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THINKING ABOUT FEELING:
SENSIBILITY AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN
THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL

By

MADHVI ZUTSHI

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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By MADHVI ZUTSHI

Dissertation Director:

Michael McKeon

The literary phenomenon of sensibility in the eighteenth-century novel denoted an ethical responsiveness in a character to the distress of others. Sensibility enabled a form of sociability that forged relationships of an individual to other individuals, and helped to imaginatively produce a larger community of strangers connected by affective bonds. It was described in terms of an unpremeditated and non-volitional immediacy. Yet especially since Mandeville's writings that read self-interest in even the most admirable virtues of pity and compassion, many writings on man's natural humanity had to defend against an inherent self-interest. This study examines four texts each of moral philosophy and novels to understand this dynamic. Eighteenth-century moral philosophy speculated on how benevolence and sympathy might serve as a counter-force to the troubling but influential account of self-interest in the period. These debates on the relationship between the affective response to the distress of others, and a more self-consciously ethical stance towards public good, get re-configured in the formal pressures of the novel form which specifically attempts to navigate the gap between the felt intensity of particular affective responses and a generically-mandated drive towards a self-

consciousness in the novel. Two characteristics in the representation of sensibility are of particular interest in my project – firstly, the emphasis on unsullied virtue in the characters of sensibility that were to be explicitly depicted as devoid of any self-interest, and secondly, sensibility in these characters enabling particular affective bonds with strangers outside their circle of familiars. This project explores the tension between spontaneity and reflection in the novel of sensibility that has important repercussions for the idea of character as well as that of narrative emplotment. The resolution to the problem of protecting the purity of sensibility from skepticism is, in my account, one of the primary engines that drives the novels of sensibility. In the representation of sensibility, a model of sociability that allowed individuals to step out of themselves and connect with strangers evoked a powerful and imaginative form of human solidarity.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents as a token
of my love and appreciation

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Table of Contents

Title Page.....	i
Abstract of the Dissertation.....	ii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents.....	x
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: “A Public is Recognized”: The Transformation of Sociability in Eighteenth-Century Moral Philosophy.....	15
Chapter 2: Sociability and the Man of Feeling.....	59
Chapter 3: The Woman of Feeling: <i>Clarissa</i> and Sensibility.....	97
Chapter 4: Irritability as Sensibility: The Problem of Matt Bramble.....	141
Conclusion.....	182
Bibliography.....	190

INTRODUCTION

...where's the kindred mind?
 Where, the large soul that takes in human kind?
 Where, the best passions of the mortal breast?
 Where, the warm blessing when another's blest?
 Where, the soft lenitives of others pain,
 The social sympathy, the sense humane...
 Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
 Thou hasty moral! sudden sense of right!
 Thou untaught goodness! Virtue's precious seed!
 Thou sweet precursor of the gen'rous deed!
 Beauty's quick relish! Reason's radiant morn,
 Which dawns soft light before Reflexion's born!

Hannah More, "Sensibility: A Poem" (lines 159-164, 245-250)

The speaker in Hannah More's long poem "Sensibility"¹ (1782) sings extensively of the representations of the eighteenth-century literary phenomenon called 'sensibility.' In parsing out the various meanings of sensibility, the speaker cautions against false notes, and endorses authors like Henry Mackenzie, whose writings in her view, truly embody sensibility. More's poem was written when the term 'sensibility' had fully acquired the meanings it had come to stand for and therefore could be named as such.² In the first few

¹ Hannah More, "Sensibility: A Poetical Epistle to the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen" in *Sacred Dramas chiefly intended for Young Persons: the Subjects taken from the Bible. To which are added: Reflections of King Hezekiah, and Sensibility, a Poem* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1787).

² John Mullan notes that the earliest use of the term 'sentimental novel,' which was the frequent epithet for novels with characters possessing the quality of sensibility in 1769 according to the *Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue*. See John Mullan, "Sentimental Novels" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 238. Mullan's pithy distinction between the terms sensibility and sentimental -- "a person possessed 'sensibility,' a text was 'sentimental'" -- is elaborated on in his description of characters (and readers) with virtue as possessing sensibility, and the use of the epithet 'sentimental' for a text that "promised an occasion for fine feeling" (238). The term 'sensibility' seems to be used frequently though in association with poetry. Charlotte Smith's Preface to her poems *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) appeals to "readers with a sensibility of heart." Besides poems on sensibility like Ann Yearsley's "Addressed to Sensibility" (1787),

lines of the poem quoted above, the speaker dwells on those who lack sensibility and cannot partake of its power to give succor to those who yearn to be touched by an expansive heart. In the later apostrophe to Sensibility, it is cited as “Virtue’s seed,” and described as a quality that grants its possessor a unique ethical knowledge and that, significantly, precedes the light of reason and reflection. It is also important to note that sensibility is described in terms of an unpremeditated and non-volitional immediacy suggested by a range of adjectives such as “hasty,” “sudden,” and “quick.” This immediacy sanctifies sensibility, which is presented as inseparable from the virtues the poem lists as synonymous with it such as “tender anguish,” “Benevolence without Prudence,” unswerving “friendship,” “melting Charity,” “artless Love,” “the delight to give,” and “the Sympathy Divine.” The poem goes on to locate sensibility in elevated beings with “gen’rous souls,” “exalted sense,” and “refined taste.” This enumeration of a long range of semantic resonances indicates that sensibility, even while encompassing all these qualities, is not reducible to any of them and its meaning must be gleaned or sensed through the virtues it produces.

The idea of a “social sympathy” used to illumine sensibility in the poem, is a complex one, as it views sensibility’s offices as reaching out to objects of sympathy, which include particular relationships like “friend” and “parent,” and an impersonal collective like “country” (284). Sensibility, in this view, could sanctify our existing relations or forge new ones with a larger collective.

there were a range of ironic ones on ‘Indifference’ that were supposed panegyrics to the quality of apathy, a quality viewed in these poems as an antidote to the intensity of sensation that sensibility brings, such as Frances Greville’s “Ode to Indifference” (1759) in *The Poetical Calendar* (1763), and Ann Yearsley’s “To Indifference” in her *Poems on Various Subjects* (1787). A range of early sentimental drama, like Joseph Addison’s *Cato* (1713) and George Lillo’s *The London Merchant* (1731), did not usually use either term.

However, the speaker also cautions against the dangers of a fraudulent type of sensibility bemoaning how “FEELING boasts her ever-tearful eye,” and the speaker warns against an ostentatious display of feelings which can empty this virtue, making a “counterfeit” of “Pity.” ‘Pity’ and ‘sympathy’ are the two synonyms used most often in the poem for Sensibility which the speaker says “eludes the chains/ Of Definition” (243-44). More’s poem provides a glimpse into why the subject of my study –sensibility —is notoriously hard to pin down,³ and how accounts of sensibility in the eighteenth century often needed to be accompanied with a warning about its possible perversion. Even Hannah More’s paean to sensibility, which she regards as a pre-eminent virtue, cannot conceal the internal fissures that threaten the idea of sensibility.

How does the novel of sensibility register at the level of form, the many contradictions, and potential inauthenticity that informs the idea of sensibility? More specifically, what does the tension between spontaneity and reflection do to the idea of character in the novel of sensibility? In seeking answers to these questions, I explore four novels – Sarah Fielding’s *David Simple* (1744), Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1748), Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* (1771), and Tobias Smollett’s *Humphry Clinker* (1771) – that represent sensibility in characters largely distinguished by their reactivity, and a troubled relationship with self-conscious reflection. Two problems in the representation of sensibility are of particular interest in my project – firstly, the

³ The many resonances of sensibility make it liable to as many readings. Markman Ellis not only notes the difficulty of separating terms like the novel of sensibility, literary sentiment, and sentimentalism but declares sensibility as “undefinable from the beginning.” See Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, gender and commerce in the sentimental novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 36. Hereafter page numbers are cited in the text.

emphasis on unsullied virtue in the characters of sensibility that were to be explicitly depicted as devoid of any self-interest, and secondly, how sensibility in these characters enabled particular affective bonds with strangers outside their circle of familiars. Since what is felt closely was believed to be more vivid in its impression on the human mind, sensibility enabled a form of sociability that forged relationships of an individual to other individuals, and also helped to imaginatively produce a larger community of strangers connected by affective bonds.⁴

Within the novels, the very idea of an unselfconscious compassion unfolds along with a critical distance that is predisposed to demystify such expressions of pure feeling. In the novels of sensibility, therefore, spontaneous compassion is inseparable from and encased by its own critique. The novel form, as I hope to demonstrate, with its self-reflexive capacities best captured sensibility because it could then be represented as an immediate experience and yet be framed by the self-reflexive mode the novel could afford.⁵ In my reading, therefore, the novel of sensibility articulates its own versions of sensibility and through the self-reflexive nature of the form, the novel incorporates the critiques of

⁴ See Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press 2004), for an account of the early modern period beginning with the Renaissance in which he notes that individualism does not displace the idea of community as is often thought but replaces it with a new dynamic of connectedness between an individual and society. He notes how “modernity gives rise to new forms of sociality” (18) with individualism replacing hierarchy, and again “connecting humans as social beings (20).”

⁵ As a modern mode of knowledge about sensibility, the novel is able to present and consciously explicate what the phenomenon of sensibility is. See Michael McKeon’s account of what makes modernity different from traditional cultures in *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). In his account, “‘traditional’ knowledge is tacit in the sense of being deeply embedded in a political, social, and cultural matrix of practice whose guidance suffuses daily experience and discourages the separation out of knowledge for self-conscious examination. “Modern” knowledge is, on the contrary, an explicit and self-conscious awareness. . . . Disembedded from the matrix of experience it seeks to explain, modern knowledge is defined precisely by its explanatory ambition to separate itself from its object of knowledge sufficiently to fulfill the epistemological demand that what is known must be divided from the process by which it is known”(xix). In my project then, the novel allows for the experience of sensibility to be depicted in its fullness more so because the self-conscious form of the novel allows a clearer view of the object of study.

sensibility and subjects characters of sensibility to a range of suspicions.⁶ Especially since Mandeville's attack that saw self-interest in even the most admirable virtues of pity and compassion, inherent self-interest became the point many writings on man's natural humanity had to defend against.⁷ This negotiation is re-scripted within novels of sensibility through formal and thematic means.

Prefacing my exploration of the novels is an initial chapter on eighteenth-century moral philosophy that examines philosophical debates on benevolence and sympathy related to the concept of sensibility. These debates served as a counter-force to the troubling but influential account of self-interest and the normative position it had come to occupy in the period. My account of eighteenth-century moral philosophy seeks to situate the negotiation of self-interest and sociability undertaken in the novels, within a broader history of ideas.

In what is still one of the best introductions to the meanings of the term 'sensibility,' in the eighteenth century, Janet Todd's book *Sensibility: An Introduction* describes this "key term of the period" as "an innate sensitiveness or susceptibility," and "a quickness to display compassion for suffering."⁸ Todd sees it as a specific term arising in the mid-eighteenth century and she identifies the representation of this "cult" in texts that

⁶ For the most elaborate attacks on virtue, particularly those associated with sensibility like Pity and Compassion, that was widely influential in the period, see Bernard Mandeville, "An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue" and "An Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools" in *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, 2 vols. ed. F. B. Kaye (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988). He articulates suspicions of concealed self-interest in these virtues that range from hypocrisy and bad faith to vainglory and lust.

⁷ See A.O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) for a discussion on the history of self-interest.

⁸ Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (New York: Methuen, 1986) 7. Page numbers are hereafter cited in the text of the paper.

demanded an “exhibition of pathos and unqualified virtue” (8).⁹ In a more recent account of the term, Ann Jessie Van Sant notes that although it seems easy to separate the meaning of sensibility and sentiment – “sensibility is associated with the body, sentiment with the mind” – this distinction is not always observed in the writings of the period, as “both sentiment/sentimental and sensibility were related to immediate moral and aesthetic responsiveness.”¹⁰ This observation highlights the fluid nature of sensibility’s origins in the mind and body. In a morality now increasingly based in the passions, it was regarded as Van Sant puts it, as “an ‘inward pain’ in response to the suffering of others ” (5). Lynn Festa defines ‘sentimentality’ as a literary mode and distinguishes it from ‘sensibility’ and ‘sympathy.’¹¹ For her, sensibility describes an “individual’s susceptibility to particular kinds and degrees of feeling,” and “sympathy alludes to mobility of emotion between different individuals,” thus ascribing to both terms a positive function of creating bonds between people.¹²

⁹ Todd argues for the centrality of sensibility in the eighteenth century as different from the pathos expressed in Greek, medieval and Renaissance literature. She explains the rise of sensibility as due to “an alliance of interests” in moral philosophy and literature which focused on the emotion and virtue of sympathy, which was more an emotional susceptibility than a rational thought. She also notes its contradictions where a belief in fellow-feeling was marked by an increased solipsism in man.

¹⁰ Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 4-5, hereafter cited in the text.

¹¹ The term sympathy is complicated by Adam Smith’s complex use of it from a term used for instinctive empathy to his use view of sympathy as a cognitive tool. See Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982; based on the sixth edition of 1790). For Smith the word sympathy often functions in the first instance as a cognition of feelings. To cite an example from him, a person who is suddenly blessed with good fortune and is likely to be envied by others, will likely subdue the signs of his new-found prosperity because he ought to “have sympathy with our envy and aversion to his happiness” (41). In this sense sympathy is a tool to sense the feelings of others by seeing ourselves through their eyes.

¹² See Lynn M. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

The moral and social function of sensibility has been a key part of scholarship on the term. Ann Van Sant's account, for instance, draws our attention to "the general shift of the foundation of moral life from reason and judgment to the affection," as sensibility was cited as the source for "an intensely felt humanity or philanthropy" (5). Todd too sees sensibility as a concept allied to the realm of ethics that, in her view, usually denoted the trumping of reason by emotion to forge bonds between people across society. John Mullan explicitly explores the relationship of sensibility to sociability in his study of the lives of its key authors.¹³ The representation of sensibility as a powerful and imaginative form of human solidarity pointed to a model of sociability that allowed the individual to step out of himself and connect with strangers. The social function of sensibility, however, does not remain static through the period according to Todd. She suggests a subtle shift from the earlier novels of the mid-eighteenth century about sensibility, where the emphasis was on "benevolence" and a "generous heart" and where an active virtue could be seen, to after the 1760s where, increasingly, the thrust is on feeling itself, in the virtue gained from feeling "pity" for another.

The last few decades have seen a proliferation in scholarship on sensibility that pays close attention to its discursive function in domains other than philosophy and literature, such as science.¹⁴ The physiological dimension of sensibility has come to play a

¹³ See John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). An excellent reading of the ties between sensibility and sociability is John Mullan's *Sentiment and Sociability* who argues that writers like Hume, Richardson, and Sterne use "a language of feeling to represent necessary social bonds." Mullan explores the forms of sociability in the personal lives of these writers in conjunction with their writings.

¹⁴ Scholars now recognize not only the influence of other spheres like science or philosophy on the discourse of sensibility but are increasingly seeing a two-way traffic by tracing elements of sensibility encoded in the changing discourses of eighteenth-century science and philosophy. G. S. Rousseau and Ann Van Sant argue for the importance of physiology in the generation of the meaning of sensibility, and Jessica Riskin examines the intangible threads of sensibility in the emerging rational discourses of science

significant role in discussions on the link that sensibility forges between the mind and the body. G. S. Rousseau, in his book on the traffic between literature and science, is unclear about the exact origins of the discourse of sensibility and surmises that it originated in literature, was imported into science, and then became a literary movement.¹⁵ According to Rousseau, “Albrecht von Haller, the Swiss Protestant physiologist, made sensibility the centerpiece of his physiology, claiming its complete dependence on nerves when he wrote that there can be neither sensibility nor irritability without them” (229). Rousseau sees other scientists and literary writers transforming a neutral medical discourse into an ethical movement, a process that, however, can be seen to originate in Haller: “Haller considers the primitive sensibility of sensory impressions merely as the microcosm of sensibility’s greater role in the macrocosm of human affairs, as it was displayed in human sympathy, empathy, benevolence, virtue – all the cults of sensibility in the moral realm” (230). Such a view places a somatic understanding of sensibility on a continuum with its moral and social manifestations. This represents an important strand of argumentation—one that I will draw upon in subsequent chapters.

Many critical discussions of the term suggest that it never was the unqualified virtue it was set up to be. Todd sees the term as starting to lose its positive association from the

in England and France. Like Riskin, Susan James in the field of philosophy calls for the importance of the passions in any study of rational philosophy noting that the passions in the seventeenth century “straddled the mind and body” and “questioned the idea that the mind was transparent to itself.”

See, for instance, Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), and G. S Rousseau, “Nerves, spirits, and fibres: towards defining the origins of sensibility” in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 3 (1976):137-57, hereafter cited in the text.

¹⁵ In the changing medical debates of the time, the irritable and the sensible were different qualities associated with different parts of the body. This discourse, according to G.S. Rousseau, was imported into England by Robert Whytt, “the Newtonian professor of medicine at Edinburgh University whose work on reflex actions remains a classic of neurophysiology, imported Hallerian sensibility to Britain, challenged it, popularized it, debated it; so did Cullen, John Brown of Brunonian medicine” (230-31).

1770s onwards but her account of the term's later decline does not take note of its rather besieged position right from its inception.¹⁶ The precise moral value of sensibility has often been doubted in modern literary criticism especially if its value is assessed vis-à-vis the yardstick of concrete, benevolent action. Here, I'd like to draw attention to one of the earliest critical debates in modern criticism between R. S. Crane and Donald Greene in order to signal how some of the terms of contention resonate through the critiques of sensibility. R. S. Crane in an article traces the element of benevolence in the cult of sensibility to the religious Latitudinarian tradition of the seventeenth century that, according to Crane, stressed on universal benevolence as a natural feeling in man.¹⁷

Donald Greene in a rejoinder to Crane's article objects to the origins of sensibility as being located in the Latitudinarian tradition on several counts. Here I focus on his dispute with Crane's assertion that Latitudinarians see a "self-approving joy" in doing good. The problem with stressing on a natural instinct towards benevolence is one that Crane himself identifies with an egoistic hedonism and forms the basis for Greene's rejection of it as an improbable idea that in any case remains unsubstantiated by evidence. Greene

¹⁶ The problem of seeing when the critique of sensibility began can be seen in two ways – firstly, its growing popularity and more explicit naming by the 1770s forced many to defend its 'true' version as against its counterfeit versions, and secondly, in attacking sensibility, writers often clarified how its correct form remained of value. See Henry Mackenzie, untitled article in *The Lounger*, No. 20 (Sat. June 18, 1785) and Hannah More, "On the Danger of Sentimental or Romantic Connexions" (1778) in *Works* 10 Vols. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853). Mackenzie's essay in the journal *The Lounger* is often cited as proving the fact that he had disliked the notion of sensibility all along. However, the essay can be read as dismissing the way sensibility was now being depicted as a performable code that offered a quick make-over of refinement to the immoral. Hannah More's paean to the moral power of sensibility in her poem "Sensibility: An Epistle to the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen" (1782) is a contrast to her essay "On the Danger of Sentimental or Romantic Connexions" (1778) which is on the dangerous effects of sentimentality. But in her essay against sentimental characters, she argues that true virtue must be rooted in a genuine sensibility.

¹⁷ See R. S. Crane, "Studies Toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling,'" *ELH* 1(1934): 205-30; Donald Greene, "Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling' Reconsidered," *Modern Philology* 75 (1977): 159-83 hereafter cited in the text. Greene argues against Crane's view, that there was a sharp difference between those who stressed good works and those who stressed faith, as all saw good works as a natural part of true faith and the Latitudinarians had not abandoned the idea that "human nature was universally corrupted" (160).

identifies the seeming pride that can accompany the virtue of goodwill and charity. Objections to sensibility in the novels have been of a similar nature and warn of motives of vainglory involved in the display of compassion. Greene notes the explicit injunction against self-approval, for instance in Luke 18:10-14, where Jesus calls self-glorification of one's virtue a sin: "For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (174). Greene sees an uneasy conflation of the instinct for goodness and a self-approving egoism, and thereby dismisses the possibility that the Latitudinarians would have sanctioned such an idea of a self-conscious virtue which, as I demonstrate below, also becomes a point of contention in the novels. The shadow of self-interest falls on the problem of self-conscious virtue and problematizes the notion of a pure compassion. The resolution to this problem of protecting the purity of sensibility from such skepticism is, in my account, one of the primary engines that drives the novels of sensibility.

The possibility of separating a pure sensibility from the domain of action and intention opens into the faith versus good works debate, which in turn could be re-cast in modern critical debates on sensibility as a debate between a secular faith in man's instinct of compassion versus the demand to manifest and prove this goodness in explicit actions. Whether sensibility is a useless, effete, and self-indulgent emotion or one that goads man to reform the world for the betterment of all seems to be the underlying thrust of much scholarship. The nature of sensibility as more a receptivity or a susceptibility to experiencing the feelings of others seems to restrict it for many scholars to nothing more than a conservative form of politics where passive compassion substitutes for active intervention in alleviating the distress of others. An instance of such a polarity in the

critical tradition on sensibility can be seen in the difference in interpreting the term passion as a significant marker of sensibility. For Eric Auerbach, despite the sense of “passio” referring to pathos and passivity, such passivity came to be transformed into an active receptivity in traditions ranging from the stoics who saw passion as active, to some Christian sects for whom suffering and ecstasy went together.¹⁸ On the other hand, R. F. Brissenden argues for the ironic distance between moral idealism and practical action highlighted in literature.¹⁹ He argues that the passivity of the victim is crucial to sensibility and evokes a masochistic object necessary to the representation of sensibility. In criticism following Brissenden too, the perceived passivity of sensibility is seen as allowing its incorporation into a range of collusions with a suspect politics counter to its egalitarian claims.

Specific instances of sensibility as politically suspect and in collusion with regressive ideologies can be identified over the last three decades that suggest variously that it was merely narcissistic, preserved aristocratic values or promoted imperial projects.²⁰ Some readings debate whether sensibility in these novels is really even being advocated as a

¹⁸ Erich Auerbach, “*Passio* as Passion” (trans. 1941) *Criticism*, Summer, 2001 and Martin Elsky - Introduction to Erich Auerbach, “*Passio* as Passion” [“*Passio* als Leidenschaft”], *Criticism*, Summer, 2001.

¹⁹ R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (New York: Harper & Row 1974).

²⁰ See for instance John K. Sheriff, *The Good-natured Man: The Evolution of a Moral Ideal, 1660-1800* (Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1982); Ruth Perry, “Home Economics: Representations of Poverty in Eighteenth-Century Fiction,” in *Blackwell's Companion to Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, ed. Paula Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Co., 2006); Robert Markley, “Sentimentality as Polemic: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and The Theatrics of Virtue” in *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (London: Methuen, 1987) 210-30; Lynn M. Festa, *Sentimental Figures* (2006). John Sheriff sees the eighteenth-century men of sensibility as a degenerate version of the earlier type of the ‘good-natured man’ because they display self-indulgence. Ruth Perry describes sensibility as advocating a “temporary feudalism” that takes attention away from the deprived to the giver. Robert Markley sees it as a form of “aristocratic paternalism.” Lynn Festa gives ‘sentimentality’ a negative meaning of “disconnecting people” and in its literary form, she sees it as sometimes used in the service of the British and French colonial projects.

basis of morality or whether there is instead an ironical or a covert critique of sensibility meant to debunk its effects. For instance, Thomas Preston in a literary history of the misanthrope as a “satiric benevolist,” views the figure representing sensibility in eighteenth-century novels as “grotesque” in a realist world.²¹ Sensibility has also increasingly come to be regarded as a parodic idea or an inherently dubious one that cannot sustain its moral import.²²

On the other hand, for scholars who see sensibility as essentially a politically radical force in its time, the liberating aspects of sensibility are read in as crucially informing the ideals of the French revolution, and enabling the rise of the middle class by replacing the aristocratic notion of worth based on status through a democratization of benevolent feelings now seen as available to everyone. Historians Paul Langford and G. Barker-Benfield describe the crucial deployment of sensibility in the larger eighteenth-century culture and discourse of commerce, seeing it as enabling a new gentility for the middle

²¹ Thomas R. Preston, *Not in Timon's Manner: Feeling, Misanthropy, and Satire in Eighteenth-Century England*, Studies in the Humanities; no. 9: Literature, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1975).

²² This view is aptly expressed by Markman Ellis who views the sentimental novel as setting out to affirm a “humanitarian sensibility,” (49) yet describes it as a “sentimentalist equivocation” (66) and often “quietist (79).” Many articles and books discuss eighteenth-century sensibility and its limited potential as an ethical and progressive force. George A. Starr, in his classic and finely observed reading of sentimental novels, “‘Only a Boy’: Notes on Sentimental Novels,” *Genre* 10 (1977): 501-27, sees the idea of stasis in the “anti-Bildungsroman” nature of the novel of sensibility as a kind of failure to secure a place for child-like men outside conventional masculinity. Everett Zimmerman, “Fragments of History and *The Man of Feeling*: From Richard Bentley to Walter Scott,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23.3 (Spring 1990): 283-300 focuses on the material transmission of the story and the editorial reconstruction in the man of feeling which he sees as “equivocal.” Van Sant also identifies in sensibility a tension “between curiosity and pity” (xii), therefore cautioning against the tendency to regard sensibility as an unqualified compassion. She suggests that objects of pity were deployed for pathos and scientific demonstration. Maureen Harkin, in the introduction to her edition of *The Man of Feeling*, (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2005) sees Harley’s efficacy as questioned within the novel. According to her, Harley’s stance of anti-imperialism is mocked implied by the lowly status of literature in the way Harley’s manuscript is treated in the novel. Barbara Benedict sees the narrative framework of sensibility as controlling the revolutionary power of feeling allowed to women. Barbara M. Benedict, *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction, 1745-1800*, AMS Studies in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. 26, (New York: AMS Press, 1994).

class.²³ The radical possibilities of sensibility have been demonstrated by Chris Jones and Marilyn Butler who see sensibility as a radical resource that fed into a revolutionary politics.²⁴

The diverse range of critical responses to the idea of sensibility in the eighteenth century provides the scholarly context within which my own arguments about sensibility will unfold in the following order:

In chapter one, I examine four texts from eighteenth-century moral philosophy that explicitly address questions of self-interest and sociability. In my reading, I explore the reliance of both instinct and reason in the formation of social bonds, with instinct or sympathy as the underlying bond between individuals, and reason as offering the objective distance to imagine a virtual community.

In chapter two, I examine two novels – Sarah Fielding’s *David Simple* and Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* – that elucidate the figure of the man of feeling associated with sensibility in the period. I probe the narrative form of these novels as an essential frame that consciously encloses and secures an unselfconsciously compassionate hero. I also observe the sociability evoked as these heroes step outside familial networks not to acquire a new family through marriage but also to make strangers familiar.

²³Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, New Oxford History of England (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1992).

²⁴ See Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (London: Routledge, 1993). Butler’s work on Austen sees her as hostile to the revolutionary potential of sensibility especially in her treatment of women characters with illicit passions; Jones links sensibility centrally to the 1790s and as contributing to the French revolution.

In chapter three, I study *Clarissa*, a text long associated with the novel form's turn to interiority, to see how Richardson strives to keep his heroine in a state of purity despite a model of characterization that rests on an exhortation to self-consciousness for ulterior, dubious motives. In doing so, my chapter poses the following questions: can sensibility co-exist with self-consciousness in female characters of feeling? What sort of toll does the idea of interiority take on the nature of sensibility?

In chapter four, I examine the seemingly misanthropic figure of Matt Bramble in Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*, whose irritability is usually seen as misanthropic, and that I read as a form of an engaged sociability. I investigate how the bringing of a satiric and sentimental side together in one figure, may allow for a conflation of particular bonds of compassion with a rational spirit for public good.

Chapter 1

“A Public is Recognized”: The Transformation of Sociability in Eighteenth-Century Moral Philosophy

Introduction

How does eighteenth-century moral philosophy relate to the literary depiction of sensibility in novels from the mid- to the late eighteenth century? What kinds of discursive affinities connect the examination of compassion in moral philosophy and the emphasis on sensibility in the novels? My reading here of four key eighteenth-century moral philosophy texts draws out the common conceptual infrastructure that serves to ground a related set of literary and philosophical engagements with the notions of self, affect, compassion, the social, and the public.¹ This common infrastructure in the moral philosophy comes into focus in ways that are useful to counterpose with their embodiment in the literary.

More specifically, a detailed discussion of the key arguments of four central texts of eighteenth-century moral philosophy brings into focus a set of generative tensions that

¹ Theories of sociability were used as a conceptual hinge to imagine the self in relation to society and were central in the eighteenth century not only in the field of moral philosophy, but also to ideas about civil society and the public sphere, to debates around the growing commercialization of society and man's ethical position, to the rise of the novel of sensibility, the anxiety about privacy, and theories of aesthetics. See for instance Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; 2003). Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

get articulated in the literary register in specific ways that subsequent chapters will track. Some of these tensions, like the relationship between the affective response to the distress of others, and a more self-consciously ethical stance towards public good, get re-configured with reference to the formal pressures of the novel form, which specifically attempts to navigate the gap between the felt intensity of particular affective responses and a generically-mandated drive towards a self-consciousness in the novel. The novels of sensibility, which I explore in later chapters, offer different formal responses to these generative tensions, responses that in turn have important repercussions for the idea of character as well as that of narrative emplotment.

The terms used by philosophers to denote spontaneous feelings of concern that a person may have for other persons, like ‘goodness’, ‘benevolence’, and ‘sympathy’ can, with some qualifications, be seen as cognate with the literary term sensibility which, in eighteenth-century novels, denoted spontaneous feelings of compassion by characters towards someone unfamiliar to them, without the interference of any self-interested motives. The depiction of such characters of sensibility in the novels and their indifference to self-gain seems complementary to the kind of benevolence and sympathy that the philosophers discuss. The particular human interactions in the novels serve to show the power of vivid passions experienced, as the springs of sensibility are activated by the cognition of another person in distress. The field of moral philosophy provides an important frame of reference for a reader of eighteenth-century literature. Some of the key terms debated in both these fields were the self and society, the private and the

public,² and self-interest and sociability –terms that were very much in the making during the period. These terms all revolve around a version of what the self meant.

The idea of self in the eighteenth century had come to indicate a self-reflexive individual as the object of his own reflective consciousness, a subject of his own feelings, and viewed by his own cognition.³ Philosophical discourse responded to the felt, if only emergent, separation between this self and society.⁴ Moral philosophy of the early eighteenth century centered on constructing a relationship between this self-conscious

² See Jeff Weintraub's article, "The Theory and the Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," for a useful discussion of the slippery nature of the terms 'private' and 'public' in Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar eds., *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). In one of his frames for understanding the private and public, Weintraub describes "public life as sociability" (16). By this, he means that "the public/private distinction in modern culture is that which demarcates the "private" realm of "personal life" from the "public" realm of the 'gesellschaft' (market oriented and formal relations in society)." In his frame of understanding the public as the social, the private and public would refer to the personal and impersonal – i.e. the re-division of a person's social life into the world of the domestic family and the social world outside of instrumental relationships" (20). In other words, the private life is divided into the private/public or intimate/non-instrumental domains. In what is of interest to my project, Weintraub sees the public here as having implications of disinterested affective ties. In such a view then, in the novels of sensibility the ties of sociability that are casually and ephemerally formed by characters through sensibility, and lacking in any pre-determined mutually useful purpose, creates a space for a meaning of the social that is closer to the public i.e. the non-instrumental.

³ See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), particularly the section on "Inwardness" for a broad argument on how a self-reflexive self comes to its "full form" in Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers (160). Taylor distinguishes between being able to think about the self, and what he calls a "radically reflexive stance" that emerges through the adoption of the first-person standpoint" (130). In his history of the self, Taylor grants the origins of "radical reflexivity" to Augustine, who sees it as a way to god, that brings to the fore a kind of presence to oneself which is inseparable from being the agent of experience" (131) and this reflexivity is central to our moral understanding" (139). In Taylor's trajectory, Descartes gives this inwardness a new direction by situating moral sources within us" (143). Locke pushes this reflexivity further where a person is not a self but always an awareness of a self. Taylor remarks on how this "completely third-person" perspective creates a human being from which "the last vestiges of subjectivity seem to have been expelled" (175-6).

⁴ Charles Taylor in his study *The Social Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) terms this period the end of what he calls the "Great Disembedding" which he explains as the process by which society is "reconceived as made up of individuals." Taylor examines how this re-conception is produced by the 'Social Imaginary,' by which he means "the way we collectively imagine, even pretheoretically, our social life" (50).

self and society and alongside, sought to harmonize self-interest with public interest.⁵ In order to do this, it articulated a concept of sociability in relation to the conflict perceived between self-interest and the public good.⁶ This was debated by putting into play a pair of terms to denote both the natural impulses of concern expressed between people, and the more impersonal and constructed bond imagined between self and society. This pairing allowed for an elasticity of two perceived qualities in human nature to complement and balance each other. A natural compassion or sympathy in human nature could be complemented or curbed by a self-conscious conception of a harmonious society. For Shaftesbury, this pair of terms would be goodness and virtue, for Hutcheson, benevolence and moral sense, for Hume, sympathy and justice, and for Smith, sympathy and the impartial spectator. The first term in each pair relies on showing a natural affect of compassion between people. The second term in each pair draws on the evocation of a consciousness that can bracket the self-interest of each person as well as limit their affection for a few, and produce an inclination towards a larger and abstract collective.

⁵ Mary Poovey notes how moral philosophy was able to present its propositions as different from, and more truthful, than earlier philosophy by assimilating the objectivity that natural philosophy claimed for itself. See Mary Poovey, "The Liberal Civil Subject and the Social in Eighteenth-Century British Moral Philosophy," *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002)125-45. According to Poovey, British moral philosophers "appropriated a variant of the apparently nonjudgmental method that natural philosophers had developed to study the particulars of the natural world. This method, which depended upon observation and experiment, had enabled natural philosophers such as Robert Boyle to argue that the knowledge they produced was "objective," in the sense of nonsectarian. Appropriating this method allowed moral philosophers to argue that the observations they made about the dynamics of subjectivity were as reliable--because as systematic--as the observations about nature for which natural philosophers had already established social credibility" (140).

⁶ Self-interest, and an opposition to or accommodation of it within a theory of sociability, is a concern in the moral philosophy of the period. J. A. W. Gunn, in an exhaustive account of the idea of the public good, observes that "from the age of Hobbes to that of Bishop Butler and beyond, ethical speculation was dominated by the nature and consequences of self-interest." See J. A. W. Gunn, *Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) 277. Hereafter, page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

These terms play upon each other, drawing on associations with its twin term to strengthen the idea of a sociability that is or must be geared towards public good.

Self-interest in human nature as being in friction with the social passions became a salient point to which eighteenth-century moral philosophy responded. For instance, in the opening words of Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) that begins with the clause, "how selfish soever man may be supposed," the term 'howsoever' meaning to whatever extent, here with "selfish" in between the 'how' and 'soever', indicates that the selfishness of human nature to whatever degree had come to seem normative. But its qualification too seemed to have become routine: "there are evidently some principles in [man's] nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to man, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it." Selfishness is balanced by a natural interest in the condition of others. Smith claims that this feeling of fellowship in man makes others' happiness or an alleviation of their unhappiness, "necessary" to him. "Necessary" here would imply a feeling that is involuntary and is made an unavoidable part of his own happiness. Smith posits fellow-feeling in man's nature as a "principle" indicating that the feeling of conjoined interests is foundational in man, an original faculty that is his essence though man "derives" no evident gain in wishing for the happiness of others. Even the word 'interest' here, (used in the phrase "interest him in the fortune of others") unlike its subsequent synonymity with self-interest, means a concern or passion on behalf of others, i.e. an engagement and participation that need not always be self-directed. The debate on the selfish passions in man was thus co-produced alongside a vigorous discussion on the natural compassion in man. Shaftesbury had already invigorated a debate on "common sense or the love of

mankind” as essentially constituting the sociability of man.⁷ He deplored the suggestion that man suppresses natural affection “turning every passion towards private advantage, a narrow self-end” (56).

I seek to trace the contours of sociability in eighteenth-century moral philosophy through an examination of four texts -- Shaftesbury’s “An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit” (1711),⁸ Francis Hutcheson’s “An Inquiry Concerning the Original of Our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good” (1725),⁹ David Hume’s *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40),¹⁰ and Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).¹¹ My aim is to ascertain how a desire for what Shaftesbury calls “universal good” was in the process of being theorized alongwith the representation of relations between individuals as affectively powerful. The debate in these texts on the sociability of man dealt with relations between individuals as well as between an individual and society.

⁷ Shaftesbury’s term ‘common sense’ is explained in “Sensus Communis, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour (1709),” his playful piece on the importance of genuinely free conversation in producing virtue. Also, in his essay “Soliloquy,” he advocated the method of conducting a conversation inward, not to lead to solipsism but to publicness. See Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, “Sensus Communis, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour in a Letter to a Friend” and “Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author” in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 57. Hereafter “Sensus Communis” is abbreviated as *Sensus* and page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text alongwith Part and Section number.

⁸ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, “An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit” in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Page numbers from this edition are cited parenthetically in the text alongwith Part and Section number.

⁹ Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises* ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004; based on 2nd edition of 1726). Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁰ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature, Being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1978). Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, reprinted from the OUP edition, 1976; (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982; based on his sixth edition of 1790). Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

I use the term ‘sociability’ to mean what the Shaftesburian term “sociableness” or “associating spirits” indicated (*Sensus Communis*, Part III, section 2, 53) i.e. the desire in men to associate with others. Shaftesbury elaborates on this desire by using various terms like “herding,” “fellowship,” and “affection” that he claims leads man from love for “kindred and clan” to “country,” and finally to “universal good” (*Sensus*, Part III, section II, 51). In other words, sociability includes man’s personal and intimate ties with his familiar circle as well as his relation to an impersonal society. For Shaftesbury, it is this widening spiral of the social passions emanating from man and progressing outward that puts in motion the near and far relations of men and through which “a public is recognized” (*Sensus*, Part III, section 2, 51).

The terms ‘society’ and ‘public’ in the eighteenth century (where ‘public’ was often used as an adjective like public interest, public good, public spiritedness) were often drawn together by writers, for instance, like where Shaftesbury says that “a public spirit can come only from a social feeling or sense of partnership with human kind ... There is no real love of virtue without the knowledge of public good” (*Sensus*, Part III, section 1, 50).¹² The social and public are aligned here and with it, public good and virtue are aligned too.¹³

¹² In *Sensus Communis*, Shaftesbury melds common sense with common good -- “[Some commentators] make this common sense of the poet, by a Greek derivation, to signify sense of public weal and of the common interest, love of the community or society, natural affection, humanity, obligingness, or that sort of civility which rises from a just sense of the common rights of mankind, and the natural equality there is among those of the same species” (48). Shaftesbury allies these words though here he is critical of these commentators.

¹³ The discussion of sociability was itself a new emphasis in philosophy. See Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation*. Habermas offers a reading of how virtue as a political term changes in the discussion of sociability. Habermas observes that in ancient Greek states, “the virtues, whose catalogue was codified by Aristotle, were ones whose test lies in the public sphere” (4) and he sees “this ideological template” as present through the Renaissance till the seventeenth century. In his account of the nature of the modern public sphere in the eighteenth century, political philosophy is transformed into moral debates and comes under the category of the social. What were earlier considered political questions and centered around what

The notion of a public good was naturally not new, and according to J. A. W. Gunn, it was re-conceived from an earlier version of a common good.¹⁴ The traditional view of the common good as Gunn describes it, was that according to earlier beliefs, private interests must bow before the common good, whereas the newer individualist discourse pitted private interests as a counter to state or monarchical interest. Hence the gradual replacement of “common good” with “public interest” or “public good” can be observed. Michael McKeon in explaining the term ‘public interest,’ notes that “it is premised on the conviction that interests are multiple and that no single interest—not even that of the monarch—is universal or absolute.”¹⁵

The notion of multiple interests as equalizing and yet potentially frictional produced new ways of imagining sociability. The category of private interest received renewed attention and was seen as excluding or even being a foil to public good.¹⁶ Without the framework of a religious injunction towards benevolence, the question that moral philosophy addressed was how exactly the idea of private interest could be woven into a desire for public good.

should be based on reason and nature became questions of human sociability (103). The moral could now be outside politics (though naturally bearing on political questions too) and reconfigured as social behavior. In Habermas’s view, the transformation of the political into the social through moral philosophy allows a critique of politics that may not otherwise have been possible. The emergence of the public sphere, he demonstrates, is made possible by the creation of private persons imagining themselves as non-partisan citizens who can objectively imagine public interests.

¹⁴ Gunn explains that the term ‘common good’ held too many traditional moral associations so either the term public interest or public good were used, the former often in a political context. He reminds us that the term ‘public interest’ was common from the seventeenth century beginning with the civil war, “gradually replacing the ‘common good’ of scholastic philosophy and the ‘*salus populi*’ favoured by Roman law” (ix). Moral philosophy exerts pressure to renew a desire for this refurbished public good.

¹⁵ Michael McKeon, “Parsing Habermas’s ‘Bourgeois Public Sphere,’” *Criticism* 46 (Spring 2004) 275. Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁶ Hutcheson uses “public” most often as an oppositional term to any kind of selfish gain, for example, “publick spirit” against “selfish,” “publick good” versus “self-interest” (99) and “publick Good” versus “private Advantage” (104).

Yet the problem identified by Shaftesbury and others was not just of self-interest but of the abstract nature of public good that precluded a naturally-felt inclination towards it. Personal relations or even relations between particular strangers could fire the imagination of man, but his lack of “affection” for a remote collective was highlighted in a debate where the promptings for an imaginative connect with an impersonal collective were unclear. Shaftesbury explains the problem as one lying in the difference between an immediate experience and reflecting on an abstract idea, and between the perception of a “community” and a “body politic”:

Universal good, or the interest of the world in general, is a kind of remote philosophical object... In less [smaller] parties, men may be intimately conversant and acquainted with one another. They can there better taste society and enjoy the common good and interest of a more contracted public. They view the whole compass and extent of their community, and see and know particularly whom they serve and to what end they associate and conspire. All men have naturally their share of this combining principle, and ...unless it be happily directed by right reason, it can never find exercise for itself in so remote a sphere as that of the body politic at large. ...[In the body politic] no visible band is formed, no strict alliance, but the conjunction is made with different persons, orders and ranks of men, not sensibly, but in idea, according to that general view or notion of a state or commonwealth... The close sympathy and conspiring virtue is apt to lose itself for want of direction in so wide a field.

(*Sensus Communis*, Part III, section 2, 52)

The ability in men to visually embrace a smaller “contracted public” allows a familiarity that gives them a purpose and drive towards a common good. This “wheels within wheels” (53) sociability as he calls it, may even result in factions or war where for want of a larger domain to manifest their “associating spirits,” men intensify their association with a narrow group. The challenge for writers deliberating on man’s sociability lay in attempting to draw a connection between personal affective bonds and the idea of the welfare of an impersonal and virtual public.

There was not only a felt virtuality about a general public but also about the subject himself. The sense of selfhood in these texts is imbued with an idea of a reflexive consciousness that was elaborated on by Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689).¹⁷ As has often been noted, Locke's notion of consciousness is one that is always "of" or "about" something, the preposition dividing the subject from the object, even if the two are one and the same person. Consciousness in man is to register what knowledge he receives.¹⁸ He says that consciousness is "our Observation employ'd either about external, sensible objects; or about the internal operation of our Minds, perceived or reflected on by ourselves" that produces knowledge.¹⁹ "Observation" entails a noticing, and the added term "employ'd" suggests a labor that is purposeful. For Locke, even in the most immediate and passive receiving of impressions, a consciousness of taking in ideas is present. So consciousness creates a distance that is implicit in all selfhood. The imagining of one's own mind resulted in the understanding of the self as virtual.

¹⁷ See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

¹⁸ Though many arguments about Locke's *Essay* continue over the exact division of the mind or the time lag when a person is conscious of an impression he receives or an idea he thinks about, it is clear that for Locke, knowledge is that which is noticed or observed. The contention has been over the levels of distancing – is consciousness the same as perception or an awareness of a perception, or the same as reflection, and whether there is a time lag between perceiving and knowing one has perceived something. Locke's meaning of the terms awareness, perception, consciousness, and reflection have not yet been agreed upon. See ShelleyWeinberg, "The Coherence of Consciousness in Locke's *Essay*" in *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 25.1 (2008).

¹⁹ Locke, Bk. II, chap. I.2, p. 104. The division of external objects and internal operations of the mind is paralleled by the terms "perceived" or "reflected" which may indicate that the mode of receiving impressions is perception, and the mode of looking within the mind is reflection. But Locke thereafter uses perception and reflection for the mind's internal operations too. Reflection, though, is restricted to ideas got from within the mind, and is always based on reasoning.

The virtuality of a non-material collective of people that Shaftesbury worries about had to then be based on a new imagined fellowship.²⁰ As McKeon argues, “the virtualization of the public sphere also depends on a reconceptualization of the faculty of the imagination as capable ...of a remarkably powerful and productive sort of human solidarity” (276). In other words, the newer virtual representation of social bonds was produced through a simulated connection between an individual and others.

Part I: The Moral Sense

The philosophy of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson increasingly sought to sketch a continuum between the vividness of passions felt in particular encounters between individuals and the less moving specter of a public or society perceived in virtual terms.

i. Shaftesbury: “Private good is not really such, but imaginary”

Shaftesbury’s treatise “An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit” (1711) has been read as a renewal of a classical account of society as an organic whole and which invokes an equation between the virtuous and happy way of life.²¹ This was partly to negotiate a

²⁰ The idea of a virtual collective has been formulated by Benedict Anderson and Jürgen Habermas among others. McKeon glosses Habermas’s idea of the virtuality of the public sphere as a “discursive realm of imagined collectivity where people “come together” in a sense far different from their traditional assembly in the agora, the public square, the meeting hall, or the like” (276). Benedict Anderson conceives of virtuality as the means to imagine a nation, especially through a feeling of simultaneity i.e. each individual imagines others like him in the nation as sharing the same passage of time. He offers the novel and the newspaper as two forms for “re-presenting the kind of imagined community that is the nation” with the novel being “a complex gloss upon the word ‘meanwhile’” (25). See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revd. edn. (London: Verso: 1983, 2006) and Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation* (1989).

²¹ The influence on Shaftesbury of Greek Stoic philosophy and their belief in action is noted by Lawrence Klein in his introduction to *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (xxvii). Klein argues that Shaftesbury saw modern philosophy as alarmingly tending to Epicureanism which emphasized dissociation and therefore Shaftesbury sought to resurrect an active virtue.

growing divide between the conceptions of self-interest and public good in his time through Hobbes's influence.²² Isabel Rivers reads Shaftesbury's career as demonstrating "the classical tension between *otium* [retirement] and *negotium* [service], between on the one hand, private retirement, self-examination, and individual virtue, and on the other, public service, love of one's country, and the good of the whole... For Shaftesbury true self-knowledge is not possible without wide commerce with the world, private virtue without commitment to public good."²³ This tension was negotiated in his "Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit" and reconceived not as separate sides but, as I demonstrate below, goodness and virtue form a mutually constitutive relationship to bring together "a contracted public" with the "body politic."

In order to establish what virtue may comprise, early in the *Inquiry* Shaftesbury distinguishes between 'goodness,' meaning an affection for others available in all species, and 'virtue,' meaning a reflection on goodness, a capacity exclusive to humans. Shaftesbury defines goodness as what is fit or appropriate in "every living creature" (plant, animal or man) in relation to its essence and in consonance with the harmony of "a system or whole" to which the thing belongs. Therefore, nothing can be good or bad unto itself only. He then rebuts the idea of man as disincorporated from society through a series of linked metaphors from nature that stress an organic view of the universe – beings relate to each other as the limbs and organs relate to the body, as do leaves and branches of trees to each other and to one root. In such a system, an anomalous part in a

²² Even Hobbes is not spared from being labeled a moralist by Shaftesbury. In *Sensus Communis* he argues wittily that Hobbes's warning to readers about the selfish nature of men is an act of public spiritedness towards innocent readers (43-44).

²³ Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780, Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

network affects the whole, just as one “pernicious man” is “justly styled an ill man” (169) as he ill-fits in with others and with his own nature. The metaphors of part-whole that are likened to creature-species and man-society allow for parts to exist as units but not independently of each other or of the whole. For Shaftesbury, persons do not just aggregate into a society. Virtue is predicated on man recognizing the web-like nature of the universe and his embedded position in it.

Shaftesbury presents this system as embodying a dynamic process rather than just a static whole of discrete parts. Once a set of parts is re-presented as a part of another whole, it takes on a singular identity. The joining of parts to make a whole is extended infinitely whereby each constituted whole is a part of a larger system. In human terms, this means that a society is not just a conglomeration of people in a whole system but also a firmly-tied group of units gesturing towards something beyond itself. People are not just part of society, but as he puts it, society is part of a “globe or earth,” which is further a part of another system like a “galaxy” (169). His positioning of a whole into a part of something larger, serves to tighten its constituent units so that they lose their discrete identities and forge a whole, thus fitting into a larger pattern. By establishing the interrelated parts of systems, which exist because of the harmony amongst each other, Shaftesbury can claim that virtue must consist in the recognition of that which benefits the system to which a creature belongs.

Since society is shown as an organic whole and the individual as inextricably tied to others, Shaftesbury points out that no self-interest which is inimical to the good of all can really be a good even to the individual. Even an injury to any part, he argues, hurts the whole, and conversely a good for the system will benefit the individual:

Now if, by the natural constitution of any rational creature, the same irregularities of appetite which make him ill to others, make him ill also to himself, and if the same regularity of affections, which causes him to be good in one sense causes him to be good also in the other, then is that goodness by which he is thus useful to others a real good and advantage to himself. And thus virtue and interest may be found at last to agree.

(*Inquiry*, Bk. I, Part II, section 1, 167)

“Appetite” and “affections” are viewed as “irregular” and “regular” respectively. He suggests that appetite is a desire for a personal gratification without any rectitude, and it makes the individual and the system he is part of ill. Shaftesbury emphasizes that true interest cannot be just self-interest, and therefore cannot be opposed to public interest in the Hobbesian sense but in fact they “agree” or concur. Regularity of affections suggests a conformity or symmetry of affections within a system that results in harmony so that “at last” or ultimately, interest and virtue coincide. In such a framework, self-interest cannot be conceived apart from the interest of others and therefore the equation of virtue with interest is not to accommodate a private self-interest but to dismiss as illogical the idea of a discrete self-interest which is not in tune with the good of others. For Shaftesbury, therefore, that which “the subject considered as private good, is not really such but imaginary,” an impossibility because good cannot but be of all (Bk.I, Part II, Sec. 2, 170). The specter of people placing their private good above society’s good, haunts Shaftesbury even as he points out its cosmic harm. He firmly dismisses the idea of a private benefit, which is not in tune with the public, as “imaginary” or illogical.

Once Shaftesbury has shown the private and public as overlapping and the welfare of both as congruent, he pursues the logic of this argument so that a reader must acknowledge this congruence and must reflect on his own actions. Though goodness is natural and universal to all creatures, it is the possibility of conscious virtue or merit that

differentiates men from other creatures. Selfishness must then be recognized not only as an immoral choice but as an irrational one: “Everyone discerns and owns a public interest, and is conscious of what affects his fellowship or community. When we say, therefore, of a creature that ‘he has wholly lost the sense of right and wrong’, we suppose that, being able to discern the good and ill of his species, he has at the same time no concern for either” (Part III, section 1, 177-78). Shaftesbury stresses that those who pursue their self-interest to the exclusion of the interests of “their species,” can “discern” what constitutes the public good, but nevertheless are showing a deliberate lack of concern for it. The conflation of being “conscious” and having “concern” is a significant move that tries to bind together affections or the passions, and consciousness.

To explain the immediacy or instinctive nature of virtue, he compares this moral instinct or sense in man to his aesthetic responses to art and music. The ability to sense what is harmonious for the order we live in is for Shaftesbury akin to our aesthetic capacity to admire harmony and beauty. Shaftesbury stresses on our mind’s sensor in detecting an ill action just as we might detect an off-key note in music or an incongruity in a painting:

The mind, which is spectator or auditor of other minds, cannot be without its eye and ear so as to discern proportion, distinguish sound, and scan each sentiment or thought which comes before it. It can let nothing escape its censure. It feels the soft and harsh, the agreeable and disagreeable in the affections, and finds a foul and fair, a harmonious and a dissonant, as really and truly here as in any musical numbers or in the outward forms or representations of sensible things.

(Inquiry, Part II, section 3, 172-73)

Shaftesbury sees our mind as a sensory organ responding to impressions and inevitably in a state of perceiving and judging, like the mind having eyes and ears. He likens our mind’s looking and listening to the thoughts and feelings of others, to our aesthetic

responses to beauty that we feel “in the affections.” We can detect through our affections a discordant note in those minds that are out of tune with the rest of society. The moral sense that Hutcheson would later use as a mode, Shaftesbury here delineates as a capacity to be esteemed and valued.²⁴ Virtue is then not just a rational reasoning but is allied to an instinct for harmony.

Thus virtue, in Shaftesbury’s definition, holds together a sensory perception of an idea and a conscious knowledge of it. Shaftesbury’s emphasis on consciousness of the mind echoes many ideas from John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), but Shaftesbury deploys sensation and reflection as a mutual process.²⁵ The conceptual overlap between sensation and reflection is intensified in Shaftesbury’s application of it to virtue.²⁶

²⁴ See Ernest Tuveson, “The origins of ‘moral sense,’” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 11:1/4 (1947). The term ‘moral sense,’ later seen as a school by many, is used just once by Shaftesbury: “For, notwithstanding a man may, through custom or by licentiousness of practice favoured by atheism, come in time to lose much of his natural moral sense, yet it does not seem that atheism should of itself be the cause of any estimation or valuing of anything as fair, noble and deserving, which was the contrary” (*Inquiry*, 179-80). Shaftesbury has previously used it not as a term but a phrase where it is clearer in meaning. In this Part his broader argument is that “the mind’s case in respect of that natural affection and anticipating fancy, which makes the sense of right and wrong” is independent from religious beliefs and atheism (*Inquiry* Part III, Section 1- 2, 179-80).

²⁵ In this dual play of sensing and reflecting, Shaftesbury’s reliance on Lockean empiricism is evident. In John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Locke sees knowledge as derived both from our senses, and from our mind’s reflection on the impressions and ideas that it receives. For Locke, the distinction between sensation and reflection is not so acute since the ideas generated are representations of external and internal objects, and the method of being conscious in the case of external and internal perceptions is the same. Only their objects are different and he even labels reflection initially as “an internal sense.” It is only to distinguish the source of the latter sensation as arising entirely from within the mind that the term ‘reflection’ is used.

²⁶ Shaftesbury’s ethical beliefs though seem distinct from Locke’s in the sense that Shaftesbury asserts an internal space for moral affections in man while Locke views morality as arising from empirical experiences and has a somewhat utilitarian outlook. Shaftesbury in his letters was open in his criticism of Locke. See Jason Aronson, “Critical Note: Shaftesbury on Locke,” *The American Political Science Review* 53 (1959): 1101-04. Locke’s morality is tied to his epistemology where he tries to prove that knowledge is particular and we are not born with any general maxims. Lawrence Klein argues that Shaftesbury may agree with Locke’s politics but not with his atomistic view of humans. “Shaftesbury sympathized with Locke’s political beliefs but not his attempt to ground them on the consequences of a supposed natural state

Shaftesbury divides the self as first having goodness, then a self-consciousness of goodness called virtue, and then an affection for virtue itself. In a Lockean move, where the thoughts and feelings in the mind are themselves objects, Shaftesbury says,

In a creature capable of forming general notions of things, not only the outward beings which offer themselves to the sense are the objects of the affection, but the very actions themselves, and the affections of pity, kindness, gratitude, and their contraries, being brought into the mind by reflection, become objects. So that, by means of this reflected sense, there arises another kind of affection towards those very affections themselves, which have been already felt, and are now become the subject of a new liking or dislike.

(Part II, section 3, 172)

The relation between the sensation of goodness and the reflection on virtue becomes reflexive. Shaftesbury's logic is somewhat dialectical like the virtue he advocates.

In the above passage, affections like kindness are objects too and virtue lies in an affection for itself. In order to trace the difference between "what is esteemed mere goodness and lies within the reach and capacity of all sensible creatures" and "that which is called virtue or merit, and is allowed to man only," Shaftesbury elaborates a Lockean model and shows the importance of both sensation and reflection in producing virtue. Sensation relates particular experiences like receiving kindness, and reflection allows for an affection for the general quality of kindness.²⁷ In suggesting a subsequent affection for virtue, the sequence becomes dialectical where goodness being an instinctive affection for the species, and virtue being a conceptual understanding of the organic nature of the species, the individual develops an affection for the concept of virtue itself, just as self-

prior to society. A humanity prior to society was simply inconceivable if one insisted on natural human sociability" (xxviii).

²⁷ For Locke too particular knowledge is empirical and general knowledge is abstract. See Book 4, end of Chap VI of *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

conscious virtue partakes of intuitive goodness. The particularity in sensing goodness is sought to be related to the reflection in discerning what virtue is. So the part-whole relation could be seen as derived from the sensation-reflection relation. This two-way model allows for a back and forth between the experience of goodness, and an understanding of its necessity and value.

This model of linking the particularity of goodness and the generality of public spiritedness allows for an embedding of a desire for public good within the natural goodness of man. It also restricts seeing public and private good as discrete by making them mutual. Shaftesbury's treatise evokes a self-reflexive sociability, one that is highly self-conscious in that we can divide ourselves and look on our actions as others might, anticipating Adam Smith's idea of the impartial spectator to some degree.

ii. Hutcheson: "Whence is This Secret Chain Between Each Person and Mankind"

Mandeville attacked Shaftesbury's construction of the virtuous man for being too aristocratic, and claimed that his idea of virtue was a screen for self-interested motives like vanity.²⁸ Hutcheson defended Shaftesbury in his treatise on moral philosophy published alongside his treatise on aesthetics -- *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*.²⁹ Mandeville's main point in *The Fable of the Bees* (1714) lay in its sub-title, *Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, where he suggests that self-interests feeds into the public good since avarice and competitiveness lead to development and prosperity.

²⁸ Mandeville, "A Search into the Nature of Society" in *The Fable of the Bees* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1970) 335-37.

²⁹ The original title for these complementary works, first published in 1725, was *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, in which the Principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are explained and defended, against the Author of the Fable of the Bees; and the Ideas of Moral Good and Evil are established, according to the Sentiments of Ancient Moralists, with an Attempt to introduce a Mathematical Calculation in subjects of Morality*.

Hutcheson particularly sought to counter an oft-made insinuation of Mandeville's that if there is a virtual connectedness between all persons in a society then their desire for public good can be seen as self-interested since they too will benefit from the good (section I.vi, p. 97). Hutcheson counters this view by transforming virtue into what he describes as a moral sense and the treatise becomes an effort to prove the disinterestedness of the moral sense. Both 'benevolence' and 'moral sense'—key terms for Hutcheson—are marked by disinterestedness i.e. free from advantages to particular persons. Benevolence for him is any action for the good of others without any self-gain for the actor, or agent, as Hutcheson calls him: "As to the Love of Benevolence, the very Name excludes Self-Interest. We never call that Man benevolent, who is in fact useful to others, but at the same time only intends his own Interest, without any desire of, or delight in, the Good of others" (103). So for Hutcheson, accidental good actions like the discovery of fire or iron don't count, though they may have helped everyone, since the intention to do good is absent.

Moral sense is a term Hutcheson uses to describe the ability in everyone to perceive the benevolence of an action performed by themselves or by another person, and to approve of the lack of self-interest in the action. He conveys the mutuality of benevolence and moral sense by claiming that moral sense too is a kind of benevolence because in approving of benevolence we further its cause and make it concrete.

For Hutcheson, the terms "benevolence" and "moral sense" replaces what Shaftesbury calls "goodness" and "virtue" but the difference is more than nominal. Although in significance their meanings overlap to some extent, for Shaftesbury "goodness" is being what is natural and fit for each creature and includes benevolence, while for Hutcheson

benevolence is narrowed to altruism towards others and he eschews the demarcation of an organic system. This is not just a shift in nomenclature but a shift in focus from the actions of virtue, to the perception and approval of benevolent actions by others. Though both are speaking of an approval for one's own actions and of others, the key difference is that where Shaftesbury urges men to choose virtue and realize it as the only path to a happy life, Hutcheson shifts focus from the virtuous actor to the observer and approver of virtue in others. This shift in Hutcheson can to some extent be accounted for as a part of his defensive armor against Mandeville's idea that hypocrisy and secret self-love often lurk behind good actions. By downplaying the role of virtuous intentions which could evoke accusations, the focus is on approving of clearly virtuous actions.³⁰ The virtuous actor in Hutcheson's treatise is significant mainly as the object of value for other people.

Through this method of shifting morality to the spectator rather than the actor, any suspicion of a secret motive, like seeking admiration that may taint a benevolent action, is evaded since only approval of evidently benevolent actions without gain to the actor counts as moral sense. The problem of motive is thus sidelined making an implicit allowance for the natural presence of self-interest. The terms of debate that Hutcheson engages with are no longer virtue versus vice, as virtue itself seems to be under attack and deemed difficult to establish.³¹ Hutcheson considers how even the simple

³⁰ Mandeville in "An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue" says that even the most virtuous men who have a true "Love to Goodness" reveal "symptoms of Pride." See Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1970) 92.

³¹ Hutcheson sought to defend Shaftesbury against the charge of positing innate ideas like benevolence through his term "moral sense" by keeping it in line with Locke and distinguishing the moral sense from an innate idea. By referring to benevolence as a sense, Hutcheson seeks to avoid making it an idea that is essentially innate or an idea that is worked out through reasoning. Hutcheson thus formulates his moral theory in terms similar to his aesthetic theory so that the ability to admire a virtuous person or action is natural.

observance and approval of a virtuous action by another agent could be construed as a kind of self-interested approval if too much identification occurred between the spectator and those who benefit from the benevolent action. This extreme kind of disavowal of any agency or identification is similar to both the kind of anxiety that characters like Clarissa face with regard to agency in the novel, as well as the anxiety about identification that her readers may have faced.³² Shaftesbury defines virtue as desiring benevolence in ourselves where the actor and spectator are in the same person, whereas Hutcheson defines virtue or what he calls moral sense, as appreciating benevolence in others by splitting the spectator from the actor.

Hutcheson addresses the more niggling problem of determining motive or intentions by which actions or an actor can earn the label of benevolence.³³ The interconnected nature of all things, as Shaftesbury would have it, became an idea easily manipulated by Mandeville as he claimed that self-interest was embedded in all motives. In a snipe at “Moralists” perhaps like Mandeville, Hutcheson rejects the view that self-gain of one person “profits the Whole,” as well as the view that since from that whole, every person benefits, we approve of such actions. Hutcheson retorts that even an indirect advantage does not make us admire self-interested acts over those of “public good”, which means

³² Scott Paul Gordon traces the search for proving sincerity both in *Clarissa* and in readers of the novel. See Scott Paul Gordon, “Disinterested Selves: *Clarissa* and the Tactics of Sentiment” in *ELH*, 64.2 (Summer 1997) 473-502. He describes how “the storm over *Pamela* showed the ease with which any text can be absorbed into a discourse of universal self interest-in Richardson's phrase, “basely Ravished out of my Hands, and ... depreciated and debased”-by those whom I call ‘Mandevillian(mis)readers’.” On the level of plot, *Clarissa* shows its heroine to be free from motives of self-interest imputed by her antagonists. But Clarissa recognizes the possibility of readers imposing “the worst construction” on the most disinterested words or actions, of construing “Sincerity” as “design (476-77).”

³³ Mandeville observes in “An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue” that “it is impossible to judge of a Man’s Performance, unless we are thoroughly acquainted with the Principle and Motive from which he acts” (91).

that our approval cannot be “counterballanc’d by Interest” and our “moral sense cannot be brib’d,” as he puts it in the sub-heading to this part (93-95).

But Hutcheson more readily accommodates selfishness by describing a moral and a natural good as on the same plane though distinguishable. For him, a natural good refers to assets, both physical and mental that a person may possess (like houses, strength), while a moral good denotes a person’s benevolent instincts (like faith, kindness) (85). He concedes that although only a moral good evokes admiration, this admiration or approval may be mixed up by our interest in the benefit or good to ourselves thus diluting our capacity for disinterestedness:

In our Sentiments of Actions which affect our selves, there is indeed a Mixture of the Ideas of natural and moral good, which require some Attention to separate them. But when we reflect upon the Actions which affect other persons only, we may observe the moral ideas unmix’d with those of natural Good, or Evil. (91)

If a man’s action helps us, “attention” would be needed to strain out our self-interest of gaining from that help, from our approval of his benevolence. The attention required to separate out our pleasure and approval at our own gain suggests that it isn’t easy to keep self-interest out of our approval of an action done to ourselves. A subjective rendering of either doing or receiving benevolence is not easily cited by him since intention or design cannot be established clearly in his theory.

Hutcheson’s indirect depiction of a moral sense ironically implies the possibility of self-interest as always present and thus his need to bracket off its traces. It is perhaps for this reason that towards the end of the treatise, he draws up an ethical calculus to find a tangible way of allowing for the existence of some benevolence after deducting various self-interested motives. In his formulae, he demonstrates how to deduct the motive of

self-love in the actor from the virtue of an action: “When he would not have produc’d so much publick Good, had it not been for the Prospect of Self-Interest, then the Effects of Self-Love is to be deducted, and his Benevolence is proportion’d to the remainder of Good, which pure Benevolence would have Produc’d” (104). Here Hutcheson allows some benevolence even to actions with an element of self-love. He offers six axioms or formulas to help calculate the weight of benevolence in each action. One purpose of this calculus seems to be that by converting perception into a set of mathematical formulas, he allows benevolence to exist despite it sometimes having a tinge of self-gain. The plus-minus method then allows benevolence and self-love to co-exist in the same action, and the possibility of a “pure benevolence” is held up as an ideal, a zero point not of negation but of origin and possibility.

Hutcheson does not rely on taking an organic view of society and works with a disaggregated one. He atomizes people into discrete units so any act of kindness, even within affective relationships, is a sign of benevolence. This is a different order of connectedness between people from Shaftesbury’s insistence on the seamlessness between all persons in an abstract, virtual sense. This discreteness of individuals in Hutcheson allows all acts of concern, even for family for instance, to be seen as part of the benevolent nature of man rather than as furthering one’s interests by looking after one’s own clan. He questions the surmise that the love of parents for their children is a form of self-love: “Is the Parent hungry, thirsty, sick, when the Child is so? No, but his love to the Child makes him affected with his Pleasures or Pains (113).” There must be a virtual link called love, according to him, that transfers the child’s physical distress to the parent. Hutcheson underscores the fact that there is no ongoing physical connection

between a child and parent, even considering that physically the child has emerged out of the parents so the affective connection is real. Hutcheson imagines the following dialogue with an opponent (whose voice is in quotes) who might insist that children are just an extension of their parents so the tenderness of parents should be seen as self-interested in order to dismiss it: “How are they part of our selves? Not as a Leg or an Arm... ‘But their Bodys were form’d from Parts of ours.’ So is a Fly, or a Maggot which may breed in any discharg’d Blood or Humour: Very Dear Insects surely (113)!” Hutcheson points out that if a maggot crawled out of somebody’s blood, it would not be beloved of that body. The physical separateness of humans is emphasized demonstrating that benevolence is the medium that makes children a virtual part of their parents, not the fact of their biological sameness. Hutcheson takes the most intimate bonds to show that affective relationships are precisely just that, based on affect and not on a physical connection, an interest, or obligation.³⁴ This ‘estrangement’ of family is part of his larger argument about public good. Familiar intimate bonds are depersonalized in order to show the bond with strangers in society as equally distant and therefore capable of receiving an individual’s benevolence just as he bestows it on his familiars.

Hutcheson uses examples of the particular compassion between individuals to argue for the same in more diffused and general social networks. He argues that the disinterested love between children and parents is a part of a continuum of bonds bringing together those relations based on weaker ties. The gradation of bonds becomes a move to keep the virtual bond with strangers in society on the same plane as familial ties though weaker in affect. His idea of successive bonds with those less familiar to us is

³⁴ In almost all novels of sensibility I examine, such an estrangement of family is replaced by renewed affective ties with the family as well as by familiarizing strangers.

located on the same plane as the stronger bond of parental love: “Pray, may not this [parental love] be a Foundation of weaker degrees of Love where there is no preceding tie of Parentage, and extend it to all Mankind (114)?” Hutcheson here brings a vivid image of parental love in order to place it not only as the building block of affect towards others, but to show that the love between all mankind is a weaker version of love in intimate relationships. He cites examples of this gradation of ties in how people feel concern for their neighbors, their country, a foreign country, and then the “distant planets” (114). Moving between particular bonds of the family which are strong and thus easily conveyed to the reader and universally acknowledged as powerful, to the more general bond underlying all communities, allows Hutcheson to imbue the less excitable nature of the general bond as an extension of the more powerfully moving particular ones. Hutcheson’s insistence on “natural affection between collateral Relations” acknowledges that affection varies in strength “according to the nearer or more remote Relations” (115). This splitting of relations not necessarily into kin and society but more broadly into “nearer” and “remote” brings the focus back on the theorization of sociability. He is essentially using two models to encourage the concern for a remote collective – one is by an account of the decreasing bonds felt as a person contemplates the collective, which, despite suffering a diminishment of degree, mimics his feelings for his family and friends. The other strategy he employs, is to underscore the strangeness of intimate ties so that conversely, strangers may easily be cast as intimate too.

The shift in his argument from bonds between particular individuals to the bond between an individual and a community is not only to address the problem of a remote collective but to use the particular virtue of benevolence and the general virtue of moral

sense to resolve this distance. After a careful layering of categories of people, proximate and distant, Hutcheson addresses the more distant by actions of casting about for what the remote might entail to its imaginative limit, in this case foreigners and aliens. He claims that if we know of “Agents capable of moral affections” in those planets, we would “delight in their happiness” because of our affection for benevolence. The movement in his discourse, from feeling to approving, is so fluid as to make benevolence and the moral sense appear as exchangeable qualities. Since a very intense passion cannot be shown for those distant from us or to the idea of a public good, the moral sense, which is a judgment of actions not affecting us and thereby remote from us, becomes a way of securing the idea that the distant is of import to everyone. Benevolence gets displayed in particular bonds and moral sense is better manifested in communicating general bonds. The connection between the two, the former a feeling, the other a kind of judgment and hence more objective, like Shaftesbury’s pair of “goodness” and “virtue”, makes it seem that the approval of an action for public good is part of the same category of feelings like love between familiars, except that it is manifested differently.

Another way of saying this is to reverse the order of “particular to general”; if general bonds are on the same plane as particular ones between individuals, then particular bonds must also be brought somewhat in alignment with the remoteness of general bonds. This is why the separateness of parent-child is emphasized. Similarly, the relatively cool nature of approval of the moral sense is brought closer to the passionate nature of benevolent actions. Approbation of actions for the public good can point to an affective connect between strangers: “It is true indeed, that the Actions we approve in others, are generally imagin’d to tend to the natural Good of Mankind, or of some Parts of it. But

whence this secret Chain between each Person and Mankind” (91)? Since there is no real but hidden chain between men, there must be an imaginary or virtual one which makes them invested in everyone’s concerns. Individuation, though a form of the separateness of people, also becomes proof that our caring about public good is a sign that we can transcend our individual boundaries. As Hutcheson observes, there is no real “secret chain” or actual seamlessness between individuals yet the virtual links that the moral sense provides between people bespeaks its power to imbue us with a sense of a collective identity.³⁵

Part II – Sympathy and Sociability

In Shaftesbury’s account of people as parts of a system, his style is marked by abstract arguing, and there are rare appeals to the emotional side of human sociability. But in Hutcheson we can discern a distinct shift towards showing particular examples of sociability in a partly literary and anecdotal style. The two philosophers that I will focus on for the remainder of this chapter —David Hume and Adam Smith—continue this effort to trace a connection between compassion and its relationship to a reasoned kind of public spirit where each individual desires the welfare of a public. Where Shaftesbury

³⁵ Hutcheson’s view of benevolence was also attentive to the diversity of cultures outside England unlike Shaftesbury’s universal standards of virtue which did not allow for different cultural standards. Politically, the translation of benevolence into contemporary contexts is made more visible by Hutcheson. For Hutcheson, the lower socio-economic ability of a person proportionately increases the value of his benevolent action ranked in deference to the greater effort he makes. So the actions of a person of lower rank weigh far more than the same actions by someone of a higher station. For Shaftesbury, virtue is articulated as a refined, urbane, cultivated quality. It is theoretically available to everyone, and he leaves it as an abstract quality without specifically drawing in middle-class groups, unlike Hutcheson who explicitly grants the possibility of benevolence to traders. Hutcheson was often cited by contemporaries as promoting an anti-slavery and anti-colonialist position. His specific democratizing of benevolence across classes and nations allowed intrinsic virtue for everyone and simultaneously, the self-conscious choosing of virtue made it meritorious.

and Hutcheson see public-spiritedness as essential to a natural harmony and strive to show that people naturally recognize this, Smith and Hume replace Shaftesbury's 'goodness' and Hutcheson's 'benevolence' in order to narrate the workings of what they call sympathy, which, however, does not necessarily expand into a desire for a harmonious and just society. Hume and Smith focus on "sympathy" as a limitation -- a term used by them to speak about the sheer sense of imaginative connection between minds enabling people to relate to each other's thoughts and feelings, but which can become partial.

i. Hume: "There is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind"

Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* is significant, among other reasons, as an account that reconciles self-interest within a theory of sociability. To an extent, this accommodation of self-interest is at odds with the novels of sensibility which takes a less pragmatic view of sociability in relation to its protagonists. However, the centrality given to the passions by Hume is echoed, and in fact amplified, in the novels. He gives the passions – described by him as a kind of involuntary force of feelings -- a central role in his theory of knowledge and ethics. In his account of the acquisition of knowledge through experience, the dialectic between sensation and reflection, or what he calls impressions and ideas, is demonstrated to be so swift and constant that a chain of imitation is set up between the two. Ideas being a copy of sensations, seek to reproduce them so exactly that they actually create fresh impressions.

But because the mind cannot sustain the pressure of new impressions, a new experience is seen as resembling a past experience. Hume notes that perceptions then are

always following a mode of the past, of habit and custom. It becomes virtually impossible then to ‘see’ anything new, or unfamiliar except with a persistent skepticism that he became well-known for. Hume’s acute skepticism unravels into an eternal, radical doubt that realizes the unstable nature of human perceptions and the impossibility of the certainty of any knowledge. By the end of the first book in the *Treatise*, he renounces this skepticism as an isolating and bewildering position to inhabit. The force and instability of impressions may have prompted Hume to advocate a conscious moderating of desires.

Hume’s account of the flux of perceptions suggests an unstable society and he tries to work around this flux to secure a workable sociability in man. He dismisses what is commonly understood as reason, as being unable to mediate between our passions because reason cannot produce volition. It is the passions that produce volition, desires, convictions, and morality. Hume does not rely on reason as pragmatically guiding us to a long-term and larger good, as was suggested by Hobbes and Locke. Since what we understand as reason for him is simply a cover for the passion of pleasure, we may do great good or great destruction to others depending on what might please us more. The desire for public good then would be random since it would not be a choice based on altruism as he illustrates through this example:

’Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. ’Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an *Indian* or person wholly unknown to me... A trivial good may, from certain circumstances, produce a desire superior to what arises from the greatest and most valuable enjoyment... (416).

For Hume there is no ‘unreasonable’ passion because the pleasure from passion justifies it for us, which makes morality unreliable; we may be indifferent to the misery of “Indians” and strangers or may be immensely sympathetic and self-sacrificing towards

them. Hume claims that our passions are strong or weak, determined by the contiguity and familiarity of objects to us. Hume limits benevolence to people who fit into the categories of the familiar. He says:

We love company in general ; but 'tis as we love any other amusement. An Englishman in Italy is a friend : A European in China ; and perhaps a man wou'd be belov'd as such, were we to meet him in the moon. But this proceeds only from the relation to ourselves; which in these cases gathers force by being confined to a few persons. (482)

Thus in Hume's treatise, neither reason can lead to choosing public good nor is there an inherent instinct for it.

In Hume's scheme of justice, the passion of sympathy may be too particular or partial, and so must be set aside for general principles to create a stable society. In contradistinction to justice, which is an artificial yet desirable virtue for Hume, he views the natural virtue of sympathy as a kind of moral identification in particular cases. But sympathy must be given up if it clashes with the general system of justice. Particular cases of injustice, according to this logic, can be compatible with the larger good:

Judges take from a poor man to give to a rich; they bestow on the dissolute the labour of the industrious; and put into the hands of the vicious the means of harming both themselves and others. The whole scheme, however, of law and justice is advantageous to the society; and 'twas with a view to this advantage, that men, by their voluntary conventions, establish'd it. (579)

Hume takes up cases of justice that may sound unfair to the reader to show how general laws or principles are indifferent to individuals. By this, he means to limit the sympathy that might be felt for those who are denied justice, in order to enshrine the necessity of keeping aside our narrow sympathies in favor of the rules that uphold a society.

Hume sees sympathy as absent in feelings of individuals towards society more strongly than Shaftesbury had laid out in the problem of remoteness in feeling for public good. Hume flatly denounces the possibility of an individual ‘feeling’ for an abstract collective that he cannot imaginatively identify with:

In general, it may be affirm’d, that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourselves. ’Tis true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible creature, whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us, when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours : But this proceeds merely from sympathy, and is no proof of such an universal affection to mankind, since this concern extends itself beyond our own species. (481)

Though Hume denies the existence of a “love of mankind” in human nature, he concedes that when brought imaginatively close to a situation, no one is immune to feeling compassion for his fellow beings, no matter how alien he may be. He admits that “no human” in suffering or even happiness can leave us indifferent thus allowing for a universality for the objects of sympathy if represented clearly to us, and in fact indicates an inevitability in the evocation of compassion. Significantly, it is the representation or the virtual presence of a person that can affect anyone.³⁶

Hume acknowledges the power of sympathy in particular cases but shows how it cannot be extended to the wider circle of “mankind.” He claims that the law-abiding citizen is one because of a desire for order, since “public interest... is a motive too remote and too sublime.” In these spatial terms, “sublime” implies too high and exalted a motivation, and “remote” suggests the idea of public interest to be distant, something not

³⁶ An increasing emphasis on the imagination as mediating the representation of other minds facilitated forms like the novel where a narrator could mediate a connection between readers and characters.

relatable or striking to the mind. Feelings of concern in men lack the elasticity or strength that will allow it to be stretched so as to cover the whole of society.³⁷

It is the interests of each unit that pushes for a harmonious order and a consent to rules.³⁸ For Hume this is an advance towards a public spirit since this calm passion of self-interest is for a conventional society that will preserve the possession and inheritance of property as well as the smoothness of commerce. For him, self-interest becomes the basis for a minimal inclination towards public interest.

ii. Smith: “Though [the passions of different men] will never be unisons, they may be concords”

Perceiving society as constituted of individual subjectivities, Adam Smith seeks to outline a system of morality that is not outside of one’s self but one which can come from within. I explore Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) to trace how he evolves a relationship between sympathy, which for him denotes a strong cognizance of and identification with the feelings of others, and his idea of an impartial spectator, which denotes an individual’s ability to keep all interests in mind so as to identify with an impartial public good. His account of sociability invokes most clearly the virtual nature

³⁷ He repeatedly reiterates this view when he says for instance that through experience we perceive that “the generosity of men is very limited, and that it seldom extends beyond their friends and family, or, at most, beyond their native country. Being thus acquainted with the nature of man, we expect not any impossibility from him” (602).

³⁸ This is in line with Hirschman’s account of the growing acceptance of pursuing economic self-gain. Hirschman traces the history of the term ‘interest’, which earlier denoted the passion of the vice –avarice-- and becomes in the seventeenth century a good passion that can tame more harmful ones. By the eighteenth century, avarice becomes a calm, acceptable passion.

of all relations, between individuals, between individuals and society, and even within a person.

Smith describes 'sympathy' as the ability of a person to enter imaginatively into the mind and body of another to feel his thoughts, sensations, and emotions. Imagination becomes a tool which can be harnessed to know what is otherwise unknowable -- "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (9). Thus sympathy appears to be a virtual connection between people where a simulation, of both the self, and the other, is produced. Not only must a person imagine someone else's feelings, they must imagine themselves anew. Sympathy is personal, arising out of a self, yet it is also a mental leap by which we move out of ourselves towards others.

The virtual nature of sympathy is emphasized through its non-material state and the lack of necessity of the presence of the sufferer. For Smith, a physical encounter with the situation of distress or an actual witnessing of the grief-stricken person is not needed -- "Sympathy does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it" (12). Visibility of or contact with the subject is not necessary. It is the narrative about the grief wrought by suffering which can strike the imagination and evoke sympathy. This is a second remove from reality so to speak -- the spectator need simply be made cognizant of the suffering. The sympathizer can then be immersed in a process of imaginative identification. Smith shows this identification to be a complex one since the sympathizer is moved in his mind while the sufferer is moved by his actual experience. This difference results in a somewhat skewed and asymmetrical model of

sympathy. The mere sight of someone in tears need not evoke pity but often an imaginative comprehension of their situation could better reality: “we sometimes feel for another, a passion for which he himself seems to be altogether incapable; because, when we put ourselves in his case, that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality” (12).

This difference between “imagination” and “reality” for Smith is crucial to construing sympathy as an imaginative or literary production created by a representation of reality, much like a novel can induce strong responses in its readers. In another of his examples, a dead person may evoke our pity, quite needlessly as he points out, because we imagine for them not only a deprivation of life but also the unknowable state of mind of a corpse, “putting from our lodging, if I may be allowed to say so, our own living souls in their inanimated bodies, and thence conceiving what would be our emotions in this case” (13). Here he describes a displacement of souls in living beings from their live bodies (“lodging”) to the corpse’s. The mind can powerfully transpose us to inhabit another body while still retaining its own subjectivity. Smith’s example approximates the process of reading a novel, and quite graphically describes the feeling of putting one’s self in someone else’s shoes, where the sympathizer without ever having experienced a situation can still imagine the feeling of loss produced from it.³⁹ I think it is important to note Smith’s own clarification at the end of the treatise that sympathy is not an egotistical mode, where by putting himself in someone’s shoes, the spectator feels for himself. He is

³⁹ The exact nature of identification is hard to pin down in Smith’s description – does the spectator ‘become’ the sufferer in his imagination, or does he conjoin his own self with the sufferer’s state? This question becomes pertinent in his next example. The most universal kind of pity according to Smith is the sight of the insane. Those beyond reason may in fact appear cheerful but we, by performing an acrobatic feat of imagination, can enter their mental condition of madness and yet see them from our own reason. Smith creates a process of identification, a dual identity, in which we enter and cohabit with the consciousness of another though retaining the clear-sightedness in this cohabitation.

clear that an individual *is* really giving up himself to identify with another as in the example he gives of men who can be pained by the sight of a woman in labor, though incapable of ever giving birth themselves and knowing the pain: “A man may sympathize with a woman in child-bed; though it is impossible he should conceive himself as suffering her pains in his own proper person and character” (Part VII, section 3, 1.4, 317).

Smith’s account of sympathy unravels this cohabitation of minds as a dynamic and dyadic two-way process. He shows the transition of the sufferer into a spectator who looks on himself in his grief-stricken state as others might view him. If the sufferer allows his entire grief to be manifested in view of others, they may in fact withdraw at such an excessive show of emotion that Smith dubs “clamorous grief.” Smith observes how by toning down the expression of grief, the sufferer reaches a more viable scale of emotion for the sympathizer to enter. Not only does this facilitate the sympathy of the spectator, but it allows for an exchange of subjectivities, thus giving a healing prop to the sufferer who can step outside his grief through someone else’s mind. The sufferer, by seeing the reflection of his grief through the eyes of spectators, which is naturally weaker than his emotion, “necessarily abates the violence of what he [the sufferer] felt before he came into their presence, before he began to view his situation in this candid and impartial light.” Sympathy is extended by the sufferer to the commiserating spectator. The spectator may then increase his own degree of sympathy till the two levels equalize. Smith’s description of this reciprocity between the sympathy in the sufferer and spectator approximates a transactional mode between individuals. This contract of sympathy, a contract of exchange as well as of narrowing the gap between two persons, allows the relationship to hold up despite the different mental states of grief and pity of the actors,

i.e. the spectator and the sufferer. These separate actors work in a mutuality that is akin to but distinct from commonality.

Smith borrows musical terms to clarify his argument about the difference between a coming together and a commonality, when a sufferer yearns to see the same intense grief in his sympathizer that he is experiencing.⁴⁰ Smith uses the musical concept of harmony to explain what brings accord between the passions of grief and that of pity -- “Though they will never be unisons, they may be concords and this is all that is wanted or required” (22).⁴¹ A unison is not what is sought between the sufferer and spectator since grief and pity cannot coagulate. “Concord” in music is what Smith settles for, where differently pitched emotions may come together. Concord is a harmony suggesting a succession of sounds that produce an agreeable consonance closer to the process of sympathy. In the realm of affective subjectivity, Smith strives for a resonance rather than a union.

⁴⁰ Smith elaborates on the gradual exchange of an emotional pitch between the spectator and the sufferer: “[The sufferer] longs for that relief which nothing can afford him but the entire concord of the affections of the spectators with his own. To see the emotions of their hearts, in every respect, beat time to his own, in the violent and disagreeable passions, constitutes his sole consolation. But he can only hope to obtain this by lowering his passion to that pitch, in which the spectators are capable of going along with him. He must flatten, if I may be allowed to say so, the sharpness of its natural tone, in order to reduce it to harmony and concord with the emotions of those who are about him. What they feel, will, indeed, always be, in some respects, different from what he feels, and compassion can never be exactly the same with original sorrow; because the secret consciousness that the change of situations, from which the sympathetic sentiment arises, is but imaginary, not only lowers it in degree, but, in some measure, varies it in kind, and gives it a quite different modification. These two sentiments, however, may, it is evident, have such a correspondence with one another, as is sufficient for the harmony of society. Though they will never be unisons, they may be concords, and this is all that is wanted or required.”

⁴¹ Musically, “unison” is defined as identity of pitch where “all the voices or instruments perform the same part, in which sense *unison* is contradistinguished from *harmony*.” “*Harmony* results from the concord of two or more strains or sounds which differ in pitch and quality.” From *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1913 + 1828) in *American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language* (ARTFL) Project, s.v. “unison “concord”, “harmony”, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://machaut.uchicago.edu/websters>.

This two-way process is significant, not only because it brings individuals in accord with each other but also because this process can be replicated between an individual and his relation to society. Smith seeks to analogize sympathy with a commitment to public good. The concord between individuals is sought to be mapped onto a larger collective. Smith resolves the problem posed in Hume's conception of sympathy as not easily extendable to what is distant or abstract through his creation of the idea of an impartial spectator. Smith's theory of inter-subjectivity is one encoded within a morality in which we must see ourselves not just through our own feelings, which may be those of our self-interest, but as an impartial spectator who judges our actions and even thoughts. "Impartial" suggests not just a drawing back from being partial to one or another but to be comprehensive; "spectator" suggests one who has an extensive view and can direct attention to a synthesis of peculiarities or diverse groups. The spectator applies an impartiality to himself too. Just as the sufferer keeps his sympathizer's feelings in mind, for Smith, men can maintain their morality by keeping an 'eye' on themselves, by mentally standing in their viewers' gaze. No one would wish to lose the respect of others or their approbation, and this wish, according to Smith, is the biggest deterrent to misbehavior. He illustrates this with the example of the sporting arena where a sportsperson will not cheat against his competitors because the spectators will cry foul.

The impartial spectator in Smith's account resolves the unevenness of partial sympathies to create an image of public good that must be held in each mind. Since sympathy in his discourse can be too particularized and must be contained in order to produce a harmony between divergent interests, Smith's ideal subject splits into an agent and a judge who will not violate the principles of natural justice to rationalize his own

conduct but sees, as a good judge should, without his own prejudices and from the view of a third party. The emphasis is on a balanced perspective which he values above the force of sympathy for particular persons.

Smith's distinctions between men and women, serve to illustrate clearly the qualities of an impartial spectator that he advocates. Most of the philosophers I discuss, do not specify whether their descriptions of human nature or mankind operate on the assumption that men and women possess similar moral qualities or whether gender mediates the outcome of qualities like benevolence or sympathy. However, Smith is atypical in this respect since he remarks on how men and women may partake of these qualities in different registers. Smith grants a greater tender-heartedness to women, but in his view, only the best of men can rise to the role of an impartial spectator. In a well-known passage on women, Smith observes that "humanity is the virtue of a woman, generosity of a man" (190). Smith holds in lesser esteem the womanly quality of humanity because in his view it consists "merely in the exquisite fellow-feeling which the spectator entertains with the sentiments of the person principally involved" (190). "Exquisite" seems more like selective fellow-feeling bestowed on a few people only, whereas "generosity" implies a wider frame, a liberality. The qualifier "mere" for fellow feeling suggests women's natural yet inadequate response, one that is devoid of self-consciousness. For Smith, women make no effort or exertion to humanity as they simply do what natural sympathy in everyone would "prompt us to do" (191). This "exquisite sympathy" of women is dismissed by Smith as a self-indulgent feeling requiring no "exertion of the sense of propriety" (191). "Exertion" implies a perceptible effort that is closer to an action rather than to a passive feeling. This effort towards propriety is a

struggle that bespeaks strength and intellectual perception that he views as a male domain. Smith views generosity as that which is concerned outside the self when he says, “we never are generous except when in some respect we prefer some other person to ourselves, and sacrifice some great and important interest of our own to an equal interest of a friend or of a superior” (191).

Smith exemplifies his idea of true sympathy by using women as an example of what sympathy in its usual meaning denotes i.e. a tender indulgence towards others. For Smith this is not constitutive of virtue since it demands no fortitude from the sympathizer and does serve any useful aim.⁴² The ability to identify with a non-present public is what his ideal notion of sympathy would be. This perspective is an impartiality which is present in his definition of generosity which only the most virtuous men may possess. It includes a “magnanimity... which they feel, must naturally occur to any third person.” Since for Smith, impartiality is key to the public aspect of sympathy, generosity is deemed as the quality that allows some men to be magnanimous by their use of the “impartial bystander” perspective (191). In fact, he explicitly compares generosity to a “public spirit” which he reserves for “men of reflection and speculation” and finds absent in the “bulk of mankind” (192).

The special nature of thoughtful men casts them above most other men in degree but women are the category that thinking men are distinguished from in kind.⁴³ All men and women partake of the general sympathy which inclines them to feeling the distress of

⁴² Cf. Mandeville in *The Fable of the Bees*. Pity is dismissed by him as “an impulse of Nature, that consults neither the publick Interest nor our own Reason, it may produce Evil as well as Good” (91).

⁴³ Readings on the gendered account of Smith mainly conclude that he reserves the highest virtue of moderation for men, while dismissing women and weaker men on the same plane. See for instance, Maureen Harkin, “Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: Sympathy, Women, and Emulation,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 24 (1995) 175-190.

others, but the more abstract ability to zoom out of a particular fellow-feeling, and think in larger terms of how society might view the same, belongs to reflective men. Though there is an overlap between some weak men and all women in general, thereby belying a neat division of the sexes, the highest qualities of control are reserved for men, albeit the manliest and wisest of them.

Smith's shift in emphasis in the treatise from the impassioned, concerned spectator to the impartial spectator is grounded in his view that the ideal of fellow-feeling is difficult to translate into a larger public spiritedness. Sympathy does not enlarge into public spiritedness, as it does for Hutcheson, because for Smith, as also for Hume, it is liable to be partial. In his vision of sympathy as fellow-feeling, compassion can take on many forms and can quite literally become an extension of our self-interest.⁴⁴ Sympathy is a kind of closeness or contact in Smith which can produce not just compassion, but uneasiness and even aversion to that closeness.

Thus, impartiality becomes a minimal commitment in Smith, not so much to pursue public good but at the very least to avoid malicious actions to others. He argues that for the most part, even if men do not actively show benevolent feelings, they actually do eschew malice by inculcating an impartial spectator. He gives the example of a man receiving the news that all the inhabitants of China have perished in an earthquake. Apart from expressing some dismay at the news, the man returns to his business and pleasures.

But "if he was to lose his little finger tomorrow, he would not sleep tonight; but provided

⁴⁴ Smith recognizes the inadequate sympathy with the humiliation suffered in economic misfortunes as particularly grievous examples of this perversion of sympathy. The poor are condemned to a mental solitariness as we seek to sympathize with the fortunes of the wealthy and emulate their success both imaginatively and in real economic terms. He speculates that an alien to human society would actually believe that the suffering of the rich is more intense considering how much attention they gain and how little the poor. What emerges is that conversely, since we realize the state of bereftness a poor man inhabits, we ourselves desire to be prosperous so as to retain the attention of others. The desire to increase wealth gets naturalized.

he never saw them, he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of millions of his brethren” (136). The quote suggests man’s inclination to be indifferent to the lot of distant men, manifested in the unperturbed “snoring” while millions are being “ruined.” Smith raises a further question: “would man destroy millions of lives to save his finger”? Here he suggests that indifference is a mild form of self-interest compared to actively destructive forms of self-interest. Smith sees the voice of conscience as an impartial spectator, and as stronger than feelings of sympathy that govern the day-to-day lives of men, and yet stronger too than their selfishness, though they may not be aware of it.

Conclusion

Eighteenth-century moral philosophy played a role in erasing the derogatory association of self-interest that allowed the private self to become sociable. Charles Taylor describes how the idea of a moral order came to underlie the social imaginary.⁴⁵ He traces the beginnings of a new social imaginary (which he defines as the way ordinary people imagine their social existence) through the natural law theory of Grotius and then Locke and notes that “what is added in the eighteenth century [to conceiving of God’s benevolent scheme] is an appreciation of the way human life is designed to produce mutual benefit” (70).⁴⁶ Moral philosophy outlines how human sociability will somehow

⁴⁵ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*.

⁴⁶ Taylor goes on to add that in the economic form of social self-understanding, “emphasis is sometimes laid on mutual benevolence, but very often the happy design is identified in the existence of what one might call ‘invisible hand’ factors. I mean by this actions and attitudes that we are ‘programmed’ for, that have systematically beneficent results for the general happiness, even though these are not part of what is intended in the action or affirmed in the attitude (70).” Taylor notes that “mutual benevolence” as the mode

protect harmony because it is in everyone's interest to seek alternative mappings of self-interest that can be converted into justice.⁴⁷

The efforts to draw out virtue as a desire for public good indicate a renewed search for a political meaning of virtue. The struggle of moving from particular sympathies in Smith to an impartial spectator can be seen as analogous to Habermas's notion of the bourgeois public sphere where one's private self is brought in a disinterested form to the public sphere.⁴⁸ The public sphere has been seen as arising out of the birth of the private when private individuals leave behind their private interests to dwell on matters of the public. Smith too attempts to show how these individual units who are bonded in varying types of sympathy can consciously step back and assume a public persona.

What becomes visible is not only that the private and public, and instinct and consciousness, are seen as embedded in one another but that the two dyads come together. In other words, instinct comes to be associated with the private sphere of an individual, and consciousness with his relationship to the public. However, this split between reason and passion is not strictly dichotomous in the period. In even the most

of sociability comes to be replaced by the idea of a "happy design" which somehow resolves even actions unintended towards a common good. This vision is different from the sociability envisaged in *Theory of Moral Sentiments* where there is no invisible hand, no external designer, but each agent must become an impartial spectator.

⁴⁷ Mary Poovey sees the idea of an internally felt subjectivity called human nature as a powerful replacement for the idea of natural law whose force was external to individuals. According to her, "human nature served the same explanatory function as the sixteenth-century idea of natural law, but, as the difference between the two terms suggests, focusing on human nature meant supplementing the idea of law, which could be said to originate outside of individuals, with reflections on human subjectivity, which was experienced as originating within the individual. This shift from an abstraction that refers to concrete relations or external necessity to one that conjures internal experience informed the general project the British moral philosophers undertook: to explain why individuals could be counted on to produce a mutually beneficial society in the process of gratifying themselves (139)."

⁴⁸ Habermas notes a new form of publicness borne by individuals at this time: "The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason" (27).

intimate relations of man, say with his child or with himself, the capacity to reflect is always there, as we noticed in Hutcheson's argument that there is some exertion and consciousness of benevolence that informs the tenderness of a parent. Similarly, even the most abstract reflections on the common good can be inflected with the passions since they provide momentum for activity whether of the mind or body.

In the novels of sensibility, there is a natural emphasis on individuals, and thus on the passions. The impulsive signs of connection with people allow for an intimacy that short-circuits barriers of class or propriety. The familiar can be strange and the strange can be intimately familiar. Matt Bramble begins his journey with his family of strangers and returns with a somewhat extended one based on affective ties. Harley merges into a new family, which is that of his steward Edwards'. Clarissa has Anna as her sister in solidarity and then a host of strangers who take care of her in her final days. These relationships are family-like, or more accurately, familiar who are often brought together by a moral and affective affiliation.

The relation of the protagonists to a larger public is of less momentousness to the plot except perhaps in *Humphry Clinker*. Nevertheless the movement of these characters outside their home is an entry into the social. Their occasional fulminations against society – Simple on the stock exchange, Harley on colonialism, Clarissa on property relations, Bramble on London -- reveal their conscious recognition of what an ideal society should be.

But what *does* underlie both philosophy and literature is the value accorded to the consciousness of virtue already seen in the philosophers I examined. Unlike the

characteristic of sensibility which could denote goodness in a person, the novels of sensibility in their formal structure show the self-consciousness so desired by the philosophers. Both forms of discourse examine the possibility of conjoining compassion and an intensely self-conscious subjectivity that becomes virtue. While the characters who are persons endowed with sensibility show a spontaneous natural goodness, the self-consciousness about virtue is deflected onto the reader, and onto other characters in the novel viewing the virtuous protagonist. The moral sense, or the instant recognition of what is selfless and kind in the characters marked by sensibility, is evoked thematically and formally. Therefore what perhaps an examination of moral philosophy does, as a prequel to the literature I examine in subsequent chapters, is that it allows us to view the same pairing of natural goodness and self-conscious virtue, in the characters of sensibility and the act of reading the novel. The characters exhibit a natural instinct for goodness that within the architectural scheme of the novel must, in different ways, be made to negotiate the problem of consciousness. The novels cannot bypass the need to self-consciously reflect on the virtue the protagonists exhibit and the texts I examine offer different solutions to this dual condition of novelistic representation.

Chapter 2

Sociability and the Man of Feeling in the Eighteenth-Century Novel

The philosophers I examined in the previous chapter variously shape the idea of an instinctive compassion in man into a new sociability. The passions themselves undergo a change in meaning from something destructive to a more social force.¹ Their effort seems directed at how goodness, benevolence, or sympathy (the terms they use to describe their versions of an instinctive compassion), could work with self-interestedness, and they exhort the reader to a conscious exertion towards the common good. An instance of such an exhortation can be observed in *Sensus Communis*, where Shaftesbury bemoans the making of virtue into “so mercenary a thing,” that people have to be reminded of its rewards to be convinced. He observes that for Christians, only voluntary virtues like “private friendship and zeal for the public and our country” that do not earn rewards in the afterlife, may therefore have the quality of disinterestedness.² The private and public virtues noted here – of friendship and communality –are also part of the didactic aims and themes of the novel of sensibility.

¹ See Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977; 1997). In Hirschman’s history of the passions and interest, the passions which were once seen as sinful, become positive dimensions of human nature by the eighteenth century. This process begins in the early modern period where less destructive passions are used to counter more forceful ones. One of these passions – avarice—is viewed as interest in its limited sense of economic gain in the seventeenth century and linked to rationality. Interest then comes to be wedged between “destructive passions” and “ineffectual reason” (43). Finally in the eighteenth century, the passions become a good force and are seen as tempering the force of interest-- “passions improve a world governed by interest alone” (47).

² See Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, “Sensus Communis, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour in a Letter to a Friend” in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 46. Hereafter, page numbers are cited in the text.

The idea of an instinctive compassion, so central to the philosophical elaborations of the idea of social good and sociability, is brought into special focus in the novels of sensibility where a compelling human responsiveness to the suffering of fellow humans is the hallmark of its protagonists. This chapter explores two eighteenth-century novels of sensibility – Sarah Fielding’s *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) and Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* (1771)—that navigate the space between the particular texture of individual friendships and the broader issue of public good, both of which Shaftesbury exempts from the charge of being an instrumental virtue.

Sarah Fielding and Mackenzie’s novels that are separated by a generation, allow us to discern certain continuities and discontinuities, both formal and thematic, in their evocation of spontaneous compassion, and they conveniently bookend a shifting set of responses to the man of feeling ‘type’ who embodies the spirit of a new sociability based on instinctive compassion.

The character of David Simple, in the first of the two novels I examine, is often believed to be, as Gerard Barker states explicitly, one of the “earliest examples of the Man of Feeling in English Fiction” (69)³ while the title of Mackenzie’s first novel, *The Man of Feeling*, has become an epithet for the hero of sensibility and has come to represent what Janet Todd calls, the “blockbuster” of sensibility. Barker identifies a shift in the character type embodied by the protagonists of the two novels and argues that while the eponymous hero of Fielding’s novel -- David Simple -- embodies a more

³ Felicity Nussbaum in her article, “Effeminacy and Femininity: Domestic Prose Satire and *David Simple*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 11.4 (1999) too calls David Simple “perhaps the first man of feeling” (436). Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

resolute and active benevolence, the protagonist of Mackenzie's novel – Harley -- represents an effete helplessness that evokes pity (69-70).⁴

This chapter seeks to explore further the shift that Barker marks between the two novels and in doing so will focus on the particular conjunction between sensibility, self-consciousness and the mode of sociability associated with the man of feeling. My examination of Sarah Fielding's novel will focus especially on the affective affinity that serves as the basis of social relations, especially in the novel's elaboration on the term 'friend,' a prominent thread that runs through the novel as indicated by the sub-title of the novel – *The Adventures of David Simple: Containing an Account of his Travels through London and Westminster in the Search of a Real Friend*. In my exploration of *The Man of Feeling*, I analyze why in the depiction of characters representing sensibility, compassion does not always co-exist with the process of reflective thinking. Sensibility as a literary term indicated a sympathetic responsiveness in a character, and in this sense these two novels encompass two aspects– the capacity to respond compassionately especially to strangers, and the instinctive immediacy of such a response that eschews pre-meditation. A prominent feature of the character of feeling is an absence of self-interest in their responses to others, which places them at variance with the broader milieu that they are part of.⁵

⁴ See Gerard A. Barker, "David Simple: The Novel of Sensibility in Embryo," *Modern Language Studies* 12.2 (Spring 1982) 69-80. Hereafter page numbers are cited in the paper. I discuss how women fit into this type in my chapter on *Clarissa*.

⁵ Barker describes the naïve men of feeling as "spontaneously benevolent, sensitive, and idealistic, [and] at the same time remarkably innocent and hence ill-equipped to cope with a cynically callous world" (69). Robert Burns is famously said to have described Mackenzie's novel as "a book I prize next to the Bible" as a way of acknowledging the ethical power of sharing others' feelings, though he did not see particular relationships as being able to challenge a self-serving society. See Robert Burns, *Selected Poems and Songs*, ed. Robert P. Irvine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

The two novels, therefore, though having different emphases, demonstrate a shared concern with an ideal sociability especially with strangers, as well as with the spontaneity in the protagonist. In the analysis that follows, I will trace in *David Simple* the elaboration of the aspect of sociability as embodied in the search for a friend, while I examine Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* for the value accorded to an unreflective sensibility in its naïve hero whose acts of compassion often escape causal logic.

The protagonists in both novels are marked by a naiveté that sets them apart from other characters around them.⁶ These protagonists display a sensibility that is not vetted by self-consciousness in a world dominated by materialistic self-interest, corruption, and deceit. While *David Simple* can be seen as one of the early novels of sensibility that begins crystallizing the eighteenth century man of feeling type, Mackenzie's novel coming about three decades later is able to take this type and sift it through a series of questions about the efficacy and value of such a figure. The absence of a reflective character seems linked to the challenge of how the virtuous character in this novel remains open to insinuations of self-interest.

Both novels approach the question of self-interest in ways that are fundamentally different from the moral philosophy I examined earlier, which seeks to link the naturally benevolent person to a more self-consciously virtuous individual. In the philosophy, feeling for, and thinking about public good, get intertwined with each other and in fact borrow qualities from the other so that the immediacy of a sympathetic reaction to a

⁶ Gerard Barker distinguishes what he calls naïve Men of Feeling from worldly Men of Feeling, placing *David Simple* and *Harley* in the former category, and Sir Charles Grandison, Lord Orville (*Evelina*), and Henry Clinton (*The Fool of Quality*) in the latter. In his distinction, the worldly ones are didactic and do exemplary actions, while the naïve ones show a goodness of heart and react. See Gerard A. Barker, "David Simple: The Novel of Sensibility in Embryo" (1982).

stranger is not strictly opposed to a reflective process of reasoning on virtue as a desire for the common good. In moral philosophy, two selves exist in each person -- the self that naturally acts, and the reflective self that checks and observes this natural self.

This chapter examines how and why the man of feeling, as represented in these two novels, splits these two selves and presents the protagonist as unthinking and instinctively benevolent. In showing us what virtue would look like without self-consciousness, the depiction of sensibility in these two novels raises crucial questions and offers unique insights into the ideas of sociability and self-interest.⁷

i. “A Friend that he could live with, who could throw off all separate Interests”:

Sociability in *David Simple*

The Adventures of David Simple was Sarah Fielding’s first and most successful novel. She was regarded as a minor writer until the nineteenth century, but recent scholarship has re-evaluated her life and writings and sought to establish her own contributions to the mid-eighteenth century literary sphere outside the shadow of her more famous brother, the playwright and novelist Henry Fielding.⁸ *The Adventures of David Simple*, published

⁷ In speaking of sensibility, or what he calls sentimentalism in novels, John Mullan suggests that it is “more like the consequence of an anxiety about the sociability of individuals, than the assertion of a faith in human benevolence. The novel, the genre that pays special attention to the texture of both individuality and social relations, is an appropriate place for this anxiety to find expression.” John Mullan, “Sentimental novels” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 250.

⁸ Sarah Fielding is now regarded by some scholars as the most popular English woman writer of her period after Eliza Haywood. See Peter Sabor’s introduction in Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple*, and *Volume the Last*, ed. Peter Sabor, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1998, *Eighteenth-Century Novels by Women Series* (x). Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text and are to this

anonymously in 1744 in two volumes, proved to be very successful and was reprinted ten weeks after its first appearance with a preface by Henry Fielding.⁹ The character of Simple and the novel's form prefigure many of the issues that novels of sensibility engage with like the nature of social ties, and a narrative form that construes the hero as transparent and gullible.

The full title of the novel, *The Adventures of David Simple: Containing An Account of his Travels Through the Cities of London and Westminster, in the Search of A Real Friend*, sums up the intent of the main narrative,¹⁰ a journey which is undertaken to redefine the hero's public and private world by a search not just for a friend but for what a "Real Friend" means. The novel tracks the travels of the eponymous hero David Simple, a trader's son, who after being betrayed by his brother Daniel (described as Simple's first *friend*), sets off to London in search of a real friend. The term 'friend' in the novel is used loosely to refer to both men and women, and encompasses both kin relations like his brother and uncle, as well as non-kin relations like the women he courts or the men he befriends. The problematic raised particularly by Hume that passionate

edition. Sarah Fielding was also associated with a fledgling movement for women's communities. Shortly before her death she was to join her friends Sarah Scott and Elizabeth Montagu at a "female utopia," a community planned in Buckinghamshire and based on Sarah Scott's novel *Millenium Hall* (1762). See Peter Sabor (xxiii). *David Simple* has been admired for its progressive views on women, an anti-slavery stance, and its advocacy for a more equitable distribution of property embodied in the views of the characters of Camilla and Cynthia.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xxiv. Sabor notes how all editions before his have placed Henry Fielding's Preface first and have sought to value Sarah Fielding's work through the influence and editorial 'help' of her brother. Sabor notes that in fact Sarah Fielding is now thought to have ghost-written pieces for her brother particularly the "Leonora" story in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*. In her brief "Advertisement to the Reader," Fielding reveals herself as a woman and justifies the act of writing on the grounds of financial necessity.

¹⁰ Ute Kauer interprets Sarah Fielding's choice of a picaresque, masculinist form as choosing her brother's style over her favorite author and brother's rival, Samuel Richardson's sentimental epistolary style. Kauer reads the novel as a masquerade on the author's part endowing Simple with "traits of the sentimental tradition" and showing a "de-sexualized hero." See Ute Kauer, "Masks and Masquerades in the 18th Century Novel: Sarah Fielding and Samuel Richardson," *Erfurt Electronic Studies in English*, 1, 2003.

sympathy operates with diminished intensity for those not familiar or familial but who can yet be brought close by vivid impressions is demonstrated in the novel by the depiction of a sensibility that can evoke feelings for strangers by re-framing the term ‘friend’.¹¹ Naomi Tadmor sees the term in the eighteenth century as merging several meanings toward accepting selective friendships as signifying a connection with a wider social order.¹² In this sense, friendship mediates the private and public worlds of individuals and arguably becomes a version of universal benevolence, a theme reiterated in all the novels of sensibility. Tadmor cites one writer’s explanation from the period on how friendships are a complex sign of our capacity for goodwill towards everyone: “When men contract friendship they ‘inclose the Commons’ ... and limit to two or three friends that which originally has been intended for all” (240). In these lines, friendship is seen as a Christian fellowship whose scope has been limited in recent times and is sought to retain its connection with a larger universal charity. Friendship between persons is then inimical to Christian brotherhood by virtue of closeness to some over others.

Shaftesbury in his *Sensus Communis* refutes the charge on friendship as inimical to universal fellow-feeling and deplors the teachings coming from “Reverend Doctors” like

¹¹ See Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Hereafter page numbers are cited in the text. Naomi Tadmor provides an insightful account of the term friend in the eighteenth century that in her study designated a wide spectrum of relationships “that spanned kinship ties, sentimental relationships, economic ties, occupational connections, intellectual and spiritual attachments, sociable networks, and political alliances” (167).

¹² Tadmor sees eighteenth century writers as conflating three traditional notions of friendship that she elucidates thus: “Whereas Aristotle defined perfect friendship as ‘the friendship of those who are good, and similar in their goodness ... Cicero defined it as ‘a complete sympathy in all matters of importance, plus goodwill and affection’ ... Aquinas saw clearly the tension between such exclusive sentiments, and Christian notions of universal charity. For the sake of God, he argued, a man should not limit his love to his friends, but love his neighbour and fellow-man” (238).

“Bishop [Jeremy] Taylor” who frown on friendship as narrow.¹³ Shaftesbury carefully demarcates “private friendship” from Christian brotherhood in order to stress its voluntary nature. He defines what he calls “private friendship” not as general charity but as a “peculiar relation, which is formed by a consent and harmony of minds by mutual esteem and reciprocal tenderness and affection” (46). For Shaftesbury, this is always between unrelated persons. He argues that ‘friendship’ as defined in the New Testament to mean “our acquaintance, or our kindred, the relatives of our family or our fortune or our sect,” cannot really be called friendship as it is enjoined on a Christian to do so. He emphasizes particular friendships, i.e. any friendship between two persons in harmony based on mutual affection, and qualifies the term friendship into a microcosm of brotherhood. In the novel, we can see a resonance of this idea, as the circles of the familiar and strange collide into one. The desire to demonstrate compassion to anyone by Simple straddles the private-public divide by making all strangers possible friends; a public of potential friends and a private way of accessing the public.

Simple’s search for a friend, therefore, blurs the lines between the private and the public by expanding on the understanding of private relationships. It opens with Simple’s despair of finding a sincere friend since he is disappointed by his brother’s treachery and violation of friendship, since for Simple, filial love and friendship are synonymous. The novel traces a move away from the biological family into the world in the search for different friends, now not to be defined by family but by those who wish to bond without

¹³ Interestingly, Shaftesbury claims that Jeremy Taylor is forced to explain Christian charity as an expansive version of private friendship and points out that Taylor’s examples are drawn from the heathen world. In Shaftesbury’s view, Taylor was forced to concede that private friendship is not selfish or limited and can motivate people towards a “pure love” for everyone (47). Shaftesbury’s view is echoed in *Clarissa* in Clarissa’s value of her friendship with Anna, and she cites the same Biblical passage from 2 *Samuel* as Shaftesbury on the friendship between Jonathan and David as a love ‘surpassing the love of women.’

self-interest. After being duped by his brother Daniel of his rightful inheritance, which is subsequently restored to him by the help of a loyal servant and his uncle, Simple decides to use his money to serve “his Friends,” as yet an unknown set of people or an empty category that could potentially include anyone. Simple does not confine his search to seeking a friend only for his own companionship, but with a reciprocal view to become a friend to someone. When he decides to travel to London for his quest, the narrator explains that Simple’s “design was to seek out one capable of being a real Friend, and to assist all those, who had been thrown into Misfortunes by the ill Usage of others” (21). The use of the singular “one” and plural “all” suggests particular and general categories that friendship can belong to. The narrative suggests that Simple is looking both for a particular friend who may become his companion, as well as seeking to befriend all those who need his help. The word “friend” in the passage therefore denotes and merges two categories in the narrative – it refers to a friend to live with or a companion, and more generally to strangers who have a claim on our compassion by virtue of their suffering. ‘Friend’ can extend to individual strangers as well to a larger community.

The category of ‘strangers’ falls between the familiar and a remote public. Though these strangers are particular individuals, they inhere in the general public by virtue of being unacquainted and are thereby remote in a sense, and the imaginative effort of connecting to them is a step towards connecting with a remote general public. This can be seen in the manner in which becoming friends with strangers who are not seeking friends for any selfish reasons, is a search for and consolidation of a society shorn of selfishness. The two aims cohere. In the narrator’s description, Simple is looking for “a Friend that he could live with, who could throw off all separate Interests; for where Selfishness reigns in

any of the Community, there can be no Happiness” (20). Simple’s quest is for someone who has no “separate interest” in the relationship and he sees the merger of two such individuals as an ideal community where again, no “selfishness” intrudes. By using the term ‘community’ for a fellowship of two, as well as for a larger collective, and earlier, ‘friends’ for brother, lover and for strangers in need, the narrative shows how the elastic idea of friendship serves the dual purpose of a label for familiars and strangers, for bonds of marriage and a harmonious collective of hitherto unacquainted strangers. This straddling of the public and private can be seen in Simple’s explicit purpose of exploring all classes and types of people in “all “publick Assemblies” and many “private Families” (21-22). This collective is fleshed out materially by consciously addressing the status of the people he meets and at the same time by his sifting through all ranks to arrive at a generalized understanding of the collective without any divisions.

Simple’s search creates a sense of a public world as his encounters are consciously sought across all ranks to the point of ultimately seeing the classification by rank as devoid of meaning. He consciously expands the demographic profile of who the ideal friend may be by overlooking status or as he calls it the ‘station’ of such a friend. Even as he wonders which class of society might yield the best people, Simple decides to ignore external circumstances of rank and status, “Place or Station,” for determining what a person would be like, since according to him it only affects their capacity for whatever they are naturally disposed to do (21). People have become just themselves, unattached to their socio-economic markers so that personhood is delinked from status, and a collective community can be imagined since hierarchies of rank have been ignored. This move creates a category of all men as he travels first to London not to “see

Buildings” as other travelers might do but to “enter into the Characters of Men.” He believes London is representative of all places as “Mankind in their Natures are much the same everywhere” (21). The specificity of station is overridden by the fact that the novel clearly recognizes the existence of compassion in all and conversely the self-interest of people in all classes.¹⁴

Simple’s test for assessing the suitability of a good friend is to ascertain their generosity and the absence of a mercenary nature in them associating self-interest with a mercenary inclination at the cost of fair play. He finds people of each class of society failing this test in different ways. One of his first excursions in the city is to the stock exchange only to find it inimical to the very idea of friendship, as the men there are “assembled with no other view than to barter for interest” (22). ‘Interest’ here, as in many places in the novel, connotes a selfish motive, here meaning making profits off a fluctuating stock market at the cost of other people. Simple notes that all the “Countenances” of those at the Exchange are marked by anxiety and fear, proving to him that the pursuit of self-interest does not necessarily lead to happiness. Within minutes of being there, an attempt is made by a “Broker” to dupe Simple into buying shares that, unknown to Simple, are falling in value. Simple is warned by a rival broker about the first broker’s intentions. Simple learns to his dismay that the epithet of “a good man” in the financial sphere equals a financially sound person. This prevarication over “good” puts him “in a rage” about a place “where riches were esteemed goodness” (23). Appalled at

¹⁴ Many instances of the democratization of feeling compassion, in that it is exhibited by persons of all ranks, can be seen in vignettes of compassion in various novels, for example, in Henry Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews*, a postilion boy shows the most compassion to an injured Joseph in contrast to the gentleman and ladies in the carriage. John Mullan in *Sentiment and Sociability* allows that sensibility was not confined only to the propertied class and those of a lower class had access to it. Rank is stressed as an identity marker only to reveal its irrelevance since people from all stations reveal a self-interested nature.

the equation of money with worth, Simple sees any sign of avarice as incompatible with goodness. His search for goodness is not only a search for a friend or a virtuous being but is a confirmation of what goodness or virtue means.

At this point it is worth mentioning how the term “virtue” is used through the text. Like so many terms used inconsistently during the period, the meaning can vary especially in terms of gender and is used both in the singular and plural. Virtue in this novel most often is used in opposition to vice and indicates some ethical behavior and is simply a placeholder for an opposition to vice. The use of the terms virtue and vice appear to offer clarity. The purpose of virtue and vice is to be distinct as is evident when the character of the atheist trying to woo Cynthia is castigated because “he made such a medley between Pleasure and Pain, Virtue and Vice that it was impossible to distinguish what he had a mind to prove” (141). However, Simple refers most to the virtues that especially lead to the good of other people. In one instance, Simple mentions qualities that would be signs of selflessness or the virtues he yearns to find -- “Besides, he saw the Shadow of those Virtues in so many Minds, that he did not in the least doubt, but the Substance must exist in some place or other,” referring to “Generosity, Good-nature, and a Capacity for real Friendship” (35). On the other hand, a woman’s virtue is most often referred to in the singular and means only one thing – chastity or sexual modesty: “she fancied whatever she suffered, she should command herself enough not to transgress the Bounds of Decency, or the Laws of Virtue” (100). This sense of a woman’s virtue as chastity is repeated through the text and a significant exception is in David’s refusal to limit a woman’s virtue to chastity. In his quest for a friend who is virtuous, he chooses Camilla without reference to her sexuality: “He was sure she had every good Quality

human Nature is capable of possessing. He ran over every Virtue in his own Mind, and gave them her all, without any Exception” (215). To an extent, the novel makes fewer distinctions between the virtue of men and that of women.

Goodness or virtue is delineated by exploring how it may be distinguished from other qualities which appear like goodness, but lack true compassion. Several examples of seemingly good men are depicted to show what kind of goodness Simple values. Book I narrates Simple’s interactions with the middling sort or those in “genteel professions” who are afflicted with miserliness and pride (45). A gentleman of French extraction, Mr. Orgueil, symbolizes a pride in his virtue. His calm and pleasant manner, and the value he places on the character of people as opposed to their riches, initially convinces Simple that he may have found a worthy man. But as Orgueil’s friend Mr. Spatter points out to Simple, Orgueil is very intolerant of the frailties of others. Depicted as a caricature of the Stoics, Orgueil is amused by vices and thinks they are “impossible to remedy.” He looks upon “compassion” as “a very great weakness,” believing only in duty and reason (55). This misuse of the stoic attitude is shown as immoral because for Simple, duty and reason cannot be divorced from compassion. The stoic position or rather this caricature of it serves to show how a good-humored acceptance of vice is not a form of benevolent tolerance. Simple’s search for goodness allows us to see him as an embodiment of it through his cognition of what it must entail.

Sensibility can be seen as a sympathetic passion that radiates from the self towards others and is often authenticated in the body. Passions are endorsed only in conjunction with sympathy for others, a quality marked by Simple’s “Tenderness” of heart. The passions are evoked as moral insofar as they open up Simple to others, and within such a

sphere, the manliness of crying is stressed.¹⁵ On hearing the tragic story from Mr. Orgueil of a young lady abandoned by her lover and who subsequently dies of shame, Simple is moved to tears. His tears are described in terms of what constitutes appropriate crying for a man: “Here Mr. *Orgueil* stopped, seeing poor *David* could hear no more, not being able to stifle his Sighs and Tears, at the Idea of such a Scene; for he did not think it beneath a Man to cry from Tenderness, tho’ he would have thought it much too effeminate to be moved to Tears by an Accident that concerned himself only” (48). David weeps for others and not for his own afflictions. The “he” in the second clause could refer to David or likely to Mr. Orgueil but in any case creates a distinction between what falls under the rubric of the manly and the effeminate and maps it onto the difference between tears of sympathy and self-pity.¹⁶ The passion of compassion becomes worthy of admiration as it makes the individual step outside his self into others. This susceptibility to full sympathy is one that unites his body and mind to the anguish of Camilla as she relates her story of being reduced to poverty. He shakes “with Horror at that Thought” and is very invested in his concern for her. As the narrator describes it, “he felt in his own Mind all the Misery

¹⁵ Felicity Nussbaum in her article “Effeminacy and Femininity: Domestic Prose Satire and *David Simple*” (1999), makes the case that. She sees Simple as “feminized” and Cynthia as displaying a “vigorous masculinity” (439). Nussbaum’s point is to show how Simple is cast as “effeminate” which in the novel is not the same as “feminine or unmanly (425), and allows for the creation of the man of feeling. Her claim though that “Sarah Fielding subtly contests the powerful fantasy of masculine authority in *David Simple* through a heroine who is manly and a hero who is not” (426), does not sufficiently allow for the question of how such a figure remains the moral fulcrum of the narrative and whose values do authorize the benchmark for virtue.

¹⁶ See Ute Kauer, “Masks and Masquerades in the 18th Century Novel” 2003. Using Madeline Kahn’s term ‘narrative transvestism,’ Kauer views Simple’s ‘tender’ masculinity not as a feminist subversion of the picaresque mode but as part of sentimental philosophy that sees men’s crying as pity and women’s as self-absorbed (3). Kauer’s main argument is that Sarah Fielding’s novel cannot sustain the contradiction of using a male genre and therefore fails as a narrative structure. This recalls Adam Smith’s difference between women’s humanity that he views as self-indulgent, and men’s generosity in being objective, as discussed in my previous chapter though Smith is referring to women sympathizing with others passionately – closer to what Simple is doing.

she had gone through” (131). This ability to feel sympathy with someone’s distress, as Smith too describes it, becomes the hallmark of sensibility.

His sensibility entails a minimal account of the inner workings of his mind. The moving in and out between Simple’s point of view which is to take things at face value, and that of the narrator as the omniscient and objective story-teller, allows Simple to preserve his naiveté and the narrator provides a fuller story to the reader of a world driven by self-interest. Simple is impervious to self-interest by not being able to identify it in others and must be shown its pervasiveness by other characters. But since the world is inhabited by characters with ulterior motives, Simple becomes gullible since his lack of a hidden self is at odds with those with self-interest and whose characters are harder to read correctly. In formal terms, the novel presents Simple’s gullibility by allowing the narrator to comment and probe the nature of others in order to preserve Simple’s naiveté. The opening chapter of the novel details the close friendship between David Simple and his brother Daniel. David is described as ‘simple’ due to his inexperience, and, because he never harbors any “ill Designs on others, [he] never thought of their having any upon him” (8). Simple sees others as they appear on the surface. In the second chapter, we soon learn that it is David’s own ‘simple’ understanding of his perfect relationship with his brother Daniel that has been ventriloquized by the narrator in the first chapter, though cast for us in a frame of explanation. The second chapter opens with the narrator’s revelation of Daniel’s cunning nature. The narrator inserts herself in Daniel’s consciousness and readers would realize that they had been placed in ignorance like David, as she begins with the following revelation: “It will perhaps surprise the Reader as much as it did his Brother, to find that Daniel, notwithstanding the Appearance of

Friendship ... [wished] to promote his own Interest" (8). The second chapter is written from the point of view of Daniel's hidden interior revealing that his friendship with his brother was his strategy to have access to his money. Though the narrator asserts at one point that she has got "this History from [David's] mouth," the ability to see through others that David lacks, has to be gained either from experience, or by the revelation through others, or in the reader's case, through the narrator's disclosures. Thus the narrator must insinuate herself into a naïve character as well occupy a conscious space outside of him to be able to make sense of his naiveté.

Conversely, the second chapter detailing Daniel's cunning in luring the maid Peggy to be his accomplice, shows that the ability to detect an ill motive in others can only be developed by examining one's own ill motives. The narrator in explaining Daniel's "Wisdom," notes that "he could easily find out an ill-disposed Mind in others by comparing it with what passed in his own Bosom" (9). Though the sentence implies that Daniel can detect a fellow villain by finding a harmony between himself and them, it also implies assuming a self-interest in everyone. In this assumption Daniel is right. He is able to break down the resistance of the maid Peggy to join his scheme in cheating David out of his inheritance. Initially he is set back by her refusal of his bribes to go along with his plan of forgery "but when he reflected" on his own avarice, he decided that since it would be "impossible for him to refuse anything he thought valuable," he surmises that Peggy too is unlikely to resist money and therefore continues to bribe her further. Peggy does give in eventually, led on by the temptation of more money. Daniel's ability to find accomplices is not based only on his canny ability to size up characters like Peggy, but because the world described in the novel is one in which the chances of self-interest

winning out is high. Simple, on the other hand, cannot make such assumptions and cannot read most people accurately. His point of view is inadequate to describe a world of self-interested characters thus leaving the narrator to perform the function of conveying Simple's simplicity and exposing the duplicity of other characters.

Simple's inability to reflect and grow more cynical and prudent is consistent through the novel. Though he briefly considers becoming a recluse, he is described as "too social" to retire from society preserving his lack of cynicism. The narrative is made up of loosely connected episodes – his encounters with the high and the low of society, his visits to the stock-exchange and theatre in London, and episodes recounting the life histories of other characters, like Camilla and Cynthia's story, and the tale of the melancholic French lady Isabelle. But there is a connecting thread that links Simple to the intricate web of people he encounters. This thread works like a series of eye-openers where each acquaintance of Simple's introduces him to another person, with the more recent acquaintance usually revealing the hidden selfish motives of the previous acquaintance. Simple tends to believe each one, till their true nature is revealed by the next character. He remains gullible and only acquires a little caution (but not cynicism) towards the end of the narrative and remains much the same in his search for an ideal friend.

The ever-widening ties with friends and encounters with strangers conveys the reach of Simple's compassion. The novel ends on a happy note, after a series of digressions with the dual marriages of Simple with Camilla, and her brother Valentine with Cynthia. The ending embodies the success of Simple's values as his search for an ideal companion is completed and he continues to befriend strangers like Isabelle who need his aid. The

novel is able to disperse Simple's benevolent energies over a wider range of people and not just one 'friend'.

The success of such a sociability became harder to demonstrate as Fielding's own example shows. After a gap of eleven years Sarah Fielding wrote a sequel to *David Simple*, simply titled *Volume the Last* (1753).¹⁷ A more somber piece reflecting on the aftermath of *David Simple*'s happy ending, *Volume the Last* shows the futility and poignancy of happiness for the benevolent man who must endure the ravages of illness and death, and suggests to the reader that persons of sensibility like Simple, like his literary successors Clarissa and Harley, are too good for this world. Simple endures the grief of his wife Camilla's long illness and death as well as the death of Valentine her brother, and the novel ends with the demise of a broken-hearted Simple. Though Simple never turns cynical, bitterness undermines the childlike happiness of his character in the sequel. Written a couple of years after Sarah Fielding had lost her three sisters and a young nephew all within a year, it reflects a more bitter view showing the solitariness of human life and the inevitable loss of friends, and casts a shadow over the hope embodied at the end of *David Simple* on Simple's success in finding a real friend. The tragic ending of *Volume the Last* is more akin to the death of Harley in *The Man of Feeling* – an implicit rejection in both novels of the idea that marriage is the natural locus of sociability and that a virtuous life will be a happy one. Nevertheless the robust idealism and innocence of the protagonist was transformed into an effort at building a community whose members connect without the prospect of any self-interest.

¹⁷ *Volume the Last* did not prove successful and was never reprinted in her lifetime. See Peter Sabor (xvi). Fielding wrote another sequel to *David Simple* in an epistolary form titled *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple* (1747) but it is only loosely connected to the first novel.

Thus Sarah Fielding's first novel of sensibility reveals two of its significant aspects. The personal desire for companionship is depicted as co-terminus with the desire to strengthen one's community. Public good is sought through individual relationships beyond Simple's intimate circle showing a sociability that transforms an ever-widening range of strangers turned into a community. Secondly, Simple's compassion is paired with spontaneity, which in formal terms produces a narrative technique that can reflect this ethic. Simple's lack of guile is possible through the presentation of an unreflecting character whose judgment on others does not impinge on his optimism. The problematic of a narrative centered on a character without self-consciousness receives fuller attention in Mackenzie's novel *The Man of Feeling* where it finds itself center-stage both formally and thematically.

ii. "Virtue's younger sister": Sensibility in *The Man of Feeling*

Mackenzie's first novel *The Man of Feeling* published in April 1771 can be understood less as depicting pure enactments of sensibility and more as posing and resolving problems about representing sensibility. The novel was immensely popular in its own time.¹⁸ The novel stages various scenes about its protagonist Harley revealing his spontaneously compassionate nature to mark him out as its hero, and by doing so, raises questions about the efficacy and morality of sensibility that may appear passive, even while underscoring its status as a testimony to the underlying bonds between individuals.

¹⁸ According to Horst Drescher, it was reprinted several times, and translated into French, German, Italian, Polish, and Swedish in its time and the 1st American edition was published in 1782. See Horst W. Drescher, *Literature and Literati: The Literary Correspondence and Notebooks of Henry Mackenzie Vol. 2/Notebooks 1763-1824* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999) 30.

Harley's occasional views on politics, like his views on colonialism that argue against the principle of material self-interest, show a continuum between the ability to feel for individuals in distress as well as imagine a public world that does not lean on the self-interest of its units.

The novel presents a man of feeling marked by spontaneity and carefully demarcates his lack of self-consciousness from the highly self-conscious narrative frame. The narrative charts the story of Harley a young, bashful gentleman in his attempts at acquiring financial stability and the subsequent failure of his ventures. The story of Harley is marked through a series of encounters with strangers whom he reaches out to in sympathy. His reactions to individuals in distress—often that of tearful commiseration—make up the stock sentimental scenes. These scenes – like the hero's experience of horror at Bedlam, an encounter with a repentant prostitute, and his kindness to his old tenant farmer -- have a quality of being vignettes in the novel. But it is the very staginess of these scenes that allows them to be citations of sensibility that are unreflective, compassionate, and naïve. In order to preserve Harley's stable, unchanging sensibility, the narrative frame takes on the burden of plot movement, causality, explanation, and didactic purpose so that there is a sense of a deliberate care in presenting a spontaneous hero.

This deliberateness is built into the narrative partly through the device of a fictional editor and a third-person narrator. The novel uses the tradition of narrating the story from a 'found manuscript' and thus there are two narrative frames in the novel. The first frame comprises the outer shell of the narrative where the 'editor' in the novel takes possession of a 'found manuscript' from a curate, edits, and presents it to the reader. The reader is

told that since the manuscript relating Harley's life story is torn and is missing pieces, the narrative's structure is thus marked by gaps in the story. There are missing chapters so that the novel which begins at chapter 11, moves onto chapter 14, jumps to chapter 19, then from 21 to 25, 36 to 40, and so forth and these jumps are mirrored by actual jumps in the story. There are also three unrelated fragments scattered in between the chapters. The disconnected episodes and some unexplained characters create a narrative in which the reader does not have full access to all the threads of the story. The graphic markers of gaps are marked in the middle of a speech in one chapter thus:

* * * * *

[Here a considerable part is wanting.]

* * 19

These editorial intrusions constantly remind the reader of the lack of a formal coherent structure within the narrative and therefore of the highly-wrought structure of the novel, which does not allow a fragmented character to become morally incoherent in any way to the reader. The labor of the form is to give due reverence to its content whose value has to be defended against the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of the story.

The split between the ephemeral yet moving figure of Harley and the constructedness of the narrative frame is repeated in the split between the value of such a story and those who see it as futile. The novel begins by its fictional editor slighting the worth of its publication. The curate who has possession of the manuscript before handing it to the editor is dismissive of the manuscript describing it as 'worthless', and his evaluation adds

¹⁹ Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 32. Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text and refer to this edition.

to the frailty of Harley's story.²⁰ The curate calls the story a sermon, but describes it as a "weary" read, inconsistent in tone, without "a single syllogism" thus desiring a mode of reasoning. The curate has been using the manuscript as "wadding" (stuffing) in his gun signifying its functionality as waste. The editor describes the story as "a bundle of little episodes, put together without art, and of no importance on the whole, with something of nature, and little else in them" revealing that they have been strung together without method. "Nature" seems opposed to "art" where natural experiences are distinguished from the artifice that bestows a system. The editor grants it some modest literary merit by noting that if the piece had been written by "Richardson or Marmontel," he might "have wept," but he "is ashamed to be pleased with the works of one knows not whom" and therefore "does not cry" at its moving passages (4, 5). Though the editor makes no expressions of grief, the citation of Richardson and Marmontel places the narrative (and Mackenzie's first novel) in a literary tradition of sentiment thus appealing to the reader to see the text as belonging to such a tradition.

A sense of worth that mark the character of Harley is articulated through extreme modesty and self-deprecation. Harley's life is presented as one which is perhaps worth noting even as the narrative emphasizes how such a character has passed away unregarded. Thus the material status of the novel and Harley's person and personality are intertwined as fragile and obscured from the world's notice. The novel's discourse suggests that this is a false estimation of its value. Harley's life-story, when narrativized, gets torn and fragmented as is reflected in the episodic and fragmented nature of his

²⁰ Maureen Harkin argues in her introduction to the Broadview edition of the novel that such a framing of the narrative as part of a torn manuscript adds to the sense of defeat of its hero and what he represents because of the way it notes the ephemerality of art as a material object. See *The Man of Feeling*, ed. Maureen Harkin (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005).

story. Within the novel his actions are incomprehensible to most others around him. The novel's form thus replays what Harley's story represents – it is fragmented, bewildering, yet nested within a strong framing structure encasing his value and endorsing what he represents.

This strong frame is provided by the narrator, (unnamed except once in the novel as Charles), who as Harley's friend performs a dual role allowing us to see Harley's mild follies without condemning his gullibility. The relationship of this narrator to Harley is never explained and he functions both as a kind of omniscient narrator and at times appears as an intimate friend of Harley's as is evident in his sense of bereavement at Harley's death at the end of the novel. The narrator also allows an occasional gently-mocking tone at the expense of Harley especially in Harley's admiration for Miss Walton and the natural but absurd nature of his jealousy of her other suitors. However, the narrator's occasional humor at the expense of Harley only adds to the sense of Harley's quaint unworldliness and is carefully distinguished from the incomprehension shown by other characters towards his odd behavior. His singularity is thus made relatively comprehensible to the reader even while recognizing his anomalous position in the world he inhabits.

The novel strives to render an unusual character as an admirably virtuous one, not only through the narrator's endorsement of him, but also by invoking a sensibility assumed in every reader who must implicitly be endowed with sensibility. The narrative seeks to moderate the reader's access and involvement with Harley, but the style draws in the reader's identification with Harley's feelings. The gaps in the narrative are not meant to matter because the reader is invited to connect with Harley despite these gaps. The

omniscient narrator's frequent use of the collective pronoun 'we' creates an intimate tone with the reader by implicating the reader within his omniscience. He sets up an intimate knowing 'look' between reader and character. This is achieved by the assumption that universal feelings of intense joy or suffering need not and indeed cannot be expressed in descriptive terms. Therefore at several points in the narrative, the reader is invited to imagine a scene that the narrator will not describe because the emotions of the character need not and cannot be expressed. For example, Harley's happiness in being able to reconcile the unfortunate prostitute Emily Atkins with her estranged father is conveyed by indirectly asking the reader to imagine it: "we would attempt to describe the joy Harley felt on this occasion, did it not occur to us, that one half of the world could not understand it though we did; and the other half will, by this time, have understood it without any description at all" (52). By placing the reader as either with him or beyond him in being able to imagine and feel what Harley feels, the narrator demands a particular response arising from sensibility in the reader in order to make sense of the narrative.

Harley is spared the task of explaining his reactions and theorizing his sensibility as this function is taken over by the narrator.²¹ The narrator serves as a moderating voice, adding comments on Harley's propensities and providing a counterview to the way most characters in the novel respond to Harley's apparent foolishness. The novel has often been criticized by critics for depicting a hero like Harley who is out of sync with the world, a fact amply acknowledged within the novel. However, his incongruity is situated within a moral compass that is not blind to his value. Harley is distinguished from his larger society as uncommon, unique, even odd but is held up as an ideal that needs to be

²¹ In contrast Yorick, the man of feeling in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* offers meta-comments on sensibility, for instance in his speech beginning "dear sensibility" in "The Bourbonnais" in Lawrence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 117.

esteemed. In an early chapter with the heading “OF WORLDLY INTERESTS,” the narrator marks out the difference between the ‘world’ and Harley based on his unusual lack of self-interest: “There are certain interests which the world supposes every man to have, and which therefore are properly enough termed worldly.” Here the narrator plays on the term ‘worldly’ to show how a general propensity becomes a norm as ‘the world’ (in the sense of a large number of people) have become ‘worldly’ or mercenary. The narrator then remarks that “the world is apt to make an erroneous estimate: ignorant of the dispositions which constitute our happiness or misery, they bring to an undistinguished scale, the means of the one [happiness], as connected with power, wealth, or grandeur, and of the other [misery] with their contraries.” The narrator argues against a self-seeking ethic, a critique that Harley cannot articulate since it would be out of character for him to reflect on the nature of self-interest. The narrator then offers up a counter-tradition of “philosophers and poets” who “have often protested against this decision [that wealth leads to happiness]; but their arguments have been despised as declamatory, or ridiculed as romantic” (9). For the narrator, worldliness is wrongly linked to happiness in the common view. An ideal form of behavior that the reader may think is impossible is reconstructed and shown as coming from a long-established tradition of thinkers. The narrator argues for characters like Harley who are not ‘worldly’ in both senses of the word – he is different from the rest of the world and transcends the material (and materialistic) world.

Harley’s inability to be worldly-wise conveys an innocence, like that of David Simple, which is incapable of being suspicious of the intentions of others because he has no hidden motives himself, and to that extent, no interiority. The assumption that a self-

conscious interiority is a split between the outward behavior of a person and his or her own hidden self-interested motives leads to a highly attenuated representation of self in Harley. While in *Clarissa*, as the next chapter demonstrates, the text struggles with the task of showing interiority in a character who is innocent despite being constantly suspected of masking her real desires, in *The Man of Feeling* coming decades later, Harley's character retains a non-reflective flatness to indicate that all that there is to him lies on the surface.

The lack of self-consciousness in Harley, suggests that there is nothing shameful to examine or reflect on that lies concealed within him. This refusal to examine becomes an ethic in Harley's implicit trust of everyone and his stubborn refusal to imagine their hidden motives. The narrator shows us the pitfalls of imagining self-interested intentions in people by initially playing along with a cynical view of Harley only to ultimately vindicate him. In the chapter "THE MAN OF FEELING IN A BROTHEL," the narrator implies that Harley must have an obviously lewd motive in taking a famished young prostitute, Emily Atkins, to a tavern. The narrator remarks that he "does not mean to inquire" or speculate on the nature of Harley's "impulse" behind this action, as it is "against [the narrator's] nature to search for motives where bad ones are to be found" (37). An assumption of self-interest behind a benevolent action is mockingly posed by the narrator as if there is no need for him to search for ulterior motives as they are probably base. This cynicism is shown as an ironic parallel to Harley's own reluctance to probe the motives of others, though his reluctance proceeds from a fear that prudence and caution might be a mask for self-interest. As it turns out later in the episode, Harley has no dishonorable reasons for befriending Miss Atkins. Thus, the narrator reveals, through a

clearly ironic tone, how attributing motives to the actions of others lead to erroneous judgments. The narrator's false lack of curiosity implies that those who may have read Harley's presence in a brothel as evidence of his lascivious nature would have been proved wrong.

The play between sincerity and self-consciousness becomes the moral crux of the novel. Harley's quixotic nature and persistent naïveté is in contrast to the narrator's revelation of the deception that Harley is prey to. The sensibility that Harley displays is emphasized by his inability to see through people. Even after he is made aware of duplicity in other characters he continues to be credulous. In other words, he refuses to alter his original response to them and continues to argue for taking something at face value. The novel repeatedly sets up episodes in which Harley is first shown as naïve about characters he encounters, then he learns the truth about them yet chooses to continue in a state of naïveté by persisting in his original impression. Harley refuses to attempt to discern who may or may not be worthy of compassion.²² Even though he may be duped by self-serving characters, this is shown as less of a problem for him than for the world which is inhabited by self-seeking schemers. Harley consistently avoids the tools of reason, deliberation, and self-consciousness since they stall the flow of compassion.

The novel thus seems to set up a link between a lack of self-consciousness and an ethics of compassion. In Harley, naïveté becomes synonymous with the lack of reflection and the inability to string together cause and effect. Sensibility is intimately tied up with an ability to live inside the moment. The earliest instance of this in the novel is Harley's

²² A similar sentiment is expressed in Hannah More's poem "Sensibility," where the speaker says that probing for who is deserving of one's compassion and generosity is a way to preempt sensibility: "Benevolence, which seldom stays to chuse/ Lest pausing Prudence teach her to refuse" (lines 209-10).

encounter with a fortune-teller who offers to read Harley's fate. Instead, Harley asks for the beggar's life story who relates how he has been forced by poverty into fortune-telling, a profession that he reveals is based on lying and cunning as people pay more money to hear apparent lies about their future. Originally a day-laborer, he has been unable to work after a severe illness. The man describes why he switched from plain begging to fortune-telling. He discovered that people did not wish to listen to the story of a beggar's misfortunes but were willing to give a little money to him in order to avoid listening to him. But more significantly, his not being a disabled beggar robbed the donors of a sense of being charitable for the reasons he sums up: "In short I found that people don't care to give alms without some security for their money; a wooden leg or a withered arm, is a sort of draught [draft] upon heaven for those who chuse to have their money placed to account there (17)." The fortune-teller notes that charity towards the visibly disabled is viewed as a kind of insurance by people who see it as an investment towards securing a place in heaven. Charity or giving alms without real compassion is mocked in the novel as bereft of any real sympathy and based on self-interest of some kind. Charity cannot become a manifestation of compassion if a selfish motive of the giver taints the action. An unreflective compassion, therefore, becomes the basis that must precede any action which can be called virtuous. In this sense, sensibility is not always tied to benevolent action. Significantly, therefore, sensibility in this sense is detached from the realm of effects or utility and instead measured solely with reference to the purity of intention that attaches to these acts.

The term benevolence from philosophy is associated with sensibility in the novels, but it is not as Hutcheson suggests, necessarily an action for the good of others. What is

similar though is the stress on intention. In the novel, the feelings of sensibility are virtuous because of the compassion that lead to it, just as Hutcheson makes motive the key determinant for benevolence. In fact the non-utilitarian aspect of compassion in the novels is often shown as a counter to utilitarian models of charity that focus on the action and its effects rather than on the interpersonal bond between sufferer and sympathizer.

Sensibility is also not quite equated with the conventional understanding of virtue as allied with reasoning or discernment. The novel consistently depicts Harley as avoiding the question of judging the objects of compassion. The fortune-teller's open acknowledgment of using lies to earn a living tests Harley's sense of charity towards him with the question of whether charity is only to be shown to the deserving poor. When Harley realizes the duplicitous maneuvers of the fortune-teller, he hesitates briefly before giving another shilling to him. Harley's decision to give to a man who lies for a living is noted by the narrator as not quite within the purview of what is strictly called virtue: "Harley had drawn a shilling from his pocket; but virtue bade him consider on whom he was going to bestow it.—Virtue held back his arm:—but a milder form, a younger sister of virtue's, not so severe as virtue, nor so serious as pity, smiled upon him: His fingers lost their compression;— nor did virtue offer to catch the money as it fell (18)." Harley gives money to a trickster and this action is illustrative of an un-nameable urge which goes beyond a conventional understanding of virtue and pity. Virtue is "severe" suggesting a harshness in judgment and a rigidity which restrains its ambit and thus holds Harley's arm from reaching out. His feelings are not of Pity either which is "serious" or not so indulgent. A "younger," indicating a newer or renewed, form of virtue "smiles" on Harley, favoring his outstretched gesture. What moves Harley is un-nameable here but is

clearly a form of virtue. This virtue that came to be called sensibility encompasses a gentleness that eschews a moral evaluation of those who make a claim on our compassion. The eschewing of any criterion evokes a universal character to sensibility making it a virtual quality that transcends concrete situations.

Harley's foolishness in trusting people is thus shown as rooted in his general tendency to ignore social origins and clues about a person's reliability. This allows him to befriend people across conventional borders of respectability. The novel counters a feeling the reader may have about ridiculing Harley for this, by having his naiveté work unexpectedly well with helpless victims of suffering. One of the classic episodes in the novel that allows Harley to befriend and help a destitute person is his encounter with Emily Atkins -- a lady who has been seduced and abandoned by a libertine lover and is now a prostitute. He offers her nourishment, is solicitous as she faints from hunger, and arranges for her safe transport to her lodgings. Harley's offer of money and food to Emily saves her from destitution and the harsh legal system. When he visits her the next day, she outlines what might have happened had Harley not given her money. She would have been "thrust out from this miserable place which misfortune has yet left me; exposed to the brutal insults of drunkenness, or dragged by that justice which I could not bribe...From that Mr. Harley, your goodness has relieved me" (49). The practical nature of Harley's monetary assistance to her is noted here but more than that is his capacity, as she further notes, to look past her notorious profession, his "exertion of benevolence which the infection of infamy prevents even in the humane" (49). Those who lie beyond the respectable borders of misfortune are seen as contaminating anyone who comes close to them by ruining their reputation. To be compassionate is to partake of, to participate in

another person which is why, even the “humane” may limit their humanity to avoid disgrace by association. Harley here chooses to associate with “infamy” because his sensibility is a universal compassion that cannot exclude a particular being from its reach.

Sensibility as outside consciousness is often shown in a mechanistic form which makes it involuntary in nature and it is manifested in the sheer physicality of the response. The signature feature of the man of feeling is his compelling impulse to sympathize and respond physically to others as part of displaying the connection the character feels within, literally wearing his heart on his sleeve. As a typical man of feeling (and in this respect similar to David Simple), Harley sheds copious tears in sympathy with others as can be seen in this brief but telling sentence about Harley crying with his steward Edwards’s little granddaughter over her parents’ grave: “—The girl cried afresh; Harley kissed off her tears as they flowed, and wept between every kiss” (74). The little girl’s anguish at her parents’ death has been renewed at their burial. Harley kisses her tears to commiserate with and comfort her as he too cries with her. The form of sensibility here is one of overlay – her tears, his kisses, and his tears. There is a flow between their anguish though the cause is slightly different for both, hers for her parents and his for her loss. His kisses to wipe her tears suggest a bridge he builds between their different griefs bridging the divide between sufferer and sympathizer.

The liberal use of dashes and exclamation marks in the novel, and the staccato nature of many sentences that lack in grammatical coherence too signify the physical nature of emotions that language is inadequate to reveal. Language as tautological in expressing emotions is evident when Edwards is thanking Miss Walton for her kindness: “—He folded his hands together—‘I cannot speak, young lady,’ said he, ‘to thank you.’ Neither

could Harley. There were a thousand sentiments; —but they gushed so impetuously on his heart, that he could not utter a syllable” (78). These “sentiments” are thoughts Harley wishes to speak but their rapid outpouring is too forceful and suggest the impossibility of conceiving a mental and physical divide in sensibility. The physical signs of sensibility have a momentum that overtakes its articulation but the reader can assess what “these thousand sentiments” might be.

The novel shows Harley’s sensibility as not equivalent to charity or duty and not as an instrument for social reform or a source of a powerful change across society. The novel shows results and effectiveness as less important than the solace and dignity on sufferers conferred by trust and empathy. Harley’s acts of charity are not just a disbursement of funds to the needy, but are shown as spontaneous responses to people. In fact his lack of alertness and inability to offer practical aid is emphasized in the narrative. In the scene in which Emily Atkins faints due to lack of nourishment, Harley is so overwhelmed by her swooning that though he catches her from falling on the ground, he is unable to disengage himself from the situation. He cannot even attempt the simplest practical response like ringing the bell for help. The narrator depicts Harley supporting Emily from falling, “looking wildly at the door, as if he wanted to run for assistance, but durst not leave the miserable creature. It was not till some minutes after, that it occurred to him to ring the bell, which at last however he thought of, and rung with repeated violence even after the waiter appeared. Luckily the waiter had his senses somewhat more about him” (37-8). Harley’s absent-mindedness is a result of his concern for Emily while the waiter who has his wits about him is shown to have a sneering attitude towards both Emily and Harley suspecting them of lewd intentions. Harley gives Emily his last bit of money making him

unable to pay for the food he has bought her. This highlights his penchant for living in the moment without reflection or foresight. The waiter mocks Harley for being gullible and trusting a harlot's story showing his own lack of compassion.

Harley's spontaneity is presented as a part of his ethic, that is occasionally shown as one consciously adopted by him. As Harley rushes to meet Emily the next morning as he has promised her, he forgets his purse and the note of her address at his home and is forced to return for them thus delaying his appointment. Harley cannot brook the slightest delay in attending to her and he foregoes locking up his valuables in order to be punctual for his appointment with her: "two vibrations of a pendulum would have served him to lock his bureau;—but they could not be spared" (41). The strength of Harley's impulses overtakes the few seconds needed to secure his valuables and is a sign of his compelling compassion.

Though Harley usually does not reflect on his ethics, these are a few moments in the novel where he gestures towards his convictions thus revealing in him a principled rejection of self-consciousness as a less reliable basis for humaneness. After being cautioned by his companions against frauds, Harley is forced to consider the "colder homilies of prudence" and wonders whether to keep his promise to Emily to visit her. "Prudence" suggests caution and deliberateness in choosing an end. As he recalls her tears of gratitude and weeps at the memory, the vividness of the memory overpowers all caution about her real motives. As he reasons within himself, "to calculate the chances of deception is too tedious a business for the life of man" (41)! Harley is not always a naïve fool refusing to exercise caution and judgment but actively chooses such a philosophy after reflecting on it, a kind of affection for spontaneous goodness, as Shaftesbury too

suggests. Prudence in Harley's terms is a tool by which we may rationalize our refusal to trust our better instincts.

The novel launches a consistent attack on what it variously terms prudence, calculation, logic, even a deliberation on knowledge, as a covert and rationalized form of self-interest. Harley's natural shyness becomes a marker of his refusal to be worldly and self-seeking and results in his passivity in pursuing the woman he admires, his stubbornness in refusing to ingratiate himself to a rich aunt in the hopes of being her heir, and his failure at securing more lands for lease which would raise him from the lower end of the gentry scale. This passivity becomes necessary if these actions are self-interested for material or erotic advantages.

Like Simple, Harley seeks a sympathy or resonance with his companion. The moral affiliation of Harley with Miss Walton with her "blush, a phrase of affability to an inferior, a tear at a moving tale" reminds us that although Harley is unusual, his humanity does not always make him antithetical to everyone else but only serves as an ideal form of a humanity that everyone must surely possess. It is important to note that Harley though frequently shown as odd, is sometimes shown as similar to others especially in situations of extreme suffering that evoke sympathy in every spectator. In the episode of the visit to Bedlam by Harley and some companions, as they all listen to the poignant tale of a young woman who has gone mad with grief for her dead lover, there is "not an unmoistened eye around her." The narrative shows that cases of extreme misfortune affect everyone and indicate compassion in each person.

This is a testimony to a humanity that is universal though not always realized. Harley, therefore, may appear unique and separate yet is seamlessly connected with others

through his compassion. He achieves communality despite being out of sync with his community. He is able to demonstrate that his blindness to the faults of others does not inhibit his sociability but, on the contrary, grants it a mobility and breadth. The novel thus underlines the limitations of reason in connecting the self and the other.

Harley's single status is not a sign of solipsism but serves to show the importance of non-kin social bonds over conjugal ties, thereby extending the meaning of family. Harley's most constructive and practical act of help is towards Edwards. Harley not only grants him land for lease but shares in some of the physical labor. Harley's voluntary labor motivated by his compassion for the fate of Edwards and his grandchildren is shown as a reminder of both the religious and secular nature of sensibility as a virtue. At the end of the novel, Harley does not marry his Miss Walton but instead dies from a prolonged illness, which begins with a fever he has contracted from Old Edwards. Harley in a sense enters the Edwards family instead of having one of his own.

By positing the existence of an ideal type of sensibility and its divorce from reflection, *The Man of Feeling* uncompromisingly pushes such a project to its furthest limits—resulting in the literal disaggregation of the novel's form that is marked by ellipses and fragmentation. The novel enacts the impossibility of formally containing a character like Harley even while bringing him into existence. It is true then that Harley can exist only in a novel. As a character, he has no coherence, no sharply defined self, no abilities to move the plot forward and, almost as a consequence, must die.

III

Both *Simple* and *Harley* subsist on the refusal to think through their experiences towards prudence or cynicism. The *Man of Feeling* addresses the problem of consciousness as inhibiting the performance of a complete sociability. The novel form allows an immediacy of experience that is vital to the presentation of sensibility as an impulse, beyond reason and convention. And yet the form of the novel carefully brackets feeling as an ethic by going through the process of debate, of distancing, and of self-consciousness both in terms of the novel's form and to some extent in the character of Harley himself.

David Simple is able to generate the ideal individual who wishes to be involved beyond his private sphere in a social connection with others. The idea of a 'friend' as both particular, and including the whole of society, allows the novel to straddle the separation of the individual from his social network. Simple defines sincerity and generosity through his own feelings and manages to find others who share his ideal. The novel helped establish the figure of such an individual whose compassionate sociability with his larger society becomes the end of individual happiness.

Both novels in their own way illustrate two aspects of sensibility. By making virtue a quality that is intrinsic and on the surface, they demonstrate how sensibility democratizes benevolent feelings by negating an ideology that posited socio-economic worth as somehow internal to man.²³ Despite the frequent contention that sensibility affirmed the

²³ Robert Markley suggests that the ideology of sentiment was conservative and promoted an essentialist view of class—"sentimentality can exist only...in societies where money and power are unequally distributed" (227). Markman Ellis offers a more moderate account of Mackenzie's politics in his reading of Henry Mackenzie's views on the abolition movement in *Julia de Roubigne* and his political tracts where Mackenzie praises William Wilberforce, the champion of the abolition cause (125). The debate was cast by Mackenzie in terms of reason versus sentiment where those for the abolition of the slave trade were seen as sentimentalists and those against abolition were viewed as using reason. Ellis suggests that though

power of the gentry over the sufferers from the lower ranks, it is clear that even if it was a quality most associated with the gentry, the belief it propagated was the possibility of fellow-feeling in all men, and the possibility of fellow-feeling with all men.²⁴ Secondly, the novels also suggest that sensibility may be the key to a more workable sociability by advocating the idea that feeling a natural compassion towards individuals is co-extensive with desiring a public good or a concern for a collective as can be seen in Simple's indignation at a commercial society or Harley's fulminations against colonialism. The novels show the possibility of a more sociable individuality that is completed by fitting itself into the whole structure of human society.

Though sensibility is represented as an unmediated experience, the novels represent both the experiential and reflective sides of human nature, and can formally navigate the space between them in order to delineate the most ideal form of sociability. The novel form can, therefore, present dual ideas and, both hold them apart within a tight structure so that we can see both ideas as distinct as well as in play with each other.

However, the process of describing a sensibility understood as a pure, unmediated compassion that is doubly purified—both from the skepticism attendant on the possession of an interior self-consciousness and from the realm of utility or effects—results in a notion of character that, especially in the case of Harley, seems to be hollowed out and evacuated of substance almost to the extent of making him appear as a thin and highly attenuated figure that slips through the very grasp of the novel.

Mackenzie was pro-abolition his rhetorical strategy in his political tracts was to support the abolitionists but did little to challenge the opposition to abolition for politically expedient reasons. Ellis sees Mackenzie as “sympathetic to the ideas of Adam Smith, trusting to evolutionary rather than revolutionary means of change” (127).

²⁴ In a different view, W. B. Gerard suggests that sensibility shows the “desirability of a democratizing equivalence of feeling among all classes in society” (553).

But paradoxically, it is precisely this thinness or lack of heaviness that marks this pure and unmediated conception of compassion, which allows for the reach and mobility to cut through the lines that separate both the familiar and the strange and kin and non-kin as well as class and gender categories and in the process create its own unique mode of sociability.

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Chapter 3

The Woman of Feeling: *Clarissa* and Sensibility

Introduction

Is the model of sensibility that is based on an unselfconscious compassion and a static mode of being, applicable to women of feeling? In seeking answers to this question, I focus on Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa* (1748) to understand the literary antecedents of the above model and to study whether its eponymous heroine can be a woman of feeling akin to male characters of sensibility who appeared in later novels like *The Man of Feeling*. *Clarissa* precedes Mackenzie's novel by about twenty-three years. Yet I choose to look at *Clarissa* with the benefit of the strategic hindsight provided by my previous engagement with novels that succeeded it by roughly two decades. By approaching *Clarissa* from the direction of a futurity, this study derives a particular advantage vis-à-vis the idea of sensibility and its relationship to self-reflection. To read *Clarissa* in the light of the later novel is to recognize and appreciate the formal and thematic tensions in play in Richardson's novel, necessitated by the conflation of virtue and self-examination—a conflation that Mackenzie steers clear of in his novel. Once again, it is by looking back at the character of *Clarissa* through the perspective provided by the later novel that one comes to see more clearly why the gendered subject of feeling, in this case *Clarissa* herself, cannot like Harley, be recused from the task of judging herself. The tensile strain that this puts on the novel is evident to all readers of *Clarissa* and the novel circumscribes for us, in a sense, the very outer limits of representing the character of feeling.

In the case of Clarissa, her sensibility is represented less by spontaneous acts of compassion (though her charity is observed), and more by a paring down of sensibility to the idea of a sincerity that is devoid of any concealed sexual interest. Clarissa's individuation and her importance in the critical tradition of novel scholarship is often based on the possibility that the causes of her actions are driven by motives she is assumed to be concealing from herself and/or other characters. In other words, it is the exemplary model of interiority that she represents, "a subjective and inward direction" as Ian Watt puts it, which forms the basis of her centrality to the history of the novel.¹ But despite the attention to her interiority, the novel, as I go on to show, invests substantially in an attempted synchronization of her inner and outer self. To this extent, Clarissa's private self, on her own reflection, is no different from her avowed beliefs and actions. Unlike later heroines, like those of Jane Austen who grow through self-examination, Clarissa does not, for the most part, evolve or come to possess greater moral self-awareness through her epistolary exchanges. But at the same time, Richardson's presentation of her character is also crucially different from later figures of sensibility like Harley whose very presentation is based on the avoidance of self-examination. Clarissa, unlike Harley, is ceaselessly made to submit to self-interrogation and respond to

¹ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, with an Afterword by W. B. Carnochan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 176. Hereafter page numbers are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text. Watt's highly influential study, published originally in 1957, set the terms of critical debate on the model of interiority in Richardson's novel. Watt describes the excitement over Richardson's novels by his contemporaries as not just attributable to his gratifying "the sentimental tendencies of his age," which Watt explains as the belief in the innate benevolence in man and its literary version of "philanthropic action" or "generous tears" (174). He places Richardson's uniqueness in his "re-orientation of the narrative perspective" (175). He explains this as the depiction of the "domestic life" and "private experiences" of characters (176). Daniel Defoe is viewed as bringing to the novel an "individual's psychological concerns" (85), a secularizing of "the Puritan injunction to self-scrutiny" (75) that had been expressed in confessional autobiography became an "introspective tendency" in Robinson Crusoe (75). However, the Puritan influence has Crusoe reflecting and interpreting events as "divine pointers" (77) and it is in *Clarissa* that a psychological tension is produced because Clarissa's "sexual feelings" are withheld from Anna and "her own consciousness" (229).

the suspicions of others. To depict a character whose avowedly moral self-image remains undisturbed, despite very disturbing circumstances and, more seriously, hundreds of pages of excruciatingly minute accounting of motives and intentions and actions, places an enormous pressure on the formal structures of this novel. At the more obvious level, this strain manifests itself in the seemingly interminable nature of the accounting process that resists any closure.

For Richardson, this is a high stakes gamble since his depiction of Clarissa's presentation of herself through her letters cannot but create the impression of an interiority that is potentially different from her outward assertions and behavior. In depicting a mind that is constantly, by virtue of the epistolary form, giving an account of oneself and one's motives and intentions, the novel, therefore, invites the charge that Clarissa's letters conceal a dimension of meaning that is almost by definition inaccessible to her interlocutors. That Richardson was deeply aware of this problem of reception is evident in his editorial changes to the different editions of the novel. Many of these changes focused on Clarissa's feelings for Lovelace, and as Mark Kinkead-Weekes demonstrates, after the first edition in 1748, Richardson sought to clarify in each subsequent edition that Clarissa is clearly not in love with Lovelace but only swayed by him.²

² There are differing scholarly accounts of Richardson's exact didactic purpose to his alterations in each edition as I indicate below. M. Kinkead-Weekes argues in "Clarissa Restored?," *The Review of English Studies* 10.38 (1959): 156-171, that Richardson's readers were not happy with or convinced by Richardson's revisions that were aimed at correcting wayward readers who saw Clarissa as secretly in love with Lovelace. Kinkead-Weekes notes that the novel gives up the conflict within Clarissa by the revisions in the second and third edition of 1749 and 1751, and concludes that the third edition is a crude version of the first.

Gerard A. Barker in "Clarissa's 'Command of Her Passions': Self-Censorship in the Third Edition," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10.3 (1970): 525-539, bemoans the confusion arising out of the alterations and how Richardson needn't have worried about Clarissa's love for a rake, since Clarissa's unconscious love for Lovelace is a good disguise for her, implying that the unconscious part of it extenuates Clarissa.

Does Richardson succeed in the depiction of a virtuous heroine, even while being acutely aware that such a project must co-exist with the impression that there could be a difference perceived as duplicity between her interior mind and her external behavior? The interpretative play between a spontaneous character and conscious narrative form as present in the *The Man of Feeling*, is here held together and brought into direct engagement within the formal constitution of the character of Clarissa. In what follows, I examine how the epistolary form worked here by Richardson both invokes and contains the suspicion voiced by different characters in the novel, that hidden motives and illicit desires may be buried and concealed in Clarissa, therefore tainting her supposed virtue. In contrast, although Harley too is accused of hypocrisy by other characters, the reader would find it harder to doubt his virtuous motives.

Doubting Clarissa's intentions has been a frequent pattern in the criticism. Tom Keymer, for instance, in his study of the epistolary form of *Clarissa* sees a suggestion of "dissimulation" in its heroine (135). In Keymer's significant reading of how the letters are not a transparent access to a character, he notes how "her letters seem determined not by 'reality' but by the self-image she prefers to project" (135). In Keymer's argument, the debate about Clarissa's virtue in the novel is created to allow the reader to experience the complex and flawed nature of virtue. Keymer observes that even her most ardent supporters at the time found her reason to escape with Lovelace as "specious" and "the

Eaves and Kimpel give a more complex view and show evidence that some of Richardson's 'alterations' may already have been written but not put in the first edition as he himself claimed. They see a unity in Richardson's vision carried through that was already there in the first edition. See T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, "The Composition of *Clarissa* and Its Revision before Publication," 83, no. 2 (1968): 416-428.

Tom Keymer in his study of the different installments of *Clarissa* in the first edition sees Richardson's project as one which teaches the reader to weigh each side and debate the plausibility of the characters' defenses. See Tom Keymer, *Richardson's 'Clarissa' and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

reasons given for refusing Anna's help, the novel hints, may be no more than a smokescreen behind which lies a very different reason for preferring that of Lovelace”(160). The undermining of Clarissa, according to Keymer, is to allow the reader to go through the process of deciding what is right and wrong.

However, as I read the complexity of narrating Clarissa’s character, the problem of being virtuous without always appearing to be so is presented as a foil to such constructions as Keymer proposes, based as it is on his reliance on Clarissa’s supposed projection of a self-image. I am suggesting, therefore, that Richardson depicts a suspicion of Clarissa’s virtue in order, precisely, to allow the characters’ and, by proxy, the readers’ doubts about her virtue to be countered within the frame of the novel.

This mix of virtue under an assault of doubt is mirrored in the dialectic between action and reflection. More critically, how does the dynamic model of reflection co-exist with the static model of virtue assumed to reside without alteration in Clarissa?³ She may alter her course of action when she learns from Anna how those actions may be interpreted differently from what she imagines, but her own reflections do not betray that she is consciously or unconsciously driven by motives inconsistent with virtue. Her agency is dynamic, not passive or minimized, yet re-affirming and validating the very feelings that characterize her response to Lovelace and her family. As a novel of sensibility, *Clarissa* can attempt to show the central character as virtuous in a spontaneous and unreflective mode, and yet have all this unfold within a framework of reflection, where the subject

³ Harley consciously avoids thought and reflection at one point to rely on his instincts. He too performs actions that may seem self-interested like helping a prostitute but his interiority is not available to us. The reader is ultimately assured by the narrator that doubts about Harley are misplaced. Contrastingly, Clarissa must find extenuating circumstances for her elopement as there is no narrator.

appears to be ‘in-process’.⁴ The challenge, therefore, is the daunting task of preserving unchanged that which is subject to ceaseless movement.

The relative ease with which the virtue of Simple and Harley is established is in stark contrast to *Clarissa*. Yet the novels of sensibility I examine all seem to be concerned with a defense of authenticity against the cynical charge of self-interest. Scott Paul Gordon lays out *Clarissa* against the background “established by a generation of writers—Behn, Manley, Defoe, and, most thoroughly, Mandeville...who construe the profession of “virtue” as a mask strategically adopted to further one’s interest.”⁵ Gordon cites how Richardson had been annoyed by the mistrust of his first heroine and “the storm over Pamela showed the ease with which any text can be absorbed into a discourse of universal self interest—in Richardson’s phrase, ‘basely Ravished out of my Hands, and ... depreciated and debased’—by those whom I call ‘Mandevillian (mis)readers’” (476). The fear of intentions being judged lead, in Gordon’s estimation, to a thinning or evasion of subjectivity. Gordon’s larger claim is that for sensibility to remain a virtue, those who claimed it, had to show “an explicit disavowal of individual agency” (489).⁶ My chapter

⁴ Ian Watt offers one explanation for the dynamic nature of novelistic characters. The earlier tendency to evoke universals was slowly being reversed in the eighteenth century where novels focused on individual truths. This kind of individualism demanded the depiction of the particularity of experience and one way of showing this was to show the personality of the character “defined in interpenetration of past and present awareness” (21) and changed by experience. Watt’s account of the novel form places Richardson as the most prominent example of particularity in characterization marked by causality and change. A causality principle was invoked between the past and present. Though *Clarissa* is for Watt an example of this principle, in my reading the novel seeks to escape the causal implications of her actions and its effects on her character and intentions.

⁵ Scott Paul Gordon, “Disinterested Selves: *Clarissa* and the Tactics of Sentiment,” *ELH*, 475. Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically.

⁶ Gordon’s point here is taken up in detail in his book *The Power of the Passive Self, 1640-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Gordon sees the disavowal of an agentive self, reflected by the readers of *Clarissa* who begin to sound like the character of *Clarissa*. In their effusion of tears in reading *Clarissa*, the source of their feelings was claimed as arising from outside the self, and not self-generated.

builds on this argument, especially with a view to examining the tension between the spontaneous or apparently instinctive side of character as opposed to the self-aware conscious self, whose actions can be ascribed to reasonably clear intentions and designs. One way of approaching this tension has been through reading *Clarissa* in terms of the legacy of the casuistical tradition, which also dealt with the knotty problem of sorting out what may be a genuine desire to arrive at a moral judgment from the dangers of self-delusion.⁷

Clarissa's interiority and the psychological focus that the novel seems to invite, has drawn unto itself a substantial amount of the interpretative energy expended on the novel. However, some relatively recent readings, like those of Frances Ferguson, Sandra Macpherson, and Jonathan Kramnick in different ways, turn their critical focus away from the problem of interiority and instead focus on the relationship between character, novelistic form and the formal requirements by the philosophical and legal notions of

⁷ See G. A. Starr, *Defoe and Casuistry* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1971; Edmund Leites, *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Keith Thomas, "Cases Of Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England" in *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. John Morrill, Paul Slack, Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text. Edmund Leites in his understanding of this religious practice in medieval and early modern Europe defines "the study of 'cases of conscience' ... as the resolution by expert minds of difficult moral cases" (119). Starr offers a pithy understanding of casuistry seeing it as a set of 'rules for breaking rules' (1), a phrase which captures its criticism for centuries, where it was seen as a kind of sophistry or way of obscuring what should be apparently straightforward moral rules. Its disappearance in the eighteenth century is attributed to its association with equivocation. Leites explains its disappearance because it became "more important to form a moral will and character." More significantly, Leites argues that "the novel had its birth in casuistry, but character became its chief concern" (133). What is of interest here to my project is the persistence of suspicion of motives or as the Marquis of Halifax put it, "interest was a subtle casuist," according to Thomas (51). The second point of interest is that a moral intuition was seen as rightfully replacing the deliberateness of casuistry: "Prolonged doubt was a likely sign of weakness, and elaborate casuistry a way of eroding moral responsibility: a person's first impulses were usually correct" (Thomas 51).

action and intention.⁸ Ferguson, for instance, offers a complex reading of the rape of Clarissa to refute misogynistic laws and feminists' responses to them that share a focus on formal representations of mental states rather than on particular psychological states of the suspect and victim.⁹ In her argument, using formal criterion to determine rape—since mental states are hard to prove—re-establishes the “powerlessness” of women who lose their agency in the process. Thus if Clarissa, according to Ferguson, is not to become Pamela (who, arguably, retroactively confirms suspicions of her intent about Mr. B) or a Shamela, she must avoid the ambiguity inherent in a psychological state. For Ferguson, a psychological novel like *Clarissa* does not problematize the mental state of a character (as the later stream-of-consciousness novel does) but shows the problem of the stipulated self (what others want us to mean) in opposition to what we really mean. In Ferguson's words, “the psychological novel, as fully initiated by *Clarissa*, thus appears to be a confrontation between other people's accounts of one and one's own account... The form might itself oppose the very mental state it was designed to represent” (100-01).

According to Ferguson, Clarissa's mental state is overridden by her dependence on formal states like unconsciousness, and a reversion to girlhood at the end, to achieve a fixity that prevents Lovelace from transforming her non-consent even retroactively into consent. My account of the novel, draws inspiration from Ferguson's insightful reading

⁸ Frances Ferguson, “Rape and the Rise of the Novel,” *Representations* 20, (1987) 88-112; Sandra Macpherson, *Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Jonathan Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010). Hereafter, page numbers are cited in the text.

⁹ In Ferguson's words in “Rape and the Rise of the Novel,” “feminists like Susan Brownmiller and Andrea Dworkin share with misogynistic ancient rape law [like ancient Hebrew law and Anglo-Saxon law] the tendency to specify the male injury to the female in terms of formally identified and stipulated mental states [so that according to ancient law to bring the victim's mental state in line with the rapist's, she must marry him]...For Brownmiller and Dworkin, it carries with it the impossibility of consent: women, because they are women, never consent; men, because they are men, always rape And they thus recapitulate, even though in a reversal of those early legal codes, the tendency of the law to negate particular psychological states and to substitute formal states for them” (94).

of *Clarissa* especially in terms of her focus of Clarissa's inability to evolve through the novel and acquire the necessary guile to outwit Lovelace. This also fits in with my reading of characters of sensibility who escape their representation by others, by their distillation into a stasis that resists incorporation into the narratives of others.

Another alternative to using an interiority model to read *Clarissa* is offered by Sandra Macpherson who sees causality in the novel as driven by plot and not character. In Macpherson's thesis, which is contrary to most received wisdom on the realist novel in the eighteenth century, the lens of will, agency, and intentionality as constituting an interiority is not the only model available to read characters in novels. Using a legal context of strict liability law emerging in the eighteenth century, she sees novels and the law as holding persons responsible for harm even if they were unintended. Strict liability in law at the time, according to Macpherson, disregards intention and only sees harm as *ipso facto* rendering the cause as culpable in an impersonal way. Macpherson argues that there were different models of understanding personhood in contest with each other, especially in *Clarissa*, and offers an illuminating reading of Lovelace's character, particularly on the basis of what she calls constructive intention i.e. reading an intention into an action. While I would endorse the idea that this friction between different models of reading drives the novel's tension, her claim that Richardson's model of personhood, derived from strict liability, i.e. action as character, as clearly triumphant over other models of understanding character is open to question.

The problem of casting the same reading net over Clarissa and Lovelace and holding Clarissa responsible for her situation though innocent (as Macpherson insists), seems to replicate what the novel itself problematizes for us. In contrast, I will attempt to

demonstrate that Richardson's project of extricating Clarissa from a perpetual implication in her catastrophe is one that is accomplished without forfeiting the establishment of Lovelace's culpability by showing how Richardson shows different kinds of interiority for Lovelace and Clarissa.

Jonathan Kramnick also chooses to set aside interiority as a primary vector in organizing his critical engagement with the novel and instead focuses on how *Clarissa* complicates the ideas of intentionality, consent, and a causal theory of action. He does this by throwing into relief the possible detachment of actions from mental causes. For Kramnick, Clarissa's death, which eludes the agential categories of both suicide and murder, confirms the possibility of the novel's investment in non-intentional actions: "Clarissa dies without any special causal role for her mind. The death happens in virtue of physical parts not metaphysical wholes" (229).

In all three readings mentioned above, there is, albeit in the pursuit of very different goals, a bracketing out or at least a temporary suspension of the interior states of mind that are traditionally, in novel criticism, seen to provide a locus of coherence around human action. Although this setting aside, even as a thought experiment, opens up new and interesting avenues to enter into the world of the novel, it does so at the cost of a full engagement with the problem of interiority that should be able to account for that investment in the realm of mental causation without putting it either on hold or in subservience to other non-interiority based models of action.

My chapter, while building on the insights by all three critical interventions, will suggest that the problems posed by interiority in the novel are not resolved only through having that interiority placed alongside competing modes of understanding character, but

instead by finding a way to account for interiority *per se*, as well as in relation to the idea of sensibility, which as I have shown has a troubled relationship with the notion of reflection and interiority.

Even though in Clarissa's tragic end, the sense that she is too good for this world anticipates Harley, Clarissa's sensibility is fraught because she is always trying to prove her innocence through a process of self-examination that is subject to infinite doubt. Sensibility becomes an idea or a quality whose representation in novels is always constituted by an awareness of doubt about its existence as an ethic. Thus the doubt of inauthenticity becomes intrinsic to the representation of sensibility, though not to the quality of sensibility itself. In all representations of characters of sensibility, there is a doubt about their intention, purity, and sincerity of the character and by extension, doubts about its efficacy and potential to challenge a society overrun by the cynical pursuit of self-interest. This doubt should be seen as distinct from the skepticism regarding the representation of immediate experience that in formal ways, display the consciousness of immediacy to the reader. As Maria Makelä points out, "even the early exemplary texts of epistolary fiction foreground themselves the linguistic and narrative mediacy of the immediate."¹⁰ Since mediated selves are often calculating selves in a negative sense in some of these novels, the presentation of immediacy is important. The representation of sensibility in novels is therefore always dialectically constituted by showing it as a virtue

¹⁰ See Mariä Makelä, "Masters of Interiority: Figural Voices as Discursive Appropriators and as Loopholes in Narrative Communication" in *Strange Voices in Narrative Fiction* ed. Per Krogh Hansen, et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011) 199. She says of Pamela's letters that "the verbal mannerisms or the discursive façade of an ingénue figure are ultimately all that we have – these sentences from the figural interiorities and the literary experientiality that we readers are so keen on capturing...In many narrative instances, the most productive ambivalence lies between the 'voice' of an unmediated experience and the unavoidable sense of premeditation brought on by language, intentional structure and communicativeness". The character writing sometimes becomes authorial moralizing as if from a third person omniscient view, "making a character (themselves) an exemplum" (205).

that is based on an avoidance of self-interest, along with a conscious fending off of the possibility of a duplicitous display of innocence that conceals self-interest.

However, the skepticism towards claims of unmediated self-presentation acquires a new intensity when conjoined with the question of gender, since sensibility as a virtue is defined differently for women characters. Chastity, instead of charity, or a spontaneous version of it, becomes the ideal for women that must be defended.¹¹ Corinne Harol notes how in the eighteenth century, virtue for middle-class women comes to reside in virginity for its own sake and not in order to transmit property. She traces how “the Catholic virgin, as exemplar of femininity, gets converted into the paragon of Protestant virtue (12).”¹² Virginity is not just a physical quality, but a symbol of virtue, an internal quality.

Interestingly, a conduct book of the period prescribed chastity as a virtue to be consciously practiced.¹³ Clarissa’s virtue is a principled one, but its purity has to ironically be shown. For Earla Willputte, in a study of the poet Martha Fowke’s letter to her fellow writer and lover Aaron Hill in “Clio’s Letter to Hillarius” (1723), explains how virtue for Martha Fowke is part of physical passion but that passion is akin to

¹¹ In *The Man of Feeling* Harley must love Miss Walton with a platonic passion, and die without consummating the relationship. With male characters representing sensibility, chastity is desirable so that many of the male figures like Harley, Simple and Matt Bramble do not explicitly display sexual desire, at least in the course of the novels, but is not their defining feature.

¹² Corinne Harol, *Enlightened Virginity in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 12.

¹³ Wetenhall Wilkes, in *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady* (1740; 8th edn. 1766), says of chastity -- “this, more than any other virtue, places your sex in the esteem of ours... Chastity is a kind of quick and delicate feeling in the soul, which makes her shrink and withdraw herself, from everything that is wanton, or has danger in it. This makes it so great a check to loose thoughts that I prescribe to you the practice of it in your greatest solitudes as if the best judges were to see and censure you” (29). See Wetenhall Wilkes in Vivien Jones ed., *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

“sensibility.”¹⁴ Willputte shows sensibility as sanctifying adultery for Fowke as a fidelity to love, and thus a pure virtue. Sensibility then, or a sincerity, becomes more significant than the virtue of sexual modesty.

Unlike the virtue of compassion, which is prominent in men of feeling whose avoidance of self-interest is allied to an avoidance or failure of pursuing economic self-gain, the focus of what constitutes Clarissa’s virtue is the absence of any unchaste desire for Lovelace who, being an infamous rake and her brother’s antagonist, would be an inappropriate object of desire for her. Sensibility, associated as it was with the passions of the body as its marker, was prone to be associated with sensuousness as Lawrence Sterne demonstrates so well in *The Sentimental Journey*. Clarissa’s suspected feelings for a rake are hard to defend since her action of ‘eloping’ with him seem to belie her words, and a desire for him would entail sympathy with the vice that Lovelace embodies.

If sensibility leads to fellow-feeling or identification with another, the danger of such a sympathy with a character marked by duplicity like Lovelace, suggests a conceptual difficulty with regard to the character of feeling that *Clarissa* must address. The novel envisages a relationship between two people, Clarissa and Lovelace, who act and respond in accordance to the other’s moves, much like Adam Smith lays out in his picture of mutual sympathy between spectator and sufferer, but instead of the harmony that Smith envisages, here it results in a claustrophobic and entrapped togetherness that shows the problematic interlocking nature of intersubjectivity.

¹⁴ See Earla Willputte’s discussion of Martha Fowke’s *Clio: or, A Secret History of the Life and Amours of the Late Celebrated Mrs. S—n—m. Written by Herself, in a Letter to Hillarius* (1723) pubd. 1752, in *Passion and Language in Eighteenth-Century Literature: The Aesthetic Sublime in the Work of Eliza Haywood, Aaron Hill, and Martha Fowke* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

In the first part of this chapter, I explore why the novel makes it so hard for us to know whether Clarissa is duplicitous. The hard-to-know part condemns her in the eyes of most of the characters in the novel. However, as I demonstrate, Richardson pushes against the assumption that a hidden interior or even an accessible interior is inherently dubious. The novel suggests a moral triumph of Clarissa despite a self-conscious subjectivity that defines a new mode of sensibility.¹⁵

Part two examines how the letters create both states of experience and reflection.¹⁶ I also examine how the subjective interlock between Clarissa and Lovelace is literalized in the formal necessity of interplay between dual sets of letters.¹⁷

In the final section, I explore why, despite the most perfect compassion between Clarissa and Anna, sympathy is not fully realizable.

¹⁵ For a discussion with similar concerns, see Christine Roulston, *Virtue, Gender, and the Authentic Self in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Richardson, Rousseau, and Laclos* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998). Roulston observes that an authentic self is demanded of women since virtue demands that there be no gap between private and public so authenticity must be performed by women.

¹⁶ These states have evoked much notice from critics. Ian Watt in *The Rise of the Novel* sees Richardson's use of the epistolary form to depict personal experience as most apt, since novels read in private tell "of an intimate world of which no one speaks out loud in ordinary life" (190). For a discussion of the many devices to register experience and reflection, like *in medias res*, foreshortening, withholding details, direct and reported dialogue, etc. see Fred Kaplan, "'Our Short Story': The Narrative Devices of Clarissa," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 11, no. 3 (1971): 549-562.

¹⁷ Rabb looks at the use of dualism of characters and concepts in Melinda Alliker Rabb, "Under plotting, Overplotting, and Cor-respondence in 'Clarissa,'" *Modern Language Studies* 11, no. 3 (1981): 61-71.

PART 1

Sympathy and Mind-reading

In many novels of sensibility, the men of feeling display a singular inability to read and recognize deceit in others and learn from the experience of being gulled. However, mindreading takes on a different cast in the character of Clarissa, opening up the possibilities of gullibility and delusion, as well as hypocrisy and complicity. Since Clarissa comes up short in her ability to read Lovelace's mind, her inability could be read as a sign of her virtue by revealing her relative unfamiliarity with vice.¹⁸ Such naïveté attracts and falls prey to a predator like Lovelace and might be seen by other characters, who are unconvinced of her naïveté, as the beguiling face of a dangerous self-delusion. Gullibility could even begin to look like a cover for assent to vice. Clarissa's actions evoke a suspicion in her readers, both inside and outside the novel, that virtue is a mask for vice, and that innocence in women is a hypocritical garb for concealing sexual desire.¹⁹ The novel invokes this suspicion but at the same time provides the grounds to resist such a reading and is significantly invested in countering such a suggestion. If, on

¹⁸ Ian Watt sees Clarissa as embodying a rural simplicity whereby she cannot know "what duplicities are hidden in the behaviour of the people she meets" (181).

That Clarissa is an innocent victim is not a simplistic reading but a plausible one that Richardson intended readers to make and that contemporary readers often agreed with. For instance, Diderot in his *Éloge de Richardson* (1761) expresses the power of identification with and concern for Clarissa that a reader like him experienced. While reading the novel, Diderot says that he would cry out to Clarissa -- "Don't believe him! He's deceiving you! If you go you'll be ruined!" (qtd. in Ian Watt, *Rise of the Novel* p. 201).

¹⁹ Richardson himself regretfully observed that he had met more admirers of Lovelace than of Clarissa (Watt 212).

the other hand, Clarissa is really naïve, it is at her own peril, as the novel unfolds a series of horrific consequences when vice preys on innocence.²⁰

(i) Is Clarissa complicitous with Lovelace's designs?

The novel suggests that Clarissa is unable to gauge the depths of Lovelace's immorality perhaps as a result of her own lack of acquaintance with the tools of deception. Yet, her subjectivity is produced through a suggestion of depth—a depth that, significantly, is made visible to the reader by the suspicion and accusations of deceit leveled against her by most of the other characters in the novel. At best, she is viewed by her loyalists, like her closest friend Anna Howe and her childhood nurse Mrs. Norton, as not always being able to read her own mind regarding Lovelace.

The correlation between correspondence and intimacy, both based on a kind of transactional exchange, is drawn out in the novel as a signal that Clarissa's acceptance of, and then response to, Lovelace's letters are her first sign of her reciprocal response to his advances. Lovelace has already accomplished the intimacy of a correspondence between himself and Clarissa before her brother, James', return from Scotland who subsequently forbids Lovelace's suit to Clarissa. Because of its forbidden nature, Clarissa's personal correspondence with Lovelace takes on the garb of a secret affair. Anna conveys her mother's comment on the propriety that demands of Clarissa that she stop meeting or writing to Lovelace after her brother James's feud with Lovelace: "My mamma will have

²⁰ The question of Clarissa's innocence has plagued criticism of the novel. Scott Paul Gordon, Heather Zias, Terry Castle, and Terry Eagleton are among the few who defend Clarissa. See Scott Paul Gordon, "Disinterested Selves: "Clarissa" and the Tactics of Sentiment," *ELH* 64, no. 2 (Summer, 1997): 473-502; Heather Zias, "Who Can Believe? Sentiment vs. Cynicism in Richardson's *Clarissa*," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27.3 (Fall 2003): 99-123; Terry Castle, *Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning & Disruption in Richardson's "Clarissa"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

it that you cannot now, with any decency either see him or correspond with him.”²¹

Writing, and a face to face interchange here, are viewed as equally intimate. At each charge of evasion or duplicity from Anna or the Harlowes, Clarissa tends to first deny the charge but usually goes on to admit that her behavior towards a rake like Lovelace could be interpreted to her disadvantage. To allow doubt to be cast on Clarissa is a tricky gamble by Richardson, but the sequence of retrospective regret suggests that at the time Clarissa does something deemed improper by others, she is unaware of its implications and is thus innocent. In her retrospective examination, she asserts that she has not been consciously encouraging Lovelace and as soon as she is told of the impropriety of any of her gestures, she withdraws them. Her repetitions of such mistakes and her tendency to repeatedly respond to Lovelace in ways that militate against propriety and caution, ironically testify to her innocence and inability to learn from her previous mistakes.

The beginning of the novel focuses on how Clarissa’s feelings for Lovelace become the subject of investigation for her friends. Anna accuses Clarissa of prudery in her avoidance of the term “love” to describe her attitude to Lovelace by choosing a tamer phrase such as “conditional liking.” Anna’s response to Clarissa’s clarification is to closely read between the lines written by Clarissa, offering her own gloss on Clarissa’s words:

You are pleased to say, and upon your word too!—that your regards (a mighty quaint word for affections) are not so much engaged, as some of your friends suppose, to another person...So much engaged!--How much, my dear? Shall I infer? Some of your friends suppose a great deal—You seem to own a little....

²¹ Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady: Comprehending The Most Important Concerns of Private Life And particularly showing The Distresses That May Attend The Misconduct Both Of Parents And Children, In Relation To Marriage* (based on the first edition of 1747-48) ed. Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985, 2004), 40. Hereafter page numbers refer to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

But you proceed with a kind of drawback upon your averment, as if recollection had given you a doubt! –You know not if they be (so much engaged)...But you know best—Yet you don't neither, I believe. (70)

Anna teases out an acknowledgment from Clarissa's words observing that Clarissa owns to her feelings being "engaged" with Lovelace and the quibble is only over the degree. Anna's mocking repetition, apparently of Clarissa's phrase, "upon your word" implies that such declarations of innocence, in emphasizing their veracity, indicate a spurious need to declare the truth, but end up doing the opposite. In pointing to Clarissa's evasive use of the word "regards" instead of the more frank term "affections," Anna also suggests that Clarissa is not being open about the type of her feelings in her using a less romantic word. Anna tracks for us the visible shift in time from Clarissa's certainty of dislike of Lovelace, to a retraction ("drawback"), discernible in Clarissa's lines as if Clarissa's assertion ("averment") of not being in love with Lovelace at the beginning of Clarissa's letter is then withdrawn moments later upon reflection. This doubt – about Clarissa's feelings for Lovelace –made visible to the reader by Anna's decoding of Clarissa's letter through its inconsistencies, as she close-reads her way through the letter, marks the temporal arc through which Clarissa reconsiders the truth about her feelings even during the process of writing to Anna. Although Anna concludes that Clarissa is incognizant of her feelings, her overwrought interpretation of Clarissa's letter that sifts through a complex of motives, suggests a skill that Clarissa lacks because such probing itself suggests a capacity to understand, acknowledge, and be implicated in guilt. In a sense, the absence of such a skill itself proves Clarissa's innocence.

Anna goes on to insinuate that Clarissa is not unaware, but is in fact loathe to admit her attraction for a rake like Lovelace.²² Again, the novel simulates doubts about Clarissa but there is no revelation of guilt in her. If Clarissa's gestures can be read or misread by Lovelace and others so easily, then the novel attempts to suggest how difficult it is for women of virtue to maintain an impression of purity.

However, since Anna is Clarissa's soul-mate and has her interest in mind, readers are likely to take their cue from what Anna believes.²³ In mimicking Clarissa's style of prevarication, Anna produces the suspicion of an unspoken acknowledgement of love in Clarissa's letters. While reporting a conversation with her mother to Clarissa, she reproduces her dialogue with Mrs. Howe, who is fairly moralistic about Clarissa's defiance of her parents over a man the Harlowes disapprove of. In the following passage written by Anna to Clarissa, Anna reports how she defends Clarissa to her mother:

[Anna:] Clarissa Harlowe would prefer Mr. Lovelace to all men, if morals—
 [Mrs. Howe:] If, Nancy!—That *if* is everything!—Do you really think she loves Mr. Lovelace?
 [Anna addressing Clarissa:] What would you have had me to say, my dear?—I won't tell you what I *did* say—but had I *not* said what I *did*, who would have believed me? Besides I *know* you love him!—Excuse me, my dear: yet, if you deny it, what do you do but reflect upon yourself, as if you thought you *ought not*? (248)

²² Many critics feel forced to address the question of Clarissa's deceit or delusion, and many see Clarissa being depicted as being deceitful about her attraction to Lovelace. For instance, R. F. Brissenden in *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan, 1974), observes that "there is an element of sub-conscious acquiescence in her relationship with Lovelace that gives it a peculiar sado-masochistic force" (162). I would add that we need to examine the levels of consciousness made available to us in the text to test this point (that Clarissa conceals her real feelings) in order to avoid being presentist with a post-Freudian view of consciousness.

²³ As we know, Richardson intentionally meant it to be this way in the first edition. In a letter to Aaron Hill, Richardson remarked that: "As to Clarissa's being in downright Love, I must ac-knowledge, that I rather chose to have it imputed to her, (his too well-known Character consider'd) by her penetrating Friend, (and then a Reader will be ready enough to believe it, the more ready, for her not own-ing it, or being blind to it herself) than to think her self that she is. This gives Occasion for much natural Reluctance to believe her self to be in Love, on her Part, and much Raillery, the Talent of Miss Howe, on her Part," (qtd in Gerard A. Barker, "Clarissa's 'Command of Her Passions': Self-Censorship in the Third Edition," p. 526).

Anna's reply to her mother seems to imply that Anna's response, not directly reported here, is the hidden thought of Clarissa. The use of the word "reflect" here suggests that Clarissa's denial bounces back on her under the directives of a propriety that thoroughly mediates her response to Lovelace. Moral reflection, in Anna's formulation, intercepts and cancels out Clarissa's 'love' for Lovelace, making her deny what Anna considers, is the truth of her real feelings for Lovelace. Clarissa's moral consciousness, for Anna, testifies to the existence of a prior attraction that is smothered by the demands of a moral propriety, and which can only work through the power of negating what is already a felt reality. Morality, for Anna, is what one "ought not" to do and therefore can only work through a process of negation that paradoxically brings to light what one really wants to do. All this only stands to confirm what Anna already 'knows' to be the truth ("I *know* you love him"), and therefore, Clarissa's denial only ends up giving the game away.

However, Anna's complex reading of Clarissa reveals her own beliefs and runs counter to another interpretative possibility that her quoted dialogue with her mother makes available. This possibility turns on reading the "ought not" that guides Clarissa not as a negative pressure, but one that mediates her view of Lovelace without operating through a denial of more instinctive and unmediated feelings. This latter possibility disallows the idea of a divided self and instead, suggests that there is a fundamental continuity between her stated view regarding her feelings for Lovelace and the so-called space of her inner reflection. Such an alignment between the outer and inner clearly flies in the face of Anna's reading of Clarissa, since it proposes a model of the self in which, rather than a structural mismatch between the spontaneous and the reflective, we see a co-incidence between the two. But as already mentioned, this latter possibility must throughout the

novel, exist in a state of contestation with a suspicion, typified by Anna's view, of a hidden self that lies concealed under her more public and self-conscious self.

Clarissa resists such imputations partly by noting the insidious nature of courtship protocols for women. Clarissa is aware that men will deliberately misinterpret a woman's silence as acquiescence – they “reckon upon our silence as assents voluntarily given” (117) -- even though, as she says, a woman may be silent only due to a desire to keep the peace. Clarissa emphasizes that the charges against her are typical of attitudes to a spectrum of women who are all perceived as dissimulating and duplicitous.

Each instance of clarification offered by Clarissa is succeeded by a new situation of doubt, thereby reinforcing an ambivalence that becomes constitutive of Clarissa. For instance, the next question in the narrative centers on why escaping with Lovelace was her only choice. The confusion lies in why Clarissa does not reach out for other choices of refuge and instead, relies on Lovelace as the only savior. Does she let herself be duped by his manipulation of her situation?

The novel indicates that Clarissa is deluded at many points and this detracts from the idea that she is a collaborator in her ‘elopement’. Clarissa seems loathe to examine more fully Lovelace's claims for the urgency of her escape, thus exposing her poor skills at reading him. She reports Lovelace's claim that his desire is to restore free choice to Clarissa -- “In short, he solemnly vows that his *whole* view at present is to free me from my imprisonment; and to restore me to my own free will” (350). Despite some hesitance on this score, by the end of the letter, after ruminating over her impending disgrace and whether she should choose to take Lovelace's help or continue resisting her family's choice of a husband, Clarissa repeats Lovelace's vow of restoring free will to her with

remarkable conviction: “He renews all his vows and promises on this head, in so earnest and so solemn a manner, that (his own interest, and his family’s honour, and their favour for me, co-operating) I can have no room to doubt of his sincerity”(350). Clarissa’s inability to read Lovelace or to suspect him of deception, makes her closer to the type of naiveté that men of feeling inhabit. But as a woman, her naiveté becomes dangerous and her lack of self-knowledge makes her appear more complicit with her oppressor, and seems to suggest a disguised sexual interest beneath the modesty and virtue.

The novel’s momentum tends towards cleaving Clarissa’s mind into two parts, one consisting of her beliefs and the other containing her view of herself through the eyes of Anna. These two parts do not in any sense reveal an internal fissure in her mind, but merely present to her the gap between her actions and how these actions are perceived by others. The fact that she cannot read her own gestures as complicitous then points to her inability to conceal motives. Clarissa is made to understand through Anna’s insinuation that her choosing Lovelace’s offer of escape as the only viable option may appear to others as a sign of her desire for him. As she writes to Anna:

The manner of putting your questions, abundantly convinces me that I ought not, in *your* opinion, to *attempt* it. You, no doubt, intend that I shall *so* take it; ...it has absolutely determined me *not* to go away; at least, not tomorrow. If *you*, my dear think...my inclination is *faulty*; the *world* would treat me much less scrupulously. When, therefore, you represent *that all punctilio must be at an end the moment I am out of my father’s house*; and hint that I must submit it to Lovelace to judge when he can leave me with safety; that is to say, give *him* the option whether he will leave me, or not; who can bear these reflections. (360)

“Putting questions” and “reflections” do not arise naturally in Clarissa, and she simply uses Anna’s interpretation of herself to understand how she might appear to others. She does not realize that “punctilio,” or the niceties of conduct which is the thin garb of

propriety that guards a woman's reputation, will be stripped away once she has demonstrated her willingness to enlist Lovelace's aid to escort her to safety. She has not investigated why he would help her escape, only to allow her to reconcile with her family on the condition that she never see Lovelace or marry him. The sheer incredibility of such a lack of reflection, paradoxically, makes her more believable. The only other explanation would be to read her as extremely duplicitous. It is only Anna's suspicion that she is willing to take Lovelace's help because she secretly loves him that alerts Clarissa to her own foolhardy decision, and makes her temporarily decide to backtrack. Her last phrase suggests that "reflections" mean the reproaches of others who see more than is on the surface. Her next step of 'eloping' with him is a definite action that can only then be explained by her as a decision taken in a state of frenzy, not of her own making.

Her family and others can easily see her action of elopement as 'proving' her intention retroactively. Her will could be deemed as implicit in her action of going with Lovelace.²⁴ Once the nature of Clarissa's feelings for Lovelace has been raised, the novel cannot exonerate her of her most "fatal error" of leaving home with Lovelace (1371). Clarissa's defense is to claim a state of stupefaction and describe her body as a will-less machine propelled by her "legs" and not her "heart."

If the mind could be associated with reflection, and the body with spontaneity, here the mind is holding fast to innocence and the body's spontaneity underwrites that

²⁴ See Kramnick, 214-218. Kramnick points out that for Lovelace, Clarissa's decision to escape with him retrospectively carries her consent to a relationship with him: "[Lovelace's] strategy had depended on mental states coming about after their physical and causal relations had been set. Arrange the world a certain way, and a mental state will follow. This is (again) to imagine that states of desire, intention, and consent have the causal structure of a belief: one adjusts to external facts of the matter and often holds beliefs without knowing so; likewise, one fits in with the world one is presented with and often consents without realizing it."

innocence, though performing the culpable action: “Oh my dear, what a poor, passive machine is the body, when the mind is disordered!” (303). Once the mind is weakened with fear, Clarissa’s body can be lead on in an unconscious way. Here, Clarissa’s response is informed by an understanding of both the connect and disconnect between body and mind. Clarissa, in fact, is claiming the space of sensibility, seeing her action of ‘elopement’ as one taken on impulse, impelled by the passion of fear, and performed in the moment with no regard to the past or future. Her mind is deemed innocent as she is consistently depicted as a character who, even after she examines her actions, can find nothing in her conduct that questions her innocence or tarnishes her virtue.

By placing agency in the body Clarissa disavows the act of leaving home as a conscious choice. She describes her decision to meet Lovelace in the summerhouse to Anna in a passive way – “the action I have so unhappily been betrayed into.” The plea of being led into an action allows Clarissa to see herself as “beset” by her family into meeting Lovelace. But her strenuous defense that Lovelace tricked her does not detract from the fact that the charge of complicity always hovers around all actions deemed to be an error of judgment. When Clarissa describes her decision to take Lovelace’s help to escape, and to accept his offer of his aunt’s shelter, as “the rashest thing that ever I did in my life!” (337), she is admitting responsibility for her actions, but not for her intention. Through the novel, Clarissa takes a dual view of this significant action of hers – as one that she is responsible for, but also one that she did not fully will.

For Clarissa, therefore, the purity of her intention exculpates her from the constructions that her actions subsequently lend themselves to in the eyes of others. “Let me wrap myself about in the mantle of my own Integrity, and take comfort in my

unfaulty intention,” she writes to Anna, implying clearly that her actions acquire an immunity from culpability because they are motivated by blameless intentions. Her actions and intentions are bound in a moral congruence that, in her mind, stand guarantee against variant readings of her action that attempt to retrospectively re-construct her intentions to fit her actions. The very possibility that intention can be read into action, militates against Clarissa’s non-causal model of intention and action, in which intention and action are coterminous and seamlessly connected.

However, Clarissa’s inability to anticipate and prevent others from retrofitting her intentions to her actions seem to dovetail with Lovelace’s ability to read meanings into actions that he has precipitated, as evinced in the narrative account given by Clarissa. She narrates the breathless details of her escape from home with Lovelace to Anna in her letter, recording her growing panic and the lack of time to think as the knocking is heard on the locked door of the summerhouse and Lovelace urges her thus, “fly, fly, I beseech you.” Clarissa’s account to Anna, of her response to Lovelace, is couched in the third-person – “Oh Lord!—help, help, cried the fool, all amaze and confusion, frightened beyond the power of controlling.” The terms “amaze” and “confusion” show her stupefaction at that moment, her inability then to think or move of her own will. Having imagined her brother, sister, father and servants pursuing her, Clarissa tells Anna she “ran as fast” as Lovelace, yet “knew not that I ran; my fears at the same time... took all power of thinking from me adding wings to my feet.” Her physical action of running is delinked from any thoughtful decision-making on her part as she describes it: “my fears which probably would not have suffered me to know what course to take, had I not had him to urge and draw me after him”(380). Her innocent fear joins hands with his guile, binding

them together. Her sensibility, an inability to fully comprehend the dubious motives of others, does not allow herself a separation from Lovelace and an objective assessment of his actions.

Again, the accusations against Clarissa are countered by her own clarifications, and she repeatedly says --“I have never been faulty in my will” (1371). Later in the novel she describes her fault as a failed test of her judgment, a testing of her “secret pride.” As she writes to her uncles towards the end of the novel, “I shrunk in the day of trial. My discretion, which had been so cried up, was found wanting when it came to be weighed in an equal balance. I was betrayed, fell... the fault was not that of a culpable will” (1375). Clarissa sees her error as a temporary loss of self, an error of judgment, impelled by pride in her own virtue so at the same time she can see herself as “betrayed,” cheated, and since her will was not intentionally wrong, absolved of blame. However, the novel does not let go of the suggestion that Clarissa’s pride in her virtue merges indistinguishably into her willful blindness about Lovelace. This inability to act despite her suspicions is an index of the extent to which her mind is controlled by his. The interlocking of their subjectivities is made literal when he succeeds in ‘imprisoning’ her.

(ii) Lovelace and the limits of mindreading

Clarissa’s easy gullibility is matched and proved by the master-plotting exhibited by Lovelace. Lovelace takes pride, at least till he rapes her, in his ability to have women consent to him with open eyes -- “I love, when I dig a pit, to have my prey tumble in with secure feet and open eyes: then a man can look down upon her, with an Oh-ho, charmer! How came you there!” In his perverted form of understanding others, Lovelace seeks to

understand Clarissa, not in comradeship, but in the form of ownership. In his view, men must be duplicitous in their dealings with women, to counter women's assumed hypocritical concealment of their true feelings.²⁵ Lovelace sees his manipulation of women as an inverse form of what he perceives as their coy evasiveness. Female indirectness in his view is the mirror image of male scheming and plotting – the one creating and putting into place the other.

Clarissa's failure to anticipate or second-guess Lovelace's plans, damns her as being possibly complicitous on the one hand, but on the other it also exonerates her, precisely because she cannot read his malafide intentions. His skills at pre-empting her responses are limited and ultimately shorn of a compassionate sympathy because he is trying to identify with a person's feelings for his own self-interest rather than to sympathize with her.

The novel connects plotting with sexual power quite explicitly in the character of Lovelace. He boasts to Belford about his plotting prowess: -- "What a matchless plotter thy friend! Stand by and let me swell!—I am already as big as an elephant; and ten times wiser! mightier too by far! Have I not reason to snuff the moon with my proboscis"

(473)? Lovelace literally bloats with pride at his crafty plans and puts down Belford as a lesser man, by loading the description of plotting with a clearly phallic image. Here, the

²⁵ See Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), who brings cognitive science to bear on literary studies. Zunshine applies the idea of meta-representationality i.e. – "our cognitive ability to keep track of sources of our representations"—to *Clarissa* (4-5). Zunshine's point is clear in her example of how Lovelace is different from Milton's Satan. Satan knows, at least most of the time, that he lies and that his representation of the world is false. But Lovelace starts believing his own lies and forgets that he has invented them, attributing his own desires to Clarissa. The novel "makes the reader uncertain of whether Lovelace is fully aware that his representations of other people's mental states are, at least on some level, his own self-serving inventions"(99). Using the Theory of Mind as elucidated by Simon Baron-Cohen, she describes Clarissa and Lovelace as both engaged in mind-reading and claims how they are "preternaturally adept at planning and deflecting each other's mental gambits" (84). In my reading, by examining and bringing out the uneven and shifting nature of this ability, I see the mindreading ability of Clarissa as different from Lovelace.

novel shows us the obverse side of sensibility where instead of one character compassionately entering another, Lovelace's highly sexualized metaphor suggests his desire to enter Clarissa's body through her mind.

The dystopian kind of mindreading that Lovelace performs, shorn of all altruism, reaches its horrific limit in his rape of Clarissa. At this point, it becomes plain that he may guess some of Clarissa's reactions but because he lacks empathy with her sense of virtue and her suffering, he fails to show any compassion for her trauma as he proceeds to violate her.²⁶ Born out of this attitude is his understanding of rape, not as an act of violence, but as a slow acquiescence to the act by the woman: "thou dost not imagine that I expect a *direct* consent—My main hope is but in a yielding resistance, without which I will be sworn, whatever rapes have been attempted, none ever were committed, one person to one person" (719). In his view, women always mean to consent and therefore the idea of rape is untenable. Commenting on Anna's suspicion to Clarissa, that Lovelace is capable of "indecenty," he notes that the expectation of his diabolical actions is a kind of license to live up to the low expectations of him. Lovelace's logic is that if women fear sexual violence, it is a sign that they expect it, since fear is an acknowledgment and a kind of acceptance of an anticipated event: "If women have such things in their heads, why should not I in my heart" (637)? For Lovelace, fear is an inverse form of desire, and men must actualize the sexual desire that women disown in themselves. Clarissa challenges this gendered model of intention and consent by not only resolutely and

²⁶ Ann Van Sant reads Lovelace in the light of experimental science where suffering of an animal or human subject was necessary; in the case of Lovelace he wishes to investigate if Clarissa is a woman with unguarded feelings. Thus the sympathetic reading to Clarissa, must be balanced by Lovelace's and Richardson's detached notion of cruelty "as a method of revelation" as was acceptable in scientific experiments. After the rape, Lovelace loses energy because according to Van Sant, Richardson is done with "trial as a means of investigation." See Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-century sensibility and the novel: The senses in social context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 80, 82.

clearly refusing his advances but also stopping short of believing and articulating the possibility that he can commit such an act on her. It is this very inability to anticipate his actions that gestures towards her innocence.

But it is a token of the novel's investment in exploring the narrow gap that constitutes this particularly vexed space of interlocked selves that Lovelace's model of ever-vigilant and self-interested mindreading can on occasion threaten to lapse into a model of spontaneity and unselfconscious feeling. Just as Clarissa is shown as occupying the very outer limits of sensibility, the kindred nature of mindreading with sympathy is drawn out in the fact that Lovelace's mode of manipulation can threaten to spill over into real sympathy for Clarissa. Lovelace's plotting occasionally gets the better of him and threatens to sabotage his own cunning. When he makes an impromptu but vague proposal of marriage to Clarissa, and she responds with "confusion" thereby revealing a faint willingness to accept his proposal, Lovelace confesses to Belford about his joy at this by saying that "had a parson been there, I had certainly been a gone man" (492). Having no intention of marrying Clarissa at least until she first submits to his physical advances, Lovelace here is in danger of losing the game. On occasion, almost like a man of feeling, he succumbs to his better self and forgets his watchful, reflective mode of being, like when he tells Belford: "Didst thou ever before hear of a man uttering solemn things by an involuntary impulse, in defiance of premeditation and of all his proud schemes" (493). The power of Clarissa to sometimes make him forget his planned schemes of seduction, creates a war within him.²⁷ But as he writes to Belford about catching himself in this

²⁷ Howard Babb discusses this "structure of alternatives" where each character can become the opposite of what they mean to be. He sees Lovelace as changing from a loving savior to a Solmes-like figure that has Clarissa confined and treats her like a sex object. See Howard S. Babb, "Richardson's Narrative Mode in *Clarissa*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 16, no. 3 (1976): 451-460.

unguarded moment, “I no more intended all this nonsense than I thought the same moment of flying in the air” (493)! The gap between intentions and actions here allows Lovelace the possibility of being a different type of person, so that he may be viewed as less villainous by readers and critics. Lovelace must exert himself to disown his compassion for Clarissa and he strives to stick to the libertine self he believes himself to be. Describing his conscience as an “intruder” who now flies away, he speaks of the pain his conscience gives him and how its departure lets him breathe easy:

And now it [his conscience] lessens to my aching eye!—And now the cleft air has closed after it. And it is out of sight!—And once more I am
ROBERT LOVELACE (658)

The “cleft” in the air caused by this fissure in him is hard for Lovelace to deal with, and he must cover this divide in himself in order to persevere in his stripping of Clarissa’s virtue. This crack in the air is his conscience, caused by his feelings of sympathy for her, and when the air closes over it he is relieved that it has parted from him and he feels whole again. He is affected by her virtue by the end of the novel just as she too is affected by his reading of her mind.

PART 2

WHY WRITE? /THE EPISTOLARY FORM

(i) Letters as the “Written Mind”

The most frequent symbolization of letters by characters in the novel is to regard them as a tangible marker of the person and his or her self, mood, and bodily state. So

complete and intimate is the relationship between the letter and its writer, that Clarissa's correspondence with Lovelace is considered improper (381). The motivation to deny access to one's letters, or gain access to the correspondence between others, is based on the conviction that letters illumine the self and reveal the mental state of the writer. For instance, Anna marks her own resistance to Mr. Hickman by not sharing her letters with him (487). Her mother, Mrs. Howe, exerts her authority over her daughter by insisting on seeing the correspondence between Anna and Clarissa. Lovelace, too, acknowledges the idea of the real self residing in letters, and like his literary predecessor Mr. B., will go to any lengths – pleas, guile, or theft -- to access the letters of the object of his desire (572-73). He emphasizes its metonymic function when he desires to see Clarissa's letters in the original. and not just transcribed extracts.

The imagined concurrence between self and letter implied in the novel is further intensified by the notion that the physical condition of writing emanates from the writer's bodily or mental state. For instance, in clarifying her attitude towards Lovelace at the beginning of the narrative, Clarissa writes a long letter to Anna concluding with her inability to write more due to fatigue: "my sentences drag; my style creeps; my imagination is sunk; my spirit serves me not" (187). Clarissa's pen reflects her mood in the parallels set up between her sunken imagination that drags down her pen, and her low spirits that distort her style. The passion of the writer can affect the style and conversely, the condition of the letter must validate the writer's sentiments. To ensure the passion informing her letters is not missed by her interlocutors, Clarissa in a postscript to a letter to her brother James, asks him to observe its unrevised nature – "See the force and volubility, as I may say, of passion; for the letter I send you is my first draft, struck off

without a blot or erasure” (228). Clarissa must point this out to persuade James of her sincerity, thereby indicating the suspicion of its absence and her reliance on the draft-like letter as conveying her raw feelings.

The representation of letters as manifesting the self can also suggest that the letter is more authentic and stable than the wavering self thus functioning not only as a metonym for the letter writer, but as a coherent substitute for the unpredictability and flux experienced by the character. An instance of this is when Clarissa trusts her letter of retraction, in which she has turned down Lovelace’s offer to help her leave home, more than her steadfastness in resisting him. Trusting her written self more than the unstable state of mind that may succumb to Lovelace’s Machiavellian urgings, Clarissa resolves to hand him the letter that he has not picked up and let that speak for her, rather than put her case in spoken words, saving her “much circumlocution and reasoning: and a steadfast adherence to that [her] written mind is all that will be necessary” (370). The writer’s self appears to crystallize into the letter, away from the writer, allowing the letter to congeal the self more securely than is possible within the writer herself.

This represents the point in the novel where the dialogue between reflection and representation on the one hand, and spontaneity and immediacy on the other, reach a crisis of sorts. For Clarissa to ascribe greater authenticity and integrity to her written self, as compared to the self revealed in the immediacy of a direct verbal encounter, seems to reverse the hierarchy set up between spontaneity and reflection so central to the character of sensibility.

However, Clarissa seeks to actively hold on to the “written mind,” which in this case, bespeaks her authentic unchanging virtue, not by setting up a dichotomy between the

writing self and the speaking subject, or more broadly between the self mediated by epistolary conventions versus the “real” self. On the contrary, she insists that in her letters, her authentic self consolidates itself even more successfully than any other mode of self-presentation. In other words, letters for Clarissa do not constitute a surface beneath which the self resides; rather, for her the textual body is a privileged site that integrates the authentic self.

It is by thus reconfiguring the relationship between reflection and feeling, from a model that pits one against the other, to a model that locates them on the same plane as each other—re-imagined as contiguous rather than divided or oppositional—that *Clarissa* appears to resolve the categorical tension that it thematically and formally sets up in the novel.

(ii) Letters as Experience and Re-Writing the Self

The differences between Lovelace and Clarissa in their writing to the moment, reveal the impossibility of distinguishing between her interior and her acting self, whereas Lovelace keeps apart his plotting self from the performance of being her ardent suitor. Unlike the fragmented representation of the man of feeling, where Harley’s experiences are presented in an ephemeral form shorn of self-reflection, in *Clarissa*, the letter allows the possibility of experience and reflection to co-exist within Clarissa without setting up a vertical, surface-depth model of the self. Clarissa may see the benefits of writing as a way to stabilize the wavering self, not so as to set up a hierarchy between the writing self and experiencing self, but more as a co-produced self that comes into coherent focus through writing : “but when I have set down what I will do or what I have done on this or that

occasion; the resolution or action is before me, either to be adhered to or withdrawn or amended, and I have entered into a compact with myself, as I may say” (483). Here, her reflection through writing is a way of re-entering her experiencing self again and centering her shifting thoughts in the stability of the written text, not in order to crystallize her better self, but rather as a means of producing the self as such.

Lovelace, on the other hand, uses letters to reveal his sadistic side and to prolong the anticipated pleasures that result from his plotting. While waiting for his fake fire plan to take off, Lovelace writes to Belford anticipating the intimacy with Clarissa that is sure to result from a fire discovered in her room: “I have time for a few lines preparative to what is to happen in an hour or two; and I love to write to the moment—” (721). Lovelace seems to enjoy writing to the moment to savor the impending triumph of his plotting, almost preferring the process of writing as plotting to the enjoyment of its success.

For Lovelace, writing is as titillating as plotting, and he needs to re-live an experience by writing it if only to enjoy its effect on him. In his account of how he ensnares Clarissa back to Mrs. Sinclair’s from Hampstead and then rapes her, Lovelace re-lives the countdown in the present tense reproducing Clarissa’s growing panic. He remarks in his letter to Belford –“Thou’lt observe Belford, that though this was written afterwards, yet (as in other places) I write it as it were spoken” (882). The excitement of the build-up, and then the anti-climactic experience of the rape for Lovelace, are detailed in the letter not so much as a calm reflection after the experience but as a repetition of the experience all over again, and only then the lessons learned are possible. In other words, the letters don’t just convey a reflection of an experience. In writing to the moment, they signify the experience again and then allow the re-examination of consequent feelings. Everything

must be lived twice, first in experience, and then written down again for any perspective to be developed. An example of this from the above letter would be his expression of the thrill of gaining total access to Clarissa's body, and then the realization that without her consent he has not really got her. These moments of excitement and anguish that he must convey in the present tense to re-live it with his friend, help him revise his understanding of what raping her has meant to him.

The metaphor of letters as self is worked out through different dimensions of how the self is inscribed in them and in how they can become tools of self-knowledge, or show up the inadequacy of self-knowledge. The limitation of letters as offering clarity reveals the process of examining the self as an inexorable process with no veracity possible.

The letters apparently suggest a surface-depth model of character but Clarissa insists that her real self resides in the letters and that it is her person that may be prone to manipulation. The letter is a device that reveals the self in its autonomy. They also allow for the complexity of Clarissa's sympathy for Lovelace which can, on occasion, appear to border on desire. For example, although Clarissa maintains her disapproval of Lovelace, his illness (feigned by Lovelace to test her love for him) prompts Clarissa's concern for him to be expressed. In her letter to Anna, to whom alone she dare reveal her concern for Lovelace, she admits that his illness "has taught me more than I knew of myself."

Clarissa is surprised by the fact that she has so easily overcome her dislike of Lovelace and she tells Anna that if Lovelace does misbehave again, "I hope my reason will gather strength enough from his imperfections...to enable me to keep my passions under. I have not had heart's ease enough to inspect that heart as I ought" (679). Though Clarissa

refrains from examining her own heart, her writing allows her to admit that there is something unexamined in her.

This is a risky gambit on the novel's part, one that could lead to a charge of equivocation in her disguised desire for Lovelace. However, her acknowledgment of this tension that she is trying to overcome, indicates an integrity of character in all its senses, moral and metaphorical, rather than duplicity. So inappropriate does Clarissa think her love is for a rake like Lovelace, she will not read her own letter: "Dissatisfied with myself, I am afraid to look back on what I have written" (679). This is not a split between the writing and performing self and only produces an illusion of interiority; instead what we see here is the continuum on which thinking and feeling are placed.

Another way of seeing this continuum is to see an amalgamation of thought and feeling. Richardson understood the letter as an appropriate vehicle for friendship. As Ian Watt argues, Richardson wrote that letters allow for pure friendships because they permit an unbroken focus, implying an immersion and a concentration that bespeaks a complete merger of thought and feeling: "[correspondence is] more pure, and yet more ardent, and less broken in upon, than personal conversation can ever be amongst the most pure, because of the deliberation it allows."²⁸ Richardson, paradoxically, sees writing letters to friends as "ardent," precisely because they allow for uninterrupted thoughtfulness to the point where thought and feeling are indistinguishable.

Since writing can both produce and destabilize coherence, it stands to reason, therefore, that rather than imagining an oppositional relationship between the written self and the 'real' self, one ought to imagine the two in an essentially collaborative and imbricated mode of relating to each other. The shifting lines between the two make it

²⁸ Samuel Richardson's *Correspondence*, quoted in Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (2001)191.

difficult to maintain an absolute distinction and therefore runs counter to the very possibility of a self that conceals itself behind the conventions of letter writing. Furthermore, it throws into question the basis on which the suspicion of bad faith is leveled against Clarissa, since such doubts assume a stable opposition between the self and its representation in letters.

To conclude, letters reveal the potential as well as the limits of communication as a sign of the proximity and distance they produce in interpersonal relationships. The complexity of a character like Clarissa who must hold naiveté and reflection together in herself in order to be and remain virtuous is mirrored in the form where experience and reflection must be carefully placed together and given coherence through letters. Clarissa's naiveté, as I have been arguing, is emphasized by showing the extent to which her reflective side coincides with her spontaneous self, a process that the epistolary form in Richardson's novel embodies.

PART 3

Sympathy

Introduction

Clarissa's inability to produce a hidden, self-interested interiority that is different from her actions and words is, in some sense, similar to her inability to maintain beyond a limit, the structural distinction between her intimate, private/ familial bonds, and her bonds with non-kin others like Anna. This becomes a characteristic feature of characters of sensibility, for the demands of sensibility do not pay heed to the boundaries that

separate kin from non-kin, or the familiar from strangers. Clarissa's attitudes towards friendship as opposed to the claims of family particularly demonstrate this.

The terms 'family' and 'friends' were not as exclusive or distinct in the eighteenth century as they are now imagined.²⁹ The term friend could refer to family members who were seen as 'natural friends' and were expected to disregard self-interest with each other. Naomi Tadmor reads *Clarissa* as a tragic story where Clarissa's 'natural friends' do not put her happiness ahead of their own interests (whether financial or of honor) and in this 'dislocation of friendship' Clarissa must turn to her chosen friends like Anna and Belford.

The role of Anna as friend to Clarissa, instead of the Harlowes, cements the idea of disinterestedness as the defining feature of any ideal relationship. Tadmor makes a similar point about self-interest in the Harlowes as inimical to their role as friends to Clarissa –“the 'friends' proceed to negotiate the terms of her marriage to Mr. Solmes with a view to their own best interests, rather than to Clarissa's” (262). The cruelty of the Harlowes as perceived by Clarissa reveals their disturbing lack of sympathy for her, especially on the part of James and Arabella, explicable in terms of their financial interest and sexual rivalry respectively. In placing their own interest above hers, as David Simple's brother does to him, they break a significant obligation of family members to be friends.

In a novel filled with images of claustrophobia, intrigue, and fearful mistrust, the only starkly positive relationship is the close and consistent friendship of Anna and Clarissa. Since Clarissa is imprisoned for much of the novel, Anna's selfless and extraordinary

²⁹ See Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Hereafter page numbers are cited in the text.

commitment to her friend along every step of the way is a remarkable examples of female friendship in early modern literature.³⁰ The novel thematizes their friendship as a perfect sympathy based on compassion. In urging her friend to share her grief over her family's lack of support, Anna reminds Clarissa of how she defined friendship: to be a friend is "to take a thorn out of one's friend's foot, to put it into our own" (355). This image embodies how compassionate sympathy, as Adam Smith goes on to describe, is what constitutes friendship.

The friendship between Clarissa and Anna is of a piece with the inability to mark out a domain of private self-interest, which forms the basis for the conflation between sensibility and reflection that my earlier section demonstrated. It serves as a pre-condition for the sympathetic friendship between Anna and Clarissa since the re-alignment between spontaneity and self-consciousness must inform the idea of a friendship that can accommodate both affect and reason, without having one militate against the other. To be able to feel affection for non-kin individuals suggests the capacity to reconfigure the relationship between particular affect and a more general idea of disinterested friendship.

Since Anna begins to replace Arabella in the solidarity she shows with Clarissa, their friendship illustrates the implicit social nature of friendship which is not in the realm of exclusive relationships. Tadmore's historical investigation shows how the Christian ethic of universal charity, which traditionally viewed particular relationships as opposed to a

³⁰ Katharine Rogers notes this early depiction of strong female friendships and uses it to show Richardson's more favorable take on women by granting them the possibility of singlehood and a women's community, as opposed to Henry Fielding whose women are depicted in relation only to men, though she acknowledges Fielding's more open portrayal of female sexuality. See Katharine M. Rogers, "Sensitive Feminism vs. Conventional Sympathy: Richardson and Fielding on Women," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 9, no. 3 (1976): 256-270.

general love for all, was gradually accepted in a narrower way to mean a love towards a few friends (240). However, the affective bond in a particular friendship signifies the potential capacity to be friends with all, just as Hutcheson sees particular bonds like filial love leading to the possibility of a love for mankind. As Anna urges Clarissa to be frank about her siblings' machinations, she reminds Clarissa "that a friendship like ours admits of no reserves" (67). "Reserves" would indicate a boundary that must be demolished to ensure that all propriety, as with men, or customary loyalty, or with family is kept aside.

The sympathy between Anna and Clarissa is often highlighted as a contrast to Clarissa's familial ties marking the peculiarity of a friend being more than family, and demonstrating how non-kin friendship uneasily substitutes for the most 'natural' tie. Clarissa notes this in gratitude to Anna: "What pain, my dearest friend, does your kind solicitude, for my welfare give me! How much more binding and tender are the ties of pure friendship, and the union of like minds, than the ties of nature!" (1113) The possibility of a relationship based purely on affection as more "binding" despite it carrying no social obligation exposes the paradox of unreliable family ties. Anna's unconditional acceptance of Clarissa in her "fallen" state after her rape, and her absolving Clarissa of all blame, provides Clarissa with the succor that she yearns for from her family but will never receive. The mechanism of sympathy in replacing natural bonds suggests the breaking down of family ties not only from consanguineal to conjugal as Ruth Perry suggests,³¹ but to affective ties not privileged legally in society. The solace

³¹ Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

that Clarissa derives from Anna's loyalty and kindred thoughts is tempered by the contrasting hurt from her family's hostility.³²

If friendship is "binding" as opposed to the "tie of nature" in family, the novel suggests that the ties of nature i.e. with family have come unstuck. Clarissa's earliest persecutors are her family who trigger her subsequent rash choices, and the Harlowes remain consistently mistrustful of her even until the news of her fatal illness. Anna's friendship becomes the tie par excellence, and Clarissa exalts their friendship citing from the Old Testament: "Well might the sweet singer of Israel, when he was carrying to the utmost extent the praises of the friendship between him and his beloved friend, say that the love of Jonathan to him was wonderful; that it surpassed the *love of women!* What an exalted idea does it give of the soul of Jonathan, sweetly attempered for this sacred band, if we may suppose it but equal to that of my Anna Howe for her fallen Clarissa (1114)"!³³ Clarissa refers to the poignant words of David on hearing of the death of his friend Jonathan, son of Saul. David's lament places friendship over all desires and Clarissa cites these lines to place her friendship with Anna above not only her natural family, but also romantic or sexual relations, and above erotic or financial interests.

The notion of self-interest as contaminating benevolent bonds is concretized by Clarissa in her understanding of family as often based on property. She sees families as

³² Tadmor notes that the replacement of Anna for Clarissa's family, though one of relief, remains painful to her and reminds the reader that the Harlowes have abandoned their duty *as family* in not being friends to Clarissa: "As Clarissa is cast off by her 'natural friends', chosen friends seek to take their place. In doing so, however, they not only fail to save Clarissa, but they remind both Clarissa and the reader that she is bereft of those friends for whose friendship she yearns, and whose friendship she really needs" (265). The inadequacy of the family is linked to the shedding of its inherent role of friends as expected in the eighteenth century.

³³ Clarissa interprets the following lines from the Old Testament by David on the death of his friend Jonathan -- "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women," 2 Sam. 1:26 (AV).

splitting humanity into rivalrous units and constituting a private sphere that prevents common cause —“in my opinion, the world is but one great family; originally it was so; what then is this narrow selfishness that reigns in us, but relationship remembered against relationship forget” (62). In Clarissa’s imagining of the family, men could see themselves as part of a universal community but the desire to possess and increase private property, as her brother hopes to do through her marriage to Solmes, forces one set of relationships (family) to dominate over relationships where no self-interest prevails.³⁴ The universal community she idealizes suggests her yearning for belonging to a community where self-interest has not been naturalized. What is left unstated by Clarissa, but demonstrated in the novel, is that friendship, not family by blood or marriage, can be free of material and sexual interest, gesturing towards an alternative not brought to culmination in the novel. The limitation of same-sex friendships between two young genteel women, in a culture that prioritizes ties of blood or marriage as binding, undermines its full potential.³⁵ The novel also demonstrates, in the infrequent communication towards the end of the novel between Anna and Clarissa, that female friendship cannot provide a safe haven from conventional bonds. As separate beings with separate destinies, Clarissa dies while Anna goes on to a more conventional end in her marriage to Mr. Hickman.

At the end of the novel Clarissa dies amongst strangers who care for her, like Mrs. Smith her landlady and Belford the reformed rake, rendering her state of bereftness from

³⁴ Robert D. Moynihan in “Clarissa and the Enlightened Woman as Literary Heroine,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 1 (1975): 159-166, notes the influence of Puritan thought here where women as spiritual equals could defy family interests.

³⁵ Tadmor notes the inappropriateness of Anna replacing the Harlowes, and who cannot perform the duties of what Tadmor calls a “senior friend.” “Her relationships with select friends can hardly be enhanced without transgressing her obligations to ‘related friends,’ and without violating boundaries of virtue and decorum” (268).

her family's presence and forgiveness as poignant, and showing the extraordinary compassion of strangers.

Clarissa's 'purity' which hinges on the novel's reconfigured understanding of the relationship between sensibility and self-reflection, is put into the service of a new sociability, which is marked by the absence of a restrictive, kin-based notion of 'friendship'. In other words, her inability to maintain a distinction between a hidden inside and a performed outside translates, at a different level, into her ability to collapse the boundaries between kin and non-kin and thereby form affective bonds of friendship outside the family. that necessitate a re-evaluation of the very categories that demarcate the family from the stranger.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate that Clarissa too represents the impulsive compassionate figure of sensibility. The rambling and peripatetic nature of sensibility represented by Harley and Simple cannot work for women given their limited spatial mobility. Neither can a naïve virtue unalloyed with self-consciousness survive as a viable mode for the women of feeling. Clarissa is caught between a fatally debilitating naiveté and an assumed interiority that is always suspect to others.

Richardson's novel negotiates the tortuous journey that takes the woman of feeling into the heart of that treacherous terrain where interiority is always imagined in terms of

disguised self-interest and sexual passion. That Clarissa, for some readers, may emerge from this journey unscathed, albeit dead, is possible only by producing a rapprochement between a non-reflective, spontaneous self and a self that exposes itself to the relentless scrutiny of self-reflection.

In Richardson's novel, Clarissa must go through a painful process of a reflection on the possibility of evil in Lovelace without losing her purity. She must persist in innocence and despite coming to a knowledge of evil, must remain untouched by it herself.

Chapter 4

Irritability as Sensibility: The Problem of Matt Bramble

Introduction

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771) by Tobias Smollett has often been described as a novel of sensibility that must be understood either in conjunction with other modes of writing like comedy or satire or as a mixing of sentimentalism and a rationalistic or satiric style.¹ The idea that this novel yokes the sentimental and the satirical can best be understood through Ronald Paulson's classic *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*. Paulson argues that there is not just a break but also a continuum between the mode of satire in the early half of the eighteenth-century and of sensibility in the latter half. Citing Smollett as one of his examples, Paulson sees him as drawing on sentimentalism within satire. Giving significant attention to *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, Paulson observes that "with the advent of Bramble, the satirist's reaction to vice became analogous to Harley's reaction to virtue in Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*."² Paulson's argument is that in both cases—satirizing vice or advocating virtue—the intensity of reaction is the same as is the moral aim. What distinguishes Bramble from Harley, however, is the fact that he is neither naive nor a dupe to the cunning and corruption of others, and he borders on an apparent misanthropy.

¹ See William H. Wandless, "Narrative Pain and the Moral Sense: Toward an Ethic of Suffering in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Literature and Medicine*, 24, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 51-71. For those who do cite it as a novel of sensibility, the categorization is explained as if requiring justification. See David M. Weed "Sentimental Misogyny and Medicine in *Humphry Clinker*," *SEL* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1997) 615.

² Ronald Paulson, *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967), 240.

Bramble's misanthropy can be seen as constitutive of his satire on the degeneration of England though his sensibility evokes a secret benevolent self. For some critics, Bramble is literally seen as monstrous in his self-authorization at the cost of others. For critics like Barbara Benedict, characters like Bramble offer a variation on the man of feeling type and are to be viewed as curiosities who appear monstrous.³ David Weed's view of Bramble is harsher, describing him as a gentlemanly man of feeling, who resists infection from a femininity associated with a commercial society.⁴ In a similar charge of misogyny, Aileen Douglas, in her monograph on the body in Smollett's literary writings, views Bramble's account of his body as privileging him, especially at the cost of women's bodies.⁵ In Douglas' estimate, Bramble derives legitimacy from his defining of women's 'immoral' modes, like Tabby and Win's apparently monstrous sexuality and Mrs. Dennison's craving for luxury. Douglas notes that there is ample evidence of Bramble's own disorderly sexual desires and an inclination to luxury. Sexual desire tends to complicate or undermine the virtue of benevolence and therefore sits uneasily with the man of feeling type. Though I agree with her notion that the connotation of personal pleasure, which has no public good and can hint at lasciviousness, problematizes

³ Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) 5.

⁴ David M. Weed, "Sentimental Misogyny and Medicine in *Humphry Clinker*," *SEL* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1997) 615-636.

⁵ See *Uneasy Sensations: Smollett and the Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Douglas argues that Bramble's account of his body "derives considerable authority from the discourses of eighteenth-century medicine, which represented hypochondriacs as persons of sound judgment and good sense, and from events within the novel itself—where women are seen as disorderly creatures who ruin estates and endanger health" (176).

sensibility in the more overtly sexual men of feeling in my reading, the text does not encourage such a reading of Bramble's sexual disorderliness.⁶

A novel of sensibility is usually designated as such because of a character representing sensibility i.e. a person with spontaneous, compassionate feelings for those in distress, and inclined to benevolent actions which are demonstrably untainted by any self-interest. Within such a broad description, Matthew Bramble's body is a distinct problem that is no longer merely an outward sign of sensibility but contains a range of symptoms that appear to militate against the idea of benevolence. The reactive body is no longer merely a marker of the hero's responsiveness to the distress of others, but the site of a pathologized oversensitivity that is manifested through bodily symptoms and suggests an internal dynamic between irascibility and sensibility.

The body's centrality to sensibility takes on an unusual focus in this novel where the body is not just showing symptoms of feelings but constitutes sensibility in itself. Robert Erickson describes Matthew Bramble as the quintessential man of "passions."⁷ The emphasis on his body has been noted by critics like Ann Jessie Van Sant who sees Bramble's character as bringing together the man of feeling and the man of humor, or as Thomas Preston sees it, the emphasis on Bramble's physiology comes not so much from the earlier humor type but the eighteenth-century type of the man of feeling.⁸ The body

⁶ Bramble's major sexual escapade is in the past of the novel. The scene with the poor woman who Tabby suspects is a prostitute, demonstrates that Bramble's engagement with her is a disinterested action of relieving her rather than taking advantage of her vulnerable state.

⁷ Robert A. Erickson, "On the External Uses of Water in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*" in O. M. Brack, Jr., *Tobias Smollett, Scotland's First Novelist* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2007) 100.

⁸ See Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Thomas Preston, "Smollett and the Benevolent Misanthrope Type," *PMLA* 79, no. 1(1964): 51-57.

becomes the touchstone of what he represents and is not just an outward sign of his compassion towards others, especially since his body is often in an irritable state, literally and metaphorically, and frequently does not exhibit any apparent signs of compassion.

Humphry Clinker both continues the man of feeling figure and takes it to a new level, largely through a deeper understanding of the role of "the reactive body." Bramble's body displays the paradoxical but dual aspects of aversion from and compassion toward people. The man of feeling figure in the eighteenth century typically showed a seamless relation between mind and body. In *Humphry Clinker*, the body plays a critical role, but unlike in other novels of sensibility, it is not only a trembling, blushing, or weeping body that houses a benign attitude, but a sick, irritable one leading to an irritation with others. Early on in the novel, his misanthropy is described as rooted in excess affect or as in Jery's assessment, a "peevisness [that] arises partly from bodily pain, and partly from an excess of mental sensitivity" with pain and sensitivity occupying analogous positions here.⁹

This hallmark of irritability in Bramble does not last through the end of the novel but fades out, a fact that is noticeable in the clearly demarcated geographical sections of the novel. His is not just a literal journey, as it parallels a move from the irascible though charitable character of Bramble to a sanguine and useful one. Though somewhat circular in nature, as the end of the novel retains the charitable values of Bramble and a faith in country life, there is a change visible in the curing of Bramble's irritable body and cantankerous mind alongwith a renewed vision and purpose of an ideal landowner's life

⁹ Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966). All references in this chapter are to this edition and page numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.

who must work effectively in improving his estate and the life of those dependent on it.¹⁰ The earlier intensity of his body's reactions to a variety of olfactory and auditory stimuli as well as his real and imagined bodily ailments disappears at the end of the novel.¹¹ His body and mind are made whole by ridding excess affect from both. But not only do his ailments get healed, there are no episodes of impulsive benevolence to strangers as depicted earlier. There is a move at the end of the novel from marking body-driven responses and impulsive benevolence in Bramble to thoughtful civic virtue.

Critical responses to the novel have focused largely on seeing how this irritability, though linked to a moral satire, is excised at the end of the novel because of its apparent incongruity with the idea of benevolence. For instance, Robert Folkenflik argues that Bramble must come out of himself in the course of the novel, and come to know others through his travels.¹² This implies that his irritability and misanthropy need to be cured, restoring him to being a more sociable person. In my reading, I explore how this irritability of body and mind might be allied with Bramble's sensibility and need not be seen in opposition to it.

The terms 'irritability' and 'sensibility' were part of the medical discourse at the time and the terms shifted meaning as they moved between literature and science as well as

¹⁰ See Byron Gassman, "The Economy of Humphry Clinker" in *Tobias Smollett: Bicentennial Essays Presented to Lewis M. Knapp*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and P.-G. Boucé (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). Gassman describes this shift in the third volume, where in Scotland there is "less of an individual tone and diction in the letters" with more factual reports, and on return to England, "less interest in sights and sounds" (166-67).

¹¹ In his study of the four "blind" senses as providing an epistemological basis for Smollett's thematic concerns, Donald Siebert notes how there are sensuous descriptions of the positive places in the novel like of Wales or Scotland. See Donald T. Siebert, "The Role of the Senses in *Humphry Clinker*," *Studies in the Novel* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1974): 17-26. Though sensuous descriptions persist, the fact of their pleasantness at the end renders them less intense in their effect on Bramble's own body, especially in rural England.

¹² See Robert Folkenflik, "Self and Society: Comic Union in *Humphry Clinker*," *Philological Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 20.

within each discourse. G. S. Rousseau describes ‘irritability’ as a term in scientific parlance initiated by the Swiss physician Albrecht von Haller that signified the closing up of muscular fibres whereas ‘sensibility’ was associated with nerves that are sensitive and open out to sensation.¹³ Though both are reactions, their manifestation is different. According to Rousseau, in Haller’s medical terminology ‘Irritability’ referred to a heightened reaction to things, while ‘Sensibility’ had to be “accompanied by consciousness.” For Haller, the sensible parts of the human body convey impressions to the soul showing a material and idealistic account in the origins of sensibility.¹⁴ But for animals Haller calls “those parts sensible, the irritation of which occasions evident signs of pain and disquiet in the animal.”¹⁵ In the hierarchy between man and animals, the impact of pain on a man is deeper, not merely physical. In animals, the division between the irritable and sensible is less clear.

If closing up is a sign of irritability, it could metaphorically suggest a closing up to the environment and produce a misanthropic nature that is cynical. On the other hand, if being receptive to others is equivalent to sensibility, which is a susceptibility to the distress of others, then it would lead to benevolence. But as Van Sant observes in her account of sensibility as physiology, there is a possibility that “sensibility can lead either

¹³ See George S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essay on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 229.

¹⁴ Haller’s idea is presumably derived from Aristotle’s understanding of sensation, as receivable by man who has a soul. See Sean Gaston’s article “The Impossibility of Sympathy” *The Eighteenth Century* 51 (1-2): 129- 152, 2010. Gaston highlights Derrida’s reading of Aristotle’s *On the Soul* where the soul remains untouched though it is essential for sensation or for being touched in a physical or non-material sense: “As Derrida suggested, while one should always be attentive to the idealization or progressive escape from the sensuous and the material in the eighteenth century, one should also be wary in this period of the implicit idealization of sense and touch.” The dialectical nature of sympathy shows its sides as material and idealistic.

¹⁵ Albrecht von Haller, “Dissertation on the sensible and irritable parts of Animals” (1752), quoted in Van Sant, *Eighteenth-century sensibility and the novel*, 51.

to a sentimental or to a satiric report of experience” (104). Irritability begins to come closer to the meaning of sensibility as it begins to lose its association with closing up and to acquire a meaning of receptivity.

In Smollett’s novel the figure of Bramble is worked to reconcile his irritable and benevolent side, his sentimental and satiric inclinations, as Paulson would have it. The man of feeling as an intensely social being, uncontrollably feeling for those in distress, is hard to equate with a seemingly misanthropic protagonist like Bramble. But the eponymous Humphry Clinker, who may compete for the designation of the man of feeling with his air of simplicity and compassion, is peripheral to the plot. Less significant than Bramble in terms of not being the moral voice as a satirist, Clinker often functions as a plot device to show up the benevolence of his master/father Matt Bramble. He is devoid of any voice as he is singularly excluded from the coterie of the five narrators/letter-writers in the novel and more so does not invite commentary by them. Clinker’s compassionate nature and the unavailability of his subjectivity might suggest that he is the truest man of feeling, one whose sensibility could be described only by other characters in the novel. But his late entry into the plot and his infrequent appearance thereafter, register him as a minor character. Although Clinker is significant in terms of the novel’s moral vision and as a plot device, Bramble takes up the most space in the novel and functions as its main protagonist both in terms of plot and moral point of view, doubling as the virtuous hero and the voice of satire on England. Clinker could be seen as a man of sensibility too, as his underling and a corrective to Bramble’s cantankerousness. But in this novel, the emphasis is not so much on minimizing self-consciousness in the

man of feeling as is the case with Harley in *The Man of Feeling*, but on the peculiar sociability of Bramble in whom benevolence and misanthropy reside together.¹⁶

Bramble's misanthropy which is an aversion to people in general has been associated with a conservative distaste for an aspiring commercial class.¹⁷ A revulsion for any contact with those who do not conform to the protocols of social hierarchy is presented as the source of his misanthropy and cantankerousness. In other words, his irritation appears to be concerned with the erasure of social boundaries between different ranks of people. In this chapter, I show how his irritability is more pervasive and deep-seated, born out of his unique sense of imaginative connection with people in his physical and social context. In the broadest sense, Bramble seems to shrink not only from the mixing of classes but simply from the idea of the mingling of individual bodies. His aversion to contact with almost anyone in the novel bespeaks his felt intimacy with others, and so despite its unsocial nature, his aversion becomes a sign of a heightened sense of sociability -- one that is acutely sentient of the invariable connection of individuals.

Matt Bramble in combining these two aspects -- irritability and sensibility -- shows us a possible continuum between them. For a large part of the novel, we encounter a man who cannot get away from his perceived closeness with the bodies around him. His

¹⁶ See Thomas R. Preston, *Not in Timon's Manner: Feeling, Misanthropy, and Satire in Eighteenth-Century England* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1975) for a full history of the literary figure of the misanthrope. In his section on Smollett, Preston charts out the existence of the "benevolent misanthrope" long before Smollett but sees Bramble as a kind of "amiable humorist" who transcends the type and is closer to the man of feeling. The benevolent misanthrope would be markedly different from the malicious one. Preston examines the minor characters associated with this type who are Bramble's immediate literary predecessors including Mr. Spatter in Sarah Fielding's *David Simple*.

¹⁷ See Tara Ghoshal Wallace, "'About savages and the awfulness of America': Colonial Corruptions in *Humphry Clinker*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 18, no. 2 (Winter 2005-6): 229-250. Tara Wallace sees Smollett's attitude to the colonization of America, through the story of Lismahago, as ambiguous at best and critical of the contact that colonization entails. Bramble indeed associates the blurring of class markers with greed and corruption especially connected with colonialism. He seems to particularly berate colonialists abroad, and instead advocates colonizing the Scottish Highlands over America.

negative reaction ironically serves to underline the relentless ‘sympathetic’ connection between people so that his peevishness is only partially explicable by his conservative world view. Sensibility here is not always a kind of compassion but at its most basic level, a sense of intimacy between discrete bodies. What remains with us most powerfully after reading the novel is that his persistent fear of contact with people is an acknowledgment of that contact as ever present.

I

THE IRRITABLE BODY

Matt Bramble mockingly titles his letters –“the lamentations of Matthew Bramble” (33) and his complaints of physical and mental stress drive his need to write letters of complaint to his doctor cum friend, Dr. Lewis.¹⁸ As “a man without a skin,” (49) as his nephew Jerry describes him, Bramble experiences an intense amount of bodily responses to stimuli whether it be noise, smells, the physical press of crowds, or his personal ailments. These stimuli affect his mental and physical state as parallel or simultaneous afflictions, in a manner marked as peculiar to his character in the novel. On the very first page of the novel, he equates the torture of an irregular bowel system with the vexing responsibilities of chaperoning his orphaned nephew and niece and concludes that “I am equally distressed in mind and body.” He then conflates physical and emotional distress by viewing his medical ailments as psychosomatic, for instance, when an incident about his niece Liddy is seen as anticipating “another fit of gout” (5). The responsive man of

¹⁸ Wayne Wild cites Brambles letters as containing rhetorical drama similar to the ones written by patients to doctors at the time about their “irascibility or irritability” which often signaled sensibility. See *Medicine-by-Post: The Changing Voice of Illness in Eighteenth-Century Consultation Letters and Literature* (Rodopi BV: Amsterdam, 2006) 217.

feeling here is literally feeling ill. His nephew Jerry observes that “Mr. Bramble is extravagantly delicate in all his sensations, both of soul and body,” (67) and this delicacy persists, at least through the first two volumes of the novel. The novel’s depiction of the conflation of mind and body in Bramble is repeated in Jerry’s assertion of “soul and body” confirming that at least for Bramble, the two are impacted together. Bramble’s body bears witness to a perturbed mind and vice-versa.

Bramble’s attention to his bodily processes is most marked by an obsession with his bowel movements suggesting a body in pain. Volumes 1 and 2 of the novel begin with references to his nagging constipation (“I have told you over and over, how hard I am to move”) begging his doctor friend for relief (5), and in each letter to Dr. Lewis there is a lingering sense of disturbance in his body (“I had certain croaking in the bowels, which boded me no good”) (118). This suggests an irritability which closes him up and extends his discomfort. But the novel goes on to suggest that his peevishness is intimately connected to his benevolence.¹⁹ For instance, Bramble’s personal complaints about his illnesses are sometimes interspersed with demonstrations of his charity to the public.

With an excruciatingly responsive body, Bramble is also responsive to the needs of others. This responsiveness can be glimpsed early on in the novel in the string of instructions expressed to his friend, Dr. Lewis, which will benefit the poor around his estate in Wales. These range from selling corn at a lower price to the poor, gifting a cow and money to “Morgan’s widow,” and settling a score with a potential litigant by demanding charity from him to the poor. Like a man of feeling, the characterization of Bramble’s goodness avoids any note of self-righteousness on his part. All acts of charity

¹⁹ Though the bowels of Bramble are seen in the novel as a manifestation of his irritable side, there is also the Biblical association of bowels with compassion as noted by Robert Folkenflik in “Self and Society,” 197.

are to be done with a characteristic lack of self-advertisement, and Dr. Lewis is instructed not to flaunt Squire Bramble's patronage -- "don't say a syllable of the matter to any living soul" (5). Bramble's character avoids the trap of vainglory that could be charged on the seemingly benevolent. In quick succession, the first letter of the novel by Bramble to his friend Doctor Lewis lines up all his characteristics bringing together his irascibility, his ailing body, and his compassion for others. Logically, his irascibility should be a sign of him being closed to people. But the novel urges us to view Bramble as combining an irritable body that cannot tolerate pressure, with a mind that is unable to tolerate pain in others too.

The assumed dissociation of irritability from any benevolence can be seen in Jery's initial judgment about his "peevish" uncle. Jery in noting to his friend how he has begun to identify with his uncle and has got past his dismissal of his uncle as a "Cynic," observes how Bramble's "peevishness is the result of bodily pain and partly due to a natural excess of mental sensibility" because both body and mind, says Jery, may be "endued with a morbid excess of sensation" (17) or a prolonged susceptibility to impressions. The implication here is that Bramble peculiarly registers impressions with an equal force in both mind and body. While sensibility is a type of receptivity to others, Bramble is curiously closed and receptive in turns. The body becomes the register of both.

The body as the unwitting witness of his sensibility is affected even in the relatively calmer scenario of displaying a moral sense i.e. approving of another's benevolence. Bramble's cantankerousness and aversion to most, even his family, is interrupted often by episodes of his complete imaginative merger with strangers. Bramble displays a

Hutchesonian kind of moral sense in his recognition and approval of a disinterested benevolent action by other individuals. In Hutcheson's evocation of the moral sense, as I describe it in my first chapter, the general ability to admire benevolence in others reveals an innate quality of benevolence in all people. But acute consciousness of one's own benevolence is evaded in Hutcheson, perhaps offering a clue to Bramble's secrecy about his charity. Bramble's moral sense is strongly evident in the episode where he displays his intense approval of Capt. Brown's benevolence to his erstwhile separated family. Bramble is "charmed" by the display of Brown's generosity and is beside himself with joy when the separated family is reunited. Completely caught up in their story and then witness to their reunion, Bramble is described by Jery as so "moved by this pathetic recognition" that he "sobbed, and wept, and clapped his hands, and hollowed, and finally ran down into the street" (264). Bramble's sympathetic participation in the family's turn of fortune through his expressions of happiness makes him more than a witness or reporter as Jery is, and in fact even the Brown family's response is more muted. Bramble's running out into the street reveals his excitement which has no direction, since he has no role to play, but his running seems to be a physical response to release his sympathy for this family of strangers. Here his sensibility, similar to the moral sense, remains within the appreciation of a disinterested, benevolent action. In this episode, we see a clearer display in Bramble of how his body's reactivity is not confined to his irascibility. He also throws into sharp relief the latent sensibility in everyone since Jery, and the reader too, in understanding Bramble must reveal their own sensibility.

Whether expressed in sympathetic joy or in his irritability, it is not always clear whether his reactivity originates in the body or the mind, and the relay of affect from

the mental to the physical and vice-versa seems impossible to track or control in Bramble. It seems that Bramble often observes and assesses his surroundings, and his body then reacts as a concrete response. His responsiveness is most marked in the scenes of physical stress, like in one of the most notable instances in the novel when he faints in the closed confines of a ball room at Bath. Bramble is revolted not just by the numbers and noise or lack of air, but by what he sees as the inanity of people dancing monotonously in a narrow space. He views them as “insipid animals, describing the same dull figure for an evening, on an area, not much bigger than a taylor’s shop-board” (65). The lack of space is less the cause of his claustrophobia than the use of it by “insipid” people. His unusual response of swooning in the ballroom is ascribed to his “uncommon sensibility” by everyone, from the doctor to Jery, to Bramble himself who derides others’ nerves as coarsely constructed. What is “uncommon” about Bramble’s magnified reaction is the way his body has extreme reactions as a result of the power and reach of his imagination.

Bramble’s mind can continue to react long after his physical reactions have died down. He reflects on the causes of his fainting by minutely dissecting the smells in the poorly-ventilated room that triggered his claustrophobia. The inclination to map out the unmappable begins in Bramble as a classificatory drive. He describes the cause of his swooning as “an Egyptian gale” (basically a wave of stink), which to him is “impregnated with pestilential vapours” (65). Jery mocks his uncle for his delicate nose and reports that Bramble “swears [that] the accident was occasioned by the stench of the crowd” (67). Jery’s report that his uncle “swears” how bad the stink was, shows that he thinks differently about the intensity of the smell having been present in the same room.

Bramble, in his usual plaintive letter to Dr. Lewis after the incident, breaks down the nature of the smells which caused his fainting by imagining the different components of its worst offenders as well as of the supposed perfumes that by mixing with stink, have become unbearable. In his conjecture about the ingredients in the stink, he tells Dr Lewis:

Imagine to yourself a high exalted essence of mingled odours, arising from putrid gums, imposthumated [abscessed] lungs, sour flatulencies, rank arm-pits, sweating feet, running sores and issues, plasters, ointments, and embrocations, hungary water, spirit of lavender, assafoetida drops, musk, hartshorn, and sal volatile; besides a thousand frowsy steams, which I could not analyse. (66)

Bramble engages with the unpleasant task of distinguishing the smells of armpits and feet, from those of rotten gums and abscessed lungs. He trails off into his inability to record a “thousand steams” that he cannot even begin to separate out and label.

Bramble’s list includes his worst fears, concretized in the worst smells he abhors. The idea of infinite smells that his suspicions imagine, evoke a mind that is constantly spiralling off into making an exhaustive list of contaminating elements in his surroundings. Yet to himself, he seems to be endlessly lagging behind the task of conclusively mapping an inexhaustible record that can sort through the multitude of perceived effluences. This see-saw between actually sensing offensive phenomenon, and conjecturing beyond what is comprehensible to the eye or ears or even the most delicate nose, suggests a sublime of the foul. In a comparable move to an aesthetics of the sublime, which allows for the imagination to both comprehend the enormity of a phenomenon or objects and confronts the possibility of never being able to grasp it all, Bramble’s attempts to break down and classify the foul substances that disturb him are not without the despair of feeling an eternal lag behind what he can apprehend. Though his irritability may be induced by material causes, Bramble’s mind always has an

offensive irritant to worry about and keep his body in a highly reactive state. Once Bramble's nerves have been jarred, an internal movement in them is set off.²⁰

Bramble's wild imaginings are a lingering reaction re-lived in his letter long after his bodily reaction has subsided. His imagination dwells on physical minutiae as if to seek a concrete correlative to encase his stress after his body has completed its visceral reaction. Irritability could originate in the mind, and the body would register its effects. Thus it seems that there is a mind-body-mind trajectory in Bramble's reactivity that effectively keeps the two dimensions of the physical and the mental in him in a continuous loop.

For this loop to play on, an environment must surround him that seems to him to be constantly irritating. A perception of social disorder becomes the principle on which his reactivity stands. Bramble's deep sensitivity to all annoying stimuli is documented carefully in Bath and London, where the lack of space and distance from crowds eludes the distinctions of rank. The Bramble family's arrival at Bath is greeted with "hideous noise" that annoys Jery too but Bramble's reactions are the most extreme. The cacophony is a medley with Chowder's barking, Tabby's noisy defence of her dog which Jery describes as "truly diabolical" (29), the town waits' (professional musicians) music startling everyone, followed by the thump of the dancing Irishman, Ulic Mackilligut. The Irishman's charming excuses soon disarm Bramble into a polite reconciliation, allowing him to carry on his noise showing Bramble's selective civility. The horn-playing

²⁰ See Catherine J. Minter, "The Concept of Irritability and the Critique of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *The Modern Language Review* 106, no. 2 (April 2011): 463-476, who sees irritability as being a trace in the culture of Sensibility in Germany. The difference between the two became highly debatable and ambiguous with an increasing focus on the term 'irritability' in medicine. In one new view at the time "once heightened nervous irritability is present, external stimuli are no longer needed to produce physical and emotional states, which may occur as a result of the nerves' own internal mobility" (472).

“Negroes” fare worse with Bramble who thrashes them after they refuse to stop playing. Their impertinence is associated for Bramble with their colonial master, Col. Ringworm’s impertinence in refusing to stop them from disturbing others.²¹ They bear the brunt of Bramble’s anger against aspirational colonialists. It seems clear that Bramble’s responses to different stimuli are always embedded within his perception of its context. Irregular noise bothers him because of his assessment of it being improper or contrary to social order.

Bramble’s highly sensitive body is cast as unusual in comparison to his travelling companions. As a case of someone with a similar delicacy in body and spirit, his niece, Lydia, too reacts to the chaos on arrival at Bath but soon recovers to enjoy the scene. She is initially struck by “the highest quality and lowest trades folks, jostling each other, without ceremony, hail-fellow well-met,” but this jumbling of ranks does not disturb her beyond its novelty factor. In her account of how she first responded to Bath, she says that “the noise of the musick playing in the gallery, the heat and flavour of such a crowd, and the hum and buzz of their conversation, gave me the head-ach and the vertigo the first day; but, afterwards, all these things became familiar, and even agreeable” (39). Her responsiveness to physical stimuli starts off on a Brambleian note but ends differently. Like her uncle, she initially responds to the physical and social chaos at Bath with signs of illness. But her adjustment to the aural and visual crowding is quick, and we feel its swift passage within the time the sentence ends, just as the noise for her changes into something pleasant within a day. Her youthful optimism about the same places that annoy

²¹ Ironically Smollett was associated with colonialism in as much as he derived some income from English colonies. His letters contain several instances of his awaiting income both from Jamaica where his wife owned property and from the East Indies. In Letter no. 31, he writes about his instruction “to sell our Negroes in the West Indies”. See Lewis M. Knapp, ed. *The Letters of Tobias Smollett* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 28, 40, 41, 45, 62, 68.

Bramble, suggest a mild mockery at both their positions in that her initial similarity in physical reactivity to her uncle makes his persistent reactions seem malingering.

If Lydia is receptive to novelty, Bramble is closed and this has a moral dimension as his body seems to acutely register a disequilibrium in England. His delicate constitution is carefully inscribed within his critique of a corrupt world where the social and political system has degenerated.²² He connects the micro-individual to the social by linking his dislike of everything in London, to the corruption of its denizens and state. For instance in a trenchant critique of the food available in London, Bramble dismisses its sullied nature as it lacks any recognisable connection to its origins. The processes of city life through which goods are circulated, taint them with impurities leaving them unfit for consumption. His satire arising out of his irritability is often his only form of connection to a public world.

Bramble's anger is both a rational critique of actions that negate public good, and is his form of connection to a changing society. His engagement with this world can be seen in his 'analysis', i.e. on breaking down for his interlocutor, for instance, the different types of contaminants in milk highlighted in all their gross detail:

the milk itself should not pass unanalysed, the produce of faded cabbage leaves and sour draff [grain husks], lowered with hot water, frothed with bruised snails, carried through the streets in open pails, exposed to foul rinsings, discharged from doors and windows, spittle, snot, and tobacco-quids from foot-passengers, overflowing from mud-carts, splatterings from coach-wheels, dirt and trash chucked into it by roguish boys for the joke's sake, the spewing of infants, who have slabbered in the tin-measure, which is thrown back in that condition among the milk, for the benefit of the next customer; and, finally, the vermin that drops from the rags of the nasty drab that vends this precious mixture, under the respectable denomination of milk-maid. (122)

²² See John F. Sena, "Smollett's Matthew Bramble and the Tradition of the Physician-Satirist," *Papers on Language and Literature* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 380-396. John Sena views Bramble as part of a tradition of the physician-satirist, "a satiric persona who describes and responds to reality in medical terms" and shows physical sickness as a metaphor for his moral queasiness.

The milk which seems spurious is contaminated for Bramble because it imbibes waste, like snot and spit, from plebeian city dwellers. The actual circulation of waste is concretised in the detail of the dribble from infants being “thrown back’ into the milk and passed unwittingly to the next consumer. What finally condemns the product is the nature of its seller, a “nasty drab” with the insinuation that she is a ‘public’ woman who approximates the role of the erstwhile pastoral type of milk-maid. Bramble’s distaste for the milk being sold in London arises not only from the suspicious nature of the milk’s components but from its circulation in a literal way i.e. in an open container thereby exposing each consumer to everyone’s passing waste. This recoiling from soiled goods is not solely because the milk may have gone bad, but because of the imagined and real contamination that physically passes between people through commerce. His rational satiric side is mixed in with his deep personal revulsion of contact with anything perceived as corrupted from the original. The aversion from London then is inextricably tied to his sense of possible connection with the public in the consumption of milk.

The narrative casts Bramble’s fulminations on the city both as part of his irrational fears and as a valid moral critique. From the microscopic study of the worst food and drink in the city where the table-beer “is fitter to facilitate the operation of a vomit” (122), to a macro-analysis of the moral “pollution” affecting London, Bramble quickly places adulterated food within the context of a lack of “regulation” by the city which views checks as antagonistic to “liberty” (122). He links fraud to the general self-regard of people in London caused by their “interest or ambition” (123). This larger satirical picture that Bramble paints has a moral coherence that co-exists with his paranoid

imagination when he imagines the excesses of pollution. However, despite the credibility of his satire on modern city life, Bramble's acute observance of the kinds of contaminants that infiltrate milk for instance, reveal a mind of satiric observation that is painful to watch not only for what it picks up, but for the strain such a mind must carry in uncontrollably observing and fearing each micro-speck of dirt and every invisible pollutant that swirls around him. In this sense, the reader is tied to Bramble's pain even if it is cast as misanthropic, and this partly enables us to see his benevolence in the form of his social satire, even in his misanthropy.

The resulting and apparently oppositional relation between benevolence and irritability is overcome through a view of the mind-body relation as neither "seamless" nor oppositional but dialectical. Both mind and body are shown to trigger benevolence and irritability, with neither mental nor bodily response taking priority. This novel clarifies to us that sensibility as a term holds together the physical and the mental so that the two are in play. The body and mind are sometimes conflated and sometimes kept apart only to be held in an endless relay of responsiveness. This painful uneasiness of the traffic between the two becomes the problematic that the novel strives to negotiate. But instead of splitting the mental from the physical, the novel depicts both the irascible and the benevolent as situated within both the mind and the body, so that the mind-body conflation remains intact in both cases. That is to say, his irritability exists both in his mind and body, and so does his benevolence. Just as the mind and body are in a continuum as two interconnected parts of the same person, his irritability and benevolence can also be seen as a continuum.

II

THE INTIMACY OF CONTAGION

In the second section of this chapter, I explore the fear of contagion which seems to be the main trigger of Bramble's anxious reactions. The idea of contagion is mapped onto the social body where Bramble shrinks from any contact with the masses as they represent a diseased society that is experiencing a decay of its traditional social and political order.²³ Through his obsession with contagion, Bramble is in a constant state of reactivity, but one that though seeking immunity from contact, can never secure it.

The fear of contagion is linked to the erasure of social boundaries in Bramble, though also revealing his acute acceptance of what seems inevitable to him. The first volume of the novel focusing on Bath and the second on London, mark out these two spaces as particularly prone to a hasty commercial expansion in England, and a consequent flooding of people from all ranks mixed together in its streets and public spaces. Bath localises a space where "a very inconsiderable proportion of genteel people are lost in the mob of impudent plebeians" (37). For Bramble, Bath and London are abhorrent because the self-interest pursued by a new commercial class is spreading to all sections of society. He blames "luxury" as the driving force behind all degeneracy in the nation. The term 'luxury' is explained as "the ostentation of wealth" suggesting an objection not to great wealth but what is perceived as its unnecessary display.²⁴ Bramble's aversion to society

²³ The analogy between physical and moral sickness alongwith the imagery of disease has been explored among others by Ronald Paulson, *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967) and Michael McKeon, "Aestheticising the Critique of Luxury: Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*" in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, ed. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

²⁴ Luxury as a focal point of critique, has been discussed extensively by critics, notably by John Sekora who argues for Smollett critiquing luxury of the disenfranchised from a conservative standpoint. In opposition to this reading, Michael McKeon reads this critique of luxury, more as a formal device in a

seems to be particularly caused by the insolent aspirations of the likes of tradesmen and colonialists. He fears the unavoidable contact with them just as he would fear a contagious disease, and yet his fear betrays his acknowledgment and even acceptance of what are shown as irreversible social changes.

Bramble's observations on how contact is established between people most often takes on the metaphor of disease ("the very air we breathe is loaded with contagion") and his fears are literally pegged onto the idea of unwittingly catching a disease from an infected person ("we cannot even sleep, without risque of infection" (47). Though the sense of closeness of people in crowded public spaces oppresses him, nevertheless his constant envisioning of a sense of contact with others, even at some physical distance from him, through the elements of air and water reveal a deeply felt and involuntary connection with people around him. Sensibility in him abhors closeness with others but ironically keeps him obsessed with connectiveness as he frets over the possibility of contagion in sharing public spaces.

Bramble's fear of "contamination" (46) is so intense as to make him imagine an impossible catching of diseases beyond what is credible. For instance, while in Bath, he ascertains without due evidence that the water from the bathing area may be seeping into the drinking water at the Pump rooms: "for, after a long conversation with the doctor, about the construction of the pump and the cistern, it is very far from being clear with me, that the patients in the Pump-room don't swallow the scourings of the bathers" (46).

novel that ultimately celebrates the upward mobility of Humphry Clinker. Robert Mayer takes a similar position to McKeon though from a different perspective. Mayer analyses the depiction of the different geographical realms arguing that the novel's ending of personal felicity is linked to changes in the public realm moving towards a United Kingdom. See John Sekora, *Luxury: the concept in Western thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Michael McKeon, "Aestheticising the Critique of Luxury" (2003); and Robert Mayer, "History, *Humphry Clinker*, and the Novel," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 4, no. 3 (April 1992): 239-256.

Bramble vividly sees in his mind, the refuse scrubbed off the skin of bathers going into the mouths of visitors at the Pump rooms. From his own account, there is no indication that the doctor has actually offered this suspicion and Bramble's vaguely-phrased reasoning, "it is very far from being clear with me," implies that the doctor has tried to disabuse him of this suspicion. The passage indicates that Bramble has chosen his point of view, of the drinking water containing waste, on no credible grounds. No one else at Bath is shown as pontificating and worrying about the fear of infection from water, perhaps because their sense of contact with people is less acutely one of bristling at any touch. And ironically, Bramble has conveniently forgotten that he has already drunk a pint of the water at the Pump-room and reportedly it agrees with his stomach, as narrated in his letter to Dr. Lewis (38).²⁵ Bramble is thus prone to suspicions of an extreme kind ignoring all evidence that undermines his fears. The fear of catching something suggests his virtual connectedness to everyone, one that the other characters do not reveal, thereby showing his closeness to them and not just a fear of contact that erodes class distinctions.

Bramble's satire on the dirt and chaos of Bath arising out of the mingling of bodies both physically, and a mixing of ranks, turns on himself as he reveals his persistent fear that the emissions of other bodies may touch him. His musings do not take away from the satire of the dystopia or a kind of lunatic asylum that Bath has become according to Bramble. It reveals his incessant need to imagine the possibility of being in contact with the waste of other human bodies in the most vivid detail, à la Swift, evident in the description of filthy human emissions. Bramble's suspicions of the contaminated water leads to his micro-listing of what it might contain – "sweat, and dirt, and dandruff; and

²⁵ Interestingly, in a letter about his stay in Bath, Smollett described the place as restorative of his health and declared that the water he drinks from the Pump makes him warm and glowing. See Letter 88 in *The Letters of Tobias Smollett*, Ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 109.

the abominable discharges of various kinds, from twenty different diseased bodies” (46), that therefore could enter his body. The use of the word “abominable” for some “discharges” which remain unnamed, reveals his constructed doubts of what else the water might contain. By the next page in his letter, he has jumped to the idea of diseased and dying bodies leaving their traces on the mattresses in Bath and possibly on the ones in his lodgings, as if he is desperately seeking endless sources of contamination to worry about, and he rebukes Dr. Lewis for not advising him to carry a personal mattress.²⁶ Bramble’s imagination allows him to envisage contact even with the dead, but more pertinently, it allows him to imagine contact not only with the close and visible bodies around him, but with those distant in time and space clearly marking his heightened ability to create a community, albeit one based on the communicability of disease, with virtually anyone. Though he is clearly being mocked in the novel at these points, the mockery of his excessive imagination does not undermine a continuity between the alternating currents of his revulsion and his sympathy for an abstract imagined community.

Here, it is possible to speculate on the nature of Bramble’s fear of contagion from near and distant or imagined sources as giving shape to a virtual community. His revulsion for waste is to a degree credible but incredible too in the immensity of the circuit he can imagine. His idea of pollution is both physical and non-physical, bringing into being a virtual entity manifested in material terms. His revulsion can be viewed as bespeaking an intimacy where the non-present becomes tangible and accessible. A virtual public is

²⁶ This incessant worrying about closeness compares sharply with Bramble’s evident pleasure in the simple hay bed in Scotland that he and Jerry lie on without worrying about its previous contact with other bodies. This change, later in the novel, seems to be due to both a healing of Bramble’s edgy and suspicious nature in the salubrious though primitive environs of Smollett’s native Scotland, and the relative hierarchy within Scottish society so that simplicity and healthfulness are shown as coterminous with a stable social order.

constituted and it has no clear boundaries since for Bramble, the circle of polluting bodies is ever expandable. Its non-materiality is implied as is its tie to physical traces of contamination where something can be transmitted without communication of substance. The meaning of the word ‘virtual’, as potential, is also implicit in the nature of such a public, which is latent and active at the same time.

Bramble’s excessive fear of contagion serves to further the idea that Bramble in his imagination is always in ‘touch’ with others. The idea of contracting a disease is formulated in terms of his porous body as he rhetorically speculates to his doctor – “suppose the matter of these ulcers, floating on the water, comes in contact with my skin, when the pores are all open” (45).²⁷ Bramble’s imagination, fuelled by fear of any disease, makes him speculate on a range of diseases -- “the king’s evil, the scurvy, the cancer and the pox” – which he may “imbibe” (46). His list of diseases exaggerates the actual possibilities of contracting them and confirms to us that his fear of disease ensures a continuous obsession with the knowingly impossible goal of preventing himself from mingling with other bodies. In other words, this pervasive fear is an acknowledgement of the constant virtual intermingling of individual bodies.

Bramble’s express fear of contagion to his porous body demonstrates a growing acknowledgment of the porousness of social boundaries, a way of connecting him to an abstract public. When he observes a poor fruit seller in London spitting on the cherries she sells, he begins to imagine the circulation of her spit, revealing his imagined intimacy of strangers across class:

It was but yesterday that I saw a dirty barrow-bunter in the street, cleaning her dusty fruit with her own spittle; and who knows, but some fine lady of St. James’s

²⁷ In the same letter cited above, Smollett looks forward to bathing in the waters at Bath to open up his pores. *Letters*, ed. Knapp, 110.

parish might admit into her delicate mouth those very cherries, which had been rolled and moistened between the filthy, and perhaps, ulcerated chops of a St. Giles huckster. (122)

The image of the mouth-to-mouth contact, between the St. Giles cherry-seller and the St. James lady, is clothed in disgust and confirms that though the novel doesn't explicitly celebrate the whittling away of rank and status, yet Bramble's paranoid ruminations about constant intercourse cutting across class lines is the closest acknowledgement we get of the felt intimacies within an increasingly garbled social order. The other examples of cross-class mixing, shown in the sexual escapades of gentlemen with poor women, or in the mixed genealogy of Humphry, are less vivid in conveying the interchange of fluids and matter between people of different social orders than Bramble's imagined contact of the gentry with the masses. Admittedly, the contact with the cherry-seller is a repulsive one for Bramble but its physical nature, and the metaphors of contagion which foreclose the possibility of escaping contact with strangers, evince a mobile and connected world. The bogey of mixing in the novel is revealed in the fact that the breaking down of social hierarchies cannot solely account for Bramble's irascibility which seems more fundamental to his character. The sense that his prickly nature is deep-seated can be seen in the fact that it is not just cross-class contact that bothers him. Even those of his class like his family can produce a violent exasperation in him as strangers might. This play between closeness and strangeness is visible too in the familiar sphere of the family.

The role of family in the novel cuts in two different directions symbolizing levels of closeness and distance at the same time. The Bramble family here is not quite a close conjugal one but a mish-mash of relations mainly linked through siblings. This sense of a loose family, not quite an affective one rooted in marriage, reveals a distance that must be

overcome with some effort. Bramble's initial exasperation with his nephew and niece and a more grave annoyance with his sister, make it clear that it is not only contact with a different class which upsets Bramble. The fact that they share blood ties ensures a sense of inescapability about them for Bramble, producing both suffocation as well as a protective stance towards them. Their dependent status both irks him and binds them more deeply to him. The novel records his sympathetic attitude towards Lydia early on, though in the case of Tabby it takes the whole novel to make her tolerable to Bramble. Bramble's growing affection for his family serves to highlight the artificial nature of family ties, which rather than being natural, require some labor to get forged. This also reveals more generally how strangers can become intimate as Bramble shows signs of increasing affection for his unfamiliar family.

Bramble's dislike of the closeness of family members, who as dependents form part of his household, betrays an apprehension in him of what are appropriate levels of closeness. The fact that these dependents, his sister and nephew-niece, are blood relations but not part of his affective circle make them irritants as people he cannot be easily rid of, as he is tied by biology and a sense of duty. He initially complains about having to parent the orphaned pair of siblings, and he also resents his sister Tabby's 'wifely' nagging. As he complains rhetorically to Dr. Lewis, "why the devil should not I shake off these torments at once? I an't married to Tabby, thank Heaven! Nor did I beget the other two: let them choose another guardian" (12). Yet he quickly comes to feel a fondness for Lydia, and his reference to Tabby as not his wife is countered in the novel by their depiction as a bickering couple, so much so that Bramble himself declares the similarities of nagging found in sisters and wives: "O! I shall never presume to despise or censure

any poor man, for suffering himself to be hen-pecked; conscious how myself am obliged to truckle to a domestic dæmon; even though (blessed be God) she is not yoked with me for life, in the matrimonial wagon” (77). The idea of a sibling not having the lifelong claims of a wife, but then as a blood relation making some claims on him (for instance Tabby sees his money as coming to her when he dies), is an example of how family represents a biological closeness which can be as oppressive as an anonymous public, thereby linking his response as consistent to both family and strangers. The alienation within this family who begin the journey as strangers, at least between the two generations, and their gradually growing closeness, attests to the function of sensibility – a sympathetic attitude -- to make a family affectively functional. The fact that Bramble cannot get away from his family, however alienated he may feel, is the flip side of his responsiveness where he cannot get away from the pressure of strangers however overwhelming he may find their closeness.

Accepting a closeness with family, with whom initially Bramble feels estranged from, gets linked to the ultimate acceptance of mixing classes in the novel quite literally through his acceptance of his servant, Humphry Clinker, as his long-lost son. The father-son relationship is not automatically embraced by Bramble. Clinker is fortuitously able to recognise Bramble as his father, but Bramble shows little emotion on meeting a son unknown to him, merely remarking that he is a result of youthful sins (318). Clinker had, previous to this discovery, just saved Bramble from a near-death accident and Bramble as a grateful master had bestowed an annual sum of thirty pounds on Clinker as a reward. Bramble on discovering Clinker’s identity, rightly restores him to a son’s status, and the novel includes the wedding of Clinker and Winifred in the comic ending of the several

marriages that close the novel. The fact that Clinker exists in the novel, and one may well ask what would be lost without him, seems to serve as a catalyst for a change in Bramble. Though seemingly unrelated to Bramble's transformation into an amiable family man, Clinker's addition to the Bramble family makes Bramble's past benevolence to the lowly Clinker, into a legitimate and desirable quality, retrospectively justifying a general desirability for benevolence even to the most wretched men. The sheer contingency in the idea that anyone may turn out to be family collapses all distinction between the familiar and the strange, the gentleman and the farrier boy.

However, it is the extraordinary social mobility of Win Jenkins, Tabby's maid, as daughter-in-law of Bramble which completes the novel's evocation that class distinctions are impossibly fragile. The change in the class nature of Bramble's family, as Clinker is brought into the Bramble or Loyd family (Loyd being Bramble's earlier name derived from his mother), is further wrought by the inclusion of Winifred Jenkins in it. Bramble permits his son to marry this girl from the underclass, but it is Winifred who signals her social mobility most forcefully at the end (hers being the last letter in the novel) by signing off as "Win. Loyd" and claiming her status as "removed to a higher spear [sic]." Since her status is precariously tied to the recent upward mobility that Clinker achieves on being recognised as Bramble's son, Win must assert her status by advising her erstwhile confidant and fellow servant, Mary Jones, to be respectful to her "and keep a proper distance" (353). Though her misspellings are a reminder of her origins, the unusual mobility of Win is demonstrated by the fact that though Tabby accepts Clinker as her nephew with alacrity, by reasoning that he is 'noble' since he is tied to them by blood, her acceptance of Win into the family is far more reluctant but is signalled in her

ultimate acceptance of having to look for a new maid. The re-doing of such social boundaries in the novel is in contrast to, but places in perspective, the irrational aversion of Bramble to it through most of the novel.

III

FORMAL RESOLUTIONS

The final section of my chapter analyses the form of the novel in order to track how the endless relay between body and mind in Bramble grounded in irritability, is resolved at two levels in the novel. At the level of narrative form, the multiple set of narrators helps to facilitate the view of Bramble as unique, both in his peevishness and in his benevolence. Jery, particularly, is a proxy for the reader who will observe and sympathize with Bramble's benevolence as is the typical framing of sensibility in characters.²⁸ At the second level—that of plot structure-- the corrupt and polluted spaces of Bath and London, which constitute the bulk of the travels, are placed in contradistinction to Scotland and rural England where Bramble is evacuated of his irritability. The model of a benevolent order that is represented by Bramble's friend Dennison's well-run estate, displays an improved view of England by suggesting the possibility of a blissful life on a productive estate managed with frugality and benevolence.²⁹ Bramble, having lost his edgy,

²⁸ Smollett adapts the device of multiple letter writers from Christopher Anstey's verse satire *The New Bath Guide: Or, Memoirs of the B_R_D family. In a series of poetical epistles* (1766). See Ronald Paulson's discussion of this in *Satire*, 200-01. The difference is that the main writer there is akin to Jery's role and he soon becomes part of what he observes whereas here the writers are critical.

²⁹ See Jeffrey L. Duncan, "The Rural Ideal in Eighteenth-Century Fiction," *SEL* 8, no. 3 (1968): 517-535, who sees Dennison's estate as having moral qualities. Duncan, in his study of the pastoral and georgic tradition of a rural ideal, sees different functions used for thematic and aesthetic purposes i.e. in Fielding (moral order), Smollett (economic and moral order), Goldsmith (aesthetic and religious order) and Sterne (religious order). In his study of *Humphry Clinker*, Duncan sees the last part of the travels as coming significantly after the 'progress' of England and the 'primitivism' of Scotland. Edinburgh and Glasgow

cantankerous nature, is more mellow, and his benevolence is now confined to a rational aid of his family and friends. The one-on-one episodes of compassion towards strangers disappear to reveal a more rational side to his public-spiritedness. This resolution transforms his sensibility into a rational virtue.

The multiple narrators in the novel enable a focus on Bramble's body and allow the narrative to depict both his benevolence and his misanthropic side by splitting the narrative into separate monologues. The use of several unique narrators facilitates this split so that Bramble can express his annoyances, and the others can wittingly (like Jerry and Lydia) or unwittingly (like Tabby) communicate his benevolence. The narrative structure also allows attention to be drawn to different dimensions of Bramble by placing them quite simply in different letters. So his irritation is mainly expressed in his letters, and his benevolence in the letters of others.³⁰ Secondly, the plot and style of the novel undergoes a change in the final volume by disembedding Bramble from an intense relationship with his body. His letters from the time of his arrival into Scotland till the end of the novel reveal a tone that is dispassionate and rational, and his body seems to have healed so that there is no incessant complaint about his maladies to Dr. Lewis. Nor does he exhibit any acute sense of being oppressed either by strangers or his family. In the last leg of his journey in rural England which is a long halt in Monmouthshire,

show order in the cities and the Highlands show an order in the countryside. If in *Joseph Andrews* according to Duncan, the physical environment is a setting, in *Humphry Clinker*, the physical order is itself examined, the process is shown, and "reason applied to nature."

³⁰ Robert Folkenflik in "Self and Society" (1974), notes how the form of the letters helps to unmask Bramble's misanthropy and give distance from his loved ones like Dr. Lewis: "The letters are a perfect means of dramatizing at once Matt's human feelings and his inability to relate directly to people. Even Matt's most splenetic outbursts are socialized and shared with a sympathetic epistolary audience, and his unquestionably warm friendship with Lewis is mediated by distance rather than being given face-to-face confrontation of the sort that so often proves so difficult for Matt" (198).

Bramble comes to play an active role in the lives of his family and friends. His keen interest in his friend Dennison's ideal estate, and his active role in taking the hapless and financially ruined Baynard under his wing, transform Bramble into an active and purposeful hero. The novel ends with his emphasis that henceforth he has no inclination to complain anymore and thus no inclination to write. Writing for Bramble is tied to the troubling experiences of his body and mind.

Jery's objective tone makes him the most rational narrator with the most reliable point of view while also providing a humorous corrective to Bramble's misanthropy.³¹ Jery works well as a proxy for the reader since the lack of change in his life through the novel, including his consistently stark monastic status as the only young single character at the end, marks him out as a spectator and commentator without contributing much to the events unfolding before him. His close reading of his uncle facilitates Bramble's benevolent actions to be read and interpreted by a sympathetic observer so that Bramble's subjective feelings of compassion are never expressed to the reader and he remains relatively un-self-reflexive, and thus a man of feeling. Jery's notice of Bramble's benevolence softens the picture of Bramble's own brusque and off-hand mention of his charity. If Bramble represents goodness or benevolence, Jery displays a moral sense.

Jery is reduced to being the sympathetic observer of Bramble's charity yet unable to execute his own sense of charity. When Bramble is 'caught' secretly giving twenty pounds to a sick woman, Jery describes his own paralysed response to the woman's

³¹ Gassman in "The Economy of *Humphry Clinker*" comments on the singular nature and function of Jery as narrator. He notes that the letters of Jery are "letters of action" as opposed to the others' "letters of reaction" since he is amused but not "carried away" so he is "a good reporter" (161-62). Jery helps to confirm Bramble's moral point of view and Jery's objectivity can be traced to his function where in the letters, description of events in "which interest lies in the event itself than in the narrator's reaction are customarily given to Jery Melford" (163).

plight: “I must own, to my shame, I feel a strong inclination to follow my uncle’s example, in relieving this poor widow; but, betwixt friends, I am afraid of being detected in a weakness, that might entail the ridicule of the company” (23). Jery sticks to his script of being the observer of a benevolent action and proving his moral sense (as Francis Hutcheson describes it) by being a disinterested spectator who recognises and approves of a disinterested benevolent action by another. And as a commentator who spares the man of feeling from publishing his own goodness, Jery’s tears interpret Bramble’s action as movingly benevolent. This puts in perspective the more conventional and cynical labelling of extravagant charity as either being an impossibility, or concealing an ulterior motive. It is the latter sort of cynicism that prompts Tabby to ask of Bramble, “who gives twenty pounds in charity” (22)? Tabby’s lack of generosity can only implicitly reveal Bramble’s excess of it, and her suspicion that Bramble is in reality paying off a prostitute, highlights Bramble’s unusual level of compassion. Jery affords a more abstract picture of virtue in himself as different from Bramble’s keenly expressed kindness. Bramble demonstrates a sensibility that Jery only espouses.

This observation of Bramble’s benevolence allows for the separation of a noticing or mediated presentation of sensibility and its unmediated form. Jery as a constant companion to his uncle and as a curious observer keen on reporting what he observes to his college friend, Watkins, is best able to convey Bramble’s bodily gestures to the reader. Jery’s acute descriptions help to convey that the body’s manifestation of sensibility is morally higher than that of the gestures of charity. Like Harley in Mackenzie’s *Man of Feeling* who is stupefied into inaction by the intensity of his own sympathy at the sight of distress, Bramble too cannot always respond usefully in similar

situations. When a poor woman, the subject of his charity, faints at the extent of his generosity, Jery as the hidden observer tells us that Bramble “ran about the room in distraction, making frightful grimaces; and at length, had recollection enough to throw a little water in her face” (21). Bramble’s charitable response of giving money is morally surpassed by this expression of his concern for her, shown in his “distraction.” His uselessness at that moment, paradoxically conveys his complete sympathy with her distress. Through Jery, Bramble’s benevolence is kept in view revealing the flip side of his cynicism and misanthropy. Bramble tends to focus on the record of his misery at the world and its increasing corruptions. Jery, therefore, becomes the recorder of Bramble’s benevolence, whom he describes as “a Don Quixote in generosity” (267) while Bramble himself expresses his compassion only in his actions.

Jery shares a strong sympathy with Bramble’s sensibility so that he is the best conveyer of it to the reader, thus demonstrating not only the moral import of sensibility but its form of communication where Jery registers Bramble’s feelings as his own and thereby becomes an ideal reader that readers of the novel can identify with. In the episode about the encounter with the highway robber Edward Martin, sensibility is revealed as a cognitive process. Martin has been highly impressed with Bramble’s kind treatment of his servant Humphry Clinker, and Martin’s recognition of Bramble’s compassion reveals his own capacity for it. Martin writes a letter to Bramble expressing a desire to retire from robbing and requests employment from Bramble. Jery and Bramble are both touched by Martin’s desire to reform, and Jery describes first Bramble’s response, and then his own, to Martin’s letter: “The ’squire [Bramble], having perused this letter, put it into my hand, without saying a syllable; and when I had read it, we looked at each other

in silence. From a certain sparkling in his eyes, I discovered there was more in his heart, than he cared to express with his tongue, in favour of poor Martin; and this was precisely my own feeling, which he did not fail to discern, by the same means of communication” (160). The relay of sensibility is mapped here as Bramble’s kindness to his servant Clinker has been observed by Martin, who recognizes Bramble’s benevolence and which acts as a catalyst on him to reform. Martin’s desire to quit a life of crime is recognised as a sign of nobility by Bramble and Jery. Bramble’s notice of Jery’s teary response is observed by Jery. This relay of looking suggests the compelling and communicable nature of sensibility. That a shared understanding is beyond language, is demonstrated by Bramble’s next speech in which he can deduce that Jery approves of the unconventional idea of ‘saving a thief.’ Bramble has already taken for granted Jery’s assent in the project to save Martin. Jery’s lesser role is conveyed in his response to Bramble’s desire to go ahead and help Martin by saying that he would “concur in any step he [Bramble] might take in favour of his solicitation” (161). It is clear that Jery shares the same moral codes as Bramble, but within the novel, for reasons perhaps of his youth and position, his role must be one of assent not action. Jery’s role as observer of Bramble is over before the final volume and he ceases to comment on the peculiarities of Bramble’s character. In the third volume, he and Bramble become parallel narrators conveying their distinct but not dissimilar views of Scotland, and filling in details the other has not provided. Jery’s role conveys an essential idea – that reading a character is to share in their ideas. Just as readers of all novels are enabled through a shared imagination to make sense of characters, this novel’s readers must adopt a position of sensibility to make sense of

Bramble. This novel is different though from the others in this study, in how sensibility is channelled into a rational virtue of an active benevolence.

Bramble's transformation at the end indicates less a complete change in him, and more a switch to a positive benevolent side unentangled by intimacy or irritability, a distanced and rational benevolence as against an entangled sensibility visible on his body. This is reflected in Bramble's tone as narrator in the last volume, which changes dramatically right from its first letter. There is no customary mention of his dyspepsia, and the style used to describe each place in Scotland is akin to that of an objective traveller; a striking contrast to his previously intense preoccupation with his body's reaction to the environment in Bath and London. Since there is no explanatory cause either psychological or in terms of the plot for Bramble's sudden lack of irascibility, we can assume that Scotland has a healing effect on Bramble though its failings are not missing from his account. Bramble is full of praise for the Scots although he is careful to note minor flaws in them, for example, of their language or landscaping (230). The very first letter of Volume 3 written from Edinburgh attempts to remove English prejudices about the Scots, and Bramble self-consciously sets out to do this by pointing out the merits of their better legal system, their university ("supplied with excellent professors"), and the magistracy. He remarks on the "sublime" architecture of Holyrood palace, and the general lay-out of the town. Bramble's appreciative observations are reinforced by his meeting in Edinburgh with celebrities like David Hume, John Home, Adam Smith, and Hugh Blair, prompting him to declare Edinburgh as "a hot-bed of genius" (233). His praise of the place is striking in its absence of any bitter observations as evidenced in his

travels in England. His attitude to the place lacks the claustrophobic closeness he felt in England.

Bramble chooses to use a rational model of description by balancing his praise with some criticisms, but the flaws he notes are not serious moral ones, and nor do they enrage him or affect his body. There is an air of objectivity in his style like when he describes the people: "If I may be allowed to mingle censure with my remarks upon a people I revere, I must observe, that their weak side seems to be vanity._ I am afraid that even their hospitality is not quite free of ostentation" (234). His criticism of the Scots is gentle and either borders on the complimentary, such as on their extravagant hospitality in the preceding quote, or focuses on their flaws that are linked to the union with England like the decay of the towns (233). By the end of the letter, he declares his willingness to consider town living if it is to be in Edinburgh -- a strong departure from his constant nostalgia in Bath and London for the countryside. If we compare Bramble's views to Jery's in Scotland, they are rather similar in tone unlike their divergent humours about Bath. Instead of commenting on Bramble's character as earlier, Jery's letters from Scotland only serve to add to the movement of the plot by taking up a report of a fresh travel destination, rather than qualifying his uncle's report by giving a different impression about an episode as might have happened in the earlier sections of the novel. For instance, the letter after Bramble's description of Edinburgh, is not Jery re-describing Edinburgh for us as might have been expected in the earlier structure, but simply a record of their travels to the next place. This equalization of their points of view reduces the distance between the two thereby serving to reduce the impression of Bramble's

singularity and allowing his connection with his environment to be calm, removing the feeling of intimacy that often accompanied his rage.

Once Bramble has been severed from his constant irritableness in the Scottish phase of the journey, and additionally a long halt at Monmouthshire at the residence of his college-mate Dennison, the process of Bramble's transformation by offering a positive example of an active life is completed. This last leg of the journey provides a mould into which Bramble may place his healed body and a rational mind. Bramble decides to stay and observe Dennison's way of life in rural Monmouthshire, and in the process, he re-lives the life story of the Dennisons who represent domestic bliss and an ideal mode of running an estate. Being a younger son with little inheritance (321), Dennison had been determined to live in the country to avoid "extravagance and dissipation" (322), a project in which he succeeds due to his industry and frugality. Bramble learns the value and pleasures of work and decides to lead a more active life henceforth.

Bramble's promise to be more active in Wales is not clear in its exact dimensions. However, his wish to be active is partly achieved by casting him in the role of a mentor to his friend Baynard. After recounting the story of Baynard, his friend whose life has been ruined by his wife's avarice and her desire to live in luxury, we are brought up to speed with Baynard's bereavement as his wife has just died much to Bramble's relief. Bramble proceeds to rehabilitate Baynard by offering him the model of Dennison's estate who has transformed a reportedly arid piece of land into a fertile and productive one. Bramble functions as a liaison between the two gentlemen, one who is successful despite few resources, and the other in ruins despite a good inheritance. In bringing Baynard to a

more active role, and in resourcefully finding money for him to start over, Bramble becomes a more useful friend and an advocate of an active and frugal life.

The more considered benevolence, the kind of justice that Adam Smith propounds, is linked to his greater self-awareness. Bramble notes a change already in himself and vows to maintain this demeanour. This is reflected in his changed attitude to his family whose affairs he successfully manages. In a way, Bramble extends his family in various ways -- by taking on the responsibility of Baynard and getting Tabby to loan him money, by pushing for Lismahago's marriage to his sister, and by allowing Clinker to marry Winifred. But more than that is the change in Bramble to become a self-consciously healthy and active man. He describes the change in himself in his last letter in the novel from how he "absurdly sought for health in the retreats of laziness" to his current optimism that allows him to be "disposed to bid defiance to gout and rheumatism." He looks back on his travels as a catalyst for change having learnt that one should "now and then take a plunge amidst the waves of excess, in order to case-harden the constitution" (339). The excess refers to the sense of hyper-reactivity that Bath and London produced in him and implies that his nervous irritability has been stabilised by purging the body of such excess. His irritability which was an ironic sign of his sensibility is replaced by a rational and expansive benevolence tending to the common good, showing that sensibility is the individualized and spontaneous version of public-spiritedness.

Conclusion

The novel ends with the resolution that if felt intimacy produces uneasiness, such uneasiness must be excised from Bramble. However, the bulk of the novel and its more

vivid parts are to do with the irascible and misanthropic side of Matt Bramble—the aspects of his character that register most strongly with the reader. The figure of the benevolent misanthrope was crystallised in Bramble and was imitated numerous after that.³² This mix of misanthropy with benevolence in him allows satire and sentiment to be yoked and gives the satirist a moral edge, alongwith giving the sentimental man better survival skills.³³ Secondly, the figure of Bramble—as not perhaps gullible but at least inexpressive about his feelings of benevolence, changes the figure of the man of feeling from one who can see no evil in others to one who can understand it and protect himself from its pervasive attack. This produces an individual who appears to be estranged from people in general, but can relate to individuals in need. A misanthropy targeted at the larger public allows the individual to remain sociable with particular individuals, though in bonds that may be casual i.e. not always sustained over time into settled relations. Bramble can be sociable with affectively kindred strangers who become for the moment like family. His annoyance at crowds and the intensity of his feelings, when brought into contact with them through the imagined transmission of bodily emissions, is balanced by channelling his keen sense of intimacy with people in face to face encounters with individuals.

Nevertheless the painful irritation of Bramble could not have continued without some resolution. The man of feeling as gullible either does not survive like Harley who is shown as too good for this world, or he must move to a state of experience like Simple

³² See Preston, “Smollett and the Benevolent Misanthrope Type,” (1964) 51, footnote no. 14 on such imitations.

³³ Preston, “Smollett and the Benevolent Misanthrope Type,” (1964) notes the peculiar form of Bramble as a man of feeling in a realist way where “a real man of feeling can be only a grotesque in the real world” (57).

especially in his mature version in *Volume the Last*, the sequel to *David Simple*.

Bramble's character helps the man of feeling figure survive by losing excessive affect since it is also part of his irritability, and he re-invents himself as one who both helps individuals and favours a benevolent landowner's life in a more rational way. This move demonstrates that an active and rational virtue of desiring the common good completes sensibility here.

The novel shows Bramble in two ways – his intense reactive side where he responds to particular persons, and his more general concern for society as evinced in his satire. Sensibility as the feeling of compassion for persons suffering is not far removed from a belief in public good. Moral philosophy too connects responding to a suffering individual to a public-spirited benevolence. The effort that Shaftesbury draws, as I show in my first chapter, to link the pain each individual experiences at the misery of another, as a sign of one's public-spiritedness, is evident in Bramble. His benevolent actions to individuals, tie in with his concern for the public and his outcry against selfish citizens. His satiric bent against those in society who betray the common good (within his traditional view) is not a mask covering up his sensibility but is co-terminous with it. He simultaneously exhibits concern for individuals and for public good. In this sense, he fully symbolizes the intent behind the advocacy of sensibility, which was to show the natural concern of people for each other that was indicative of their sociability. Smollett's addition of satire to sensibility isn't problematic for the latter category: it completes it.

A feeling for public good may be reflective or well-planned, and is meant to benefit a larger collective. The novel of sensibility assumes that sensibility is the individualized version of public-spiritedness i.e. sensibility is a form of, and a sign of, the desire for the

common good. This novel illustrates both parts by weaving into Bramble both sensibility and misanthropy, as parts of a whole inclination to the common good.

Though sensibility is represented in novels as particular to extremely sensitive characters who are often depicted as unique or odd, their very exemplarity ties them to everyone else. Other characters may not be blessed with the same sensibility as Bramble but in smaller ways may demonstrate similar qualities -- like we see in Jerry's sense of righteousness and charity, Lydia's sentimental and kind nature, Tabby's extension of help to Baynard, and of course, Clinker's compassionate and selfless acts in extending himself for others. These characters reveal the underlying strain of sensibility possible in everyone, and furthermore, the presumed recognition of the protagonist's goodness by readers of the novel reveals the sensibility in them as well. Bramble as the man of feeling is only an extreme version of what surely must lie within everyone.

Conclusion

This study began by drawing on eighteenth-century moral philosophy to illuminate a complex of ideas that inform the novel of sensibility. These include the relationship between self-interest and sociability, the idea of an instinctive and unselfconscious compassion, and the links between the general and particular. Notwithstanding the very different discursive regulations they operate with, the literature and philosophy that I have examined, show a remarkable alignment in their attempts to imagine the relationship between individual self-interest and a sociability that aims at the larger good of the collective. While in the philosophy, the possibility of squaring these two sides of the equation becomes the explicit goal as well as the ideal horizon towards which almost all the texts move, the literature I explore creates character types who transcend the gap between the self and other through their exemplary compassion or virtue.

But beneath this overlapping focus can be discerned a profound distinction. Moral philosophy, after Shaftesbury, attempts to limit the role of an instinctive, passion-based compassion that is seen as prone to be diminished by a range of self-interested motives, and therefore seeks to frame it within a rational, more objective, and self-conscious desire for public good. However, the literary texts I examine are without exception, engaged in a project to resuscitate the possibility of a naïve and unselfconscious compassion most often in the face of a consciously staged attempt within the novel to discredit such an enterprise. In other words, while the philosophy tries to install a rational and general system of public good based on a moral sense or sense of justice through an appropriation

of particular and instinctive compassion which is both extended and incorporated within a more abstract and impartial public-spiritedness, the literature appears to doggedly hold on to the almost utopian possibility of pure and unselfconsciously compassionate characters who are immune to the cynic's disbelief in their existence.

The novels construct sensibility as an unselfconscious virtue of compassion, especially through the narrative structures in the novels. These narrative frames enclose sensibility as a pure passion securing it from the necessity of its own advocacy. The relationship of this frame to the subject, or the form to content, is not one of distance that would alienate the reader from the presentation of sensibility, but instead this split between form and content is sought to be bridged in various ways. This process is particularly evident in *The Man of Feeling* where the frame implodes into the content through its failure to give coherence to the fragments that constitute the tale. When the narrator in *The Man of Feeling* refuses to explain to the reader why Harley is moved by a sufferer, the narrator becomes a man of feeling who cannot express the ineffable. Moreover, he positions the readers as persons of feeling who must identify with Harley's sentiments intuitively without the aid of any narrative explanation. In this connection, *Clarissa* marks a limit case, in the sense that the eponymous heroine, unlike the typical man of feeling, is made to submit her instinctive and spontaneous responses to a continuous process of exhaustive self-examination—a process that poses a challenge to the novel's project of defending her against charges of duplicity. The sheer brinkmanship involved in such an experiment has formal implications and, as I have argued, is negotiated by a delicately re-calibrated alignment between virtue and self-reflection.

However, the resistance to the presentation of sensibility as an unmediated and pure virtue is an ever-present shadow that attaches itself to sensibility. Charges of duplicity were not only leveled at characters both within and outside the novels, but the novels of sensibility invited similar charges of hypocrisy. In fact, I would argue that the authenticity and power of these novels emerges through their engagement with such a cynicism.

The questioning of sensibility as a genuine mode of being, and doubts about its potential for effecting a more just and harmonious society became more strident, and by the end of the eighteenth century, this critique overpowered its already shaky ethical status. The end of the eighteenth century saw a reversal in the fortunes of sensibility and was marked by a sort of backlash that parodied and critiqued the phenomenon.

Mackenzie's Scottish compatriot Robert Fergusson wrote a playful poem "The Sow of Feeling" (1773) that made a mockery of the delicacy ascribed to those with feelings by representing the refinements of a polite pig.¹

Satires focusing on terms like feeling and sensibility increased over time. A well-known visual example of the satire on sensibility is Thomas Rowland's pictorial depiction in his print *The Man of Feeling* (1788) where the 'man of feeling' depicted is a clergyman who is literally 'feeling up' a young woman with his hand on her breast. This lewd message echoes the suspicion of hidden motives behind the supposedly responsive man, as well as the perceived danger of the physical connotation of feeling that may spill

¹ Robert Fergusson, "The Sow of Feeling" in *The Poems of Robert Fergusson*, ed. James Gray (Edinburgh: John Fairbairn, 1821).

over into the sexual.² ‘Feeling’ here as a physical and overtly sexual gesture, both vulgarizes and reveals the hypocrisy that could be masked by sensibility. Sensibility could be seen as a refined form of self-directed compassion, which defeated its very purpose, as in the well-known instance of Jane Austen’s somewhat mocking depiction of Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). Marianne’s excessive sensibility is presented as self-indulgence, in contrast to her sister Elinor who has the right balance of both sense and sensibility, thereby showing not a split between the two epithets in the title but the desirability of yoking them.

Thus it seems that the parodies of sensibility did not necessarily attack sensibility but a degenerate or caricatured version of it. In fact, the ability to be compassionate is a lesson to be learnt by all Austen heroines. In *Emma*, Mr. Knightley reprimands the eponymous heroine for humbling the ridiculous but pathetic figure of Miss Bates at Boxhill, reminding Emma that “her situation should secure your compassion,”³ the word ‘compassion’ to some degree standing in for sensibility. The fact that the phenomenon of sensibility constituted two parts – a spontaneous compassion, and doubts about its genuineness and efficacy, can be seen from the 1770’s in an explicit backlash against the culture of sensibility.

However, the critiques of sensibility were always in place from the mid-century and only became more strident at the end of the eighteenth century. The fear of a feigned sensibility, the image of self-indulgence it evoked, particularly when associated with the

² See Bradford Keyes Mudge, *The Whore’s Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³ Jane Austen, *Emma* (London: Dent, 1964) 330. Mr. Knightley asks her to consider Miss Bates’ impoverished condition and her difficult adjustment to it to call on Emma’s better feelings.

leisured class, and the fear of pride or vainglory in one's virtue, made sensibility a fragile notion that was always struggling to prove its sincerity.

In the aftermath of the late eighteenth century, sensibility re-appears in Romantic poetry as a central tension, between the self-conscious narrating self, and either the pre-reflective mind or the memory of a pure unselfconscious past, which the poems attempt to reconcile. While the structural impossibility of realizing this ambition becomes the subject of much of Romantic poetry, it is important to note that the tension between spontaneity and self-reflection that permeates the novel of sensibility is reconfigured into a new thematic alignment in many major Romantic poems.

To scan the traces of what remains of sensibility from the nineteenth century onwards, allows us the hindsight that reveals some of its features more clearly. Raymond Williams describes the fate of its allied word "sentimental" which was seen as marked by excessiveness and self-indulgence from the nineteenth century onwards, a fate he says sensibility escaped in its survival as an aesthetic feeling (282), in the process, losing its strong emotive and moral associations in the bargain. He notes the passing away of 'sensibility' so that in the twentieth century, "no adequate replacement has been found" (283). Williams offers the example of T. S. Eliot's phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' that attempts to construe 'sensibility' as unifying thought and feeling. Sensibility, shorn of its moral and social value, leaves behind an aesthetic remainder – marked by disinterestedness in aesthetic terms – a pale specter of its earlier self.

The aesthetic dimension of sensibility can also be seen as embedded in modern theories of sociability, where it is leached of the idea of public good or at least a harmonious society that was the desired end of the kind of sociability generated by

sensibility in the eighteenth century. For instance, Georg Simmel sees sociability in the twentieth century as purely a form of bringing people together, not for any express purpose of personal or business ends but simply for its own sake, though its ethical purpose of compassion is replaced by the conviviality of friendship, a move away from the debate on how friendship enlarged into the common good.⁴

The cultural work done by the phenomenon of sensibility in the eighteenth century was to link the particular individual to the general collective, and to harness the good passions towards a society that need not be divided by conflicting self-interests. The fact that the man or woman of feeling often end up dead by the end of the novels, makes these texts serve as a eulogy for their exemplary purity, and arguably a lament for an impossible virtue that has little chance of survival. Bramble survives only when his sensibility is toned down by the calmer rational aspect of goodness.

But was sensibility really doomed to a short-lived life much like its best known figure, Harley, or did it power up a long tradition that undermines the naturalness of self-interest?⁵ A discourse of a natural humaneness and inevitable compassion in humankind survives till date, which we hear in strident appeals to outlaw all self-interest that runs counter to public good. In contemporary debates on ideas like altruism, empathy, and compassion, we can see the thread of continuity from sensibility. For instance, in developmental psychology, the difference between cognitive empathy and sympathetic empathy,⁶ or in neuroscience that talks of “limbic resonance” between people,⁷ we hear

⁴ See Georg Simmel, “The Sociology of Sociability,” *American Journal of Sociology* 55.3 (1949).

⁵ One could well ask if sensibility allows the idea of self-interest too to be held as natural and eternal since benevolence is surely being invoked so powerfully to counter an equally powerful force.

⁶ A recent scholar Adam Smith differentiates between “cognitive sympathy (mental perspective taking) and

an echo of the problems of cognition and sociability in much the same ways as we heard in the eighteenth century. In our own discipline, sensibility as a way of being moved has been examined by James Chandler, who traces movement of all kinds, from vehicles in Sterne to the image in cinema, all linked to the idea of the transportation outside one's self that sensibility suggests.⁸ More general discussions on morality and altruism grapple with ideas of the familial and strange. Some studies explore whether the inclination to caring for strangers is learnt from the elementary care in family and then radiates outward, as Hutcheson suggests, or through a 'social capital model' where a civil recognition of the needs of others, as Shaftesbury might persuade us, is necessary for a modern public sociability.⁹

The negotiation of self-interest as an immediate concern can be seen in Simon During's account of the word "interesting" from the early modern period to our times. He demonstrates how in our modern culture, pity has become a more distanced emotion evoked in the casual way we use the term 'interesting' sometimes for an object of pity,

emotional empathy (the vicarious sharing of emotion)" using an evolutionary account to show how they became "two separable, complementary systems". See Adam Smith, "Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Empathy in Human Behavior and Evolution," *The Psychological Record* 56 (2006), 3-21. His account of cognitive sympathy could well have been written by Lovelace.

⁷ In an insightful piece on how modern neuroscience resonates with very similar themes found in David Hume's writing on sympathy and in Jane Austen's *Emma* on a "sympathizing sensibility," Wendy Jones notes that "it is testimony to the powers of observation of eighteenth-century writers that we can draw on the vocabulary of contemporary neuroscience to explain phenomena they recognize and describe" (333). See Wendy S. Jones, "*Emma*, Gender and the Mind-Brain," *ELH* 75 (2008) 315-343.

⁸ James Chandler, "The Languages of Sentiment," *Textual Practice* 22(2008) 21-39.

⁹ Jennifer Wilkinson and Michael Bittman, "Relatives, Friends and Strangers: The Links between Voluntary Activity, Sociability, and Care," *Social Policy Research Centre* 125 (2003). The authors conclude that strangers with a sense of civic responsibility, which they call the social capital model, are far more likely to be better care-givers than family and friends.

suggesting a lessening of concern in the word's meaning and in fact expressing a disguised indifference in its implications.¹⁰

A looking into the past and future of sensibility can help to give shape to the eighteenth century idea of sensibility by seeing what it came out of and where it morphs. For a brief look at its past, Clifford Orwin's account is useful as to how the Greek notion of 'pity' and the Christian notion of 'charity' are replaced by compassion from the eighteenth century onwards make it, for him, a virtue most suited for an age of individualism.¹¹ One account of the narrative arc sensibility might have moved on is Lynn Hunt's book *Inventing Human Rights* where she argues that the idea of human rights in the twentieth century grew out of the eighteenth-century idea of 'imagined empathy' and is based on its universal acceptance, and this perhaps suggests what sensibility's legacy has been.¹²

Although sensibility was short-lived in its time, much like the man of feeling who represented it, it continues to enjoy an afterlife in a variety of discourses that have not yet relinquished their belief in the idea of a natural compassion and a compelling responsiveness as the basis of expressing solidarity with fellow humans.

¹⁰ Simon During, *Exit Capitalism: Literary Culture, Theory, and Post-Secular Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2010) 39.

¹¹ According to Orwin's explanation of why pity and charity cannot do the work of compassion in a modern era he argues that for the Greeks, pity was too close to a vicarious self indulgence and sought to master it with reason. Christian charity celebrated suffering by pointing to the afterlife for alleviation. Orwin sees the Scottish enlightenment as too moderate in their understanding of sympathy which did not in his view stress enough on alleviating the suffering of others. Compassion became the democratic virtue suitable to individualism. See Clifford Orwin's piece in an online magazine, "How an Emotion Became a Virtue: It took Some Help from Rousseau and Montesquieu," *In Character: A Journal of Everyday Virtues* 01/01/08 <http://incharacter.org/archives/compassion/how-an-emotion-became-a-virtue-it-took-some-help-from-rousseau-and-montesquieu/>

¹² Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

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