. Betsy’s second thoughts] occur to her after Munden has already killed her pet squirrel, accused her unjustly of mismanaging the household finances, attempted to extort her pin money, tacitly supported Lord ****’s attempted rape, and committed adultery with a woman living in their own home. Such accumulated provocations are a sign, perhaps, of the accumulated circumstances needed to justify a woman’s bid for separation in eighteenth-century jurisprudence, even though the legal rights for it existed.²⁴²

However, it is different to judge Betsy’s story in the context of the representation of male adultery in fiction, and according to the relevant legal rights of the injured woman, from judging it in comparison to the example that Sidney sets by her (non-) reaction. Betsy shows resentment, admittedly with limitations, but certainly in a way that Sidney does not. The novel emphasizes the singularity of her emotional stance by providing a counter-argument through Sir George’s words. When he is informed about the separation, Sir George is away and does not hasten to intervene. ‘He does not know (at this distance) how to advise’, writes Sidney, ‘but that, as I am of so patient and forbearing a spirit, he thinks my wrongs may sleep till he comes to town’ (159). The point made here is a significant one; no drastic action is taken to amend the wrongs suffered by distressed virtue. Sidney’s forbearance or her failure to express resentment makes her doubly vulnerable, as it exposes her, as Watts notes, to further offences. Sir George also shows irritation at her for hoping for reconciliation, calling her ‘mean-spirited’ and ‘tame’ (161). His attitude is transparently demeaning and dismissive and brings to the fore Murphy’s point that ties resentment to self-respect. Her own forbearance invites others to suppress their fellow resentment, in the sense used by Butler, and their empathy. His exasperation comes close to the way Adam Smith describes a moral observer’s reaction to a similar lack of resentment and passivity:

Those passions [hatred and resentment], however, are regarded as necessary parts of the character of human nature. A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still, and submits to insults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them. We cannot enter into his indifference and insensibility; we call his behaviour mean-

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spiritedness, and are as really provoked by it as by the insolence of his adversary. Even the mob are enraged to see any man submit patiently to affronts and ill-usage. They desire to see this insolence resented, and resented by the person who suffers from it.243

The same feeling of discontent is shared also by the reader-observer, who finds Sidney’s behaviour insulting to her dignity and by extension that of fellow dignity. Both on the textual level and the hermeneutic level there is a craving for action, which can be satisfied only by the person who has been injured. What is more, this is an attitude not at odds with eighteenth-century moral standards, as passages in Smith and other philosophers suggest; the same standards that Sidney subscribes to. However, she will not resent the injuries, either directly or indirectly. There is a point where her brother intends to take action against Arnold, but Sidney begs him, in an intense scene, to forgo his intention. Despite the dramatic tension, her brother is actually unable to redress her wrongs because Sidney’s rigid delicacy would not allow any discussion of such improper matters as adultery or a possible reference to her past with Faulkland. As Faulkland explains, ‘he [Sir George] feels the wounds that her reputation has received’, but he cannot, ‘possibly redress the mischief, as his sister’s injuries spring from a cause which her delicacy will not permit to be scrutinized’ (210). Sidney’s resentment is always hindered by her delicacy.

Faulkland is actually the one to take action and redress, in a somewhat extravagant manner, Sidney’s wrongs. He sees it as his purpose to make Arnold return to Sidney and to re-establish her domestic peace. He abducts Mrs Gerrarde, in a plan of inverted knight-errantry, takes her away and finally marries her off to his servant, after he convinces her to write a letter to Arnold vindicating Sidney’s innocence and revealing her own treachery. Sidney is relieved by the prospect of having her domestic life restored to her; so is her mother. Sir George, though, feels differently. He resents Arnold and believes that, by forgiving him, Sidney and Lady Bidulph forgive not human frailties, as Faulkland’s fault, but ‘enormities’ (295).

243 Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 43, emphasis added. This section is entitled ‘Of Unsocial Passions’.
But, strictly speaking, Sidney does not forgive Arnold. The premises of the definition of forgiveness are not met in this case. Because as ‘we may forgive only what is initially proper to resent’, in the same way, we cannot forgive what was initially not resented. Resentment and forgiveness are directed towards ‘responsible wrongdoing’. As Murphy observes there is nothing to resent and forgive if the person ‘has done nothing wrong or was not responsible for what he did’. Mr Arnold is, in fact, guilty of responsible wrongdoing, but Sidney absolves him of it by attributing his behaviour to deception by another. She repeatedly refers to the artfulness of Mrs Gerrarde, her wickedness and the way in which she defies traditional femininity. Indeed references to Mrs Gerrarde within the novel, not only made by Sidney, continuously assert her to be an extreme figure. She is likened to a ‘fury’ (213), ‘cannot be considered a female’ (213), and is often characterised as ‘vile’ and ‘designing’. In doing so Sidney, and the narration, construes her as having extraordinary, almost supernatural and magical abilities, capable of effecting a transformation in Arnold’s essentially good nature who then acts out of character as if under a spell. Consequently, Arnold is perceived not as an offender who deserves to be resented, but as a victim who deserves pity: ‘I was sure Mr Arnold had been seduced by the wiles of a wicked woman, for that he was by nature a good man, and [...] he had more of my pity than my resentment’ (152). When Arnold returns to her, then, there is no need for the restoring capacity of forgiveness in order for the ruptured relationship to be resumed and mended: the spell is dissolved and Sidney has her husband back. For this reason we do not have a scene of forgiveness like the one in Betsy Thoughtless, where the repentant Mr Munden expressly asks to be forgiven:

This is very kind’, said he, and stretched out one of his Hands towards her, which she took between her’s with a great deal of Tenderness, ‘I have been much to blame’, resumed he, ‘I have greatly wronged you, but forgive me, — if I live, I will endeavour to deserve it. (276)

In this scene the premises put forward by Murphy’s analysis are met: the offender admits his fault; shows repentance; undergoes a ritual of ‘humiliation’ in his apology; asks for forgiveness from the one person who is capable of granting it, the primary victim of injury; and also promises to reform in order to be worthy of the forgiveness

244 Murphy, ‘Forgiveness and Resentment’, p. 20.
granted to him. On the contrary, Arnold expresses remorse to people at third-level involvement such as their friends Lord and Lady V___ (246) or Sidney’s mother, but never asks for her own forgiveness and he never undergoes a ritual of ‘humiliation (which Sidney ‘dreads’, 254). What we are given instead of a ritual of humiliation and a scene of forgiveness is a scene of tears: ‘there was no language but tears, which we both shed plentifully. Mr Arnold sobbed as I pressed him to my bosom. My dearest Sidney, said he, can it be! Is it possible that you love me still? If Lady V___ delivered my message to you, my dear Mr Arnold, sure you would not speak thus to me’ (255). This is not primarily a scene of forgiveness but a scene of relief, relief that Mrs Gerrarde’s destructive power over them has been nullified. Fittingly, this invalidation of her power is due to Faulkland’s ‘knight-errantry’, that is, a type of action belonging to the mythical and chivalric world of romance.

In its turn, this representation of forgiveness and non-resentment raises questions about Sidney’s virtue and sensibility. The religious argument is certainly present in the novel and is expressed by both Sidney and Lady Bidulph: by Sidney in the precept ‘God give everyone their reward’ (164), and by her attitude of forgetting and forgiving in the case of his brother’s resentment towards her (376). Lady Bidulph also expresses a religious argument when she cautions that Faulkland does not have the right to punish Mrs Gerrarde. The religious piety of both women informs their attitudes, and they express the notion that people who are necessarily subject to frailties are not in a position to resent frailties in others, but that they bear an obligation to forgive injuries. Yet, for all her strict notions of virtue, Lady Bidulph does feel and express resentment, and because of her notions of virtue does not extend forgiveness equally to all. For example, the forgiveness of Arnold is a duty, in line with the dictates of virtue because of his being Sidney’s husband, but forgiveness is not extended to Faulkland (Sidney herself also feels justified in forgiving a ‘repentant husband’. And she adds the following in the form of a precept: ‘what duty obliges us to pass by in a husband, it is hardly moral not to discountenance in another man’ (257). Lady Bidulph’s attitude to forgiveness is informed by religion, but also by her strict notions of virtue and adherence to codes of female conduct. It is also influenced by her deep-seated negative emotions over her past experience. Sir George’s attitude, on the other hand, derives
from different codes of behaviour, both sexual and social, as afforded by his worldly experience and gender. Sir George, who as the editor informs us, has good qualities but is ‘void of delicacy’ (11), allows full expression of his resentments and actually withholds his forgiveness. He refuses to forgive Arnold and becomes estranged from his sister’s family after the reconciliation; he also retains his resentment towards Sidney, when later as a widow she refuses Faulkland’s attempt at a second proposal.

Sidney represents a different extreme to them both. The way she fails to express resentment for her injuries is not included in Murphy’s analysis of the concepts of resentment and forgiveness, and neither is it part of Butler’s analysis, except as a note:

Every one sees that these Observations do not relate to those, who have habitually suppressed the Course of their Passions and Affections, out of Regard either to Interest or Virtue; or who, from Habits of Vice and Folly, have changed their Nature. (77)

Sidney, then, abides by and represents a concept of virtue par excellence, a strict, literal definition that successfully excludes negative emotion. Her emotional world cannot be part of Butler’s discussion of the emotions of anger and resentment, nor indeed of any discussion that has as its subject the passions in the ways that they affect and concern ordinary people. Having, paradigmatically, achieved the submission of her negative emotions to virtue, she now belongs to a different emotional category, which significantly, includes only extremes, even to the extent of a complete change of nature. Sidney embodies a version of the moral ideal that is difficult to identify with, on account of both its excellence and, more importantly, its disengagement. As Adam Smith notes, this kind of passivity makes it difficult to ‘enter into’ the situation. Imaginative identification by the reader is hindered precisely because resentment is suppressed. This is an ideal, then, which is neither attractive nor desirable, because essentially it is unsuccessful: Sidney’s forbearance, as will be discussed below, does not counter injury but multiplies it. This pattern is also discernible in the Conclusion to the Memoirs where resentment and forgiveness are also of great significance.

In that text, the resentment is felt by young Faulkland, the son of Faulkland by Miss Burchell, who, although raised as part of Sidney’s family, is painfully reminded of his

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245 See footnote number 243 of this thesis for the full quotation by Adam Smith.
lack of social status and property. From this deep sense of inferiority stems his resentment, which Audley, the criminal mind of the story, manipulates in order to make him an accessory to his plan to seduce Sidney’s daughters. It is interesting to note that an important part of the Audleys’s plan is effected by Miss Audley’s attempt to ‘corrupt’ Dolly’s mind. She achieves this by use of rhetoric, convincing her that choosing without her mother’s consent, in making secret vows to Faulkland, is less than rebellion or a breach of duty and assures her that she will be forgiven, saying: ‘I would trust to her tenderness to forgive a little trespass which had not amounted to a breach of her commands’ (4.86). In contrast to the Memoirs where forgiveness is rigidly defined, and in a sense wrongly – by Lady Bidulph’s withholding it towards Faulkland but considering it a duty towards Arnold – here forgiveness is also defined wrongly, because it is treated lightly. In both scenarios, Sidney’s irreproachable emotional stance proves a source of distress and injury to others, and also to the future happiness of her family. By stark contrast, other, less perfect and tellingly male, characters achieve what she does not: sensibility that results in beneficial action.

The Character of Ned Warner: Resentment and Sensibility

Ned Warner, Sidney’s cousin who has long been abroad, has a kind of *deus ex machina* role in the way he comes to relieve Sidney from financial distress, to correct the effects of Sir George’s resentment towards her, and to instigate the reconnection of the family. He is an interesting character because he exhibits the qualities of virtue and sensibility, but, unlike Sidney and her idealised notions of these attributes, Ned Warner is essentially good-natured yet refreshingly imperfect, and presents a model of behaviour that is attainable. His character presents a mixture of sense, sensibility, and gratification.

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246 Sir George, is especially harsh on him and continually reminds Orlando of his ‘lesser’ position. To him, Orlando, despite being his good friend’s son, is ‘a little insignificant wretch, without family, fortune, or even name!’ (5.25). Young Orlando is often at the receiving end of insolent and demeaning behaviour: ‘Sit down, Mr Falkland, said Sir George, in an imperative tone, which implied, Young man, don’t keep the company standing. It was rather coarse in Sir George, it lessened Falkland, and made him appear as if he were not worth the attention of any one present. He seemed to feel it in this light, for he coloured extremely; however, as he is not a stranger to good breeding he quickly took his place’ (4. 218) . All references are from Frances Sheridan, *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, 2 vols (London: Printed for J. Dodsley, 1767).
of negative emotion. To begin with, he has all the qualities of a commercial man, a man of action, and exhibits traditionally masculine characteristics. He describes himself as ‘a man bred to business, [who] write[s] a good hand, and understand[s] accounts’ (361). He has great success in trade (‘all over the world where there was commerce, he put in for his share’ 379) and we are told that he had singled himself out for being ‘useful’ to his master. He made a marriage of convenience that helped advance his financial status and a marriage out of love. Widowed now, he has both the financial ability, and the desire, to help his remaining relatives. He is ‘obliging’ and ‘polite’, a man of feeling enough to be a benefactor, but also a man of sense enough to be a benefactor to those who really deserve it. To establish who is worthy of his help, he devises a ‘scheme’. He pays a visit to Sir George, appearing as a distant relative in need. Sir George is at first civil to him but when Ned talks of hardship he turns him out of his house. Sidney, as expected, reacts very differently, and although she admits her great financial distress she is willing to share what little she has with him. When she makes a move to give him a few of her shillings, Ned’s reaction is quite emotionally charged:

He suffered me to drop the shillings into his unclosed hand. He fixed his eyes eagerly in my face, but instead of replying to what I said, he only cried out, Good God! Good God! and undoing two or three buttons at his breast, he sobbed as if his bosom was bursting. (362)

Such a capacity to be affected by feeling, as Ned shows here, unquestionably marks him out as a person of sensibility. In this scene, Ned Warner provides the readers with a recognisably pathetic scene in ways that Sidney does not. Sidney’s sensibility is mainly manifested in her capacity for minute discernment, as happens, for example, when she makes particular observations about Miss Burchell’s facial expressions to judge her character by them, finds her to be a woman of doubtful virtue (154, see also 324). Sidney also makes remarks on the joy of benevolent actions and later becomes a benefactor herself, but in her representation we are exposed more to the principles behind such actions than to the emotions that emanate from adherence to these principles. For example, when Sidney expresses the joy of being able to help those in need she rationalises her indulgence of this emotion and finds herself justified in admitting it because it derives from commendable motives. Ned Warner’s reaction is
arguably the only one where sensibility is exhibited in the body and through emotion; emotion that is neither debilitating, as with Faulkland, nor suppressed. Indeed Warner’s action of ‘unbuttoning’ indicates that he has no other option than to react emotionally and physically, a sign of intensity, sincerity and ultimately sensibility.

After Warner establishes that Sidney is indeed worthy of his help, Ned Warner sets out to amend her situation. However, he does not act only from benevolent motives. His intention is to make Sidney financially comfortable, not only for her own sake, but also as a way of satisfying his desire for revenge on her brother. When Sidney is hesitant to change her simple way of life for a more extravagant one, he insists:

I will mortify your paltry brother and his wife. You shall have as handsome a house as his, and better furnished too, or I’ll know why. [...] You shall blaze for a while at least; when I have had my revenge, you may live as you please afterwards. (366)

Because of this attitude, the character of Ned Warner provides the reader both with a sense of well-deserved reward for Sidney’s patient suffering – one that is in keeping with the ethic of religious providence and of definitions of virtue – and also with a deep-seated sense of satisfaction that is derived from a kind of pay-back. The success of this character stems from the fact that he balances, and compensates for, the novel’s idealised and too rigid representation of virtue, in affording an indulgence of negative or reprehensible emotions without negating the concept of good-nature. Ned Warner, as the excerpt below shows, is unashamedly satisfied and pleased with the success of his plans to be revenged on the insolence he was met with at Sir George’s house (and also on Sir George’s abandonment of Sidney when in need):

What a poor creature is Lady Sarah! Mr Warner called upon me before her woman went away. I told him the whole passage. Oh! How he chuckled, and rejoiced, shrugging his shoulders, and rubbing his hands! He wanted to see the servant, but I was afraid he would be too strong in his insults, and turned him from the point. (372)

His, less than virtuous, contentment in Lady Sarah’s mortification is expressed through his sensibility; in the body. This very flawed, but also very human and mundane expression of joy, makes Warner a welcome break from Sidney’s moral sanctity. Most importantly, the reader is allowed this short relief from Sidney’s relentless suffering and
resignation in a way that provides satisfaction but preserves virtue. Ned Warner is an ‘honest’ man and a man who is ‘at core as harmless as a child even though a little resenting’ (367) – or actually because he is, at times, a little resenting:

I related every thing that passed between Lady Sarah and me; he enjoyed her confusion as I described it, with a triumphant satisfaction, which nothing but a very strong resentment could have excited in so good-natured a man, as he really seems to be. (378)

Furthermore, and more significantly, Warner’s ties to virtue are ensured because he makes use of the transparent criteria of sensibility in order to establish worth on the part of Sidney and injury on the part of Sir George and his wife. When Warner uses his ‘scheme’ in order to test his relatives, he not only displays sensibility but also bases his judgment of their success or failure on sensibility. That is, he puts aside his worldly knowledge and his judgment as a man of trade and action and he trusts his feeling. Another character who functions in this way is the young physician, Mr Main, in one of the inset narratives (270-5). Mr Main attends, in great emotional turmoil, the setting up of an operation on his loved one who has sustained a breast injury. But before the procedure takes place, Main stops the ‘unfeeling operator’, that is, the doctor who is resolute in performing the operation, and he suggests an alternative, non-invasive and safer treatment. The tension between the two physicians and their contrasting behaviour is allowed its full force in the subsequent duel. Candace Ward has read this passage as paradigmatic in conveying the image of the ‘sensible practitioner’, that is, the medical professional who instead of status, wisdom or authority, establishes his medical authority on sensibility.\(^{247}\) In both cases, the expressions of resentment not condemned but actually prove beneficial. Both represent a different kind of expression of resentment, that is neither like the repressed resentment of Lady Bidulph, nor like the resentment of Sir George, who is ‘void of delicacy’, and carries his resentment so far that he remains ignorant of his sister’s situation of need. Unlike them, Mr Main and Ned Warner exemplify an appropriate kind of resentment an essential part of which is to determine injury through sensibility. In that sense, the moral of the novel is further

problematized, as the interpolated narratives confirm the affinities of resentment and sensibility that the main heroine lacks. More than that, both circumstances actively ascribe a positive role to the expression of resentment, in the same vein, if not in the same way, as Butler’s. Mr Main’s resentment does not so much redress, as prevents injury; injury in its primary, physical sense as harm to the body. Warner’s redresses an injustice.

Unlike these male characters, Sidney does not make full use of her sensibility in determining worth, although she is undoubtedly endowed with the capacity for sensible discernment. For example, her ability to observe minute facial and behavioural changes in Miss Burchell – a capacity that Lady Bidulph lacks – suggests to her that there is more to Miss Burchell than her image of seduced innocence. However, she disregards this doubt in deference to a duty she owes her mother: the duty of promoting Miss Burchell’s cause because it is endorsed by Lady Bidulph. Thus, when Faulkland proposes marriage to the widowed Sidney, she rejects him, and instead encourages him to a union with Miss Burchell. One of the arguments that Sidney uses to convince him is the obligation to correct a wrong. By encouraging Faulkland to do this Sidney perceives her behaviour as conducive to this repair. However, as she did not follow her own sensibility in her judgment of Miss Burchell, she inadvertently manages to safeguard her from a deserved resentment (such as the one that Sir George shows for example) and in so doing causes a wrong to Faulkland. When it turns out that Miss Burchell is an unfaithful wife to him, Sidney solely bears the blame of uniting a worthy man to a ‘female libertine’ (383). Sidney’s blame is irrevocable because Faulkland has accepted the union with Miss Burchell, indeed he has accepted Miss Burchell herself as a ‘gift’ from Sidney: ‘Enjoy your triumph if it be one, I will receive Miss Burchell as your gift and since I cannot obtain your love, I will at least compel your esteem’ (318). When Sidney, at last, consents to give her hand to Faulkland, after he has caught his wife in adultery and, as he believes, has killed her, she will do so not only on account of her feelings for him but also as a way to repair the wrongs she has made him suffer. At this point Sidney’s delicacy must take second place to the most pressing obligation of correcting a wrong act. But, as John C. Traver notes, the memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph are in fact inconclusive; it is text that evolves through the prolongation
of narrative only to expose the failure of premature happy endings and premature judgments. What seems to be an ending is ultimately subverted and reveals yet another disappointment; Faulkland’s wife is in fact only wounded and the marriage is annulled. Sidney never makes amends for the destructive consequences that stem from her inability to resent.

**Delicacy and the ‘Resenting Heart’**

When Faulkland proposes marriage to the widowed Sidney, he also makes an appeal to her delicacy. An appeal to her to understand his inability to offer to Miss Burchell a heart that is ‘estranged’. Sidney is resolved to promote Miss Burchell’s cause out of duty to her mother (316), and feels obliged to reject Faulkland because he was the cause of separation between herself and her husband. Although they were both innocent, Sidney is too susceptible to notions of delicacy and decorum, she says, to disregard this. However, this act is perplexing, even when judged by those exact standards of female delicacy and honour. Sidney is a widow and a woman who has observed every aspect of wifely duty. Having provided support for her husband, even after his adultery and through his illness, she could be united to her first and only love, as for example Betsy Thoughtless is to Truworth. Therefore, her action of rejecting Faulkland is not dictated by the codes of female conduct, but by her interpretation of these codes. Her idea of ‘honour’, which she admits others may call ‘scrupulous’ (316), dictates her behaviour. Within the novel, this idiosyncratic and rigid interpretation of concepts of honour and delicacy is frequently identified as the cause of Sidney’s great suffering. As Lady V explains to Arnold:

> [Sidney’s] misfortune was intirely owing to her great delicacy […] had she reproached you with your infidelity, as some wives would have done, tho’ it might have occasioned a temporary uneasiness to you both, yet would it have prevented her from falling a sacrifice to that most artful and wicked of her sex. (264)

Sidney’s delicacy made her suffer in silence then and now causes her to act contrary to her own personal and emotional interests. Sidney herself identifies the cause of her unhappiness in her ‘too resenting heart’ (316). Here, as the editor informs us, the term

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'resenting’ means ‘feeling’ and it derives from a much earlier meaning of the term ‘resentment’—certainly earlier than the time of publication—as ‘a full taste, a true feeling, a sensible apprehension of’. The quotation comes from Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia* of 1656, but the meaning is repeated in subsequent dictionaries of the eighteenth century until the dictionary of Samuel Johnson in 1755-6 recorded the definite change of meaning towards the negative sense of being sensible of, feeling an affront. Interestingly, even preliminary research will indicate that the phrase ‘resenting heart’ does not occur often within prose fiction. Most paradigms are found within stage plays and particularly the ones that depict women struggling to defend themselves against perpetrators of their honour, in taking revenge on them. Of course, Sheridan’s connections to drama are well established and can justify the use of the phrase which, due to its background, may connote Sidney’s peculiar sensitivity to affronts to female honour. Or, more significantly, her exaggerated perception of them: she appropriates a phrase used in cases of genuine and indeed serious affronts, in her situation which necessarily is less dramatic, as both she and Faulkland are innocent of indecorous behaviour.

In light of the above, it is hardly a coincidence that the most successful instances of sensibility in the novel are displayed by male characters. Both Mr Main as the ‘sensible practitioner’, and Ned Warner in his role as benefactor, present a productive application of the principles of sensibility whereas Sidney’s good intentions have destructive effects. This is because male characters are not bound by what Ned Warner calls ‘chimaera notions’ (373) of delicacy and decency that constrain female experience.

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250 The definition of the verb ‘resent’ in Johnson’s Dictionary is as follows: ‘1. To take well or ill. 2. To take ill; to consider as an injury or an affront. This is now the most usual sense.’ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: in Which the Words are Deduced from their Originals*, 2 vols (London: Printed by W. Strahan, 1755-6), vol. II, p. 528.

251 Examples include: ‘My Just resenting heart at last resumes its Liberty, and pays you that Contempt which your Inconstancy deserves’ from Richard Estcourt, *The Fair Example: Or, The Modish Citizens* (London: Printed for Bernard Lintot, 1706), p. 50. ‘Though my resenting Heart is fix’d, and sworn/ to take strict Vengeance for my Sister’s wrongs’, from Nicholas Brady, *The Rape. A Tragedy* (London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1730), pp. 49-50. ‘Impatient grown to hear his guilty Voice/ Her Sorrow turn’d to Rage, her Grief to Frenzy;/ Unable to contain, she snatch’d the Sword,/ And sunk it deep in her resenting Heart. / Thus I assert my Chastity, she cry’d/ Thus, Monster, I elude thy black Design’ from William Gauger Hunt, *The Fall of Tarquin. A Tragedy* (York: Printed for John White, 1713), p. 35.
Faulkland exemplifies this, when, in great distress, after he feels his second marriage proposal will fail, he appeals to Ned Warner. Specifically he addresses a particular quality of Ned Warner’s character; his enlarged mind: ‘Mr Warner, you are a generous man, you have an enlarged mind; may a stranger ask a favour of you?’ (442). And he insists, ‘you have an enlarged mind, and do not despise the unfortunate’ (442). This very word ‘enlarged’ conveys everything that is opposite to Sidney’s rigidity, inflexibility and adherence to strict notions of virtue. Ultimately, Sidney expresses a definition of virtue and sensibility that is limited exactly because it is wholly defined in terms of, what in this discourse are perceived as, ‘feminine’ qualities. Unlike Richardson’s Clarissa, who articulates a definition of womanhood and Sensibility that includes but is beyond meekness and incorporates both ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ virtues, Sidney, is wholly defined by female virtues and female authority. Clarissa shows resistance to oppression by denying her definition as wholly ‘meek’ and submissive. ‘I verily think’, she says, ‘upon a strict examination of myself that I have almost as much in me of my father’s as of my mother’s family’ (65). Sidney, on the other hand although she is introduced to us solely through her paternal lineage, as ‘daughter of Sir Robert Bidulph of Wiltshire’ (11), she has, nevertheless, only her mother’s ‘side’ in her. Throughout the narration Lady Bidulph has sole authority over Sidney’s life and character, to the extent that Sidney herself becomes far too reminiscent of her mother’s ‘literal’ and narrow mentality. As Sue Chaplin observes, if viewed according to the legal context of the time, Lady Bidulph’s authority would be limited in comparison to that of Sidney’s father, however, according to textual context her maternal authority is firmly established as the primary one.252 Indeed, in the last two volumes that conclude her story Sidney is explicitly likened to her mother. The terms that are used to describe Sidney, and her way of life, are: ‘old-fashioned’; ‘primitive’ (4.120); ‘an extreme good woman’ (4.157) and ‘bigotted to the tyranny of duty’ (4.65). Sir George compares her to their mother (4.15) and he ridicules the way she raises her daughters, saying: ‘when are these two girls to take the veil?’ (4.24). The story is that of the next generation, but Sidney is presented throughout the narration as a person of the

past in attitude and manners. She represents an outmoded way of thinking that has its basis in the way her mother raised her and which is now anachronistic.

Effectively, then, this is a novel that challenges what Doody describes as the unreasonableness of the moral ideals that they pose.253 When seen in combination with the Conclusion, Sheridan’s work reveals these notions as outmoded and deleterious. Furthermore, an approach that focuses on the emotional pattern underlying the novel with reference to negative emotions, as given here, also exposes how damaging the prevailing notions of feminine virtue were insofar as they depended on women silencing their emotions, or, rather, certain emotions. Essentially, there is nothing ‘flabby’ about Sidney’s sentimentality. This is in itself an interesting expression that serves to show the transformation of the concept. On the contrary, her delicacy and sensibility are expressed through adherence to strict rules that require fortitude and determination. These same rules determine her attitude to forgiveness and resentment. Sheridan’s work shows that the disavowal of such emotions as resentment, as part of the definition of female virtue, does not promote sensibility, but instead leads to a conception of it that is too restrained in order to be operative or beneficial. In effect, the cause of Sidney’s misfortunes is ‘a far too resenting heart’ (316) which excludes resentment.

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Up to this point, this section on fiction has revealed how the negative emotions form part of the relevant cultural codes that inform the novel of Sensibility, the significance they bear on their plot and, ultimately, how they form part of the concept of Sensibility itself. The analysis also further confirmed the convergence between negative passion and Sensibility by showing, in reading Sidney Bidulph’s story, the problematic of their exclusion. The next section will turn the focus away from the social and theoretical concepts of Sensibility to the realm of the physical and the body. The discussion will focus on how the negative passions and Sensibility are perceived within, and in their turn how they influence the predominant medical theories of the time, before showing how they are all combined in the early novels of Smollett. Smollett’s Roderick Random (1748), will be the final example from fiction that will be discussed. Its analysis will

offer a fruitful position from which to venture towards the closing remarks of this project, bringing into play a protagonist with asserted ties to negative emotion and a disputed claim to Sensibility.
Part C: Sensibility and Negative Passions in the Body
This section focuses on the body, as both the concepts explored in this project—Sensibility and the passions—have clear origins in, or connections to, the physical workings of the body. Sensibility with its roots in ‘sense’ has been discussed as an influential premise of eighteenth-century theories of sensation and perception. In addition, although sensibility as a physiological term has been in use at least since the seventeenth century, during the eighteenth century it acquired a particular meaning through the work of Albrecht Haller (1708-77), one of the most influential medical figures of the time. In Haller’s non-reductionist mechanism, sensibility is experimentally defined as the property of the nerves and is an intermediary between impressions received and the soul, believed by now to be located in the brain. After the middle of the century, with the advent of vitalist theories of the body, sensibility was discussed as evidence of the non-mechanical operations of the body, and became what Anne Vila terms ‘an all-encompassing reactive super-property’.254 As is evident, the definition of sensibility and its implications as a physical property, change according to the physiological model that prevails at each point in time. For this reason, my analysis follows the historiography of eighteenth-century science as posited by such works as Theodore Brown’s article of 1980 that traces the transition from mechanism to vitalism.255 However, as important it is to recognise transition and the changes in the physiological model that ensue as a result, an important premise of my argument is its continuity. The term continuity here suggests an awareness of the fact that a change in physiological thought may signify a breach with older traditions, but that the new theory may recast and reuse some long-established physical notions. In addition, advancement in medical knowledge does not signify an equal and analogous change in therapeutics. Popular medical treatises may continue to disseminate the traditional, tried and empirically-confirmed advice. Hence, change and continuity are two terms of significance both for the history of physiology, and also for the way the passions are perceived to affect the body.

The passions have always been recognised in physiology as factors of influence on the body. Usually, in the traditional rhetoric they were considered as agents of disease, and counsel about their regulation was widely proclaimed. However, there are variations within this prevalent account. To fully grasp the meaning and variety of advice on the passions and their effects on the body, one must firstly understand the connotations attributed to the passions in the prevailing theory of the body at each time. In this sense, the first major alteration was not the transition from mechanism to vitalism in the middle of the eighteenth century, but the breach with the theory of humours that gradually took place from the seventeenth century onwards. One of the most significant implications of this transition was the gradual abandonment of the notion of humoural, and thus liquid, balance, to a system of thought that focused on the state of the solids in the body. Accordingly, the category of ‘humours’ gave way to ‘passions’, as psychological, mental, and physiological agents of change. With the purpose to delineate the relationship between the sensible body and the negative passions, this analysis will take into consideration the place of the passions –with special notice of negative ones– in each of the major physiological theories of the time: humouralism, mechanism and vitalism, and the way each one defines the bodily property of sensibility. Following this, I will offer a study of Smollett’s novel *Roderick Random* (1748) as a metaphor on the usefulness of the negative passions, for reasons that stem from physiology theory, but also bear implications for the concept, and narrative of Sensibility.

At this point, it would also be useful to note a point of difference between the present, broader exploration of physiology in the eighteenth century – and how this informs the idea of the sensible body in anger– and the predominant account of the physiology of Sensibility. The physiology of Sensibility is to a great extent, not to say solely, a nervous physiology. The first account that turned attention to the centrality of nerves as a main component of the conception of Sensibility was G. S. Rousseau’s ‘Nerves, Spirits and Fibers: Toward the Origins of Sensibility’ which appeared in
1975. Much in the same way that Crane’s article traces the genealogy of the man of feeling in the teachings of seventeenth-century Latitudinarians, with their insistence on benevolence and moral sense, Rousseau traces the roots of Sensibility to the neurophysiology of the brain postulated in Thomas Willis’s (1621-1675) work and its implications. Rousseau’s analysis posits Willis’s work as paradigmatic, in the Kuhnian sense, and goes on to explain its influence. By locating the soul solely in the brain, the work of Willis had a serious impact on subsequent analyses, as it instigated a wealth of speculations about the nature and structure of the nerves. The solidity or hollowness of the nerve became a question of particular importance, as there was a need to establish a means of communication between the all-important brain and the rest of the body. In this way, Rousseau argues, late seventeenth and eighteenth-century physiology and pathology become progressively nerve-oriented as ‘scientists debate precisely how the nerves carry out its [the brain’s] voluntary or involuntary intentions’. More than that, Rousseau’s argument posits that a nervous physiology is a requirement for the flourishing of Sensibility. A nervous physiology underpins both the perception of feeling and the body that expresses Sensibility. Without it, he notes, George Cheyne’s definition of feeling as ‘bodies gently or violently impressing the extremities or sides of the nerves’ would not have been possible. Nerves also provide a way of accounting for the operation and manifestation of Sensibility, the assumption being that ‘the more “exquisite” and “delicate” one’s nerves are, morphologically speaking, the greater the ensuing degree of sensibility and imagination’. Hence, the nervous paradigm is used to explain both the physiological and, by implication, the pathological aspects of Sensibility. The quality of nerves accounts not only for the person who is vested with

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256 I refer to the essay republished within the volume *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* which republishes significant essays by Rousseau. See also the introduction to the volume, entitled ‘Originated Neurology: Nerves, Spirits and Fibers’, pp. 3-68.

257 In simple words, a paradigm-shifting work is one that is sufficiently novel and compelling so as to cause a break with the commonly accepted scientific theories of the time. G. S. Rousseau makes use in his analysis of the framework of thought posited by the historian of science Thomas S. Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996). The work was originally published in 1962.


sensibility but also for exclusion; certain people have a claim to ‘delicate nerves’, others do not. In addition, the basis of Sensibility in the nerves always threatens the pathological degree; an overworking and ensuing weakness of the nerves and of the body as a result of their uncommon susceptibility to sentimental stimuli. Scholarly criticism on Sensibility has further expanded on this account and its implications. Directly drawing on Rousseau’s argument, Barker-Benfield’s *The Culture of Sensibility* explores the ways in which nerve theory and its vocabulary penetrates the literature of Sensibility, the progressively gendered aspect of nervous sensibility and the representation of distemper and disease being likely to cause weakening of the delicate parts. John Mullan in his *Sentiment and Sociability* also explores the narrow boundaries between Sensibility and nervous disease, and discusses in particular hypochondria, melancholy and hysteria.

Although this argument has great merits, this idea of the predominance of nerves that informed much of the cultural criticism of eighteenth-century physiology can be reductionist. The discourse of the nerves may be a significant preoccupation of the eighteenth century, but is not the only one. Nor should it be the only explanatory tool for the physiology of Sensibility. Moreover, as this project is concerned with the points of convergence between the body in anger and the body of Sensibility, it cannot but take into account a more comprehensive view of the physiological definitions of health, disease, the passions and the property of sensibility.

**Theory of Humours**

In order to understand the implications of the physiological accounts of the early eighteenth century, it is important to understand what is different from the previous prevalent theories. That is, one must first acknowledge the different focus of humouralism as opposed to mechanistic views of the body. This major paradigmatic shift, which occurred progressively from the seventeenth century onwards, bears great implications for the physiology of emotions. The doctrine of the four humours occupies a great part of the history of medicine and physiology. In simple words, humouralism posits that there are four basic liquid substances within the body – blood, black bile, yellow bile and phlegm – the excess or deficit of each of which determines health or
disease. The origins of the doctrine of the four humours are lost in antiquity, but as Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl note in their introduction, the principles behind it are:

The search for simple primary elements or qualities, to which the complex and apparently irrational structure of both macrocosm and microcosm could be traced. The urge to find a numerical expression for this complex structure of bodily and spiritual existence. The theory of harmony, symmetry, isonomy, or whatever other name men may have chosen to express that perfect proportion in parts, in materials, or in faculties, which Greek thought down to Plotinus always regarded as essential to any value, moral, aesthetic or hygienic.\(^\text{261}\)

Combined with the impact of the Pythagorean notion of the tetrad (harmony of the number four, four earthly elements, four seasons etc.), the doctrine of the humours evolved as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humour</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Warm and Moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow bile</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Warm and Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black bile</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Cold and Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlegm</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Cold and Moist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four humours of the body were connected to the four seasons and four material qualities and their combinations. Later, the four ages of a person from childhood through to maturity and old age were also connected to each humour. The idea was that at each season or period or life one or the other humour gained ascendancy. Health was defined to be the correct equilibrium of these humours, and sickness the disturbance of it. To be ‘phlegmatic’ or ‘choleric’ meant either ‘a pathological state’ or a ‘constitutional predisposition’.\(^\text{263}\) That is, a choleric person could be either under a state of disequilibrium, suffering from superfluity of choler that required medical intervention, usually in the form of phlebotomy, or was a person with a tendency to

\(^\text{261}\) The information presented here are taken from Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, ‘The Doctrine of the Four Humours’, in *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Nelson, 1964), p. 4. As expected, there is a wealth of sources on humouralism but I find this to be a most useful introduction, especially as it attempts to account for the origins and premises of humoural theory.

\(^\text{262}\) Klibansky et al., ‘The Doctrine of the Four Humours’, p. 10.

\(^\text{263}\) Klibansky et al., p. 12.
anger due to the abundance of choler in their body. In the latter case, each instance of
anger was considered to further harm the already unbalanced state. The basic tenets of
the doctrine of the four humours were widely disseminated through a series of
mnemonic verses that presented the basic qualities of each one. This work, the popular
*Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*, was to become a standard textbook of medieval
medicine. That is, domestic medieval medicine. Its intended receptors, as Francis
Packard observes, were not the professional medical men, but lay people.  

The predominance of humouralism, and its longevity, was owed then to its accessibility and
to the fact that it answered a very concrete need:

> Men wished to know how the choleric, the sanguine or the melancholy type could
infallibly be recognised, at what times each had to be particularly careful, and in
what manner he had to combat the dangers of his particular disposition; and in its
original form Vindician’s doctrine met this need so thoroughly that it is not
surprising that it should have formed a considerable proportion of those easily
memorised rules of health that were destined to win great popularity among the
wider public.

Under this dominant humoural paradigm, it has to be observed, physiology is primarily
pathology. In the words of Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl:

> Complete health was only an ideal, approximated, but never in fact attained. It was
logical enough, if one said of someone in whose body the humours were perfectly
combined that he was “in the very best of health” (µάλιστα υγιαίνει), for it was
thereby implicitly admitted that someone in whom one or the other humour
predominated could nevertheless enjoy good health, though not in the highest
possible degree.

This search for ideal health is basically a search for the proper equilibrium of fluids.
Under this doctrine, the passions are implicated with each humour and are thus
connected to a visceral anatomy that invokes the fluids, notions such as excess

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266 Klibansky et al., p. 12.
(plethora), and functions such as excretion and retention or stagnation. In the humoural paradigm, anger is connected to choler and the choleric disposition is the result of its overabundance in the body or its ‘superfluitie’. ‘Choler’, as Robert Burton explains in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ‘is hote and dry, bitter, begotten from the hotter parts of chilus, and gathered to the gall: it helps the natural heate and sences, and serves to the expelling of excrements’.²⁶⁷ Physiologically the predominant characteristic of choler, and by consequence of anger, is heat. On this primary level the heat and intensity of anger are viewed as serving a purpose. They maintain the heat of the body and serve the function of expulsion. The misbalanced state, the overabundance of choler defines the pathological state. This is connected to excess of heat and a hydraulic disequilibrium evident in adjacent symptoms such as the spitting of blood associated with excess of anger. With the advent of mechanistic theories of the body, the passions invoke a different kind of physiology.

**Mechanism**

The theory of the humours in its various modifications held sway in the field of medical knowledge and practice for more than two thousand years. To a great extent, its popularity was owed to the fact that it was endorsed by no less of a medical authority than Galen, whose writings became the source of knowledge for this theory.²⁶⁸ In addition to the gravitas of Galen’s influence, even a cursory examination of humoural theory, as given here, can reveal its appeal on many levels. Humouralism bears great potential for metaphor, sustains a connection between the body-microcosm and the macrocosm and offers very concrete advice for therapy. As Roy Porter very astutely observes:

> The appeal of the humoralism which dominated classical medicine and formed its heritage lay in its comprehensive explanatory scheme, which drew upon bold archetypal contrasts (hot/cold, wet/dry, etc.) and embraced the natural and the


human, the physical and the mental, the healthy and the pathological. While reassuringly intelligible to the layman, it was a supple tool in the hands of the watchful bedside physician and open to further theoretical elaboration.\(^{269}\)

However, by the seventeenth century major changes occurred in the physiological model. The first major factor in this change of thought was the rise in the Renaissance of Italian medical schools that practiced dissection.\(^{270}\) After centuries of being viewed as sacrilegious to the deceased, the practice of dissection now permitted a direct observation of the inner body. Galenic physiology continued to persist, but anatomical observations progressively shifted the focus to the solid parts of the body. In the words of Roy Porter, ‘traditional humoral theories had viewed health and disease in terms of systemic fluid balance. This model was gradually supplanted by a new concern with local anatomical structures and mechanisms – the “solids”’.\(^{271}\) Although Galenic physiology still persisted, and continued to do so usually in its popularised form, by the seventeenth century both physiological and natural philosophy theories combined to discredit the Galenic view of the functioning of the body. Major turning points in the transition were the writings that reformed the prevalent view of the functioning of vital organs of the body. One such point was the discovery of the circulation of the blood by William Harvey in 1603 which directly invalidated the Galenic concept of the creation of the blood in the liver from chyle. The heart is a muscle functioning with diastolic and systolic contractions which sets the bloodmoving in a constant circular manner around the body. Subsequently Thomas Willis’s writings changed the perception of the

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\(^{270}\) Ancient medicine is often ‘accused of’ being, and largely is, speculative. The main hindrance in the advancement of anatomical knowledge was caused by the perception of dissection as defilement of the body and in contrast to Christian principles. Dissection was performed sparingly in antiquity, the main source of knowledge was by symptoms, excretions of the body and wounds. During the Renaissance with the rise of the medical schools of the Italian universities, the demand for dissection was put forward. Before an official decision, bodies for anatomical study were obtained through grave robbing, but in 1556 the theological faculty of the University of Salamanca ruled in favour of dissection in view of its beneficial purpose. The bodies of executed criminals served the needs of the medical schools after this decision. For more information, see Esmond R. Long, *A History of Pathology* (New York: Dover, 1965).

functioning of the brain and opened up the field of nerve theory and nervous disease that is so central to Rousseau’s and Porter’s account of eighteenth-century medicine.

This new shift in focus led also to the abandonment of the writings of established medical figures and the turn to newly articulated theories and their representatives. One of the most resounding examples of this is the fact that this milestone of medical knowledge, Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* with its focus on humours, was out of print for practically the entire eighteenth century. By the early eighteenth century the leading figure in the medical field of mechanism was Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738), anatomist at Leiden who viewed the body, in the words of Porter, as ‘an integrated, balanced whole in which pressures and liquid flows were equalized and everything found its own level’. For Boerhaave the body is governed by mechanical principles and there is an equal emphasis on fluids as well as solid parts, their vessels. In his scheme, health is primarily determined by free, regular and brisk movement, as he explains in his *Institutions in Physic* (1715):

The Nature of Health, which does not simply consist in the circular Motion of the Blood, which is also in Sickness; but it is found in a certain Order and Regularity of this Motion, in a moderate and free progression of the Blood, assisted by the pulsation of the heart and the very tone of the fibres, or from the equality of the motion of the solids and fluids.

Conversely, disease is the constriction of such free and regular movement:

For as the very being of health consists in a moderate, free and equal motion of the blood, or in the equality of pulse and tone of the just temperament and quantity of fluids; so the seat of every disease, and the immediate cause thereof, is placed in the motion, as it is *immoderate, obstructed or unequal*, by reason of the lost distinction of the pulse and tone of the solids, as also the intemperament and disproportion of the fluids.

According to Theodore Brown, Boerhaave’s influence, among other factors, spurred on a second wave of mechanism; one that abandoned strict adherence to Newtonian

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272 Editions of Burton’s Anatomy appeared in 1617, 1624, 1626, 1628, 1632, 1638, 1646, 1651, 1652, 1660, 1665, 1666, 1672, 1674, 1676 and 1798.
theoretical principles and turned to experimental philosophy. This turn-around was announced by such medical figures as Edward Strother (1675-1737), Richard Mead (1673-1754), Nicholas Robinson (1697-1775) and also George Cheyne (1671/2-1743) who presented a decisively different stance in his *Essay of Health* (1724) to his older *New Theory of Fevers* (1701). These medical men maintained that health consisted of both the regular motion of fluids and also the proper state of solids. Or, as Brown puts it, ‘the state of the fibres is thought to complement the condition of the fluids as a guide to medical theory and practice’. Thus a new emphasis was placed on nerves and fibres, and consequentially on notions of texture, elasticity and laxity. Accordingly, the pathology of the period dominated by the mechanistic model –and also the pathology of sensibility that Barker-Benfield posits - defines impaired states in dichotomies of fibre quality. An epitome of this notion is found in Nicholas Robinson’s *A New System of the Spleen, Vapours, and Hypochondriack Melancholy*, where he attributes the two kinds of mental disorder as:

Under the melancholy Madness, we perceive the deepest Fear, Sadness, and Despair; with Symptoms, with all their Concomitants, most assuredly arise from a Want of Spirits, from a Laxity of the Fibres that compose the Brain and Nerves, and from a thick, heavy blood, unfit for Secretion, the Effect of that Laxity; for the Reason why the Mind is so deeply distress’d with dark, gloomy, melancholy ideas [...] That boisterous, raging Madness or Lunacy, that discovers itself in the fierce Looks, furious Gestures, and daring Actions of some Persons, is the Effect of a system of Fibres greatly elastic, whereby all the ideas of Objects are struck on the seat of the common Sensorium, with a stronger Impulse. Hence arise ideas in the Mind, that are bold, daring, and rash; Actions, in the Body that are violently strong, and above the ordinary power of the constitutions to perform. (293)

As is evident from Robinson’s double construct, mechanical accounts of the body often explain physiological phenomena by referring to the notions of structure and function. Here, for instance, particular structures –‘greatly elastic’, ‘laxity of fibres’- denote certain kinds of function which in this case are disordered. Hence, whereas mechanism invokes a very different perception of the physiological processes from

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humoural theory, it still maintains the ability to answer the main popular questions and concerns about the body. Although attention had shifted from a visceral animal economy, still the main questions of character and disposition could be answered in ways that were relatable. Boerhaave, for instance, could account mechanically for the notion of ‘temperament’ in a way that dismissed the discredited theory of humoural characterology but also implied continuity:

A Constitution or Temperament of body, physically considered, is nothing else but a particular or distinct motion in different persons; for when the blood is swiftly and violently moved, and is too fluid: this, according to the Ancients, was called a Choleric constitution; if less fluid and the motion slower, melancholic.278

The emphasis of mechanical accounts on the inner, intricate and law-governed functioning of the body also bears implications for the way the physiological influence of the passions is perceived. In humoural theory, the struggle to maintain or restore systemic balance creates the need for a regimen of medical care that involves advice on nutrition and life choices according to disposition. Therapy was effected through practices that dealt with either the excess or the deficiency of humours, and usually involved phlebotomy or cupping. Medical decisions that were based on a wealth of intricate considerations revolving around different qualities interacted with the humours in the body. The advent of anatomy favoured a more ‘localized’ approach to the physiological processes. In addition, the topic of the passions was rather problematic with regard to the core beliefs of mechanism, as it suggested a definite connection between the mental and material substances with the body. Usually mechanists attributed the influence of the passions to the connection of the soul to the body. When it came to the description of the physiological influence of the passions, these tended to be detailed enumerations of very specific effects. The passion of anger generated its own list.

The Ill-Effects of Anger

In 1729, Edward Strother (1675-1737) described the effects of anger on the body in his *Companion for Health* as such: ‘it shakes our fibres furiously, and they toss the blood

round more rapidly than usual, so that still the watery parts exhale and leave the mass hot and gross'. In 1746 writing on the causes of the most common diseases, the practitioner William Forster (d.1792), used the same description word for word and further on he added that anger:

puts all in motion and fire, it gives us no respite, we always feel the ill effects of it, for an irregular and impetuous motion of the blood endangers a breach of the vessels; and as Anger has its scene in the brain, it acts upon it and all the adjacent parts, and contributes to break of the vessels there, as several examples have testified in Apoplexies, from blood split on the brain, which arose from a violent passion. (65)

Generally, in physiological writings of the time, anger is connected to a ‘higher’, ‘swifter’ or ‘stronger’ pulse, the brisk motion of the blood, the quickening of circulation, and contraction of the solid parts of the body. In short, although before the focus of physiological representations of anger was on ‘heat’, it now changed to the principles of motion and tension. In comparison to the humoural paradigm, the mechanical representation of emotion bears an extended potential for the extreme: delirium and stupor. The ‘shaken fibres’, the ‘tossing’ of the blood, the unusual movement always threatens an intensity that will prove too much for the human frame to bear. Consequently, the danger that Forster warns about, with regard to anger, is the ‘breach of vessels’ to which anger can be a ‘shock’ (78). For this reason, anger and ‘the passions of anger’ find their pathological manifestation in apoplexy (which becomes one of the most commonly cited diseases in works of fiction), phrensy, fever and different other inflammatory and convulsive disorders. The end result of episodes of this kind of disorder is the stupor and insensibility that follows them due to the exhaustion of the nerves. Since Cheyne’s *Essay of Health* (1724), an extreme but well recognised consequence of violent passions is an ensuing ‘catalepsy’, ‘fainting’ and

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279 Edward Strother, *The Family Companion for Health: Or, the Housekeeper’s Physician* (London: for John and James Rivington, 1750), p. 292. This is a reissue of the 1729 London edition which was anonymous.
even death. Cheyne divided the passions, with regard to health, into acute and chronic. The physiological effects of acute passions, such as anger, are described as such: they ‘effect a brisk circulation, crisp up and constrict the solids for some short time, stimulate and spur the nervous fibres, and the coats of the animal tubes, and thereby give a celerity and brisker motion to their included fluids for the same time’. This vigorous motion, though, if allowed to an extreme, can easily lead to stasis due to the exertion of the nervous system. ‘The sudden gusts of these passions’, writes Cheyne, ‘being thus accounted for, when they become extreme, they drive about the blood with such a hurricane, that nature is overset, like a mill by a flood: so that what drove it only quicker round before, now entirely stops it, and renders the countenance ghastly and pale’ (155).

Based on the above, the physiological representation of anger can be unsettling for the culture that embraces sensibility. Constantly threatening the ‘distension of nerves’ and ‘the breach of vessels’, anger is presented as directly deleterious to the very organs of sensation on which sensibility depends. From a physiological perspective, then, anger was still as harmful to the human oeconomy as the superfluity of choler was under the humoural paradigm. But as this ‘harm’ is now explained through the new medical vocabulary, anger becomes antecedent to, or greatly contributing to, popular diseases and disorders of the time. Thus, Cynthia’s father in *David Simple* is firstly shown in a rage disinheriting his disobedient daughter and soon after dying of an apoplexy (87). However, despite its very distinct connections to intensity and disorder, the physiology of anger was not solely prone to pathology. Humoural physiology, as Elena Carrera has shown in a recent publication, did recognise benefits in the experience of anger. The mechanistic physiology of the eighteenth century continued to adhere to this idea albeit modifying its basic principles.

### The Curative Effects of Anger

In the search for the ideal balance of health, the objective in humoural theory was very often to apply a cure that would counteract the effects of the superfluous humour. In this

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sense, the qualities associated with anger could have a potentially useful function. Recently, in a piece entitled ‘The Uses of Anger in Medieval and Early-Modern Medicine’, Elena Carrera offered a more nuanced view of the physiology of anger, arguing just that. By reading Galenic medical treatises, surgical handbooks, and popular regimens of health circulating between 1250 and 1700, she uncovered references to the beneficial use of this emotion in restoring health. These sources continue to recognise the deleterious effects of anger that the ensuing excess of heat produces in the body:

However, they also suggest that an outburst of anger might be beneficial for people who are cold by temperament or as the result of poisoning or sickness. To these uses of anger William Bullein (d. 1576) adds that it can be a remedy for idle people who have little natural heat in their body, and that it can also help to counteract the effects of cold weather.  

In short, by following the long-established Galenic principle of curing by contraries, these sources reveal the instrumental use of anger in counterbalancing the deficits of cold and phlegmatic constitutions, the loss of natural heat by accident or disease and even its benefits for people ‘suffering from weak nerves’. Carrera concludes her paper by referring to the persistence of this belief in the late eighteenth century and specifically mentions William Corp (d. 1790) who still acknowledges the benefits of anger in paralysis or some kinds of fever.

Indeed, various sources indicate that the eighteenth century still upheld the notion of curing by contraries. However, I want to suggest that this was much more than a remnant of a traditional doctrine. Eighteenth-century physiology had its own specific reasons for abiding by this belief in the curative aspect of anger. Much more than a ‘nervous physiology’, the eighteenth-century perception of the workings of the body is informed by various doctrines, both breaking with tradition and allowing continuity. Mechanistic views of the body may have turned attention to the nerves and fibres but one of the most important concepts within this theory is that of ‘motion’, as is evident in Boerhaave’s conceptions of health and disease. When the explanatory paradigm of health and disease changes to a certain kind of motion, in consequence, the effects of

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the passions on the body are conceived in terms of motion as well. As Stanley Jackson shows, in an article on the instrumental use of the passions in psychological healing, the principle of the opposites remains the same ‘whether the language is that of too warm and too cool passions, or excess of circulatory motion and deficit of circulatory motion’. In effect, when the humoural paradigm posits and contrasts heat and coldness as the primary elements of certain passions, the mechanistic paradigm posits and contrasts a certain kind of motion. A good illustration of this is the way Cheyne describes the effects of acute and chronic passions. In his description of the effects of the acute passions on the body, Cheyne used these descriptive keywords with regard to the circulatory motion they instigate: ‘brisk’, ‘lively’, ‘stimulate’, ‘spur’ and ‘celerity’. Conversely, the chronic passions ‘wear out’ and ‘waste’ the body ‘gradually’ and cause some nerves to be overworked while others remain ‘resty’ and ‘unactive’ (158). By implication, the ‘slow and continued’ passions ‘relax, unbend and dissolve’ the nervous fibres, whereas ‘sudden and violent’ ones ‘screw up, stretch and bend them’.

When the notion of beneficial anger is articulated within eighteenth-century works of physiology, it is reframed to fit this new focus on motion. In works which refer to the passions as agents of change in the body, interspersed among comments on convulsive disorders, frenzy, inflammations and fevers are comments that reveal a positive aspect of anger in promoting and maintaining a ‘brisker motion’ of the blood and invigorating the nerves. In 1744, Bernard Lynch (d. 1745) in A Guide to Health dedicated a part in the passions and affections of the mind from the viewpoint, as he says, not of the natural philosopher but of the physician. Echoing Cheyne at many points, he explains the harmful influence of the violent passions of the mind that bring about ‘great disorders’ by ‘universally stimulating, irritating, and twitching the nerves and fibres, in such a manner as disturbs their natural contractions’. A little further on, though, he allows for a positive effect of anger, which, ‘if moderate, it may be useful sometimes, in order to stir up a brisk circulation of the languid fluids in a cold and phlegmatick constitution (316). Some years earlier, William Forster, after giving an account of the ill effects of

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anger (quoted above) went on to state that anger cures the ‘dumb and the palsical’ (96). In addition, whereas Forster attributed many of the ill effects of anger to the impetuosity of movement and the tossing of the blood that this emotion causes, he nevertheless recognised in anger a state of motion where the ‘spirits flow freely into the fibres every where, and do therefore actuate them uninterruptedly; they keep them therefore constantly supplied, and in a proper degree of tension’ (352). It is for this reason that people in anger are capable of bearing fatigue. These beneficial or, at the very least neutrally positive, effects of anger, are recognised in many treatises of the time, mainly of popular medicine. Many writers, although they recognise the pathological potential of anger – usually connected to fevers, inflammations or extreme contractions of the muscles that would lead to apoplectic incidents– they also make notice of the markedly positive effects of anger. Theophilus Lobb (1678-1763) – whom Theodore Brown recognises along with Edward Strother as a second-wave mechanist physician favouring experimentation in place of pure theory – does exactly that when he writes in his section on the passions:

The passions of love, desire, hope, joy, and anger moderately exercised, will maintain a due briskness in the motion of the nervous fluid, a sufficient strength in the vibration of the solids, and a just quickness in the contractions, and dilations of the hearts and arteries, and in the circulation of the blood; and likewise assist the animal excretions.\textsuperscript{286}

John Burton (1710-71), writing in 1738 on the non-naturals, noted that ‘Anger and joy keep the fibres in their natural tensions, assist the secretion and derivation of spirits to all parts of the body, promote circulation, digestion.’\textsuperscript{287} William Forster, mentioned above, further noted that physicians should manage people prone to swooning (loss of senses) according to constitution and advised that patients of cool temperament and without experiencing thirst, ‘ought to move briskly about, to sleep little, and to be angry but not sin; because as the blood is too cold, viscous, and gross, it ought to be

\textsuperscript{286} Theophilus Lobb, \textit{Rational Methods of Curing Fevers: Deduced from the Structure, and Oeconomy of Human Bodies} (London: Printed for John Oswald, 1734), p. 105.

\textsuperscript{287} John Burton, \textit{A Treatise on the Non-Naturals: In which the Great Influence they have on the Bodies is set forth and Mechanically Accounted for} (York: by A. Staples, 1738), p. 338.
attenuated, to be divided, and to be warmed to the pitch which is convenient for nature’ (109).

What is important to note here is not only the recognition of a positive side of the physiological effects of anger, but also the significant grouping of anger within a set of passions – such as love, desire, hope, joy – that are not traditionally connected. Rather, they are even juxtaposed in the established moral and ethical discourse on the passions. This further confirms the status of anger in physiology as distinctive and twofold. Although undoubtedly harmful to the body when in excess, there is also an unequivocal beneficial side to it which has been overlooked and largely dismissed. The reason why this side of anger has been understated and also why, at first, we find Elena Carrera’s subtitle (‘Provoking Anger to Restore Health’) incongruous, is the sweeping emphasis on the restraint of the passions as a means to health. This admonition widely propagated in both ethical discourse and in physiology, through the revival of the doctrine of the six non-naturals, although valid, tends to obscure the variety of approaches to the passions in health. An illustrative example of this tendency in criticism can be seen in Candace Ward’s reading of the advice offered by the physician James MacKenzie (1682?-1761). In her book *Desire and Disorder*, offering a study of the fevered body in sentimental novels and culture, Ward provides the following description of Georgian physiological advice on the passions:

> Georgian writers—whether physicians or novelists—paid particular attention to the relationship between moral and physical well being, most maintaining that by exercising control over the body and its passions one could preserve good health. As James MacKenzie points out in *The History of Health and the Art of Preserving It*, “He who seriously resolves to preserve his health must previously learn to conquer his passions, and keep them in absolute subjection to reason; for let a man be ever so temperate ...yet still some unhappy passions, if indulged to excess, will prevail over all his regularity”. According to MacKenzie, the unhappy passions included anger, fear, hatred, malice, revenge, and despair—passions, that, if indulged, “weaken the nerves.” “Moderate joy... cheerfulnes, contentment, hope, virtuous and mutual and mutual love, and courage in doing good,” on the other hand, invigorate them.  

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However, what the second ellipsis, very conveniently, excludes is not without significance. Mackenzie’s full account of the physiological effects of different passions is cited below:

Fear, grief, and those passions that partake of them, as envy, hatred, malice, revenge, and despair, are known by experience to weaken the nerves, retard the circular motion of the fluids, hinder perspiration, impair digestion and often to produce spasms, obstructions, and hypochondriacal disorders. [...] Moderate joy and anger, on the other hand, and those passions and affections of the mind, which partake of their nature, as cheerfulnes, contentment, hope, virtuous and mutual love, and courage in doing good, invigorate the nerves, accelerate the circulating of fluids, promote perspiration, and assist digestion.  

The emphasized sentence in the quotation above is what Ward’s use of ellipsis refuses to acknowledge. And it is a sentence that bears significant implications. To begin with, MacKenzie does not alter this passage in any of the editions of his work. Based on this, one can safely assume that the inclusion of anger in the group of positively charged passions is definitely intentional. What is more, as is evident from the quotation above, MacKenzie never groups ‘anger’ with those ‘unhappy passions that, if indulged, weaken the nerves’. Actually, he pathologizes only a certain degree of anger, ‘violent anger’, which, he states, can produce ‘bilious, inflammatory, convulsive, and sometimes apoplectic disorders, especially in hot temperaments’ (390). Essentially, then, by eliding this sentence and by casting anger, intuitively rather than scholarly, within the group of passions that have detrimental effects to the sentimental body, Ward refuses to acknowledge the duality of the discourse of anger in physiology and completely obscures its beneficial side. To an extent, this is a usual approach. However, eighteenth-century, and older, sources delineate a different and more complicated rather than singular approach to anger, which, we cannot overlook or abrade in our attempt to reconstruct the emotional past. To do so, in this case, results in the neglect of two things. Firstly, it prevents us from recognising the fact that anger, in its moderation, is not only ‘unhappy’ but actually connected to a series of positive active verbs (such as ‘invigorate’, ‘accelerate’, ‘promote’ and ‘assist’, as opposed to ‘impair’ and ‘hinder’)

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290 The editions of 1758, 1759 and 1760 are identical. The passage is cited in page 389 of all three.
that present this passion as conducive to the overall function of the body. The positive effects are not only connected to the nerves – this supposedly all-encompassing physiological category – but go on to include all the major physiological processes such as circulation of fluids, perspiration and digestion. Secondly, and most importantly to this project, the omission of this sentence prevents the reader from recognising that MacKenzie presents these passions here as related by association. To be precise, he discusses the physiological effects of ‘cheerfulness’, ‘contentment’, ‘hope’ and ‘mutual and ‘virtuous love’ as partaking of the nature of moderate joy and ‘courage in doing good’ as partaking of the nature of moderate anger. In its turn, this latter association posits an active aspect of the sentimental ideal, one that recognises the need for a degree of fierceness or ‘passion’ in order to realise the good that it values. More than that, MacKenzie makes anger part of an array of positively-charged passions which, by being connected to the free and vigorous movement of health, not only realise their functions of sociability and virtue, but they also sustain them. In effect, Mackenzie creates here a circle of cause and effect that presents negative passions as harmful to health and for this reason undesirable. A further implication would be that any possible desired ends of them are also cast as disagreeable because they will be of short effect. For example, any ‘positive’ feeling stemming from the desire for revenge would be undermined by the deleterious effects of this emotion on one’s body. However, all the virtuous and positive passions are presented as having the exact opposite physiological effects, and are for this reason desirable. What is more, their effects are long-term because by maintaining the body in good order they sustain the culture that endorses them. Anger, in moderation, forms part of that culture.

Vitalism

Under the physiological paradigm of mechanism,\(^{291}\) sensibility is a well-defined property of the nerves. In theories of vitalist physiology that gradually replace mechanical accounts after the middle of the century, it becomes much more. One of the

\(^{291}\)This does not necessarily imply reductionist mechanism. Haller’s theory, which will is discussed here, is one of extensive mechanism. See also Hubert Steinke, *Irritating Experiments: Haller’s Concept and the European Controversy on Irritability and Sensibility, 1750-90* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2005).
most famous definitions of sensibility as a property of matter in the eighteenth century comes from a prominent medical figure of the time, Albrecht Haller, a Swiss physiologist and experimental philosopher. After a series of experiments Haller defined and localized the two basic properties of living matter as irritability and sensibility, in a statement included in his paper ‘De Partibus corporis humani sensibilibus and irritabilibus’, read at the university of Gottingen in 1752. Haller restricted irritability in the muscles by defining this part as ‘irritable’ that ‘becomes shorter upon touched’. A sensible part, on the other hand, was that which ‘upon being touched transmits the impression of it to the soul’. In Haller’s work, as critics note, these two properties, irritability and sensibility, remain always neatly divided. Irritability is a material quality, experimentally qualified (according to how much shorter the part becomes upon touch) and does not have any metaphysical connotations as its function is completely separate from the soul. Only sensibility as a separate quality is connected to the realm of the immaterial and higher level of activity of the soul and conscious sensation. Critics and historians of medicine such as Anne Vila and Charles Wolfe, aptly point out that this firm division protects Haller’s work from the metaphysical dangers of strictly applied materialism poses. Indeed, as Vila notes, the first step for the creation of an all-encompassing vital property of sensibility was the blurring of Haller’s division by his followers, and the subsequent fusion of irritability and sensibility into one reactive ‘super-property’ (15). It is important to note, at this point, that there should not be an equation between the physiological discourse of sensibility and the cultural one. That is, sensibility as a property of the body, does not bear, or at least not always, any moral implications for physiologists. However, whereas one should refrain from making direct and absolute inferences from the physiological discourse of sensibility, it should also be noted that no cultural account of Sensibility as a phenomenon can be complete without regarding its status in the physiology of the time. For the purposes of this project the notion of physical sensibility is indispensable. The physical property of sensibility may not have influenced the novel of sentiment directly, but it has been a major factor in the

development and propagation of vitalist theories of the body. These theories, in their turn, spell out a different account and position for the passions in medical discourse.

Vitalist physiology posits that living matter is organized differently from all inanimate matter in that there is an immaterial and immanent principle that determines all life processes. As Roy Porter cautions when surveying the eighteenth-century life sciences ‘the lines between mechanism, vitalism and materialism can get quite blurred.’293 In spite of the existence of a ‘middle ground’, the rhetoric of vitalism was distinctively posed as a rejection of mechanism. Redefined and expanded, the concept of physiological sensibility facilitated this rhetoric. Discussing the place of sensibility in mid-century debates on vital forces and properties of matter, Charles Wolfe finds that sensibility was ‘deliberately construed as an anti-mechanist concept’.294 He asserts that this is evident in the key role of sensibility in explaining physiological processes that are problematic from mechanist views. One of the most significant examples of this is the role of sensibility within the work of Theophile Bordeu. A vitalist of the French Montpelier school,295 Bordeu explained in his work of 1752 the function of the glands via the concept of sensibility. The function of the glands was a principal concern in vitalist works because their excretory and secretory capacity could not be fully accounted for by the mechanist physiology. With his Recherches Anatomiques sur le Fonctions de Glandes (1762) Bordeu made a strong case in favour of vitalism and sensibility. In the words of Elizabeth Haigh:

Bordeu set out to prove that the secretion of glandular humours is more than a mere physical separation of elements as the mechanist maintained. By means of a painstaking and lucid analysis which demonstrated well the limitations of the mechanist position, Bordeu put forward a compelling case on behalf of vitalism. Glandular activity and all other functions was attributed to a force called

295 In addition to the various articles referred to here, a culturally informed analysis of the advent of the vitalist school of Montpellier in France can be found in Elizabeth Ann Williams, A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
‘sensibility’ which was assumed to reside in the very material of the organized body.  

Already this description of the role of sensibility is markedly different to its Hallerian equivalent. The most important transformation of the concept of sensibility that the rhetoric of vitalism marks is that it stops being localized and becomes immanent in living matter. Sensibility is no longer restricted to nerve function, but is inherent in living fibres and is manifested differently according to the function of each organ. Historians of medicine mark this as a major transformation in the concept of physiological sensibility within French eighteenth-century physiology. In British medical thought this change was best demarcated in the work of Edinburgh-based neurophysiologist Robert Whytt. For Whytt, sensibility is equated with the essence of life under what he terms one active, sentient principle that cannot be a property of mere matter. In his most important work, which sketches out his core physiological ideas, he defines this principle as:

Upon the whole, there seems to be in man one sentient and intelligent principle, which is equally the source of life, sense and motion, as of reason; and which, from the law of its union with the body, exerts more or less of its power and influence, as the different circumstances of the several organs actuated by it may require.  

This transformation of sensibility offered a boost to the propagation of vitalist theories, which in turn favoured a holistic programme of health management. In France, the vitalist view of the organism as ‘animal oeconomy’ led, as Philippe Huneman argues, to the definition of an anthropological programme that made no distinction between ‘le physique et le moral’. Consequently, French medical discourse is dominated by health advice that targets not only purely physiological matters but also ethical ones such as the passions. Huneman finds that the newly articulated concept of sensibility, which defines organs themselves and organs within their extended milieu as sensitive, changes the way the effects of the passions are perceived. ‘Mental events as

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296 Elizabeth Haigh, ‘Vitalism, the Soul, and Sensibility: The Physiology of Theophile Bordeu’, *Journal for the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, (1976), 30-41, (p. 31).


well as physical affections’ are now ‘likely to cause any change in the animal oeconomy’. That is, the passions are now perceived as a specific alteration in the animal oeconomy and for this reason form a significant part in the medical discourse.

The concepts of ‘sensibility’ and ‘animal oeconomy’ are the main causes of differentiation in the attitude towards the passions in the mechanist and the vitalist doctrine. For mechanists the passions and their effects on the body are an awkward subject that needs to be justified and explained away. This is the reason why mechanist physiologists insist on and make clear to their readers that the passions are considered within their work only as ‘physical agents’. In this way, attention is shifted from any metaphysical queries. Subsequently, as is evident by the works quoted above, they go on to identify the particular effects of the passion in question. For vitalists, like Robert Whytt, the passions and their influence become a testament both to the unitary model of physiology and the operation of sensibility. Whytt found in the passions and their influence a proof for ‘the great consent between the heart and the brain’. Within his work all physiological effects of the passions, the blushing of shame, the increased circulation in anger, are evidence of the system of continuities and sympathies that lies beneath. For instance, the increased heartbeat in anger is, as Roger French notes in his analysis of Whytt’s theory, ‘one of the prime functions of the sympathetic system’. For Whytt, the discussion of the passions did not revolve around the passions themselves as emotional phenomena but around their physical effects. The increased heartbeat of anger, the blushing of shame, the palpitation of the heart in terror, the trembling of fear, all served to show the responsiveness of the underlying nervous power. They prove the operation of the sentient principle that is roused and directs the bulk of its nervous power to the affected organ or point in the body.

In short, the vitalist paradigm favours the discourse of the passions through which it explains physiological phenomena as processes of stimulation, consent, and response. This appropriation of the passions within the doctrine of vitalism, along with the

299 Huneman, ‘Montepelier Vitalism’, (p. 618).
300 Robert Whytt, Observations on the Nature, Causes, and Cure of those Disorders which have been Commonly Called Nervous (Edinburgh: Printed for T. Becket, 1765), p. 16. Later references are to this edition.
reintroduction of the Hippocratic doctrine of the non-naturals that occurs as a consequence, promotes the centrality of passions within medical discourse. On the one hand this leads to advice on regulation and the demand for ‘ascetic constraint’, which Anne Vila reads in both the medical treatises and the novel of the time. On the other hand, it also promotes a different approach to diagnosis and patient treatment; one that revolves not only around medical knowledge but sensible and sensitive perception. The passions themselves become causes of disease through the alteration they provoke in the animal oeconomy, factors of deterioration in disease but also aid in the restoration of health. To this purpose, the ‘curing by contraries’ principle is abandoned as the century progresses. William Corp (-1790) in his essay on the effects of the passions, published posthumously in 1791, mentions the beneficial effects of anger only to negate the practice a little further on and to caution on its dangerousness.302

One of the reasons for this change lies with the inherent differences between the two main physiological paradigms under consideration here. Mechanical accounts discuss function through structure, enlist causes and denote specific, separate effects on the body. Thus they offer a particularized account of physiological processes. In addition, mechanism still retains, as presented above, similarities to the doctrine of the humours such as the modified concept of balance. Under this paradigm it makes sense to talk of cure by applying antithetical principles and the usefulness of anger. This is especially true when this usefulness is expressed through a scientifically-reiterated vocabulary that focuses on principles of motion. Vitalism views the organism as a system of sensitive organs interacting within their extended environment through sympathy. Under this paradigm, a localized cure is not adequate. On the contrary, what is required is a ‘regime’ that includes comprehensive advice on both physical and moral aspects of an individual’s life. It is appropriate, then, that the medical discourse of the passions would come to incorporate moral and religious elements.

Remnants of the traditional way of thinking are still discernible when medical writers advise on therapy. In his influential work that breaks with tradition in seeing

madness as a somatic illness, William Battie (bap. 1703-1776) advised that ‘if notwithstanding the temporary relief any passion seems to engross the man or continues beyond its usual period’, that is should be stifled by a contrary passion.\textsuperscript{303} Robert Whytt, writing on the cure of nervous diseases, similarly advised that ‘nervous disorders occasioned by strong impressions on the mind, are often prevented, lessened or cured by exciting other sensations or passions of a superior force’ (Obse. 438). More importantly, before the rejection of the beneficial aspect of anger was completed towards the nineteenth century, the basic tenet had made its impact on the novel of sentiment.

**Spirit and Feeling: Roderick Random**

No other novelist is more suitable to round up this section on the body than Tobias Smollett: a novelist with medical knowledge, who introduced, if not fully developed, elements of Sensibility in his work. More to the point, Smollett’s earlier works are deeply preoccupied with negative or violent emotions. His first novel, *Roderick Random* (1748), has been marked by what critics saw as the craving for revenge that pervades it. It is this correlation of the bodily experience of negative emotions and the progress in Sensibility that is of interest here. The facts we have about Smollett’s medical education are his study at Glasgow University from about 1735 to 1739 and his apprenticeship to surgeons John Gordon (d.1772) and William Stirling (d.1757) from 1736.\textsuperscript{304} Critics often make further informed assumptions on his medical and academic knowledge based on biographical research, such as the other relevant disciplines he was likely to be exposed to while at Glasgow. To an extent, we can also reconstruct part of his medical expertise through his medical publications, his comments on physicians and physical theories in his *Critical Review* and relevant passages in his novels. Although, as G. S. Rousseau cautions, commentators should refrain from reading too much in


\textsuperscript{304} See Lewis M. Knapp, *Tobias Smollett: Doctor of Men and Manners* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963) and the relevant entry in the *ODNB* by Kenneth Simpson. In addition, relevant chapters on his medical knowledge can be found in Donald Bruce, *Radical Doctor Smollett* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964).
Smollett’s relationship with medicine, the fact remains, as he notes, that ‘all Smollett’s
ovels refer to medicine in an essential way’. 305

The same applies to the passions, and especially the negative ones. Reference to the
passions is an important part in the making of Smollett’s novels and it can take many
forms. Literary critics have long observed how Smollett relies on the description of
external physical reactions to describe the mental states of his characters, following, as
Thomas Preston discusses, the well-established stage tradition of reading the passions in
the countenance. 306 Smollett also provides specific information on a character’s
disposition and describes effects of the passions by employing physiological knowledge
of the time, such as references to the nerves, the dilating heart or stupefaction. He,
furthermore, employs emotional vocabulary for its comical or shocking effects as, for
instance, when he describes the anger of the seaman Bowling in Roderick Random. He
also philosophizes on emotion by infusing his novels with interspersed general
comments on the passions that come close to the recognizable pattern of mottoes or
precepts in the novel of sentiment.

All these instances apply to the text of Roderick Random in which the most
persistently expressed emotion is resentment. This happens to such an extent as to be
analogous to what George Rousseau called ‘the dominant action in Smollett’s novels,
revenge, revenge and more revenge’. 307 Confronted with the issue of discerning
coherence in the great diversity of Smollett’s style and form, Rousseau advocated the
abandonment of questions of structure and the focus on questions of ‘contents’. This
move would reveal unity under the common insistence on revenge present in his novels.
Reading Rousseau, John Richetti distilled the argument thus:

He [G.S.Rousseau] finds in Smollett an eloquently expressive and unifying rage and
malice, a raw, crude, and powerful force that exceeds in its ferocious vigor even the
considerable violence to be found in satire and in the picaresque. Smollett’s claim to

305 G. S. Rousseau, ‘Beef and Bouillion: Smollett’s Achievement as a Thinker’, in Tobias Smollett:
306 For the argument on how Smollett utilizes knowledge on the ‘acting passions’ for character portrayal,
see Thomas R. Preston, ““Stage Passions” and Smollett’s Characterization’, Studies in Philology, 71.1
have a plan is dismissed, for his value as a novelist resides in intensely local effects that communicate a uniquely disturbing Smollettian outrage.  

Building on this premise, Richetti contends that this ‘unifying rage’ is a politically ingrained, resonant ressentiment that emanates from Smollett’s personal struggle to establish his literary name without the credentials of a Fielding within the newly emerging commercial and critical environment of a career in letters. In his own words, Richetti posits that:


Although there has to be a degree of caution when making judgments about personal emotional states, irretrievable to the modern reader, we can be sure that his novels, and especially Roderick Random, are ingrained with resentment. This can be, moreover, properly called ressentiment, as Roderick is from the beginning animated by a deep sense of injury and injustice. Deprived of status, property and parental affection, due to his ‘unnatural’ grandfather, Roderick experiences the frustration of his potential. His ressentiment stems from realizing that he has to lead a life inferior in status and circumstances than the one that he can lay claim to, according to his lineage. Roderick’s anger and outrage are raised against his unjust exclusion from propertied independence. Because of this, he is exposed to the ‘selfishness, envy, malice, and base indifference of mankind’ and is prevented from cultivating a tendency to virtue. Roderick’s claim to morality is unstable until the end of the novel, when all the circumstances for the realization of sensibility are fulfilled: financial and social stability, parental presence,

309 Richetti, p. 166.  
emotional regulation. Until then, he shows signs of sentimental potential but no consistent sentimental character. One reason for this is that in his role as a satirist, Roderick’s character obeys conventions other than the sentimental. There needs to be a balance, therefore, between satire and sentimentalism. Another is that Smollett, experimenting with Sensibility, presents instead of a ‘man of feeling’, a passive hero to whom things happen, a version of the sentimental character who ‘embraces life and the efficacy of active good deeds’. This is argued by Susan Bourgeois, whose study on Smollett portrays a kind of Sensibility that has a medical and philosophical basis and progressively evolves within his work.

Before this optimistic and highly sentimental conclusion then, what we know of Roderick’s character and disposition has to do with the desire to be revenged, his inflamed indignation, his fiery temper, his being ‘incensed’. These are the most frequent terms used that suggest emotional states in the novel. By contrast, at the end of the novel we are reassured that ‘the impetuous transports of [his] passion are now settled and mellowed into endearing fondness and tranquillity of love’ (RR 435). Between these states, Roderick exists in a continual state of resentment, which is intermixed with scenes of genuine tenderness and sentimental value: he mingles his tears with Strap, becomes affected by Miss Williams’s life story, and experiences respect and something akin to ‘filial affection’ for Mrs Sagely, who cares for him when he is abandoned by all, and whom he additionally recognizes as a person “primitive, innocent, sensible and humane” (RR 215). Above all, he falls in love with Narcissa whose introduction to the story also introduces the very word ‘sensibility’ and, progressively, the ineffability of intense emotion. This also further implies a certain feminine influence that effects a change on his fiery, masculine disposition. But this is not truly a conversion. Roderick does not consciously abandon certain behaviour and his emotional stance to turn to another which he recognizes as morally superior. Rather, he changes because his circumstances change and he has no need for resentment any more.

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In viewing resentment only in political terms, critical readings often overlook the fact that in the novel it is an emotion invested with a clear positive charge. The beneficial aspect of resentment is primarily linked to a ‘bracing’ effect on the body. This representation of resentment, and its cognates, as ‘sustaining’ amounts to its being instrumental in aiding Roderick to navigate complicated social situations while itinerant, and to realize the promise of Sensibility. Set against the background knowledge of the discourse on physiological benefits of negative passions, Roderick’s resentment can be more fully accounted for. Notwithstanding its certain political and philosophical resonances, Roderick’s resentment cannot be solely understood by reference to these. Resentment in Random emanates from political and social reasons, and at times comes close to the philosophical concept of it as presented in the Theory of Moral Sentiments by Adam Smith. For instance, Susan Bourgeois finds a clear parallel between the preface to Roderick Random and Smith’s comment on fiction. For Smith, the readers not only find ‘joy in the deliverance of heroes of tragedy and romance who interest [them]’, but also they ‘heartily go along with their resentment against those perfidious traitors who injured, abandoned, or deceived them’. The clear-stated objective in the preface of the novel to ‘inflame the humane passions’ (RR xxxiii) and ‘animate the reader with generous indignation against the sordid and vicious disposition of the world’ (RR xxxv) suggests a similar perception of resentment. However, neither of these accounts explains the desirability of resentment. On the contrary, a consideration of the physiological discourse on the passions, as presented above, can be an effective critical tool in elucidating Smollett’s use of resentment and its connections to the body.

I do not suggest here a direct inference. That is, I am not reading Roderick’s resentment as physiologically positive because Smollett has a connection to the writers and writings discussed above. Rather, I read a parallel between the principle of the bracing effects of negative passions and Smollett’s use of resentment based on two premises. These are accessibility of such knowledge to Smollett, and the fact that the physiological, rather than the political or philosophical discourse most assuredly

ascrives a positive aspect to these passions. To begin with, Smollett follows mechanistic physiological views and recognizes both the physical symptoms of the passions and the fact that they can effect a cure. More importantly, he knows that anger can cure paralysis, as he writes in his publication *On the External Use of Water*.\(^\text{314}\) This suggests at least an elementary perception of anger as invigorating. In addition, Roderick firmly asserts the benefit of this emotion when, at a low point in his adventures, robbed and deserted he reflects on his disposition: ‘It was happy for me that I had a good deal of resentment in my constitution, which animated me on such occasions, against the villainy of mankind, and enabled me to bear misfortunes otherwise intolerable’ (*RR* 242). This statement asserts positivity about resentment that cannot be attributed to a theoretical stance on emotions. Rather, it suggests a physiological benefit implied by words such as ‘constitution’ and ‘animate’. Roderick is thankful for resentment as it provides a useful boost that enables him not only to bear his misfortunes, but to recover from each one and continue.

Running through the novel is a motif of gushes of violent emotion coming to Roderick’s aid when he is confronted with injury and deception. From the very first instance, resentment is presented as beneficial precisely because it is a counter-effect of inactivity and submission. Faced with the schoolmaster’s cruel behaviour, Roderick experiences discrimination and the malice of his childhood world. It is at this early stage that his ‘indignation’ is firstly awakened and instigates him to challenge the cruel behaviour:

> In short, whether I was guilty or unfortunate, the vengeance and sympathy of this arbitrary pedagogue were the same. Far from being subdued by this infernal usage, my indignation triumphed over that slavish awe which had hitherto enforced my obedience. (*RR* 6)

Further on, when as an apprentice at Lavement’s he is framed for stealing medicines, it is again to his resentment that he resorts:

> The indignation which this harangue inspired, gave me spirits to support my reverse of fortune; and to tell him that I despised his mean, selfish disposition so much, that I would rather starve than be beholden to him for a single meal. (*RR* 23)

Repeatedly the experience of resentment is connected to a sense of empowerment that centres on its bodily effects. Roderick’s resentment and indignation ‘animate’, ‘support’, ‘give spirits’, and help him ‘triumph’. All these effects are positive, active, enlivening and sustaining. On the contrary, when his resentment, indignation and rage forsake him, or lose their momentum, Roderick experiences an analogous bathetic effect. He suffers more vividly the weakness of the flesh, he ‘relapses’, and is prone to melancholy thoughts such as: ‘here my rage forsook me, I began to feel the importunate cravings of nature, and relapsed into silent sorrow and melancholy reflection’ (RR 243). The same happens when his ‘fumes of resentment’ are dissipated and despair takes over after his gaming loss, an emotion that renders him almost ‘stupefied’ (RR 26).

This attitude is consistent with a general view of the passions in the work of Smollett that recognizes the violent passions as ‘rousing’, and a concurrence of them with signs of good nature. In Roderick Random, Bowling freely exhibits anger and resentment, while he is capable of compassion and affectionate consideration. In Peregrine Pickle, Mr Trunnion is boisterous and intemperate as well as a kind benefactor. Peregrine himself is of a ‘peculiar’ and ‘odd’ disposition, capable of anger to the extent of frenzy, but also attends his ailing uncle with the ‘most affectionate care’ (PP 275). Peregrine presents, as Roderick does, a characteristic amalgamation of ferocity with genuine instances of humanity and altruism. Moreover, these instances are usually directed at objects of pity that represent lowly and socially outcast groups. Roderick sees an ‘unfortunate’, not a ‘criminal’, in a woman forced to prostitution and Peregrine sees miserable objects all around him when in prison. As the narrator notes, when in jail, Peregrine’s ‘humanity was not unemployed in the vacations of his revenge.’ In Smollett’s early work, it is consistently the case that the characters capable of the most violent emotions are also capable of the tenderest sentiments. Indeed, it is the complete lack of such emotional experience that is problematic for Smollett, as the character of Gamaliel Pickle indicates. Gamaliel Pickle is the image of languor and inactivity and is ridiculed precisely for being devoid from anything.

‘inflammable’ (PP 2). He is reported as having been ‘never known to betray the faintest symptom of transport’ (PP 2), his talents ‘are not naturally active’ (PP 1) and he is ‘encumbered by a certain sluggishness and indolence’ (PP 1). According to Susan Bourgeois, Gamaliel personifies Smollett’s critique of the Stoical disposition. If one makes the case that other characters are condemned for their sins of excess, he is condemned for his sins of omission. Above all, Gamaliel lacks this combination of capacity for refined sensation with the tendency to violent emotion that is found in other of Smollett’s characters: ‘little subject to refined sensations, he was scarce ever disturbed by violent emotions of any kind’ (PP 2).

These concepts of gradation inform, as discussed previously, most of the discourse of negative passions. Lack or excess of them are always the signposts of disordered affectivity. In Roderick Random, Smollett not only suggests a positive, beneficial degree of resentment, but also confirms it as such by separating it from its excessive equivalent shown in Miss Williams’s story. The inset narrative of Miss Williams’s story fulfils a multiple purpose. It is an interesting addition to the plot that attracts the reader’s attention through its intriguing and provoking subject matter. It also serves to show Roderick’s sensible side and his capability to appreciate and be influenced by an affecting story. Notably, it is the first admission of Roderick’s ‘tender sentiments’ and a mark of his capacity of compassion. An added aspect, which is significant for the present discussion, is that Miss Williams’s story is pervaded by the emotion of resentment and her desire for revenge.

Miss Williams is, by eighteenth-century standards, a ‘fallen woman’. Seduced by a lover and impregnated by him, she is later abandoned for another woman and left friendless. As a result she experiences resentment to a superlative degree and becomes entirely absorbed in her desire for revenge. Unlike Roderick’s beneficial experience of resentment, hers is a destructive emotion with dire physical effects. It results in fever and a subsequent miscarriage. Also unlike Roderick’s, her schemes of revenge are violent in the extreme. Roderick’s revenge almost always entails physical violence, but it also maintains a slapstick side. The schoolmaster’s corporal punishment is both an equal return for his own cruel behaviour and is intended as ridicule. The same applies to Odonell, for instance, and the ulcers and sores he suffers from. Miss Williams’s
revenge, however, entails a plot to murder the lover who scorned her. This difference in degree further attests to Roderick’s resentment as being self-sustaining rather than self-destructive. Roderick’s resentment helps him survive the cruelty of the world, avenge himself on the injustice he has received, settle his accounts with those who have hurt him and move on. In the process, he pushes his way upwards into better social, financial and domestic circumstances and to the realisation of sensibility. Miss Williams’s resentment affects her body and her mind and effectively pushes her down to the lowest echelons of social existence. Moreover, Miss Williams’s resentment is more closely connected to a ‘diseased’ state because she has the start in life that Roderick was deprived of. Born to an affectionate father, who actively seeks his beloved missing daughter, she could have had an alternative story. Roderick’s ‘unnatural’ grandfather and the lack of parental affection give him no education in the natural affections and leave him with resentment as the only recourse and defence. Roderick, that is, is upwardly mobile in that he manages to endure, and navigate his way through, the envy and malice of the world. Miss Williams’s father dies leaving his fortune to a stranger; he effectively dies without an heir, cutting off his family line. Miss Williams herself reads this ‘as a mark of his resentment for my unkind and undutiful behaviour’ (RR 126). In Roderick’s story, giving in to heightened, violent passions helps towards fulfilling a social purpose, whereas Miss Williams’s surrendering to the passions effectively negates her social potential.

Excess may be destructive, but in Smollett’s world a complete lack of resentment would also be problematic. As a man not only of feeling but mostly of spirit, Roderick endures what others cannot. Henry Mackenzie’s quintessential ‘man of feeling’, devoid of such passions, ultimately dies as he is not able to cope with the sorrows of this world. Sarah Fielding’s David Simple suffers a similar adversity to Roderick. Deprived of his inheritance and social standing by an ‘unnatural’ brother he experiences anger and resentment, but they quickly dissipate without becoming factors that affect his reinstatement. Exposed to want and cruelty, David is taken seriously ill and remains out of consciousness and participation while his uncle defends his rights. Roderick’s resentment, on the other hand, is followed by action. For instance, after the incident with Lavement (quoted above) he continues saying: this said, I sallied out, in a transport
of rage and sorrow, without knowing wither, to fly for shelter, having not one friend in
the world capable of relieving me, and only three shillings in my purse.— After giving
way for a few minutes to the dictates of my rage, I went and hired a small bed-room
(RR 23). Of course, different considerations inform the two novels. David Simple is an
already well-defined sentimental hero. Roderick’s character bears the promise of
sensibility. David Simple is an itinerant man of feeling who confirms his status through
his adventures. His expression of resentment and anger follows the dictates of this
status. Roderick becomes itinerant because the conditions of civic virtue and sensibility
are denied to him. Resentment will be crucial to him in giving him the energy to win
them back.

Most importantly, the difference between the novels is that Sarah Fielding’s work
invokes religious discourse in her attitude to the negative passions, although as has been
shown, it progresses beyond that. Within a religious framework there is limited scope
for the expression of violent emotions and certainly not one that is positive. Castigated
as selfish, unsocial and destructive, the violent passions are cast as sins. In this sense,
they also have the same physiological consequences as sins have: they wither and
desiccate the body. The religious controlling paradigm always entails the notion that
violent passions are their own punishment through the emotional and physical turmoil
they induce. Sarah Fielding, as shown in previous sections, demonstrates that
perpetrators of injurious acts lament the effects if this sinful life on their health and
body. In Smollett’s work, the passions have a different underpinning. A good case in
point is offered as a general observation on the passions in the description of Peregrine
Pickle’s fraught situation when in jail:

What would become of the unfortunate, if the constitution of the mind did not
permit them to bring one passion into the field against another? Passions that
operate in the human breast, like poisons of a different nature, extinguishing each
other’s effect. Our hero’s grief reigned in full despotism, until it was deposed by
revenge; during the predominancy of which, he considered every thing which had
happened as a circumstance conducive to its gratification. (PP 678)

No religion or philosophy is invoked here, but instead an extended application of
physiological principles. Smollett describes a beneficial mental effect that is realised by
manipulating antithetical properties of the passions. This practice is what saves
Peregrine from absolute dejection of spirits while he suffers at the lowest point of his adventures. This is not a spiritual cure. There is no admonition on the regulation of the passions or bearing one’s lot with humility. Instead, the passions are summoned as antidotes to each other in what is effectively an extension of the physiological principle of curing by contraries applied to psychological healing. Under this paradigm there is a confirmed place for the intensity of anger, the heat of indignation, the support of resentment and, even, the self-fulfilling fantasies of revenge.

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Much has been written about the nerve-oriented physiology of the eighteenth century. The discourse of the nerves is admittedly an essential part of the health sciences of this period. However, an approach that reads the eighteenth-century physiology as predominantly or solely ‘nervous’, with its fiction developing side-by-side with neurology, and the whole period as the prelude to neuroscience, can overshadow the variety of approaches to the passions in health. Following that approach the most prominent physiological consequence of anger would be the threat of breached vessels through the distension of nerves. An approach that recognizes the persistence of the notion of balance, the importance of motion, and the continuity with traditional medical practices can also recognize the effects of anger as useful. The usefulness of anger, though, invokes further questions. How are we to account for the sensible body in anger? Does it now become necessary, permissible or desirable due to this beneficial side?

The physiologically beneficial experience of anger, does not in fact affect the physiology of Sensibility. That is, the experience of anger is not part of the making of the sensible body. As with the political expression of anger, the somatic one is not part of the definition of Sensibility. Rather, they both exist in the margins of the various manifestations of this phenomenon. But this is also where they belong according to their own definitions. Physiologically speaking, the benefits of anger are conditioned as such upon certain circumstances. The usefulness of anger is a cure and this signifies it as recourse, and sometimes an extreme one, in cases of disordered state (whether that means a deficiency in heat or sluggishness of motion). The metaphor can be extended. The politically-ingrained anger of Clarissa exists in the margins of the culture of
Sensibility and of its relevant constructions of femininity. In doing so it challenges and responds to the disordered and restrictive states that they define. In a parallel way Roderick’s physiological experience of resentment exists in and emanates from the margins of a disordered social existence that excludes him from the culture of Sensibility. In both cases, the negative emotion may not be part of our original definition of Sensibility but it is an integral part of it and a consequence of the conventional and unconventional stories it demarcates.
Concluding Remarks
Dear Mrs. Moulton—my mother—I have no hopes—I am miserable—she hates the thought of Mr Romney—oh! my heart bursts with pain—she threatens—Mrs. Moulton, she has threatened me—but four and twenty hours has she granted to my reason for the conquest of my passion—Then, if I continue to love—from her, I am to expect hatred and ill usage—from a mother!—who can endure the fatal stroke!—from a mother!—my virtue is shocked—her anger will be my death.\(^{316}\)

The excerpt above appeared in a novel published in 1770, self-styled as ‘sentimental’. Here, common themes are at play: marital choice, parental authority, reason and passion, and duty, as in many other novels. However, in this case anger is referred to and exploited in order to provoke sentimentalism and sensationalism. This is further confirmed by the writing style. It is full of dashes that denote the interruption of speech under the burden of intense emotion, exclamation points, use of hyperbole and the repetition of significant words (‘mother’) all combine to give the novelistic version of the dramatic interrupted style; the broken utterance. Here anger, or its threat, reinforces the sentimental trope, but it is conventionalised and, for this reason, inconsequential. It achieves the same sensationalist effect that many other kinds of situations and behaviour can also provoke. More than that, it remains a confined phenomenon that makes sense through the principles of sentimental writing; that remains predominantly in the page. This is an instance of what Barbara Benedict calls emotion as ‘fictional phenomenon’:

> The conventional language, pictorial diction, tonal instability, structural fragmentation, and multiple narrative voices work to externalize these interior experiences, to deprive them of their authority and to subordinate them within a social frame. Sentimental feeling thus remains firmly a fictional phenomenon.\(^{317}\)

In contrast, the instances of anger and resentment discussed in this study are defined precisely in terms of their unconventionality. Opposing, in principle, the discourse of Sensibility, subjected to restriction of expression according to political, religious or gender criteria and constantly undermined by the discourse of ‘inhumanity’ and

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\(^{317}\) Benedict, Framing Feeling, p. 12.
‘unnaturalness’, these emotions are, in theory, more likely not to be expressed. For this reason, when it occurs, the instance of negative passion within Sensibility turns attention to its exceptionality as a circumstance, to its rarity. It is this rarity, this strict particularity of expression, which acts catalytically in conferring gravity to these negative moments. This is because the infrequency with which they occur exempts these moments from connections to the notion of an angry or resentful disposition. This is not the anger that John Rutty struggles to do away with, nor the resentful temperament that holds on to injuries. The series of incidents discussed here, from Arabella’s insensibly losing her anger before an affecting sight, through to Ned Warner’s fair resentment, heroes of Sensibility showcase both the capacity to experience negative emotions and also the capacity to forswear them. When heroes of Sensibility express negative passions, then, these cannot be viewed under the prism of moral weakness and lapse. These are not moments of instability, fragility or loss of emotional control. Ultimately, they are assertions of sensibility and individuality.

They are assertions of sensibility because they express frustrations with anything that opposes values of Sensibility, as happens for example, with David Simple’s angry moments. They are assertions of individuality because they express frustrations with what opposes the values of Sensibility as defined by them: the frustration of their own peculiar social vision which is informed by the ideals of Sensibility but bears unique characteristics, as happens with Sarah Fielding’s work; or the frustration that derives from their own sense of dignity, their own particular definition of femininity that subscribes to, but goes beyond the social and generic codes. They are, in essence, as singular and meaningful as Arabella’s resentments: signifiers of the fact that the heroes define themselves differently from the mentality that surrounds them.

As analysed here, these moments instead of negating notions of Sensibility can actually be seen as sustaining the genre, by providing extended versions of Sensibility. Extending the paradigm, they can be seen as metaphors of invigoration, as bodily anger was thought to be to motion. When these moments of negative passions are entirely missing, as happens in Sidney Bidulph, the result is a perfectly construed archetype with no individual characteristic. For this reason, the character of Sidney Bidulph is, and remains, a product of her own time, intelligible only through specific sentimental codes.
into which one must be educated. This is so because these episodes of negative passions and their connotations, that Bidulph is missing, effectively create a sense of relatedness to the genre that extends beyond the eighteenth-century page. Unconventional and non-stylized these moments can be relevant outside of eighteenth-century culture. They are not as distant and not as confined to the fictional as the scene described in Countess Osenvor. The minutiae of their expression tie them to eighteenth-century codes of behaviour, but ultimately they appeal to concepts more constant and permanent, such as dignity and self-definition. Decidedly secular in their expression and thoroughly modern in their connection to struggles of the self, these moments can resonate with later sensibilities as well. In this way they can be viewed as part of an emotional past which we can reconstruct not just as a curiosity, to be discussed for its particularities, but as a meaningful stage in the creation of our own modern sensibilities. Therefore, it would be fruitful not to dismiss them but to pay more attention to moments in the novel when even these delicate, gentle and sentimental female and male characters are depicted as less inclined to be so.
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