Men in the Family: Constructions and Performance of Masculinity in England, *c*.1700-1820

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in History

2014

Statement of Originality

I, Tul Israngura Na Ayudhya, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work or that where it has been carried out in collaboration with, or supported by others, that this is duly acknowledged below and my contribution indicated. Previously published material is also acknowledged below.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the meanings, constructions, and performances of masculinity in the long eighteenth century, *c.*1700-1820, within familial relationships. Rather than reading the codes of masculinity out of representational sources, the thesis engages with men's lived experiences as depicted in ego-documents, such as letters, diaries, memoirs and autobiographies, in which contemporaries reflected on and made sense of their actions and behaviours. Thus, the work is in essence – what I coin – a cultural history of lived experiences.

Rather than analysing men's activities in the public sphere or taking for granted their patriarchal omnipotence in the house, this thesis puts men back into the fundamental unit of human interpersonal relationships: the family ties, which has received less attention by scholars of men's history. Inspired by R. W. Connell's concept of masculinity, the thesis analyses men's lives through three connected themes: gender hierarchy, practices of gendered roles and obligations, and the impact of these practices on family relationships and individuals' characters and personalities. It explores five key male roles and familial identities: suitor, husband, father, son, and brother. It asks, firstly, how masculinity was fashioned within familial contexts; secondly, what the prevailing concepts of manhood were when men's identities changed according to their different familial stations; thirdly, how men performed their gendered roles to their family members to express, negotiate, and gain social recognition of their gender identities.

The thesis argues that the family was a crucial locus in which masculinity was engendered, fashioned and performed. It therefore contributes to men's history in general by demonstrating how family ties could shape and fashion male gendered identities through the practices of family duties. Familial relationships did play vital roles helping men to construct and perform masculinity, no less than in public domains or in the possession of a household.

Acknowledgements

Hereby I confirm that I am writing these acknowledgements without the spirit of Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son* (1774):

My thanks must go first and foremost to my supervisor and my mentor: Amanda Vickery and Joanna Cohen. Amanda was generous enough to accept me as her student four years ago, and has been supervising me with her boundless patience since then. Her stunning academic imagination and suggestions are second to none on earth. Joanna reads my drafts, provides critical feedback and, most notably, always welcomes me with her warm, serene, and genuine character. Two qualities in her personality help me survive in Britain: *Menschlichkeit* and *Herzlichkeit.* (There is no equivalent in English for these two German words. I am sure that Joanna will smile when she sees them here.)

I am indebted to The Queen Sirikit Scholarship (Thailand) for their boundless financial assistance throughout my study-programme. Without their generosity, I would not have been able to visit many provincial archives, such as the East Sussex Record office at Lewes where a digital camera is not allowed in their reading room, and consequently I had to catch the train from London to Lewes for 17 times to finish reading 1,250 letters of the Collier Collection.

I am deeply grateful for the short but powerful conversations with Michèle Cohen, Colin Jones, Naomi Tadmor, and John Tosh. The 40-minute dialogue with John Tosh after a training session at the IHR one day in summer 2012 completely changed the way I saw 'gender relations' and 'masculinity'. I thank him and his genuine soul of being a superb teacher. The errors and undeveloped thought which remain in the following pages are entirely my own.

I am also grateful for the support of fellow PhD students: Antonia Brodie, Charlotte Brown, Polly Bull, Sally Holloway, Beth Robinson, Ya-Lei Yen. Special thanks go to Michèle Cohen, Jane Hamlett, Charlotte, Polly, Sally, and Ya-Lei for reading my earlier drafts. Ya-Lei, together with my mentor Joanna, have been the sole oasis of *Menschlichkeit* and *Herzlichkeit* for me in the British Isles.

Contents

Notes on Conventions and Abbreviations

In all quotations from manuscripts, the spelling and grammar used in the original source have been kept throughout. In published versions, I have followed the editor's conventions. In excerpts from manuscripts, all underlined parts are emphases in original, unless otherwise indicated.

Archives:

BCA	Birmingham City Archives
BL	The British Library, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections
BRO	Berkshire Record Office, Reading
CA	Coventry Archives
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies
CRO/Carl	Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle Headquarters
CRO/Ken	Cumbria Record Office, Kendal
ERO	Essex Record Office
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
HALS	Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies
HRO	Hampshire Record Office
JRL	John Rylands Library, University of Manchester
LAD	Lambeth Archives Department
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LRO	Lancashire Record Office
LSF	Library of the Society of Friends
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SA	Sheffield Archives
SHL	Senate House Library, University of London
ShrA	Shropshire Archives
WSA	Wiltshire and Swindon Archives
WSRO	West Sussex Record Office

Academic Journals:

AHR	*American Historical Review*
BJECS	*British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*

C&C	*Continuity and Change*
CI	*Critical Inquiry*
CL	*Country Life*
CSH	*Cultural and Social History*
ECL	*Eighteenth-Century Life*
ECS	*Eighteenth-Century Studies*
EEH	*Explorations in Economic History*
FCH	*Family & Community History*
FH	*French History*
FS	*Feminist Studies*
FT	*Fashion Theory*
G&H	*Gender & History*
GH	*German History*
HE	*History of Education*
HF	*History of the Family*
HJ	*Historical Journal*
H&T	*History & Theory*
HT	*History Today*
HTe	*History Teacher*
HWJ	*History Workshop Journal*
IRSH	*International Review of Social History*
JAE	*Journal of Architectural Education*
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
JECS	*Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Economic History*
JEMH	*Journal of Early Modern History*
JFH	*Journal of Family History*
JH	*Journal of Homosexuality*
JHS	*Journal of the History of Sexuality*
JSBC	*Journal for the Study of British Cultures*
JSH	*Journal of Social History*
JSHS	*Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*
L&H	*Literature & History*
MedH	*Medical History*

MH	*Midlands History*
NH	*Northern History*
NS	*New Society*
P&P	*Past & Present*
PPA	*Philosophy & Public Affairs*
SC	*The Seventeenth Century*
SH	*Social History*
T&S	*Theory & Society*
TP	*Textual Practice*
TRHS	*Transactions of Royal Historical Society,* 6th series
WHR	*Women's History Review*
YFS	*Yale French Studies*

Introduction

'Sir, I have given you in haste an account of all the evil in my nature. I have told you of all of the good'. Thus ended the twenty-four-year-old James Boswell's autobiographical essay to be presented to the great philosopher Jean Jacques-Rousseau in 1764. In this composition Boswell recounted his life from his childhood up to the time, including his upbringing, schooling, friendships and amorous adventures. He hoped that his intended audience would read the paper and then be able to answer his vital question: 'Tell me, is it possible for me yet to make myself a man?'[1]

Boswell's anxiety about the perfection of his gender identity implies that becoming a man was not an 'eternal, timeless essence that resides deep in the heart of every man'.[2] Nor does it equate to maleness, that is, a male body. Instead, it is an entirely social construction of ideas about appropriate roles for men. In this sense, *manhood*, *manliness* and *masculinity* denote a 'gender' by which scholars mean, following the famous definition proposed by Joan W. Scott, 'a social category imposed on a sexed body'.[3] Moreover, Boswell's uncertainty about the definition of being a man suggests that masculinity is not automatic, but problematic.

The present dissertation takes Boswell's question as a starting point. However, while Boswell seemed to believe that masculinity could be completed during a man's formative years (Boswell composed 'the sketch of his life' to measure his gender quality at the age of twenty-four), my thesis will argue that masculinity was constructed, fashioned and negotiated throughout a man's life, through his performance of familial roles and obligations. It was not achieved when a man was in the possession of a house. Nor did it automatically gain its momentum when a bridegroom kneeled at the altar. Rather, it was an ongoing process. As Isaac Archer (1641-1700), a conformist minister, reflected on his condition after three months of entering the married life in 1667: 'By marriage all my former youthfull desires were cured; and extravagant thoughts ceased. I found it a remedy; but cares came on mee, yet without distraction'.[4] Isaac clearly sensed

1 James Boswell, 'Sketch of the Early Life of James Boswell, written by himself for Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 5 December 1764', in Frederick A. Pottle (ed.), *James Boswell: The Earlier Years, 1740-1769* (London, 1966), 6. Philip Carter discusses at length Boswell's obsession with defining and constructing his gender. See his 'James Boswell's Manliness', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 1999), 111-30.

2 Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, 1996), 4.

3 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *AHR*, 91 (1986), 1056. For a recent, erudite criticism of Scott's essay, see Jeanne Boydston, 'Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis', *G&H*, 20 (2008), 558-83.

4 Matthew Storey (ed.), *Two East Anglican Diaries 1641-1729: Isaac Archer and William Coe*

the pleasures and pressures in his family life, and the responsibility he had to perform to achieve, maintain, and express his masculinity as a social status. In my dissertation, I will focus on the family and familial relationships, as important types of social locus, which played a vital role in constructing masculinity, yet which have been relatively less explored by historians. The dissertation asks: How did men construct their masculine identities within familial contexts? What were the prevailing concepts of manhood when men's identities changed according to their different social status within the family? How did these conceptions guide the way in which men related themselves to their family members to gain social recognition? And, what were the roles of family members in shaping men's performances of their gender? I also aim to contribute to men's history in general by demonstrating that it was their familial-personal interactions that governed the way men fashioned their masculinity and gained their masculine self-respect, no less than they did in the public domain or in the possession of their household.

As gender is subject to change historically according to time and space, it is relevant to ask what historians have done to understand masculinity in the past. In 1993, Robert Connell observed that '[s]erious historical work on themes of masculinity is extremely rare'.[5] Yet the situation has changed dramatically, since Connell passed that verdict. John Tosh has recently surveyed articles published in the journal *Gender and History*, and has found that '[w]hereas in 1989 the founding editors of the journal […] struggled to commission any article on masculinity, their successors today have no such difficulty: there are typically two or three such articles in every issue, not to mention those contributions which subsume masculinity in a comprehensive gender approach'.[6] If we accept Tosh's observation, it is fair to ask why another study on 'men as men', such as my dissertation, is still needed.

This chapter seeks to justify the historiographical significance of the thesis. My review of the historiography shows that constructions of masculinity have been divorced from family and family relationships. Early work, such as Lawrence Stone's notorious over-schematic arguments of the declining patriarchy, and the theory of 'separate spheres'

(Woodbridge, 1994), 117. For a brief overview of the meanings of home and familial relationships in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as represented in Romantic literature, consult Margot Finn, 'The Homes of England', in James Chandler (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of English Literature: The Romantic Period* (Cambridge, 2009), 293-313.

5 R. W. Connell, 'The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History', *T&S*, 22 (1993), 606. For a similar observation, see Melinda Zook, 'Integrating Men's History into Women's History: A Proposition', *HTe*, 35 (2002), 373-87.

6 John Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 17.

overlooked the family. Moreover, a new generation of historians' obsession with politeness and the British Empire contributed to neglecting the role of family ties in constructing male gender. I will also discuss major current works in studying masculinity and domesticity. The second half of this chapter will provide the parameters of my thesis, and the types of source material. The chapter ends with a 'preview' of all thematic chapters that follow, in the form of chapter outline.

* * * *

It is a historiographical irony that family history, which was the discipline that gave life to the study of 'men as men', contributed to excluding masculinity from domesticity. The eighteenth century was seen by the earlier generations of family historians as a pivotal moment in shaping 'the modern family', a point when the gendered relationships between men and women in the domestic sphere were reconfigured, making a critical discontinuity from the seventeenth-century family pattern. Notably, in his ambitious programme to document 'some massive shifts' in family values in England between 1500 and 1800, Lawrence Stone highlighted the gradual decline of men's patriarchal power from the 'open lineage family' of the sixteenth century where the tyrannical patriarchal authority ruled the family ties, to the 'restricted patriarchal nuclear family' of the subsequent century, and to the 'closed domesticated nuclear family' of the eighteenth century. In the latter pattern Stone saw the birth of the 'modern family', in which absolute patriarchal power gave way to 'affective individualism'. As a consequence, the ideal patriarch was not characterised by the medieval stereotype of the cold, distant father and husband, but rather by a new form of a loving, affectionate and companionate one.[7] Thus, the eighteenth century witnessed the dismantling of the tyrannical authority of the familial patriarch for the sake of the growing personal autonomy of wives and children. Stone's thesis was positively welcomed in the work of Randolph Trumbach. Whereas Stone coined the term 'companionate marriage', Trumbach invented the term 'egalitarian marriage' to describe the similar development in the history of the aristocratic family.[8] Trumbach went even

7 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), 3, 656-57, and esp. ch. 8 on 'companionate marriage'. For a similar argument on discontinuity of family patterns, consult Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (London, 1976); J. R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York and Oxford, 1985). Recently, Stone's argument has been reiterated by a literary scholar. See Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge, 2004).

8 Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York and London, 1978).

further when he argued that upon entering 'the modern culture of gender equality', men needed to assert the gender difference by emphasising their heterosexual desires to ensure that 'however far equality between men and women might go, men would never become like women, since they would never desire men'.[9] One apparent result was that male gender identity was measured by sexual performance, as expressed in the sexual libertinism of modern men.[10] Stone's and Trumbach's arguments imply that the rising egalitarianism in familial relationships – and at the same time the collapsing patriarchy – urged men to assert their gender identity outside the domestic domain (where women gradually gained authority and power) in order that they would not become effeminate. In these narratives, home, domesticity, and family ties had lost their significance in constructing and maintaining the male gender identity.

Unsurprisingly, Stone's and Trumbach's arguments received a series of severe criticisms.[11] Most notably, the anthropologist Alan Macfarlane argued for the continuity of English family life from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries. He underlined the ubiquity of individual freedom of choice in marriage making and the counterbalancing forces of parents, kin and community. He argued that the 'framework of decision-making, a set of rules and customs, remain[ed] broadly the same', based as it was on 'a deep bond between husband and wife'. Looking at the lives of the poor, E. P. Thompson criticised Stone on the grounds that he isolated 'the family' from the wider context of familial relations, the community, and the 'economic' restraints which profoundly shaped the modes of familial interactions among poor families. Thus, Thompson argued that 'feeling may be more, rather than less, tender or intense because relations are “economic” and critical to mutual survival'. The sentimental family might have been in place among the poor, long before the ideology of the sensible paternalists of the eighteenth-century upper ranks trickled down the social scale.[12] Anthologies of personal diaries and familial letters

9 Randolph Trumbach, 'Sex, Gender and Sexual Identity in Modern Culture: Male Sodomy and Female Prostitution in Enlightenment London', *JHS*, 2 (1991), 193.

10 Randolph Trumbach, 'The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750', in Martin Duberman *et al*. (eds.), *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York, 1989), 129-40; *idem*, 'Sodomitical Assaults, Gender Roles, and Sexual Development in Eighteenth-Century London', *JH*, 16 (1989), 407-29. For examples of the reception of Trumbach's argument, see George Haggerty, *Men In Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1999); Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton, 1992).

11 For an excellent summary of the earlier criticisms against Stone's and Trumbach's arguments, consult Keith Wrightson, 'The Family in Early Modern England: Continuity and Change', in Stephen Taylor *et al.* (eds.), *Hanoverian Britain and Empire: Essays in Memory of Philip Lawson* (Woodbridge, 1998), 1-22. For a recent review of Stone's argument, see Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Introduction', in *idem* (eds.), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), 1-17.

12 Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England, 1300-1840* (New York and Oxford, 1986), 30, 154; *idem*, 'Review: The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 by Lawrence Stone', *H&T*, 18

across the centuries confirm Macfarlane's and Thompson's arguments. They serve to remind historians of the long-lived patriarchal family pattern, but not of the unrelenting tyranny and cold-blood of fathers and husbands.[13]

However, scholars, especially feminist historians, have effectively shut the door on any further attempts to connect the conjugal, companionate relationship with collapsing patriarchy. Susan Amussen pointed out that the post-Restoration household gradually lost its meaning as the fundamental unit of social control (an analogy of family and the polity), and therefore a man's reputation was no longer measured by his capacity to govern the household order, and the female role in the household was more recognised. Yet, 'although the gender order was challenged, that challenge was never explicit or direct. Women did not ask to govern, claim equality with their husbands or declare the family an irrelevant institution'.[14] Similarly, Susan Okin argued that the invention of the 'sentimental family' (or in Stone's words 'companionate marriage') contributed to subjugate women and reinforced patriarchy. Within this discourse women were conceived of as irrational creatures with sentimental feelings. They were therefore deprived of a public role and had to retreat to domesticity. The loving wife served to comfort her publicly active patriarch emotionally.[15] Anthony Fletcher's monumental work charted the omnipresence of patriarchy as 'an outstandingly significant feature of English society between 1500 and 1800'. Building on the work of the feminist historian Judith M. Bennett, Fletcher demonstrated how the social and cultural structures of male domination were continually adjusted to sustain patriarchy. He argued that the eighteenth century witnessed new forms of medical knowledge, the rise of politeness and the advent of sensibility, and that men asserted their superior gender status not by physical strength as in the previous century, but by refined manners towards women.[16]

(1979), 103-26; E. P. Thompson, 'Happy Families', *NS*, 41 (1977), 499-501. For a criticism which is similar to that of Thompson, see Martin Ingram, 'The Reform of Popular Culture? Sex and Marriage in Early Modern England', B. Reay (ed.), *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1985), 133-34.

13 Linda Pollock (ed.), *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children Over Three Centuries* (Hanover, NH, 1987); Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.), *English Family Life, 1560-1725: An Anthology of Diaries* (Oxford, 1988).

14 Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988), 182, 186; *idem*, 'The Part of a Christian Man: The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England', in *idem* and Mark A. Kishlansky, *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Manchester, 1995), 213-33. Amussen's argument is strongly buttressed by J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Régime* (1985; Cambridge, 2000), 172-84.

15 Susan Moller Okin, 'Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family', *PPA*, 11 (1981), 65-88, esp. 74.

16 Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex & Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995), xv-xvi. For the feminist concept of 'patriarchies', read Judith M. Bennett, 'Feminism and History', *G&H*, 1 (1989), 251-72.

In addition, different definitions of 'patriarchy' adopted by scholars play a key role in investigating patriarchal authority as a core element of male gender identity. Feminist historians, such as Judith Bennett, Ingrid Tague, and Katie Barclay, have emphasised the narrow dimension of Stone's understandings of 'patriarchy'.[17] Tague, for example, has pointed out that Stone could drastically downplay patriarchy in the eighteenth century, for he 'explicitly defined patriarchy as "the despotic authority of husband and father"'. In contrast to Stone, other scholars have tended to rely on more 'flexible conceptions of patriarchy, keeping the idea of the subordination of women to men, but allowing for a positive presentation of women's roles within that subordination'. In this framework, 'patriarchy is not incompatible with affective family relationships'.[18] Thus, companionate marriage did not necessarily bring patriarchy or male dominance to its end. As Amanda Vickery argues, '[l]ove was no enemy to hierarchy', and 'the impact of love on marital power relations would still be wildly unpredictable'.[19] If one considers patriarchy as the core concept of early modern masculinity, it could still be performed and expressed within domesticity.

Although this body of research has enlarged our understanding of patriarchal formations, some problems still remain. Firstly, as Natalie Zemon Davis observed, some feminist historians chiefly focus on women's lives. In their analyses, men are reduced to be seen as gender oppressors or barriers that women struggled to overcome in order to create their individual agency within the patriarchal social system.[20] Secondly, little work has been done to explore the relationships between masculinity, patriarchy and familial relationships, which goes beyond the 'family-polity' analogy. The few works which have been done are those by Katie Barclay, Henry French and Mark Rothery, John Tosh, and Lisa Wilson (see below).[21] Thirdly, where patriarchy is adopted as an analytical

17 Bennett, 'Feminism and History'; Ingrid Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family in the Early Eighteenth Century', in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds.), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), 184-208; Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester, 2011), 5-9.

18 Tague, 'Aristocratic Women', 186, 188-89.

19 Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), 60.

20 Natalie Zemon Davis, '"Woman's History" in Transition: the European Case', *FS*, 3 (1975), 83-103. Most notably, the seminal works of Amy Erickson and Margot Finn both correct and complicate our knowledge about women's agency regarding female property and consumption within the patriarchal legal system. Nevertheless, men's lives are seen by these historians from patriarchal, tyrannical perspective, see Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London, 1993); Margot Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, *c.* 1760-1860', *HJ*, 39 (1996), 703-22.

21 Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power*; Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012); John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London, 1999); Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (New Haven and London, 1999).

framework beyond its significance for patriarchalism, most historians concentrate mainly on the relationships between husbands and wives.[22] Surely, the marital bond was not the only domain in which patriarchy worked out. Nor can we reduce family ties to just wedding beds. How patriarchy profoundly shaped masculinity in other aspects of a man's family life (such as their role as suitors, fathers, sons and brothers) is a question awaiting in-depth research.

The role of domesticity and family life in constructing and performing masculinity was also downplayed, if not refused, by the notorious theory of 'separate spheres'. The most influential work that established the theory is Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987). For them, 'middle class' as a common social identity derived not so much from the political or economic realms as from the cultural one: *gender*. When capitalism ruled supreme in the late eighteenth century, the separation of home from the workplace increased, and women's involvement in household-based production relatively declined. Then emerged the sexual division of labour within families in which men assumed the role of breadwinner, and women began to develop their own distinctive values and practices at home. Reinforced by shared beliefs in the Evangelical revival movement, bourgeois ethics of hard work and moral seriousness, the middle-class conception of the family was recast in a new way: that is, domesticity was perceived as a feminized and moral domain as opposed to the amoral world of the market in which men loomed large. These circumstances provided the basis for a shared culture among the middle class by 1850, and distinguished its members from the working and aristocratic classes.[23]

Although *Family Fortunes* can be praised on account of 'its most ground-breaking achievements' in introducing the hitherto neglected dimension of gender into the analysis of class formation,[24] its argument forms the basis for segregating masculinity from

22 See, for example, Don Herzog, *Household Politics: Conflict in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London, 2013); Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity & Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012); Hannah Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *SH*, 33 (2008), 12-35. Nevertheless, there is but little research encompassing the wide range of patriarchal practices performed within family ties. See Tosh, *A Man's Place*; French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*; Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), chs. 3, 5; Jennifer Jordan, '"To Make a Man Without Reason": Examining Manhood and Manliness in Early Modern England', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 245-62.

23 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987; London and New York 2002).

24 Kathryn Gleadle, 'Revisiting *Family Fortunes*: Reflections on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Publication of L. Davidoff & C. Hall (1987) *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson)', *WHR*, 16 (2007), 778.

domestic culture. To keep their over-arching thesis in place, Davidoff and Hall tended to simplify gendered practices within the family. For example, they told us that '[m]en would deal with the formal, women with the informal. Men would be decisive, women would be supportive. Men would take their proper place in the world, women would remain associated with the home'.[25] And, when Davidoff and Hall described the construction of the landed-gentry and upper-middle-class masculinity, they saw the process as taking place without domesticity and familial relationships. For instance: 'Masculine nature, in gentry terms, was based on sport and codes of honour derived from military prowess, finding expression in hunting, riding, drinking and "wenching"'.[26] Perhaps we did not need to wait for the revival of Evangelicalism and the advent of capitalism in order to argue for the outdoor construction of masculinity. Ancient Greek men would have known this thoroughly, when they attended their Olympic games.[27]

Indeed, the theory of 'separate spheres' was an heuristic concept for some social and economic historians. Carole Shammas, for example, compared the domestic environment in early modern England with that in America, and argued that the eighteenth century domestic sphere gradually became a site of moral, non market-orientated sociability presided over by women, which was the opposite of public, amoral and profit-orientated, masculine sociability.[28] Similarly, John Smail adopted the theory to analyse middle-class formation in eighteenth-century Halifax. He found that the same 'domestic ideology' as described in *Family Fortunes* had already been in place in the previous century. 'The ideology of separate spheres did not blossom into full maturity until the nineteenth century, but it was implicit in the values and practices of Halifax's elite women from the middle of the eighteenth century', Smail argued. Yet he suggested that his own findings should not weaken Davidoff and Hall's thesis. Rather, they served to complement the picture of how and where (chiefly local origins) these middle-class ideologies were originally fashioned.[29] Together with the thesis of declining patriarchy,

25 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 143.

26 *Ibid*., 110. It is to be noted that *Family Fortunes* contains a substantial chapter on men's lived experiences at home, covering fatherhood, male childhood, and brotherhood. Yet this is explored through the lens of social history, documenting human experiences, rather than decoding cultural meanings of those experiences which had influences on the formation of masculine self-identity, see *ibid.*, ch. 7.

27 Read, for example, Henrik Berg, 'Masculinities in Early Hellenistic Athens', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 97-113.

28 Carole Shammas, 'The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America', *JSH*, 14 (1980), 3-24. A similar argument has been echoed in Margaret Ponsonby's, *Stories from Hone: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850* (Aldershot, 2007), 8, 13.

29 John Smail, *The Origins of Middle-Class Culture: Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660-1780* (Ithaca, 1994), 168, 235. In his recent studies of 'commercial masculinity', Smail remains loyal to the theory of 'separate

the theory of 'separate spheres' contributed to the separation of masculinity and domesticity, whereby the former was fashioned without the latter.

If *Family Fortunes* and its allies left no significant place for men to fashion and perform their masculinity within familial relationships, their earlier critics – no matter how sophisticated they were – did not do much to revitalise the connection between men and their families.[30] Part of the explanation is that the theory of 'separate spheres' was challenged on the grounds that it contributed to excluding women's public, political and economic roles. Women not men were the agenda of *Family Fortunes*' earlier critics. Firstly, with regard to politics, historians, such as Elaine Chalus, Amanda Foreman, and Linda Colley, convincingly demonstrated the significance of women's roles in the political arena in the eighteenth century, especially through their indirect influences over their husbands, sons and male relatives. One need look no further than the notorious election campaign conducted by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, in which she allegedly sold kisses for votes in favour of Charles James Fox in 1784.[31] Secondly, with regard to their economic role, new research has unearthed women's own strategies and initiatives in conducting business investments. Most notably, Margot Finn, Hannah Barker and Nicola Phillips, have shown how married women found legal opportunities in which they could transact their own business, and how they strategically used coverture as a comforting shelter when their husbands failed to be efficient breadwinners.[32] Moreover, as Joel Mokyr, Jan de Vries, Maxine Berg, and Jane Humphries have argued, the consumer revolution and the industrial revolution encouraged women to participate in 'cash-generating activities as never before', both as part of de Vries' industrious revolution and as part of Humphries' pessimistic description of how women and children had to

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spheres'. See his, 'Coming of Age in Trade: Masculinity and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England', in Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (eds.), *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists* (New York, 2008), 229-52; *idem*, 'Credit, Risk, and Honor in Eighteenth-Century Commerce', *JBS*, 44 (2005), 439-56.

30 Compare my argument here with the sharpest criticism of *Family Fortunes* offered by Amanda Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres?: A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *HJ*, 36 (1993), 383-414.

31 See, for example, Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life C.1754-1790* (Oxford, 2005); *idem*, '"To Serve my friends": Women and Political Patronage in Eighteenth-Century England', in Amanda Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford, 2001), 57-88; *idem*, 'Kisses for Votes: The Kiss and Corruption in Eighteenth-Century English Elections', in Karen Harvey (ed.), *The Kiss in History* (Manchester, 2005), 122-47; Amanda Foreman, 'A Politician's Politician: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the Whig Party', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London and New York, 1997), 179-204; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 1992), ch. 6, esp. pp. 274-76.

32 Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture'; Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006); Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006).

trade their labour to maintain the family's living standard when cottage industry was in severe competition with mechanised production.[33] Thirdly, with regard to the public sphere, one of the arguments sketched in *Family Fortunes* that attracted scorching debates from scores of historians is Davidoff and Hall's claim that conduct literature established a new notion in which 'a woman's femininity was best expressed in her dependence'.[34] Yet, Linda Colley cautions that 'the doctrine of separate spheres – like many other political concepts – was ideally profoundly contractual'. Thus, 'the spread of separate-spheres ideology […] could be drawn on in practice to defend the position of women', when they were treated unfairly by their male fellows. The rhetoric 'could supply a way for women to assert their important role in British society and to protect their rights such as they were'.[35] No other historian has contributed to demolishing the 'separate spheres' more effectively than Amanda Vickery who compares the experiences of genteel women with the dictates of conduct manuals. She argues that '[t]he metaphor of separate spheres fails to capture the texture of female subordination and the complex interplay of emotion and power in family life'.[36] Furthermore, in her fine study of genteel women's lives in late Georgian England, Vickery demonstrates the omnipresence of the female role in the 'public' arena, from female active engagement in consumer society to women's charming patronage of assembly rooms and promenades.[37] Recent studies of Victorian women have concurred with Vickery's findings. For example, in their analysis of middle-class women's lives in nineteenth-century Glasgow, Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair contend that '[m]en and women were enmeshed in a matrix of circulating discourses, some of which competed with separate spheres, cut across it, supplemented it or even supplanted it'.[38] Thus, the theory of 'separate spheres' simply loses its explanatory power when it is tested against women's daily lives.

While the critics of the 'separate spheres' thesis have corrected our understanding of women's lives and their roles in the public sphere, most of them have not revisited the

33 Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution, 1700-1850* (New Haven and London, 2009), ch. 14, quoted from p. 314; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008), ch. 4, and pp. 210-14; Jane Humphries, 'Household Economy', in Roderick Floud and Paul A. Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, vol. 1: Industrialisation, 1700-1860* (Cambridge, 2004), 238-67, esp. 256; Maxine Berg, 'What Difference Did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', *HWJ*, 35 (1993), 22-44.

34 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 114.

35 See Linda Colley, *Britons*, ch. 6, quoted from pp. 269, 279.

36 Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 401.

37 Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, chs. 5-7.

38 Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven and London, 2003), 2.

validity of the paradigm regarding masculinity and domesticity. Exceptions are rare. In her important work, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (1996), Margaret Hunt rejects the theory of 'separate spheres', and concentrates on 'the ways “the market” *transcended* the so-called “public sphere” and went to the heart of family life', Hunt reminds us of the connections between commerce, family, and gender, giving as much attention to men as to women.[39] The greatest contribution of the work is that it gives full credit to the agency and authority in running household business possessed by eighteenth-century middling-sort men and women. Domesticity was then crucial to both genders. Thus, while Davidoff and Hall saw the public world as a site for fashioning masculinity, Hunt blurs the boundary and allows more domestic spaces in that process: 'Safeguarding one's credit, avoiding the temptation to spend extravagantly, applying oneself diligently to business, remaining sexually chaste, keeping good accounts, writing a good hand, maintaining rational self-control', 'continued to be touchstones of middle-class masculinity in the nineteenth century as well'.[40]

However, the most important work that revisits and challenges the 'separate spheres' model regarding masculinity and domesticity comes from a historian of Victorian Britain. In his ground-breaking study of middle-class men at home, John Tosh aims to convey that 'the “private” is being reformulated to take account of men, in the same way that the scope of the “public” has been progressively enlarged to take account of women'. For him, '[t]he home was central to masculinity, as the place both where the boy was disciplined by dependence, and where the man attained full adult status as householder'.[41] Yet in this study, Tosh goes beyond simply re-invigorating patriarchy as male gender identity and its 'family-polity' significance, although patriarchy remains the major framework in his analysis of masculinity and familial gender relations. Rather, he calls for investigating men's subjectivity both in the process of masculine construction and, particularly, during the time when a man's masculinity (as a social status) is insecure. This proposition relies on the presumption that masculinity is more than social construction and is relevant to the subjective experience of the male individual. This examination might clarify how men subjectively respond to the world when their masculine status is under contestation, or even subversion.[42] Tosh is introducing the study of feeling and

39 Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), 9.
40 *Ibid*., 72.
41 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 2.
42 John Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain?', *HWJ*, 38 (1994), 192-98.

subjectivity into the history of men. This is, arguably, one of Tosh's greatest contributions to the field.

Still, Tosh's analysis has a pitfall associated with his use of the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity'. First developed by the sociologist Robert Connell in the 1980s, the theory seeks to explain the gender structure of contemporary societies, which comprises unequal power relations between men and women, and between different categories of men.[43] It is 'hegemonic' in the way that it subordinates women to men. As Connell and his collaborators put it: '[I]t would hardly be an exaggeration to say that hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic insofar as it embodies a successful strategy in relation to women'.[44] In this light, Tosh contends that for Victorian middle-class men, 'patriarchy' was 'necessary to their masculine self-respect'. Consequently, a man might experience an acute loss of masculine self-esteem through a shortage of patriarchal roles and obligations, and this in turn would affect a man's behaviour and personality in relation to his wife and children.[45] Still, a problem occurs in Tosh's purchase on this theoretical framework. As I will show throughout my thesis, self-esteem did not necessarily only derive from male success in subordinating women. It could also be engendered by a man's pride in his intellectuality, his career achievement, his brotherly responsibility for his helpless siblings, or his self-sacrifice for the sake of other family members.

Remarkably, Tosh's innovation in studying the close relationship between masculinity and domesticity seemed to find its resonance only slowly among historians of the eighteenth century.[46] Karen Harvey has identified the reasons for 'missing men' from domesticity with two influential paradigms in historiography. One is the work of historians of the history of ideas, who highlight the 'new types of family relationship

43 Robert W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge, 1987); *idem*, *Masculinities* (1995; Cambridge, 2005), esp. 186-98. In fact, Tosh is aware of a pitfall of the concept. Yet his concern centres on the limit of historical application of the concept, for Connell emphasises the vital role of mass/popular media in establishing a social consensus or 'common sense' of the 'hegemonic masculinity' in contemporary societies. Consider John Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender', in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester, 2004), 41-58.

44 T. Carrigan, B. Connell and J. Lee, 'Hard and Heavy: Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', in M. Kaufman (ed.), *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change* (Toronto, 1987), 180.

45 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 3. Tosh demonstrates how he applies this conceptual relationship between 'hegemonic masculinity' and its impact on masculine subjectivity in his memorial analysis of the four patterns of Victorian fatherhood. Read his, 'Authority and Nurture in Middle-Class Fatherhood: The Case of Early and Mid-Victorian England', *G&H*, 8 (1996), 48-64. See also *idem*, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Harlow, 2005).

46 For an overview of the work on eighteenth-century masculinity, consult Karen Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800', *JBS*, 44 (2005), 296-311.

rooted in contract theory' in the eighteenth century, whereby a patriarch's domestic authority was subject to challenge from his subordinates. The other is an impact of historians of 'home' trying to describe 'the emergence of a new kind of domestic interior', whereby this 'new culture of "domesticity" is primarily associated with women and femininity'.[47] Is Harvey's explanation plausible?

I differ from Harvey, however. Firstly, as I have shown, historians of the history of ideas, such as Susan Amussen, Susan Okin, and (one might add) Anthony Fletcher, rejected the idea of declining patriarchy in the eighteenth century. They stated the persistence of male dominance over women, even within the household, but the mode was adjusted from the tyrannical patriarch to the refined one. Secondly, what Harvey calls historians of eighteenth-century domesticity are indeed those who challenged the theory of 'separate spheres', most notably Amanda Vickery. It is true that Vickery's classic study of gentlewomen in Georgian England contends that '[a] virtuous female superintendent was an indispensable member of the genteel Georgian household', and a gentleman was perhaps reduced only to the position of an admirer; he 'was expected to honour his housekeeper's authority'.[48] Yet it is to be noted that Vickery's *Gentleman's Daughter* chiefly aims to show the wide spectrum of female experiences both in the public and private domains to challenge the model of 'separate spheres'. Thus, Georgian male experiences are less Vickery's concern. However, in her studies regarding gender relations, Vickery has recently argued that the eighteenth-century household was in fact the practice of 'female domestic management within a framework of male superintendence and surveillance'.[49] Therefore, when Harvey sees in Vickery's work the idea that '[t]he separation of men and domesticity is now complete', it is incorrect.[50] What is then the reason for the lack of interest in studying the relationship between masculinity and domesticity in historical narratives of the long eighteenth century?

Apart from Stone's thesis, and Davidoff and Hall's theory of 'separate spheres', gender historians of the eighteenth century have posited Georgian men in relation to major characteristics of the century: the emergence of 'polite society' and the growth of the British Empire. This, I argue, has played a vital role in excluding the role of family life from the study of masculinity.

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47 Harvey, *Little Republic*, 2-13, quoted from p. 2. See also her, 'Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *G&H*, 21 (2009), 521-25.

48 Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 128, 160.

49 Amanda Vickery, 'His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England', in Ruth Harris *et al.* (eds.), *The Art of Survival: Gender and History in Europe, 1450-2000: Essays in Honour of Olwen Hufton, P&P*, Supplement 1 (2006), 23-24.

50 Harvey, *Little Republic*, 9 fn. 52.

What do historians understand by 'politeness'? Politeness had a long tradition, perhaps extending back to the sixteenth-century courtier manuals, most notably Castiglione's *Cortegiano* (1528). However, it was in eighteenth-century Britain that politeness became the code of manners for a larger group of people, from the lower ranks of the aristocracy to middle (and sometimes lower) ranks of the middling-sort.[51] As Lawrence Klein puts it, 'politeness' was a 'master metaphor' which 'evoked [the] scene of refined sociability, with its rules and participants, as against scenes in which sociability was distorted or neglected'. '[T]he semantic resonances of "politeness" can be organised around the concern with form, sociability, improvement, worldliness, and gentility'.[52] Yet, as John Brewer remarks, '[p]oliteness and refinement had little value unless they were shared; they had to be put on display, to be shown to others'.[53] Thus, politeness was best practised not in isolation but in mixed company where conviviality ruled. As Joseph Addison, an ideologue of politeness, put it: 'I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses'.[54] Thus, the masculine polite *persona* was a man about town, rather than a man retreating from the sociable world of conviviality into his reclusive, domesticated sphere.

How does the understanding of 'politeness' influence historians' interpretations of eighteenth-century masculinity? The greatest achievement is the discovery that eighteenth-century concepts of manhood should be viewed as a social category, rather than a sexual one. By downplaying the importance of sexuality as an identity, historians have turned to studying *representations* of the gentleman to understand what contemporaries defined as manliness. Using mainly sources, such as conduct books, preachers' sermons, and caricatures,[55] historians of this kind have explored manhood

51 Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998); John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth* Century (London and New York, 1997), 90-96; Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), ch. 3; *idem*, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness', *TRHS*, 12 (2002), 311-31; Lawrence E. Klein, 'Politeness for Plebes: Consumption and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century England', in Ann Birmingham and John Brewer (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (New York and London, 1995), 362-82.

52 Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), 8; *idem*, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth century', *HJ*, 45 (2002), 877.

53 Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 94.

54 Quoted from *ibid.*, 92. For a recent study of the nature of mixed-company in a polite arena which was neither wholly 'public', nor entirely 'private', see Hannah Greig, '"All Together and All Distinct": Public Sociability and Social Exclusivity in London's Pleasure Gardens, ca. 1740–1800', *JBS*, 51 (2012), 50-75. For a recent study of the relationship between masculinity and conviviality, see Karen Harvey, 'Ritual Encounters: Punch Parties and Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century', *P&P*, 214 (2012), 165-203.

55 Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*; John Gillingham, 'From *Civilitas* to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England', *TRHS*, 12 (2002), 267-89. Studies on eighteenth-century 'polite'

within the polite society of the eighteenth century. In *Fashioning Masculinity* (1996), Michèle Cohen views concepts of masculinity as a social category characterised by an on-going debate over the gentleman's relation to politeness. Cohen suggests that the gentleman was fashioned by conversing with polite women as well as by referring himself to a nationalistic discourse that used France and the French language as enabling 'Others' that created effeminate characteristics in the ideal figure of the gentleman.[56] Similarly, Philip Carter argues in his influential work *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society* (2001) that 'the prevailing eighteenth-century concept was of masculinity not just as a social but a sociable category in which gender identity was conferred, or denied, by men's capacity for gentlemanly social performance'.[57] Perhaps, Cohen and Carter are correct in prioritising polite masculinity. As Helen Berry has remarked in her fine study of an eighteenth-century castrato's life, '[t]he Georgian period gave rise to a kind of polite masculinity to which castrati not only subscribed but acted as admired cultural leaders'.[58]

This body of research has extended and corrected our understanding of eighteenth-century male gender identity. Firstly, by highlighting masculinity as a social category, it distinguishes eighteenth-century manhood from that of the previous century. As Elizabeth Foyster has shown, in the seventeenth century patriarchy was concretely manifested in male sexual reputation and the male ability to control female sexuality within marriage.[59] But, as Cohen and Carter firmly argue, in the eighteenth century, masculinity was of male, socially refined characters. Secondly, and more importantly, Cohen and Carter have demolished the conventional claim of historians of homosexuality, that with the advent of the eighteenth century, homosexuality became characterised as 'effeminate' behaviour,

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manliness based on visual sources are, for example, Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 1993), ch. 4; *idem*, *Portrayal: and the Search for Identity* (London, 2012), ch. 4*;* Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London, 2006), 110-29; Ariane Fennetaux, 'Men in Gowns: Nightgowns and the Construction of Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century England', *Immediations*, 1 (2004), 76-89.

56 Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 1996); *idem*, '"Manners" Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *JBS*, 44 (2005), 312-29; *idem*, 'Manliness, Effeminacy and the French: Gender and the Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-Century England', *idem* and Tim Hitchcock (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 1999), 44-61.

57 Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), 209; *idem*, 'Polite "Persons": Character, Biography and the Gentleman', *TRHS*, 12 (2002), 333-54.

58 Helen Berry, *The Castrato and His Wife* (Oxford, 2011), 71.

59 Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Harlow, 1999). Some historians go even further as they claim that early modern men were dogged by fears that they would fail to achieve patriarchal position and became 'anxious patriarchs', see Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1996); *idem*, 'Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England', *FS*, 19 (1993), 377-98; David Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985), 116-36.

and 'effeminacy' or 'fops' were used as a distinct sexual identity.[60] Yet, in his study of the representations of early eighteenth-century fops, Carter cautions that the fop cannot be identified with homosexual 'mollies', as has been argued by historians of homosexuality. Instead, it was a representation of over-excessive sociable men who provoked moral concerns among social commentators of the period.[61] Carter's study offers a more accurate understanding of the practices of marginalised masculinities in the late eighteenth century, particularly those of the so-called 'Macaronis', who can be considered as the counterpart of the early eighteenth-century fop.[62]

However, exploring masculinity through the lens of polite society has some drawbacks. This body of research has been 'predominantly concerned with *representations* of the gentleman', as Carter himself accepted.[63] Thus, it fails to take into account masculine lived experiences, and tends to equate manliness (as represented in textual sources) with masculinity as gendered practices in day-to-day life. As John Tosh warned us, it is 'a mistake to treat masculinity merely as an outer garment or "style", adjustable according to social circumstances'.[64] Moreover, how far the concept of polite masculinity can be applied to measure the manhood of men who were not be able to enter the 'polite' world, such as the labouring poor, is questionable. Lastly, and more importantly, in terms of gender relations, the female role in constructing a man's masculinity was mostly reduced to polishing, refining and softening male manners chiefly through polite conversation.[65] Yet, as I will show, women did play more vital roles in fashioning a man's masculinity, from shaping his sincere personality, to shoring up his self-esteem as a patriarch, breadwinner, moral leader, and loving protector. Such issues have been neglected by historians of polite masculinity, not least because a man's politeness was developed by sociable performances in the convivial atmosphere of clubs and salons, rather than within family ties.

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60 See, for example, Trumbach, 'The Birth of the Queen'.

61 Philip Carter, 'Men about Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century Urban Society', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow, 1997), 31-57.

62 Peter McNeil, '"That Doubtful Gender": Macaroni Dress and Male Sexualities', *FT*, 3 (1999), 411-48; *idem*, 'Macaroni Masculinities', *FT*, 4 (2000), 373-404; Miles Ogborn, 'Locating the Macaroni: Luxury, Sexuality and Vision in Vauxhall Gardens', *TP*, 11 (1997), 445-61.

63 Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, 9.

64 Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', 194.

65 Lawrence E. Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere in Early Eighteenth-Century England' in Judith Stil and Michael Worton (eds.), *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices* (Manchester, 1993), 100-15; Laura Runge, 'Beauty and Gallantry: A Model of Polite Conversation Revisited', *ECL*, 25 (2001), 43-63. For a recent criticism of the absence of the female role in the construction of early modern manhood, see Jennifer Jordan, '*Her*-Story Untold: The Absence of Women's Agency in Constructing Concepts of Early Modern Manhood', *CSH*, 4 (2007), 575-83.

Parallel to politeness, the growth of the British Empire during this period is another aspect which some scholars use to explore eighteenth-century masculinity. In effect, this contributes to the absence of family as an analytical framework from the construction of male gender. Linda Colley offers an influential thesis, arguing for the hegemony of elite masculinity embodied in the cults of 'juvenile fortitude', 'heroic endeavour' and 'aggressive maleness', which were forged during the Napoleonic Wars. For Colley, military manliness grasped at the heart of men across social-rank boundaries. Similarly, Rosalind Carr has demonstrated how 'Highland martial masculinity' gradually became the 'masculine ideal' in eighteenth-century Scotland as opposed to 'the masculine ideal of the refined British gentleman'.[66] On the other hand, Matthew McCormack has shown that military manliness was closely linked with politeness and polite deportment in particular. He demonstrates the strong relations between social dancing and infantry drill, and 'the specific roles that dance had in military life', allowing soldiers to develop their manly graceful deportment and synchronicity of movement. As such, McCormack argues that in the eighteenth century, politeness was no enemy to military masculinity; rather it was 'specially tasked with preparing men's bodies for war'.[67]

The overseas empire can complicate the way we think about masculinity. Scholars, such as Kathleen Wilson, and Matthew McCormack, set the tone that the military and naval campaigns governed the debates on the nature of masculinity at the national level. Wilson, for example, points out that after the British were defeated by the French navy at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, a sense of 'emasculation and degeneracy' was at the core of 'the body politic' in Britain. The prerogative of elite masculinity experienced a period of intense discussion and re-configuration, for it was believed that the luxury lifestyle and Frenchified politeness among aristocrats were responsible for the effeminacy of the army and naval fleet, which in effect had ruined the British Empire.[68] Moving away from the national to the individual level, Denver

66 Colley, *Britons*, ch. 7; Rosalind Carr, 'The Gentleman and the Soldier: Patriotic Masculinities in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *JSHS*, 28 (2008), 102-21. For the cult of heroism, see Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire, Trade and Popular Politics in Mid-Hanoverian Britain: The Case of Admiral Vernon', *P&P*, 121 (1988), 74-109; Gerald Jordan and Nicholas Rogers, 'Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England', *JBS*, 28 (1989), 201-24.

67 Matthew McCormack, 'Dance and Drill: Polite Accomplishments and Military Masculinities in Georgian Britain', *CSH*, 8 (2011), 317, 326.

68 Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1751-1785* (London, 1995), ch. 3, quoted from p. 165; Matthew McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender in 1750s Britain', *G&H*, 19 (2007), 483-500. By contrast, Stephen Moore has recently argued that public discussion about the British defeat in the early 1750s 'was underwritten not by concerns of national emasculation but rather by eminently practical political rhetoric strategies designed to undermine the reputations of the two men at the center of the crisis – Admiral John Byng and Thomas Pelham-Holles, the duke of Newcastle'; see his, '"A Nation of Harlequins"? Politics and Masculinity in

Brunsman has reconstructed how British naval life appealed to male aspirations: 'Within the all-male environment of a sailing vessel, homosocial activities such as drinking, singing, gambling, and swearing all helped to shape the masculinity of seamen'. This was the way in which forced mariners used to restore their damaged masculinity (chiefly their loss of patriarchal status) after they had been captured by British press-gangs.[69] However, in these historical narratives, it was not a man's hearth and home, but rather his engagement in the military campaign and martial music that constituted his masculinity.

However, the latest development in the historiography of eighteenth-century masculinity is bringing men back to their households. Historians are examining the relationships between domesticity and masculinity. This is perhaps being conducted in the same line that John Tosh pioneered in the case of Victorian manhood a decade ago. In her discussion on how bachelors lived in the eighteenth century, Amanda Vickery has shown that manhood was bestowed its full meaning only when men had settled down their own household.[70] Recently, while analysing the relationship between prescriptive literature of household management and men's self-writings, Karen Harvey has urged historians to distinguish between the 'home' and the 'house'. For her, the 'home' is a concept which has been associated with emotion, comfort and, therefore, femininity. This narrow conception of the 'home' fails to capture 'the multi-faceted investments that men made in the "house"' based on the precepts of 'oeconomy', the household management. She asserts that '[m]en's self-identities were grounded in the physical and emotional space of the house and the social relationships of the family. The house literally and metaphorically generated masculine identities'.[71] It was the possession of the 'house' and perfect household management that allowed men to appreciate their full sense of self-valorisation. Although Harvey brings into play familial stations throughout her analysis, she views the dutiful performances in each life-stage (mostly those of husbands and fathers) only as expressions of manly managerial ability. Yet, how far can masculinity be reduced to the state of being the household management alone? Moreover, Harvey fundamentally fails to tell us how the discourse and the practice of 'oeconomy' could be reproduced within the family, passing down from fathers to sons, while she claims that 'oeconomy' was a central factor in constructing masculine identity. Nevertheless, the importance of 'the house' for creating masculine self-identities is supported by Matthew McCormack's research. Based

Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', *JBS*, 49 (2010), 514-39, quoted from p. 515.

69 Denver Brunsman, 'Men of War: British Sailors and the Impressment Paradox', *JEMH*, 14 (2010), 27.

70 Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009), ch. 2.

71 Harvey, *Little Republic*, *passim*, quoted from pp. 166-67; *idem*, 'Men Making Home'.

on a wide range of political pamphlets and prescriptive literature, McCormack studies how householdership was closely linked to the virtue of 'independence' and generated a sense of full citizenship to Georgian men, which – at least in political theory – allowed men to enjoy their perfect manhood. He argues that '[w]ithin this scheme, only [the male household head] is free from obligation and is therefore fully in command of himself, and is capable of full self-realisation and self-determination'.[72]

Yet, how can historians be certain that the full manhood bestowed upon a male householder in political theory was firmly established in real life? Don Herzog has analysed a plethora of popular literature in early modern England, and has shown that male dominance was neither 'natural' nor 'essentialized', but rather subject to 'be reformed or even abolished', and household was full of social conflicts. Herzog believes that patriarchal power was bestowed upon the household head when he showed his ability to master conflicts. Thus, he argues that 'conflict isn't the opposite of social order'.[73] The work of Herzog is perhaps most in tune with the aims of my present study. As I will demonstrate in this thesis by using other genres of sources, the construction of patriarchy was an on-going process in relation to the patriarch's performance to his family members.

Recently, historians have shifted their attention to the social values that shaped male gender identities, rather than exploring the tyrannical power exercised by the patriarch as was typical among earlier generations of family historians. Based on the diaries of four Manchester men, Hannah Barker's study of middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester points out that masculinity was associated with mastery of the self, devotion to God, hard work and family life. Barker shows 'enduring' structures of gender identity deriving from the previous centuries, rather than those which underwent the most dramatic change, as emphasised in the studies of masculinity in relation to public arenas.[74] The continuity of gender values has been reiterated in other studies, too. William Stafford analyses letters and obituaries from readers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in late Georgian England, and finds the continuity of masculine gender values. While upper and middling-rank men were commemorated in relation to their politeness, responsibility and intellectuality, other masculinities – irresponsible youth, libertinism and sportsmanship – were evidently disapproved.[75] Using

72 Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), 19.
73 Herzog, *Household Politics*, xi-xii.
74 Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family'; *idem*, 'A Grocer's Tale: Gender, Family and Class in Early Nineteenth-Cenutry Manchester', *G&H*, 21 (2009), 340-57.
75 William Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*', *History*, 93 (2008), 47-68.

extensive correspondence of landed gentry families from 1660 to 1900, Henry French and Mark Rothery ambitiously re-assess the historical change in masculinity. They argue that despite some cultural changes in stereotype, there existed continual deep-seated norms in constructing male gender identities which were assimilated, enacted, reproduced and transmitted within families over several generations. These values were, according to French and Rothery, virtue, honour, self-control and independence. Thus, they call for the study of *longue durée* in the history of masculinity.[76]

What is then the gap in men's history? As I have shown, the separation of men from domesticity has a long history from Lawrence Stone's and Randolph Trumbach's theses, to the theory of 'separate spheres' and its criticisms, and the impact of the growing interest in polite society and the British Empire. Although research on the relationship between masculinity and family life has started to burgeon in recent years, historians have tended to focus mainly on the family obligations of the head of the household. Therefore, we still know little about the other meanings of masculinity which varied according to different social identities within the family. Also, we still know little about how men – apart from the patriarchs – conducted their gendered lives within the familial-gender hierarchy, and the impact these gendered practices had on men's emotions and personalities, when they either succeeded in performing the gendered obligations or failed to do so.

* * * *

The following part of this chapter defines the parameters of the dissertation and explains the types of source material used. Rather than analysing men's activities in the public sphere or taking for granted their patriarchal omnipotence in the house, this thesis puts men back into the very basic unit of the human interpersonal relationship: family ties. I will look into eighteenth-century masculinity through three connected themes: gender hierarchy, practices of gendered roles, and the impact of these practices on family

76 French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 235-48; *idem*, 'Hegemonic Masculinities? Assessing Change and Processes of Change in Elite Masculinity, 1700-1900', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 139-66; *idem*, '"Upon your entry into the world": Masculine Values and the Threshold of Adulthood among Landed Elites in England, 1680-1800', *SH*, 33 (2008), 402-22. For examples of the continuity of familial masculine values as depicted in primary sources, see Mark Rothery and Henry French (eds.), *Making Men: The Formation of Elite Male Identities in England, c. 1660-1900. A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke, 2012). In fact, French and Rothery's emphasis on the continuity, rather than the transformation of masculinity, conforms to Josh Tosh's argument proposed in 1999. See his, 'The Old Adam and the New Man: Emerging Themes in the History of English Masculinities, 1750-1850', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities* (Harlow, 1999), 217-38.

relationships and individuals' lives. This thesis explores five key aspects of male familial status: the role of suitor, husband, father, son and brother.

There are three frameworks that govern the way I approach my subject. Firstly, I take family relationships as the core element of my study. Family tie is a useful category of gender analysis, for it is a locus infused with intimacy, expectation, responsibility, power and contestation. As Robert Connell puts it:

> The interior of the family is a scene of multi-layered relationships folded over on each other like geological strata. In no other institution are relationships so extended in time, so intensive in contact, so dense in their interweaving of economics, motion, power and resistance.[77]

Moreover, as Mike Roper and John Tosh state, gender is a relational and organising concept. It is a principle that inhibits and organises social structures, institutions, practices, and even human imagination.[78] Yet, little work has been done on the eighteenth century to explore how masculinity organised and structured men's lives and the way they related to their family members.

However, it is to be noted that by the term 'family' I mean a group of persons who were bound to one another by ties of blood and marriage, although they did not necessarily reside under the same roof. I am aware that this definition is anachronistic to the eighteenth century. As Naomi Tadmor argues, the term 'family' meant in this period a household unit embracing a ground of persons (regardless of the ties of blood and marriage) who were living under the same roof and were subordinate to the same household head. She coins the term 'household-family' for this kind of social formation, which might include couples, children, servants, apprentices, husbandsmen and the like.[79] However, the concept of the 'household-family' might exclude some human relationships from the analysis of the practices of fashioning masculinity: lovers and adult siblings. Obviously, they were not living under the same roof. And, in the case of lovers, they did not share the same patriarch.[80] Yet, as I will show in chapters one and five, courtship and sibling relations played a key role in fashioning men's gender identity too. Therefore, these types of social relationship are included in my thesis as well.

Secondly, in order to examine the meanings of masculinity as expressed in men's

77 Connell, *Gender and Power*, 121.

78 Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity', in *idem* (eds.), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, 1991), 11.

79 Naomi Tadmor, 'The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England', *P&P*, 151 (1996), 111-40.

80 Tadmor points out that sibling relations were understood by contemporaries under the concept of supportive and protective friendship. Brothers and sisters were thus often called 'friends'. See her, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), ch.5.

familial conduct, I adopt the dynamic definition of 'masculinity' sketched by Robert Connell:

> 'Masculinity' [...] is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.

Connell does not consider masculinity as an object. For him, masculinity is not a norm (that is manliness). Nor is it a character type, or a behavioural average. Instead, he urges us to focus on 'the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives'.[81] This approach allows us to explore how women and men ranked male social identity in the gender hierarchy from their own perspectives. Thus, this approach helps us to move away from the focus of patterns and norms as represented in prescriptive sources, to the focus of historical subjects' lived experiences. It also offers an opportunity to view masculinity not only as a social identity (an aspect of the structure of social relations), but also as a man's personality and feelings as affected by the impact of gendered practices in the intimate relations of family life.[82] In addition, the dynamic nature of Connell's definition is useful, for it reminds us that masculinity is a becoming process and could not be fully fixed at a particular stage of men's lives, either when the wedding bell rang or when the house was possessed, as some historians have claimed.

Thirdly, my dissertation is – what I coin – a cultural history of lived experiences. It aims to understand the meanings of masculinity embedded in the different gendered roles and obligations which men performed within their familial relationships. My approach is a deliberate attempt to respond to John Tosh's recent exhortation that '[w]e need to reconnect with th[e] earlier curiosity about experience and subjectivity, while recognising that experience is always mediated through cultural understandings'.[83] Tosh's reference to the relationship between experience and subjectivity leads us back to the concept of experience as discursive evidence, sketched by Joan Scott. For her, experience is 'a part of everyday language, so imbricated in our narratives'. It is not something people have. Instead, experience is evidence of 'how conceptions of selves (of subjects and their identities) are produced'. In this sense, experience is constituted by individuals, as part of their sense of who they are. Therefore, it is variable; it changes when individuals' identities change.[84] In this spirit, I will pay particular attention to the different meanings of masculinity as produced through the way men performed their gendered roles and

81 Connell, *Masculinities*, 71.
82 Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', 194-98.
83 Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity', 31.
84 Joan W. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience', *CI*, 17 (1991), 782, 793.

obligations within familial relationships. As we shall see, the meanings of masculinity were not only restricted to the social or sociable category, as some historians have argued.

It is to be noted that in response to Tosh's calling, Karen Harvey has recently developed the methodology that she herself calls 'a cultural history of social practice'. She aims to reconstruct the thought-world of men's daily domestic experiences, by which she means masculine household management.[85] Yet, can we reduce the variety of male identities to only the status of household manager? If the householdership was so important in fashioning men's masculinity, how could – for example – a young sailor perform his gender when he was not in the possession of a house? By paying attention to just one type of 'social practice', household management, Harvey fundamentally fails to capture the different meanings of masculinity that varied according to men's identities. This does not lead us further than the claim that polite sociability was *the* core concept of eighteenth-century manhood.

To gain an insight into men's lived experiences, I choose to use 'ego-documents' as my primary source material for this dissertation. The term was originally coined by the Dutch historian Jacob Presser in his collection of testimonies from survivors of Nazi persecution. Recently, Ulinka Rublack and Mary Fulbrook have defined the term as 'a source or "document" – understood in the widest sense – providing an account of, or revealing privileged information about, the "self" who produced it'. Scholars also use other terms, such as 'self-narratives', 'self-writings', or 'life-writings'.[86] Different genres may be counted under the rubric of 'ego-documents': diaries, letters, commonplace books, pocket books, account books, and many more. Yet, my thesis primarily analyses diaries and letters, supplemented by autobiographies and memoirs. This is because these genres are by nature personal narratives which are much in tune with my research assumption and questions, allowing us to gain insights into how men and women reflected on – and thus gave meaning to – their gendered lives. Moreover, as Rublack and Fulbrook have argued, self-narratives shed light on 'persons whose identities are shaped in relation to changing networks of interpersonal relations, with the "self" at the intersection of different sets of roles and expectations, while a monitoring "inner eye" records experiences, expectations and norms in the literary vehicles and conventions available and acceptable at any given time'.[87] Men's self-writings can therefore help us reconstruct

85 Harvey, *Little Republic*, 14-15.
86 Mary Fulbrook and Ulinka Rublack, 'In Relation: The "Social Self" and Ego-Documents', *GH*, 28 (2010), 263.
87 *Ibid*., 268.

how individuals perceived themselves fluidly, when their interrelations with people changed according to their different identities. The variety of meanings of masculinity can thus be revealed through reading personal narratives, or discursive experiences in Joan Scott's words.

However, like other types of historical sources, ego-documents need to be treated with care. Notably, the diary was not an unvarnished, transparent record of the diarist's action or thought-world. The genre was originally created in the seventeenth century, as part of the 'very engine of Protestant devotional life', together with pious conduct manuals and sermons.[88] By the eighteenth century, diaries began to include more worldly content as well as purely devotional content.[89] In this light, self-vigilance in the form of diary-keeping was infused with the more secular forms of writing.[90] Thus, upon reading someone's diary, as E. P. Thompson brilliantly noted:

> we have evidence not of a spontaneous unmediated attitude but of this transcribed into an approved self-image (perhaps with approved doctrinal after-thoughts), like someone arranging his face in a looking-glass.[91]

Diary-keeping provided diarists with useful platforms for self-reflection which in effect enabled them to look for ways to improve themselves.[92] With this in mind, I will read personal diaries to find out how eighteenth-century men and women reflected on – and approved of – the performances of masculinity in their family lives as recorded in their own writings.

Personal letters are another genre to be used in this dissertation. Like diary-keeping, letter-writing is not the transmission of the writer's transparent thoughts onto the pages. Letter-writing by its nature involves cultural performance and communication. Martyn Lyons argues against the notion that 'personal letters have traditionally been valued for their spontaneity and their ability to convey personal experience more authentically than official or administrative letters'. Rather, '[l]etter writing is a highly ritualised form of communication that has to be understood in the context of its historical period'.[93] It is clear from current research, most notably by scholars using a material

88 Kathleen Lynch, *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* (Oxford, 2012), 11; Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Modern Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997), 23. See also Tom Webster, 'Writing to Redundancy: Approaches to Spiritual Journals and Early Modern Spirituality', *HJ*, 39 (1996), 33-56; Elaine McKay, 'English Diarists: Gender, Geography and Occupation, 1500-1700', *History*, 90 (2005), 191-212.

89 Elspeth Findlay, 'Ralph Thoresby the Diarist: The Late Seventeenth-Century Pious Diary and its Demise', *SC*, 17 (2002), 108-30.

90 Matthew Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier: The Life of an Eighteenth-Century Protestant Capitalist* (New Haven and London, 2013), 2-3.

91 E. P. Thompson, 'Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context', *MH*, 1 (1972), 42.

92 Trevor Field, *Form and Function in the Dairy Novel* (Basingstoke, 1989), 31.

93 Martyn Lyons, 'French Soldiers and their Correspondence: Towards a History of Writing Practices in the

culture approach, that each step of creating a letter was accompanied by cultural meanings which the writer wanted to express to the reader, such as selecting the paper, underlining parts of the text, or self-censoring some of the contents.[94] In other words, letter-writing was the practice of the writer's thoughtful self-presentation. Moreover, each letter was communicative by its nature. It transmitted an approved self-image of the writer to the reader. This approved self-image was a product of a larger conversation between the correspondents. While some letters introduced a new issue, others were essentially responses to previous ones. Letters were then part of a negotiation between the writer and the reader, which was shaped and re-shaped by the dynamic relationships of the correspondents at a particular moment in their lives. Through this action, the writer did not just fashion his own identity upon the page, he also made an effort to adjust his reader's identity and behaviour.[95] Thus, I will read the contents of family letters in the context of the dynamic relationships of each correspondent to understand their thought-worlds when they performed their gendered roles and obligations.

This dissertation will also benefit from autobiography and memoir. These genres are particularly important when studying the family lives of the poor, especially their childhoods. While we have a number of family letters between children and parents from the upper and middling ranks, we have only few of these sources created by the poor themselves when they were young. This is because the poor only acquired literary skills relatively late in life in comparison to boys from the other social ranks. Perhaps autobiography and memoir are the most promising source material we have, which was produced by the poor themselves. However, these types of life-writings are not a faithful reflection of past childhood experiences.[96] The remarkable distance between an author's

First World War', *FH*, 17 (2003), 81; Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power*, 27.

94 Susan Whyman, *The Pen and The People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford, 2009), 19-23, Nigel Hall, 'The Materiality of Letter Writing: A Nineteenth Century Perspective', in *idem* and David Barton (eds.), *Letter Writing as a Social Practice* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2000), 91-102; Cynthia Lowenthal, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (London, 1994), 15. See also James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke, 2012); Dena Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters* (London, 2009), esp. chs. 5-7.

95 Martyn Lyons, 'Love Letters and Writing Practices: On *Ecritures Intimes* in the Nineteenth Century', *JFH*, 24 (1999), 233-36. For methodological discussions on the topic, consult Mireille Bossis and Karen McPherson, 'Methodological Journeys Through Correspondence', *YFS*, 71 (1986), 63-75; Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences', *Auto/Biography*, 12 (2004), 201-35.

96 Philippe Lejune argued that what distinguishes autobiography from other genres is the textual assertions that the author, the narrator and the protagonist are identical. The reader also believes this because there is an imaginary 'autobiographical pact' or 'contract' between the reader and the author. The contract is nothing but the assumed correspondence between the author's proper name on the title page and the first person 'I' used in the text. Lejune proposed that this is the way the author used to claim the truth of his narratives. See his, 'The Autobiographical Contract', in Tzvetan Todorov (ed.), *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader* (Cambridge, 1982), 192-223, esp. 193-202; *idem*, *On Autobiography* (Minneapolis, 1989).

childhood and the moment of text production could shape the way he changed and rewrote his memories to match his own personal purposes and the cultural values of the time.[97] In this sense, following Paul Eakin, I suggest that upon reading life-writings, it is important to look for the culturally available models of self upon which an autobiographer drew in representing himself.[98] Only then can we detect the concepts and meanings that eighteenth-century people valorised and attached to masculinity.

Nevertheless, I am not suggesting that we can have an exhaustive account of all aspects of male experiences through reading ego-documents. My analysis is grounded in the recurrent themes of men's letters home and their other life-writings. These themes are love and courtship, married life, fathering and upbringing, and the sibling bond. This is not least because men were not committed to writing about every topic. Jane Hamlett has observed in her study of nineteenth-century men's diaries and autobiographies that '[m]en tend to provide sparse accounts of their early home lives, which are frequently subordinate to a central narrative of career'.[99] Regarding family letters, Amanda Vickery notes that 'a man's letters often chiefly concerned his own illness, minor matters of law and local administration, and above all sport'.[100] Vickery also finds that there were two topics that were virtually absent from genteel women's diaries and letters: spirituality and sex. In order to conduct my own research, I surveyed the contents of personal writings in my sample collections which comprise thousands of private letters from 28 families, 10 men's diaries, and two autobiographies. The collections embrace around 112 individuals of both sexes. I can only confirm Hamlett's and Vickery's findings. Indeed, I want to extend Vickery's remark on the absence of spirituality and sex from female writings, for her observation can be neatly applied to male ego-documents too (at least in my sample collections).

However, everyone who is familiar with eighteenth-century gender history will raise quizzical eyebrows to my notion that men did not mention sex in their private writings. One can recall several passages from James Boswell's *London Journal* that contradict my claim. For instance, on 25th November 1762 Boswell recorded his 'female sport' for the first time in London: 'I picked up a girl in the Strand [&] went into a court

97 Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative* (London, 1993), 51-52.

98 Paul J. Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (Ithaca, 1999), ch.1; David Carlson, 'Autobiography', in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.), *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century History* (London and New York, 2009), esp. 182-88.

99 Jane Elizabeth Hamlett, 'Materialising Gender: Identity and Middle-Class Domestic Interiors, 1850-1910' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2005), 38. See also Polly Elizabeth Bull, 'The Reading Lives of English Men and Women, 1695-1830' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 2012), 20-25.

100 Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 10.

with intention to enjoy her in armour. […] I toyed with her. She wondered at my size, & said If I ever took a Girl's Maidenhead, I would make her squeak'.[101] Yet we must not forget that Boswell did not keep his diary for himself alone, since he transcribed its pages and sent them to his close friend William Temple regularly.[102] And, Temple was not a member of Boswell's family. Sexual boasting remained confined to all male-company.[103] However, I am not suggesting that sex was unimportant in defining masculinity. Rather, I contend that its absence from men's letters home reveals the fact that sexual prowess was not a significant aspect through which men sought to gain social recognition from their family members.

In addition, it is to be noted that in this dissertation, I deliberately downplay – although do not completely ignore – the *representational* sources, such as conduct manuals, novels, satirical prints, and the like. The reasons for this are as follow. Firstly, these sources have been exhaustively used by scholars of men's history. Thus, John Tosh has recently called for a revitalised historical approach, paying attention to behaviour and experiences.[104] Secondly, literary scholars have long questioned the 'absolute authority' of prescriptive literature in fashioning men's gendered behaviour.[105] Profligate sons are efficient proof of the limited power of the written precepts. Thirdly, most – if not *all* – conduct manuals were produced by and aimed at the gentleman. Therefore, other social groups, such as the lower middling sort and the poor, were not represented. Moreover, where the image of the poor was brought to light in this source material, the poor did not represent themselves. Rather, they were represented. This is because most of them were illiterate. Therefore, I suggest that it is far more accurate to engage with ego-documents, if we seriously intend to gain insights into men's lives, and how they themselves conceptualised gender in their lived experiences. However, where the representational sources, most notably the prescriptive literature, are mentioned in this dissertation, they are consulted in order to compare the social expectations with those of the families, and gauge the interplay between social norms and individual agency.

This study adopts a very broad division of social groupings based on wealth and social status: the gentry, the middling sort, and the labouring poor. Historians differ from

101 Gordon Turnbull (ed.), *James Boswell's London Journal, 1762-1763* (1950; London, 2010), 11.
102 *Ibid*., xxiv, 3-4.
103 On sexual boasting in all male-company as an attempt to win 'approval and admiration from other men', consult Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, 42-43.
104 Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity', 24-25.
105 See, for example, Vivien Jones, 'The Seductions of Conduct: Pleasure and Conduct Literature', in Royal Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (eds.), *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1996), 115, 123-24.

one another in defining and giving the contours of eighteenth-century society. According to G. E. Mingay, the landed gentry itself can be subdivided into the upper gentry, the lesser gentry, and the expanding group who styled themselves as 'gentlemen' which included 'lesser esquires, men of respectable lineage who had lost their estates, the better class of professional men, retired military officers, former merchants, and the like'.[106] At the opposite end of the social spectrum were the labouring poor who were employed for meagre wages (such as servants in husbandry or domestic services) as well as those who received poor relief from their parishes.[107]

The middling sort is notoriously difficult to define. Scholars agree that their circumstances and attitudes were enormously diverse.[108] Margaret Hunt argues that 'most middling people had incomes between £50 and £2,000, and the bulk of these were concentrated within the range of £80 to £150'. This amount of income was important for them to sustain a genteel (and polite) lifestyle and a level of 'independence' commensurate with middling status.[109] While Hunt gives due weight to income and investments in defining the middling sort, Jonathan Barry defines this social grouping by the nature of their occupations, covering the professions and the skilled trades (merchants, lawyers, and medical doctors), and the dirty-hand business (artisans and farmers).[110] However, Henry French has studied the middling sort of the smaller provincial towns and rural areas. He argues that it is more accurate to define this social group using the concept of 'gentility', by which he means the 'innate characteristics that ensured they, and only they, were fit to govern the rest of the social order'.[111] Given the sheer variety of the definitions, this thesis follows a broad definition proposed by Margaret Hunt, when referring to the middling sort: 'These people were beneath the gentry but above the level of the laboring classes; most of them worked for a living, although a growing number lived wholly or partially on

106 G. E. Mingay, *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (London and New York, 1976), 13-14; Quoted from Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 17. For a different definition of 'gentlemen', see Penelope J. Corfield, 'The Rivals: Landed and Other Gentleman', in Negley B. Harte and Roland Quinault (eds.), *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914: Essays in Honour of F.M.L. Thompson* (Manchester, 1996), 1-33.

107 Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, 6-8. See also Dianne Payne, 'Children of the Poor in London 1700-1780' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Hertfordshire, 2008).

108 For a detailed discussion of the difficulties in defining the middling sort, consult Craig Andrew Horner, '"Proper Persons to Deal with": Identification and Attitudes of Middling Society in Manchester, *c*1730-*c*1760' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 2001), 1-35.

109 Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 15. However, Peter Earle suggested a lower amount of income in order to define the 'middle class' in the eighteenth century. He argued that '[p]ersonal wealth of a few hundred pounds and an annual income of about £50 thus provide a lower bound for the middle station'. See his, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989), 14.

110 Jonathan Barry, 'Introduction', in *idem* and Christopher Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1994), 12-23.

111 Henry French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007), 22.

rental income and other investments'.[112]

This thesis is based on the close investigation of a series of case studies to represent a range of social ranks, incomes, geographies, professions, and periods. The dissertation uses evidence from forty-six different families, embracing 112 individuals. The source base is comprised of twelve diaries (10 male, and 2 female), two male autobiographies, and twenty-eight collections of family correspondence. The collections are preserved in 22 different archives across England, from Lewes in East Sussex to Carlisle in Cumbria, and from Norwich to Sheffield.

The individuals are drawn from various social backgrounds. At the highest level are the collections of lesser landed-gentry families, such as the Lovells from Somerset and the Senhouses from Cumberland. Lower down the social scale are letters of genteel families, such as the Rebows from Essex, the Readings from Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, and the Greenes from Lancashire. Professionals and tradesmen form the greatest part of my dissertation, and include the wealthy cotton manufacturer Joseph Strutt from Derbyshire, the wine merchant Richard Noyes from Hertfordshire, the flax merchant Thomas Langton from Lancashire, the Anglican preacher William Temple from Cornwall, and the surgeon Matthew Flinders from Lincolnshire. At the lowest level are two labouring men: the ironmonger George Newton from Durham, and Joseph Mayett from rural Quainton in Buckinghamshire who earned his living as a servant in husbandry. Religion was also a criterion in selecting these individuals. Apart from the established Anglican church, other religious sects are also included in my study to represent a wider range of the population of England: Quakerism, Methodism, Unitarianism and Baptism.[113] It is to be noted that in selecting my sample, I give priority to the archival collections which contain manuscripts produced by generations and cover different familial stations. This criterion is based on my research assumption that when a man's familial identity changed, the practices of his gendered lives changed accordingly. In addition, with this sheer variety of social ranks, denominations, and regions, this dissertation aims to find out similarities and differences of constructions and performance of masculinity in eighteenth-century England.

The dissertation focuses on the period between *c.*1700 and 1820, which forms part of what historians call the 'long' eighteenth century, *c.*1660-1820. The period itself witnessed many significant changes in the social and cultural arenas: the rise of the middling sort and the decline of the aristocracy as the cultural leader, the birth of

112 Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 15.
113 For a complete list of sources cited, see bibliography.

consumer society, the start of the industrial revolution, the growth of the British Empire, the rise of politeness, and many more. However, as we have seen in the historiographical review earlier in this chapter, it was in this 'long' eighteenth century that scholars saw the birth of modern domestic culture in which men were gradually separated from their homes and families. Supported by the idea of politeness and the British Empire, historians have long forgotten the relationships between men and their families in constructing and performing male gender. This thesis aims to test and challenge that notion, and also to show the different picture in which men and their families were closely linked.

The dissertation starts *c.*1700, partly for practical reasons. The documents that were produced by men who were born after the Restoration in 1660 seem to burgeon around 1700. These men were the first generation who grew up and prospered under, and absorbed the new cultural contexts roughly outlined in the previous paragraph. The thesis ends in 1820; when the industrial revolution started to gain its full momentum and brought with it the birth of 'middle-class' society and the new concepts of gender relations based on the Evangelical revival. This is when Britain became a major imperial power, which transformed the notions of masculinity and men's lives catalysed by the ideas of 'chivalry', 'civilisation' and 'muscular Christianity'.[114]

This thesis is structured in relation to different male identities within families. It is thus done in order to test whether eighteenth-century masculinity was confined to *one* prevailing concept: either sociability or 'oeconomy'. However, this dissertation is not a study of all aspects of male experience, but an exploration of the concerns that men expressed in their own writings. Having consulted the family archives for this thesis, I have the impression that most of the surviving documents are records of the following types of familial relationships: courtship and marriage, fatherhood and childhood, and sibling relations. Perhaps they also reflect the preoccupation of eighteenth-century men.

This dissertation opens with a particular sort of relationship which was a prerequisite to the establishment of one's own household: courtship. Historians have long shown that together with consanguinity, conjugality was also a crucial factor in choosing spouses. The chapter explores collections of love-letters and examines the prevailing concept of masculinity encoded in men's self-presentation. It aims to problematise Philip Carter's influential argument on sociable manhood in the eighteenth century. I argue that

114 See, for example, John Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914', *JBS*, 44 (2005), 330-42; *idem*, 'Domesticity and Manliness in the Victorian Middle Class: The Family of Edward Benson', in *idem* and Michael Roper (eds.), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London and New York 1991), 44-73; Cohen, '"Manners" Make the Man'.

men's capacity for maintaining the conformity between actions and protestations was the most crucial criterion in measuring their manhood. A man of sincerity, rather than a man of polite sociability, was then the code of masculine self-presentation during courtship.

Following courtship, the second chapter explores men's married lives. I agree with historians about the continuity of patriarchy as a masculine gender identity in marriage. As we shall witness right at the opening of the chapter, a man was seriously distressed when his patriarchal status was challenged by his own wife. 'I felt at the Moment what a Dupe I had been', he exclaimed. Yet I will show that men did not automatically gain their patriarchal status. Patriarchy was constructed and maintained through men's performances. Their patriarchal roles were not merely confined either to genteel behaviour or household management, as some historians have claimed. Rather, patriarchy was expressed through a range of masculine familial obligations, embodied in the role of – what I will call – 'benevolent provider', 'moral leader', 'kind protector', and 'great comforter'.

The third chapter looks at the relationships between fathers and children. In contrast to motherhood, little work has been done to explore fatherhood in this period. I will look into how paternal obligations, patriarchal expectations, and fatherly performances affected a father's life, personality and thought-world, as well as the way he interacted with his progeny. Fatherhood was then, as now, bound to pleasure and pain, joy and distress in child-rearing. Performing paternal duties could also shape a father's image in his children's eyes as well as his own character and emotions, involving anxiety, strictness, worry, readiness to protect his offspring, and playfulness. Yet, children could raise quizzical eyebrows when their fathers failed to feed, shelter and clothe their families, although this paternal failure did not necessarily result in the children's rebellion against their patriarchs. The chapter aims to show that the link between fatherly duties and a father's personality was more closely tied, than we might have admitted.

The fourth chapter deals with one of the classic themes in the historical narrative on eighteenth-century constructions of masculinity: fashioning the son's masculinity. Using conduct manuals, a score of scholars have *tirelessly* uncovered the social values which parents thought important in gendering their male progeny: knowledge, economy, religion, moral manners, self-command and many more. I will then engage myself with other type of sources, the ego-documents. The chapter's findings serve to confirm this catalogue of manly virtues. To some extent, the chapter will also extend the list of manly qualities. Yet the chapter aims to be more rigorous, and ambitiously examines the *raison*

d'être of instilling these values in boys. It argues that what parents expected in their male offspring were the attributes that transformed him into full manhood, to take care of his family and be ready for self-sacrifice, in sum, the perfect 'future patriarch'.

The final chapter looks into the relationship between brotherhood and masculinity. one of the most neglected aspects in family and gender histories. Social historians have explored sibling relations, sibling rivalry, and sibling unity in relation to family inheritance, especially among the landed families in which primogeniture was the rule. In contrast, this chapter will move away from, though not completely ignore, the relationship between inheritance and sibling relations. It explores siblinghood from a gender perspective. Central to this issue are questions of how men perceived their social status in the sibling hierarchy, how sibling obligations contributed to the way men fashioned and performed their masculinity, and how important siblings were for each other in constructing their individual characters.

Throughout the thesis, family history and men's history are brought into play in order to shed light on the meanings and practices of male gender. This connection seems to be a burgeoning field in historical narratives of the long eighteenth century. Thus, the thesis will end with an after-thought about the fruitfulness and limits of this disciplinary connection; the role of women in fashioning masculinity; and the question about change over time in gender and men's histories.

This thesis is thus structured to reflect my argument and assumption that in the eighteenth century, the constructions and performances of masculinity were not confined to only *one* prevailing concept. Even in one family, a man had more than one social identity which in turn governed his different gendered roles and obligations, and surely his masculine performances. Familial masculinity was varied in definition and practice, changing from one familial station to another. The constructions and performances of male gender within families were far more nuanced than we have admitted.

Chapter One
'[T]o make myself worthy of you':
Masculine Self-Presentation in Courtship Letters

On 23 March 1758 John Lovell, an apothecary from Bath, penned a line to his bride-to-be, Sarah Harvey of Cole Park in Wiltshire, informing her about the final arrangements for their wedding ceremony which was about to take place in a week's time at the residence of Sarah's aunt and guardian in Shaw. Before sealing the letter (which was the couple's last surviving courtship letter), the fervent bridegroom-to-be gave his future wife a tantalising glimpse of a virtue she could expect from him on the happy day:

> I intend to appear at Shaw in the same Cloaths I had on when [*damaged*] at Colepark, but you must expect to see my Body, as well as my [*damaged*] array'd with a wedding Garment at the Solemnization of our Marriage [*damaged*] which I doubt not, our Hearts as well as our Hands, will be join'd in [*damaged*] and indissoluble Union.[1]

The choice of garment was meaningful and was employed to convey the value the suitor most valorised in his relationship with his sweetheart, that is, sincerity. As Ulinka Rublack has stated, for many people in early modern Europe the act of dressing became an important 'signifying practice' through which 'people could acquire and communicate attitudes towards life and construct visual realities in relation to others'.[2] Thus, upon seeing John in 'the same Cloaths' as he wore when he first came to court her two years ago at Cole Park, Sarah would have been reminded of his unalterable self and inviolable love towards her. As a man of fidelity and sincerity was, I argue, how the suitor wanted to be recognised in the eyes of his lover up until the moment of kneeling at the altar. How men constructed and performed their sincerity to their sweethearts is the subject of this chapter.

As Anthony Fletcher remarked, men's masculinity was never more thoroughly tested at other stages of their lives than during courtship. Courtship was a prime period for fashioning, adjusting and performing their masculinity.[3] Recent work, especially on women's lives, has extended our horizon of knowledge on the negotiating processes leading up to the marriage settlement between lovers and their families. This body of research provides us with insightful information on choice, chance and consent in

1 WSA, 161/102/2 (23 Mar. 1758), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.
2 Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2010), 25.
3 Anthony Fletcher, 'Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England', *History*, 84 (1999), 419-36. For a similar view, see Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), 56.

courtship and marriage in early modern society.[4] Yet, we still know little about men's mentality during courtship: how did they experience the amatory relationship with their dearest girls? How did they arrange anxieties or hopes in their minds and consequently present themselves to their peers? What can male experiences during courtship tell us about eighteenth-century masculinity?

As I have noted in the introduction of this dissertation, current research has revealed the significance of masculinity as a social category, constructed, maintained or undermined by men's social, not sexual, performance.[5] Philip Carter has gone even further, arguing that sociability was the prevailing concept of eighteenth-century male gender identity.[6] Yet, did eighteenth-century lovers adopt sociability as the prevailing category for measuring a suitor's masculinity?

Scholars have shown that the eighteenth century witnessed a change in the mode of courtship and marriage, emphasising love-in-marriage. Ruth Perry, for example, has detected a move from consanguinity to conjugality in English literature, where individual love was increasingly acknowledged and respected by parents when the young couples made their marital choices.[7] Referring to the number of elopements, Steven King stated that financial security was not always crucial.[8] More recently, Katie Barclay has argued that '[t]he importance of economic resources in marriage negotiations did not diminish in the eighteenth century, but their use as a marker of love and value declined'. For Barclay, eighteenth-century suitors used the language of romantic love to highlight their respect for their sweethearts, while their predecessors in the previous century used economic resources.[9] Thus, in the age when romantic love enjoyed increasing influence in courtship and marriage, it is doubtful whether a suitor would have been willing to present to his

4 See, for instance, John R. Gillis, *A World of their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (New York, 1996), esp. ch. 7; *idem*, '"A Triumph of Hope over Experience": Chance and Choice in the History of Marriage', *IRSH*, 44 (1999), 47-54; *idem*, 'Conjugal Settlements: Resort to Clandestine and Common Law Marriage in England and Wales, 1650-1850', in John A. Bossy (ed.), *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West* (Cambridge, 1983), 261-86. For an example of discussion on the subject, but from the literary scholars' point of view, see Bonnie Latimer, '"Apprehensions of Controul": The Familial Politics of Marriage, Choice and Consent in Sir Charles Grandison', *JECS*, 32 (2009), 1-19.

5 See the Introduction, 23.

6 Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), 209.

7 Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge, 2004), 36, 229-35.

8 Steven King, 'Chance encounters? Paths to household formation in early modern England', *IRSH*, 44 (1999), 47-54. However, Helen Berry is of the opposite opinion, arguing for the persistence of economic resources in marriage decisions in the eighteenth century; see her, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England* (Aldershot, 2003), 78.

9 Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester, 2011), 82-83. For a similar argument, see Nicole Eustace, '"The cornerstone of a copious work": Love and Power in Eighteenth-Century Courtship', *JSH*, 34 (2001), 518-45.

beloved how much he enjoyed the sociable world, given that was perceived as a site for flirtation and fornication.

This chapter aims to problematise Carter's argument. It asks: Whether sociability was actually the dominant concept in measuring a suitor's masculinity in the period witnessing the increasing importance of the language of romantic love? And, how lovers of both sexes negotiated their genders and power within that changing framework? The chapter argues that during courtship men valorised 'sincerity', and adopted this virtue as the most crucial part of their identity when they interacted with their lovers. As it will emerge, sociability was refused by men studied here when they presented themselves to their sweethearts.

What was then 'sincerity'? As Michèle Cohen shows in her analysis of the relationship between plain-speaking, masculinity, and national character, eighteenth-century social commentators associated masculine sincerity with plain-speaking, bluntness, and taciturnity.[10] Yet Dr Johnson gave the definition of 'sincerity' as 'pure, honest, uncorrupt', and he understood 'corrupt' to be 'vicious, debauched, rotten'.[11] This definition allows us to explore the suitor's sincerity in a broader perspective, encompassing the ways the lover presented his 'honesty', and showed his 'uncorrupt' mind and non-debauched behaviour in courtship letters. All this enabled women to gauge their future husbands' virtuous qualities, and perhaps to make their reasonable decisions.

This chapter studies men's performances during courtship. Some men reflected on their experiences and recorded them in their private diaries. However, by their nature, diaries record a personal point of view and lack the dialogue of courtship correspondence. Moreover, men's diaries may try to interpret female behaviour, but their lovers offer no direct testimony. Consequently, we rarely have direct evidence of women's roles in shaping men's behaviour during courtship, recorded from a female viewpoint. Therefore, this chapter primarily uses courtship letters, as they furnish the dialogue of courtship correspondence. The chapter explores the correspondence of seventeen couples, covering the period from 1700 to 1820. The individuals are drawn from various social backgrounds, from an Anglican curate in Westmorland to a naval commander-in-chief, and from a wine merchant in Hertfortshire to a successful Presbyterian cotton-manufacturer in Derbyshire. Some engaged in the sociable world; others did not. The

10 Michèle Cohen, 'Manliness, Effeminacy and the French: Gender and the Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-Century England', in *idem* and Tim Hitchcock (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 1999), 44-61.

11 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1785), 'sincerity', 'corrupt'.

sample selection is aimed to test Carter's argument on polite masculinity.

Unfortunately, most surviving love-letters were written by men. This archival fact proves, at first sight, to be a drawback that might hinder historians from gaining an insight into women's own testimony. However, to a certain degree, surviving male letters can provide valuable clues for historians to gain information on female roles during courtship. For example, in 1757 John Lovell sought to win the heart of Sarah Harvey whose aunt opposed their attachment. John's letter reveals much about Sarah's role in helping him to gain her aunt's consent. John wrote:

> The opening my Letter to your Aunt is what you have my full Excuse for, even before You ask'd it; yet I confess upon Review that the Thing startles me more than a little, [...]. If You did it by Accident, it is well; -- if by Design, from your Apprehensions that I might have express'd myself in it after such Manner, as wou'd prejudice the Success of my Intentions towards You, most truly You was not only welcome, but I thank you very much for it, esteeming it a most kind Action in You.[12]

Although none of Sarah's direct testimony survives, we learn from John's letter that she was apt to seize the opportunity to promote their relationship before her aunt's eyes without waiting for her suitor's suggestion or command. This was a prudent girl whom John was courting and in whom he saw the promise of matrimonial happiness. Women's ink might not survive; the impression of their actions in men's lives does. Historians need to find an appropriate way to reconstruct it, although female epistles have disappeared from the archives.[13]

Finally, it is to be noted that this chapter does not study men's 'genuine' emotions of love, but men's self-presentation to win their ladies' hearts. Upon reading eighteenth-century courtship letters, we cannot assume that love-letters simply reflect couples' 'genuine' feelings. Scholars have suggested that in the early modern period courtship was not always about romantic love between couples. David Cressy's pioneering work on multi-faceted consent showed that parents, kinsmen, friends and neighbours also played a key role in matchmaking. The suitors' social status, fortunes and reputation were closely scrutinised by their peers.[14] Furthermore, Amanda Vickery has recently suggested that 'the intensity of men's longing for marriage and domesticity is the overriding impression

12 WSA, 161/102/2 (9 Jul. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.

13 For an example of the destruction of female letters, see Margot Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture in England *c.* 1760-1860', *HJ*, 39 (1996), 77 fn. 43. Susan Whyman provides various interpretations of why female letters rarely survive. See her, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford, 2009), 42-44.

14 David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1999). Also consult, Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, 2000); *idem*, "Ruled by my friends': Aspects of Marriage in the Diocese of Canterbury, c. 1540-1570', *C&C*, 6 (1991), 9-41; Richard Wall, 'Beyond the Household: Marriage, Household Formation and the Role of Kin and Neighbours', *IRSH*, 44 (1999), 55-67.

their diaries convey, a desire not just for sex and services, but also for a continuity of female companionship and a centred domestic life'.[15] Vickery's argument enables us, for example, to understand Rev. Thomas Naish's successive courtships, after the death of his first wife in April 1711. Although he had been married to her for seventeen years, Rev. Naish started to look for a new wife soon after his first had passed away. In June 1711 he courted a certain Mrs. Sarah Ware, 'but it came to nothing'. Five months later, in November 1711, he courted Mrs. Joan Sweet and finally married her the following month.[16] Had Rev. Naish ever written love-letters to both Sarah and Joan, we can hardly believe that there was a correlation between his feeling and writing. Thus, we should be suspicious of men's love-letters and their love utterances. The love-letter was therefore not always the unvarnished record of every suitor's true love. Some romantic expressions could mirror the writer's beating heart. Others could be more like a composition to please the suitor's chosen object, a means to an end.[17] This was a context in which eighteenth-century love-letters were composed. Therefore, rather than searching for how men presented their 'genuine' feelings in courtship letters, it is more important to find out what the couples expected to read in the love-letters and how men performed this to please their significant others.

* * * *

In the eighteenth century the love-letter was an indispensable part of courtship. As Robert Darnton argued in his analysis of Rousseau's sentimental readership, '[l]iving cannot be distinguished from reading, nor loving from the writing of love letters. Indeed, the lovers teach one another how to read just as they teach one another love'.[18] Thus, love-letters were not transparent records of lovers' feelings; rather, they were instrumental in fashioning ideal lovers, a process performed by the lovers themselves. As we shall see, women used men's letter-writing to measure not only their affection, but also their quality of trustworthiness. The rules on exchanging letters constantly and men's vows and protestations put them and their behaviour under women's scrutinising eyes. To an extent, this empowered women in the hierarchical relationship, although this does not necessarily

15 Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009), 82.

16 Doreen Slatter (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Naish* (Hereford, 1965), 72.

17 For the cultural rules of composing love-letters, see Fay Bound, 'Writing the Self?: Love and the Letter in England, c. 1660-1760', *L&H*, 11 (2002), 1-19.

18 Robert Darnton, 'Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensitivity', in *idem*, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London, 1984), 221.

mean that they enjoyed the 'season of [their] supremacy',[19] for men too were apt to exercise their power to control women's conduct in the name of love and sincerity.

Love-letters were naturally written when direct physical contact was impossible for the couples. This was an occasion for lovers to perform their fidelity towards one another. In an age when there was no other option for communication at a distance, any pair subject to separation had to nourish themselves chiefly by letter-writing.[20] In these circumstances, eighteenth-century lovers found a way to console themselves by exchanging letters. In 1716, as Mary Cranston (1696-1762) momentarily left her suitor, the town-clerk and solicitor John Collier (1685-1760), alone in Hastings, his loneliness forced him to put pen to paper. John wrote to Mary that '[t]ho' I had not your permission to Write, it Would almost be a crime in you [...] not to pardon me, [...] itt's doeing what is or can bee the most pleasing and agreeable in your absence'. Similarly, as the famous naval commander, Lord Nelson, urged his future wife, Mrs. Frances Nisbet, in 1785, '[d]on't think me rude by thus entering into a correspondence with you, consider that separation from the objects we esteem lose some of its pangs by a mutual unreserved correspondence. Therefore if you think it right let me now and then be favoured with a few lines'.[21] These discourses suggest that the comforting role of love letters was well recognised by eighteenth-century lovers.

Moreover, Georgian lovers valorised their letters and associated them with a sign of 'Inviolable esteem & affection'. John Collier declared in 1716 that 'I pursue [letter-writing] & Heaven knows itt's done with pleasing Sincerity Ardent desires &c'.[22] The belief in encoding inviolable affection into love-letters was well illustrated in one love letter written by the assize Charles Pratt (1713-1794), to Elizabeth Jeffreys (d. 1779). In late winter of 1749, when the weather was still 'extreamly Cold', Pratt sent his beloved an epistle to warm her with his 'most burning Love' which was – without doubt – embodied in 'the Post':

> I think I see you shrinking by ye fire sick with ye heed half up ye Chimney, shivering &

19 Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 58, 47.

20 See, for example, CKS, U840/C9/11 (28 Feb. 1748), Elizabeth Jeffreys to Chrales Pratt: '[P]arting from you one of my Temper is hard to bear. [...] It proceeded from Love, which I again assure you was the cause of it'. Also see various examples of how eighteenth-century people used love-letters to sustain their relationships in Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke, 2006), 93-124; Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, *Women's Lives and the 18th-Century English Novel* (Tampa, 1991), ch. 3. For an example of an analysis of nineteenth-century American love-letters, see Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York and Oxford, 1989).

21 ESRO, SAY/1458 (3 May 1716), John Collier, Hasting, to Mary Cranston; George P. B. Naish (ed.), *Nelson's Letters to His Wife and Other Documents, 1785-1831* (London and Colchester, 1958), 17.

22 ESRO, SAY/1458 (3 May 1716), John Collier, Hasting, to Mary Cranston. Also see Naish (ed.), *Nelson's Letters*, 25.

> miserable: If my love cd warm you at this distance, you shd have no occasion for fire, but in spite of what ye Poets say upon this occasion, a Coal fire is a better relief to sensible cold than ye most burning Love that ever was conveyed by the Post.[23]

How could the love-letter be associated with 'Inviolable esteem & affection'? Conventionally, as scholars have suggested, contemporary letter-writing manuals instructed a perfect gentleman correspondent not to fail in assuring his sweetheart of his sincere love.[24] This could be only a formality, an insignificant expression for non-lovers. However, it was indeed significant for eighteenth-century lovers, as both men and women proclaimed that their lovers' assurances of love in letters made them happy.[25] Likewise, as Roland Barthes, a French literary scholar, has suggested, I-love-you and other love utterances 'can be understood by everyone [...], but [...] can be heard (received "prophetically") only by subjects who have *exactly and right now* the same language'.[26]

Since the love-letter was associated with inviolable affection, it is no wonder that some perfect suitors, eagerly showed their beloved that they esteemed letter-writing as an honourable duty. Lord Nelson, for instance, related in a letter to his illicit love, Lady Emma Hamilton, his disobedience of his physician's advice not to write due to a problem with his eyes:

> My eye is very bad. I have had the physician of the fleet to examine it. He has directed me not to write, (and yet I am forced, this day, to write to Lord Spencer, St Vincent, Davidson about my lawsuit, Troubridge, Mr Locker, etc., but you are the only female I write to;)[27]

Lord Nelson's narrative is telling. Not only did he risk his health for the sake of letter-writing, but he also implied that he did it because of responsibility. Interestingly, among a series of letters he produced that night, one was for Emma. In this context, Lord Nelson was considering the composition of love-letters as one of his duties. Moreover, by listing his recipients' names, Lord Nelson would have intended to imply to Emma that her position was second to none, of an equal standing to the rank of a 'Lord'.

Just as eighteenth-century lovers encoded sincere love and amorous duty in the action of composing love-letters, so any failure to pen a line constantly and without delay would be condemned as a sign of being negligent and insincere. Female lovers were highly sensitive to silence. As a young Westmorland curate, Thomas Brockbank (1671-

23 CKS, U 840/C1/9 (15 Mar. 1749), Charles Pratt, Exon, to Elizabeth Pratt, London.
24 Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters*, 95-110; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 47.
25 For example, WSA, 161/102/2 (18 Jun. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw: I was honour'd with your obliging Letter of last Night, for which I sincerely thank You, and do intreat that Favour to me often, for the Light of every one which comes from you friendly Hand will infallably [*sic*] give me real satisfaction.'; Robert Wickson (ed.), *Nelson's Love Letters to Lady Hamilton: A Collection of Full Text Letters, 1798-1805* (Ferndown, 2005), 35: 'They [i.e. 'your dear letters'] are my comfort, joy, and delight'.
26 Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1979), 212.
27 Wickson (ed.), *Nelson's Love Letters*, 22.

1732), failed in 1702 to write to Elizabeth Wittingham after a month's silence, she bewailed: 'I thought You would have let me have heard from You once in a months time, [...] but I find yt wch is out of yr Sight is out of yr Mind: But I must tell You it is not so wth me'. One anonymous noble-lady threatened her illicit admirer in 1718, saying 'I hope now you will not faill writeing one poste, I shall take itt unkindly of you if you do', and in another letter she begged him to write to her constantly; otherwise, she 'shou'd suspect you of nott being sincere, for you have often said that you shou'd be concerned to make me unneasy, and I am sure that is very naturell, if one Loves'.[28] In 1788, a young Derbyshire lady, Isabella Douglas (1769-1802), enquired of her suitor, a Presbyterian cotton-trader Joseph Strutt (1765-1844), the reason for his long silence. She pointed out that his silence was nothing but a sign of his changing affection: 'I must confess I often think our feelings are not mutual, or they would be actuated by the same principle, & you would never for such a length of time neglect me. I have now your last letter before me where you say I must not judge from appearance, of what then can I judge? or how can I be assured that your opinions are unchanged?'[29] Therefore, a perfect gentleman had to convey his inviolable affection by mailing his sweetheart constantly lest he appeared as a lukewarm lover or, even worse, a deceiver in her eyes.

Not only was the regularity of correspondence significant in demonstrating a man's sincerity, but also the length of the letter. Just as women identified love with the love-letter, so its brevity was a sign of limited love. This helps us to understand women's lamentations over men's laconic letters. When Elizabeth Jeffreys came back from her excursion in 1748, she wrote, 'the first thing I did was to run to my Aunt, & ask her for your Letter, & open'd it with great Eagerness, but was so Disappointed at the shortness of it'. Likewise, we learned from Joseph Strutt's letter to Isabella Douglas that she preferred a long letter to a short one: 'If you measure my affection by the length of my letter, my dearest girl, or judge of it by their frequency, you may possibly form as wrong an opinion in the first instance, as you assuredly do in the latter'.[30] The long silence and the short

28 Richard Trappes-Lomax (ed.), *The Diary and Letter Book of the Rev. Thomas Brockbank, 1671-1709* (Aberdeen, 1930), 232; WSRO, Add Mss 40,439/1 (11 Sep. [?1718]), anon. noble-lady to anon. nobleman; WSRO, Add Mss 40,439/2 (n.d.), same to same.

29 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/5/16/2 (1 May 1788), Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook, to Joseph Strutt, Derby; see also NRO, BOL 2/4/2 (6 Feb. 1772), Elizabeth Reading, Woodstock, to Edward Leathes, Bury St. Edmunds; see also NRO, BOL 2/4/22 (12 Dec. 1772), same to same: 'Why then should I any longer continue in this cruel state of suspence [...] Poor Patience is now quite worn out & Reason is through headlong from her Throne [...] [L]et me assure you that I should not have made these professions was I not fully convinc'd in my own mind that your long silence is not owing to neglect, [...] It is now a Month since the date of your last'.

30 CKS, U840/C9/16 (6 Aug. 1748), Elizabeth Jeffreys to Charles Pratt; BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/4 (18 Jun. 1787), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Doughlas, Sandy Brook.

letter were taboos for every perfect suitor.

Moreover, constant mailings also functioned as a measure of masculine trustworthiness. When an anonymous noble-lady was tired of waiting for a love letter which her lover had promised to send her in 1718, she blamed her suitor, saying that 'I wish you wou'd consider before you speake'. 'If you dont keep your word with me, [...], you cannot in Justice expect I shou'd do any thing for you'. She continued, 'pray My Dearest Lord write to me every opportunity, I had no Letter from you by the Coachman, I was in hopes I shou'd though you writ by the Poste'.[31] Here we have a discourse of promising and keeping one's word. As scholars have suggested, the period after the Restoration witnessed the watershed in changing codes of masculine virtues, *inter alia* the idea of reputation. True reputation was no longer founded upon military or physical prowess, as it had been in the previous centuries. Rather, reputation and credibility were measured by a man's personal character, especially his capacity for keeping his own word and pleasing his significant others. Dr Johnson gave the definition of 'reputation' as being 'Character of good or bad' and 'Credit; honour'.[32] Vera Nünning, a literary scholar, pointed out that the middling ranks emphasised the importance of truthfulness, candour and honesty as the new superior virtues over the older aristocratic ideal of military prowess, which gradually lost its influence as a leading moral code of manners in society.[33] This was a new cultural concept which evolved in accordance with the advent of a 'polite and commercial' society in which personal credit played a key role in defining an individual's behaviour and his economic role.[34] In this context, if an eighteenth-century gentleman earned his dignity from his civil reputation, his lack of capacity for keeping his vows would undermine his masculine virtue. In this regard, the love-letters analysed here suggest that a suitor failing to write to his lover constantly according to his vows would be perceived by his beloved not only as an insincere gallant, but also as a man of untrustworthiness whose reputation was to be suspected.[35]

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31 WSRO, Add Mss 40,439/4 (n.d.), anon. noble-lady to anon. nobleman; WSRO, Add Mss 40,439/5 (22 Sep. [?1718], same to same.

32 Johnson, *Dictionary*, 'reputation'.

33 Vera Nünning, 'From 'Honour' to 'Honest': The Invention of the (Superiority of the) Middling Ranks in Eighteenth-Century England', *JSBC*, 2 (1995), 21.

34 For historical surveys on honour, see John Gillingham, 'From *Civilitas* to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England', *TRHS*, 12 (2002), 267-89; Donna T. Andrew, 'The Code of Honour and its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England 1700-1850', *SH*, 5 (1980), 409-34; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex & Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995), 323-25. For an analysis of relationship between personal honour, professional credit and commercial society, see Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge, 2003).

35 Anthropologist, Frank Henderson Stewart, emphasises the importance of honour and reputation as integral components of social relations, and calls for a more in-depth exploration of a nexus between a

Moreover, if power is understood as one's capability to control others, male epistolary deficiency seemed to be an occasion for lovers to negotiate their position in the gender hierarchy. As we have seen, women valorised the rules of exchanging letters, and therefore tended to blame their lukewarm lovers on this occasion which in turn tipped the scale in favour of female supremacy. In 1772, a tepid young Oxonian, Edward Leathes (d. 1788), courted a young Norfolk lady, Elizabeth Reading, but often failed to pen her a line. In one letter, Elizabeth implicitly questioned not only his heart but also his honesty:

> Your Letter arriv'd but just in time to relieve me from a terrible fright I had been in for some days past, for it was so long since I heard from you, that I begun to be alarm'd, & thought some very bad accident had happen'd to render you incapable of writing. [...] I assure you I should not have made it, but to shew you the natural weakness & timidity of our Sex & how apt we are to anticipate danger. Believe me I had no other suspicions but of your health & safety, I know your Heart is too honest to let you deceive & am perfectly satisfyed on that account.[36]

As we have seen, women interpreted men's epistolary absence as infidelity. It would be too naive to believe that Elizabeth really considered Edward's long silence as a sign of his probable illness which rendered her 'a terrible fright'. Rather, her words must have been to disguise her 'suspicions' of his infidelity. By (literally) underlining that she was convinced of his honest heart, Elizabeth was attempting to use her statement to forestall his probable unfaithfulness. Perhaps, it even implied that she simply did not believe him. If Edward did not want to be condemned as a deceiver, he had to show Elizabeth his unalterable love by mailing her constantly. Just as eighteenth-century male credibility was founded upon keeping vows and pleasing peers, so a man who was considered to be a deceiving gallant, who flirted but did not write, would be deprived of his full virtuosity. In this context, Edward's masculinity was to be judged by Elizabeth according to his own behaviour towards her. It was, in this sense, the female who conferred, or denied, the male's gendered identity.

Since women could blame their lukewarm lovers for their insincerity and untrustworthiness, which would likely challenge the gender hierarchy, several men were shrewd enough to pre-empt such an unfavourable judgement. Thus, they did not hesitate to beg their lovers' pardon for being long silent or writing only short letters. A town-clerk, John Collier, was obsessed with excusing himself for his succinct epistles: 'I am sure My Dear Will pardon the shortness of this letter [...] &, on that hopes I promise to give my selfe More pleasure & Satisfaction In Writeing longer Next Post', wrote John in 1716.[37]

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sense of personal honour and the perception of one's character and action in the eyes of others; see his, *Honour* (Chicago, 1994), 1-29.

36 NRO, BOL 2/4/4 (25 Mar. 1772), Elizabeth Reading, Woodstock, to Edward Leathes, Strampshaw.

37 ESRO, SAY/1467 (12 Feb. 1716), John Collier to Mary Cranston.

Some men were astute enough to admit failure before being blamed by their sweethearts. Having penned no line to Mrs. Elizabeth Leathes for a month, Edward Peach, a Kentish attorney, started his letter in September 1789 with a humble excuse: 'I acknowledged I must take some shame to myself for the long delay I have taken in answering your Letters; which was more from the want of doing it with propriety and satisfaction than any slight or disrespect to you'.[38] His strategy is significant. He preferred accepting his guilt himself to letting her seize the opportunity to blame him, which would in turn question his trustworthiness. This would in effect undermine his manliness, since a deceiving gallant was not only a lover-*sine*-sincerity, but the quality of his gender could also be questioned.

* * * *

Being a devoted correspondent was not adequate if a suitor aimed to win a lady's heart. The style and content of his letters counted too. Scholars have stressed the relationship between language and gender identity. Margaret Hunt notes that male verbal restraint was closely linked with the middle-class linguistic taste for plain interaction, which was the opposite to the lavish style of the aristocracy. Similarly, Amanda Vickery suggests that in composing love-letters men heavily relied on '[a] neo-classical reserve' and 'self-conscious affectation' recommended by letter-writing manuals of the time. However, Vickery argues that this intertextuality is 'notoriously difficult to substantiate. Evidence on the reception of texts is exceptionally hard to secure'.[39] In contrast, Fay Bound has recently challenged this argument, pointing out Vickery's treatment of 'letters and diaries as unproblematic mediators of inner experience'. Bound has gone further, arguing that historians continue to view love-letters as 'fixed representations of subjectivity, stabilised by the underscoring of an author's name', rather than – what she has postulated – as 'fictional constructs, or as textual spaces undergoing revision in the construction of "self-hood"'.[40] Admittedly, historians agree on the influence of linguistic models on male self-presentation. However, they differ from one another in identifying the limit of the lover's discourse as a direct testimony of an individual's inner character.

Yet, was the language of romantic love always the interplay between letter-writing

38 NRO, BOL 2/140/? (29 Sep. 1789), Edward Peach, Sevenoaks, to Elizabeth Leathes.
39 Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), 201-2; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 56-8, 70-1.
40 Bound, 'Writing the Self?', 4.

manuals and letter-writers? Were there any levels of individual agency when suitors crafted their own expressions to highlight their loyalty to their sweethearts? Sally Holloway has recently explored the linguistic repertoire which eighteenth-century lovers used to conceptualise their romantic feelings. This embraced the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, sentimental fictions, scientific and medical discourses. Holloway argues that the relationship between love language, texts and self-expression was far from straightforward. She points out that '[w]riters often seem to have quoted certain texts unconsciously, perhaps because they were reading them at the time. A multiplicity of forces shaped the language they chose, including the writer's gender, education, the circumstances of production, and letters by other writers'.[41] Although Holloway acknowledges individual agency in crafting love-letters, she does not sufficiently demonstrate how 'the circumstances of production' of the letters in her sample influenced the way in which the lovers articulated their affection. Therefore, we still know little when, why and to what end people chose to quote or deploy a particular discourse.[42]

What follows is my attempt to analyse certain techniques which men repeatedly adopted to present their sincerity. Three themes were inextricably spun together to form a lexical web of the masculine symbolic language of fidelity: the man's sweetheart as the centre of his happiness, his denial of the homosocial world, and his nonchalance about sociable activities. As we shall see, men indeed relied on the linguistic repertoire of letter-writing manuals, particularly for the first theme. Yet, more crucially, they turned to their own self-crafted language – for the second and the third themes – to present their loyalty more powerfully. The popularity of this self-invented *motif* of sincerity suggests that the suitor valorised fidelity as the prime inner virtue deserving a particular manner (not to be found in letter-writing manuals) to convince his beloved. Perhaps, historians can better understand the suitor's mentality when they move away from matching letters and manuals and look into men's self-crafted language.

At the centre of the language of fidelity stood men's assertion that their felicity depended on their sweethearts. Its connotation is to suggest that nobody or nothing else could render the suitor happier than his darling. In a letter dated February 16th 1716, a

41 Sally Anne Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects during Courtship and Adultery *c*. 1730 to 1830' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2013), ch. 5, quoted from p. 166.

42 For proof of my criticism of Holloway's analysis, compare – for example – my interpretation of how John Lovell mentioned his dream in his love-letters to his sweetheart, Sarah Harvey, with Holloway's examination of the same author. Whereas I give a full context in which that letter was produced and why the writer would have mentioned his imaginary vision to his lover, Holloway does not mention any circumstances in which the letter was crafted. See Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects', 177, and see below in this chapter for my own analysis, pp. 64-65.

town-clerk John Collier wrote to Mary Cranston:

> I doe Assure You that I never thought of a Valentine or of the day till I read your letter but noe doubt I could not have fix'd on a more compleater then You Mark'd out for me.[43]

Although none of Mary's letters survive, we can presume that in her previous letter she must have raised the topic of Valentine's day to John. Perhaps, she enquired of him his activities on that day.[44] Whether or not he was really ignorant of the festival, we shall never know. However, he consoled her with his assertion that she was the only person who could complete his life.

Unlike John Collier's sophisticated line, other lovers simply followed letter-writing manuals, reproducing the discourse 'my-happiness-centres-on-you'. First, witness samples from the manuals. *The Complete Letter-Writer* (1757) provided ideal choices: 'I cannot be well till I see you, which, if I be with your usual charming Gaiety, I shall be the most bless'd of Mortals'.[45] Likewise, *The Complete Art of Writing Love Letters* (1795) instructed the male correspondent to conclude his love-letters by emphasising what his happiness was centred on:

> [I]t is impossible, I perceive, to turn off the mind at once from an object which it has long dwelt upon with pleasure. My heart, like a poor bird which is hunted from her nest, is still returning to the place of its affections; and, after some vain efforts to fly off, settles again, where all its cares, and all its tenderness, are centred.[46]

The model was vividly echoed in several surviving love-letters. In 1757, the apothecary John Lovell from Bath concluded his letter by begging Sarah Harvey to remember that '[m]y own Felicity is connected with yours'. Invariably, this can be found in the discourse of James M. Macnabb, a captain of the East India Company, when he wrote to Jane Campbell in 1820: 'Remember that all my happiness most vitally depends on the continuance to you of that blessing'.[47] The linguistic repertoire was already at hand for suitors to follow or copy to express their honesty.

Yet, the popularity of such a discourse might lose its power to convince women of male fidelity, perhaps simply because anyone could copy the model too easily (and thus it was worn into a cliché). Take the cotton-manufacturer Joseph Strutt as an example. Although he usually sealed his letters to Isabella Douglas with the discourse 'my-happiness-centres-on-you', his protestations were questioned by her. In 1788, having been

43 ESRO, SAY/1469 (16 Feb. 1716), John Collier to Mary Cranston.

44 Alan Macfarlane provided an example of earlier references of the relationship between Valentine's day, romantic love and marriage which dated from the fifteenth century; see his, *Marriage and Love in England, 1300-1840: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (New York and Oxford, 1986), 198.

45 Anon., *The Complete Letter-Writer* (London, 1757), 142.

46 Anon., *The Complete Art of Writing Love Letters* (London, 1795), 7.

47 WSA, 161/102/2 (3 Jan. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw; BL, Mss Eur F206/109 (4 Mar. 1820), James M. Macnabb to Jane Campbell.

neglected by Joseph for a while, Isabella finally wrote to him, saying that 'you may sometimes steal a few moments, to convince me I am not forgotten, & to cement in stronger bonds that friendship, & mutual confidence [...] but which in our present state is not likely to be encreased we living in a manner strangers to each other'.[48] Following the language repertoire alone would not help men to convince their sweethearts.

Thus, men needed to shore up their protestations by using other linguistic techniques which were not influenced by letter-writing manuals: the denial of the homosocial world and nonchalance towards sociable activities. In the eighteenth century, monied bachelors spent many happy hours in coffee-houses, chop-houses and other commercial venues, such as shopping streets and assembly rooms.[49] Therefore, the discourses suggest that to demonstrate their fidelity, the devoted suitor re-presented himself as a man secluding himself from the sociable world. In 1703, Richard Noyes, a wine merchant in Hertfordshire, courted Elizabeth Duppa. Having parted from her for a while, Richard assured Elizabeth that 'for your sake I have disoblig'd most of those Gentlemen I us'd to converse with without being in the least concern'd at it; I confess to them, my being detain'd by more powerful charms than all the society on Earth is able to give'.[50] Clearly, Richard was attempting to show Elizabeth that the state of being in love had transformed his modes of seeking pleasure. Yet, I am not suggesting that men really secluded themselves as they told their sweethearts. Perhaps, they frequented coffee-houses without revealing this to their lovers, since it did not conform to the symbolic language of loyalty. However, this masculine retirement was obviously adopted as a sign of fidelity, or perhaps as a promise that they would make a good husband. In this regard, we can say that from men's language in love-letters it seems as if for them, being in love marked out a distinguished stage in men's lives: from men-about-town conversing with same-sex company to men dedicating themselves to reclusive devoted love.[51]

Another strategy men adopted to express their loyalty towards their sweethearts

48 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/5/16/2 (1 May 1788), Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook, to Joseph Strutt, Derby.

49 For accounts of bachelor's lives and their activities, see Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, ch. 2; Philip Carter, 'Men about Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century Urban Society', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow, 1997), 31-57.

50 HALS, D/EGp/C1/15 (26 Feb. 1703/4), Richard Noyes to Elizabeth Duppa. See also BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/28 (31 Jul. 1791), Joseph Strutt, Brighton, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook: '[I]f I have this opinion of it now, when Races Balls Play, & every kind of dessipation seems to give life & spirit to the most dull & inanimate, I know not what I should think of it when it has lost these powers of attraction'.

51 An investigation of juvenile drinking culture in Holland's Golden Age has recently shown that Dutch men started to refrain themselves from socialising in the homosocial world when they adopted the identity of a lover or a devoted husband, see Benjamin B. Roberts, *Sex and Drugs* before *Rock 'n' Roll: Youth Culture and Masculinity during Holland's Golden Age* (Amsterdam, 2012), 76-90.

was asserting their indifference towards sociability. 'I was Last night at ye Assembly:', related a young assize Charles Pratt on one of his dull evenings to his lover in July 1749, 'There was a great deal of good Company & some Handsome women as I was told; for you are not to suppose I have any eye for beauty in your absence. I neither played nor danced' there. A good fourteen days later, he 'escaped the irksome amusement of sauntering about ye Room & looking at Women I don't care for: For without descanting upon beauty or comparing your person with others, I assure you, no other Women Living gives me the uneasiness of Wish.'[52] Patently, Charles was endeavouring to accentuate that his enervation in the assembly rooms was inextricably intertwined with his indifference 'toward other women since I began to Love you.'[53] In other words, the devotion of his love was encoded in his disenchantment toward sociable activities.

Similar language can be found in many polite gentlemen's letters, dating from the second half of the century onwards, as the assemblies became more popular. The apothecary John Lovell informed Sarah Harvey about his life in Bath in 1757, in which he emphasised his feeble enthusiasm for a ball:

> We had a Ball that Evening, and a very agreeable Partner fell to my Lot, but I fear I cou'd not make myself so to her. I well remember the Time when nothing cou'd delight me more than such Entertainment, and so good Company; but I now find the Case is greatly alter'd with me. Nothing affords me its accustom'd Satisfaction; nor have I Pleasure in any Thing, but the still existing Hope, that the Time will soon come, when all Doubts and Impediments will vanish, and happily give Place to universal Approbation and Consent: when my Intentions towards You will be as clear as the Light, and the Integrity of my Dealings as the Noon-day.[54]

No historian would take John Lovell's narrative as the unvarnished, unmediated truth. In fact, John wrote this amidst a crisis in his courtship with Sarah Harvey, as her aunt disagreed with their attachment and exerted herself to dissolve their relationship by blowing bad rumours about John into Sarah's ears.[55] This forced John to take action. He accepted in the same letter that 'I send this Letter unseal'd in One to Your Aunt purposely for her to have a Reading of it, in great Hopes that it may effectually dissipate all her Doubts concerning me'.[56] Just as his sending the unsealed letter was *purposeful*, so was his letter-writing. Therefore, rather than expecting transparency in his letter, we should pay attention to the purpose of his epistolary composition. Obviously, John mentioned his boredom in the assembly room in order to emphasise that only in his beloved could he

52 CKS, U840/C1/20 (7 Jul. 1749), Charles Pratt to Elizabeth Jeffreys, London; CKS, U840/C1/23 (15 Jul. 1749), Charles Pratt, Dorchester, to Elizabeth Jeffreys, London.
53 CKS, U840/C1/19 (6 Jul. 1749), Charles Pratt, Winton, to Elizabeth Jeffreys, London.
54 WSA, 161/102/2 (9 Jul. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.
55 For the tension between John Lovell and Sarah Harvey's aunt, Mrs. Smith, see correspondence between Lovell and Mrs. Smith in the collection: WSA, 161/102/1.
56 WSA, 161/102/2 (9 Jul. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.

find a perfect state of happiness. Similarly, the star-crossed and pauperised Rev. Charles Powlett (1764-1834) from Hampshire grasped at the language of indifference towards sociability in order to reinstate his trustworthiness, which was perhaps his sole virtue that he could highlight to make himself worthy of his future wife. In a letter sent to Miss Anne Temple (1772-1827) and her family, he recounted the balls he had attended:

> The Prince of Wales gave a most superb Ball last Friday [...] On Friday next Sir H. Sr. John Mildmay gives a Ball to the Prince [...] & on tomorrow svennight the Duchess will give a Ball here [...] Pray give my Love to your Father & Mother, assure them that my Brains are not turn'd by the Gaiety of the Scenes around me & that I would rather pass my time, & that I should enjoy a much greater pleasure in the Society of their Daughter upon the top of St Nicholl's Mount than I shall ever do in her absence though following Royal Stag-hounds, or mixing with Starts & Garters in a Ballroom.[57]

Ball after ball was listed here. But, no other 'Gaiety' or amusements could divert his loyalty from his beloved Anne. His heart was solely concentrated on her. The assembly room once again formed part of the language of fidelity, not peculiar to eighteenth-century polite gentlemen.

Moreover, the courtship letters of John Lovell and Rev. Charles Powlett studied in the previous paragraph bring us to an issue of how far individual discourses became cultural norms. The intended audience of these letters was wider than the writers' lovers. It embraced their sweethearts' parents and kin. Perhaps these two suitors wanted to highlight their fidelity towards their darlings to gain multi-faceted consent from their lovers' families and guardians, else why these ill-starred suitors resort to bring to light their feeble enthusiasm for sociable activities? This strategic performance suggests that the symbolic language of the disenchantment toward sociable activities was not confined to the lovers themselves. Rather, the language would also have power to convince broader audience. These letters testified the wider recipient's complicity in the shared language of polite men's sincerity.

Doubtless, we can never know whether men experienced balls and other amusements as dull as they narrated. Far more significant however, is the question of why men grasped at such a language to stress their fidelity. As scholars suggest, the assembly room was one of the commercial venues for sociable activities. On the one hand, assembly rooms were initially invented as a polite arena in which eighteenth-century men and women conversed with one another to polish their civil morality and manners. On the other hand, assembly rooms were, as the century wore on, gradually associated with moral decadence, since young people of both sexes frequented the

57 HRO, 72M92/7/9 (25 Jan. 1791), Charles Powlett, Hackwood, to Anne Temple, St Gluvias.

assembly rooms not only to socialise, but also to flirt with one another.[58] Moreover, the assemblies were also questioned by contemporary moralists, since they usually hosted masquerade balls which were culturally condemned as scenes of 'flaming Debauchery'. One moralist reflected on this as early as 1721. 'A masquerade is', he commented:

> an open scene of Outrageous and flaming Debauchery, where Temptation is passionately courted, the wanton Imagination indulged to the last degree, so that none who go there return from thence chaste and innocent.[59]

Thus, in the contemporary perception masquerades, balls and assemblies were associated with the sexual adventures of men-about-town. Therefore, if men did not want to be perceived by their lovers as insincere, they would have to highlight their personal negation of these sociable activities.

Yet, one might argue that this love language could have operated at the expense of the presiding eighteenth-century concept of manliness. As specified by John Locke, one of the authoritative sponsors of polite society, dancing 'gives graceful Motions all the Life, and above all Things, Manliness'.[60] Accordingly, by eighteenth-century standards a man's retreat from polite dancing company could have undermined his own manliness in his peers' eyes. However, in courtship letters a man's significant peer was his own beloved for whom his assurances of fidelity were paramount. Much more esteemed were men of trueheartedness than those of sociability. Thus, in a particular situation, a man's gender identity could be altered, depending on the relation to his significant others, and particular moment in his life (as it is still possible that men enjoyed sociability at different points).

It is to be noted that not *all* men were able to adopt this masculine symbolic language to present their sincere self, though the suitor still valorised fidelity. Some men, Quakers for example, could not refer to the *motif* of indifference towards the sociable world, simply because their religious denominations forbade them to participate in such

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58 For a classic examination of Georgian assembly rooms, see Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), 150-62, 267-83; Mark Girouard, 'Moonlit Matchmaking: Assembly Rooms of the Eighteenth Century', *CL*, 4644, 4647, and 4650 (1978), 540-44, 766-68, 1057-59, respectively; Jane Rendell, 'Almack's Assembly Rooms – A Site of Sexual Pleasure', *JAE*, 55 (2002), 136-49.

59 Anon., *The Conduct of the Stage Consider'd with short Remarks upon the Original and Pernicious Consequences of Masquerade* (London, 1721), 28. For the most distinguished study on the cultural meanings of masquerade in the eighteenth century, see Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (London, 1986), esp. ch. 1.

60 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London, 1764), 301. This notion was echoed by Stephen Philpot in 1747. See his, *An Essay on the Advantage of a Polite Education Joined with a Learned One* (London, 1747), 55. For current research on the relationships between polite dance, military drill, and eighteenth-century masculinity, see Matthew McCormack, 'Dance and Drill: Polite Accomplishments and Military Masculinities in Georgian Britain', *CSH*, 8 (2011), 315-30.

venues.[61] Although the *motif* disappeared from the Quakers' love-letters, this does not imply that Quaker men were not keen to underline their fidelity. In 1702, Thomas Story, a missionary and new settler in America, contrasted his masculine honesty with female 'unconstancy' to convince her of their future happiness:

> When I look upon some prodigious instances of deceipt & unconstancy in thy Sex as well as thy own, I am apprehensive of danger; but when I observe the firm constancy of my own Love, review thy virtues, & reflect upon our inward & free conversation […] I cannot give way to thoughts of so great disappointment.[62]

For Thomas, men needed only masculine sincerity to ensure matrimonial happiness. A hundred years later in 1803, a London Quaker banker Paul Moon James courted Olivia Lloyd. He constantly reminded her of his fidelity: 'The dearest task that I would seek, is in securing the smile of Happiness for ever for thee; and the proof of my sincerity, in evincing Peace to be the constant inmate of thy bosom'.[63] Barred from attending sociable venues by their religious denominations, men still referred to the discourse 'my-happiness-centres-on-you' to protest their valued qualification: men of sincerity.

* * * *

Love, sincerity and fidelity did not operate in vacuum. They were closely linked with the negotiation of power between couples. While Amanda Vickery stresses female supremacy in courtship (though she accepts the possibility that the language of love may have caused women to surrender to their lovers), Katie Barclay argues that 'love was clearly understood to remove women's power'.[64] Yet, courtship was not always a zero-sum game. Both sexes, I argue, usually negotiated their power through the discourse of love and fidelity. Whereas male vows and protestations put them under women's control, men derived their power over women from underlining their sincerity towards their chosen objects. Love and fidelity formed a playground of power negotiation for the pair.

Men's vows in love-letters functioned as an informal agreement between the couple, allowing women to measure their suitors' behaviour accordingly. Men, too, were aware that a breach of promises would violate their image as a trustworthy and devoted suitor. Apart from performing the role of constant letter-writer, men often highlighted their sincerity through their vows of self-improvement. Perhaps, this was a way to

61 Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, 1982), 198-99.
62 LSF, Temp MSS 388/1/1 (1 Jun. 1702), Thomas Story, Flushing, to Ann Shippen.
63 LSF, Temp MSS 403/9/19/1/4 (26 Jan. 1807), Paul Moon James, New Street, to Olivia Lloyd.
64 Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 58; Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power*, 89.

convince women of their commitment to being a good husband. For example, a poor, young barrister Charles Pratt often divulged his anxiety to Elizabeth Jeffreys, when he wrote that '[i]n reality, My Dear Girl, I have but one Cause of Complaint in ye World, [...] & that is, present poverty; [...] it is mischievously interposed to delay & protract our Union; so that altho' I am yr Husband by solemn Contract & engagement, I am not able to call you mine according to ye Custom & Laws of this Country'. Charles admitted his straitened circumstances and made a promise to Elizabeth in 1745, saying that 'I am endeavouring to make myself worthy of you [...] I am obliged to be industrious that I may save ye Credit of your choice'.[65] Charles's promise is significant. Had he failed 'to be industrious', not only would he have remained impoverished and been barred from matrimony, but also – and more importantly – he would not have been able to 'save ye Credit of your choice'. In this regard, his credibility relied upon his capacity to keep his own words. As we have seen, credit was an integral part of reputation which in turn was one of the main ingredients of upper- and middling-rank masculinity. Therefore, a man could have lost not only his sweetheart, but also his full gender, if his actual performance had not conformed to his words.

Male self-improvement was also measured by a woman's family as an index of the suitor's regard for his darling. As I noted earlier, 'sincerity' was *inter alia* understood as an 'uncorrupt' mind and behaviour.[66] To show this virtue, self-improvement was important. For example, Rev. Charles Powlett, aged 26, realised that poverty was the major obstacle in his courtship. Having been born as an illegitimate son of the Third Duke of Bolton, Powlett was not able to inherit the prestigious title and his father's property. Once he met his future wife, Anne Temple, in 1790, for the first time, he confessed to his mother that in his present situation, 'it is impossible for me to fulfill my most ardent Wishes in marrying Miss Temple', for 'I am not sufficiently [Mad & Foolish] to wish to <u>starve</u> even with' her.[67] Indeed, Anne's father, Rev. William Temple, also opposed the relationship due to Powlett's poverty. Realising his Achilles' heel, Powlett strove to improve his status to secure his own masculinity throughout his courtship. Possibly, his will to show his improved status promptly drove him to mention any progress of his clergymanship to his peers. Having been appointed by the Prince of Wales as his 'Royal Highness's Chaplain' in 1790, Powlett proudly told his darling that the

65 CKS, U840/C1/4 (4 Mar. 1745), Charles Pratt, Winton, to Elizabeth Jeffreys.
66 See earlier in this chapter, p. 43.
67 HRO, 72M92/7/6 (27 Apr. 1790), Charles Powlett, Itchin, to Mrs Powlett, Canterbury; HRO, 72M92/6/2 (27 Aug. 1790), same, Canterbury, to same.

Prince spoke of him 'in the most flattering Manner' to the duchess, and 'her Grace communicated the welcome Intelligence to me with so much Joy & True Friendship that it drew Tears from my Eyes'. At the same time, he also noticed his exceeding 'love of self-praise' and consequently begged Miss Temple not to 'suppose that I have mention'd this [in]stance for the sake of Egotism & a love of self-praise'.[68] It is difficult to believe that Powlett related this story without 'the sake of Egotism', especially when we take into consideration that the praise he received from the duchess could be understood as the zenith of what he had long been attempting to achieve, namely his successful profession. Indeed, his improved status was eventually seen and confirmed by his prospective father-in-law. Mr Temple recorded in his diary in June 1791 that Powlett was '[a] most amiable and ingenious young man and whom I must ever highly value, and to whom I cannot but wish my dearest Nancy [Anne Temple] to be united.'[69] A man's self-improvement was an indicator for how much he dedicated himself to a lady.

If a man's self-improvement empowered him to win his lady's heart, the opposite behaviour would set his sincerity on trial and lessen his power in courtship. The courtship of Edward Leathes, a future rector from Norfolk, proves this point. Edward's relationship with Elizabeth Reading in the 1770s was hindered by his own inappropriate character, particularly his gambling and failure to be ordained. Having 'heard a very bad character of you', Rev. James Reading, Elizabeth's father, 'insisted upon my never writing to you again', she told her suitor in November 1772.[70] Having negotiated with her own father, Elizabeth informed Edward that her father 'should have no objection to our union', 'if he found you sent about in earnest to prepare for Orders'. Subsequently, she encouraged her admirer to improve himself. Her morale-boosting is suggestive:

> You see my Edward that happiness is still within our reach, that it now depends entirely on your own behaviour & regular Conduct that the Bishop may not object to ordain you, & I do not doubt but yr regard for me will be sufficient to induce you to it. [...] Was my Father convinc'd of this, [...] I dare say all will be very well again.[71]

Elizabeth emphasised that his affection for her was enough to change his misconduct. Thus, Edward's willingness to reform himself would have been considered by his beloved as a sign of his honesty. Indeed, Elizabeth admitted in September 1772 that 'I look'd upon you as quite reform'd & did not in the least doubt yr sincerity'.[72] In female eyes, male

68 HRO, 72M92/7/10 (16 Feb. 1791), Charles Powlett, Hackwood, to Anne Temple, St Gluvias; see also HRO, 72M92/7/8 (26 June 1790), Charles Pratt, Looe, to Mrs Powlett, Canterbury.
69 Lewis Bettany (ed.), *Diaries of William Johnston Temple, 1780-1796* (Oxford, 1929), 94.
70 NRO, BOL 2/4/18 (4 Nov. 1772), Elizabeth Reading, Hampton-Gay, to Edward Leathes, Strampshaw.
71 *Ibid*.
72 NRO, BOL 2/4/11 (2 Sep. 1772), Elizabeth Reading, Woodstock, to Edward Leathes, Westminster.

sincerity was conferred, or denied, by the capacity of the man to improve himself or be (at least) self-sufficient.

Unsurprisingly, the suitor needed to defer to his peers' demand to regain his power in courtship. Yet, a man was still under the control of his darling's family. In a letter to Elizabeth's father, Edward announced his commitment to being ordained.[73] His vow would satisfy every future father-in-law's expectation, as Rev. James Reading 'was vastly pleas'd with it' and 'has been in high good humour ever since'.[74] Although Edward was allowed to continue his courtship, the scale was not tipped in favour of him immediately. This is because he had now a concrete deal with his future father-in-law. If Edward violated the agreement, Rev. James could legitimately oppose the union. Moreover, as we have seen, one of the core ingredients of eighteenth-century masculinity among the middling men was credibility, relying on men's capacity to keep their own words to satisfy their significant others. If Edward could not reform his character, not only would his union be unbound, but his masculinity would also be questioned. In this regard, upon receiving Edward's promise letter, Rev. James would have been enjoying his status of controlling his future son-in-law's manhood.

Indeed, the scale of power was tipped in favour of a woman, once her suitor failed to show conformity between his actions and professions. Being disappointed with her future husband, Elizabeth Reading wrote Edward Leathes a letter in November 1772 which shows brilliantly how a woman judged male sincerity according to the conformity between his words and actions:

> My Father has been assur'd [...] that your conduct has been more irregular since I left Strumpshaw [...] – how then could yr regard for me be sincere when yr actions & your professions were so very different? He also heard that you had frequented the Gaming Table at Norwich for a long time: how cd you assure me you had never been there more than twice? Your Journey to London too was unknown to any of yr Friends & upon an occasion improper places, that by these irregularities you have involv'd yourself in many difficulties which they fear you will not easily surmount, & will be a means of yr not being able to get a Testimonium.[75]

This reveals much about Edward's misconduct: addiction to gambling, lies and ignorance of his own career and reputation. His unmanly performance was perceived by his lover as a sign of his insufficient devotion to her. Elizabeth lamented: 'How can I hear these things of the Man I thought of making my husband [...]?'[76] Being condemned by women as an unworthy husband must have been painful for every man, for without a wife his manhood

73 NRO, BOL 2/4/15 (16 Oct. 1772), Edward Leathes, Strumpshaw, to Rev. James Reading, Woodstock.
74 NRO, BOL 2/4/16 (25 Oct. 1772), Elizabeth Reading, Hampton Gay, Edward Leathes.
75 NRO, BOL 2/4/20 (26 Nov. 1772), Elizabeth Reading, Woodstock, to Edward Leathes, Strampshaw.
76 *Ibid*.

could not be completely bestowed upon him. A man's honesty was severely questioned when his behaviour did not conform to his vows given to his peers.

Yet, the suitor was not always subordinate to his sweetheart. Men were apt to seek to gain power over women by adopting the language of sincere love, a strategy that would have been difficult to enact in the previous centuries when marriage for money and consanguinity was the norm.[77] This method was especially employed by suitors whose fortunes were comparatively less than their lovers. In such cases, impecunious lovers often argued that their affections were based on disinterested passions.[78] John Lovell, whose courtship with Miss Harvey was originally rejected by her aunt because of his poverty, needed to present himself as a disinterested lover. He assured his beloved in 1757 that 'if you was now in actual Possession of Ten Thousand Pounds, and the whole entirely at your own Disposal, my Desires towards You cou'd not be greater than they are at Present, […]. I never calculated your Merits by Money'. It was a man's promise to keep his fingers far from a woman's inherited fortune, after he became the 'Master of it'.[79]

Wealthy ladies and their relatives were keen to test the fidelity of suitors of low income to ascertain that it was the woman herself, not her fortune, that attracted their admirers. We learn from Richard Noyes' courtship letters in 1703 that his lover, Elizabeth, constantly had an 'unkind opinion' of him. She inexhaustibly enquired about a lady he met:

> The story of the Lady you was pleas'd to mention (and wch as all such things are, is carried much beyond the truth) has mightily disquieted me; That a business shou'd be now reviv'd, wch I hoped was quite forgotten and buryed (as I desire it may) in perfect oblivion; Let me beg you Madm. to entertain no thought to my prejudice on that acct. I confess'd the truth to you, Nor (as I told you) have I ever – spoke to her since, or ever will.[80]

One might argue that every insincere suitor might naturally defend himself by telling a lie, as Richard was doing here. However, studying their letters throughout the courtship suggests that in every letter in which Richard replied to Elizabeth's suspicions of his infidelity, he grasped at the discourse that his love was based upon disinterested passions. He lamented to his suspicious lover that it was not her suspicions of his affairs with the lady that troubled him, but:

> that you shou'd imagine a Worldly Interest, weighs the least with me, in my professions to you; My very Nature abhors a thought of such a baseness, 'Tis your Dear selfe I only love, and if your Fortune was ten times more, it cou'd not balance one grain in my Opinion with

77 See earlier in this chapter, p. 42.
78 See, for example, HALS, D/EGp/C1/9 (8 Jan. 1703) Richard Noyes to Elizabeth Duppa.
79 WSA, 161/102/2 (9 Jul. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.
80 HALS, D/EGp/C1/2 (28 Nov. 1703), Richard Noyes, to Elizabeth Duppa. For Elizabeth's other enquiries after Richard's meeting with the lady, see for example, HALS, D/EGp/C1/4, 5, 9, 11 and 12, same to same.

the agreable [*sic*] person of Mrs Duppa.[81]

There is one clue which enables us to conclude that Elizabeth's constant enquiries fundamentally were her desire to test Richard's patience. Richard once bewailed that 'You are pleas'd to play with my ruin; To laugh at all the serious protestations I make to you; Not to value my most solemn Vows and Oaths'.[82] Richard labelled Elizabeth's action as a 'play'. As Karen Lystra has suggested in her study on nineteenth-century American love-letters, women tended to orchestrate a crisis of doubt to test men's virtue and sincerity.[83] In this respect, we might argue that a woman was testing her suitor, which in turn provided her with an opportunity to assess his sincerity, and whether he was attracted by her personality or her wealth. And, it was the suitor who used love assurances to defend himself and to conquer his chosen object's suspicions. In testing and passing the test, the language of faithful love became a means to an end.

In addition, men did not hesitate to grasp – directly or indirectly – at the claims of their sincerity and intimacy to empower themselves when they wanted to take control over women. One (indirect) strategy was the mention of a dream. The eighteenth century witnessed the cult of sensibility which viewed romantic feelings as a cause of involuntary bodily and physiognomical reactions, such as tears, sighs, palpitations and imaginary visions of the loved-being.[84] In this culture, a dream of one's beloved became a vivid testimony of genuine affection. Thus, it is no wonder that a woman who was uncertain of her suitor's faithfulness would seal her letter with the following line: 'But adieu for to night […] so good night my Edward, sweet sleep attend you & if <u>dreams</u>, may Your faithful Bessey be the sole object'.[85] Moreover, Sebastian Leutert has demonstrated that the eighteenth century saw the psychological turn of dream interpretation. By the mid-century, dreams had gradually lost their predictive meanings. A dream revealed less about the future of the dreamer than his inner self, current state of mind and personality.[86] It is,

81 HALS, D/EGp/C1/2 (28 Nov. 1703), Richard Noyes to Elizabeth Duppa.

82 HALS, D/EGp/C1/12 (28 Jan. 1704), Richard Noyes to Elizabeth Duppa.

83 Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 157-91.

84 For a superb analysis of sensibility in life and letter, consult Sarah M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008), esp. 80-110.

85 NRO, BOL 2/4/22 (13 Dec. 1722), Elizabeth Reading, Woodstock, to Edward Leathes. For work on the relationship between women, their dreams and dream records, see Patricia Crawford, 'Women's Dreams in Early Modern England', in Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper (eds.), *Dreams and History: The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis* (London, 2004), 91-103; Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008), 219-60.

86 Sebastian Leutert, '"All dies, was mir mein Genius vorgezeichnet hatte": Zur Psychologisierung des Traumes in Selbstzeugnissen des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Kaspar von Greyerz *et al*. (eds.), *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich: Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen (1500-1850)* (Cologne, 2001), 251-74, esp. 261-72. It is to be noted that Leutert's argument has been reviewed by Claire Gantet, emphasising the enduring influence of religion in dream interpretation which allowed

therefore, unsurprising that a lover was willing to tell his darling that he had experienced visions of her, for such a dream conveyed his fidelity, implying that she always occupied his thoughts, even when he slept. Couples would have known this new cultural meaning of dreams. Some suitors, particularly impotent ones, would have been apt to grasp at it to empower themselves. Take the lovers from Wiltshire as an example, whose courtship letters are discovered for the first time here. In 1757, John Lovell's courtship with Sarah Harvey was hindered by her aunt. He frequently urged his reluctant girl to talk instead with her uncle, to obtain permission for his visitation at Cole Park. In a letter dated November 1757 he wrote:

> This Morning I had another visionary Enjoyment of your ever desirable Presence. […] At my first Sight of you there seem'd to be a Canal between us, and you appear'd sitting on its Bank directly opposite to me. But I was very speedily with you. After being favour'd with the Indulgence of an ever pleasing Salute, and some short Conference with You, the Scene was Suddenly remov'd to Bath, where you made me happy with your Company at a Concert of Musick at our Town Hall.[87]

An incautious reader would take this passage as a transparent testimony of how romantic love could enter a faithful lover's head as he slept. Perhaps, John Lovell really experienced this vision, given that the surviving records confirm his ardent love and secure commitment towards Sarah. One would nod contentedly over such an argument, perhaps reassured by their own knowledge of the culture of sensibility, until one recalls that the ill-starred suitor sealed his letter with these strategic lines:

> Hold you before of having made your Aunt acquainted with my Intention of coming to Colepark, but being doubtful whither she has spoken of it to your Uncle or not, I can't refrain from wishing you wou'd mention it to him; however I submit it entirely to your Pleasure.[88]

Now, one should be alert in reading Lovell's letter. Without surrounding evidence, such as a diary, we can never be sure of his dream description. Rather, one should be led from these strategic lines to reflect that the cunning suitor mentioned the dream to his hesitant darling, for he wanted her to take action in favour of him.

Experiencing a vision of one's beloved is one thing, but relating it is another. Just as a dream revealed the state of a suitor's worried mind, so a woman was expected to ease his concern. Due to the paucity of surviving records, we cannot be certain whether Sarah Harvey followed John Lovell's suggestion. Yet we do know that John was granted

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the predictive power of dreams to continue, see Claire Gantet, *Der Traum in der Frühen Neuzeit: Anzätze zu einer kulturellen Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin, 2010), 429-60. For a general discussion of dreams and cultural history, see Peter Burke, 'The Cultural History of Dreams', in *idem*, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1997), 23-42.

87 WSA, 161/102/2 (28 Nov. 1757), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.

88 *Ibid*.

permission to visit Cole Park in January 1758.[89] Whatever the case, it is still fair to entertain an interpretation that John's mentioning his dream to Sarah implies that he tried to urge her to speak with her guardian in favour of him. Thus, the suitor described his experiencing visions of his beloved, perhaps, to underline his fidelity and genuine affection that went into his head straight away as he slept. Yet, it is equally possible that he recognised the cultural meaning attached to the dream of a lover in the cult of sensibility, and deployed it to empower himself in an unfavourable situation, for a soft-hearted woman could not bear to see her suitor experience disturbed nights for so long.

More straightforwardly, the assertion of sincerity could empower a suitor to take direct control over his darling's personal conduct. This method was popular among suitors who were hindered by their business from writing or visiting their lady-loves constantly, or even when they had to deal with other competitors. Witness the courtship of the cotton-trader Joseph Strutt and Isabella Douglas in the 1780s, whose love-letters were – to my knowledge – unearthed for the first time by my own archival discovery. Joseph's business in Derby prevented him from seeing his sweetheart in Sandy Brook constantly. His absence enabled other men to try their luck at courting the charming, but lonely Isabella.[90] In November 1787, Joseph was told by his parents about Isabella's conversing with flattering men who flirted with her at the assembly. He consequently wrote her a letter which offers us a glimpse of how a lover could manipulate his darling in the name of sincerity:

> I cannot help mentioning here, & you may observe it as an invariable rule, that the consequence you talk of as requisite to your own case will always be very unpleasing, & sometimes very disgusting; & you may depend upon it there is nothing will place you in so amiable a point of view, as that bashful Modesty which I have so often & so strongly recommended – if I have ever done it in too plain & forcible language, it was because you did not seem to think it a matter of sufficient import to attend to. Insincerity & double-dealing never have & I trust never will form a part of my character.[91]

The tone is telling. Joseph saw it necessary as part of his sincere character to instruct Isabella on female virtue which would guard her from other flattering suitors. Indeed, in another letter Joseph claimed that it was his duty to criticise and correct her conduct: 'I think it *incumbent* upon me very lovely Friend, to tell you what I think wrong in your manners or your conduct'.[92] The harsh and direct tone, Joseph himself accepted, might also suggest that he saw that the situation was approaching the critical point. Perhaps,

89 WSA, 161/102/2 (15 Jan. 1758), John Lovell, Bath, to Sarah Harvey, Shaw.

90 For Joseph Strutt's commitment to his flourishing business, see BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/8 (23 Nov. 1787), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook: '[I]t has long been one of my established principles, never to neglect my business for my pleasure'.

91 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/7 (7 Oct. 1787), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook.

92 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/12 (n.d. 1788), Joseph Strutt to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook (my emphasis).

Joseph was very much worried about his reputation, which would have been damaged, had the rumour of Isabella's flirtation with other men in his absence been widely spread. Therefore, he needed to stop the situation straight away. However, it is striking that Joseph derived his power to instruct Isabella, not from his superior social status – such as his four-year-old seniority or his established, successful profession – but from his sincerity and his ability to speak his mind to her.

If power did not originate from social status but the claim of love, it might easily have been subject to negotiation. As Bernard Capp remarks, few women equated subordination with submissiveness.[93] Although Isabella's letters from this period did not survive, we know from Joseph's that he continued to instruct her behaviour for over a year. This suggests that Isabella did not conform to Joseph's demands submissively. Some vivid testimonies of her resentment survive in his letters. He quoted her words: '"You convince me I have been deceived both myself & you." "Time & Heaven will restore to me that peace of mind you have destroyed."' Over these words Joseph lamented: 'My God! My God! Look into my Heart & see if these expressions are in justice applied to me'. Still, he maintained his identity as an honest lover, asserting that 'Oh! My Heart was a faithful Monitor, when it whispered me that I should offend you by telling you what I conceived was wrong in your conduct'.[94] Having reflected on the affair, he gave her an ultimatum in October 1788, saying that he 'assuredly will not marry at present', for 'at all events I do not think either you or myself, qualified by any means to support the characters we should assume, with that dignity & propriety with which I have conceived they ought to be sustained'.[95] This was not a suitor's bold prerogative. Instead, it suggested Joseph's promise that his standards would ensure their familial reputation and matrimonial happiness. The scale of power was tipped in favour of the suitor, when he knew how to use the language of honest love to soften the tone of his commands.

However, the surviving records do not allow us to conclude that Isabella immediately deferred to her critical lover's prerogative. Rather, there was a sign that Isabella and her female acquaintance orchestrated what Karen Lystra called 'a dramatic emotional crisis' to negotiate her situation, though not to test the quality of her potential husband, as Lystra argued in the case of nineteenth-century America.[96] Having received the ultimatum of postponing their marriage, Isabella decided to spread a rumour in

93 Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), 72.
94 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/13 (12 Oct. 1788), Joseph Strutt to Isabella Douglas.
95 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/14 (26 Oct. 1788), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook.
96 Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 146.

January 1789 that Joseph had recently 'broken off engagement' with her, blaming him for his 'appearance of indifference – often of coldness – & sometimes of neglect'. Joseph was sure of the motivation behind the rumour, and pointed out, 'the Idea of forcing me to perform my engagement, or at least of performing it sooner than I intend'. The surviving evidence suggests that Joseph did not conform to Isabella's orchestration. He struggled to improve her conduct, accepting that '[t]he improvement of your mind at this time is of the most serious important'.[97] His love-letters were accompanied by his justification that his moral teaching came from his true-hearted sentiments, perhaps in order to lessen Isabella's possible resentment.[98] Before their wedding bells rang in 1793, Joseph's final surviving courtship letter testified that he was pleased with her virtuous improvement which would guarantee their matrimonial happiness: 'Oh my love – acquainted as I am with your disposition & your virtues, & knowing myself as I trust I do, have we not the fairest prospect of being most happy?'[99] In Joseph's eyes, Isabella's improved disposition was a product of the long courtship-*cum*-instruction arranged and protested by her suitor, who justified his instruction in the name of fidelity.

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This chapter has analysed the prevailing concept of masculinity encoded in men's self-presentation in courtship letters. At the centre stood men's struggle to show their sincerity, and to keep their words after making their own vows to their lovers, a quality that gained importance in the age of 'marriage-for-conjugality'.[100] Since the lovers relied heavily on letter-writing to nourish their relationships, women tended to judge men's sincerity by the frequency and constancy of male correspondence. Love-letters became not only a site upon which men encoded their fidelity according to women's expectations, but also served as an instrument which women used to measure the virtuosity of their suitors. Writing love-letters also allowed men to proclaim and present their commitment to the prospective marriage. Male vows of self-improvement in courtship letters should remind us that the language of love was not confined only to the ways that lovers conceptualised their affectionate feelings, but the language also included men's protestations of their

97 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/16 (7 Jan. 1789), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook; BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/17 (26 Jan. 1789), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook; BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/18 (10 Aug. 1789), Joseph Strutt to Isabella Douglas.

98 See, for example, BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/26 (5 Jun. 1781), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Buxton.

99 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/34 (4 Nov. 1792), Joseph Strutt, London, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook.

100 Perry, *Novel Relations*, *passim.* See also earlier in this chapter, p. 42.

commitments to self-improvement. Being a devoted suitor, a man had to promise to improve himself, construct his professional career, gain social reputation, be a credible figure, and project himself as an ideal, loving husband. Men's capacity to maintain conformity between their actions and professions was the most crucial criterion in measuring their manhood. This broad spectrum of behavioural checks was based on the wider array of definitions of eighteenth-century 'sincerity' which covered the manly qualities of 'honesty' and 'uncorrupt' performance. In addition, although male vows put them under female check, it was by no means the empowerment of the single sex alone. Just as women forced men to behave according to their loyal protestations, so men referred to their fidelity claims when they wanted to tip the scales in favour of themselves. Sincerity became then the crucial reference point around which the pair revolved to negotiate their powers in their courtships.

I have also argued throughout the chapter that the prime concern of eighteenth-century suitors was to show their faithfulness and dedication to their chosen objects. Therefore, men valorised fidelity and honesty, and adopted these as the most crucial parts of their identity as a suitor. Some men, especially who participated in the polite society, expressed their fidelity in a period-specific manner. By stressing their indifference toward balls and other amusements, they created the language of faithfulness, a historically specific way of expressing male loyalty. Thus doing, the courting polite gentleman was refusing the sociable category which some historians have considered to be the main feature of eighteenth-century masculinity.

Yet, it is to be noted that my argument on 'men of sincerity' is based on the sample of the courtship letters crafted by upper- and middling-rank lovers. It does not pretend to claim that men from other social ranks, such as the aristocracy and the poor, were willing to conform to this concept. However, I have demonstrated that the upper- and middling-rank lovers adopted the notion of fidelity to measure the male performance, although they differed from one another in terms of their denominations. In addition, I contend that sincerity was the prevailing concept of eighteenth-century men who adopted the identity of a suitor. This was consistent throughout the period. Perhaps, it is because the period itself witnessed the increasing importance of the conjugal love, as some scholars have claimed. Even the cult of sensibility that experienced its heyday in the late eighteenth-century did not necessarily prioritise the sentimental suitor over the 'sincere' one, as it is evident in my analysis of the courtship of Joseph Strutt. 'Sincerity' remained the dominant concept of eighteenth-century male lovers.

To test my argument thoroughly, we need look at failed courtships in which men failed to be sincere and consequently lost their sweethearts. Yet the entire collection of my sources does not offer such an unhappy situation. Letters of that kind may have been destroyed at some points. Perhaps broken-heart or failed lovers thought that the failed-courtship letters were unworthy of being preserved. However, we have seen that women blamed their suitors who failed to enact the signs of devoted love, ranking from lukewarm lovers who flirted but did not write, to men-about-town who frequented the assembly rooms, and suitors who neglected their self-improvement and showed no signs of being perfect husbands. All of these sorts of men were subject to losing their sweethearts.

Perhaps the most promising example to prove my argument is documented in a record of a trauma of loss suffered by a woman from Horsham. The diary of a tailor's daughter, Sarah Hurst (1736-1808), testifies my point that men's efforts to assert their sincerity were matched by women's expectations of this quality in a worthy suitor. Sarah's suitor was Henry Smith (1723-1794), a captain who fought in Canada during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). Driven by her concern for his welfare on the seas and in the battle, Sarah frequently experienced nightmares in which either she herself or her lover was severely harmed. She acknowledged in April 1759, after dreaming of being 'shipwreck'd & then made a Slave' that '[t]he thoughts of my dear Smith occasions these strange Ideas'.[101] However, it was her dream on Friday 28th of September 1759 that seemed to affect her mind the worst of all in the entire diary:

> Dream that my Dear Smith is married & fancy that I am dreadfully shock'd. How perplexing are these chimeras of the brain, but sleeping or waking he posses [*sic*] my thoughts, I know I am not worthy [of] this Dear Man, which makes me fear I shall be depriv'd of him.[102]

Even when Sarah dreamed that 'my Dear Smith was dead, & I watch'd him three days at the expiration of which time he came to life again', she commented it only '[h]ow surprising are dreams'.[103] Yet the fear of her lover's death did not damage her mind as fatally as the vision of her being deprived of his love in favour of another girl. This testifies that a female lover expected fidelity from her suitor, and was so worried about his changing heart that it permeated through her head as she slept. 'Sincerity' was then the defining virtue which the perfect suitor had to aspire to.

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101 Susan C. Djabri (ed.), *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst, 1759-1762: Life and Love in 18th Century Horsham* (Stroud, 2009), 83. For a different interpretation of Sarah Hurst's dreams, see Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects', 176-77.

102 *Ibid.*, 112.

103 *Ibid*., 138.

Chapter Two

'Then “Hail wedded Love!”': Performing Patriarchy in Conjugal Relationships

It is not for nothing that people believed marriage marked entry into adulthood. As Robert Connell noted, marriage carried with it the 'patriarchal dividend', allowing men to enjoy natural and moral superiority over those subject to their authority.[1] Thus, men were sensitive to their patriarchal status. On 23 May 1798 Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) wrote a letter to his sister, Sally, in which he reflected on his unhappy matrimonial state marked by a series of domestic disputes between himself and his 'brutal & shameless' wife, Mrs Charlotte Martin Wesley. Having been married to her for half a decade, Samuel, then aged 32, poignantly confessed:

> I felt at the Moment what a Dupe I had been in remaining so long under the same Roof with so brutal & shameless a Body & altho' I never suspected that she wd have proceeded to lift her Hand against “her Lord, her Governor, her King,” yet I had experienced enough previously to condemn me justly for my tame, &, I will add, my criminal Forbearance.[2]

If the reason for Samuel's grievance was that his status as 'her Lord, her Governor, [and] her King' had been unjustly challenged and his wife had attacked him, his letter reminds us of the very existence of patriarchy at the end of the eighteenth century. It also offers us a glimpse into the social and cultural role adopted by a husband as his prime gender identity in his marital life: the patriarch.

'Patriarchy' is by no means a straightforward term.[3] Judith M. Bennett, a feminist historian, understands it as:

> A familial-social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.[4]

Similarly, Anthony Fletcher defines patriarchy as 'the institutionalised male dominance over women and children in the family and the subordination of women in society in general'.[5] However, Bernard Capp claims that '[t]here was no patriarchal *system*, rather an

1 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (1995; Cambridge, 2005), 77, 82-83.
2 JRL, DDWF/15/7 (23 May 1798), Samuel Wesley to Sally Wesley.
3 For a useful summary of the debate over patriarchy, see Robert Shoemaker and Mary Vincent's introduction to their (eds.), *Gender and History in Western Europe* (London, 1998), 1-22.
4 Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and Challenge of Feminism* (Manchester, 2006), 55; see also *idem*, 'Feminism and History', *G&H*, 1 (1989), 251-72. In fact, in conceptualising 'patriarchy' Bennett relies much on the American feminist poet Adrienne Rich's definition of the term. See Adrienne Rich, *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience & Institution* (New York, 1976), 57-58.
5 Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex & Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London,

interlocking set of beliefs, assumptions, traditions, and practices, and the largely informal character of patriarchy enabled each generation to adapt it to changing circumstances'.[6] Yet, historians, Capp included, agree that 'patriarchy' was characterised by male dominance, and this was a key characteristic of early modern England.

Reflection on Samuel Wesley's letter and the definition of patriarchy leads us to ruminate on one of the most fundamental debates in family history, inaugurated by Lawrence Stone's publication of his monumental work, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*, in 1977. Stone argued that the eighteenth century witnessed the most critical development in family history in which the patriarchal family system of the previous century gave way to more affective and companionate marriage. Stone's argument was echoed in Randolph Trumbach's *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family* (1978). According to Trumbach, men perceived the rising egalitarianism in familial relationships as a threat to their masculine identity, which had previously been manifested in patriarchy. Consequently, men sought to assert their gender identity outside of the domestic domain, which became gradually dominated by women, so that they would not become effeminate.[7] In this sense, men could not assert and perform their masculinity inside the domestic sphere. Of course, Stone's and Trumbach's arguments have not gone unchallenged, particularly on the grounds that they relied primarily on elite sources, and ignored the continuity of patriarchy, despite its adjusting forms.[8]

However, as we have seen in Samuel Wesley's letter, patriarchy was still alive, even during the closing years of the eighteenth century. In fact, in recent years a number of historians have accepted the enduring existence of patriarchy throughout the early modern period, focusing on how it operated and changed over time; how it affected the relationships between husbands and wives; and how men and women took part in maintaining, sustaining and negotiating it.[9]

1995), xv.

6 Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), 1.

7 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977); Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, London and San Francisco, 1978); *idem*, 'Sex, Gender and Sexual Identity in Modern Culture: Male Sodomy and Female Prostitution in Enlightenment London', *JHS*, 2 (1991), 186-203.

8 For classic criticisms of Stone's argument, see for example, Alan MacFarlane, 'Review: The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 by Lawrence Stone', *H&T*, 18 (1979), 103-26; Lois Schwoerer, 'Seventeenth-Century English Women Engraved in Stone?', *Albion*, 16 (1984), 389-403; E. P. Thompson, 'Happy Families', *NS*, 41 (1977), 499-501. For a recent review and collection of essays discussing Stone's argument and its limitations, consult Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds.), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007).

9 See, for example, Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988); *idem*, 'The Part of a Christian Man: The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early

Although recent historians have favoured the continuity of patriarchy, they differ from one another in explaining its endurance. Some suggest that early modern men and women took for granted that male dominance was the societal norm. Bernard Capp, for instance, asserts that '[m]ale domination was so rooted in the culture that contemporaries found it almost impossible to imagine a society based on fundamentally different principles. Most contemporaries, of both sexes, understandably accepted the assumptions on which they had been raised, and very few escaped that cultural straitjacket'.[10] Others detect the ways in which patriarchy was dynamically constructed and maintained. Anthony Fletcher argues that eighteenth-century men did not maintain their patriarchal status by tyrannical force any more than in previous centuries. Instead, they used civilised manners towards women to claim their supremacy. For Fletcher, this was a result of newer, secular and medical ideas of sexual difference in the eighteenth century, which ceased to view women as a sexually voracious, intellectually inferior, and naturally ungoverned sex. Instead, femininity came to be understood as modesty, chastity, humility, obedience, and piety. Just as female gender changed, so masculinity shifted from being defined according to men's capacity for controlling women's sexuality and passion to being defined in accordance with their own improved, soft and sentimental manners. The 'soft patriarch' should not be understood as 'effeminate'. Rather, this was a new way to govern women in the age of politeness and sensibility.[11] However, Karen Harvey has recently downplayed masculine genteel manners in sustaining male patriarchal status. Instead, she argues that men, especially from middling ranks, created their gender identity by performing their roles as a perfect 'oeconomist', that is, an ideal household manager.[12]

Although I agree with historians about the survival of patriarchy as a masculine gender identity in marital life, I differ from them in some respects. Firstly, I contend that

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Modern England', in *idem* and Mark A. Kishlansky, *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Manchester, 1995), 213-33; Anthony Fletcher, 'The Protestant Idea of Marriage in Early Modern England' in *idem* and Peter Roberts (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge, 1994), 161-81; Linda Pollock, 'Rethinking Patriarchy and the Family in the Seventeenth-Century England', *JFH*, 23 (1998), 3-27. More recent research on negotiating patriarchy based on extensive epistolary family archives has been conducted by Katie E. Barclay, '"I rest your loving obedient wife": Marital Relationships in Scotland 1650-1850' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2008); see also *idem*, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester, 2011); *idem*, 'Negotiating Patriarchy: The Marriage of Anna Potts and Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, 1731-1744', *JSHS*, 28 (2008), 83-101; cf. Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity & Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century* Britain (Oxford, 2012); Michael McKeon, 'Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760', *ECS*, 28 (1995), 295-322.

10 Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 1-2. A similar assertion can be found in Matthew McCormack's, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), 19-28.

11 Fletcher, *Gender, Sex & Subordination*, part III. See also Susan Moller Okin, 'Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family', *PPA*, 11 (1982), 65-88.

12 Harvey, *Little Republic*, *passim*.

men did not automatically gain their gender identity as the patriarch; instead they needed to perform and fulfil their patriarchal roles to claim gender superiority. Secondly, these duties were not confined merely to household management or genteel behaviour. Rather, they covered a range of masculine family obligations, embodied in – what I call – the 'benevolent provider', 'moral leader', 'kind protector' and 'great comforter'. These were key roles which husbands were expected to perform in order to claim their patriarchal status.

This chapter explores the meanings and cultural practices of patriarchy as a gender identity adopted by eighteenth-century men. The chapter examines how patriarchy was perceived and understood by spouses; how it was constructed both in advice literature and lived experiences as depicted in familial correspondence; and how husbands performed their patriarchal roles to sustain their gender identity. To answer these questions, the chapter analyses private correspondence between spouses as well as personal diaries and autobiographies, covering the period from 1700 to 1820. The individuals are drawn from various social backgrounds, from a Baptist labourer in Buckinghamshire and an Anglican curate in Hampshire to a successful Presbyterian cotton-trader in Derbyshire and a soldier commander in Essex.

It is not my intention, however, to reveal the 'authentic experiences' of these couples upon reading their correspondence. Recent historians have warned us against any attempt to take letters as a mirror of 'genuine' marital performance within the household. Rather, letters were, by nature, two-way communication. An individual not only constructed and asserted his own identity upon the page, but also negotiated it with his significant other while affecting and determining his identity.[13] Reading private correspondence in this light enables us to see the relational character of patriarchy as constructed and reconfigured between spouses upon the page. We may assume that how men represented themselves in family letters does not necessarily reveal the 'reality' of what they did. Such accounts were, as Greg Dening warns us, always coloured by cultural norms. Self-representation in family letters was in effect a sort of 'performance' or 'actuality', framed by specific ideas and notions of the time.[14] Thus, my aim is to search for those 'cultural norms' which eighteenth-century spouses understood as essential features of the ideal husband's gender identity. This method enables us to analyse 'cultural norms' of the family from a different vantage point. It gives priority to the norms which were represented in lived experiences, the norms that were constructed and actualised by

13 For a discussion of the relationship between letters and identity, see Martyn Lyons, 'Love Letters and Writing Practices: On *Ecritures Intimes* in the Nineteenth Century', *JFH*, 24 (1999), 232-39. See also the Introduction, pp 32-33.

14 Greg Dening, *Performances* (Melbourne, 1996), 60.

the couples themselves.

This chapter argues that throughout the century, spouses saw patriarchal status as a husband's key identity sustained by his male role as 'benevolent provider', 'moral leader', 'kind protector' and 'great comforter'. These patriarchal features were so important for defining a husband's marital identity, that even the failed patriarch, as we shall see, was not willing to allow his wife to perform these roles, as this would have undermined his masculinity. However, there were significant changes in attitudes towards conjugal relationships in the second half of the century. If the cult of sensibility enabled artists to bring physiognomical and bodily expressions into family portraiture in the later decades of the century,[15] it also enlarged the ways in which spouses projected themselves to each other as sentimental life-partners. Although it did not destroy the idea of patriarchy, the cult of sensibility, I argue, obliged men and women to fashion their identities *upon the page* by adopting the language of feelings. Thus, the *self-representation* of a 'sentimental' patriarch loomed large in the family's private archives.[16]

* * * *

In married life a husband's superiority was not in place without condition. The ideal husband was prescribed by conduct books as a household master exercising his power and performing his authority with love towards his wife. For example, Richard Allestree instructed his readers in *The Whole Duty of Man* (1675) to 'let those husbands that tyrannize over their wives, that scarce use them like humane creatures, consider whether that be to love them as their own bodies'. Although the author of *The Art of Governing a Wife* (1747) stated that husbands 'must govern with absolute Power', he warned them to respect the 'Rule of Love' by which wives had to 'be belov'd, but not so, that the Husband be lessened or brought into Danger'.[17] In short, love formed an integral part of being a patriarchal husband.

However, love is not a transparent term carrying the same meaning over centuries. Its meanings vary according to time and context. Dr. Johnson, for example, listed a series

15 Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 2006).

16 In the use of the term 'sentimental patriarch', I differ from Anthony Fletcher's similar wording. While he means by the term a civilised patriarch with genteel manners towards his wife, I use it to characterise the new way of self-representation between spouses as they appeared in family correspondence, the new way that individuals intended to be perceived as such by their significant others.

17 Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man* (London, 1675), 327; Anon., *The Art of Governing a Wife, with Rules for Batchelors* (London, 1747), 43-44.

of situations where the word 'love' could be coined: 'The passion between the sexes; Kindness, good-will, friendship; Courtship; Tenderness, parental care' and many more.[18] As for 'the love of Husbands', the conduct-book writer William Fleetwood pointed out that it was chiefly seen in three things: 'First, in being kindly affection'd to their Persons; Secondly, in being faithful to their Vows; and Thirdly, in taking care of, and making all due Provision for them'.[19] The love of a husband essentially consisted of kindness, fidelity and ability for household provision; this reflected social and moral virtues, rather than an individual's internal state of mind.

How could the love of a husband be performed? Can this performance reveal anything about the cultural meanings of being a 'loving' patriarch? Most conduct books did not clarify the cultural meanings hidden behind their prescriptions.[20] However, in 1711, 'Mr. Steele' published a treatise on 'What are the Duties of Man and Wife Towards each Other', which provided an insight into these queries. 'Mr. Steele' quoted Ver. 25 of the Bible, to exhort men that 'Husbands, love Your Wives, even as Christ also loved his Church'.[21] In this sense, ideal husbands were compared to Christ's image and were expected to imitate his roles. A catalogue of 'perfect' actions was presented to husbands; each piece of advice had its root in the scripture. The very foundation of conjugal relationships was that the husband must love his wife as himself, implying that violent actions against the wife were unacceptable. 'Mr. Steele' explained that this principle derived from the Gospels which dictate that 'thou shalt love thy Neighbour [as thy self]'. Thus, the good Christian husband ought not to abuse his wife. Also, the husband had to be attentive in instructing his wife, 'wherein she is ignorant'; generous by 'gentle Reproof of his Wife, when she doth amiss'; ready to encourage her, 'when she doth well'; and willing to comfort her in affliction, 'whether it be in Mind or Body'.[22] Although Anthony Fletcher argued that scripture had lost its influence in prescribing gender relations by the eighteenth century, this treatise of 'Mr Steele' was an epitome of the endurance of biblical ideas in family life.[23] Furthermore, these commandments were far from the idea of

18 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1785), 'love'. See also, Anon., *A Dictionary of Love. Or the Language of Gallantry Explained* (London, 1787), 'to love' and 'the love passion'.

19 William Fleetwood, *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants* ... (London, 1705), 298.

20 For example, while Richard Allestree thought it necessary for husbands not to put 'a very harsh sound in the ears of some wives', he failed to justify this principle of respecting human dignity in terms of where it came from. See his, *The Ladies Calling* (Oxford, 1700), 201.

21 [Mr. Steele], *What are the Duties of Man and Wife Towards each Other* (Exon, 1711), 9-10.

22 *Ibid*., 11-13.

23 For a fuller discussion of the close relationship between biblical notions and gender constructions in the eighteenth century, see William van Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *HJ*, 52 (2009), 1053-73; *idem*, 'Educating Christian Men in the Eighteenth and

'affective individualism', when the love of husband was mentioned. Rather, they were intended to construct an ideal, Christ-like husband who was full of wisdom, generosity and integrity, and indeed, a 'great comforter'.

The husband was also expected to show his love to his wife by 'making Provision for her, both of what is necessary, and also of what is convenient for her, according to his Ability'. 'Mr. Steele' laid down the 'main Care' upon a husband's hands because he considered this a part of male honour to assist his wife, whom the Gospels described as 'the weaker Vessel', who could be only rescued by men's 'Wisdom, Forecast [and] Strength'. The author continued: 'And that not while he Lives only, but he ought to make Provision for her, as far as he able, after his Departure hence; for so did Jesus Christ for his Church'.[24] In this sense, the husband by performing the role of an 'benevolent household provider', would not only win his honour as a perfect patriarch, but also construct his own identity as representative of Christ in the household. Therefore, a husband's charity towards his wife as discussed in the advice literature was more about his social duties than his individual emotion.

What then were the meanings of 'love' for a woman, and how did they play a key role in sustaining the role of a 'Christian patriarch'? First and foremost, it was 'the great Duty of every Wife' to 'reverence her own Husband'. This reverence was 'made up of Love', according to 'Mr. Steele'.[25] One anonymous writer believed that 'the Love of a Husband does very much depend upon the Obedience of a Wife'.[26] It is clear that wifely love was associated with the idea of female subordination. As Ingrid Tague noted, for women marital love was nothing but obedience.[27] The conduct writer George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, explained women's obedient love in terms of the inequality of the sexes. For him, men were superior to women in both physical strength and reason. This alone made it indispensable for women to subject themselves to men. He wrote, 'the Supposition of yours being the weaker Sex, having without all doubt a good Foundation, maketh it reasonable to subject it to the Masculine Dominion'.[28] However, conduct-book

Early Nineteenth Centuries: Public-School and Oxbridge Ideals', *JECS*, 32 (2009), 425-37. For a classic account of the idea of *imitatio Dei* as a key feature in fashioning masculinity in the eighteenth century, see Jeremy Gregory, '*Homo Religiosus*: Masculinity and Religion in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 1999), 85-110.

24 [Mr. Steele], *What are the Duties of Man and Wife*, 13.

25 *Ibid*., 15-16.

26 Anon., *The Husband's Gift to His Wife* (Gloucester, 1725), 8. Cf. Anon., *The Art of Governing a Wife*, 16: 'and she who is submissive will live happily with her Husband'.

27 Ingrid H. Tague, 'Love, Honor, and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourse of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century', *JBS*, 40 (2001), 81-89, 94. Similar arguments on obedient love can be found in Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998), 133-135.

28 George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, *The Lady's New-year's Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter* (London, 14th

writers were not so heartless towards women, that they ordered them to obey without pointing to the advantages that subordination could bring. One author put it:

> An obedient Wife (says one) is the likeliest Woman in the world to command her Husband. So that in plain terms, you are more afraid than hurt, and instead of being so scrupulous of having your Duty told you, you should use your utmost diligence to learn and practice it, if ever you mean to have your Husband loving and kind to you.[29]

This is what we might call the empowerment of women, although it was performed at the expense of being inferior. This piece of advice is interesting in two respects. Firstly, it squarely told women that their subordination alone was sufficient to 'command' their husbands and to achieve what they wanted. Secondly, the advice implied that wifely obedience enacted the love of a husband. If the love of a husband was understood as the state of being a 'benevolent provider' and a 'great comforter', the wife's obedience allowed the husband to perform his role of an ideal patriarch.

Besides, for women conjugal love was also understood as the wife's duty to please her husband. This proposition found its root in Genesis, which established the idea that women were created as a help-meet for men (Gen. 2.18). One author made it clear that:

> Now, if the Woman owes her Being to the comfort and profit of Man. 'tis highly reasonable that she should be very careful and diligent to content and please him, otherwise she doth wickedly pervert the end of her creation.[30]

And, in order to 'please' her husband, a wife ought 'to love, to honour, [and] to obey' him. It is also to be noted that this conduct-book writer related a wife's love to the fear of offending her husband. The author claimed that 'when the Wife has so much Love for her new Husband, as to make her careful to oblige, and fearful to offend him, in process of time she will so engage his affections to her, as that she may defie [*sic*] the world to alienate them from her'.[31] Pleasing a husband had much to do with not provoking his anger. In this regard, a wife endeavouring to obtain her husband's fondness was not different from a humble Christian begging for God's mercy by not incurring his wrath.

The matrimonial love performed by husbands and wives depicted in the advice literature was not romantic love. It contained rather spiritual connotations, giving the husband an image of Christ in the household. While the wife showed her love to her spouse by subjecting herself to his superiority, the husband performed his love by fulfilling his duties as her kind-hearted provider and spiritual comforter. Performing love between couples can therefore be considered as maintaining the hierarchy within the

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edition 1756), 20-23.

29 Anon., *The Husband's Gift to His Wife*, 8.

30 *Ibid.*, 10.

31 *Ibid*., 18.

family. It was then the image of a benevolent patriarch that was projected in the advice literature. It formed an integral part of masculinity for men approaching husbandhood.

* * * *

As we have seen, the perfect patriarch was expected to take up the roles of 'benevolent provider' and 'great comforter' to sustain his superiority over his wife. As Susan Amussen noted, in early modern England to be master of the house was highly significant in defining masculine status, as in this view a failed patriarch was qualified as inferior among his fellows.[32] This might be a reason why eighteenth-century men were preoccupied by the concerns of family life, as analysed in Hannah Barker's recent articles.[33] Yet, what were the aspects of patriarchy that men themselves valorised and struggled to perfect? How did they react when their patriarchal status was under threat? As we shall see, patriarchy was maintained by masculine performances of being caring household providers, moral leaders or 'good examples', and loving husband, the features that comprised a husband's gender identity.

It is no exaggeration to say that our understanding of the roles of husbands and wives in the eighteenth century was influenced by scholars' reading of the advice literature. This type of source gave a very rigid picture of different roles and duties between the genders. *The Art of Governing A Wife* (1747) is an epitome. Its author preached at the beginning: 'It is the Duty of the Husband, to go abroad and get his Living, and the Wives to look to the House. It is the Husband's Duty to provide Money, and the Wives to lay it out providentially'.[34] This instruction can be categorised as part of what historians call the theory of 'separate spheres' in which men were expected to be the breadwinners and women were the efficient housekeepers.[35]

However, this stereotype of husbandhood has been challenged by current research.

32 Amussen, 'The Part of a Christian Man'; cf. Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), ch. 3.

33 Hannah Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *SH*, 33 (2008), 12-35; *idem*, 'A Grocer's Tale: Gender, Family and Class in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester', *G&H*, 21 (2009), 340-57; cf. Sarah Lloyd, 'Cottage Conversations: Poverty and Manly Independence in Eighteenth-Century England', *P&P*, 184 (2004), 69-108.

34 Anon., *The Art of Governing A Wife*, 28-29.

35 The most influential work establishing the discourse of 'separate spheres' is Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987; London and New York, 2002). Cf. Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), ch. 4, esp. p. 160, where she argues that '[a] gentleman was expected to honour his housekeeper's authority. Most were only too happy to do so. Thus, the role of the dignified, efficient housekeeper was available to eighteenth and early nineteenth-century gentlewomen as a source of both personal satisfaction and public credit'.

Karen Harvey has recently argued that in the eighteenth century, another discourse of household management was also available, which historians have ignored for too long. This was known as 'oeconomy' which was 'more to do with ownership or authority than with the detail of domestic chores'. Harvey points out that 'oeconomy earned men “Honour and Reputation” and taught them self-governance, an important virtue of any man seeking masculine status'.[36] Harvey's argument certainly extends our understanding of the relationship between men and the household. Yet her work seems to suggest that men struggled to be perfect oeconomists, in order to be eligible to claim their reputation in the outside world which was governed by other men. How far Harvey's argument is valid is debatable. However, it is not my intention to deny that there was no relation between private housekeeping and claims to public honour. But, what we cannot overlook is that in such an argument, there is too little acknowledgement of women's role in the construction of masculinity. If gender is relational, it is fair to ask how the husband performed his patriarchal duties to gain the recognition from his own wife.

Eighteenth-century men, especially from the middling and lower ranks, perceived themselves as household providers. Their writing reveals a deep sense of responsibility for the sake of their family's welfare. A middle-aged, but still poor, barrister Charles Pratt (1713-1794) penned a line to his wife, Elizabeth (d. 1779), during his circuits in 1753, conveying how he understood his bread-winning duty: 'I in the mean time shall be wandering a great distance, remote from you [...] without any other Comfort. [...] But it is neither wise nor grateful to repine, since I am destined to this Cause of life; & your happiness with the Welfare of my family depend upon my Labours'.[37] By narrating how much he sacrificed his comfort for family welfare, Charles highlighted his masculine status as a stalwart breadwinner. Perhaps he was also confirming to his wife that she had married a strong man and benevolent provider. Whatever it was, the role of a responsible breadwinner was evident in this husband's writings. It formed an integral part of his patriarchal identity.

This strong sense of responsibility as the male 'breadwinner' was also present in the lower ranks of society. Joseph Mayett (1783-1839) was a Baptist labourer from Quainton in Buckinghamshire. He strongly trusted in God and salvation. His autobiography is a recital of youthful follies followed by a life of trials, and can be seen as a confessional writing. While he was guilty of juvenile frivolity, he did not hesitate to

36 Karen Harvey, 'Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *G&H*, 21 (2009), 532-33; *idem*, *Little Republic*, esp. chs. 2 and 6.

37 CKS, U840 C1/34 (5 Aug. 1753), Charles Pratt, Sarum, to Elizabeth Pratt.

remind God of his appropriate deeds whenever he foresaw His praise. Among these were Joseph's travails in supporting his ill wife in 1820, five years after their wedding:

> [T]his winter the bread was very dear and after the wheat seeding was done I was out of work and obligated to apply to the overseer for labour. he employed me but he would not give me only 6s per week. at this time bread was 2s 4d per loaf. my wife was very ill and I was obligated to have a woman to wait on her. 3s 2d per week I paid for rent and fuel which left me only 2s 10d per week to maintain myself my wife and a woman to do for her. but in this destress [*sic*] the Lord in mercy appeared for me and raised me up a friend who employed me and gave me full wages for my work. I also left my house and took another at one Shilling per week and paid my rent half yearly and my wife recovered her illness and thus I was delivered again from this State of thraldom.[38]

Joseph's sense of being a responsible patriarch was evident. He did everything in his power to ensure that his wife would be fed, sheltered and well attended during her illness, even though he had to perform onerous additional work, which he compared with the state of being enslaved, to earn enough money. One might suspect the trustworthiness of his narrative. Yet, it is difficult to deny that Joseph valorised the role of breadwinner and orientated himself to this model when exposing himself to God. As such, bread-winning was a key duty that middling- and lower-rank men adopted as part of his husbandhood.

The role of a household provider extended beyond the conventional assumption of bread-winning, and embraced the provisions of everyday consumption. As documented in Margot Finn's pioneering work, middling men were committed to providing everyday and fashionable goods for family members.[39] On some occasions, men initiated this purchasing themselves; on others it was their wives who asked them to do so. When John Collier (1685-1760), a town-clerk and solicitor in Hastings, went to London for business in 1731, he looked for new fashionable materials to clothe his family members.[40] He informed his wife, Mary (1696-1762), that 'I have sent my boxes this Week. [...] The 2 boyes Gownes & cloathes for Nick [a servant] & Your Cawlet [*sic*] wch if you want you'l

38 Ann Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton (1783-1839)* (Cambridge, 1986), 72-73.

39 Margot Finn, 'Men's Things: Masculine Possession in the Consumer Revolution', *SH*, 25 (2000), 133-54. Finn's article corrected historians' previous assumption that masculine consumption had made less of a contribution to the rise of eighteenth-century consumer society than their female counterparts. For a recent work that has confirmed Finn's argument, see David Hussey, 'Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats? Male Consumer Activity and Domestic Shopping in Late-Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century England', in *idem* and Margaret Ponsonby (eds.), *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Aldershot, 2008), 47-69. However, in her study of Lancashire gentlewomen, Amanda Vickery argued that men tended to purchase expensive and dynastic goods, while women were committed to mundane and repetitive purchasing. See her, 'Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions, 1751-81', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods: Consumption and Society in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1993), 274-301.

40 For another example of a loving patriarch clothing his family, see Bridget Clarke, 'Clothing the Family of an MP in the 1690s: An Analysis of the Day Book of Edward Clarke of Chipley, Somerset', *Costume*, 43 (2009), 38-54.

Open it'.[41] Like other wives whose husbands visited fashionable towns, Mary 'directed' her husband to procure her a new dress. In February 1732, she asked John to buy her a new gown from London. On 9 February 1732, he told her that he would start looking for it on the next day and would not just do it but 'consult What Will bee most proper'. A fortnight later, he reported his progress: 'As Your Gown was not bought before Your letter came, Your orders as to the Colour are obey'd and it was bought this afternoon. Itt's a dark Colour but I think the Same you Intended & besides that is upon Enquiry the proper Colour'.[42] John proved to be an attentive husband. He did not just enter a draper's shop and buy any gowns whose colour seemed to match his wife's order. He had done some research ('upon Enquiry') before he made the decision to please his wife. It is needless to say that we can never know whether John had actually consulted and enquired after the 'proper colour' before he bought it. Whatever the case, his narrative reveal that he constructed his identity using the model of an 'attentive provider', an image he intended to be perceived by his wife.

In some cases, men's shopping carried more intimate meanings. For instance, when Joseph Strutt (1765-1844), a Presbyterian cotton-manufacturer in Derbyshire, visited London in 1794, his wife, Isabella (1769-1802), wrote a letter to him, addressing him as 'my indulgent kind protector'. She asked him for 'two commissions':

> [I]f you will not think them too troublesome & trifling I should be glad if you would procure a coral & bells for our dear boy & a lilac bonnet for me <u>to your own taste</u> but I must request you not to think of the latter one if it will be attended with any trouble in the execution.[43]

If he had failed to afford 'a coral & bells', which were used for teething devices and amusement of the baby for pacification, his fatherhood would have been questioned.[44] If he had not succeeded in purchasing the bonnet, his status as a loving husband would not have been perfected. But, what husband would dare to refuse a wife's commission when she addressed him 'my indulgent kind protector'? It may also have been possible that his wife set him a test to gauge his kindness both as a husband and as the father of their new born child. Perhaps she took an active role in making her own husband an indulgent,

41 ESRO, SAY 1583 (24 Feb. 1731), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.

42 ESRO, SAY 1626 (9 Feb. 1732), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings; ESRO, SAY 1628 (17 Feb. 1732), same to same.

43 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/5/16/12 (25 Oct. 1794), Isabella Strutt, Derby, to Joseph Strutt, London.

44 In the eighteenth century, coral used for teething was often equipped with a rattle or small bells. Such teething devices became luxury products in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, the relationship between infancy and coral changed in the course of the eighteenth century. Coral gradually lost its function of protecting the child from the evil eye, and became instead a device for its physical well-being. See Marcia Pointon, *Brilliant Effects: A Cultural History of Gem Stones and Jewellery* (New Haven and London, 2009), 127-31.

loving patriarch. In this context, procuring goods upon the request of his wife enabled a husband to fashion, and even to perfect, his own identity.

It is to be noted that the advice literature imbued the husband's provisioning with various meanings, too. From a religious point of view, 'Mr Steele' instructed the husband to show his love by 'yielding to the reasonable Request of his wife', just as Biblical figures had done before: '[s]o did David to Bathsheba, [...] So did Isaac to Rebecca, […] [and] So did Jesus Christ daily to his Church'.[45] It was now the husband's duty to imitate the model laid down by these pious figures. For other authors, furnishing his wife was a means of forestalling wifely adultery which would certainly ruin a husband's honour. One writer warned male readers: 'How many Women are debauch'd, not thro' Inclination, but because their Husbands do not supply them with Necessaries, and so they redeem their Wants at the Expence of their Honour'.[46] Indeed, as Margot Finn demonstrated, within the so-called 'law of necessaries' married women were allowed to buy 'necessary' goods on behalf of their husbands' credit, and such transactions were regarded as legally binding. Some women determined to separate from their husbands, exploited this law of coverture to tip the scales in favour of themselves, claiming that their husbands failed to provide them with 'necessary' and sufficient goods.[47] Thus, a kind and indulgent husband was likely to be exempted from being abandoned; his money not only supplied his house, but also maintained his manhood, in terms of both piety and worldly reputation.

To prove my argument that the 'benevolent provider' was an overarching, aspiring value for constructing a man's patriarchy, we need look at a failed patriarch who desperately struggled to underline his role as the breadwinner, although he had long ago lost it in practice. A case study of Samuel Wesley's (1662-1735) married life testifies my claim. In 1688, Samuel married his wife Susanna (1669-1742). He became rector of Epworth in Lincolnshire in 1695. Financial problems plagued them throughout their marital life. In May 1701, Susanna gave birth to their fourth child, Anne. This forced Samuel to think carefully about the family budget as they were now short of money even for basic commodities:

> Last night my wife brought me a few [*sic*] Children. There are but Two yet, a Boy & a Girl, & I think they are all at present. We have had four in two years, [...] 3 of all living. [...] Never came any thing mere like a Gift from Heaven, then wt ye Countess of Northampton sent by ye [Lady's] charitable offices. Wednesday Even: my Wife & I clubbed of joynt stock, we came but to Six-shillings, to send for Coals. Thursday I mett Mr Cogan, &

45 [Mr. Steele], *What are the Duties of Man and Wife*, 14.
46 Anon., *The Art of Governing A Wife*, 30.
47 Margot Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, *c.* 1760-1860', *HJ*, 39 (1996), 703-22. See also, Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), 41-47.

> showed him ye Graces Letter. Fryday morn: I recd the Ten pounds. & at Night my wife was delivered.[48]

Amidst the family's financial crisis, Samuel was scarcely revelling in the birth of their daughter. What he considered as 'a Gift from Heaven' was not his baby, but the financial support of £10 sent by 'ye Countess of Northampton'. It was poignant that the patriarch had to warm his family not with his own money, but with the charity of his patron.

A man's patriarchal status was deeply undermined, when he proved to be an impotent household manager. This could cause a patriarch to be physically deprived of being the head of his household. Having been unsuccessful in managing his family's budget, Samuel was finally arrested and imprisoned in Lincoln Castle for debts of almost £30 in 1705:

> On Friday last, when I had bin Christning a Child at Epworth, I was arrested in my Churchyard by one who had bin my Servant [...], at the Suit of one of Mr Whichcott's Relations & jealous Friends, [...] I must imediately pay the whole Sum or goe to Prison: Thither I went, [...] I thank God my wife was pretty well recovered [...] before I was taken from her; & hope shee'll be able to look to my Family if they don't turn 'em out of Doors, as they have often threatened to do. One of my biggest Concerns was my being forc'd to leav my poor Lambs in ye midst of so many Wolves – But the great Shepherd is able to provide for 'em & preserv'em.[49]

Samuel's plain language should not prevent us from speculating how much grief he was experiencing in this embarrassing situation. It is clear that he was imprisoned, and his house was under threat of being sequestered. Thus, he was physically deprived of his household, a patriarch without a house. Moreover, his patriarchal status was severely undermined by the fact that he was apprehended by his former servant who had once been under his authority. Finally, the arrest took place publicly 'in my Churchyard' where he performed his professional obligation. All this must have been truly mortifying for him.

In addition, if patriarchy was partly understood as a man's duty to supervise his family's welfare, a patriarch without this was all but impotent. Indeed, Samuel's authority of this kind was, after his imprisonment, transferred to his wife's hands. It is interesting that he called his family members 'my poor Lambs', suggesting that he saw himself as a shepherd imitating Christ's life. However, this was not the case. The 'Shepherd' of this family was not Samuel. In reality the shepherd was his wife Susanna, in contrast to Samuel, who believed that God was 'the great Shepherd' providing for and preserving his family. Samuel was deprived of being the patriarch, both in his thoughts and in reality.

How did a man react to this humiliation? Having been deprived of being the patriarch, Samuel struggled to retain his masculine status. In the same letter he praised his

48 JRL, DDWF/1/1 (18 May 1701), Samuel Wesley, Epworth, to John Sharp, London.
49 JRL, DDWF/1/2 (25 Jun. 1705), Samuel Wesley, Lincoln Castle, to William Wake, Lincoln.

wife, saying that, she 'bears it with that Courage which becoms her & which I expected from her'.[50] This was not merely a compliment. It was Samuel's assessment of his wife's performance, as if he were playing the judge's role. Thus doing, he could assert his superiority in the family. In addition, Samuel later informed Archbishop John Sharp of York that 'my Wife's at home scarce so much: She soon sent me her Rings, because she had nothing else to relieve me with, but I return'd 'em, & God soon provided me'.[51] One might see Samuel's rejection of his wife's help as a noble sentimental gesture, for Susanna's rings would have included her wedding ring, which was recognised as a sign of the solemn matrimonial contract as well as the continuous flow of love of the couple.[52] Yet we should be sensitive to Samuel's situation in interpreting his rejection. He was by now deprived of almost all aspects of his patriarchal status. Had he accepted his wife's assistance, he would have completely surrendered to her leading role in the family, allowing her to perform the role of breadwinner (which was conventionally associated with the 'masculine' domain). In that case, patriarchal control would have been passed to a female's hands. As Robert Connell observed, 'hegemonic masculinity' can be challenged when it is performed by a female or subordinate male.[53] Thus, to maintain the familial gender hierarchy – and with it his own gender identity – Samuel could not accept his wife's rings. He decided to wait for charitable help, rather than receive her support which would in turn undermine his patriarchal status. Patriarchy was still at the heart of the man, although he had long ago lost it in practice.

Hitherto, I have demonstrated how the role of household provider formed an integral part of masculinity among middling- and lower-rank men. These men were proud to claim their manhood by underlining their strong commitment to maintain their family's welfare. Yet, one might wonder whether bread-winning was an aspiring duty that noblemen used to highlight their patriarchal status, for they enjoyed a comfortable standard of living?

The evidence from aristocratic men suggests that they boasted less of their efforts to earn money for families, and instead showed their wives their financial preparedness and attentiveness in controlling household management. It was customary among upper-rank families that their households were run by a housekeeper and a steward who

50 JRL, DDWF/1/2 (25 Jun. 1705) Samuel Wesley, Lincoln Castle, to William Wake, Lincoln.
51 JRL, DDWF/1/3 (17 Sep. 1705) Samuel Wesley, Lincoln Castle, to John Sharp, York.
52 Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, 2002), 62; David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1999), 342.
53 Connell, *Masculinities*, 69, 71-81.

governed the maids and servants. This housekeeper was accountable to the aristocratic household master. In some families, an agent was hired to ensure that the lady would not be in want of cash when the household head was away from home for longer periods.[54] Before going to sea in 1809, Admiral Purvis appointed an agent to assuage his wife Jane's anxiety about the family's cash flow. He constantly showed his attentiveness to her welfare. In September 1809 he wrote to her: 'Did you get my last quarterly bill? You have not acknowledged it – but if you had received it, it is surprising you should complain of being poor'.[55] As Katie Barclay has remarked, once aristocratic men were confident that they had fulfilled their 'breadwinner' duty, they tended to check their wives' expenses as part of their exercising superior power and asserting their patriarchal manhood. Thus, Barclay's nobleman, Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, consistently looked into his wife's 'purse' in the 1740s and did not hesitate to complain of her extravagance. Grant was of the opinion that he had the authority to do this as part of his superior status. Therefore, he was angry when his wife started to resent his control: 'You aske what is wrong in family expence or management, and how can things be better. I can not understand, why you are always so uneasy and angry, at my proposing to enquire into it; I can have no ill designe in it; nor can it have any bad effect'.[56] Unlike the middling- and lower rank men, 'bread-winning' was not an overarching action that the nobleman was keen to highlight. Instead, the aristocratic patriarch assumed that the 'overall control of household' was in his authority, and formed part of his patriarchal status.

It is worth noting that the 'overall control of household' allowed men to perform the role of family inspector, which in turn sustained their dominant status in the family. Women themselves also acknowledged this role of their husbands. In 1778, a genteel woman from Essex, Mary Rebow (c.1751-1804) sent a letter to her husband, Colonel Isaac (1731-1781), thanking him for his praise of her farm management. She wrote that 'You really make me quite Vain with Your Praises on ye Subject of Farming; I am very glad You are pleas'd with ye Method of proceeding, & assure You every thing goes on so well, that I trust You will find Your Words verified in regard to ye Produce'. No matter how skilful in farming she appeared to be, Mary still regularly asked for his opinion of what she ought to do next or whether what she had done so far was right: '[P]ray write me

54 Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family*, 137.
55 Quoted in Margarette Lincoln, *Naval Wives & Mistresses, 1750-1815* (London, 2007), 78.
56 Quoted in Barclay, 'Negotiating Patriarchy', 97. On gender divisions of accounting, see Amanda Vickery, 'His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England', in Ruth Harris *et al.* (eds.), *The Art of Survival: Gender and History in Europe, 1450-2000: Essays in Honour of Olwen Hufton, P&P*, Supplement 1 (2006), 12-38.

word where You wou'd have [this servant] be'. On another occasion, having made a deal with another farmer, Mary reported this to the colonel and added, 'Did I do right?'[57] It is clear that Mary sought her husband's approval and was glad to find his agreement. Thus, asking for his opinion allowed her husband to exercise his authority whilst being away from home. Indeed, it was women themselves who offered men the opportunity to perform and maintain their patriarchy.

However, the husband's overall control was not absolute and unchallenged. Patriarchy was subject to attack from the moment a bridegroom knelt at the altar. The unhappy marriage of Samuel Wesley and Charlotte Wesley, with which I opened this chapter, reveals how grievously a man could suffer when his patriarchal power was not only challenged, but ignored and disrespected. After five years of brutal marriage, Samuel confessed to his sister, Sally, in 1798 that 'Domestic Tales are never entertaining', 'Affectionate Terms are out of all question' and 'Tenderness will not touch her, & to Reason she is deaf'.[58] Upon reflecting on how violently Charlotte behaved against him, Samuel lamented: 'I am not fond of publishing the Miseries of my own House, nor can it be very flattering to my Vanity to talk of the Evils which I have brought upon myself'.[59] It is evident that Samuel felt guilty that he himself had generated this familial disorder, as he was the one who had decided to marry her. In the same letter, Samuel recounted a humiliating scene orchestrated by his wife:

> I have not mentioned to any one the last Alteration which took place between Mrs W. & Me on Sunday Evening, when she, without any new cause of Provocation that I know of thought proper to be most villainously abusive, & upon my insisting on her not quitting the Room till she had heard a few Words of Mine, holding the Door in my Hand, to prevent her flying away, which she was preparing to do, she honoured me with a sharp Blow in the Face, given properly, not, woman – like, with an open Palm, but with a clenched Fist, & sooth[e] to say, it made my Teeth ache for 2 or 3 Minutes. --- You will hardly conjecture that it was returned.[60]

This narrative is interesting. If we believe Samuel's account, Charlotte attacked her patriarch on 'Sunday', the Lord's day, a day on which no sin was expected to be committed, except by evil. Thus, Samuel was portraying his wife as a sinful woman who had attacked her own lord. Charlotte was also preparing to flee from her patriarch, suggesting that she was no longer willing to be under his authority. And, she physically attacked her patriarch, not with 'an open Palm, but with a clenched Fist'. Charlotte

57 ERO, A12619 Photocopies of the letters of Mary and Isaac Rebow, 1767-79, 3 vols., vol. 3, fol. 298 (26 Jul. 1778), Mary Rebow to Isaac Rebow; ERO, A12619, vol. 3, fol. 311 (2 Aug. 1778), same to same; ERO, A12619, vol. 3, fol. 362 (14 Aug. 1779), same to same.

58 JRL, DDWF/15/7 (23 May 1798), Samuel Wesley to Sally Wesley; JRL, DDWes/6/39 (n.d.) same to same.

59 JRL, DDWF/15/7 (23 May 1798), Samuel Wesley to Sally Wesley.

60 *Ibid.*

renounced every rule of womanhood, being disobedient, violent, ungrateful and ungovernable. For Samuel, the world was now turned upside down. A man's patriarchy could not be attacked more severely than this.

According to the surviving sources, Samuel did not do anything to protect his masculinity and patriarchal status. What he did was simply writing letters to his sister, informing her of how badly his wife had behaved towards him. Perhaps, this was the way he chose to bemoan his undermined masculinity, rather than risking his reputation by fighting her brutally. In a letter sent to his sister, Samuel proclaimed: 'If a dungeon were the first consequence of my Separation, if disease & death were to follow that, I still prefer them all to a life of continual Vexation & Insult'. We do not know about the process of separation due to paucity of the sources. Yet, it succeeded around 1810. The separation should not be viewed as a failure for an attacked husband. Indeed, Samuel himself accepted that he would not 'tamely bear the Yoke of Matrimony without honour, profit, or pleasure'.[61] In this sense, separation was a means to prevent such a husband from further unfair assaults which in effect would ruin his masculine patriarchal status.

* * * *

Just as husbands derived their superiority from the control and material support they supplied to their families, so it is no wonder that men also valorised the ethics of hard work as part of their identities. Thus, husbands were determined to highlight their desire for self-improvement and were committed to being a 'good example' for their wives. Perhaps, this was how men prevented themselves from their wives' criticism which would in turn undermine their male dominance.

Moral laxity and neglect of career could subject a patriarch to his wife's challenge to his authority. Take Edmund Harrold's (1679-1721) married life as an example. He was a middling-rank wigmaker and bookseller in Manchester and kept diaries between 1712 and 1715. The diaries reveal that apart from his poverty, Edmund had severe drink problems which he saw as the major cause of his ill behaviour, such as missing private and public prayers, loss of self-control and squabbling with his wife.[62] Having been drunk the night before, Edmund examined his vulnerabilities the next day, revealing his attitudes about the sort of husband he aspired to be:

61 JRL, DDWes/6/39 (n.d.), Samuel Wesley to Sally Wesley.

62 Craig Horner (ed.), *The Diary of Edmund Harrold, Wigmaker of Manchester*, 1712-15 (Aldershot, 2008). This diary has been analysed in Barker, 'Soul, purse and family', which shows the similar argument.

> This day I lay in bed till almost 11 cl[oc]k, [...]. Ive drank no ale to day, yet on 6 at night I'm vext about my ramble last night. I've mist pub:[lic] [and] private prayer 2 times. Its a very great trouble to me, yt I thus exspose [*sic*] my self, hurt my body, offend against God, set bad example, torment my mind and break my rules, make my self a laughing stock to men, greive ye holy spirit, disorder my family, fret my wife now quick, wch is al[l] against my own mind when sober.[63]

Edmund was disappointed with himself, as he lost self-control when drinking, which led him to miss family prayers which he was obliged to attend as a pious patriarch.[64] Apart from ruining himself in his fellows' eyes, Edmund was deeply upset with his ill behaviour because he had set a bad example to his family by ignoring prayers and fretting his wife. His lack of sobriety was even more grievous for him, for his wife was now pregnant ('my wife [who is] now quick').[65] For a mother-to-be, her husband's ill conduct would have caused her feel uncertain about the future of her family.

Why did Edmund aspire to being a 'good example'? The diary suggests that Edmund considered this to be an essential part of his patriarchal status. He was influenced by Dr. Ainscough's sermons on this topic. He summarised the sermons twice in his diary. The first entry was on 6 July 1712, three days before his self-examination above. His summary reads: 'Doctrine, yt men in mode and figure in ye world should be ye most of all carefull to sett good example and virtues as pre[ce]dents for others to ffollow. Example being prevalent above precept, and sooner followed'. In another sermon but on the same topic, the preacher directly exhorted that 'its ye duty of great persons, so more especiall of parent[s] and masters of familys to walk so' as examples to their families.[66] For Edmund, excessive drink not only caused him to lose self-control and miss doing his duty to God, but also prevented him from being a 'good example' and displaying his virtues as the patriarch. In short, it stopped him from performing his patriarchal roles.

Moreover, excessive drink created an opportunity for a wife to question her husband's virtues which could explode into family disorder. Throughout the diary, Edmund recorded several entries in which his drunkenness caused 'wife[s'] clamours' or his 'Wifes grumbling'. On one occasion in 1712, it led to a serious dispute between them. Edmund noted: 'Came home and went to bed, but my wife scolding and upbraided me with drunkenness, houghting and coughing and would not be easie'. He reacted to this humiliation, which was indeed generated by his loss of self-control due to drinking, by

63 Horner (ed.), *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, 17.

64 Conduct manuals prescribed the patriarch not forget his private devotion, regardless his idleness or excess of business; see, for example, Anon., *A New-Year's Gift; or, A Letter from A Father to his Son* (London, 1715), 14-15.

65 For the meaning of 'to quicken' as 'to become alive: as, *a woman* quickens with child', see Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 'quicken'.

66 Horner (ed.), *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, 16, 23.

conveying to his wife that he could resume this cardinal manly virtue by himself. He recorded the scene following the dispute: 'So I got up and read a sermon [...], very pertinent to my case and thoughtfulness, and I found a great deal of comforts to my soul from it. Yn I lead me down and slept on couch chair 3 hours, and yn I went to bed and she was quiet to me but ill etc'.[67] The husband, who was in want of self-restraint in daily life, was subject to lose his superior status in the family. This must be a plausible explanation of why Edmund wanted to show his determination not to admit to drunkenness throughout his diary.

Apart from preventing men from committing any frivolities, the virtue of self-control forced men to devote themselves to hard-work.[68] If men derived their patriarchal status from being breadwinners, it was hard-work that allowed them to be ideal patriarchs. Therefore, men were keen to point out their industrious personalities. Throughout the century, we find a number of references in which men suggested this virtue to their peers, both directly and indirectly. For example, Edmund Harrold proudly recorded his industry, noting on one occasion, 'Worked hard, kept to my duty, and finished 2 wigs well and handsomely'.[69] The Methodist Rev. Charles Wesley (1707-1788), delightedly reported to his wife Sarah (1726-1822) in 1786, the prosperity of his service which attracted a large number of people: 'I have been strengthened to go this the whole Service this morning, & to preach & administer the Sacram[en]t to 400 Communicants'.[70] Even when a patriarch had a well-established career, the sense of self-improvement and desire for hard-work was still present. As Rev. William Johnson Temple (1739-1796), the vicar of St Gluvias in rural Cornwall with a living of over £300 a year, noted in his diary as his 49th birthday was approaching, 'When shall I act so as to be satisfied with myself? My birth-day and a new year approaches after wch I would fain hope to be able to do better'.[71] The sense of self-improvement and the ethics of hard-work were at the bottom of these men's hearts.

Industry was particularly important for husbands of the Evangelicals, who believed that solemn hard-work was a way to salvation. When Emma Money visited her parents in Middlesex, she was informed that her mother supported her brother's family

67 *Ibid.*, 24, 47, 43-44.

68 For a superb discussion of the religious significance of hard-work and abstinence, see Margaret C. Jacob and Matthew Kadane, 'Missing, Now Found in the Eighteenth Century: Weber's Protestant Capitalist', *AHR*, 108 (2003), 20-49; Matthew Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier: The Life of an Eighteenth-Century Protestant Capitalist* (New Haven and London, 2013), esp. chs. 1, 2 and 5.

69 Horner (ed.), *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, 30.

70 JRL, DDWes/4/37 (20 Jul. 1786), Charles Wesley, Bristol, to Sarah Wesley, London.

71 Lewis Bettany (ed.), *Diaries of William Johnston Temple*, 1780-1796 (Oxford, 1929), 58.

more than hers. Emma was upset and felt disregarded by her parents. In one letter to her husband Rev. William Money (1776-1848), who earned his living at Yatesbury, she lamented: 'I am not jealous of his better luck; at the same time if so much is being done for a Child who has acted in every way possible to forfeit his Parents affection, why notice the little gifts bestowed upon me, who never gave either Father, or Mother, an uneasy moment'.[72] William grasped this opportunity to preach to his wife on the manly principle of industry which he believed she ought to follow:

> You speak likewise under some impression of disappointment at having received no presents. [...] Do not, my darling, for a moment regard any thing of this kind. Sweeter to me would be bread earned by the "sweat of my brow", than purple cloathing & sumptuous fare provided by the reluctant & grudging hand of any created being.[73]

A genuine and dignified, masculine breadwinner had to earn his bread 'by the "sweat of my brow"'. When these lines were written, it was the heyday of the Evangelical revival. It strikingly privileged men as the 'moral leaders' of families, who controlled and guided their dependants' morality. In this context, William was not simply performing as a 'moral leader' when exhorting Emma to commit herself to manly industry, but he also appeared as a pious husband, fulfilling his duty prescribed by the religious movement of the time.

It is worth noting that the middling-rank men analysed in this section, regardless their denominations, were keen to valorise the sense of duty and work ethic throughout the eighteenth century. Therefore, we probably need to revise the dominant image of pleasure-loving and polite Georgian men. Perhaps, historians have too long associated the driven ethic of manly industry only with the Victorians, and overlooked its influence over their ancestors.

* * * *

The ideal patriarch was also expected to master his affective feelings towards his dear wife. Although it was widely accepted that in the eighteenth century not all people married for love, for most spouses love was expected to be an important ingredient in their married lives.[74] Yet, what did spouses mean by 'loving couples'?[75] How did the

72 WSA, 1720/829 (n.d. [1812]), Emma Money, Colney Hatch, to William Money, Whetham.

73 WSA, 1720/829 (28 May 1812), William Money, Whetham, to Emma Money, Colney Hatch.

74 For representatives of this view, see Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford and New York, 1986), chs. 12-13; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, ch. 2; Ralph Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (London, 1984). However, other historians whose studies are based on upper-elite ranks' sources argue that power, connections and money were prominent motives in marriage choices. See David Lemmings, 'Marriage and the Law in the Eighteenth Century: Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753', *HJ*, 39 (1996), 339-60.

75 Recent research has been conducted on the changing meanings of love over time, though has been given

sensuality and physicality of the marital bond function within a hierarchal paradigm to sustain male dominance? From a sociological point of view, intimacy is a sign of increasing equality within a romantic relationship. For Theodore Zeldin, the romantics invented the modern idea of intimacy which highlighted the 'union of two souls', rather than sexual intercourse. Once that union was declared by both parties, 'the two ideally lost their sense of separate identity'. This concept enabled individuals to experience equality within conjugal relationships.[76] For Anthony Giddens, intimacy creates and enlarges an individual's autonomous boundary, allowing them to project themselves, their needs, and their desires to each other 'in an egalitarian way'.[77]

Yet, can this be applicable to conjugal relationships within a hierarchal society? In her analysis of eighteenth-century Scottish marriage, Katie Barclay has argued that intimacy (as well as 'love') in the early modern period was discursively understood as female obedience and male responsibilities within marriage. Thus, 'intimate relationships were built on a framework of male superiority and female inferiority. How intimacy was created therefore reinforced the patriarchal system'. Yet, she also allows for the possibility that couples used the definition of intimacy (obedient wives and dutiful husbands) to 'negotiate power within marriage' when they failed to perform their appropriate roles in marital bonds. 'Intimacy was not an equalising force, but it could be used to complicate power relationships'.[78] However, it is to be noted that the discussion of intimacy and power (as outlined above) has been conducted in the framework of ideas. For those scholars, intimacy means less physicality than ideology. The final part of this chapter, however, will analyse intimacy as physical sensuality, revealing its role in sustaining male superior status in conjugal relationships. For proof of the close link between sexual intimacy and patriarchy, one needs look no further than the fact that non-consummated marriage could lead to marriage annulment under the English common law, a failure which surely grieved the impotent patriarch at heart.[79]

According to the letters studied here, sensual intimacy did not reduce the marital hierarchy; rather it underpinned it. Eighteenth-century spouses usually referred to personal, physical touch in the context of patriarchal protection, emphasising the

to philosophical aspects, see Simon May, *Love: A History* (New Haven and London, 2011); Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Stanford, 1998).

76 Theodore Zeldin, *An Intimate History of Humanity* (London, 1994), 325.

77 Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge, 1992), 188-192, quoted at p. 189.

78 Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power*, 143-44.

79 See, for example, Helen Berry, 'Queering the History of Marriage: the Social Recognition of a Castrato Husband in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *HWJ*, 74 (2012), 41-43.

patriarch's duty and his superior status within the household. To begin with, women tended to believe that connubial life entailed the union of minds and bodies as well as the living-together of the spouses. (This is significantly different from 'intimacy' seen by the scholars discussed above.) Even the temporary absence of their husbands could cause them misery. While married to the 40-year-old barrister James Hewitt (1709-1789), Mary (d. 1765) was regularly left alone at home in Coventry during her husband's circuit obligations. In July 1749, two months after their wedding, Mary wrote a letter to him, lamenting that it was 'an age' since she saw him and 'your goodness to me Makes yr absence ye more disagreeable to me'. Outlining her understanding of love, she bade him return:

> [D]id I love your comepany less should not mind being without you any[way], I hope yu will contrive your affaires so as yt I may be as little from yu as possible if you [design] to make my life comefortable, as you promest me yu wd during ye [w]hole time you courted me. [...] You must lett me live with you. to be absent 2 months in a year as you must when upon ye Circuit will be quite long. [...] I am shure [sic] I think so, for when people are to long from one another they can not have yt regard they ought for each other, [...] if I was to be half my time living without you it wd natturally make me think you did not love me as well or you cd not, nor would not, suffer me to be from you.[80]

In Mary's opinion conjugal love could only be nourished and perfected when husband and wife were together. In another letter, Mary recounted how much she suffered from her 'Cholick', which was aggravated, as she wrote, 'only when I think of yr leveing me behind at Cov[entry] & that thought drives me madd'.[81] One would argue that this line was written amidst Mary's illness, and therefore she needed more loving attention from her spouse. However, it is clear that Mary esteemed her husband as a powerful source of consolation and that his absence was unbearable for her.

The meanings of conjugal love as represented in private correspondence were also extended from a companionate to a more intimate level between couples. Around 1775, Mary Martin (*c*.1751-1804) married Colonel Isaac Rebow (1731-1781), who lived near Colchester in Essex. Isaac was based at a military camp, probably around Maidstone in Kent. The surviving letters, written after their wedding reveal how Isaac failed to keep up Mary's spirits. Like Mary Hewitt, Mary Rebow was disturbed by their separation.[82] Her longing for her husband could not be fulfilled by just seeing him, but by staying, or

80 CA, PA 1484/77/157 (15 Jul. 1749), Mary Hewitt, Coventry, to James Hewitt. It is to be noted that the correspondence of the Hewitt couple has been analysed before in Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009), 92-94.

81 CA, PA 1484/77/163 (25 Jul. 1749), Mary Hewitt, Coventry, to James Hewitt, Leicester.

82 The strain of separation was one of the re-current themes that loomed large in correspondence between husbands and wives. But, this kind of wifely lamentation was much intense among military and naval wives, as their husbands' fate was much more difficult to foresee. For a fuller discussion, see Lincoln, *Naval Wives*, 100-105.

perhaps even sleeping, with him. She was surprised when she was told that 'Dutchess of D.' and a certain Mrs. Chester 'are ye only two Ladies that Sleep in ye Camp; Is it true?'[83] Mary was amazed by this information, because it was certainly unconventional for women to stay overnight at a military camp. Perhaps the news allowed her to fancy doing so herself. Upon cursory reading of her letters, several references to their intimacy were used to remind Isaac of her attachment. Mary once reported that 'my Spirits are better' which 'I cheifly attribute to ye having been with You all Night in imagination'. The message is straightforward; just imagining sleeping next to him could cure her spleen. In another letter, sexual allusion was made more directly, but also *purposefully*. Mary told Isaac that due to the hot weather she could not 'get a Wink of Sleep 'till three or four o'Clock in ye Morning, [...] for its my Opinion it is intirely owing to ye want of my usual Method of going to Sleep, what do You think?'[84] It is to be noted that this direct sexual reference was made amidst the first letter, when Mary started to persuade her husband to let her come to stay at Maidstone, a town near his camp. In this sense, it is fair to entertain an interpretation that sex formed an indispensable part of conjugal love as defined by couples themselves.[85] Moreover, as Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster have shown, sexual intercourse – and with it procreating progeny – was also efficient proof of men's sexual prowess and men's and women's fertility. This in turn confirmed the pair's gender identities, fulfilled the purpose of marriage by begetting children, and surely complied with female desire for pregnancy.[86] In this sense, Mary Rebow's request for intimate consummation was more than a tantalising expression between the couple. Rather, she was apt to integrate sexual allusions into the meaning of marital love to achieve her goal and to help Isaac to fulfil his role of a husband.

Yet, how did men understand connubial life if women believed that personal unity and sexual intimacy were so crucial? From my sample here, men also lamented when they were absent from their wives. But, while women equated personal absence to their husbands' declining love, men associated it with a sort of marital trial, which, if coped

83 ERO, A12691, vol. 3, fol. 298 (26 Jul. 1778), Mary Rebow to Isaac Rebow.

84 ERO, A12691, vol. 3, fol. 269 (3 Jul. 1778), Mary Rebow to Isaac Rebow; ERO, A12691, vol. 3, fol. 276 (12 Jul. 1778), same to same. It is to be remarked that the latter reference has been revealed for the first time in Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 97. However, while Vickery reads this reference as evidence of the Rebows' sexual intimacy, I treat it as evidence of how the couple acted to define their conjugal love.

85 That sex legally formed an indispensable part of marriage in the eighteenth century has been recently discussed in Helen Berry, *The Castrato and His Wife* (Oxford, 2011), ch. 8. Berry argues that according to contemporary belief, marriage was subject to be annulled when it was proved that there was no sexual consummation between the couple, as was the case in the trial of the famous castrato Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci and his spouse, Dorothea Maunsell, in the 1770s.

86 Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England', in *idem* (eds.), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), 172, 182.

with triumphantly, offered spouses the opportunity to reflect on and enhance their love. For example, the Methodist Rev. Charles Wesley (1707-1788) frequently mentioned his reflection on separation from his wife Sarah, noting in 1757, 'Absence only increases Love – for you are never absent from my heart. I go on heavily without you: & shrink back from the thought of losing you all ye summer'.[87] However, one might argue that this was a unique case, as the Methodists gave priority to self-exploration; therefore, the image of a reflective lover would not be inconceivable.[88] Although Charles consoled himself that absence intensified marital love, we need a more imaginative reconstruction to understand his panic when he recalled that he would not see his wife for the whole summer. As Phyllis Mack observes, Methodist male preachers frequently travelled alone, and saw their families only sporadically.[89] Without physical sensuality for a long period, such an itinerant husband would be sensitive to occasional fancy of being away from his partner. No matter how much he forced himself to reflect on the positive effects of absent intimacy, physical sensuality between him and his wife was also at the bottom of his heart.

Similarly, the following example shows that reflective husbands were not confined only to the Methodists. A 40-year-old barrister and the future first Earl of Camden, Charles Pratt (1713-1794), wrote to his wife, Elizabeth, during his circuits at Winchester in 1753, after four years of marriage:

> I am very well & in higher Spirits than when I left you: For tho' I have constancy enough to conceal my own pain at parting; I Always feel it & it always but heavily upon me for ye first day or two: After that it grows easier; for we are all so formed as to bear absence patiently enough, [...] If it was otherwise people who love one another wd [be] on the Rack till they met again, to prevent wch families [to] never separate, & the business of the World cd not go on.[90]

Although their separation was miserable, Charles bore it with self-restraint and instructed Elizabeth to follow his example. Also, he justified his absence, viewing it as a professional obligations which ensured his family's welfare. Thus, Charles not only represented himself as a master of love, but also highlighted his role as a responsible breadwinner. Yet, could this also have been the man's self-deception? Perhaps he highlighted his sacrifice of intimacy in order to complete his more pressing duties.

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87 JRL, DDWes/4/8 (7 Apr. 1757), Charles Wesley, London, to Sarah Wesley, Bristol.

88 For a fuller discussion of the culture of Methodists, see Doreen Rosman, *The Evangelicals and Culture* (London, 2011). For detailed discussions of the impact of Methodist culture on the household in the later eighteenth century, see Dee E. Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (Princeton, 2002), ch. 4.

89 Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008), 135.

90 CKS, U840 C1/33 (2 Aug. 1753), Charles Pratt, Stockbridge, to Elizabeth Pratt.

However, not all men represented themselves as thoughtful masters of love. When not living together, some men (especially in the later decades of the century) compared their miserable state with the bachelor life they experienced before kneeling at the altar. To illuminate this point, letters written by Rev. Charles Powlett (1764-1834) to his wife Anne (1772-1827) prove to be an appropriate source. (To my knowledge, the Powletts' letters are unearthed for the first time by my archival discovery.) The couple married in 1796 and lived near Winchester in Hampshire. In 1805, when Charles went to Bath to take the waters for his illness, his solitude drove him to the point of indescribable sensation: 'I cannot describe to you the Sensation I felt last Evening when I returned into my Inn [...] & sat down to my Solitary Beef-Steak; I felt as if my Soul were taken out of me, & I now feel perfectly like a Fish out of Water'. For Charles, a man living far away from his wife was nothing but a soulless and dying body. Indeed, when far away from his wife in 1806, Charles disapproved of the bachelor life: 'I am miserable here & long to kiss you [...] The more I see the more I am convinced that a Bachelor's Life annihilates every proper feeling, if not every proper Principles'.[91] Remarkably, physical intimacy ('kiss') did not stand isolated in the letter, but it was usually mentioned in the context which allowed the husband to underline his patriarchal duty. For Charles, marital life was one led on 'proper Principles', and he disdained the single life.

Yet, what did Rev. Charles Powlett mean exactly by the annihilation of feeling and principles? A clue was given in a letter he wrote to his wife in 1799. When he went to Oxford and saw 'Collegiate-Life' that year, he reflected:

> I have seen enough to excite my Pity when I consider the Situation of the Members of the Different Colleges. Here indeed “The peaceful Fellows of the College sleep.” --- 'tis true they have no anxiety for want of Money, no Cares about the welfare of their Family, but where are their pleasure? where is that Sentiment of affection which fills the Soul? Science can only fill the Head, but the Heart of a Fellow is a Vacuum! --- Then “Hail wedded Love!” --- I feel every moment as lost in which I am separated from “all my Soul holds dear”, but on Wednesday I embrace my dearest Life again.[92]

For him, celibacy 'annihilated' men's hearts, separating them from 'that Sentiment of affection'. It prevented men from enjoying the sense of responsibility they had when taking care of their family's welfare. Interestingly, Charles believed that this kind of pleasure was inseparable from the 'Sentiment of affection'. In this sense, he represented himself to his wife as a sentimental household provider, willingly performing his duty with benevolent love and a feeling heart. Notably, he expected his reward in the form of

91 HRO, 72M92/9/6 (n.d. [?1805]), Charles Powlett, Bath, to Anne Powlett, Winchester; HRO, 72M92/8/9 (15 Mar. 1806), same, London, to same, Winchester.

92 HRO, 72M92/7/22 (15 Dec. 1799), Charles Powlett, Oxford, to Anne Powlett, Basingstoke.

intimate physicality ('on Wednesday I embrace my dearest Life again'). Whatever he meant exactly by the word 'embrace' – be it a simple hug, a metonym for sex, or both – his physical reunion with his wife would certainly be his reward for being a committed patriarch. These sensational words leave far behind the image of the self-restrained and thoughtful 'master of love' represented by early eighteenth-century men, as Pratt and Wesley discussed earlier.

It is not my intention to argue that men in the early eighteenth century had no heart to perform their duties. Rather, I contend that the cult of sensibility which experienced its heyday in the second half of the century obliged men to emphasise, if not artificially add, sentimental aspects into their self-representation. Or, as I discussed earlier, with regard to women's understandings of love, the sentimental patriarch was perhaps a result of negotiating gendered definitions of love between women (emphasising personal intimacy) and men (stressing masculine self-command in face of love in its proper place). If so, we might conclude that later eighteenth-century men were adjusting themselves (at least on the page) towards women's understandings of conjugal love, by gradually renouncing the characteristics of the self-restrained lover and showing more sentimentality to their wives. And, men who conformed to women's wishes might be categorised as 'men of feeling'. As G. J. Barker-Benfield noted, '[t]he culture of sensibility wished to reform men, to make them conscious of women's minds, wishes, interests, and feelings, in sum, their sensibility'.[93]

What follows is an attempt to illustrate my contention that the sentimental movement influenced the way husbands thought about the relationship between themselves, their wives and home. To begin with, as John Mullan pointed out, in the culture of sensibility '[t]ears, blushes, and sighs – and a range of postures and gestures – reveal conditions of feeling which can connote exceptional virtue or allow for intensified forms of communication'.[94] That is, what people wanted to say was more articulated by involuntary bodily and physiognomical reactions, rather than by baroque lavish words. This opened up a new style of self-representation in family correspondence.

The evidence in my sample shows that early eighteenth-century men adopted the self-restrained style of expressing his matrimonial love. One case studied here is the

93 G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992), 249.

94 John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1988), 201. For recent research on sensibility, see Ildiko Csengei, *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2011); Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge, 2005); Ann Jessie van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge, 2004).

correspondence between a Hastings town-clerk and solicitor John Collier (1685-1760) and his wife Mary (1696-1762). Having arrived in London for business, John wrote a letter to Mary in July 1718, stressing his attachment to her which rendered his absence from her unpleasant:

> I hope believe itt is needless for me to Say how unwilling I am to be depriv'd for long of your Company and Conversation, [...] I have seen but very few people & have made mee progress in Your Commands but depend they will bee always fresh in my Memory till completed (even the first frocks & cotten Wastcoats) I hope you'l favour me with Letters Every Post & long ones but if Your name only is Wrote in them they'l be firstly esteem'd and look'd upon With a great deal of pleasure.[95]

The way John expressed his conjugal love was forthright. First, he implicitly presented his devotion by highlighting that he was so attentive to her 'Commands', that he chose not to meet friends. Second, he asserted that his happiness centred on her 'Company and Conversation'. When not together, conversing with her by letter sufficiently enlivened him. John relied much on these two themes in expressing his love to Mary. A letter written in 1732 still echoed the manner he adopted seventeen years earlier:

> I have bought all the things You directed me [...] There are great preparations Making for the Instalment of the Knights of the Bath but I don't intend Giving my Selfe any Trouble about that affair but compleat my business as Soon as Possible to have the Pleasure of returning home to You my Dearest in whom Centres all My happiness & satisfaction.[96]

Assertions loomed large in his style of expressing his love. Although one might sense his loneliness and longing to see his wife again, one senses these only by reading between the lines. His feelings were not described in terms of physical and physiognomical reactions aroused by the want of Mary's company.

Even in a very poignant event, this early eighteenth-century man did not let sentimental gestures penetrate his writings. In 1718, the first daughter of the Collier family died. Having received the news, John wrote a letter with the tone governed by his self-restraint and his determination to console her: 'I doe assure you I am under a Very great concerne wch is [...] Increas'd by My absence from you wch deprives us from being a comfort & Support to each other under this Tryall. [...] My Dearest I did not think this fatall newes could have been soe Shocking to me then concerne I am under on. […] [B]e assur'd I can't Enjoy one Minute's True Satisfaction till I have the pleasure of being with you'.[97] It would be too heartless to speculate that upon penning these lines the 33-year-old solicitor was not in tears. Once again, it is not my intention to argue that early eighteenth-

95 ESRO, SAY 1489 (26 Jun. 1718), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.
96 ESRO, SAY 1588 (27 Jun.1732), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.
97 ESRO, SAY 1494 (2 Dec. 1718), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings. For a similar usage of parental fortitude in the face of mortality, see Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, ch. 3.

century men had no feelings. Rather, they were not yet influenced by the culture obliging people to highlight conditions of feelings decoded in tears, sighs and trembling.

John Collier's correspondence was not unique. A certain George Smyth, a gentleman and tradesman from Shropshire, also adopted the self-restrained style of expressing his conjugal love. In the 1750s, when he was left alone at home, George wrote a letter to his wife, informing her of his wish to return immediately because 'I can't really bear ye House without you' and '[i]f you were but here, I should think much less of my present Calamity'. When he professed his attachment to her, simple assertion was applied: '[I] hope You'll not believe I can forgett you who dayly give me stronger Proofs of your Affection yn I can repay, but shall allways endeavour to deserve'.[98] Matrimonial love was best uttered by compact words.

Yet, as the century wore on, the cult of sensibility changed people's literary styles. As John Brewer has remarked, the exercise of sympathy came to be seen as a form of moral reflection. Masculine moral consciousness was measured according to the expression of sentimental feeling. Just as Christ was reinterpreted as a man of feeling and his gospels were praised for their ability to soften the heart, so men were obliged to connote their virtue by describing the bodily and mental disturbances caused by immediate circumstances.[99]

The influence of the cult of sensibility was also evident at the familial level, well beyond the literary circle. In the late eighteenth-century, genteel husbands felt obliged to react to their wives' matrimonial love by using the discourse of sensibility. Correspondence between a Presbyterian cotton-manufacturer, Joseph Strutt (1765-1844), and his wife Isabella (1769-1802) from Derbyshire, shows both continuity and change in the way the spouses represented themselves to each other. Having married in 1793, the couple suffered their first separation in October 1794 when Joseph came to London for his business. On the night of the 25th October 1794, Isabella wrote her first letter to her patriarch: 'My heart is assailed by a variety of painful emotions while I reflect that this is the first night I shall spend under this dear roof without my indulgent kind protector. [...] It will I fear prove a sleepless one. 10 o'clock'.[100] As scholars have noted, under the cult of sensibility the idea that a lover's absence caused depression, insomnia or suicide loomed

98 ShrA, 1536/4/1/7 (2 Jun. [*c*1750s]), George Smyth, Wotton, to Mrs Smyth; ShrA, 1536/4/1/11 (n.d.), same to same; ShrA, 1536/4/1/27 (n.d.), same to same.

99 John Brewer, 'Sentiment and sensibility', in James Chandler (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of English Literature: The Romantic Period* (Cambridge, 2009), 21-44.

100 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/5/16/12 (25 Oct. 1794), Isabella Strutt, Derby, to Joseph Strutt, London.

large in popular literature.[101] In her analysis of love-letters and letter-writing manuals, Fay Bound went even further in claiming that eighteenth-century lovers translated the language of feelings from epistolary manuals into their own letters in order to make sense of their emotional experiences.[102] Yet, it is difficult to make such a claim without further supporting evidence, such as a book inventory of the writer. It is more appropriate to view incidences of this language as the way people negotiated with an idea circulating in their society. In this sense, Isabella's emphasis on sleeplessness was a widespread cultural practice. It articulated her marital love towards her husband, rather than documenting her 'genuine' felt emotion.

As I noted earlier, a man of feeling was one who was attentive to women's feelings: Joseph unashamedly defined himself as such.[103] Since Isabella used sentimental language in her initial letter, Joseph would be obliged to perform the role of sentimental husband, too. His reply is noteworthy:

> O my most beloved wife I know not how much I love thee & how ill I could bear thy loss, [...] How does Charlotte [i.e. his daughter] go on you do not mention. [...] I dreamt of you both last night but when I awoke I had only a pillow to embrace instead of thee my dearest love.[104]

The first sentence was perhaps an evidence of the continuity of unsentimental language, in which no physiognomical and psychological consequences were described. But, in the second part, Strutt turned to the language of sensibility. He implied that his suffering was so poignant, that it caused him to dream of his wife and daughter. In the cult of sensibility, his dream was to be interpreted as a psychological consequence of his worries about the welfare of his family members, as being away from home prevented him from performing the role of 'kind protector' of his family. In the end, he dramatically sentimentalised the scene by noting that he had 'only a pillow to embrace'. This symbol is suggestive. As Joseph was representing himself as a 'kind protector' of the family, there was no other perfect symbolic action than 'embrace' to signify the sense of 'kind protector'. Joseph was astute enough to grasp this symbol to perform the role of sentimental patriarch expected by his wife. The linguistic style of conjugal love was shaped and re-shaped by the couple themselves.

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101 For the archetypes of sentimental language, see Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, xvii-xxxiv; for an outline of the physiological and psychological consequences of emotional betrayal, see Michael MacDonald and Terrence Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990).

102 Fay Bound, 'Writing the Self?: Love and the Letter in England, c. 1660-1760', *L&H*, 11 (2002), 1-19. See also Chapter 1, pp. 51-52.

103 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/48 (14 Jul. 1802), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Strutt, Blackpool: 'I pay attention to thy feelings & thy wishes even tho' thou art absent'.

104 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/38 (31 Oct. 1794), Joseph Strutt, London, to Isabella Strutt, Derby.

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This chapter has analysed the relationships between husbands and wives, both in prescriptive literature and lived experiences. It shows that throughout the century patriarchy formed the prevailing part of the husband's identity. Yet, men were not automatically awarded the 'patriarchal dividend'. The chapter has argued that patriarchy was earned only when patriarchal duties were performed. Men did not gain their superiority by either manly 'genteel manners' or by being the perfect 'household manager', as some historians have argued. Rather, a series of ideal patriarchal roles were to be fulfilled, embodied in those of a 'benevolent provider', 'kind protector', 'moral leader', and 'great comforter'. As we have seen, these roles were not only prescribed in the advice literature, but also accepted by the spouses themselves. They were cultural models to which the patriarch orientated himself in his self-representation to his wife.

Although patriarchy was an overarching, aspiring value for all husbands studied in this chapter, some men prioritised one aspect of patriarchal duties over the others. This was governed by social differences and specific cultural code of the time. As we have seen, aristocratic men were not keen to emphasise their abilities to be perfect breadwinners. Instead, they tended to underline their authority in the overall control of their households. By contrast, middling- and lower-rank men did not hesitate to highlight their driven sense of industry, work ethics and self-discipline. This was likely because the noblemen were usually not in want of money and earned their livings from regular income from their estates. Bringing a loaf of bread back home may have been less applauded by their family members, in comparison to the same action but performed by those patriarchs from the middling- and lower ranks. Like the differences caused by social ranks, the practices of a 'loving' patriarch could be affected by the specific culture of the time, such as the cult of sensibility. Whereas the husbands from the first half of the century represented themselves as the reflective masters of love, those from the second half of the century eagerly expressed their conjugal love toward their wives by using the discourse of sensibility. Patriarchy formed an integral part of the husband's life, but its practices did vary, depending on social differences and the cultural code of the period.

Moreover, it is to be noted that this chapter has analysed men from different denominations, covering Anglicans, Methodists, Evangelicals, and Baptist. The chapter finds that different religious sects did not divide the core concept of patriarchal husbands

among their believers. Perhaps, our association of masculine work-ethic with Evangelical middle-class men of the Victorian period needs revision. As I have shown, even a middling-rank Anglican husband in the early eighteenth century had the undeniably driven sense of hard work, self-improvement and being 'good example' for his family members. In my sample, different denominations did not divide, but unite, the characteristics of patriarchal performance.

Lastly, this chapter has brought to light the significant roles of women in helping men to construct and perform patriarchy, or even in attacking male superior status. Historians have too long limited female roles only with polishing polite gentlemen's manners. By contrast, this chapter has shown that wives played a vital role in defining conjugal love, shaping their husbands' masculinity, and encouraging their life-partners to actualise the ideal husbandhood. Some women regularly asked their husbands to approve their housekeeping duties, which in effect helped men to exercise their masculine authority of household control. Others challenged their husbands' superior status by blaming their patriarchs' ill behaviour. Yet, this could encourage men to improve their unpleasant habits, if they did not want to set their patriarchal status on trial. Perhaps, the role of women in fashioning masculinity needs serious revision. Thus, patriarchy was not in place automatically. Instead, it was the couples themselves who configured and re-configured, shaped and re-shaped, male patriarchal identity.

Chapter Three:
'I am, my sweet little Fellow, yr aff[ectiona]te Papa':
The Significance of Paternal Obligations in Men's Lives

On 28 August 1775 Edward Leathes (1743-1788), the young rector of Reedham, penned a line to his father-in-law, Rev. James Reading. Edward informed his correspondent of the 'safe delivery of your Daughter', Elizabeth, with whom he had eloped a year earlier. Her confinement lasted exactly four days. Having cared for his wife throughout the 'most severe & dreadful time' of a woman's life, the new father confessed that:

> [I]t is both needless and impossible to represent to You the Care, Sorrow, Trouble, Uneasiness, Fear, [and] Wild Despair [of] Myself during this Most Awful but (thank God) now happy Night. I will only add that for my own part, was it to gain the Riches of the Eastern Empire, or to become the great Master of the Universe or even to restore Peace (which I most Ardently wish for) between England & America I would not endure the bitter Pangs of another Night so fraught with Anxious Doubts, & Dead-like Thoughts as this has been.

Edward's sensational words suggest that this was the first time that he had encountered the appalling drama of childbirth, as a nervous bystander. Nevertheless, it was the birth itself that allowed him to enjoy 'the greatest degree of Happiness Immaginable'.[1] Moreover, this happy event marked out a new status for Edward: fatherhood. Although his potency and virility were now confirmed by the birth of his offspring, his masculine social status as a paterfamilias had just started to gain momentum. It was to be conducted, performed, and tested within familial gendered relations. The parenting practices through which a man engaged his place in the family had a profound effect on his life, no less than what he had experienced in the trauma of childbirth. It is the relationship between paternal duties and the fathers' personal lives that this chapter is going to explore.

The experiences of early modern English fathers are well documented, although work on fatherhood is less developed in comparison to that on motherhood.[2] At the

1 NRO, BOL 2/24/26 (28 Aug. 1775), Edward Leathes, Reedham, to James Reading, Woodstock.

2 At the centre stands the debate of whether maternity was a cultural construct architected by the Enlightened philosophers. The publication of Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York, 1962) set the tone that the Enlightenment naturalised mothers, portraying them as naturally pious figures, suitable for caring for their children fondly. Ariès' argument has long been convincingly rejected by historians, who emphasise the continuity of natural mothers since the Renaissance, if not earlier. For the most detailed criticism of Ariès's thesis, see Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1983). Similarly, Patricia Crawford, whose study on seventeenth-century motherhood, argued that women consciously realised their privileged status as mothers and often referred to their distinguished motherly performances to claim and assert their power in the family; see her, 'The Construction and Experience of Maternity in Seventeenth-Century England', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1989), 3-38. Recently, historians have moved away from Ariès's debate, agreeing that maternity was a defining feature of womanhood for

beginning of family history in the 1970s, historians of social and demographic histories tended to describe early modern fathers as cold-blooded procreators of children who were primarily concerned with the continuation of their lineage. Therefore, their role in child-rearing was limited, and they voluntarily passed this role to their wives.[3]

However, gender historians have reassessed this image of fatherhood, charting a change from uncaring to dutiful, tender and loving paterfamilias. In their attempt to establish the 'separate spheres' model in English historiography of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall asserted that in middle-class families, while regular care for very young infants was in the hands of women, men were occasionally involved in nurturing babies, although often with the aid of female servants. Fathers only took responsibility themselves as companions and guides to older male children.[4] Davidoff and Hall's argument was adopted by Josh Tosh whose seminal work on Victorian middle-class men and domesticity set the influential thesis that fatherhood was an integral part of masculine, social and subjective identity. The greatest merit of Tosh's study lies in the discussion of the father's subjectivity, which was configured and continually re-configured by their 'face-to-face relations' with their family members. The outcome was his well-known proposal of the four-styles of Victorian fatherhood: the absent, the tyrannical, the distant or anxious and the intimate father.[5] Tosh's work has inspired historians of earlier periods to re-consider this close relationship

centuries, although the attitudes, ideas, and values attached to motherhood certainly changed over time, in parallel with other changes in society, including medical, social, economic and political changes. For the impact of new understandings about sex and medicine on constructing modern maternity and femininity, see Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995), ch. 19. For a classic account of the impact of wars, economic crises, the growth of the British empire and the theory of 'separate spheres' in the second half of the eighteenth century on the construction of 'natural' motherhood embodied in breast-feeding and the persona of the fond mother, see Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England', *JHS*, 2 (1991), 204-34. For a well-documented account of eighteenth-century maternal experiences, see Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), ch. 3, in which she reminds us that surely, maternity, embodied in childbirth and child rearing, was an integral part of genteel women's lives, but '[w]hat distinguishes the eighteenth-century discourse of motherhood from its predecessors is not a sudden idealization, but rather the overlaying of a range of secular celebrations on the ancient religious solemnizations', quoted from p. 93.

3 See, for example, Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977), *passim*; Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), esp. pp. 104-18; Ralph Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (Harlow, 1984), esp. chs. 6-7.

4 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987; London, 2002), 329-43. This argument was reproduced and applied to explain the state of fatherhood and motherhood throughout the long eighteenth century in Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (Harlow, 1998), 122-28; Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989), 237.

5 For John Tosh's landmark essay on fatherhood and masculinity, see his, 'Authority and Nurture in Middle-Class Fatherhood: The Case of Early and Mid-Victorian England', *G&H*, 8 (1996), 48-64; *idem*, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London, 1999), ch. 4, esp. pp. 93-100.

between fatherhood and the construction of masculinity.[6]

Historians of the eighteenth century have recently consented to the idea that fatherhood formed an integral part of male identity for all social ranks. At the top of the society, the art historian Kate Retford has shown that late eighteenth-century elite men were increasingly keen to adjust their public image by representing themselves as family men and loving fathers, in particular, in family portraits. Using middling-sort men's diaries, Hannah Barker has demonstrated that men formed a profound attachment 'towards family life and, in particular, towards fatherhood and being husbands'. Consequently, Barker disputes the claim that the publicly sociable masculinity of the polite gentleman was a core concept of eighteenth-century manhood, as famously advertised by Philip Carter. Similarly, current studies on lower-rank and labouring parents, such as those of Patricia Crawford and Joanne Bailey, have argued that fatherhood was not just a way of expressing the masculine supreme authority over offspring, but its fundamental ideas, such as emotion, provision, instruction and discipline, played a key role in determining the dominant model of what a man ought to be. In her articles 'Masculinity and Fatherhood in England c. 1760-1830' and 'Imagining Fatherhood in England, c. 1760-1830', Joanne Bailey has stated that thanks to the cult of sensibility, late eighteenth-century fathers (even among the labouring poor) could not assert their male identity by simply referring to their material responsibility and patriarchal power; rather, these traditional references of ideal fatherhood needed to be reconceived against the new cultural code. Thus, the sensible and tender father became the new model of being a father and, to some extent, of being a man.[7] This body of research confirms Tosh's argument that fatherhood shaped male identity and was the core of men's lives.

There is an exception, however. In her analysis of 'oeconomy' as 'a valued style of

6 A good example of historians who work on the line of John Tosh is Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), 212-33. However, French and Rothery differ from Tosh in terms of the fact that they do not give due weight to the 'face-to-face relations', but to the material and emotional negotiation of family values between fathers and their male offspring represented in familial correspondence.

7 Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 2006), ch. 4; Hannah Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *SH*, 33 (2008), 12-35, quoted from p. 18; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), 209; Joanne Bailey, 'Masculinity and Fatherhood in England c. 1760-1830', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 167-86; *idem*, '"A Very Sensible Man": Imagining Fatherhood in England, c. 1760-1830', *History*, 95 (2010), 267-92; *idem*, 'The "after-life" of Parenting: Memory, Parentage, and Personal Identity in Britain c. 1760-1830', *JFH*, 35 (2010), 249-70; Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010).

manliness', Karen Harvey suggests that '[t]here was a close match between the positive qualities associated with manhood and the good management of a house'. For her, oeconomy 'was not reliant on marriage or fatherhood, though it was most readily expressed through a paternal role'. Thus, 'fatherhood as either a biological or social identity was not essential for an oeconomist'.[8] In this account, performing paternity was not important in its own right in fashioning masculinity; it was only a channel through which men showed their manly capacity for managing their households, which was the core of manliness. Harvey downplays the significance of fatherhood in men's lives.

What about men who were unable to father a child? A thought-provoking, although not unproblematic, article by Elizabeth Foyster and Helen Berry on childless men in early modern England has shown that a man's manhood would be set on trial if a married man failed to father a child. According to them, childless men sought to restore their manhood by either adopting their siblings' children, being surrogate fathers, or running a charity such as opening an orphan house (if financial status allowed them to do so) to guide and instruct deserted children. All of these were pursued, they argue, to enable childless men to perform patriarchal duties, which were the core concept of early modern masculinity. In this sense, the patriarch's manhood could not be fulfilled without the existence of children.[9]

Is this plausible? Although Foyster and Berry's argument has confirmed the place of patriarchy in shaping male identity, some aspects remain unclear. Firstly, while the authors identify the cause of lost manhood among childless men as their own failed sexuality, there is no reasonable explanation of why these men restored their manhood through their social performances, rather than through their sexual activities. Secondly, failed sexuality could undermine men's gender identity in the seventeenth century, when manhood was firmly grounded on sex and marriage.[10] Yet, this cannot be straightforwardly applied to the eighteenth-century context, in which masculinity was not understood as sexual, but social.[11] Eighteenth-century childless men could be worried when they could not father a child, but the reason for this could also derive from other reasons, such as their dynastic concerns, rather than from anxiety over their own sexual

8 Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012), 23, 181.

9 Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England', in *idem* (eds.), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), 158-83.

10 Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Harlow, 1999).

11 Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York 1996).

performances alone.[12] Thirdly, as William van Reyk has argued, throughout the eighteenth century '[a]t the heart of Christian ideals of manliness was the imitation of Christ, an all-encompassing Christian ideal of personhood'.[13] In this light, running a charity, such as opening an orphanage, can also be viewed as a religious activity of ideal Christian men, who were imitating Christ's life. Indeed, some childless men felt religiously ashamed of their unfruitfulness, partly because they thought that their failed procreation would result in decreasing their communal piety, when they could not fill the increasing room on the parish church pews with their own progeny.[14] Quizzical eyebrows may have been raised to childless men, but it is still unclear in which respects their masculine identity was drawn into question: sexuality, patriarchy, piety, or all of these. Nevertheless, the issue of childlessness testifies that masculinity was closely linked with the state of being a father and being fathered.

What then are the merits of and gaps in the current historiography? On the one hand, this body of research has wiped the image of cold-blooded fatherhood out of the historical narratives, and has revealed the variety of emotions accompanying the state of being a father, such as affection, tenderness, anxiety, grief, and distress.[15] On the other hand, it has not yet sufficiently explained how the patriarchal duties affected the ways men interacted with their offspring, how the paternal performances affected the ways men perceived themselves, and what images of the fathers could appear to children's minds when the fathers performed, or struggled to perfect, their roles. As Anthony Fletcher has noted, fatherhood was usually about a constant tension between 'the exercise of guidance and authority' and 'the expression of the affection that fathers felt for sons and daughters'.[16] This tension could have affected a father's emotional character as

12 For example, upon receiving the news of the death of his brother's son, Rev. Thomas Naish (1669-1755) recorded in 1708, then childless although having been married for fourteen years, that this was '[a] great calamity to us all, having no other son in our family.'; see, Doreen Slatter (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Naish* (Devizes, 1965), 65. Similarly, a childless Joseph Ryder (1695-1768), a Yorkshire clothier and Unitarian, recorded 'affections as to a Posterity to keep up my name. I appear'd in a very resigned way. I thought if my name might but be found written amongst the Living in Jerusalem It was a Blessing Infinitely beyond my Desert.'; see Matthew Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier: The Life of an Eighteenth-Century Protestant Capitalist* (New Haven and London, 2013), 123. Although impotence was a key source of humour in eighteenth-century erotica, it is certainly not reflected in men's diaries. The evidence we have, as shown in these two examples, speaks more towards men's dynastic concerns, rather than those of the sexual ones. On impotence in erotica, see Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), 137-39.

13 William van Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *HJ*, 52 (2009), 1053.

14 Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier*, 58, 130.

15 Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, & Generation* (Oxford, 2012), ch. 1 and *passim*; *idem*, '"Think wot a Mother must feel": Parenting in English Pauper Letters, *c.* 1760-1834', *FCH*, 13 (2010), 5-19.

16 Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven and London, 2008), 129.

remembered by his children.

This chapter looks into how patriarchal expectations and paternal performances affected men's lives, both how they saw themselves and how their children (may have) perceived them. Given that the father was the patriarch of a family, this chapter is structured as an analogy to the patriarchal obligations as analysed in the previous chapter. It begins with the role of the paternal provider, then, caring and tutoring companion, moral guide, and loving father.[17] It analyses seventeen collections of family letters, diaries and memoirs, covering the period from 1700 to 1820. The individuals are drawn from various backgrounds, from an Anglican landed gentleman in Norfolk to a Methodist labouring-poor ironmonger in Durham, and from a well-to-do physician in Wells to an almost bankrupt merchant in Reading. Of these seventeen families there are eight religious men to be analysed. This is not my arbitrary choice. Instead, these reverends are selected in order to test and reject William van Reyk's recent claim that religious writers proposed the imitation of Christ – understood as 'solitude' and 'charity' – as a Christian ideal of personhood, and consequently for them 'the single life was preferable to marriage'.[18] My sample shows that clergymen were profoundly engaged with family life, although it still remains unresolved why '[c]lergymen, in particular, exercised the fascination of fatherhood', more than other professional men.[19]

This chapter argues that fatherhood was central to men's lives more than just a way to show their potency or to express their ability to manage the households. Rather, it was significant in men's lives in two dimensions. Firstly, performing paternal obligations affected the fathers' personalities, emotions, and the ways they adjusted their own approved self-images. Secondly, these fatherly performances were an index which the children themselves and other male fellows used to evaluate a father's manly qualities. (Whereas the second dimension has been reiterated in the current historiography, the first one has not yet been thoroughly explored.) The chapter also suggests that whereas the patriarchal expectations remained unchanged throughout the period, there was a shift in the way in which paternal love was enacted and performed to children. As we shall see, while in the early eighteenth century fatherly affection was expressed through an approving gaze as a reaction to filial obedience, the late eighteenth-century father showed his love through physical touch as a response to his children's fond attachment towards

17 This order also echoes the themes of paternal duties as prescribed in conduct literature of the period. See below in this chapter, p. 113.

18 Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness', 1056-57.

19 This has been unresolved for more than two decades since Davidoff and Hall observed it in 1987, see their, *Family Fortunes*, 346-48.

him. This shift was closely linked with both the cult of sensibility and the changing cultural meanings of human senses, the gaze and the touch.

* * * *

Married life was an important locus for a man to 'vindicate' his manly qualities. These were, first and foremost, performed and assessed through his attentive conduct towards his children, particularly in sheltering, clothing, and feeding them. One advice manual saw this paternal duty as a source of self-esteem for a paterfamilias, noting that '[t]his is an Ambition very natural and allowable in a great and good Man, and the Contemplation of it, gives him the greatest Satisfaction'. On the contrary, if 'a Child [was] brought into the World, without a Provision for its Support, [it] must give the Man of Sense no small Uneasiness, as he's the Author and Introducer of Misery'.[20] The risk that a man might prove an inadequate breadwinner could disturb a man's peace of mind. It is not exaggerated when Josh Tosh argues that '[c]hildbirth was therefore a moment when awareness of a father's material responsibility was particularly intense. But that sense was integral to the whole experience of fatherhood'.[21]

Material responsibility not only formed an integral part of fatherhood, but also a father's self-respect. This was particularly important for middling- and lower rank fathers, whose financial status was not secure. Perhaps no other man could reveal his emotion when struggling to perfect his breadwinning role more clearly than the twenty-five-year-old Matthew Flinders (1751-1802), a Lincolnshire surgeon and apothecary. In 1776 he reflected on his family's situation, noting that 'we have nought in a natural sense, but my industry in Business to depend on'. With a strong sense of the responsibilities of the paterfamilias, Matthew would at times feel especially worried when he opened his accounts book, saw the expense tables in it, and added the new figure of the annual calculation to the last year's summary. Yet, he would also gain a bit of relief and could enjoy some self-esteem when he could support his family through a difficult time. He recorded at the end of 1781, when the British economy was severely affected by the American War of Independence, that '[t]his has been a year of uncommon expence to me

20 Anon., *Essays, Relating to the Conduct of Life ...* (London, 1717), 45-46. See also, Robert Dodsley, *The Oeconomy of Human Life, Translated from an Indian Manuscript, Written by an Ancient Bramin ...* ([1750] Philadelphia, 1787), 34: 'Consider thou who art a parent, the importance of thy trust; the being thou hast produced, it is thy duty to support'.

21 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 82. For an example of how a pauperised father, Samuel Wesley, lamented his lot when a new baby was born, see JRL, DDWF 1/1 (18 May 1701), Samuel Wesley, Epworth, to John Sharp, London. I quoted and analysed this letter in the previous chapter, see Chapter 2, pp. 82-83.

– and the times are universally complained off as bad from the consequences of the War, yet thro' mercy I have been enabled to save near Seventy Pounds, which added to my former savings is a considerable help'.[22] Perhaps with a long relieved sigh, he proudly recorded this surplus. And, his 'self-image approval' would have sent him looking for ways to continue in this way or to improve himself.[23]

Striving to be a perfect paterfamilias also played a crucial role in fashioning a man's emotional experience and approved self-image. Having the financial burden upon his shoulders, Matthew felt obliged to find a positive dimension even during a poignant time. On the death of his two-year-old son in 1776 he recorded that 'we ought to think the non increase of our Family a blessing'. With the death of his still-born daughters in July 1777, the following words were put in Matthew's diary: 'How kind is the Providence of God thus to free us from the expence and care of a numerous family, for had all our young ones lived with us, we should scarce [have] known what to have done with them. The two we have living, if agreable to divine Wisdom, I would gladly keep, but by no means wish an increase'. For Amanda Vickery, this record prompted her to conclude that '[h]e was not a sentimental man'.[24] However, Matthew would have been a cold-blooded man had he not added a few words in the previous record: 'However let that happen as it may; I hope we shall always acquiesce to the good will of God'.[25] New offspring were always welcome to his family. In fact, Matthew never saw any family increase as an unfavourable burden. In his diaries he never complained about the birth of a new baby. By contrast, he always welcomed his new infants: 'With gratitude to a mercifull Providence I note that my wife was delivered of a fine Boy very early this Morning. […] I thank God, both are hopefull'.[26] Thus, Matthew's consideration of the decrease in his family as 'a blessing' cannot be viewed as evidence of his unsentimental character. (I will prove my claim below.) Yet, why did Matthew record this in his diary as if he was a callous father?

To answer this question, we need to understand the generic convention of early modern diaries. That is, what a man wrote in his life-writing was a self-representation, functioning as a self-serving tool. This could help him to survive emotionally in distressing circumstances. As E. P. Thompson instructed us, the diary was not a record of

22 Martyn Beardsley and Nicholas Bennett (eds.), *'Gratefull to Providence': The Diary and Accounts of Matthew Flinders, Surgeon, Apothecary and Man-Midwife, 1775-1802*, 2 vols. (Chippenham, 2007-2009), vol. i, 4, 120.

23 For an excellent account of how early modern people used a diary as 'self-image approval' and as a 'material force' to improve themselves, see Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier*, 3 and *passim*.

24 Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009), 49.

25 Beardsley and Bennett (eds.), *Diary and Accounts of Matthew Flinders*, vol. i, 41, 49.

26 *Ibid*., vol. i, 109, 132; vol. ii, 32.

an unmediated attitude, but a self-approval doctrinal after-thought, like someone arranging his face in a looking-glass.[27] As such, Matthew's remark on the death of his daughter, which seems to us to be cold-blooded, should not be seen as his spontaneous attitude towards the bereavement. Instead, it should be considered as his approved self-image, in which he represented himself as a master of self-command, who was in the right place when a pressing situation required. Thus, forcing himself to view the death of his infant as a divine blessing was arguably his own way of self-consolation, helping him move on to perform what was expected of him as a patriarch. Indeed, in 1799 when his daughter Betsy died, Matthew confessed that 'as a Parent I feel the weight of such a loss, but am not insensible that humble Resignation is the duty of Man'.[28] For Matthew, with a smaller number of family members, there were increasing possibilities for him to perfect his breadwinning role. Matthew represented himself in his own diary as an unsentimental man. But, as a bereaved father with flesh and blood, the weight of such a loss that he 'felt' would have moved him to the verge of tears. It was then patriarchal expectations that governed the way a man reflected on his family life and self-image.

Failing to be an efficient provider could affect the way a man's children judged his paternal qualities. Modern sociologists argue that the inefficient paterfamilias may have prioritised or strengthened other traditional masculine traits to assert and protect his insecure patriarchal status. As a result, such a father may have aptly presented himself as a strict moral guide, an over-attentive intellectual instructor, a stoic restrained man, or a violent patriarch exercising his physical strength or developing his formidable character to protect or control his subordinates more closely.[29] Building on this concept, John Tosh studied the patterns of Victorian fatherhood, and found that playing the role of tyrannical father was a way men used to bolster their authority when their breadwinner status was 'insecure'.[30] However, Joanne Bailey has found two different ways which fathers used to cope with their failures. One man 'freely acknowledged' his shortcomings, but did not let them affect 'his sense of self', because he simply 'shrugged off personal responsibility', and observed that 'as I did not make myself, my want of talents […] is no *moral* defect; […] brings no *guilt* upon my mind; nor can any person *justly* blame or despise me on that account'. By contrast, the other man chose to be 'a good father' to 'compensate for

27 E. P. Thompson, 'Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context', *MH*, 1 (1972), 42. See also the Introduction, p. 32.

28 Beardsley and Bennett (eds.), *Diary and Accounts of Matthew Flinders*, vol. ii, 213. For a discussion of the language of Christian resignation and its doctrinal implications, consult Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, ch. 3.

29 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (1995; Cambridge, 2005), 81-86.

30 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 96.

unhappy areas of his life, namely his marriage'.[31] Based on these scholars' findings, I would contend that it is difficult to substantiate and prove the causal link that failures in one aspect of parenthood would always encourage the impotent paterfamilias to prioritise other roles in order to compensate for the shortcomings elsewhere. Further research on this causal link is much needed.

Nevertheless, the evidence gives the impression that breadwinner formed an integral part of fatherhood, and children's love for their fathers was evidently linked with how their fathers performed this duty. Take the pauperised Wesleys as an example. Their correspondence is a rare testimony, because it records the ways children blamed their patriarch and questioned his paternal merits. (Such sources might have been easily destroyed to protect a patriarch's reputation.) Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) was the rector of Epworth and the father of ten children. Surviving records of the family suggest that Samuel passed all of his paternal duties to his wife, Susanna, whose education, intelligence and determination were far stronger than those of her husband. For instance, while we have surviving letters between Susanna and her sons (John and Charles) showing their discussions about private prayer, or the separation of the Methodists from the Church of England, we have no similar records from Samuel's part.[32] Also, as we shall see in chapter five, Samuel senior was not the person who provided financial support for educating John and Charles at Oxford. Instead, the money came from Samuel junior, the eldest son of the family.[33] Thus, Samuel failed to perform the role of the perfect paterfamilias. In 1729 one of his daughters lamented the current dreadful lot at home:

> [O]ur Family are full of fine sanguine dreams, my old beliefe yet remains That my Father will never be worth a groat as one saying is, and we of the Female part of the Family consequently left to get our own Bread, or starve, [...] but Life would be over in a few years, and then sure all sorrow will end. [...] now indeed to Dye seems to me not only tolerable but desirable.[34]

This suggests the particularly tragic situation of Samuel's daughters. Samuel seemed to be remiss in securing his daughters' future lives. Indeed, in 1731 Susanna Wesley reported that when Samuel's brother visited her family, he was 'strangly scandaliz'd at the poverty of our Furniture, and much more at the meaness of the Childrens Habit'. '[H]e wonderd what his Brother had don wth his Incom', she continued, 'for twas visible he had not spent it in Furnishing his House, or cloathing his Family'.[35] Samuel's material responsibility was

31 Bailey, *Parenting in England*, 162-63.
32 On Susanna Wesley's child-rearing responsibilities, see Charles Wallace (ed.), *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (New York, 1997), 367-76.
33 See Chapter 5, p. 180.
34 JRL, DDWF/6/2 (31 Dec. 1729), Emily Wesley, Lincoln, to John Wesley, Oxford.
35 JRL, DDWF/2/8 (12 Jul. 1731), Susanna Wesley, Epworth, to John Wesley, Oxford.

apparently invisible.

Under this beleaguered circumstance, it was evident that Samuel's neglect of his material responsibility resulted in his daughters' questioning of his patriarchal legitimacy. In 1733 his daughter, Kezziah, discussed at length her views on filial duty:

> "Parents are requir'd to take care of, provide for, and instruct their Children" but I cant think the Duty and Obedience of a Child arises from the Parents being the Instrument of its coming into Life: but from his Protection, Tenderness Affection and continual Endeavours to make it Happy: the Duty of a Child [...] appears to be founded on Gratitude; if on the contrary a Parents will make no allowance for the Follies of youth, nor takes any care to support, protect or instruct it, but as far as it is in their power, makes Life a Burden, all the Duty owing to such a Parent, [...] is not doing what is forbid, and doing all that is Commanded.[36]

Without his effort to make his children happy, Samuel lost positive image in his daughters' eyes, and this consequently led to the loss of filial love. Indeed, as Sarah Lloyd observes, a father's willingness to relieve the distress of his own family was considered to be his personal merit.[37] The evidence does not reveal any sign that Samuel realised his unpopularity among his daughters. By contrast, it shows that he did not try to adjust himself to please his daughters in other respects in order to compensate for his failures as a benevolent provider. Instead, he boldly asserted his own power over them. For example, in 1734, Samuel forced his daughter Kezziah to marry a certain Mr. Hall. Although she was resigned to accept her lot, she wished herself that God might 'have Blessed me with indulgent Parents [...] who wou'd have Preferred my Happiness, before their own private Sattisfaction'.[38]

At first glance, this case study seems to support John Tosh's observation that the impotent breadwinner would become the tyrannical father in order to sustain his 'insecure' masculine status. Yet, we should be aware that there is no evidence saying that Samuel felt his status 'insecure'. Nor did his daughters speculate that poverty or undermined patriarchy was the cause of their father's authoritarianism. Rather, what the evidence shows is that failures in breadwinning accounted for the loss of filial love, and allowed children to question patriarchal legitimacy. Yet, the children did not challenge their father's authority publicly. This was different from the matrimonial relationships in which patriarchy could be challenged by women who were unsatisfied with their inefficient breadwinners and consequently sought shelter in their coverture, or even managed to get separated. Paternal authority was relatively secure. Yet, it did not guarantee the filial love,

36 JRL, DDWF/13/3 (26 Mar. 1733), Kezziah Wesley to John Wesley, Oxford.
37 Sarah Lloyd, 'Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners: Conviviality, Benevolence, and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London', *JBS*, 41 (2002), 32.
38 JRL, DDWF/13/5 (16 Jun. 1734), Kezziah Wesley to John Wesley, Oxford.

for what cemented a father-child relationship was nothing but the father's 'Protection, Tenderness Affection and continual Endeavours to make it Happy'.

* * * *

Fatherhood was never reduced to breadwinning alone. Paternal care was also a defining feature of ideal fatherhood. One conduct manual put it succinctly: 'First, take care of their health; then their morals; and finally, of their making their way successfully through the world'.[39] And, the caring father was best recognised by his fatherly concern and anxiety about his children's welfare.

Some fathers felt – or presented themselves so – their minds much disturbed when they could not help their wives attend their babies. The fatherly wish to nurture his children was expressed to highlight the father's tender personality. John Collier (1685-1760), a town-clerk from Hastings, was a good example. During his London business trip in 1730, John was alarmed by his wife's letter, informing him of their three-year-old Jenny's illness. He wrote to his wife: '[I] am Extreamly concern'd for Poor Dear Jenny & heartily Wish I was at home to make her a feast'. John's wish to nurture his little daughter suggests that he saw it as one of his paternal responsibilities. As long as his London business prevented him from performing this duty, his mind was disturbed by 'noe little uneasiness'.[40] Certainly, it is difficult to find evidence to substantiate this father's claim of his acute anxiety. Yet his letter shows that he welcomed the act of comforting the baby as part of his paternal role and it affected his inner feelings when he could not perform this duty.

To prove my claim more convincingly, we need to find records in which a father was blamed when he failed to attend his infants, or failed to show signs of his worried mind. Unfortunately, no surviving record in my sample offers what we are looking for. However, I do have evidence that the nurturing father created a noble impression on his wife. In 1776, the young father Edward Leathes (whose letter I used to open this chapter) was much alarmed, when his seven-month-old Betsy 'had a Fit'. Together with his wife, Elizabeth, he continually attended the baby, although he himself had just recovered from his 'Indisposition'. Once little Betsy 'is finely recover'd', Elizabeth Leathes found that their

39 Anon., *A Present for An Apprentice: or, A Sure Guide to Gain Both Esteem and Estate ...* (Edinburgh, 1761), 106.

40 ESRO, SAY 1558 (16 Feb. 1730), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings. For a father's child care in Regency period, see Michael James, 'A Georgian Gentleman: Child Care and the Case of Harry Tremayne, 1814-23', *FCH*, 9 (2006), 79-90. See also Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 122-23.

daughter's disorder 'affected Mr Leathes so much that his spirits are still so low he does not know what to do with himself'. 'I never saw a Man fonder of a Child in my Life', she proudly praised her husband in a letter sent to her own father.[41] It would be too heartless to argue that Elizabeth invented or exaggerated her husband's tender qualities, for we should not forget how much her young husband was moved by the sounds, noise and pains, when she delivered their first child one year earlier. However, it is still noteworthy that Elizabeth directed these letters to her own father. Given the couple's elopement a year earlier, the content of Elizabeth's letter is suggestive. In the context of reconciliation with her father, it was certainly advantageous to emphasise Edward's manly quality to counterbalance his misbehaviour. For that purpose Elizabeth did not hesitate to grasp at Edward's care for their baby. Men's child-care was far removed from an 'effeminate' activity. It was a manly business that deserved to be singled out for commendation.

Therefore, it is a misleading assumption that fathers rarely performed child-rearing. Anthony Fletcher even claimed that 'the day-to-day management of babies was seen as effeminate and not men's business', reducing fatherly performances to guidance and authority, though not without affection.[42] Fletcher's argument was based on his survey of the aristocratic family. This cannot be applied to all men from other social ranks. Contrary to Fletcher's claim, evidence in my sample shows that middling-rank men attending babies were not judged as being 'effeminate'. Rather, it was esteemed by men and women alike, as we have seen in the cases of the Colliers and the Leathes.

However, historians have also observed significant aspects of the caring father, such as clergymen and their notable interest in nurturing their children and the cultural construction of the image of the attentive father. Firstly, Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff remarked that '[c]lergymen, in particular, exercised the fascination of fatherhood from the nursery to the Sunday pulpit and clerical daughters seem to have been among those with closest ties to their fathers'.[43] My example of Edward Leathes, the young rector of Reedham, underpins their observation. It also reminds us that clergymen did not automatically prefer the 'single life' to marriage, as William van Reyk has recently argued.[44] However, the exact meaning of the over-concerned nurturing father to a clergyman still awaits further research. Secondly, Joanne Bailey has recently argued that in the second half of the century the image of the nurturing father was invented in

41 NRO, BOL 2/25/9 (15 Mar. 1776), Elizabeth Leathes, Reedham, to James Reading, Woodstock; NRO, BOL 2/25/10 (19 Mar. 1776), same to same.
42 Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, 184; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 455-56.
43 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 346.
44 Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness', 1056-57. See also earlier in this chapter, p. 107.

accordance with Evangelicalism (Moses himself instructed his men to act 'as a nursing father beareth the sucking child'), the cult of sensibility and the political construction of patriotic-paternal monarchy of George III. The discourse of the nurturing father derived its connotations from the conceptualisation of the father as a protector in terms of both political and religious patriarchal meanings.[45] Regarding the chronology, the over-concerned nurturing father, Edward Leathes, who attended his ill baby in 1775, fits neatly into Bailey's assessment. Nevertheless, as evident in the case of John Collier from the earlier decades of the century, the caring father was demonstrably in place long before the advent of those movements discussed by Bailey. Perhaps the cultural meaning of the caring father may have been conceptualised, constructed and celebrated according to the changing contexts of the time. Yet, its practice may have been directly motivated by witnessing one's ill babies who could do nothing more than howl to bewail their acute suffering, for not every father's heart was made of stone.

Paternal care could be performed from a distance too. When they were not living together, the fact of separation brought to light in familial letters all that revealed fathers' concern about their children's health and welfare. This was embodied in the minute details of their advice. In November 1687 Thomas Brockbank (1671-1732), an Oxford student, received the first letter from his father Rev. John Brockbank of Witherslack in Westmoreland. Apart from religious instructions, he implored his son and heir to 'have a care of yr bodily health yt it be not wrong'd either thro' want of meat, drink, cloaths, Physic, [...] or over-charged wth too much study'. When the winter approached, he advised his son to '[p]ut on two pair of stockings to keep you from cold', a piece of advice concerning clothes and garments that one may have expected to come from a mother's pen, rather than a father's.[46] John Buxton (1685-1731), a Norfolk landowner, reminded his eldest son Robert (1710-1751) of minding the principle of 'the *mens sana in corpore sano*', so that 'you will be happier than any knights in the world'.[47] In 1809, Luke Howard (1772-1864), a Quaker owner of a chemical manufacturing business in Plaistow, received a letter from his wife Mariabella, informing him of an indisposition of their eldest son, Robert, then aged seven. Bella wrote: 'I went down to bottle a cask of currant wine & Robert accompanied me, while Mary was making pie in the kitchen, he tasted a little more wine [...] [and] a good deal of sugar off Mary's pies without my being present, and

45 Bailey, *Parenting in England*, 59-60, 118-122; *idem*, 'Masculinity and Fatherhood', 176-77.
46 Richard Trappes-Lomax (ed.), *The Diary and Letter Book of the Rev. Thomas Brockbank, 1671-1709* (Manchester, 1930), 4, 23.
47 Alan Mackley (ed.), *John Buxton Norfolk Gentleman and Architect: Letters to His Son, 1719-1729* (King's Lynn, 2005), 63.

poor fellow he has smarted for his naughty tricks for he soon after complained of sickness, & has been so very sick attended with faintness'. Having received the news of his naughty boy, Luke Howard, who was trained as a chemist, instructed his wife to 'give Robert a moderate pill Rhubarb every day before dinner if he still continues to have the same craving for sweets: I cannot help thinking his stomach must be a little out of order'.[48] The evidence from the Anglican preacher from Westmorland, the landed gentleman from Norfolk, and the Quaker merchant from London testifies that paternal concern accompanied father-child relationships, regardless the fathers' social differences, space, and time.

Paternal care could motivate a father's meticulous instructions, and consequently created his image as a strict paterfamilias. This was usually the case among fathers whose professions forced them to experience their affectionate families at a distance. As Phyllis Mack has observed in the case of Methodist itinerant preachers, '[t]he problem was that the inherent difficulty of fusing the ideals of itinerancy with those of domestic life was aggravated by worries about the health and well-being of families that men had little power to affect'.[49] One might also fairly add that this conflict of identity may have caused some dutiful, travelling fathers more anxiety about their progeny's health and therefore they may have been stricter in their fatherly advice to protect their children from life-threatening illnesses. The Methodist preacher Charles Wesley (1707-1788) ordered his wife, Sarah, to keep a watchful eye on their naughty daughter who loved to taste ripening fruits like other children: 'If you cannot keep Sally from eating poison, I must grab up all the trees in the garden, or take another house without one'. Although eating raw fruit was universal childish behaviour, the tone of Charles' command is evidently harsher, and we will witness another similar example shortly. Indeed, he presented himself as a strict father to his daughter. Before sealing the letter, he threatened his little Sally with the potential withdrawal of his paternal love in the case of her unchanging conduct: 'I know not what to say to Sally unless she has quite left off eating raw fruits. Then you may give my love to her also'.[50] Charles' threats were not to be taken as sincere, for it was unlikely that he would act as he proclaimed if his daughter would not change her habit. Although his strident statement would have been a secret joke known between his wife and himself, it would have been perceived by his little Sally as a parental rigorous command, when her

48 LMA, ACC/1017/1431 (14 Jul. 1809), Mariabella Howard, Plaistow, to Luke Howard, Darlington; LMA, ACC/1017/1432 (20 Jul. 1809), Luke Howard, Sunderland, to Mariabella Howard, Plaistow.

49 Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008), 125.

50 JRL, DDWes/4/5 (10 Jul. [1764]), Charles Wesley, London, to Sarah Wesley, Bristol.

mother passed these threatening words to her. Paternal love created not only the image of a concerned father, but also a strict and even harsh one.

The case of Charles Wesley apart, it is noteworthy that most surviving letters were between fathers and their eldest sons, leaving us with scarce evidence of paternal care towards younger children.[51] However, it would be incautious to argue that men were only concerned about their heirs because they sought to secure their lineage. Yet, any conclusion drawn *ex silentio* is often problematic. Take as an example the correspondence between a Lancashire flax merchant Thomas Langton (1724-1794) and his sons John (b. 1756) and Will (b. 1758). In the 1770s the boys were educated together at Mr Booth's school in High Beach, Essex. In a letter to his eldest son in October 1772, Thomas clearly indicated his concern for his younger son's health. 'I fancy [Will] has made a beginning in learning to play upon the flute', he wrote, 'I hope he will take care not to injure his health by playing too much upon it, as wind music has a dangerous tendency [...] to young boys while they are growing'.[52] Also, we should note a practical fact that when boys were together at the same school, fathers tended to write to their eldest sons, knowing that the siblings would share the letters amongst themselves. Thus, although the letter was addressed to the eldest son alone, we cannot take for granted that its content was exclusively for him. In this light, we must be attentive to the usage of the simple pronoun 'you' in letters, which might not refer just to the formal recipient. For example, in 1724, the genteel brothers Robert and George Buxton were educated at Mr. D'Oyly's school in Playford. Their father John sent a letter to his eldest son Robert:

> This cool season makes the country pleasant but the fruits will want a warmer to ripen them, you must [...] be cautious how you eat of them. Whiles I enjoy a perfect health my self & hear that you continue to do so, I assure you I do not envy the happy temperature of the climate at Lima, nor the beautifull ancient & modern scenes of the buildings [...] &c of Italy, nor the politeness of France nor the riches of Holland, nor any thing els in England.[53]

Being aware of the effect of the 'cool season', John Buxton warned his son(s) of being poisoned by eating unripe fruits. It is likely that the content was not directed to Robert (aged 14) alone, as it is likely that George (aged 8) was also ignorant of this scientific fact. Perhaps it was the father's intention that Robert would instruct his younger brother accordingly. Whatever it was, John did not hesitate to show his paternal care. Like other fathers in my sample, he considered his offspring's 'perfect health' the most precious

51 For a discussion of the lack of survival of other male children's correspondence, see Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford, 2009), 42.

52 Joan Wilkinson (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Langton, Flax Merchant of Kirkham, 1771-1788* (Manchester, 1994), 132.

53 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 51.

treasure in his life. The concerned, caring father was then an integral part – and a recognisable image – of Georgian fatherhood.

* * * *

Like provision and paternal care, guidance in education and morality was significant in a father's life. Performing this duty helped him to sustain his masculine social status, and it also had impact on his state of mind. Certainly, to prove my claim convincingly, we need look at families in which the patriarchs failed to fulfil their duties, and consequently were blamed by their subordinates. However, surviving evidence in my sample does not reveal such family drama. Letters may have been destroyed to protect the patriarch's reputation. Diaries may have been kept with tongue-in-check, for they never were an entirely private possession. Perhaps docile children did not dare to criticise their fathers, since the advice literature emphasised that 'filial affection was best demonstrated by unswerving obedience'.[54] To overcome this source problem, we need look instead at what a father was expected to perform, and how this paternal duty might have buttressed his masculine social status, and how this might have affected his state of mind.

Let us begin with the role of educational guide. It has long been accepted that it was the father's responsibility to support and control his older sons' education, while child-rearing and girls' education devolved to the mother. Yet, as Robert Griswold reminds us, fatherhood may have meant breadwinning, nurturing, moral guidance and professional companionship over the centuries, but each father performed these functions in a different context which gave specific meanings to the activities.[55] Thus, guiding their offspring in their education may have special meanings for some fathers, especially those who were encountering some failures and sought to prioritise another aspect of fatherhood in order to compensate for their shortcomings elsewhere. Yet, it is not easy to substantiate, because what father wanted to accept his own imperfection. However, the most promising example in my collection is the Martin family. In 1759, a Reading merchant, Edwin Martin (b. 1741), underwent a severe business crisis. At the same time, his son, Edwin Martin junior, was admitted to Oxford. A male cousin of Edwin Martin senior offered him financial aid to allow the boy to continue his study. This relative of Edwin Martin senior reminded him that '[a]s to good Advice am sure He will not receive

54 Nicola Phillips, 'Parenting the Profligate Son: Masculinity, Gentility and Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1791-1814', *G&H*, 22 (2010), 92.
55 Robert Griswold, 'Introduction to the Special Issue on Fatherhood', *JFH*, 24 (1999), 252.

better than from your self'.[56] This piece of man-to-man advice suggests how this brother was making an attempt to bolster his kinsman's self-esteem to take on and perfect another domain of paternity. Perhaps this brother realised that Edwin was being deprived of the most important aspect of his paternal duties, and that he ought to leave room for the failed patriarch to perform other parental aspects to restore his undermined masculinity.

One might argue that only educated fathers from upper and middling ranks could guide their children in education as compensation for their failures in material provision. Pauper parents were not armed to perform thus, for they themselves did not have higher education. However, pauper children seemed to measure the manliness of their fathers by their paternal efforts, attentiveness and enthusiasm in taking care of the children's schooling and careers. In the early nineteenth century, the Methodist ironmonger George Newton (1761-1825) of Thorncliffe related how his father reacted to his 'strong inclination to be a clergyman'. 'I seriously proposed the matter to [my] father, who, in consequence, consulted a clergyman respecting the expense of sending me to the university', George continued, 'but he represented this to be so great, that my Father told me kindly he was not in circumstances to afford it'. George then abandoned his dream, and chose 'another business'.[57] Although George's father could not afford to make George a clergyman, his paternal enthusiasm for realising his son's dream was so great, that it was remembered and eternalised in the family's memoirs. It was the father's endeavour and commitment that mattered and touched the hearts of pauper children, not the end result of success.[58]

In middling and upper-rank families, the paternal role in guiding a son's education profoundly shaped the father's state of mind and personality. Since the duty was performed with close vigilance, it could create the image of a strict father. As we shall see, this could cause anxiety in a father's mind when the boy's school performance turned out in an unexpected way. To begin with, men often presented themselves as mindful fathers whose interest in their sons' education could not be reduced by other aspects of fatherhood. The landowner John Buxton reminded his eldest son Robert in 1719 that '[I am] always mindfull of you and will by all means I can think of study to promote your true interest'. In 1725, when the boy had difficulties with learning Greek grammar, his

56 BRO, D/EZ/124/1/13 (5 Jul. 1759), A. Atkins, Clapham, to Edwin Martin.

57 SA, TR 292/3, Memoir of Mr George Newton of Thorncliffe near Sheffield.

58 For a similar example of how pauper children commemorated their fathers' supportive actions, see Ann Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton (1783-1839)* (Cambridge, 1986), 5, 7. For a discussion of how pauper fathers encouraged their children to be disobedient to their masters as part of negotiating and asserting paternal authority, see Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England 1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), 210-11.

father enthusiastically gave him moral support: 'Let not the difficulty of the Greek discourage you, your pains will be well recompensed by the pleasure that charming language will give you when you have got a taste of it'.[59] Fathers also kept a close eye on their sons' school progress, and did not pass the entire duty to their sons' tutors who acted in practice as *in loco parentis*. John Collier, a town-clerk from Hastings, commanded his little boys in 1729 to 'bring your Schoolbooks home that I may See how you & Jemmy Goe forward'. This father eagerly embedded his moral support in material things to encourage his boys: 'I […] will buy you all the books you desire and Every thing else as long as you continue a good boy and mind your learning'.[60] Similarly, the boys of the Langton family were controlled by their striving father, though apparently more strictly. Having received a specimen of his second son's writing, but not one for his eldest son, Thomas Langton wrote to him in 1772, asking in minute detail about his progress: 'I should be glad to see how you improve in your writing, and to know the plan of business you pursue, what books you read and how your time is chiefly employed and what masters you have to instruct you'.[61] The image of a strict father caused by the paternal concern of his children's education cannot be mistaken here. Thus, the father's devotion to his progeny's schooling could affect the father's personality.

To gauge the state of mind of these fathers, an intensive, imaginative reconstruction is needed. Given that a son's progress at school was of great importance to his father, he would have waited impatiently for his sons' school reports. Opening a letter and witnessing his son's handwriting might have been an emotional moment for a father whose mind was hanging in the balance. He would have felt relieved when his expectations were materially fulfilled, assuring himself that his paternal authority and advice had been heeded by his progeny. Also, it would certainly have been a pleasant moment, not least because the father would have been moved by paternal love and pride in his children. By contrast, it could be an alarming moment for a father if his boys' performance turned out disappointingly. For example, John Collier's state of mind was grievously blown by his errant boy's remissness in schooling. In 1737 he confessed to his wife that 'As to Jemmy I Own his behaviour & Silent unwillingness to Goe to School was then Very recent in my Memory & I assure You cost me Some Tears'.[62] Perhaps John's sadness was occasioned by his sense of his limited power in exercising his paternal

59 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 34, 76.
60 ESRO, SAY 1534 (20 Sep. 1729), John Collier, Hastings, to Jacky Collier, Battle; ESRO, SAY 1510 (26 Nov. 1728), same to same.
61 Wilkinson (ed.), *Letters of Thomas Langton*, 131.
62 ESRO, SAY 1709 (3 Dec. 1737), same, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.

authority over his son. It was also likely that as a father with flesh and blood, he was genuinely worried about the future path of his wayward boy. Whatever it was, this father's tears were closely tied with his strong sense of paternal responsibility in guiding his offspring's education, and surely with his paternal concern about their school progress.

In addition, surviving evidence implies that fathers' anxiety was exacerbated by their social competitiveness. Historians have argued that 'paternal authority had a public dimension, and the behaviour of children was seen to reflect on the masculine identity of fathers'.[63] Yet how far this social ambition affected the father's state of mind and the father-child relationship has not been demonstrated. I would contend that social contest often forced fathers to pressure their sons into concentrating at school. In 1726, John Buxton wrote a letter to his eldest son Robert, telling him about his younger brother. 'Jacky is gon to school &', he wrote, 'I'm in hope he will also be every way the first among his schoolfellows'.[64] Although the younger son was the subject of this letter, it is likely that the father directed this message to his recipient, his eldest son. Since the first-born son was assumed to be the chief representative of the family, his school performance could be the most promising medium for boasting his father's reputation. There was a clear sign that fathers were indeed worried that other boys would surpass their own sons in the matter of learning. Having had a meeting with Mr Hornby, another textile merchant in Kirkham and his business rival, Thomas Langton wrote a letter to his sons that 'Mr Hornby tells me that his son Thomas is very much improved in his writing and accounts. I would not have him surpass you therein'.[65] The impact of the adult's social competitiveness on the father's anxiety and the pressure upon the sons' shoulders cannot be more tellingly laid bare than in this quote.

For proof of the power of social emulation over the father's worried mind, we need look no further than a father who willingly distorted the facts of his children's school performance when he felt his paternal quality threatened by other male fellows. In 1730 John Collier wrote to his sons at Mrs Thrope's school, after he had just met with his assizes colleague, a certain Mr. Carleton, and his little nephew: 'I have Seen little George Carleton, [...] his Uncle Sayes he is diligent In his book & I told him you were both Soe & You must bee Sure to mind it & not let him Get before you'. However, close reading of Collier's correspondence makes it clear that what John said to George's uncle ('I told him you were both Soe [i.e. diligent]') was only half-true. It was only John's eldest son, Jacky,

63 French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 213.
64 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 89.
65 Wilkinson (ed.), *Letters of Thomas Langton*, 128.

who was industrious, not his younger brother Jemmy, who was in fact – in John Collier's own words – 'Soe Naughty a boy a[t] Market day as drinking & getting out of the [...] Balcony'.[66] In the situation in which his colleague boasted of his nephew's prudent behaviour, John saw it as necessary to veil some unpleasant facts about Jemmy. Certainly, in so doing, this allowed John to talk proudly of his offspring to save his own reputation before his colleague. Perhaps he simply wanted to protect his naughty boy by not revealing his ill conduct. Whatever it was, the boy's school performance affected the father's emotions. It could worry him, or hurt his pride, else why resort to distorting some unpleasant facts about his lambs.

In addition to educational support, fathers performed their duty of guiding their offspring with regard to morals and manners. This role allowed fathers to articulate their piety and Christian manliness to their offspring. Some historians claim that children's moral instruction was devolved to the mother's hands, for it was believed that men were libertine and immoral.[67] However, as Jeremy Gregory argued, *homo religiosus* was a defining category of eighteenth-century masculinity. The neglect of religious priorities was seen as unmanly, and therefore led to effeminacy.[68]

The evidence from my sample confirms Gregory's argument. It shows that apart from the normal patriarchal duty of leading family prayer,[69] fathers tended to take care of their sons' morality, instructing them in daily private devotion and self-reflection. In 1749, Peter Lovell, a small landowner in Somerset, told his son that 'I thought it my Duty as a Parent to recommend to your Perusual [*sic*] such Portions of Scripture as I apprehended [...] to hold just your Integrity, that so your Character might continue as spotless for the future as I [...] apprehended it has hitherto been'.[70] Paternal control over the child's private devotion would have been conducted more closely, especially among dissenting families. The Unitarian Richard Kay (1716-1751) from Lancashire recorded in his diary that

66 ESRO, SAY 1547a (16 Jun. 1730), John Collier, London, to [Jacky and Jemmy] Collier, Battle; ESRO, SAY 1529 (4 Jun. 1729), same to Jacky Collier. See also, ESRO, SAY 1558 (16 Feb. 1730), same to Mary Collier, Hastings: 'I had [...] a letter from Jacky & Jemmy [...] Jacky is wrote Well & a handsom letter but Jemmys in the old Way'.

67 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 329-43; Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society*, 122-28; Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 237.

68 Jeremy Gregory, '*Homo religiosus*: Masculinity and Religion in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 1999), 85-110. Recently, Gregory's argument has been reaffirmed by William van Reyk's research, see his, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness'; *idem*, 'Educating Christian Men in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: Public-School and Oxbridge Ideals', *JECS*, 32 (2009), 425-437; *idem*, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness During the Period of the Evangelical Revival, c. 1730 to c. 1840' (D. Phil, thesis, Oxford, 2007).

69 See, for example, Edmund Hobhouse (ed.), *The Diary of A West Country Physician, A. D. 1684-1726* (Rochester, 1934), 104: 'Sunday [8 Mar. 1724]. Went to afternoon Church. No sermon. I read to my Family in the Whole Duty of Man'.

70 WSA, 161/329 (18 Mar. 1748/9), Peter Lovell to John Lovell.

'Father has been examining me concerning my closet Duties, and some other weighty Affairs'.[71] There was a good reason for Richard's father's strict control. As Matthew Kadane has argued, '[d]issenters believed in God's constant intervention which demanded an individual's vigilance whose nature was morally depraved'.[72] Thus, this paternal control was likely to have been conducted to ensure the son's spiritual salvation. In 1790, a London Quaker Robert Howard wrote to his son Luke, then aged 18, and apprenticed in Stockport, to follow up 'whether my recommendations [...] are put in practice, dost thou rise at Seven in the Morning, [...] the diligent hand maketh Rich, and that not merely in increase but in Peace of Mind, it is a Valuable thing on asking ones Self, have I done my Duty [i.e. daily prayers]?'[73] Taking care of young men's spirituality was – regardless of denomination – one thing which fathers saw as their main responsibility. Thus doing enabled the father to highlight his Christian manliness and pass it onto the next generation.

However, it is noteworthy that there were different nuanced meanings of these similar pieces of paternal advice on daily private devotion. The differences were influenced by distinct denominations and occupations. The Anglican polite gentleman associated piety with a means that could help his son fashion his 'spotless' character, which was necessary for his son's entering polite society. The Unitarian father strictly controlled his son's closet duties, for dissenters believed that the spiritual salvation could be best achieved through self-vigilance. The watchful father was, perhaps, usual among the devout dissenting families. Likewise, the Quakers – also a dissenting sect – gave a due weight to private prayer. But, what the Quaker father emphasised was actually the link between piety and business success, two main ingredients in the Quakers' lives. For them, the daily private devotion could construct his son's sobriety and self-discipline, which in turn would ensure a boy's success in his apprenticeship and future business. Although fathers took care of their sons' piety, the instruction carried with it different meanings which varied according to each family's social rank and religious sect. Yet, fathers sought to instil devoutness in their sons' character in order to ensure that their boys would experience the secure paths in the future, both spiritual and worldly ones.[74]

Fathers also cared for their daughters' moral virtues, considering it as their

71 W. Brockbank and Rev. F. Kenworthy (eds.), *The Diary of Richard Kay, 1716-51 of Baldingstone, near Bury: A Lancashire Doctor* (Manchester, 1968), 25.
72 Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier*, 156.
73 LMA, ACC/1017/1376 (29 Apr. 1790), Robert Howard, London, to Luke Howard, Stockport.
74 For a good overview of faith and belief of each denomination, consult Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, 1982), ch.4; *idem*, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (Harmondsworth, 2000), ch. 5.

responsibility to rectify their daughters' ill behaviour. Take the Readings as an example. Having received a letter from his young daughter, Elizabeth, in 1761, Rev. James Reading (d. 1790) of Woodstock was very much disturbed by 'the Vicissitude of human Affections' which he detected in Elizabeth's style of letter-writing. Indeed, it took him about a week to reflect on this matter before he decided to pen a line to his girl. Perhaps this suggests that this father took his daughter's conduct very seriously, and did not just pass it onto his wife's hands alone. His meticulous letter testifies his dutiful paternity:

> Your Letter [...] hath supplied me with several Reflections on the Vicissitude of human Affections. I dare say, you speak your Mind, when you express Joy and Sorrow, Hope & Fear, Five times in the Four first Lines. --- That such a little Breast shou'd be the Scene of such tumultuous Passions! I conclude from it, That tho' you are pretty far advanced in your University Education, you are not yet fix'd in your Philosophical Principles; you are not yet determined whether to weep with the Stoick, or laugh with the Cynick.
>
> I have heard of those, who cou'd discover a Person's Temper from his Hand-writing. For my Part, I do not pretend to so nice an Observation: but I cou'd venture to pronounce You musically inclined, from the Style of your Letters; in which your Joy & Sorrow alternately rise & fall like the Jacks in an Harpsichord, and the Sharps & Flats are very expressive of your Hopes & Fears.[75]

Although Elizabeth's letter does not survive, we can speculate on its content from reading her father's. Elizabeth would have experienced sensational events that rendered her mind 'tumultuous'. Then, she let her unsettled mind speak to her father in the form of a letter. Rev. Reading obviously disapproved of her lack of emotional control, 'tumultuous Passions' and not being stoic. Instead, it was self-command, fortitude, and stoicism that Rev. Reading wanted to see in his daughter. As Amanda Vickery observes, Christian stoicism was the defining philosophy of the genteel Anglican woman.[76] Thus, Rev. Reading's letter suggests his thorough understanding of the panoply of conventional feminine virtues, and his aptitude for criticising his daughter when she fell short of them. Also, this example reminds us that the instruction of the daughter's virtue was not devolved to the mother's hands alone. Perhaps, the relationship between fathers and daughters was more closely tied than we have assumed.

Besides, it is worth noting that among the labouring poor, performing the role of a moral guide could give specific meanings to the patriarch. Children tended to single out their fathers' strict morality for commendation in family memoirs. It is true that most of surviving sources created by the poor are in the form of memoirs and autobiographies, for they were written only when their authors became adults and acquired literary skills. Thus, one might fairly argue that the offspring doubtless reconfigured their parents'

75 NRO, BOL 2/1/8 (4 Dec. 1761), James Reading, Woodstock, to Elizabeth Reading, Oxford.
76 Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 96.

characteristics to match their own personal purposes and the cultural values of the time. As Joanne Bailey has recently observed, the famous tailor Francis Place eternalised his father's pursuits and social improvement in order to counter claims of a decline in working-class morals.[77] However, not all children were so cynical as Francis Place. The evidence shows that the moral guide functioned as a short-cut which pauper children were apt to grasp at when they wanted to eternalise their fathers' manliness. Witness the memoir of George Newton, who grew up in Durham in the 1760s and 1770s:

> It was my happiness to be providentially placed under the care of parents who were studiously attentive to the morals of their children. My father was indeed inflexibly severe in enforcing moral discipline in his family, and though he sometimes indulged in vain and trifling conversation himself, yet he never failed to correct the smallest impropriety in the conduct of his children, insomuch that we seldom durst [*sic*] venture to speak in his presence. I have sometimes thought this was going to an extreme, as the government of fear (if not duly tempered by love) has a tendency to oppress the spirit, and check the natural genius of youth. This, however, was merely an error of judgement and proceeded not from any want of real affection.[78]

As we have seen, George's father was a labouring pauper. Material responsibility was an obligation that he could not perfectly fulfil, if not his Achilles heel at all. In this context, George chose to elaborate his father's role as a strict moral guide in order to highlight his patriarch's manliness. George's action had a cultural significance. Conduct manuals instructed the pauper and pauperised patriarchs to mind moral supervision as their prime duty. One author observed: 'It is not in the power of every parent to provide for his children. […] But it is in every man's power to bring up his children in the fear of God, [...], to form their minds to the practice of virtue, to instil into them the principles of morality, […]'.[79] The memoir of George Newton does not point out that George's father performed the role of moral guide very strictly, for he wanted to use this duty as a compensation for his failure in supplying his family materially. Instead, what the evidence reveals is that when an offspring wanted to underline his father's excellence, he referred to a specific aspect of paternal duties. It was then the father's performance in his paternal obligations that children used as an index for measuring their fathers' manly quality, and consequently created the specific meanings and images of their own fathers.

Moral guidance was significant in men's lives not only in family memoirs, but it could also affect father's peace of mind in real lives. Children's immorality might cause disregard for their patriarchs. Perhaps no other example can show the deeply distressing mind of a father more tellingly than a case study in which a paterfamilias was confronted

77 Bailey, *Parenting in England*, 134.
78 SA, TR 292/3, Memoir of Mr George Newton.
79 Quoted in Bailey, *Parenting in England*, 63.

by his difficult children. Having lost his wife, Anne, in March 1793, Rev. William Temple (1739-1796) from St Gluvias in Cornwall had to take care and bring up his seven young children alone in his late fifties. Although he had no financial problems to worry about, he was extremely 'hurt by the petulance and quarrels' of his offspring.[80] In February 1796, he wrote about their wayward behaviour in his diary:

> Robert grows very troublesome. Yet alas! what is he fit for? Yet to keep him at home – what a trial and perpetual vexation: restless, yet capable of nothing. Octavius rude from too much indulgence. Anne petted from the same cause. Laura all the disagreeable qualities of a girl just come from school. Poor me![81]

He could not handle his children at all. Moreover, his sigh – 'Poor me!' – underlined his deep melancholy and sense of self-pity. As Linda Colley observes, the inhabitants of rural areas during the French Revolution were less likely 'to be infected with radical ideas, and more willing, perhaps, to know their place and keep to it'.[82] Thus, this Cornish Rev. Temple, who was a committed Evangelical, was likely to have a conservative outlook, and increasingly radical ideas during the French Revolution may have aggravated his concerns about his own patriarchal status. These disobedient children would have grieved their father at heart. A month later, he filled his diary with some words, giving us a compelling clue to unlock the state of his wretched mind:

> L[aura] put me out of humour, a ρυδε [rude], καπριχιους γιρλ [capricious girl]. What a difference between the attention of children and wives. O my beloved Anne [i.e. his late wife], I never knew your real value till I lost you. Children do not think at all, or think only of themselves: giddy, selfish, capricious.[83]

What distressed Rev. Temple was not only his children's unruly behaviour, but also the fact that they did not attend to him. It was care and kind attention which he expected from his children. He hoped that they would do this in place of their late mother. One evening in August 1796, this father was left alone at home when 'Anne, Laura and Mr. Powlett [Anne's fiancé] went [...] to a foolish dancing party'. The sense that no child was around him to respect, attend and care for him caused this lonely father to lament in his diary that 'How λιττλε κομφορτ [little comfort] I have. Laura, Robert, even Octavius, John, Frederic, Frank. αλλ ιν τθειρ τυρνς [all in their turns]. σο διδ ποορ Wιλλιαμ & μι δεαρ Αννε [so did poor William & my dear Anne [his late wife]'.[84] That he used a code for this entry is noteworthy. Possibly, he did not want to ruin his children's reputation had anyone read it. Perhaps, it was his intention not to leave any sign of his emotional weakness. Yet it may

80 Lewis Bettany (ed.), *Diaries of William Johnston Temple, 1780-1796* (Oxford, 1929), 157.
81 *Ibid*., 158.
82 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 1992), 176.
83 Bettany (ed.), *Diaries of William Johnston Temple*, 164 (All decodes are my own.) .
84 *Ibid*., 196 (All decodes are my own.).

also suggest that he wanted to veil his neglected patriarchal status in the family embodied in his children's lack of respect, obedience and loving attention towards him. Whatever it might be, Rev. Temple's diary reveals that this father needed his children's docility, respect and attention to sustain his peace of mind.

* * * *

The final part of this chapter is devoted to the discussion of the emotional performances of loving fathers. In the course of the eighteenth century the practice of expressing fatherly love towards children changed profoundly. Joanne Bailey has recently argued that the ideal father, as *represented* in the period between 1750 and 1830, was a sensible father, who was 'tenderly affectionate, sensitized and moved by babies'. Fatherly hugs, material support, a deep understanding of his children's personalities and protective guiding hands were significant gestures of a father's tenderness.[85] Yet, how far this ideal image of a tender father corresponded with the lived experiences of father-child relationships remains unclear. Furthermore, we still know little of what fathers understood as paternal love, how they communicated this to their offspring, and how this performance related to their masculinity. What follows is an attempt to understand these aspects of fatherhood.

Paternal love was, I argue, performative. It was enacted to communicate specific messages. That is, the father conveyed his affectionate feelings in order to react to a *particular* circumstance. To understand this, we need to know what fathers saw as adorable in their children, and what called for the show of affection.

In the early eighteenth century, a father tended to convey his paternal fondness when he was moved by his offspring's well-being and good disposition. In 1711 Richard Steele depicted a fond father expressing his affection towards his progeny:

> I stood the other Day and beheld a Father sitting in the Middle of a Room with a large Family of Children about him; and methought I could observe in his Countenance different Motions of Delights, as he turned his Eye towards the one and the other of them. [...] His eldest Son is a Child of a very towardly Disposition, [...] I do not know any Man who has a juster Relish of Life than the Person I am speaking of, [...] It is the most beautiful Object the Eyes of Man can behold, to see a Man of Worth and his Son live in an entire unreserved Correspondence. The mutual Kindness and Affection between them give an inexpressible Satisfaction to all who know them.[86]

This scene was obviously filled with the 'mutual Kindness and Affection' between a father

85 See fn. 8 above. However, Bailey's argument is to some extent an echo of Fletcher, *Growing Up in England*, chs. 4, 5 and 10; Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, 90-108.

86 Donald F. Bond (ed.), *The Spectator*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1965), ii, no. 192 (10 Oct. 1711), 252-53, 255.

and his children. Yet, what really occasioned delight in this father when 'he turned his Eye' towards his offspring? The art historian Kate Retford has used the first sentence of this passage as evidence to support her argument that the tender father enjoyed having a circle of his progeny around him, a trend which would experience its heyday after the 1760s as seen in family portraits and literary discussions.[87] If we read the entire document, however, we can clearly point out the true reason for this father's felicity as suggested by Steele. The fatherly joy was not simply aroused by the physical connectedness between the patriarch and his children. Rather, it was the good disposition that the patriarch saw in his children, particularly his eldest son, that he relished and enabled him to convey his paternal affection and kindness, embedded in his fond eye-contact. In addition, it is not for nothing that this father encoded his paternal affection in the approving gaze. As Robert Jütte observes, in Western culture, prior to the cult of sensibility, the 'classical' hierarchy of the senses was arranged as follows: '*visus* (sight), *auditus* (hearing), *odoratus* (smell), *gustus* (taste), *tactus* (touch)'.[88] Thus, fatherly love was performed through the medium of the highest of the senses.

Why was paternal affection stimulated in accordance with the patriarch's approval of his children's good disposition? Of course, one might fairly argue that it was simply a father's genuine want to see his own offspring imbibe good qualities. Yet, what Steele argued was that a 'Man is happy who can believe of his Son, that he will escape the Follies and Indiscretions [...], and pursue and improve every thing that was valuable in him'. This is because when a man was in his grave, society would remember him by looking at his offspring's behaviour. 'You cannot recal your Father by your Grief', Steele wrote, 'but you may revive him to his Friends by your Conduct'.[89] Therefore, fatherly tender affection was enacted when the father was assured of his children's good qualities which would in turn guarantee the father's own reputation when he passed away. Steele called this kind of father-child relationship 'a transplanted self-love'.[90]

Although Steele's discussion of the reasons for fatherly joy seems cynical, he was correct in identifying the occasion which stimulated the father to perform his paternal

87 Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, 118.

88 Robert Jütte, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*, trans. James Lynn (Cambridge, 2005), 61.

89 Bond (ed.), *The Spectator*, ii, no. 192, 253-54, 256.

90 *Ibid.*, 255. For a different interpretation of Steele's passage, see Shawn Lisa Maurer, '"As Sacred as Friendship as Pleasurable as Love": Father-Son Relations in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*', in Beth Fowkes Tokin (ed.), *History, Gender & Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Athens, GA), 14-38, in which she argued that the discourse of masculinity in those periodicals served to promote the idea that the ideal patriarch was best exemplified in the 'fraternal father' who treated his sons as equals in the business partnership rather than as the minors in the household. Maurer's argument has been echoed in Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, 96-100.

affection. Family letters in my sample echo Steele's assessment. In 1722 John Buxton told his eldest son Robert why the young boy deserved his fond affection:

> You have always been very dear to me ever since you were born and I will own to you my affection has encreased with your years, not only because you are my son, but that also I have discovered many good inclinations in you which give me very good hopes you may one day be a credit and honour to our family as well as my comfort and happines.[91]

Here, Steele's argument was neatly reproduced. Obviously, it was Robert's 'many good inclinations' which moved John to express his affectionate feelings. John's expression of paternal love was in tandem with his approval of Robert's praiseworthy conduct. In other words, paternal affection was enacted when the patriarch was pleased with his children's behaviour. In this sense, performing paternal love sustained the patriarchal status of the father.

Certainly, we need to look at children's loss of paternal love because of their misconduct for proof of my claim. Unfortunately, my sample does not offer a clear case study. Evidence of such a poignant case would have been easily destroyed by the parties. However, surviving records show that fathers usually warned their children to continue their appropriate behaviour if they did not want to miss out on paternal fondness. John Collier warned his boys, Jacky and Jemmy, in 1732: 'Pray continue to be very good boyes, & let Your behaviour in all respects, answer that Character, if you Expect any countenance & Encouragement from Us'. Indeed, John kept his word. By February 1734 his naughty Jemmy had much improved himself. Having observed his son's improvement, the father bestowed a material reward on his boy. 'I this day went to Westminster and met him in the Hall *looks* very healthy & much like a School boy (having outgrown his cloaths not a little) [...] I find he goes at School with Courage and Successe [...] I have promis'd Jemmy to give him a Play before I come out Of Town it being what I find he has much reckoned upon', John reported his wife.[92] Thus, John Collier's paternal fondness was not performed through words and expressions, like that of John Buxton. Rather, it was encoded into materiality, a play ticket. Anyway, fatherly endearment was still promptly enacted when the father was pleased with his son's conduct.

However, the late eighteenth century witnessed a change in the way the father performed his affectionate feelings. Evidence in my sample suggests that fathers tended to be emotionally moved by the connectedness between themselves and their progeny, both physical and psychological. Fathers were particularly sensitized to the recognition that

91 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 40.

92 ESRO, SAY 1594a (24 Oct. 1732), John Collier, Hastings, to [Jacky and Jemmy] Collier, London; ESRO, SAY 1640 (7 Feb. 1733), same, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings (my emphasis).

they were not absent from their children's minds. This was crystallised when the patriarch was away from home. In such cases, the tender father was sentimentally moved by the minutiae of his offspring's actions recounted in family correspondence, which displayed their desire to reinforce connections and their wish for the family's reunion. In 1809, Luke Howard, a Quaker from London, attended the Friends' meeting in Sunderland. Upon reading a letter from his eldest son Robert, Luke would have certainly smiled. The little eight-year-old Bob knew exactly which domestic scene had to be singled out to conjure up certain sentimental responses in his dear father. The little boy wrote in his childish handwriting: 'I suppose that thou wilt be glad to hear that dear little John [his two-year-old brother] has not quite forgot thee for this morning he saw John Bevans passing by on the coach, and called out "Father". We shall all be very glad to see thee again, and unite in dear love to thee'. Indeed, Luke revelled in his son's letter, for he proudly showed it to 'the friends who were with me, and that they approved both of the contents and the writing'.[93] This suggests that to flatter the sentimental patriarch, it was essential to remind him that he was not forgotten by his little ones. In this sense, the father's self-esteem was sustained by the emotional bonds between himself and his children.

Since a child's yearning for a physical reunion with his father was conceived as a discernible sign of the emotional attachment between them, it is not unexpected that the father used bodily expressions to convey his fond affection. While early eighteenth-century fathers expressed their paternal love through an approving gaze, late eighteenth-century fathers put forward kissing, hugging, and caressing in order to convey their affectionate feelings. However, I am not suggesting that fathers from the earlier period did not kiss, hug, or caress their children. Yet, evidence from my sample shows that the tactile sense carried with it special meanings which the loving father used to highlight that the relationship between him and his progeny was special, rare, exclusive and intimate. As Robert Jütte has argued, the late eighteenth century witnessed a change in the classical meaning of the touch. The tactile sense became permissible although it presupposed some familiarity and good faith with the person concerned.[94]

A brief case study will serve to illuminate the special meanings and the uses of such physical contact within a family. Visiting London in January 1817 for business, Rev.

93 LMA, ACC/1017/1433 (17 Jul. 1809), Robert Howard, Plaistow, to Luke Howard, Sunderland; LMA, ACC/1017/1434 (28 Jul. 1809), Luke Howard, Edinburgh, to Robert Howard, Plaistow. For a similar example, see WSA, 1720/829 Photocopies of Money family correspondence (n.d. 1809), Emma Money, Whetham, to William Money, Bristol.

94 Jütte, *A History of the Senses*, 177-179. For the variety of cultural meanings of the kiss, see Karen Harvey (ed.), *The Kiss in History* (Manchester, 2005).

Charles Powlett (1764-1834) from Hampshire wrote to his daughters Caroline (aged 17) and Horatia (aged 14), who were then being schooled in Canterbury: 'My dear Girls, I write at night because I am solitary & it makes me in some degree feel that I am conversing with my dear Children'. Letter-writing was for him merely a temporary self-help method to soothe his loneliness because 'no pen can express my affectionate feelings to you both'.[95] For him, feelings could not be simply transplanted into ink-blotted texts. Still, he had to convey his 'affectionate feelings' to his young girls. Although the final part of this letter is missing, we may imagine that he invariably sealed it in the way his usually did in other letters: 'I earnestly hope that nothing will prevent all of us from having the delight of folding you in [?my] arms'.[96] Here, hugging became a clearer sign of fatherly love than any pen could offer. In another surviving part of the same letter (1817), Rev. Powlett dedicated a small but vivid portion exclusively to his six-year-old son Frederick:

> [M]y dear sweet little Fred,
>
> I hope you have been a good boy [...], I cannot tell you how much I long to see you & kiss your dear little face & scrab you with my beard & whiskers. [...] I am, my sweet little Fellow, yr aff[ectiona]te Papa. C. P.[97]

To present-day readers, this passage seems normal enough. However, it is too anachronistic to think that way. According to Jütte, it was in the late eighteenth century that bodily contact became personal and intimate, presupposing familiarity and being given to a person whom the giver considered special and concerned. In this new cultural context, Rev. Powlett's kissing and scrubbing of his son's face had more meaning to offer than just expressing his own tenderness, as historians of sensibility would claim. It prioritised little Fred's status among his siblings who would think that their father was more intimate to and concerned only about him. Indeed, Rev. Powlett realised that such a description would cause his girls to feel neglected. On another occasion, he felt obliged to clarify his action, so that he would not be a partial father in his daughters' eyes: 'I may shew more <u>fondness</u> for dear little Freddy, because he is as good as he is beautiful, and because he is a Baby. but believe me I love you all equally & most fervently'.[98] Encoded in kisses, hugs and caresses was therefore the sense of privilege, specialness and intimacy between the father and the child.

Just as the practices of kissing, and the like, were increasingly restricted to be

95 HRO, 72M92/10/13 (14 Jan. 1817), Charles Powlett, London, to [Caroline and Horatioa] Powlett, Canterbury.
96 HRO, 72M92/10/16 (20 Oct. 1819), Charles Powlett, London, to [Caroline and Horatioa] Powlett, Canterbury.
97 HRO, 72M92/10/13 (14 Jan. 1817), Charles Powlett, London, to [Caroline and Horatioa] Powlett, Canterbury.
98 HRO, 72M92/10/20 (n.d.), Charles Powlett, London, to [Caroline and Horatioa] Powlett, Canterbury.

conducted only with familiars, so giving such gestures in family letters suggested the changing idea of the father-child relationship. This served to highlight the specialness of family life, emphasising the sense of belonging between the father and the child who received such fond physical contact. Bodily contact not only gave rise to the tender father, but also created the intimate one, the one who was exclusive to the family and belonged to his little ones only. In addition, the case of Rev. Powlett suggests that family life gained its special and intimate meaning among clerical families, unlike the argument proposed by William van Reyk.[99] When a father kissed a child, his lips simply tied up their relationship. Thus, it is unsurprising that he needed to be cautious about balancing his fond practices towards all of his offspring. If only the familiar deserved kissing, hugging and caressing, who else would be more familiar to a patriarch, if not his wife and children?

* * * *

This chapter has explored the paternal duties and their impact on the fathers' lives and their relationships with their progeny. Fatherhood was then, as now, bound to the pleasures and pains, joy and distress of child-rearing, such as witnessing one's offspring suffer life-threatening illnesses or seeing them grow up firmly with correct dispositions and careers. Paternal obligations were also the reference points which the father himself and his offspring used for measuring the father's manly qualities, giving the specific meanings to his paternity, and shaping the ways the father and his children represented his image in life-writings. Fatherhood was central to men's lives more than just a way to show their potency or to express their ability of household management. We should remember that one daughter evaluated the manly quality of her father, not just from his 'oeconomical' capacity, or from his procreation of her life. Instead, this daughter derived her filial love, duty and obedience from her father's 'Protection, Tenderness Affection and continual Endeavours to make [a child] Happy'.[100] It was the fatherly performances of his own paternal obligations that shaped the ways his progeny perceived and assessed the nature of their father-child relationships. The significance of fatherhood in men's lives was more crucial than some historians have allowed.

However, paternal roles and obligations affected fathers' lives in different ways, which were influenced by each family's social background. Among landed-gentry and

99 Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness', 1053.
100 DDWF/13/3 (26 Mar. 1733), Kezziah Wesley to John Wesley, Oxford.

upper-middling rank families, the role of an educational and moral guide seemed to be the major duty that these fathers took up. Their letters to their sons suggested these fathers' strong will to make their offspring ready for entering the polite world. Down to the social scale, the evidence from the middle-middling rank families gave an impression that although the fathers were also interested in their sons' education and correct dispositions, their letters testified that these fathers publicly used their sons' school performance for their own social boasting and competitiveness. Some fathers put direct pressures upon their boys' shoulders, instructing them not to be surpassed by their school fellows who were the sons of their families' business rivals. The worried and strict fatherhood seemed to be a recognisable image of the professional, middling-rank father. By contrast, among the pauper and pauperised families, the role of a breadwinner was an overarching, aspiring value that fathers aspired to. Children also used this paternal duty to assess their fathers' manliness. However, it was not the end result, whether a poor father could feed, clothe and shelter his family, that mattered in his children's eyes. Instead, a pauper father was judged by his family members according to his commitment to perform the role. Paternal duties had the significance on fathers' lives, but each father prioritised one of his obligations over the others differently according to the social station of his family.

Performing paternal roles and obligations was affected by denomination, but only in a limited way. The evidence in my sample shows the unity in performing fatherhood among the Anglican, the Unitarian, and the Quaker. However, I have found that these fathers differed from one another only when they came to take up the role of a moral guide. Although they all were keen to instruct their children morally, they pointed out the usefulness of piety in a different way. As I have shown, the Anglican father underlined the link between the reading of the Scripture and the fashioning of his children's elegant dispositions. The Unitarian father forced their offspring to be self-vigilant to ensure their salvation. The Quaker father gave a due weight to associate religious strictness with the foundation of his sons' business success. Fathers seemed to be aware of the practical reasons of their religious instructions which had upon their children's future paths. Perhaps, eighteenth-century family letters can bring to light an earlier sign of what historians call the secularisation of religion.

Although this chapter argues for the continuity of paternal obligations throughout the century, it discovers a significant change in the way fathers expressed their paternal affection. Whereas the early eighteenth-century fathers performed their paternal love through their patriarchal, approval gaze, the late eighteenth-century fathers encoded their

affectionate feelings in the loving, bodily contact. The sign of paternal love was moved from the father's eyes to his arms and lips. This occurred in accordance with the change of the sensory hierarchy in the age of sensibility, which emphasised the role of physical, psychological and emotional bound between individuals. Perhaps, this is early evidence of the image of a loving, playful father that became familiar to us today.

Last but not least, fatherhood was naturally crucial in men's emotional lives, too. The father's manly stoicism was perhaps never more tested than in bereavement. Lawrence Stone notoriously argued that in the age of larger families and excessive child mortality, parents were emotionally disengaged from their children and unaffected by their untimely death.[101] Evidence suggests that fathers were indeed grievously touched by such mournful events, although their reactions varied, depending on pressing circumstances. Witness a bereaved father, John Collier, who lost his promising son, Jacky, at the age of twelve in 1733. The father found it heartbreaking to come to Westminster school without seeing his dear boy: 'Some days I have Terrible conflicts with Dear remembrance of ----- that cut me Worse than Swords'.[102] He could not even write down the name of his dear deceased child. Perhaps, no father could represent the bitter grief more plaintively than this father did, when he went to the school to collect Jacky's personal belongings in February 1733. He conceded to his wife in mournful language:

> I have See[n] many Occurences that revive my losse & bring to my remembrance the Dear Child that I can hardly bear it. His name is Engraven on my heart in letters of Blood never toke effac'd & really sometimes I can Muse upon it & think I can & ought to bear it with a becomeing resignation & sometimes it Goes Through My Soul worse than Daggers. Writeing This in a Museing posture I have let my Thoughts run too far but I verily beleive my Selfe That I have fix'd Greater resolutions on the unhappy affair & hope to keep them.[103]

This is a piece of compelling evidence revealing the tension between emotional fatherhood and traditional masculinity. On the one hand, an ideal masculine value and Christian fortitude required him to be resigned. On the other hand, the humaneness of a father made it difficult for him to enter his deceased child's chamber without grief. Just as he decided to fix 'Greater resolutions on the unhappy affair', only someone with a heart of stone could not believe that John Collier was on the verge of tears while he was packing up Jacky's belongings. Thus, historians must not take for granted that masculine self-control equated to a father's emotional detachment from his child.

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101 Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 206-214, 247-249. However, Stone's argument has been unsurprisingly attacked by recent historians. See, for instance, Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 122; Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 100-101. For a brief anthology on how parents across the centuries reacted to this unhappy event, see Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*, 123-132.

102 ESRO, SAY 1633 (14 Jun. 1733), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.

103 ESRO, SAY 1627 (13 Feb. 1733), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.

Masculine self-command at the time of bereavement continued into the late eighteenth century, and surely even continues today. It required men's apprehension of the (in)appropriateness of being in tears. In January 1787, Rev. William Temple recorded in his diary: 'Not recovered my spirits since the loss of my son: depressed and weighs me down: yet it is no time to trifle now'. Self-control and Christian fortitude were present at the heart of this bereaved father. However, when men attended the death beds of their offspring, there was no need to veil their paternal tears. The London Quaker Robert Howard stood in the sick chamber of his dying son Robert in 1791 and saw 'poor Robert on the interview attempted to speak [...] but could not, we all burst into Tears'.[104] The death of an offspring always testified the centrality of fatherhood in men's lives.

Fatherhood formed then, and now, an integral part of manhood. Its practices profoundly affected the father's daily and emotional life, either when nurturing his infant, guiding his child's morality, controlling his son's schoolbooks, gazing at his mature personality, hugging him fondly, or attending his death bed.

104 Bettany (ed.), *Diaries of William Johnston Temple*, 51; LMA, ACC/1017/1381 (5 Feb. 1791), Robert Howard, London, to Luke Howard, Stockport.

Chapter Four

'[T]ake upon you the Man & the Gentleman': Parents, Sons, and the Construction of the 'Future' Patriarchs

In January 1793 a genteel woman, Elizabeth Peach, received a letter from her teenage son. Yet she was 'very great[ly] disappointed', for it was 'a pack of nonsense not fit to be read'. She continued:

> I'm sorry to find that with your growth of Stature you have not out grown childish Hacks & that you do not begin to take upon you the Man & the Gentleman. We hope to see no more of that Style of Writing from you, but such as from your Understanding & Education we have reason to expect. You have nothing to do but to turn your writ & vivacity to proper Objects to make it agreeable to your Friends & you may be assur'd your Letter will always be acceptable to us, if you write them in the manners we know you are capable of.[1]

This instruction is telling. It suggests that for a genteel boy, his grown limbs and torso alone did not necessarily signify the full state of manhood. Instead, well-organised thoughts, trained wits and intellect were required. In the parental imagination, the transformation of a boy into a man was a social and cultural process, not just a sexual and physical development. The search for these categories and their *raison d'être* in parent-child relationships is the subject of this chapter.

Childhood has long been explored by generations of scholars. In the first half of the previous century, sociologists argued for the relative smoothness of the transition from childhood to adulthood in pre-industrial society. Family and kin, tutor and master, all made an effort to ensure that youth had less personal liberty of choice in imitating their adult models. Youths' life passages were closely controlled by the adult.[2] Building on this model, Philippe Ariès and his followers notoriously concluded that childhood was an eighteenth-century invention. Prior to that period, children had had only hard and severe experiences under their parents' strict control. It was the enlightened philosophers who discovered the distinct state of childhood; since then adults have paid more attention to the young's individual needs and personalities in child-rearing.[3] However, Ariès' thesis has long been convincingly rejected by historians who stressed the continuity of the

1 NRO, BOL 2/12/3 (3 Feb. 1793), Elizabeth Peach, Sundrich, to [Edward Leathes], Norwich.

2 Classic accounts of the view are represented by the work of Karl Mannheim and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt. Consult Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge by Karl Mannheim* (London, 1952), 276-321, esp. 288-94; S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure* (London, 1956), esp. 75-92 on primitive and pre-industrial societies, and pp. 92-114 on modern societies.

3 Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York, 1962); Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (London, 1976).

nature of more affectionate and less authoritarian parent-child relationships than Ariès envisaged.[4] Nevertheless, relying heavily on 'the cult of childhood' in the late eighteenth century, Dror Wahrman has argued that 'a [new] regime of identity insisting on the unique, ingrained, enduring inner self did place more weight on the child's shoulders. It turned the child – even the newborn infant – into the self-contained bud of potential that would subsequently bloom into the full adult'. A child's gender identity was identified by his biologically inwardly-turned self, rather than by his socially-turned one. Gender difference was a product of 'gender panic' aroused by the American Revolution. Child education had to conform to biological models rather than those of social and cultural associations.[5]

Wahrman apart, historians agree on the influential role of social and cultural aspects in fashioning a child's gender identity. Using conduct manuals and school practices, scholars confirm that boys and girls were treated, cultivated and educated differently throughout the period. While girls were expected to learn and develop their modesty, sensitivity, and home-service skills for their future role as wife and mother, boys were encouraged to be stern, tough and adventurous, and ready to enter a wider world.[6] However, Michèle Cohen reminds us that there was fundamentally no difference between boys' and girls' education as far as academic subjects were concerned. What mattered was indeed the different 'methods' of learning. The texts designed for women's reading consisted mainly of abridgements from larger works, and the subjects were thus superficially treated and disconnected. As a result, it was believed that a woman's mind was not trained to serious exercise, or to wholesome reflection. By contrast, boys' education was based on patient thinking and deep digestion of the subjects. The schoolboys were encouraged by strict and laborious study in order to compare, combine, analyse and separate ideas. For Cohen, this 'methodological' difference contributed to the conventional assumption that men's minds were always superior to women's.[7] Still,

4 Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1983). For anthologies of parent-child experiences from the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, see *idem* (ed.), *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children over Three Centuries* (Hanover, NH, 1987), and Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.), *English Family Life, 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford, 1988), ch. 4. See also Illana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence & Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London, 1994), 1-9.

5 Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 2004), esp. 282-90, quoted from p. 282.

6 See, for example, Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven and London, 2008), chs. 2-3, 11-12, 16; Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (Harlow, 1998), 129-35; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (1987; London, 2002), 343-48.

7 Michèle Cohen, 'Gender and “method” in eighteenth-century English education', *HE*, 33 (2004), 590,

Cohen's argument reaffirms the role of schooling in constructing and reproducing the gender inequality and hierarchy.

Current research has moved away from the primacy of prescriptive literature and schooling to the active role of parents in the inculcation of appropriate gendered values into their progeny. Although scholars agree on a series of manly values (self-control, independence, stoicism, intelligence, physical strength) which adults aspired to instil in young men, literary scholars seem to be the first to have questioned the 'absolute authority' of conduct literature. Vivien Jones asks us to think about a resisting reader who took warnings against libertines as a source of inspiration to do otherwise. Similarly, Clare Brant reminds us that 'we know relatively little about children's responses to the processes by which they were socialised', and emphasises instead a particular – or sometimes *ad hoc* – context of relationships between parents and children which framed parental advice.[8] Recently, the historians Henry French and Mark Rothery have attempted to balance the scale. They propose the model of a 'mixed-economy' of elite schooling, which underlined the enduring efforts of parents to maintain (mostly by letters) the connection between boys, their families, and social expectations. Continual parental control at a distance was a testimony of the limited authority of the precepts.[9] Yet perhaps one needs look no further than profligate sons for denial of the absolute power of the role of prescriptive literature and schooling in constructing sons' gender.

However, historians exploring juvenile delinquency have tended to use their case studies to reveal the catalogue of manliness associated with the social rank of a certain wayward boy. Works, such as those of Margaret Hunt, Sarah Pearsall and Nicola Phillips, emphasise the profligate son as the anti-thesis to 'middle-class virtues of moral, sexual and financial restraint and rational self-control' qualities which were understood as guardians of a commercial world.[10] Yet this approach leads us no further than re-

592-93; *idem*, '"A Little Learning"? The Curriculum and the Construction of Gender Difference in the Long Eighteenth Century', *BJECS*, 29 (2006), 321-35; *idem*, '"To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise": Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain', in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005), 224-42.

8 Vivien Jones, 'The Seductions of Conduct: Pleasure and Conduct Literature', in Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (eds.), *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1996), 115, 123-24; Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke, 2006), 60, 63.

9 Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, c.1600-c.1900* (Oxford, 2012), 71-72.

10 Nicola Phillips, 'Parenting the Profligate Son: Masculinity, Gentility and Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1791-1814', *G&H*, 22 (2010), 92-108, quoted from p. 92; *idem*, *The Profligate Son: Or, a True Story of Family Conflict, Fashionable Vice, and Financial Ruin in Regency Britain* (Oxford, 2013); Sarah Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008), ch. 5; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), ch. 2. See also Uwe Böker, 'Childhood and Juvenile Delinquency in Eighteenth-Century *Newgate Calendars*', in Anja Müller (ed.), *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century:*

presenting the manly values which are already familiar to historians of the field. Also, we are not sure why parents saw it as necessary to stop ill behaviour in their sons: was it either to safeguard the virtues of their rank, or to protect their family's reputation, or for the sake of the boys' futures, or *all* of these? Hunt, Pearsall and Phillips seem to argue for the first two reasons.[11] But, was it actually so?

This chapter does not aim to provide a complete list of virtues which parents attempted to instil in their sons. This has already been thoroughly conducted by others. Instead, the chapter asks what the *raison d'être* of these manly values was, both for parents and for sons; how far sons accepted and internalised these norms; and, what the effects on sons' developing personalities were when they failed to fulfil their parents' expectations. Asking the *raison d'être* of these manly qualities helps us to understand why only some particular values were significant in fashioning sons' masculinity in parents' eyes, whereas many other manly traits left no sign in familial letters.

The chapter examines twelve family archives, covering the period from 1710 to 1820. The individuals are drawn from various social backgrounds, from lesser landed gentry in Cumberland and Norfolk to a Non-conformist Lancashire physician, and from Westminster schoolboys to a Methodist ironmonger in Durham. These families offer us a window on how different social ranks and religions affected the fashioning of sons' masculinity. In addition, these samples include both amenable and wayward sons. Their records show us how they and their parents thought about and negotiated with masculine virtues.

Having surveyed these family writings, I find recurrent qualities which parents emphasised to their sons: knowledge, profession, purse, manners and morality. Yet the sources do not tell us directly the *raison d'être* of these virtues. Therefore, I will take those recurrent themes in the family archives as reference points. I will examine parent-child discourse which was uttered around these manly qualities when parents justified their advice, and when sons defended their actions when things went wrong. I will argue that in the parents' eyes, the ultimate aim of constructing their sons' masculinity centred on an attempt to prepare the boy for the role of his subsequent life, that is, the head of the family or the future patriarch, be it the head of his natal family or the head of his marital one. As we shall see, the son who failed to conform to the expectation usually experienced a troublesome period with his parents to whom he had to be accountable as a son, and in some cases this failure severely affected the son's self-esteem when he felt

Age and Identity (Aldershot, 2006), 135-44.

11 See, for instance, Phillips, 'Parenting the Profligate Son', 93.

insufficiently endowed with manly qualities to perform the role of the future patriarch.

* * * *

Parents gave utmost priority to their sons' intellect which was embodied in their literacy. Undeniably, suitable knowledge was a passport in life, facilitating youth in establishing their careers, managing their households, and climbing up the social ladder. Therefore, schooling was conceived as one of the most remarkable transition markers from boyhood to manhood. This rite of passage was often commemorated in family writings, similar to breeching, apprenticing, weddings and the like. A London dissenter father (b. 1729) wrote in his retrospectively compiled diary that on 17 July 1780, 'Tommy', a son from his second marriage, 'aged 5 Years 5 Mon: 5 D[ay]s gone to Mrs Kings School at Islington'.[12] As it was normal that a boy, regardless of his social rank, had to be breeched at the age of five or so, Tommy must have gone to school with his first breeches.[13] Yet the absence of the breeching ceremony in his father's diary entry suggests that schooling gained such a special position in the transformation of a boy into a man, that his father felt obliged to record this, while the other rite of passage may have faded out of his father's memory.

As Anthony Fletcher notes, the rite of breeching was 'the ceremonial abandonment of female dress'. It was 'overwhelmingly important in the development of boyhood'.[14] If the breeching ceremony, as Elizabeth Foyster observes, marked out just one of the well-defined stages in the boy's life,[15] entering the world of knowledge can, I argue, be seen as another significant marker in constructing the son's masculinity, not only because it took place at the same age, but also because it found an unforgettable place in the parent's memory.

Intellect was an aspiring value that parents, regardless their social ranks, wanted their sons to imbibe. Even pauper parents made an effort to educate their sons. It is true that they could not afford to send their sons to boarding schools. Possibilities available to them, were, for example, to send their boys to charity schools or instruct them

12 LMA, MS 10,823/4, a notebook of a dissenter (b. 11 Jul. 1729), fol. 40.

13 Jennifer Jordan, "'To Make a Man Without Reason": Examining Manhood and Manliness in Early Modern England', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 250-51. For the breeching ceremony in the nineteenth-century, see John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London, 1999), 103-4.

14 Fletcher, *Growing Up*, 104.

15 Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (Harlow, 1999), 39-40.

themselves, mostly by using low-priced materials such as religious texts.[16] The autobiography of Joseph Mayett (1783-1839) from rural Quainton in Buckinghamshire offers us a rare window on the attitude towards literacy among the poor. Due to family poverty, Joseph was 'deprived of a liberal Education'. Yet his mother 'being able to read and write a little though in some instances hardly legible' taught him to read 'at a very early age'. Like other poor boys, at seven years of age he was set to lace making to help his parents earn additional income. Nevertheless, he recorded that '[I] Spent all the time I had at my book', underlining his devotion to learning. In 1794 his parents sent him to a newly opened Sunday school, and he spotlighted his progress: 'I sone became the first boy in the School'. His enthusiasm for learning continued into his teenage years. At the age of sixteen, his literacy skill was enhanced by the instruction of his master. 'I made a Considerable progress in reading for although I had heedlessly neglected learning yet I had not lost my taste for it nor forgot the importance of it'. His attempts at learning seemed to pay off, as he was meteorically promoted to Corporal a month after joining the militia in March 1803. The young man was 'very proud' of himself and 'thought myself somebody'. However, his self-esteem was deeply shaken two months later, when he eagerly told his brothers the news but they 'paid but little attention to it'. There is no surviving record of how the literate Joseph assessed the masculinity of other illiterate men from his social rank. Yet, given that outstanding literacy skill was rare among the poor and Joseph valorised it throughout his childhood, his brothers' neglect of Joseph's achievement in the army would have hurt his pride. Indeed, 'this struck a damp on my spirits', he lamented.[17] Perhaps intellect, and with it a chance to attain upward mobility, was crucial for some poor men, no less than the bulk of their day-to-day purse.

Education was of greater importance among the upper and middling ranks, however. Their school practices marked out their progeny from those of the labouring classes. Elite men were notably apt at distinguishing themselves from their lesser countrymen by emphasising their schooling. Lord Holland's famous reflection on his childhood points us to the role of appropriate schooling in creating a boy's social identity: 'My education resembled that of most young men of my rank […] I went through Eton and Oxford'.[18] As far as knowledge was concerned, the landed-gentry and upper-

16 Patricia Crawford, *Parenting of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), 135-39.

17 Ann Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton (1783-1839)* (Cambridge, 1986), 1-2, 8, 24-25.

18 Quoted in Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London, 1992), 169. For a classic account on the gentry and their education, see G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1963), esp. 131-33. For recent research on the topic, consult French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, chs. 1-2.

middling-rank boys' masculinity was measured by their writing skills and knowledge of classics. On the other hand, boys from the middling-middling-sort families were controlled by their parents to absorb commercial and professional education. However, education was a major element in fashioning these sons' masculinity.

Let us consider firstly the issue of penmanship. Literacy was a prerequisite for establishing oneself in a society based on social networks which in turn led to upward social mobility.[19] To ensure that their sons would enter adult society and get on in life when they eventually had their own families, parents used letter-writing to gauge, guide and monitor their boys' learning progress. In addition, literacy was culturally gendered. As Susan Whyman has remarked, apology for poor calligraphy and orthography loomed large in female letters, yet it was acceptable.[20] By contrast, brilliant penmanship was an indispensable quality for becoming a man, and among the landed gentry it was even a sign of a perfect gentleman. '[N]o man is allowed to spell ill', Lord Chesterfield put it precisely.[21] Similarly, in 1722, the small landowner John Buxton (1685-1731) from Norfolk praised his eldest son Robert (1710-1751), noting that 'I take notice that your writing is improved since this last letter which I am very glad to see, for I think it becomes one that is well educated, among other accomplishments, to be able to do that also like a gentleman'.[22] For the upwardly aspiring middling sort, accomplished penmanship generated status, dignity and respect.[23] Therefore, some parents made an effort to ensure that their sons internalised the skill, sometimes using a severe method or even a punishment. In 1722, Claver Morris (1659-1726), a physician living in Wells, was vexed at his thirteen-year-old boy, Willie, who had difficulties 'in Holding his Pen'. Once the boy 'committing the same again[,] I struck him a Slap on the Hinder part of his Head with the Palm of my Hand'. 'But that did not make him mend it', this father was disappointed.[24] In 1802, the Presbyterian cotton trader Joseph Strutt (1765-1844) from Derbyshire asked his son Joseph Douglas to pen a line to his mother. 'He began to write to you', Joseph told his wife, 'but did so ill I wd not send it as punishment to him, & he feels it'.[25] Mothers also monitored their sons' progress in penmanship. Recall, for example, a mother called Elizabeth Peach blaming her childish son on account of his ill

19 Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford, 2009), 14, 33.
20 *Ibid*., 42-44.
21 David Robert (ed.), *Lord Chesterfield's Letters* (Oxford, 2008), 246.
22 Alan Mackley (ed.), *John Buxton Norfolk Gentleman and Architect: Letters to His Son, 1719-1729* (King's Lynn, 2005), 42.
23 Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 27.
24 Edmund Hobhouse (ed.), *The Diary of A West Country Physician, A.D. 1684-1726* (Rochester, 1934), 91.
25 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/49 (16 Jul. 1802), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Strutt, Blackpool.

letter-writing at the beginning of this chapter. All of this testifies that parents, fathers and mothers alike, conceived penmanship as an important sign of a boy's attentiveness and ability to learn. They did not hesitate to criticise their sons when they failed to realise and absorb this manly attribute.

It is noteworthy that these boys' letters do not survive. Consequently, we cannot know exactly what fathers and mothers agreed or disagreed on their sons' writings, and whether parental approval or disapproval of their sons' penmanship was a gendered difference between fathers and mothers. While Claver Morris was obviously dissatisfied with his son's bad handwriting, Elizabeth Peach was displeased with the immature style and childish contents of her son's letter. However, John Buxton and Joseph Strutt left us only with very vague signs of the reasons of their judgements on their boys' writings. It is, therefore, too incautious to conclude that fathers prioritised calligraphy, while mothers gave more weight to style and contents. We lack sufficient evidence to draw any plausible conclusions yet. Further research on gender difference of the parents' attitudes towards their sons' writings is hence needed.

Among middling-sort families, literacy was closely associated with professional life, corporate loyalty, and a masculine sense of familial responsibility. Parents used familial letter-writing to implant these values into their sons. Fathers usually passed on their professional skills to their boys, preparing them for taking up the family business. In 1728 John Collier (1685-1760), a town-clerk from Hastings, instructed his eight-year-old Jacky 'not [to] write Your hand bigger than the letters I have now wrote in this [letter]'.[26] There is no evidence to confirm that the father intended to have his son inherit his profession as a town-clerk. (The boy actually died four years later at the age of twelve.) Yet, John's instruction to his son to mind his alphabet size is revealing. Just as to have good command in the art of calligraphy was indispensable for secretarial services, so the father's advice possibly suggests that writing was the basis of a career by which he wanted his boy to earn his living. Perhaps by equipping the boy with this gentlemanly attributes, John dreamed of seeing his offspring one day climb up the social ladder, as we have seen that good handwriting was a prerequisite for entering and functioning in polite society. Whatever it was, the fatherly advice marked out the important position of writing ability in the boy's future life, that the young man had to imbibe this particular skill at this early age.

In a merchant family where sons were obviously expected to take their appointed

26 ESRO, SAY 1520 (15 Mar. 1728), John Collier, Hastings, to Jacky Collier, Battle.

places in the family enterprise, the motive behind fatherly advice was tellingly laid bare. Witness a letter of the flax merchant, Thomas Langton (1724-1794), from Kirkham, Lancashire. In 1772 Thomas wrote to his boys Jack (aged 16) and Will (aged 14) who were then educated in Liverpool:

> You must be very sensible I am at great expense in giving you so liberal an education, but I hope your improvements will be adequate thereto, and then I shall think my money well laid out. [...] I have always particularly recommended to you to endeavour to improve in your writing, which is a great advantage to a person in trade, and may be of future service to you. Let me therefore remind you of it and do not scribble and write ill when you write your exercises.[27]

Clearly, the prosperity of the family business formed the *raison d'être* of the boys' education. Thus, when parents instructed their boys to write well, they were not only guiding them to cross the boundary of boyhood, but also instilling in them the sense of corporate and familial responsibilities, in being the head of a household. In addition, as we saw in the previous chapter, Thomas Langton joined a throng of fathers who used their sons' school performance to advance their own reputations.[28] In the eighteenth century merchant trading was an honourable and lucrative way of life. In smaller towns, like Kirkham, tradesmen dominated local civic government.[29] In fact, the Langton family served through four generations in the town's public life; Thomas himself was bailiff seven times.[30] Thus, it is fair to imagine that when instructing the boys' penmanship, Thomas aimed to get them well-prepared for Kirkham public service in the future which would certainly enhance the family's business reputation.[31] Indeed, these two boys also became bailiffs several times during their father's lifetime. The firm seemed to prosper until the early nineteenth century when the business was ruined by the Napoleonic Wars and the two brothers emigrated to Canada.[32] Therefore, seeing their boys' good handwriting would have allowed middling-sort parents a moment of reassurance about family fortunes over the long term.

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27 Joan Wilkinson (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Langton, Flax Merchant of Kirkham, 1771-1788* (Manchester, 1994), 126.

28 See Chapter 3, pp. 121-22.

29 For a classic account of 'the century of merchants', consult R. G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971). For recent research on social and cultural status of textile merchants, see Matthew Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier: The Life of an Eighteenth-Century Protestant Capitalist* (New Haven and London, 2013), esp. chs. 4-5.

30 Wilkinson (ed.), *Letters of Thomas Langton*, 11.

31 Cf. Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 39-42, esp. 44. In analysing the Langtons' family letters, Whyman argues that Thomas Langton was 'not interested in writing for show. Nor did he wish to enter high society. Instead he demanded clear purposeful letters, which were crucial to success in business'. Here I differ from Whyman, pointing out the relationship between civic social prestige and private business prosperity.

32 Wilkinson (ed.), *Letters of Thomas Langton*, 5-15.

Admittedly, we cannot be certain of how far boys internalised literacy as part of their gendered identity, despite all these parental efforts. Matching a boy's solemn promise of writing improvement with his changing handwriting from the ages of 8 to 17, Susan Whyman seems to take such a vow as bare evidence for a boy's self-identification with the cultural value of penmanship, 'show[ing] the epistolary development of a typical schoolboy'.[33] Of course, one can easily contradict Whyman's assertion, for nobody can maintain their handwriting style which was acquired at the age of 6 and continue thus throughout the rest of their life. Epistolary development is always there, mostly in accordance with age and experience. On the contrary, Henry French and Mark Rothery are more cautious about the boy's solemn promise of writing improvement. They remind us that the echoes of any parental values in boys' letters did not necessarily mirror the young's internalisation of any appropriate manly attributes. It could be a cynical performance on the boy's part to soften up his parents' anger or to negotiate with them, a means to an end.[34] Yet a promise to improve one's own writing skills could not be meaningless, for parents closely monitored their sons' learning progress through their letters sent back home. Thus, I contend that to some degree, boys actually needed to internalise the value or show – at least – a sign of their commitment, attendance, and progress to avoid conflict with their parents. As we shall see below, parents would hesitate to bestow a reward on boys who failed to absorb the value of literacy, which was an expectation adults put on their offspring's shoulders.

To maintain smooth relationships with their parents, it was necessary for boys to orientate themselves with the virtues associated with their gendered identity. Thus, when things went wrong with their epistolary skills, apology and pledge loomed large in boys' letters back home, which sought reconciliation with their parents. Having just moved to St Bees school near Whitehaven in 1786, Humphrey Senhouse IV, the eldest son of a Cumbrian lesser landed family, begged pardon to his father, Humphrey Senhouse III (1731-1813), when he was blamed by him for 'the badness of my writing'. The little Humphrey certainly had an excuse: 'but I hope you will excuse me as I had bad pen'. He then promised his father to be industrious in his learning, particularly in his writing. 'Mr Thompson [...] teaches writing every day a[t] School I have gone to him for this week past. I will endeavour for the future to improve myself as much as lays in my power'.[35] As

33 Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 35.
34 French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 88-95, 124-33; *idem*, *Making Men: The Formation of Elite Male Identities in England, c. 1660-1900. A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke, 2012), 17-18.
35 CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/8/23 (12 Sep. 1786), Humphrey Senhouse IV, St Bees, to Humphrey Senhouse III, Netherhall.

we shall see later, surviving records of Humphrey IV suggest that he was very aware of his special position as the heir to his family's estates, and behaved himself appropriately. Thus, we can possibly take his promise as evidence for his self-internalisation of masculine writing attributes. Similarly, we have testimony from the Collier boys which reveals how much they valorised pen and paper, a skill indispensable for a future town clerk. On 19 December 1732, the promising and obedient boy, Jacky (1720-1732), wrote an apology to his father, almost certainly the final one in his life before he was killed by small pox a couple of days later: 'I hope you will pardon my false writing in my last Letter, and, to be sure I will take care for the Future not to write any false Concords, as (we was) or to spell any thing wrong'. On the same day the naughty Jemmy who was one year Jacky's junior, wrote to his father: 'I am very sorry that in my last Letter I made so many mistakes in my Spelling but Promise to be more carefull for the future'.[36] Perhaps he was advised, if not forced, by his elder brother to perform thus. Whatever it was, unlike Jacky, Jemmy had 'the future' to correct and improve his writing. He read at Clare College, Cambridge, and was a student at the Middle Temple. He became mayor of Hastings in 1745, two years before he died at the age of 26.

However, we can never be sure whether these boys' apologies were words of faithfulness or cynical performance. Nevertheless, it shows that subscription to literacy precepts ensured happy relationships between parents and sons. In 1725, John Buxton gave his dutiful heir, Robert, 'Two pair[s] of shoes', while he allowed his younger son George, who seemed less to mind his book, to have only 'one'. John sometimes felt reluctant to give his naughty son George presents, and these were usually not without condition. 'My present will be bestowed if it makes him industrious', the worried father noted.[37] Similarly, in 1732 the Hastings town-clerk John Collier presented his auspicious son Jacky with a 'Watch', although the boy had never before requested it. Since the younger, wayward Jemmy 'was displeas'd at it', the father forced himself to give Jemmy 'Satisfactory promises', and he confessed to his wife days later that 'I find noe promises well doe'.[38] Though these fathers gave rewards to their ill-behaved sons, they did it with the certain degree of hesitation and not without conditions attached, possibly meaning that they had more control over the boys' writings. Perhaps rewards were equally

36 ESRO, SAY 1605 (19 Dec. 1732), Jacky Collier, London, to John Collier, Hastings; ESRO, SAY 1606 (19 Dec. 1732), Jemmy Collier, London, to same.
37 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 64, 79.
38 ESRO, SAY 1601 (28 Nov. 1732), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings; ESRO, SAY 1603 (9 Dec. 1732), same to same. For fashionable meanings of watches, see John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 2007), 97-107.

presented to both docile and stubborn sons, for fathers wanted to avoid brotherly disputes in case one envied the other. However, we can conclude that to gain social and material recognition from parents, boys really had to understand and subscribe to the attributes which were important for their future roles.

In addition to penmanship, classical knowledge formed a core part in constructing a genteel boy's masculinity, a gendered trait exclusive to upper middling-sort and elite men. First, to social rank. As Linda Colley remarks, elite boys at public schools were nourished by a constant diet of heroic stories from antiquity whose protagonists were emphatically men of rank and title. 'As such, they reminded Britain's elite of its duty to serve and fight, but in addition, affirmed its superior qualifications to do both'.[39] Perhaps we need look no further than a comparison between a labouring boy and a genteel one to appreciate the social implication of learning classics. For the labouring poor, childhood was likely a period used for helping parents in the economy of the household, such as food production, or being sent occasionally to local employment and services in order to supplement the low or irregular income of parents. Childhood of the poor was not intended for reading Cicero, Plutarch, and the like. On the contrary, the Norfolk landowner John Buxton encouraged his son to learn Greek, noting in 1725 that '[l]et not the difficulty of the Greek discourage you, your pains will be well recompensed by the pleasure that charming language will give you when you have got a taste of it'. For the leisured class, a male child was beguiled into sacrificing juvenile pleasure for getting himself ready to conduct polite conversation with 'that part of [mankind] that have qualified themselves to talk of these matters'.[40]

Learning classics also had a gendered implication. It is true that upper-rank women sometimes learned Latin, depending entirely on their governess or private tutor.[41] Yet, as Michèle Cohen demonstrates, girls' education was aimed at 'the wide variety of subjects', militating against 'the possibility of their learning being considered deep and thorough'. That is, a girl's schooling was designed to construct female 'superficiality', ensuring that 'girls could never really match, let alone surpass, boys' mental depth'.[42] For

39 Colley, *Britons*, 170-71.

40 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 76. In explaining the benefit of studying classics in terms of polite conversation, Buxton surely orientated his son to Shaftesbury's mode of politeness. For Shaftesbury, gentlemanly politeness was the product of scholarly conversation among learned gentlemen. Consult, Brian Cowan, 'Reasonable Ecstasies: Shaftesbury and the Languages of Libertinism', *JBS*, 37 (1998), 118-19; Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness: Moral discourse and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1994).

41 Margaret Bryant, 'The Education of Girls and Women', in June Purvis (ed.), *Proceedings of the 1984 Annual Conference of the History of Education Society* (London, 1985), 17-18.

42 Cohen, '"A Little Learning"?', 329, 331. Proof of Cohen's argument is to be found in diaries and family letters of the period. Parents advised their daughters to consult their male siblings for Latin quotation

boys, learning Latin at public schools required a strict timetable (eight hours a day of intensive declensions and conjugations), self-commitment, self-discipline, industry, and diligence. All were admirable attributes which formed the very fundament of masculinity.[43] Thus, the subject was designed not only for entering polite company, but also – perhaps ever more so – for constructing an elite boy's ideal character. Without being trained in classics 'a gentleman makes a most wretched figure', John Buxton warned his son.[44] Indeed, keeping oneself away from the discipline of classical learning was believed to damage manliness. The English poet and essayist, Bonnell Thornton (1725-1768), commented sharply in 1756:

> While other lads are flogged into the five declensions, and at length lashed through a whole school, these pretty masters are kept at home to improve in whip-syllabubs, pastry, and face-painting. In consequence of which, when other young fellows begin to appear like men, these dainty creatures come into the world with all the accomplishments of a lady's woman.[45]

If 'effeminacy' was understood as an 'admission of the quality of a woman; softness; unmanly delicacy; [...] lasciviousness; loose pleasure', an upper-rank man without classical training was nothing but 'effeminate'.[46]

Classical knowledge had a specific meaning attached, for it was distinctive to the construction of gentlemanly masculinity. Whereas Latin kept a man masculine by exercising and strengthening his inner qualities, it was French which crowned his outward personality, for 'without which no *gentleman* had been considered accomplished'.[47] Consider, another example, the benefit of learning Persian, another language which became popular among the elite in the late eighteenth century. As the renowned Orientalist, Sir William Jones (1746-1794) argued, it was important for the British to study the 'languages of Asia', so that 'the limits of our knowledge will be no less extended than the bounds of our empire. [...] [T]hey are known to be useful, and will soon be found instructive and entertaining'.[48] Whereas French accomplished the gentlemanliness, Persian had connotations of usefulness and pleasure. But, it was Latin that was characteristically of great importance in constructing the inner masculine

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and translation. See, for example, Brigitte Mitchell and Hubert Penrose (eds.), *Letters from Bath 1766-1767 by the Rev. John Penrose* (Gloucester, 1983), 119: 'When any Latin intervenes, let Jacky be your Interpreter: when any hard English Word, *Johnson*'.

43 Cohen, 'Gender and "Method"; French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 44; Fletcher, *Growing Up*, 150-55.

44 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 36.

45 *The Connoisseur*, no. 65 (24 Apr. 1755), 388.

46 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1785), 'effeminacy'.

47 Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth-Century* (London, 1996), 83.

48 William Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language* (London, 1771), x. Persian remained the official language of the East India Company until the 1830s.

qualities of upper-rank boys. Small wonder, while a girl's developed femininity was measured by her self-crafted 'purses' and 'aprons' as gifts for her parents, her brother's masculinity was reflected in his own composition of a Latin letter, though often a laconic one.[49] Thus, the son's good command of Latin signified not only his brilliant intellect, but also a certain degree of how he mastered himself in the absence of parental control. Masculinity was therefore constructed by possessing – at least in a particular subject – appropriate training and knowledge.

To prove my argument, we now consider how a son's self-esteem could be severely affected by lack of sufficient knowledge, and how he overcame his humility when his head was filled up. My case study is the Dissenter Richard Kay (1716-1751) from Bury, Lancashire. He was the only living son of a physician and surgeon, Dr Robert Kay (1684-1750). Richard was unmarried, and lived and worked as a medical practitioner with his father and mother throughout his life. If a man earned his full manhood from marriage, independence, and intellectuality, Richard would have felt unsettled. He regularly kept diaries from April 1737 until March 1750, mostly about medical practices, but also about his inner thoughts, dreams and wishes. Reading one of his dream narratives is useful for testing my argument about the relationship between knowledge and masculine self-respect. This is not an arbitrary choice. As Phyllis Mack argues, dream images were such potent markers of an individual's inner character.[50]

Let us read his dream record. On 19 August 1737 Richard Kay, then aged 21, dreamt of his father's death. Amidst the dream he thinks, 'I must carry on my Father's Business'. He then imagines 'a Throng of Patients' coming in, and fancies 'myself often at Loss to know what Remedies to apply to Persons with Different Disorders'. Next comes 'a sharp threatening Letter' from a certain Miss Wood. Having lost his father in the dream, Richard now lives with his mother. He has a strong sense of responsibility, being 'the Head and Hope of the Family'. He takes up of all the family duties, but he fancies himself

49 For examples of girls' needlework as familial gifts, see ESRO, SAY 1649 (29 Jul. 1734), Cordelia Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings: 'Since I received yours have been so Busy in making new apron & handkerchief that I could not Spare time to write before.'; CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/4/17 (24 Mar. [1767]), Joanna Senhouse, London, to Humphrey Senhouse II, I am extreemly [*sic*] Glad You approved of the purse, I am afraid it is not of the most usefull Shape but I could not deny my self the pleasure of working one for my Dear Pappa'. For examples of boys' Latin writings, see Mitchell and Penrose (eds.), *Letters from Bath*, 79; SHL, MS 811/I/16 (12 Dec. 1821), George Lewin, London, to Thomas Lewin: 'Si Progressus meus Studiis ingenuis Moribusque urbanis tibi placeat multum gaudebo (If my progress in liberal education and civic manners would please you, I will be very happy [my translation]).

50 Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008), 222, 228. See also, A. Roger Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-Industrial Slumber in the British Isles', *AHR*, 106 (2001), 373.

'to be alone, weeping, bemoaning my Self in my present Condition, and lamenting my Father's Death'.[51]

Richard's dream has been analysed by historians. For Dorothy and Roy Porter, it was Richard's worries about 'the burdens of medical practice' that haunted him in his dream.[52] Karen Harvey has recently asserted that the young Richard worried about his ability to manage the household effectively. His dream shows that the identity of oeconomical manager seems to lie at the bottom of Richard's heart. In other words, Richard's anxiety about being an efficient household manager was the cause of his dream.[53] However, in her fine study of American Revolutionary dreams as a process of self-fashioning, Mechal Sobel argues that in dreams, the dreamer's own image was *inter alia* the one whose traits were being rejected by the dreamer in real life.[54] As such, I contend that Richard's dream reveals the character he abhorred and struggled to overcome, that is, his loss of confidence caused by his lack of sufficient medical knowledge. This in turn made him feel worried about his ability to take on the responsibility of *both* household management *and* medical practices in the future.

Without slipping into anachronism, we need to ask whether Richard Kay suffered from a state of mind that he himself thought was dangerous. While reading his diary, I am struck by how often he prayed for a useful employment and self-improvement. For example, his entry for 30 April 1737 reads: 'This Day I have been employed in Husbandry. [...] yet 'tis an employment wherein I cannot be so usefully employed as I would and ought to be, and an employment that Persons can carry on that are of weaker capacities and of meaner extract and education than myself'. In November 1737, he wrote '[I] am not Determined within my Self what Vocation of Life to follow. Lord therefore in thine own due Time provide for me and determine me in an Affair of so great a Consequence'. On his 25th birthday, 20 March 1741, he recorded that 'I am this Day aged 25, I am now entering upon the World, and am now choosing my Business and Company in it'.[55] (The present progressive tense of the last example arguably suggests Richard's unsettled life.) His repetition of his desire for prosperity hints at what Ramona Wray coins 'patterns of personal significance', which can be seen as a window on the mind of

51 W. Brockbank and Rev. F. Kenworthy (eds.), *The Diary of Richard Kay, 1716-51 of Baldingstone, near Bury: A Lancashire Doctor* (Manchester, 1968), 11-12.
52 Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patient's Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1989), 117.
53 Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012), 67-69.
54 Mechal Sobel, *Teach Me Dreams: The Search for Self in the Revolutionary Era* (Princeton, 2000), 3-54.
55 Brockbank and Kenworthy (eds.), *Diary of Richard Kay*, 8, 16, 41.

an individual. As Julia Kristeva shrewdly noted, 'the speech of the depressed [is] repetitive and monotonous. […] A repetitive rhythm […] dominate[s] the broken logical sequences, changing them into recurring, obsessive litanies'.[56] As such, this very repetition alongside Richard's diary was likely a testimony of his depression. He suffered from what he saw dangerous, that is, lack of self-advancement.

Arguably, there were three main factors in Richard's life which damaged his self-esteem. These were his lack of appropriate medical training, his father's difficult character, and his religious outlook (Unitarianism). First, to worldly aspects. Richard Kay's lack of confidence heavily depended on his want of a university degree. Having left school at Christmas 1730, he and his friend Mr. Ashworth planned to continue their studies at the University of Glasgow. Yet only Ashworth could pursue his dream. 'I believe was Desirous I shou'd do so too', Richard recounted, 'but Father I believe designed me for a more private Station of Life, and thought he had given me what School Learning was sufficient'. In September 1737, Ashworth returned home with a university degree. Having met his old friend and compared himself with him, Richard reflected on his own humble life, lamenting that 'for my Part [...] it occasions something of an Uneasiness in my Thoughts, when I consider him as one but standing upon a Level with my Self, and now so far outstripping and excelling me thro' his Education in many amiable and desirable Accommodations and Recommendations'.[57] Obviously, Richard felt diffident and inferior when he met Ashworth, for want of education could make a man less than his fellows.

In addition, Richard Kay's humility was compounded by the changing context of the medical profession. As Penelope Corfield observed, by the mid eighteenth century the status of physicians rose notably. They took confidence on the grounds that their subject was being systematised, communicated, and expertly tested. Yet this prestige may have been a double-edged sword. A patient's expectations were likely to provoke a doctor's anxiety, especially if he lacked appropriate scientific know-how.[58] It was not for nothing, when, in 1757, Robert Campbell advised young physicians to obtain 'a Doctor's Degree', for 'their Approbation is necessary to an Increase of Patients, and to establish the young Physician's Reputation'.[59] As such, being deprived of systematic training, Richard Kay

56 Ramona Wray, 'Autobiography', in Laura Lunger Knoppers (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing* (Cambridge, 2009), 197; Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (New York, 1989), 33.
57 Brockbank and Kenworthy (eds.), *Diary of Richard Kay*, 14.
58 Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London, 1995), 137-39, 141-45.
59 Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (London, 1757), 46-47.

could not feel secure with his medical practice, let alone the entire responsibility of his family business in the future.

Without proper education, Richard turned to his father for improvement. '[Y]et through the Difficulty that many Times attends it he gives me but little encouragement to fix my Self to it', Richard noted.[60] The diarist did not tell us what the reasons were for his father's negligence. Nor did he write about his feelings, when he did not receive fatherly advice. Perhaps he did not want to discredit his patriarch should anyone read his diary. Whatever it was, for proof of his want of knowledge, we need look no further than the repetitive form in his diary, such as this: 'Lord give me a Genius for the Study of Medicine'.[61] It was then this unconstructive father-child relationship that also formed a crucial basis for Richard's lack of confidence in the changing context of the medical profession.

Finally, Richard Kay's depression is likely to have been partly caused by his Unitarianism, believing firmly that Jesus was a mere human being, and humans are perfectible. The Unitarians renounced the theological basis of Puritan self-denial, and laid out a new enlightened theology in which 'people could more easily justify an expansive material life'.[62] Unitarianism was therefore a new religious outlook that was consonant with the level of an individual's progress and prosperity. In this context, diary-keeping or 'addictive technology of the self' ceased to be a cause of 'self-loathing, melancholy, and debilitating despair', as it was the case among the Puritans of the earlier century.[63] Instead, an individual's self-scrutinising regularly revealed to himself his own shortcomings in terms of human imperfection.[64] As Clifford Geertz famously argued, a person's ethos and their world view confront and confirm each other; when one changes, the other always changes with it.[65] Thus, upon entering his daily closet as a Unitarian, Richard Kay would have deeply sensed his spiritual shortcomings whilst he simultaneously realised his intellectual imperfection.[66]

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60 Brockbank and Kenworthy (eds.), *Diary of Richard Kay*, 16-17.
61 *Ibid.*, 22.
62 Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier*, 156-63, quoted from p. 158.
63 For the term 'an addictive technology of the self', see Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier*, 81. On providentialism and self-loathing, consult Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), 17.
64 For a superb analysis of how a new religious outlook, such as Unitarianism, affected an individual both spiritually and worldly, read Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier*, esp. chs. 6-7 and *passim*.
65 Clifford Geertz, 'Religion As a Cultural System', in his, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, 1973), 89-90.
66 My analysis of Richard Kay as a melancholic, unsettled man for lack of appropriate professional knowledge enormously differs from Karen Harvey's interpretation. She suggests that 'Kay must have taken some *relief* in taking himself off to his “closet”' (my emphasis). See her, *Little Republic*, 161.

However, the man's humility was cured by education. In 1744 Richard Kay decided to train as a doctor at Guy's Hospital in London. He eventually stopped praying for improvement. The final records of such a prayer are dated 7 March 1744 (the day of his first hospital attendance) and 28 August 1744: 'Lord, I have here been sent for Improvement, may I be well improved, and may my Life be long spared to be useful'. Afterwards, Richard never mentioned such a prayer again. His diary entry on his 33rd birthday was simply short, and without additional prayer for useful employment: 'I am this Day aged 33 Years of Age. Lord, Preserve, direct and prosper me'.[67] This dramatic change in the nature of his prayer substantiates my claim that knowledge (or an appropriate professional education in Richard's case) played an important role in constructing masculine self-esteem.

* * * *

Fashioning the promising, future patriarch was never reduced to intellect alone. As we saw in the previous chapters, the patriarch also sustained his social status by performing the role of 'benevolent provider'. As such, I argue that to gain parental recognition, sons needed to show the signs of a promising, future patriarch centred on their ability to take care of their own purse and profession, as well as those of their natal families. As we shall see, parents lamented and – often – quarrelled with their sons when they failed to conform to this index for measuring filial masculinity.

Among upper- and middling ranks, the inculcation of thrift and frugality was crucial in parenting male offspring. One might argue that noblemen may have been detached from these virtues, for they had no lack of income. Yet, frugality was no enemy to noblemen. *The Way to be Wise and Wealthy* (1716) instructed 'Junior Gentlemen' that 'the more a Man hath, the more should be his Care and Vigilance, and proportionable to his Spendings must be his Management. A great Estate will have great Goings-out, and will require an equal Degree of *frugal Contrivance* to act to Advantage'.[68] The author justified his advice by giving the young a succinct snapshot of what the future patriarch would encounter. In 1749, Lord Chesterfield also warned his illegitimate son of wasteful shopping. To ensure that the boy's purse was not at a low ebb, he lectured: 'Keep an account, in a book, of all that you receive, and of all that you pay; for no man who knows

67 Brockbank and Kenworthy (eds.), *Diary of Richard Kay*, 80, 88, 139.
68 [Mr. J. S.], *The Way to be Wise and Wealthy: or the Excellency of Industry and Frugality* (Exon, 1716), 46-47.

what he receives and what he pays, ever runs out', though expenses on '*minutiae*', such as 'chair-hire, operas, etc.', may be omitted from account books for the sake of time and ink.[69] Likewise, Susan Whyman finds that in some successful entrepreneurial families, like the Unitarian Strutts of Belpher, parents still brought up their children 'with extreme frugality',[70] although this may not be a great surprise, given that the Dissenter was normally cautious of committing sins of luxury. However, economy seemed to be important in fashioning the young, even among affluent folk.

Indeed, historians have documented the role of accounting in creating and maintaining the patriarchal paradigm. While some argue for a practice of 'female domestic management within a framework of male superintendence and surveillance' in the context of marital relationships,[71] others point out that in parent-child relationships, accounting was aimed at training the young in the masculine virtues of honesty, truth, self-control, thrift and industry.[72] Nevertheless, when we consider the discourse uttered by sons themselves, we will gain a different impression.

To gain parental recognition, sons were apt to highlight frugality and self-sacrifice to articulate their concern for their family's welfare, either at the present or in the future, rather than to reiterate what masculine traits they had developed. In 1750 Humphrey Senhouse III (1731-1813), the heir to a lesser-landed family in Cumberland, became a student at Cambridge. Having grown up in a genteel lifestyle at Netherhall country house near Carlisle, the young man was disheartened by the miserable floor, poor furniture and bad tea of his accommodation. In order to cope with the situation, he asked his father to increase his annual allowance from £80 to £100. However, he did not fail to emphasise that 'if this be thought too great an encroachment upon my younger Brother & Sisters, my Regard for them shall outweigh any other Consideration'.[73] (We do not know his father's decision due to the paucity of surviving records.) Here, a son's sense of responsibility as

69 Roberts (ed.), *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, 132-33.

70 Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 101.

71 Amanda Vickery, 'His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England', in Ruth Harris *et al.* (eds.), *The Art of Survival: Gender and History in Europe, 1450-2000: Essays in Honour of Olwen Hufton, P&P*, Supplement 1 (2006), 23-24; Harvey, *Little Republic*, 81-98; David Hussey, 'Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats? Male Consumer Activity and Domestic Shopping in Late-Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century England', in *idem* and Margaret Ponsonby (eds.), *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Aldershot, 2008), 47-69. For an example of an unmarried man's (Rev. James Woodforde's) accounting praxis, see Margot Finn, 'Men's Things: Masculine Possession in the Consumer Revolution', *SH*, 25 (2000), 133-55.

72 French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 61-62; Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 58-62.

73 CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/4/1 (11 Jan. 1750), Humphrey Senhouse III, Cambridge, to Humphrey Senhouse II. For the refurbishment of his room, see CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/4/1 (11 Jan.1750), same to same. For purchase of hyson tea, a Chinese green tea of superior quality, see CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/4/9 (15 Feb. [1750]), same to same.

the eldest brother was emphatically laid bare. For him, his siblings' welfare deserved priority. Yet one might argue that we can never be sure whether this was a cynical or true-hearted performance. Nevertheless, we can fairly say that Humphrey realised his significant position in the family, and conducted himself accordingly. His father would have certainly been charmed by Humphrey's readiness for self-sacrifice, a virtuous quality of the would-be patriarch to govern the welfare of his subordinates.

The son's sense of responsibility was often tested when it came to the matter of family business. Humphrey's sense of being an heir to his landed family was more discernible after his father planned to improve a small harbour at Ellenfoot in the early 1750s, and developed it into a new town and later renamed it Maryport, for coal trade. In 1752, the 21-year-old Humphrey showed a clear sign of his maturity and strong will to take up his future role, informing his 'Dear Papa' that '[f]or the last Time I salute You with the childish Title'. 'My Notions have some Way overgrown the Name. I think it rather too puerile for one upon the Verge of twenty one'. His action was meaningful. As the next part of the letter reveals, Humphrey applauded his father's progress in developing the business at Ellenfoot, highlighted his wish to contribute his part towards the enterprise, and reminded him that '[i]f my Presence in Cumberland be necessary, I shal wait upon You with Pleasure immediately after taking my Bachelors Degree'. Humphrey considered his dutiful presence in Cumberland as 'Honour', 'Justice' and 'Self-Interest'.[74] As Linda Colley observes, the landed establishments experienced a major demographic crisis in the eighteenth century, for they failed to produce male heirs. Consequently, they were worried about their estates passing to other landowners.[75] Thus, Humphrey's expression – be it calculated or honest – would have had a profound effect on how his parents judged his filial responsibility.

Indeed, Humphrey passed the test, though we have no surviving record from his parents' side. Despite his other two living brothers, he inherited the family estates and coal enterprise after his father's death. Perhaps this was not unexpected, for primogeniture was applied to the landed families. Yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, the estate could be passed to other male 'spares' should the designated son prove to be a profligate son.[76] The reason for Humphrey passing the test may be the fact that his behaviour conformed to his expression. As I noted earlier, he was materially accustomed

74 CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/4/9 (14 Oct. 1752), Humphrey Senhouse III, Cambridge, to Humphrey Senhouse II.
75 Colley, *Britons*, 158-59.
76 See Chapter 5, pp. 176-80.

to a decent lifestyle. However, after his father's enterprise at Ellenfoot, Humphrey reduced his luxurious way of living. Moving to Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, he was 'obliged to buy some furniture for my room'. Yet, this time he did not present his father with a long list of expenses as he had done before. 'I shall buy no more than is absolutely necessary', he relieved his patriarch, 'and such only as is plain and strong, that I may avoid both present and future expence as much as possible'.[77] Additionally, the surviving evidence does not show any sign of a quarrelsome parent-child relationship, as was often the case in other families. It is impossible to claim that their relationship was *always* peaceful. Yet if it was agreeable for the most part of Humphrey's childhood, we may fairly assume that this was because of his correct performance. If the records were destroyed, however, it was perhaps to save Humphrey's reputation. Even so, it suggests that the image of ideal filial masculinity was represented at best by appearing as a self-sacrificing, economical, responsible and dutiful son who was growing into his role as the future patriarch.

To test my argument, we will now consider three sons, from different social ranks, whose failure to realise the role of future patriarch roused parental anger. Historians have long identified the profligate son with a 'stock character' or a symbol of the failure of parents to instil masculine virtues in their sons. It was customary for some fathers, as Nicola Phillips has shown, to have their sons imprisoned to protect the fathers' social and economic status as well as to safeguard 'the ideology of the justice of English law which operated for the good of all society and from which no man was exempt'.[78] This seems to be the case when one relies on court testimony and life-writings published by grievously hurt fathers who sought to regain their own reputation. Yet, the family correspondence studied here points to a different angle. Parents blamed their difficult sons on the grounds that the young ignored or downplayed the family's fortunes for the sake of their own selfish purpose. The sense of family responsibility was a quality parents expected in the future patriarch.

Let us begin with a family at the top of the society, where the burden was put more on the heir's shoulders due to the demographic crisis. In 1740, the Yorkshire landowner and coal-mining entrepreneur William Spencer (d. 1756) sent his eldest son John (1718-1775) to be trained in law at the Middle Temple in London. The young man

77 CRO/Carl, D SEN 5/5/1/4/10 (23 Nov. [1753-1758]), Humphrey Senhouse III, Cambridge, to Humphrey Senhouse II.

78 Hunt, *Middling Sort*, 49, 72; Phillips, 'Parenting the Profligate Son', 99, 102; Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, ch. 5.

was anything but economical, begging for an increased allowance from £100 to £120 per annum, mainly for dress consumption. In justifying his spending habit, John's writing testifies that family conflict occurred when the son downplayed a certain quality suitable for his future role as the patriarch:

> I do not pretend to have seen so much of the World, or to be so great a Master of Oeconomy as Yourself, but am sorry that You think I have profuse in any Thing, more particularly so in my Dress. To me a Coxcomb Is as detestable as a Sloven, [...] But wn one is at Rome, You know they must do, as they do at Rome.[79]

For the father, it was the principles of 'a Master of Oeconomy' which his son ought to imbibe. Years later, William still complained that 'I think You are not a good Oconomist in some respects wherein You might save money & that reputably – I often wish You had kept a diary & an Exact Acct of yr Exp[ence] (as I do)'.[80] Yet, the son seemed to prefer orientating himself around the values approved by his peers in fashioning his own personal identity. As such, he played down, if not ignored, the quality that his father intended to inculcate in him, which in turn grieved his father. Indeed, his father lamented that 'if Your Improvement and Conduct in the World should not answer my Expectation, You may be Assured it woud Affect me more, and give me more sorrow than a Miscarriage of that kind from my Other Children'.[81] More expectation may have been placed on John's shoulders, perhaps because he was the eldest son, whose frugality or extravagance would most affect the family's fortunes, especially when he was expected to continue the family's coal-mining business. Nevertheless, William's potential disappointment engendered by his eldest son's 'Miscarriage' may have been emphasised to soften up the tone of his instruction or to disguise his dislike of losing money. Whatever it was, to be a perfect son, 'a Master of oeconomy' for the sake of family responsibility was apparently indispensable.

Down the social scale among the middling sort, it was also important for the son to cloak himself in these parental values to safeguard the family's credit and respect. One might argue that this was not unexpected, for trade and commerce were at the heart of many middling-sort families. Yet, witness one family who did not participate in the market. In 1792, the genteel woman, Elizabeth Peach, became uncomfortable with her profligate son, Edward Leathes. The young man apparently surrendered to the lure of fashion, frequenting Norwich assemblies, each time with a new coat. '[H]is wanting three Coats in a Year is the highest absurdity', Elizabeth complained. In fact, after the loss of

79 SA, SpSt/60527/19 (20 Dec. 1740), John Spencer, London, to William Spencer, Barnesley.
80 SA, SpSt/60527/39 (n.d. [1743]), William Spencer to John Spencer.
81 SA, SpSt/60527/20 (24 Dec. 1740), William Spencer, Barnesley, to John Spencer.

her first husband in 1788, Elizabeth was remarried to an attorney in Kent. Yet, it seemed that her financial status was at a low ebb. In such a situation, Edward was expected to have more concern for his family. Elizabeth started to instruct her son to be 'prudent & economical' and to 'remember that nothing can keep up the respect of a family but keeping out of Debt'.[82] Given that Edward soon became head of the family in the place of his deceased father, his mother's instruction on financial management was crucial for him. His gender identity was now based not simply on outer garments, but on the ability to keep his family's heads above water. However, it seems to be the case that Edward failed to defend his masculine status. He contracted huge debts and brought his mother 'to a State of Poverty & Distress', with debts amounting to £250.[83] Contrary to what historians have claimed, we see here that in a parent's eyes, a profligate son was not as much inimical to the Commonwealth as to his own family, as being a selfish and ungrateful son.

Among the labouring poor, sons were also expected to show signs of family responsibility by performing well in their occupations, supporting themselves and assisting their natal families, though the code of 'oeconomy' may not have strictly applied to them. Yet, surviving evidence does not reveal any serious family disputes in which the son did not conform to parental expectation. Perhaps these sons were not expected to support their families financially to the same degree as those among the upper and middle ranks, simply because the lives of the poor were usually based on living from hand to mouth, and as such to survive the daily life was difficult enough for the son himself. However, evidence shows that failure in this kind of filial duty would cause parental dissatisfaction. In the late eighteenth century, George Newton (1761-1825), a Methodist Sheffield ironmonger, recounted his childhood in Durham. In the 1770s, his eldest brother 'had been brought up in the business of my father and had followed it under his care, though not indentured as an apprentice'. In 1779, George's brother became 'unsteady and tried of his employment', and suddenly 'clandestinely absconded' to become a seaman on a 'Sunderland coal ship, for three years'. This happened 'to the great grief of my father', George remarked.[84] The father felt grievously hurt, surely because his son's hasty flight from home meant both that his patriarchal power had been ignored and that the family would lose potential labour for a long period of time. For the boy, the escape may

82 NRO, BOL 2/13/6 (13 Oct. 1795), Elizabeth Peach, Cambridge, to Elizabeth Reading, Norwich.
83 NRO, BOL 2/13/5 (10 Oct. 1795), Elizabeth Peach, London, to Elizabeth Reading, Norwich.
84 SA, TR 446/4 Extracts from the Journal of George Newton, fol. 7.

have been a stepping stone to independence.[85] Yet in his father's eyes, his image as an irresponsible, errant son was not too hard to imagine.

Neglecting filial duty, especially for selfish purposes, was certainly not applauded by parents, no matter how prestigious the action might be. In March 1803, amidst the Napoleonic Wars, the Baptist poor boy Joseph Mayett from rural Quainton was 'struck' by the glare of military uniform and the lure of martial music. '[A]ll very clean I was much delighted to see them and to hear the musick. This was Co[n]genial with my Carnal nature and a great opening for Satan to draw me away from all thoughts'. Joseph, who then was a servant in husbandry, fled his job and joined the militia. Yet his parents disagreed with his decision:

> [M]y father told me that if one Shilling would buy me off he would not give it. This rather touched my feelings but I did not show it for I told him I did not desire it. My mother was much disturbed about it and asked me the reason many times why I went but I never told her.[86]

Although 'military manliness' experienced its heyday during the wars against France in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, joining the army was not always celebrated. As Linda Colley remarks, most of the inhabitants of rural areas, such as Joseph's Quainton in Buckinghamshire, reacted to the recruitment with marked suspicion. In fact, in such areas there was usually substantial agricultural work available to earn one's living, at least in summertime.[87] This may have been the reason why Joseph's parents never understood his decision to join the militia, for the spring fieldwork would apparently come in a couple of months. Joseph would certainly have been of benefit to his family as far as his labour was concerned. Thus, self-indulgence and pursuing one's dream might have been attractive to a young man. Yet, as a son, this was conducted at the cost of familial irresponsibility.

Indeed, the virtue of family responsibility was not denied by the young man. Joseph wrote his autobiography *after* joining the army, and his writing can be considered as a religious confession to seek reconciliation with God. Therefore, his account gives an impression that he afterwards disapproved of his own decision to go into the militia. Firstly, though he led us to think that he was seduced by military uniform and martial music, he eventually condemned his action as having been triggered by Satan. Walking out on one's own family was nothing but sin. Secondly, since his parents (especially his

85 For social, cultural, and economic meanings attached to the career of seamen both in juvenile and parental attitudes, see Denver Brunsman, 'Men of War: British Sailors and the Impressment Paradox', *JEMH*, 14 (2010), 9-44.

86 Kussmaul (ed.), *Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, 24.

87 Colley, *Britons*, 302, 307, 320-21.

father) disagreed with his decision, and this seemed to bother his mind throughout his military years. Joseph recorded one imaginary vision in 1806, revealing his state of mind and how he rued his decision three years ago:

> [I]n this state of distress [...] I dreamed that I was not a Soldier but I had ran away from my father and was reduced to poverty and destress [*sic*]. In this State I resolved to go home to my father acknowledge my Crime and beg his pardon. [...] my father seeing me Came unto me and fetched me in and when I Came into the yard I Confessed my Crimes and beged his pardon. He said he freely forgave me and bid me not to mind it for I was Come home safe and that was all he Cared for.[88]

In her superb study of Methodist dreams, Phyllis Mack notes that '[i]t is likely that out of many disparate dreams, people recorded the ones that illuminated a religious principle or left an emotional residue, a palpable feeling of sweetness or contentment'.[89] In this sense, we may fairly argue that Joseph recorded the dream, for it validated his accepting his own mistake and it consoled him by affirming that he would be forgiven by his father now that he had come back home, and – we might add – now that he had resumed the role of the dutiful son.

As we have seen in these three case studies, parents instilled thrift, economy, and a sense of family responsibility in their sons. Yet, in a familial context, the aim of the inculcation was expressed in terms of preparing the son for his role as the future patriarch who took care of his natal family, rather than in terms of safeguarding society's peace and order as historians have claimed (though this was also prominent in other genres of historical sources). However, while upper- and middling-rank parents highlighted the code of 'oeconomy', pauper parents expected their sons to stay nearby to their families in order to help their family members in household economy. Even when naval and military services became popular among men across social ranks in the late eighteenth century, the home-leaving son for his selfish purposes was never applauded by his parents. Familial responsibility was then parents' major expectation that a dutiful son had to fulfil, and it formed the *raison d'être* of the inculcation of manly economical attributes into the boy.

* * * *

To achieve social advancement, the young needed not only knowledge and financial responsibility. The final part of this chapter explores the role of religion, morality,

88 Kussmaul (ed.), *Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, 40.
89 Mack, *Heart Religion*, 231.

disposition and manners in fashioning the 'future' patriarch. Parents were concerned that their sons' ill behaviour would affect the young men's social advancement in their subsequent lives.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, parents saw it as their prerogative to instill religion and morality in their sons and daughters.[90] Yet the purpose may not be the same. For my argument here, let us consider first the famous John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughter* (1774):

> There are many circumstances in your situation that peculiarly require the supports of religion to enable you to act in them with spirit and propriety. Your whole life is often a life of suffering. You cannot plunge into business, or dissipate yourselves in pleasure and riot, as men too often do, when under the pressure of misfortunes. You must bear your sorrows in silence, unknown and unpitied. You must often put on a face of serenity and chearfulness, when your hearts are torn with anguish, or sinking in despair. Then your only resource is in the consolations of religion.[91]

For women, religion was a sanctuary for self-consolation. It did not empower them to fight against any suffering circumstances. On the contrary, male conduct books set a different tone about the role of religion in men's lives:

> [True Religion] obliges us to *encounter Hardships*, and *endure Temptations*; and not only to *rule our Spirit*, but moderate all our Appetites; [...] And who that considers these things aright, and looks into the sad Circumstances of our fallen State, but must needs own, That they are great Difficulties, till Use, and confirm'd Habits of Virtue and Godliness have made 'em otherwise?[92]

Religion was believed to empower men to overcome all sorts of difficulties in life. Admittedly, it is unclear how religion could help men 'encounter Hardships'. Yet, such advice was surely not for nothing, for men were expected to be the head of the family whose shoulders were to be loaded with burdens and hardships.

In addition to piety, parents were concerned with their son's disposition. When boys were away at school, they were expected to be obedient and not to commit any sins. Self-control of personal manners was usually a sign of a polite gentleman. In 1719, John Buxton told his heir to 'remember that a good disposition is of greater value than the twenty thousand pound', after having examined the lottery papers and not found any of his tickets drawn.[93] Similarly, in 1733, six months after the death of the dear Jacky, John Collier was distressed when he realised that Jemmy, his by now only one living son, had ill manners: 'I cannot bring him Of from his Ratling Way That makes me something at sometimes displeas'd With him'. Although John did not elaborate here on what he exactly

90 See Chapter 3, pp. 118-27.
91 John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughter* (London, 1774), 10-11.
92 Anon., *A New-Year's Gift: or, A Letter from A Father to his Son* (London, 1715), 10-11.
93 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 34-35.

meant by the term 'Ratling Way', we might understand its meaning by looking at a former letter in which John warned his boys of vices: '[Y]ou must both keep from any dangerous places or plays and never drink any thing of Strong liquor'.[94]

In addition to correct disposition, boys were expected to have agreeable temper. Although it was part of self-control which was advertised as a core concept of masculinity throughout the early modern period,[95] temperance became more important in fashioning sons' masculinity after the outbreak of the French Revolution, when all kinds of liberties were questioned. In February 1792, John Rice, a brandy merchant from London, wrote a letter to his father Morgan, expressing his concern about his son Charles' temper: 'I must say he is of a temper that requires much exertion of authority to regulate, & he is of a disposition very difficult to please'. He certainly had good reason for his concern: '[B]ut there is also a pertness, a petulance, & impetuosity in his temper that I cannot but fear will bring him into Scrapes as well as lessen him in the regard of his friends'. '[I]f he is not subjected to control in his improper wishes, & checked when he is unmannerly', he concluded, 'he will be quite ruined'.[96] The cause of John's concern was nothing but a fear that his son would lose social recognition among his friends if he could not control his temper. Likewise, Elizabeth Reading expressed her concern about her son Edward's temper. In a letter to her mother in December 1793, Elizabeth conceded that 'the impetuosity of his temper is a source of great uneasiness to me & […], it will lead him into a thousand difficulties which he is not aware of'.[97] The context is significant in understanding Elizabeth's concern. This was written five years after the death of Edward's father who had been the rector of Reedham. This suggests that the boy's opportunity for social advancement was much obstructed by his father's untimely death. Therefore, Elizabeth had to make sure that everything was in order regarding their young son's behaviour. To climb up the social ladder, agreeable disposition was the utmost passport necessary for polite gentlemen. Thus, piety and correct disposition were instilled in the upper- and middling-rank boy in order to ensure the smooth paths for building his future social networks and social advancement.

Virtuous habits as a manly marker were not restricted to the upper ranks. They were also adopted by lower-rank sons, especially when they came to represent themselves

94 ESRO, SAY 1635 (20 Jun. 1733), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings; ESRO, SAY 1529 (4 Jun. 1729), same, Hastings, to Jacky Collier, Battle.

95 Elizabeth Foyster, 'Boys Will Be Boys? Manhood and Aggression, 1660-1800', in Michèle Cohen and Tim Hitchcock (eds.), *English Masculinities* (Harlow, 1999), 154, 159; Fletcher, *Growing Up*, 14.

96 Lambeth Archives Department (LAD), IV/170/15 (12 Feb. 1792), John Rice, London, to Morgan Rice, Tooting.

97 NRO, BOL 2/12/25 (20 Dec. 1793), Elizabeth Peach, Sundrich, to Elizabeth Reading, Norwich.

in their life-writings. Yet, for the poor, disposition seemed to be important in itself, as a sign of devout man. For example, the Quaker mariner John Secker (1716-1795) recalled his religious childhood at the beginning of his voyage narrative. 'I was brought up and educated in my youth whilst with them, and those sober and religious principles imbibed by example and inculcation were never wholly erac'd, though much *defaced* by travel and bad company'. John emphasised his moral self *passim* in his writing. Recounting how he engaged with the drinking culture at the Cape of Good Hope, 'we went to a wine house & got a bottle or two of wine amongst us, which made us full of spirits, though not drunk'.[98] As Philip Edwards observed, 'all voyage narratives are self-serving'. '[T]he record [was] being adjusted, massaged and manipulated'.[99] Given that the Friends asserted their denominational identity by rejecting all sorts of violence and drinking,[100] John was cautious about mentioning his own drinking habits, as if a powerful censor stood over his shoulders while he recounted the story. Needless to say, we can never be sure about the trustworthiness of such a narrative. If John Secker was really abstemious, he would appear as a black sheep on board, since seafaring life was notorious for its over-drinking culture.[101] His singularity may have rendered his life difficult among his seamen fellows. As Helen Berry demonstrates in her analysis of two late-Georgian men living in provincial towns, being distinct in conscience, creed or aesthetic choice 'produced hostility in a highly stratified society that continued to look unfavourably upon singularity'.[102] Thus, John Secker's masculinity may have been regarded with contempt by his peers. Yet it is apparent in his writing that he willingly represented himself as a morally strict, non-alcoholic man. It was the morality he had been inculcated during childhood to which he orientated when constructing his approved self-image.

To prove that religious and moral manners were instilled in sons on the grounds that they were important for performing the role of the future patriarch effectively, we need to consider adult men whose reputation was undermined by their misconduct, or,

98 Andrew Hopper (ed.), *The World of John Secker (1716-95), Quaker Mariner* (Croydon, 2011), 25, 74.
99 Philip Edwards, *The Story of the Voyage: Sea Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), 10, 188.
100 Erin Bell, 'The Early Quakers, the Peace Testimony and Masculinity in England, 1660-1720', *G&H*, 23 (2011), 289-91. For a fuller discussion of how Quakers used abstinence to create their gender identity, see Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* (Manchester, 2011), esp. chs. 3-4.
101 Brunsman, 'Men of War', 26-28, 36. For a detailed account of seafaring life and masculinity, consult Valerie Burton, '"Whoring, Drinking Sailors": Reflections on Masculinity from the Labour History of Nineteenth-Century British Shipping', in Margaret Walsh (ed.), *Working Out Gender: Perspectives from Labour History* (Aldershot, 1999), 84-101.
102 Helen Berry, 'Sense and Singularity: The Social Experiences of John Marsh and Thomas Stutterd in Late-Georgian England', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds.), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500*-1800 (Basingstoke, 2004), 194.

who even lost their jobs due to their lack of morality. Among the whole of my collection, the life of the poor Joseph Mayett offers the most promising example. Joseph recounted his childhood, that he grew up among ill-mannered peers and imbibed bad habits, particularly swearing, which caused him a series of difficulties. In 1795, 'my master would Sometimes give me a Stripe for Swearing and my mistress often Reproved me for it'. Joseph was occasionally condemned by women for his swearing habit: '[T]here was a young woman […] and she would often Reprove me and tell me I was the uglyest fellow for Swearing She ever Saw in her life'. Years later, his new mistress secretly hired him to spy on her husband. Once being caught by his ill-tempered master, 'I Swore if he touched me again I would beat his brains out which I believe I Should have done but he left me so'. Yet a day later the quarrel escalated, perhaps without his usual lack of tongue-in-check habits, and this time 'I lost my Jobb of going after him for my mistress never asked me to go any more nor never Spoke to me no more for Six weeks'.[103] Although going after his master was only an extra-job for him, his narrative suggests that he saw the cause of his difficulty in his own ill manners. If the upper and middle-rank parents were concerned that their sons' immorality would affect their social advancement, it was perhaps not for nothing when Joseph's 'mother observed a Change in my Conduct and reproved me for it'. He did not tell us the reason for his mother's concern. Yet, his ill-conduct included 'Card playing or drinking or some other vain amusement to Stifle Conviction'.[104] Surely, all were the straight route to ruining the future patriarch's purse and good name.

In addition to good habits, parents made sure that their sons developed independent personalities and physical toughness. Historians have provided many examples of this process, documenting how genteel parents weaned their boys from their parental dependence during their stays at schools.[105] Some mothers blamed their sons when they could not bear the toughness of the world outside home. In 1802, having received her son's letter complaining about hardship at school, Juliana Buxton, a genteel woman, wrote to him that he had to think 'less of coming home when you are at school'.[106] Parents would be satisfied with the young sons when they showed signs of toughening up. Perhaps this is a reason why a middling-sort mother, Mary Collier, from Hastings, wrote to congratulate her sons at Westminster school in 1732, saying that 'I am

103 Kussmaul (ed.), *Autobiography of Joseph Mayett*, 3, 5.
104 *Ibid*., 48.
105 For various examples, see Rothery and French (eds.), *Making Men*, 37-41.
106 Quoted in French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 68.

glad my Dear to hear you like London and hope I shall always hear a continuance of it'.[107] Thus, to see her sons enjoy London was for Mary a favourable sign that they did not miss the warmth of the domestic fireside, and thus would become promising schoolboys.

However, it was not always the case that parents raised quizzical eyebrows when their sons sometimes lamented the hardship of their circumstances. For parents, toughening their boys was, I suggest, crucial just during the period of male childhood. Once their gender identity was secured, it became irrelevant that parents would criticise their sons who yearned for maternal warmth and domestic comfort. Take for example the young Lord Wallingford, a military commander during the French Revolutionary Wars. In the letters sent from the military camp to his mother in Winchester, Lord Wallingford repeatedly emphasised that in the army he 'deplore[s] the loss I have sustained. [F]or seriously, replacing Bedding & Missing many little Comforts, that cannot be replaced, are together objects which affect the Domestic Arrangements of my tent & Pocket'. However, he did flatter himself that the loss of 'many little Comforts' would be compensated when he came back home: 'I am certain of finding a good fire, & warm Wine & Water when I come Home.'[108] Surviving records do not show any signs of his mother's criticism.[109] Surely, as his mother, she would have encouraged him or tried to boost his morale. However, as Robert Connell remarked, when an individual's gender is firmly marked out by his social practice and the institution to which he belongs, the individual may sometimes feel comfortable to express his 'feminine' characteristics.[110] Thus the absence of Lord Wallingford's mother's criticism might not be surprising, for he was a soldier whose masculine gender identity could not have been more secure.

It is to be noted that in discussing the process of toughening the boys, *all* of the examples here are confined only to upper- and middling-rank families. Indeed, these social groups have been the main object of historical study when historians have tried to understand the making of the independent boy. Therefore, we are left not knowing whether labouring poor parents were obsessed with breaking their sons' attachment to maternal and domestic bonds, especially when pauper boys and girls were usually sent

107 ESRO, SAY 1591 (n.d. [1732]), Mary Collier, Hastings, to Jacky Collier, London.

108 HRO, 1M44/110/114 (30 May 1794), William Knollys, Camp near Tournay, to Mary Knollys, Winchester; HRO, 1M44/88/7 (25 Mar. 1784), same, London, to same.

109 Instead, we have evidence that the countess Mary Knollys did provide her son materials, such as muff and flannel, to keep him warm and ease his life during the campaign against France. See, for example, HRO, 1M44/110/62 ([22] Nov. 1793), William Knollys to Mary Knollys, Winchester; HRO, 1M44/110/114 (30 May 1794), same to same.

110 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (1995; Cambridge, 2005), 106-12, esp. 109. Recently, William Stafford has also pointed out that 'gender security in some areas left room for gender play in others'. See his, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*', *History*, 93 (2008), 52.

for work at their early age. Unfortunately, my collection does not offer any evidence to gain an insight into the minds of poor parents, for they did not give us any clues relating to this issue. Perhaps this is because the life of the poor was already hard and tough enough, unlike the comfortable and genteel lifestyles among the gentry.[111] Thus, the boy from the labouring classes was accustomed and well-trained for hardship in his adult life. However, I am not suggesting that independence and physical toughness were not important in fashioning the poor boy's masculinity. Rather, the exact meaning of toughening in gendering the poor awaits further in-depth research.

* * * *

This chapter has explored social and cultural values which were important in constructing the son's masculinity. It seeks to understand the recurrent themes of manly attributes, as depicted in family archives, to gauge why parents thought it significant to inculcate certain values in their sons.

As I have shown, these manly qualities were knowledge, thrift, economy, religion, moral manners, self-sacrifice and family responsibility. I argue that the *raison d'être* of instilling these values in boys was to construct their sense of responsibility, which was suited to their role as the future patriarch. Sons also left us several signs showing that they internalised these values, or at least realised that these traits were a crucial factor to gain parental recognition and maintain peaceful relationships. It is also interesting to see that sons criticised their ill behaviour themselves, and as the case of Richard Kay has shown, a young man felt himself humble and unsettled, and lost his confidence and self-esteem, when he could not cloak the values which were important to his role as the future patriarch.

Although constructing the 'future' patriarch was significant for filial masculinity, there were differences between social ranks. The landed-gentry parents gave a due weight to their sons' polite character, emphasising the importance of classical knowledge, self-command and toughening personality. Among middling-sort families, the 'future' patriarchs were expected by their parents to show a sign of readiness for sustaining and prospering their families' finance and business. Therefore, sufficient education in commerce and profession as well as agreeable disposition suitable for building social

111 Indeed, around 1800 a genteel mother commented that '[t]his is rather a proof that too much tenderness at home is a bad thing as it makes school seem the more hard'. See French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, 68.

networks and facilitating social advancement stood at the foreground of the process of constructing the middling-sort 'future' patriarch. Lastly, the labouring poor parents seemed to give priority in seeing their sons' familial responsibility in the way that their boys were ready for seeking employment and earn their livings. It was the sense of familial responsibility and being a committed 'future' patriarch that parents wished to see in their male offspring.

Nevertheless, I am not suggesting that the virtues, listed above, were *the* only ones parents expected to see in their sons' masculinity. One might imagine other masculine qualities. For example, it may be possible to ask whether physical prowess, manly courage and sportmanship found their places in family correspondence, given that the eighteenth century experienced successive wars and 'military manliness' enjoyed its prestige during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While the collections studied in this chapter do not provide information to substantiate such speculation, other historians have pointed out the role of sport and physical prowess in perfecting the boy's masculinity among the landed gentry and upper-middling sort families.[112] Perhaps the best example I have is an entry in the diary of a genteel woman from Nottingham. In 1803, Abigail Gawthern recorded her son's shooting activity. On 1 September 1803 her seventeen-year-old son, Francis, 'Went a-shooting with Mr Nevill, killed nothing, saw but one bird'. The mother may have been disappointed in her son's performance. A month later she proudly noted – and perhaps was keen to commemorate – the boy's achievement, when she wrote that 'F[rancis] G[awthern] Went a-shooting and killed <u>his first</u> partridges'.[113] Her excitement was substantiated by her own underlining of the word 'first'.

Perhaps one might also add a heroic body to the endless list of masculine qualities highly esteemed during the period when military and navy services were celebrated. Yet this has been confirmed only by historical research based on representational sources, especially in literature and the arts.[114] We do not have evidence confirming the echo of this ideal in familial correspondence. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, when genteel parents came to advise their sons about health and body, they tended to stress the

112 See, for example, Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 343-48.

113 Adrian Henstock (ed.), *The Diary of Abigail Gawthern of Nottingham, 1751-1810* (Nottingham, 1980), 103.

114 Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art, 1750-1810* (New Haven and London, 2006); Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), ch. 4; Courtney Noble, 'Rescuing Difference: Ambiguous heroism in Benjamin West's *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*', *Immediations*, 1 (2004), 60-75.

principle of *mens sana in corpore sano*, which linked a healthy body with the source of a noble mind, rather than a source of sexual and gender identity.[115] Perhaps one need look no further than the famous pornography of the time for proof that *most* eighteenth-century men were not obsessed with their sixpacks to claim their masculinity. Witness Fanny Hill's following remark: '[H]e made me full sensible of the virtues of his firm texture of limbs, in his square shoulders, broad chest, compact hard muscles, in short a system of manliness, that might pass for no bad image of our antient sturdy barons, when they weilded the battle-ax, whose race is now so thoroughly refin'd and fritter'd away into the more delicate modern-built frame of our pap-nerv'd softlings who are as pale, as pretty, and almost as masculine as their sisters'.[116] Although Fanny praises the man's chiselled body, her comment suggests that his figure was a rare coin, an exception not the rule.[117]

Surely, one may use other traits to create a catalogue of masculine values important in fashioning the son's gender identity. Yet what parents expected in their male offspring were the attributes that transformed them into full responsible manhood, taking care of their families and ready to self-sacrifice, in sum, the perfect future patriarch.

115 See Chapter 3, p. 115.

116 Peter Sabor (ed.), *John Cleland's Fanny Hill: Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749; Oxford, 1985), 64.

117 Research conducted by economic historians reveals the short and small bodies of the people throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See, for example, John Komlos, 'Shrinking in a Growing Economy? The Mystery of Physical Stature during the Industrial Revolution', *JEH*, 58 (1998), 779-802; Joel Mokyr and Cormac O'Gráda, 'Height and Health in the United Kingdom, 1815-1860: Evidence from the East India Company Army', *EEH*, 33 (1996), 141-68.

Chapter Five
'[H]ad we not had you for our Pilot':
Brotherly Masculinity and Sibling Relationships

In winter 1785 Elizabeth Aglionby, a 41-year-old gentlewoman from Cumberland, embarked on a journey to Bristol, hoping that 'I shall find benefit from the journey & change of scene'. The particular reason for this excursion was the recent loss of one of her family members. Elizabeth poignantly expressed her wretched mind to her sister, Mary Yates:

> [T]ime is necessary to recover so severe a shock & so great on loss – no former affliction ever affected me as this has done, but the extreme anxiety & fatigue I underwent was beyond my strenth [sic], & has hurt me so much that I fear I shall not be well either in Mind or Body for a great while.[1]

At first glance, one might imagine that these lamenting lines were penned after Elizabeth experienced either parental, filial or spousal loss. None of these was the case. In fact, it was the death of her one surviving brother, Christopher Aglionby (1752-1785), that brought her to that state of 'extreme anxiety & fatigue'. Up until that moment Elizabeth had witnessed four deaths among her family members: both of her parents and her two elder brothers. Yet she confessed that 'no former affliction ever affected as this has done'. Christopher's demise grieved her 'so much', it diverted her strength as well as damaged her mind and body. In other words, this brotherly loss was for Elizabeth an experience in which her 'Mind or Body' was destroyed, and it took 'a great while' for her to revive.[2] Elizabeth's lamentation invites us to ruminate on the significance of siblings for an individual's life and happiness.

The relationship with a sibling had a profound impact on character and personality. This impact was also recognised by early modern contemporaries. Many proverbs of the time brought the importance of sibling relations to light. 'He has made a younger brother of him' suggests the influence of a close relationship between brothers in which the younger one overshadowed the elder one's character by using his formidable personality. For the landed families where primogeniture ruled the inheritance of family estates, old sayings did not fail to underline the effects of this inheriting principle upon the heir and the younger brothers: 'The younger brother hath the more wit', and 'The

1 CRO/Carl, D/Ay/6/14/1 (n.d. [1785]), Elizabeth Aglionby to Mary JO Yates, Carlisle.

2 Recently, sociologists have explored the emotional impact of sibling death on the remaining siblings; see Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn, *The Empty Room: Surviving the Loss of a Brother or Sister at Any Age* (New York, 2004).

younger brother is the ancienter Gentleman'.[3] These proverbs reveal the fact that among the landed families, primogeniture that deprived younger sons of inheriting the family estate could significantly shape the favourable characteristics in the younger brothers. They could not inherit family land and therefore were comparatively of low-income; they tended to struggle harder to build up their careers and fortunes by profiting from their own hard work. The industry in these younger brothers' character would possibly be an agreeable consequence.

Although modern sociologists have offered research on the significant impact of the sibling relationship on the individual's social life, personal emotion, self and identity,[4] it is surprising that in the historiography siblings have been little studied. Exceptions are very rare.[5] Yet, where sibling relationships are explored, historians have been interested chiefly in the sibling definition, mutual obligations, and the roles of siblings in defining the features of nuclear and extended families.[6] This demographic history apart, some historians have concentrated mainly on siblings of the landed families, analysing how primogeniture generated acute family dramas when younger brothers united themselves against the heir.[7] Yet other historians, notably Linda Pollock, have pointed out more positive, creative and co-operative aspects of fraternal relationships.[8]

More recent research has moved away from sibling rivalry and family contention to the exploration of siblings' roles in developing each other's personhood. In her

3 J. Ray, *A Compleat Collection of English Proverbs; Also the most celebrated Proverbs of the Scotch, Italian, French, Spainsh, And other Languages* (London, 4th ed. 1768), 66.

4 See, for example, Dorothy Rowe, *My Dearest Enemy, my Dangerous Friends: Making and Breaking Sibling Bonds* (London and New York, 2007); Rosalind Edwards *et al*., *Sibling Identity and Relationships: Sisters and Brothers* (London and New York, 2006).

5 A. W. Purdue, 'John and Harriet Carr: A Brother and Sister from the North-East on the Grand Tour', *NH*, 30 (1994), 122-38; W. I. C. Morris, 'Brotherly Love: An Essay on the Personal Relations between William Hunter and His Brother John', *MedH*, 3 (1959), 20-32.

6 Naomi Tadmor, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run: Reflections on Continuity and Change', *C&C*, 25 (2010), 15-48; Keith Wrightson, 'The Family in Early Modern England: Continuity and Change', in Stephen Taylor *et al.* (eds.), *Hanoverian Britain and Empire: Essays in Memory of Philip Lawson* (Woodbridge, 1998), 1-22; David Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 113 (1986), 38-69.

7 For a classic account of this topic, see Joan Thirsk, 'Younger Sons in the Seventeenth Century' in *idem*, *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays* (London, 1984), 335-58. For a more recent account on sibling rivalry, see Sheila Cooper, 'Intergenerational Social Mobility in Late-Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century England', *C&C*, 7 (1992), 283-301. Margaret Hunt offers an analysis of the impact of the partible inheritance on the sibling rivalry among the middling sorts; see her, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1789* (Berkeley, 1996), 81-82, 99.

8 Linda A. Pollock, 'Rethinking Patriarchy and the Family in Seventeenth-Century England', *JFH*, 23 (1998), 3-27; *idem*, 'Younger Sons in Tudor and Stuart England', *HT*, 39 (1989), 23-29. Randolph Trumbach also argued for the positive aspects of sibling solidarity in a cognatic system, see his, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York and London, 1978), 31. Cf. Naomi Tadmor, 'Dimensions of Inequality among Siblings in Eighteenth-Century English Novels: The Cases of Clarissa and The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless', *C&C*, 7 (1992), 303-33; for the nineteenth century case, see Pamela Richardson, 'Kinship and Networking in a Quaker Family in the Nineteenth Century', *FCH*, 12 (2009), 22-36.

landmark essay about sibling relations in nineteenth-century Britain, Leonore Davidoff calls for studies on sibling relationships as coloured by gender and family hierarchy. She argues that siblings played a key role in shaping the individual's sense of self: '[C]hildren and young people are acutely aware of same-sex siblings as models, sometimes identifying with one another but sometimes rejecting such identification'.[9] Davidoff's article has influenced a range of historical analyses. Building on Davidoff's work, the late Patricia Crawford explored siblings and the sense of self in seventeenth-century English families, and concluded that sibling relationships were 'psychologically complex, as brothers and sisters both needed each other and sought to be independent'. For Crawford, this may have been more crucial for boys, 'since no one except girls themselves seem to have wanted girls to become independent women'. That is, boys were expected to form their own separate identities, distinguishing themselves from other male siblings; yet for younger brothers it was significant that they subsumed under their male superiors in families. These 'contradictory messages' formed a burden of identity that was placed upon a boy's shoulders.[10]

However, as for the case of eighteenth-century England, current scholars have indeed directed their attention to sibling relations, and made important contributions to family history. Recent work conducted by Margot Finn, Emma Rothschild, and Amy Harris has argued that the family tie 'was at once a place of political power, a prime site of capital accumulation, a focal point of identity formation and a key locus of emotional development and expression'.[11] This body of historical narratives has underlined the significance of sibling relations as a social capital for the individuals. Yet, little research has explored sibling relations from gender perspectives. In her pioneering study of eighteenth-century representations of brotherhood and sisterhood, Ruth Perry has recently argued that the benevolent, charitable, attentive and protective brother came to be a conventional ideal in fiction, as unconditional love was disappearing in life when it was eroded by the competing demands of matrimonial families and the new cash economy. For Perry, brotherly love to a sister became 'a moral litmus test' for men, which was

9 Leonore Davidoff, '*Where the Stranger Begins*: The Question of Siblings in Historical Analysis', in *idem*, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (New York, 1995), 211. Also, see *idem*, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century English Siblings', *JSH*, 39 (2005), 411-28; *idem*, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations 1780-1920* (Oxford, 2012).

10 Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, 2004), esp. 223-31, quoted from pp. 230-31.

11 Margot Finn, 'Anglo-Indian Lives in the Later Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *JECS*, 33 (2010), 49-50; Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton and Oxford, 2011); Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012); *idem*, 'That Fierce Edge: Sibling Conflict and Politics in Georgian England', *JFH*, 37 (2012), 155-74.

considered as 'a fundamental marker of his character', a recurring subplot in many eighteenth-century fictions. Perry observes that '[i]f a man could play the part of a good brother, it guaranteed that he would be a good husband'.[12]

This chapter aims to problematise Perry's argument. It shows that performing fraternal roles and duties had more significance for shaping a brother's gendered life than being a signifier of how promising he would make his lover a good husband. The chapter explores the meanings and characteristics of brotherly masculinity as being forged and affected by sibling relations. Central to this issue are questions of how men perceived their social status in the sibling hierarchy, how sibling obligations contributed to the way men fashioned and performed their masculinity, and how important siblings were for each other in constructing an individual's character and personality. Answering these questions will test Ruth Perry's contention that brotherly masculinity was *chiefly* measured – conferred or denied – by a man's behaviour towards his sisters *alone*, as if other factors – such as birth order, sibling obligations and gender relations – did not play a vital role in the brothers' lives.

This chapter mainly uses ten collections of family correspondence, from landed families in Cumberland and Yorkshire to an attorney in Lancashire and a town-clerk in Sussex, and from the famous Methodist family, the Wesleys in Yorkshire, to a poor Baptist family in Buckinghamshire. The source material covers the landed, middling and pauper families. This broader social stratum enables us to explore other aspects of sibling relations, rather than confining ourselves to the conventional subjects, notably the primogenital inheritance and sibling acrimony, which loomed large in the archives of the landed families and, as a consequence, have been hitherto the obsession among social historians. This chapter will shed light on the variety of aspects of sibling relationships which had a significant impact on fashioning brotherly masculinity. The inheritance apart, the aspects to be explored are fraternal obligations, the construction of the loving brothers, the importance of sibling ties in men's emotional and personal lives.

It is to be noted that I limit my study to only sibling relationships between common blood family members. That is, only relationships between siblings with the

12 Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge, 2004), ch. 4. A similar argument can be found in Gerald A. Barker, *Grandison's Heirs: The Paragon's Progress in the Late Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Newark, 1985), 75-76. Perry's *Novel Relations* apart, Stana Nenadic offers a brief analysis of sibling relationships and the formation of the individual's sense of self in her *Lairds and Luxury: The Highland Gentry in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007), 40-64. For a brilliant study on sibling relationships in colonial and post-revolutionary America which also sheds light on 'Old England', see C. Dallett Hemphill, *Siblings: Brothers & Sisters in American History* (Oxford, 2011), chs. 1 and 4.

same two parents ('real siblings'), *and* those who were related through their own marriages ('brother-in-law' or 'sister-in-law') are taken into account in my analysis. Therefore, those with one common parent ('half-siblings') and those whose sibling relationships were generated by the remarriages of their parents ('stepbrother' or 'stepsister') are excluded.[13] My selection is by no means arbitrary. Firstly, it is an analogy to sibling categories which are explored in Ruth Perry's work. Secondly, 'real siblings' and 'in-laws' shared common perceptions of early modern society. That is, just as a husband and a wife became one flesh at the altar, so a wife's 'real siblings' became her husband's brothers and sisters, too.[14] Moreover, in terms of the formation of the individual's character and personality, 'real siblings' were particularly crucial, for they often spent so much of their childhood and infancy together, either at home or at school, the life phase when gender identities were being forged.[15]

This chapter is intended to be a contribution to the discussion of gender history. It argues that siblinghood also played a key role in constructing and performing masculinity no less than other types of familial relationships that we have explored in the previous chapters. The chapter will show the significance of siblinghood in men's lives in three dimensions: familial station and obligations, emotion and the image of the loving brother, and sibling relations as the focal point of creating and confirming the brothers' gender traits and personal identity. The chapter begins with the analysis of the most important familial station in the sibling hierarchy, that is, the first-born son. As we shall see, sibling obligations offered older brothers an opportunity to perform the privileged role of – what I coin – 'the second patriarch' whose characteristics were very similar to the first patriarch, their own father. The second part of the chapter examines the role of emotions in fashioning the image of the loving brother, and the ways siblings expressed their feelings towards one another. Parts of these emotional practices were closely linked with the nature of the way siblings perceived their own relationships as 'friendship'. The final section serves as a stepping-stone, perhaps as an inspiration for further research, towards the psychological role of the close sibling ties in fashioning and confirming the individuals' character, personality, and personal identity. The chapter contends that the sibling relationships were far more important in the brothers' lives than being the 'moral litmus test', as Ruth Perry has claimed.

13 Sibling categories mentioned here are referring to Leonore Davidoff's categorisation of consanguinity and affinity in the history of the Western family in her article '*Where the Stranger Begins*', 208. Cf. Sybil Wolfram, *In-Laws and Outlaws: Kinship and Marriage in England* (London and Sydney, 1987), 67.

14 Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, 211-14.

15 Davidoff, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept', 413.

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Brotherly masculinity was constructed out of the performance of sibling obligations, expectations, and the nature of sibling relationships itself. As Naomi Tadmor argues, eighteenth-century people used the term 'friends' and 'friendship' to designate sibling relationships and to propose expectations. 'At the heart of this “friendship” relationship was a notion of “service”', which could extend from general concern to very substantial help.[16] Similarly, Amy Harris has argued that 'sibling friendship turned love and affectionate feelings into material and instrumental support'.[17] Understood in terms of family services and obligations, siblinghood *not only* shaped the social and emotional bond of siblings, as Tadmor and Harris demonstrate. Performing sibling obligations also contributed culturally, I contend, to create the meanings of brotherly masculinity. Let us begin with the eldest brother.

In every family, whether rich or poor, the privileged status was bestowed upon the first-born son whose position, roles, and obligations could be considered as 'the second patriarch'. In daily practice, the first-born son was expected to perform a range of familial duties – such as controlling the family's finances, guiding his siblings' education and careers, keeping his eye on their behaviour and morality – to gain this superior status, or to deserve it. The duties listed here reflected those of the father, as I discussed earlier in chapter three. Thus, performing these responsibilities culturally transformed the first-born son into the 'second patriarch' of the family whose status was only second to his father. For a family which experienced the untimely loss of the patriarch, the first-born son was usually promoted to his place as the first patriarch of the household. As we shall see, elder brothers also perceived their superior status among their siblings and often reminded them of it.

By and large, the sibling obligations of the 'second patriarch', which entailed a matter of day-to-day support and advice, were similarly practised by all social ranks. Yet, there was an exception. Among the aristocracy, the first-born son became the heir of the family, and his superior status was specifically embodied in the principle of primogeniture, the legal custom that gave the eldest son the family estate.[18] In part, this

16 Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), esp. 175-192, quoted from p. 179.
17 Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations*, 67.
18 Zouheit Jamoussi, *Primogeniture and Entail, in England: A Survey of their History and Representation in Literature* (Tunis, 1999), 77-102.

law distinguished the nature of sibling relationships of the noble families from those of the rest of the society. The status of the 'second patriarch' gave the eldest brother power to assist or hinder his relatives, for he was expected to watch out for his siblings' interests in matters of inheritance and financial maintenance.[19] Primogeniture gave siblings different life experiences by forcing lesser-endowed younger brothers to advance themselves intellectually and professionally in order to seek employment and earn their livings.[20] However, as C. Dallett Hemphill observes, primogeniture did not necessarily lead to sibling resentment. What made lesser-endowed siblings unhappy was, in fact, an elder's brother's failure to perform his obligations.[21]

Among landed families, the first-born son's claim of his superiority was based on his attempt at controlling the family's financial status and providing sufficient monetary support when needed. Comparatively, this duty was close to that of paternal breadwinner. When younger siblings were in want of money, they turned to their eldest brother whose financial status was secured by inheriting the family estates. For example, having married a corrupt gentleman, a Yorkshire gentlewoman, Christiana Shuttleworth, often experienced financial problems in the 1770s. During her difficult married life, her eldest brother John Spencer (1718-1775), a wealthy coal-mine owner in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, constantly supported her and her children. In a letter written in 1771, Christiana heartily acknowledged his 'many repeated Kindness':

> Most certainly You are no way Obliged to provider for my Family neither did I ever expect or in the least entertain a thought of the kind ever to desire it, and it has always added to my troubles to think I have disturbed the felicity of my kind Relations. therefore the favours received from You being a free Choice made the Value double.[22]

Christiana's acknowledgement might have been influenced by polite literary convention by which her brother's extraordinary kindness beyond the traditional requirement was highlighted. Perhaps her flowery language was a tactic to get him to do more. However, the letter revealed that by supporting his sister, John was acting as a 'provider' for Christiana's family, a role traditionally preserved for a patriarch, either a father or husband.

By contrast, the heir who failed to take care of and assist their sisters in the affairs became the subject of ridicule, especially in contemporary novels. The brother trouble is

19 Perry, *Novel Relations*, 159.

20 Susan Whyman provides us with the detailed accounts of the different life-courses between the first-born son, who lived his life in the family's country estates, and his younger brother who was pushed out to apprenticeship and seek employment as a merchant in London. See her, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), chs. 1-2.

21 Hemphill, *Siblings*, 17.

22 SA, SpSt/60537/168 (n.d. [1771]), Christiana Shuttleworth, Chesterfield, to John Spencer, London.

satirised, for example, in Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796). Lionel Tyrold is the only son of the family, who proves to be 'a practical joker without concern for others'. He completely neglects his older sister, Camilla, for the sake of his own extravagant amusements. Burney criticises him as follows: 'The zealot for every species of sport, the candidate for every order of whim. […] A stranger to reflection, and incapable of care, […] he spared no one's feelings. Yet, […] the egotism which urged him to make his own amusement his first pursuit, sacrificed his best friends and first duties, if they stood in its way'.[23] Thus, the heir would lose its reputation when his failures to take care of his siblings, particularly his sisters, became evident.

Moreover, the social role and emotional experience of the 'second patriarch' were crucially tested when sibling acrimony occurred between himself as the heir and the family's black sheep who was, at the same time, his own sibling. As Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes argued, '[t]he defining characteristics of the landed family lie rather in its obsession with the continuity of the lineage through the provision of a male heir and the transmission of property in a way that provided both for the survival of the family in the long term and its success in each generation'.[24] Thus, in the proper management of wealth, an heir was under pressure to maintain the balance between the family's prosperity, his duty to look out for his siblings' portion and inheritance, and his own property.[25] This created tensions in many families, which were further aggravated by the role of a greedy black sheep. In such a situation, the burden was put upon the heir's shoulders to test his capacity for sustaining the family wealth and managing the emotional bond between himself, the black sheep, and other siblings.

The following case study of a noble family from Berkshire, in which the second-born son was suddenly promoted to the heir, shows that in the proper management of wealth, an heir was more obliged to perform his social status and duty, than to prioritise the sibling bond by satisfying the greediness of one of his brothers. Yet this was conducted not without the heir's emotional cost. Perhaps, familial obligations played more important roles in a noble man's practices of his particular status than the ties that bonded him and his siblings.

Let us begin with the family's background. Robert Philipps (1706-1755) was born as the second son of Captain John Philipps and Lady Mary Alexander, sister of the fifth Earl of Sterline. Having lost his parents in early childhood, Robert still had Charles

23 Frances Burney, *Camilla, or A Picture of Youth*, ed. by Edward A. And Lillian D. Bloom (Oxford, 1983), 79, quoted in Perry, *Novel Relations*, 172.
24 Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Stanford, 1994), 51.
25 See also Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, 215-17.

(1703-1743) as his elder brother and William (1708-1777) as his younger one. The children were under the care of Robert Lee (1647-1737), the children's great-uncle and Robert Philipps' godfather. Having lost all of his children in infancy, Robert Lee bequeathed his estate in Binfield, Berkshire, to his great-nephew and godson Robert Philipps, on condition that he changed his name to Lee. Robert Lee's decision was governed by two factors: first, Robert Philipps was his godson; and second, Charles Philipps (the eldest child) had established himself as the black sheep of the family due to his failed capacity for financial management which caused the family's continued embarrassment. Thus, the 30-year-old apprentice lawyer in London, Robert Philipps, changed his name in 1736, and styled himself as Robert Philipps Lee. He became a country gentleman and the head among his siblings, although he was the second-born son. This meant, consequently, that the first-born son, Charles, was deprived of this privileged status, something that he should have enjoyed himself.[26]

In a family which experienced the untimely loss of the real patriarch, avoiding sibling acrimony and looking out for family prosperity were the prime test for an heir's managerial ability. Scholars argue that sibling disputes were often ignited by the perception of unfair treatment at the hand of a brother or a sister. Therefore, as Amy Erickson suggests, primogeniture's privileges had to be subject to principle of equality between brothers, and the designated heir had less the lion's share or primogenitial dividend than historians claimed.[27] If Erickson's observation is correct, this was possibly a reason for an heir to be cautious about watching out for his siblings' property. As the sudden patriarch, Robert Philipps Lee performed his duty correctly. He did not fail to give his brothers financial support fairly. For example, as Charles' constant failure in his own business was well-known in the family, the fifth Earl of Sterline, who was the uncle of these three men, added more money for him, that is, '£10 a Quarter'. The Earl hoped that this extra income would mitigate a hole in Charles's pocket which caused the family's embarrassment. This made Robert – now as the 'second patriarch' – slightly uneasy. It prompted him to remind his uncle of 'not forgetting my <poor> Bro Wm who I ~~hope may~~ think wants it as much & I am Sure deserves it much better'.[28] Perhaps Robert did this due

26 For a fuller account of Robert Philipps Lee's family, see Harry Leonard (ed.), *Diaries and Correspondence of Robert Lee of Binfield 1736-1744* (Stevenage, 2012), viii-lvii.

27 Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York, 1993), 62-3, 72-7, 204-22. For a similar argument, see Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations*, esp. chs. 3 and 5. For the argument on the heir's lion share and the sacrifice of younger siblings, see Perry, *Novel Relations*, 154, 143-89; Donna Birdwell-Pheasant, 'Family System and the Foundations of Class in Ireland and England', *HF*, 3 (1998), 17-34; Thirsk, 'Younger Sons in the Seventeenth Century', 359.

28 Leonard (ed.), *Diaries and Correspondence of Robert Lee*, 122, 254-55.

to his preferring William to Charles; but there is no clue in the diaries or letters that this was the case.

The proper management of wealth often required the 'second patriarch' to offer his siblings the financial aid with patriarchal instruction. As I have noted, Charles Philipps regularly had financial problems in his business and tended to request more money from his relatives. After having received £7 from Robert on 21 July 1737, Charles went on the next day to their uncle, the Earl of Sterline, to obtain an extra sum of £10.[29] Thus, Robert was alarmed and sent an instructive letter to his eldest brother:

> For when I consider how much you have had with in these Two last <years> ~~past~~ near £500 pounds [*sic*] & that you have taken no Method to to [*sic*] put your self in any way to provide for your Self it quite disheartens me, but on the Contrary have Squander'd it away in a very disreputable Manner by living in a Common ale <House> & consequently keeping very indifferent Company. [...] I hope you will not be displeased at my acquainting you with <th [*sic*]> True Sentiments of the familly as well as my own & heartily wish you wou'd take your own condition seriously into consideration & ~~put~~ <apply> your self to some Business or other which will oblige the whole familly and Particularly. Yr Loving Bro R L:[30]

As we shall see more examples below, it was normal for the 'second patriarch' to instruct his siblings, especially when it came to matters of finance and personal behaviour. Robert Philipps Lee not only instructed Charles, he also guided his younger brother William on the same issue:

> I assure You it is no small uneasiness to me to think of you living so long out of any manner of Business. It is impossible for me or any other Relation that lives <out> of London to do you any Service that Way unless you will endeavour to find out some employ[en]t to your Mind & Capacity. [...] I am ready to do you any service I can myself and make Use of my Int[e]r[est] with our Relations ~~for yo~~ in your Behalf.[31]

Robert's tone is suggestive. While both Charles and William received the same advice on careers, it is apparent that the tone of the letter to Charles was rather harsh, given that the recipient was his eldest brother whose birth order should have prevented him from such a sibling assault. This comparative reading of Robert's letters to his brothers suggests that being aware of his superior status as the patriarch, Robert exercised his power objectively, depending on the nature of each brother's problems.

Once the black sheep's ill conduct started to threaten the family's prosperity and the heir's property and reputation more seriously, the heir's determination to terminate the sibling acrimony was tellingly laid bare. The disputes affected the dutiful 'second patriarch' emotionally. In February 1738, the difficult Charles asked for more money from Robert, his 'second patriarch', to pay his debts. Yet, Robert was on the way to renovate his

29 *Ibid*., 86.
30 *Ibid*., 256.
31 *Ibid*., 252.

major country house in Berkshire, the representation of the family's prestige. He had to weigh his errant brother's request against the benefit of the family and his own. He decided for the family and himself: 'I do not think it any ways incumbent on me to ~~Load~~ <give> my Bro Money when I may ~~want~~ <need> it my self'.[32] At the same time, Robert wrote to his youngest brother William, expressing his despair of Charles' improvement which led him to stop his fraternal support for the sake of his own financial security: 'I can have no Hopes of him & will not hurt my self to ~~mam~~ pay for his Extravagance but at Present were I never so willing it is not in my Power'.[33] Having not obtained the financial support as expected, Charles abusively charged his brother with their uncle, the Earl of Sterline, in May 1738. This grieved the dutiful Robert at heart. He confessed to his younger brother William that 'I was never more surprised than at Reading ~~my~~ <Our> bros last Lre to my Lord, I am very sorry <~~our~~><he> is so indiscreet & ungratefull'.[34]

To end the sibling acrimony effectively, the breaking of sibling relations may be a potential option, despite its impact on siblings' emotions. In 1738, Robert agreed with his uncle, the Earl of Sterline, that Charles go to Russia. They offered him a certain sum of money which was supposed to be sufficient for him to pursue his life there as a merchant. On the one hand, as an heir, Robert was determined to prevent the family's wealth and his own property from Charles' further assault. This was reflected in a letter he sent to William: '~~Pray let him know that I desire him to~~ <I hope he will> go abroad ~~otherwise~~<or> not ~~to~~ trouble me ~~any more~~ with ~~any of~~ <stet> his Affairs whatsoever'.[35] On the other hand, as a brother, Robert seemed to be reluctant to cut the bond that tied both of them from childhood. He told his difficult brother that 'I do Promise that if you go abroad & behave well I will endeavour to forget your past ill & unkind Useage of me'.[36] The condition that Robert set for his forgiveness is suggestive. Although it may reveal his willingness to reconcile with his brother, the nature of his condition was dictated by his duty as the family's inheritance manager. However, the emigration did not take place. Charles suddenly died on 18 April 1743 before he gave his decision. Amidst the tensions between the family's interest and sibling bonds, the 'second patriarch' decided to stand for the family's prosperity and his own property, and against the family's black sheep. As a brother, 'the second patriarch' could do at best only to forgive his wayward brother, but only when the family was secured. Perhaps, the roles, duties, and obligations were more

32 *Ibid*., 274.
33 *Ibid*., 275.
34 *Ibid*., 281.
35 *Ibid*.
36 *Ibid*., 280.

important to the noble siblings than the ties that bound them.

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Apart from the inheritance drama which directed the relationships between the aristocratic siblings, the 'second patriarch' had other aspects to perform, ranging from feeding his siblings to guiding them in education and morality, which were similar to the paternal obligations. Let us begin with the material provision.

Among lower-income families, which were regularly haunted by acute financial problems, brotherly responsibility was tested. In 1719, the Wesley family from Yorkshire was on the verge of beggary, for its patriarch, the preacher Samuel Wesley senior (1662-1735), had completely failed in household management and was barred from accessing local credit. Consequently, the 12-year-old Charles Wesley (1707-1788) was about to be 'taken away from School'. Amidst this precarious situation, Samuel Wesley junior (1690-1739), the eldest son of the family, dutifully took action to mitigate the family's tragic circumstances. Penning a line with a vivid sense of self-sacrifice, Samuel assured his father of his intention to clear all of their debts alone:

> Dear Father, Be not at all inquisitive after Your Debts to Me, I intreat one thing that You will borrow of No one else to pay 'em. Fear not Your sinking Me in Your Ruin, I give You my Word that when I am no longer able to bear up, I frankly, tho' my heart should bleed never so much, acquaint You with it.

A week later Samuel went to speak with the Bishop of Rochester to borrow money, and therefore prevented Charles from being taken away from school.[37] Samuel's unconditional self-sacrifice can also be seen on another occasion in 1727, when he begged his father, who had again been denied being lent money by his acquaintances, not to tell Charles that he had given his father money to educate Charles at Oxford. However, Samuel would be surprised when the issue eventually developed otherwise. 'I don't wonder at Your not knowing the Money I sent was what my Father borrowd', he wrote to his brother, 'but rather at Your finding it out at last; for tho' I told Him of it contrary to my first Intentions'.[38] Of course, this father-son secret could simply be viewed as Samuel's attempt to save his father's face. Still, it is remarkable that Samuel did not try to claim his benevolent act or remind his family members of his self-sacrifice.

In some well-to-do middling-sort families, the eldest brother was often engaged in watching out for his young brothers' allowances and debts. This sort of relationship

37 JRL, DDWF/5/3 (11 May 1719), Samuel Wesley jnr. to Samuel Wesley snr.
38 JRL, DDWF/5/6 ([15 May 1727]), Samuel Wesley, Westminster, to [Charles] Wesley, Oxford.

resembled that of a father and a prodigal son.[39] In early February 1771, the young and extravagant, Cambridge student Edward Leathes was pursued by his Cambridge creditors, who threatened to order an attorney to arrest him. Being alarmed by 'this intelligence', his brother John 'immediately' collected money to satisfy them all with the sum of £200. A fortnight later came in 'many bills upon yr Account from various people' of the town of Bury in Norfolk, John worriedly informed his brother. Although John did not immediately pay them all this time, he told his brother that 'I shall discharge these too as soon as I am furnish'd with Money'. Despite his promise to clear his brother's debts, John did not fail to blame his spendthrift brother and rhetorically asked him: 'I would be glad to know – if ever such a thought inter'd your head when You suppose you could ever have paid it. [...] You see then your debts alone might have been your ruin'.[40] Perhaps, his complaint served to forestall any further misconduct committed by Edward. It is noteworthy that John's benevolent act was not for cost free. It was accompanied by his legitimate right, deriving from his birth order, to blame and instruct his errant brother, an action mainly preserved for the parents.

In addition to the financial affairs, parents played a key role in shaping the sibling experience of their children through their treatment of them, especially in training the eldest son to assume the status of the 'second patriarch'. The eldest son was usually expected to take a watchful interest in the education and professional careers of his siblings, in particular those of his younger brothers. This is because there were strict differences in the course of schooling boys and girls.[41] In families where the age gap between elder and younger brothers was close they were often sent to the same school and spent their formative years together.[42] The younger brothers were in this case subject to their elder brothers' supervision and guidance. In 1724, the Norfolk landed gentleman and amateur architect, John Buxton (1685-1731), sent his younger son, George (1716-1740), to be educated at Mr D'Oyly's school in Playford, where his eldest son Robert (1710-1751) was already a pupil. Buxton wrote a series of letters to his boy. From time to time he inquired of the 14-year-old Robert about his younger brother's learning progress:

39 Nicola Phillips, 'Parenting the Profligate Son: Masculinity, Gentility and Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1791-1814', *G&H*, 22 (2010), 92; Sarah M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008), ch. 5.

40 NRO, BOL 2/43/1 (28 Feb. 1771), John Leathes, Bury, to Edward Leathes, Norwich.

41 Anthony Fletcher, 'Courses in Politeness: The Upbringing and Experiences of Five Teenage Diarists, 1671-1860', *TRHS*, 12 (2002), 417-30. Regarding girl's education in particular, see Michèle Cohen, '"To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise": Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain', in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005), 224-42.

42 Stories of lived experiences between male siblings educated at the same school have been vividly related in Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven and London, 2008), 208-19.

'Has Georgy got the books he wanted, does he begin to write?'[43] Thus, parents also played a key role in attaching the role of the 'second' patriarch to their eldest son.

However, I am not suggesting that parents relied only on their eldest son's letters for information on the progress of the younger sons. Of course, they would regularly receive reports from the tutors. Given that there is no evidence in the correspondence studied here to show that parents made similar requests to their younger sons to report on their elder brother's progress, what were then the particular meanings associated with such a parental question being asked of the eldest son? In the absence of surviving records, we can only speculate an answer from using our imaginative reconstruction and some findings we saw in the previous chapter. Here, I would argue that doing thus, parents were training the eldest son to learn the sense of supervising and guiding his inferiors, duties that were expected in the future patriarch, to enable him to sense the expectations of being the 'second patriarch' who was superior to his younger brothers but still subject to his own father. In addition, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, letters from home were highly likely to be shared and read among brothers educated at the same school.[44] In this circumstance, the younger brothers would be aware of being controlled by their elder brothers, who had been authorised by their parents. Therefore such parental queries after a boy's school progress can plausibly be seen as part of training male siblings to learn their roles, positions and identities in the family hierarchy. If hierarchical power was something parents wanted to instil in their sons, this explains why we have no surviving record (at least in my sample) of fathers asking younger sons to report back home about their elder brothers' progress.[45]

The image of the 'second patriarch' was sometimes emphasised by the age gap between male siblings. In some cases the age gap was such that the eldest brother could almost be the father of the youngest one. Hence, the brother's tutorial supervision and professional guidance were comparatively similar to those of the father. For example, the law student Thomas Greene (1737-1810) was assigned by his father, Thomas Greene of Slyne (d. 1762), to look after his youngest son William (d. 1762). In 1761, the 24-year-old Thomas wrote a letter to William, who was a schoolboy at Sedbergh. Thomas asked his

43 Alan Mackley (ed.), *John Buxton Norfolk Gentleman and Architect: Letters to His Son, 1719-1729* (King's Lynn, 2005), 7.

44 See Chapter 3, p. 117.

45 However, one might wonder if occasionally the younger brothers were more reliable, especially when one recalls a plot in Jane Austen's novels. In *Mansfield Park* (1814), the younger brother Edmund Bertram is praised by his cousin Fanny Price for his protection, guidance, and generosity towards her. By contrast, the eldest son Tom is condemned for his being selfish and self-centred, extravagant and irresponsible. Yet, Edmund's reliable characteristics are mostly reported through the eyes of Fanny who becomes his lover. See Perry, *Novel Relations*, 151 fn. 21, 153-54.

brother to send him a specimen of writing together with the summary of his school progress: 'I shall be glad to see some little Performance of yours either in verse or prose Latin, or English, upon whatever subject you please, but let it be intirely your own with[ou]t the aid of any of your School ffellows, you may tell me at the same Time what Books you read, and what Class you are in'.[46] Thomas' requirement of his younger brother reminds us of similar letters which fathers sent to their sons at school or university. Compare now a father's letter to his sons. In 1771, the 47-year-old Lancashire flax merchant Thomas Langton (1724-1794) demanded of his boys, John and Will, to report their school improvement back home: 'Dear Will, [...] [I] am glad to hear your brother and you have made such improvements in your writing and accounts. [...] Dear Jack, [...] I was pleased to receive the specimen of your and your brother's writings as I think you are both improved'.[47] Here, there was hardly a difference between the 'real' patriarch (a father) and the 'second' patriarch (an eldest brother), when both of them performed the role of an educational guide.

Professional guidance was also a duty which the 'second patriarch' was expected to perform. We know from the letters of the young William Greene that his brother Thomas constantly guided him into the world of business, although it might have been too early for the boy who was just a pupil at Sedbergh boarding school. In August 1762, Thomas Greene advised his brother to 'abandon the thoughts of being a Limner' because in Thomas' opinion that business 'in all probability must tend to my [i.e. William's] own disadvantage'. Instead of being a limner, Thomas persuaded his brother to enter the services of the East India Company, to which idea William 'entirely' subsumed himself. The young boy wrote back to satisfy his eldest brother: 'I commit it entirely to your prudence to determine'.[48] Unfortunately, William was suddenly killed by deadly smallpox four months later, leaving the question unanswered as to whether he would have followed his brother's advice by entering the East India Company, and how this 'second patriarch' would have reacted had his suggestion been ignored.[49]

It is also worth noting that brotherly guidance sometimes enabled the eldest brother to emphasise his self-sacrifice for the sake of his younger siblings. Hence, brotherly advice was not simply an opportunity for the eldest brother to perform his

46 LRO, DDGr/C1 (8 Aug. 1761), Thomas Greene, London, to William Greene, Sedbergh.
47 Joan Wilkinson (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Langton, Flax Merchant of Kirkham, 1771-1788* (Manchester, 1994), 109, 112.
48 LRO, DDGr/C1 (31 Aug. 1762), William Greene, Sedbergh, to Thomas Greene, London.
49 On the death of William Greene, see LRO, DDGr/C1 (17 Dec. 1762), Simson Greene, Slyne, to Thomas Greene, London.

responsibility to pass the 'moral litmus test' for his brotherly masculine quality, as Ruth Perry suggested. Surviving records in my sample suggest that older brothers were apt to highlight their youthful self-sacrifice, and often reminded their younger siblings of this fact when fraternal obedience was needed. In 1726, Samuel Wesley penned a line to his brother Charles, then a student at Oxford, commanding him to be more strict with his expenses: 'You have had better Luck than I if You have not been upbraided with the disproportion'd Charge of the Boys & of the Girls. [...] My Advice therefore is needless, because You must know as well as I, where to place Your Superfluities'.[50] Had Samuel not reminded Charles of his childhood inconveniences in this letter, his advice would have appeared to his brother as a bare command and could have caused rejection on Charles' part. Perhaps this brotherly emphasis on his uneasy past experiences was intended to be a linguistic strategy to inspire guilt in his younger brother's mind. Whatever it was, Samuel's tone was softened by mentioning his self-sacrifice for the sake of the others.

Another example of brotherly use of his youthful self-sacrifice to buttress his authority in controlling his younger brothers' education can be found in the Greene family from Lancashire. In 1761, the law student Thomas Greene wrote to his brother William, asking him not to forget to devote himself to his study. Not failing to mention his own difficult childhood, Thomas instructed his younger brother, as follows:

> I was taken from Dendron just abt the age You were, & was then to Lanct. School as being less expensive, but then I was not permitted to attend even there constantly, being often obliged to assist our People at Home, whereby my Learning was neglected, [...] but I was determined you shod not struggle with such Inconveniences and for that Reason get you placed where you are, which I hope will turn out to your Advantage, and consequently to my Satisfaction.[51]

As I have just noted, William's untimely death makes it impossible to know how far he absorbed his brother's guidance. Yet the letters of these two families show that the lines of command and instruction were occasionally accompanied by a brotherly mention of self-sacrifice in his youth. At first sight, this might be just a simple strategy adopted by older brothers to achieve their goal. However, it is striking that the elder brothers were apt enough to grasp at their gloomy past experiences when instructing their younger brothers. Perhaps this youthful self-sacrifice in childhood formed an integral part of these eldest brothers' lives, so that it came out of their heads as they penned a line.

To some extent, my findings about the eldest brother's gloomy past experiences should encourage historians to re-consider their understanding of the image and life of the

50 JRL, DDWF/5/5 (10 Dec. 1726), Samuel Wesley to John Wesley, Oxford.
51 LRO, DDGr/C1 (8 Aug. 1761), Thomas Greene, London, to William Greene, Sedbergh.

elder brother in the eighteenth century. Based on some advice manuals, Amy Harris has recently stated that '[a]ll of a gentleman's sons should receive the same education, but the eldest son “must be graced with every Ornament”'. Thus, parents tended to invest more resources in their older children, who were the representatives of their families.[52] Such an observation is correct if we rely only on a particular genre of historical sources, that is, the prescriptive literature. Yet, as we have witnessed, in some families, especially among the middling ranks, elder brothers had to quit school sooner to allow their younger brothers to be educated. In other families, it was usual enough to find the eldest son being schooled in a cheaper institution or on a tight budget, so that the other sons could have equal access to education. The exact meaning and broader accounts of daily experiences of the eldest son's education await further research.

The role of the eldest brother as the 'second patriarch' embraced him being a good example to his siblings, showing concern for their welfare, morality and character, and giving them moral support.[53] Once again, parents certainly played an important role in shaping the image of a concerned and caring elder brother. The letters which parents sent to their sons who were being educated at the same school repeatedly reveal this aspect. In 1725, the Norfolk landed gentleman John Buxton wrote to his eldest son, Robert, hoping that his younger son, George, would 'follow your example to observe & oblige your master'.[54] Likewise, Mary Collier, wife of the town-clerk John Collier (1685-1760) from Hastings, reminded her eldest son, Jacky, of his duty in guiding his brother's morality. In 1729 both boys, Jacky and Jemmy, were educated at a boarding school in Battell. Mary Collier sent them common prayer books accompanied by a letter, instructing the 9-year-old Jacky: '[Y]ou Must never omit your Morning and evening prayers and put your Brother in mind of it to whom I insist you'd always be very kind'.[55] These assignments suggest that parents saw the being 'good example' as a significant characteristic of the elder brother. It was the burden which parents put upon the first-born son's shoulders. Yet, my sample does not offer compelling evidence which shows how the eldest brother perceived or reacted to his parents' assignments. Nor does it reveal what he did when he failed to fulfil the duty. Hence, it is not easy to gauge how far an eldest brother internalised his privileged status and the obligations which entailed it. Nevertheless, it is

52 Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations*, 31. The quote in Harris' statement comes from James Nelson, *An Essay on the Government of Children under Three General Heads, viz. Health, Manners, and Education* (London, 1763), 303.

53 Cf. Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), 112-13.

54 Mackley (ed.), *Buxton: Letters to His Son*, 61.

55 ESRO, SAY 1527 (n.d. [1729]), Mary Collier, Hastings, to Jacky Collier, Battell.

palpable that through giving these brotherly assignments, parents shaped the hierarchical relationships between their children, in which the elder brother earned his legitimate superiority through his correct and good-natured behaviour. Thus, parents played a key role in constructing and reiterating the meanings and the role of the 'second patriarch'.

However, there are a couple of promising examples in my source material which allow us a glimpse at how an eldest brother may have absorbed the role of a guiding and caring brother. One came from an eldest brother's pen; the other from a mother's. The first example involves, once again, the Wesleys from Yorkshire. When Charles Wesley decided to accompany his elder brother John on a missionary journey to America in 1735, Samuel Wesley, the eldest among them, tried to stop Charles but failed to do so. Samuel would have been disappointed when his brotherly advice was not welcomed by his brother, especially when Charles willingly followed John, the second son of the Wesleys, instead of following his advice to stay in England. Indeed, Samuel confessed to his brother that 'Your next step grieves me'.[56] Losing his advisory power over the young Charles, Samuel lamented to his brother: 'I would not therefore send my Reasons & enter into an idle Dispute, for I saw I could no more prevail on You to stay than the Sirens could Ulysses, when he himself was tied to the M[a]st'.[57] Yet Samuel did not fail to perform his duty as the caring, eldest brother. Having known that his brothers started to try to pursue vegetarian eating habits, Samuel was alarmed, and prompted to caution them not to continue that kind of dietary style, as this might weaken their health on board and in their American missions. His letter of the 29th April 1736 reads:

> You & Charles are trying how a vegetable Diet will agree with You. For what? [...] It cannot be religion for [a]bstaining from Meats is a doctrine of Devils, & well may it be calld so peculiarly in the present Case. [...] It cannot be Policy in my humble Opinion, unless You have not a sufficient Stock on board. Otherwise tis quite contrary to common Sense to weaken Your Strength & Spirits (as Vegetable Food comparatively must do) at the very time when Your Work is encreasing. I dare say You will find Work enough in the Colony, without going to the Desart [*sic*] to seek more.[58]

Although Samuel was left in England by his two male siblings and had to take care of all of his family members alone with his paucity of budget, it would be too heartless to imagine that Samuel's care for his brothers' health and welfare did not derive from his

56 JRL, DDWF/5/12 (29 Apr. 1736), Samuel Wesley, Salisbury, to John Wesley, on his passage to Georgia.

57 JRL, DDWF/5/11 (30 Oct. 1735), Samuel Wesley to Charles Wesley. In addition, Samuel's grievance was added to by the fact that without his male siblings in England, all family obligations, especially financial ones, would fall upon his shoulders alone. See JRL, DDWF/5/12 (29 Apr. 1736), Samuel Wesley, Salisbury, to John Wesley, on his passage to Georgia: 'My Fathers Death left my Mother as You know – She has been arrested for 30 pounds as perhaps You remember, for tis some Months ago. [...] I have since paid the Money & cleard that Matter. Another has sprung up, Mrs Knight threatened the same Usage, [...] So I have Sent fifteen pounds & that Peril too is past'.

58 JRL, DDWF/5/12 (29 Apr. 1736), Samuel Wesley, Salisbury, to John Wesley, on his passage to Georgia.

genuine brotherly love, as kind paterfamilias ought to have towards his inferiors.

The second example, which can shed light on how an eldest brother performed his role as a caring brother, comes from the Lovells, a lesser-landed family in Wiltshire. As this piece of evidence survives in the writings of a mother, it also points out how parents played an important role in constructing the image of a caring 'second patriarch'. We know from a letter which their mother Sarah wrote to her younger son Peter that her eldest son John, who had recently finished his degree at Oxford, wanted to pass a piece of fraternal advice to him, who just started his term at Oxford in 1778. John's advice was simple as to how his brother had better hold a candle when opening the door in the evening. The mother's letter reads: 'Jacky Desires you to Remember one thing, that is When go in the Studdy [*sic*] to Open ye Door with your Right hand and hold ye Candle in yr Left Because ye Wind with opening the Door Blows the Curtain just against your Candle'.[59] If we believe their mother's words that the advice came from the older brother John, this piece of brotherly advice suggests that this elder brother was keen to take care of his younger brother's welfare by guiding him how to conduct life alone without any familial services and assistance. Perhaps this handy tip was important for the young Peter who had just left the comfort of his genteel life-style at their country house where help was always at hand. Maybe, John had encountered similar problems himself when he attended the university earlier, and wanted to use his experiences he had had before to guide his younger brother. If their mother Sarah borrowed her eldest son's name to instruct her younger son, it was perhaps from her idea that such a piece of advice could naturally come from an experienced, caring brother. Maybe, she simply wanted to remind her younger son that he was the subject of his brother's concerns. Whatever it was, her action of passing the brotherly advice helped, indeed, to produce the specific image of the caring brother for her eldest son.

To test more convincingly whether eldest brothers eagerly adopted the role of the 'second patriarch' as their prime responsibility, it might be worthwhile to compare their letters to their younger brothers with those of fathers to sons. The father-like tone loomed large, as we shall see below, in brotherly letters, when they instructed their younger brothers on how to behave themselves. As scholars have pointed out, relationships between sender and receiver are constructed in correspondence, and letters 'take their meaning from the part they play in actual lives and relationships'.[60] Thus, we can see how

59 WSA, 161/109 (20 Mar. 1778), Sarah Lovell, Cole Park, to Peter Lovell, Oxford.

60 Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, 'Introduction', in *idem* (eds.), *Women's Letters Across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion* (Aldershot, 2005), 5. See also Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences', *Auto/Biography*, 12 (2004), 201-35.

the eldest brother understood or imagined his role through the tone which he deployed when instructing his younger siblings. Take the Yorkshire gentleman John Spencer as an example. In 1757, one year after inheriting the estates of his father William (d. 1756), the 39-year-old John wrote a letter to one of his twin younger brothers, Benjamin (d. 1759), who was then a merchant in London. In the letter John directly instructed his errant brother. The tone he deployed is remarkable:

> Consider Dear Sir again & again, that you are now in the Prime of Life, that now is the Time for raising such a Fortune as may enable you to live with Ease & Affluence in the Decline of Life. Avoid mean Company; seek that which is polite, & will do credit to yourself. Once more I beg of you to avoid Liquor; throw that detestable Instrument your Tobacco Box which you so fond of into the Kennel, then shall I hope to live to see [...] an Honour to your Family & Country I am your constant Wellwisher & affectionate J. Spencer.[61]

The tone suggests the unequal relationship *between* the eldest brother, who at that time had become the first patriarch of the family, *and* his brother who was inferior to him, not only in age but also in fortune and social status. The instruction was direct in tone, implying how confident the writer felt in his superior position. Yet, his superiority does not give us the impression of another kind of unequal relationship, such as that of master and apprentice and the like. Rather, it suggests the tone of instruction-*cum*-benevolence (or brotherly responsible love), as John Spencer signed his letter with 'I am your constant Wellwisher & affectionate J. Spencer'. This reminds us of parent-child correspondence which fathers used as a medium to instruct their teenage boys at school or university. Indeed, John's letter to his brother Benjamin echoed the message John himself had received from his father two decades earlier, when he was a law student in London:

> I am glad to hear You have recovered Your Health, and heartily (wish You may) now use proper means to preserve it, but too much Indulgence in Bed in a morning, and frequent visiting the Play house at nights without other Exercise, I am sure won't be the way to do it. [...] if you woud be a Good Oeconomist, You might out of this Allowance [i.e. £120] Live Handsomly, lay out a good deal of money in Law Books, and have always plenty in Your Pocketts.[62]

However, it is not my intention to argue that John Spencer saw himself as his own brother's *natural* father. Rather, I am suggesting that his correspondence to his brother revealed how John perceived his privileged status, and how he exercised his authority. My conclusion is that the eldest brother realised his patriarchal power over his younger brothers and felt obliged to act according to the role that his social position gave him. The brotherly sense of being the 'second patriarch' was thus expressed and reflected in the

61 SA, SpSt/60548/15 (6 Nov. 1757), John Spencer, Sewerby, to Benjamin Spencer, London. Also, see SA, SpSt/60548/6 (17 Sep. 1756), same, Cannon Hall, to same: 'Pray God you take Warning by his Misfortune. That you may meet with Succession all your Undertakings'.

62 SA, SpSt/60537/4 (13 Dec. 1740), William Spencer, Barnesley, to John Spencer, London.

tone of the sibling correspondence.

However, one might wonder whether the younger brother also perceived his eldest brother's status as the 'second patriarch'. How far did siblings accept their eldest brother's power? Needless to say, answering these questions is subject to the dynamics of individual family's relationships. As Linda Pollock showed in her case study of a seventeenth-century family, while younger brothers united themselves against the heir when property issues were concerned, they also respected him when the display of family reputation was required.[63] Although the collections in my study here do not reveal cases in which younger siblings severely rejected their eldest brother's power and status, we cannot take for granted that the eldest brother's status was firmly established in every family. Nevertheless, what surviving evidence shows, as we shall see now, can prove that a younger brother actually accepted the authority of his 'second patriarch', and was apt to single out his role for commendation.

Take the Greene family from Lancashire as an example. As we have just seen, Thomas Greene took care of his youngest brother William, whose health, education, moral conduct and future profession were never far from Thomas' eyes.[64] Once their father died in May 1762, William wrote a letter to his eldest brother in which Thomas' status as the 'second patriarch' was vividly brought to light:

> I am very sensible that the loss we sustain by our Fathers death is very great, but yet would have been much greater, had we not had you for our Pilot, [...] I should therefore be very ungrateful if I should not pay obedience as a son, when you take upon yourself the care of a Father.[65]

The discourse of the father-son relationship was deployed here by the young William to frame and characterise his relationship with his eldest brother. These lines might, however, be coloured by literary convention in praising the brother's kindness. Yet William ended his letter by telling Thomas that he fancied changing his lodging, since 'I am willing to be as little expensive as I can', certainly to help his eldest brother to save expenses.[66] Possibly, this was also a message intended to show his brother that he was willing to be an obedient sibling – or perhaps an obedient son, too – by showing his readiness to perform 'oeconomy', just as every dutiful middling-sort son ought to do.[67] Thomas Greene's status as the 'second patriarch' was then neatly perceived and accepted

63 See Pollock, 'Rethinking Patriarchy'.
64 See LRO, DDGr/C1 (8 Aug. 1761), Thomas Greene, London, to William Greene, Sedbergh; LRO, DDGr/C1 (31 Aug. 1762), same to same.
65 LRO, DDGr/C1 (9 May 1762), William Greene, Slyne, to Thomas Greene.
66 *Ibid*.
67 For examples of upper- and middling-rank parents who called for oeconomy in their sons' character, see Chapter 4, pp. 156-58.

by his younger brother, surely not least because of Thomas' own ability in mastering his obligations *par excellence*.

* * * *

Brotherly masculinity cannot be reduced to power, status and material obligations alone. The following part of this chapter examines the role of emotions in constructing the image of a loving brother, and the ways siblings expressed their feelings towards one another. In this part, I will pay particular attention to the gender relations between brothers and sisters, as their relationships offered more compelling evidence of the emotional bond than those between brothers and brothers. However, I suggest that to understand the idea of a loving brother, we need to realise that the qualities which were central to the image of a loving brother might not necessarily be the same ones which were essential to the notion of an ideal siblinghood, although some of their characteristics overlapped.

Surviving records suggest that the ideal siblinghood resonated with the definition of 'friendship'. Prescriptive authors, such as John Gregory (1724-1773), considered the sibling relationship as 'an additional bond of union to your friendship'. In his posthumous *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1774), Gregory wrote:

> If all other circumstances are equal, there are obvious advantages in your making friends of one another [sisters]. The ties of blood, and your being so much united in one common interest, from an additional bond of union to your friendship. If your brothers should have the good fortune to have hearts susceptible of friendship, to possess truth, honour, sense, and delicacy of sentiment, they are the fittest and most unexceptionable confidants.[68]

Personal testimonies also show that siblings celebrated the quality of friendship as the natural state among them. As early as 1725, having concealed her 'Uneasiness to the Hazzard of Sense & Life, for want of some Friend to condole with', Mahtabel Wesley decided to relieve her grievance by penning a line to her beloved brother John. Similarly, as late as 1792, William Howard, a Quaker London merchant, extolled with his brother Luke (1772-1864) their continual, 'natural ties of fraternal friendship'.[69]

Historians have argued that friendship implied a combination of practical assistance and deep devotion to each other's welfare.[70] In his analysis of early modern kin interaction, David Cressy suggested that '[w]hat mattered was not how far apart you lived

68 John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London, 1774), 70.
69 JRL, DDWF/9/1 (7 Mar. 1725), Mahtabel Wesley, Kelstern, to John Wesley, Oxford; LMA, ACC/1017/1033 (12 Mar. 1792), William Howard, London, to Luke Howard, Stockport.
70 Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations*, 68.

or how often you saw each other, but what the relationship was worth when it came to the crunch'.[71] However, friendship cannot be reduced to only material support in time of a crisis. As Naomi Tadmor has demonstrated, friendship was a 'multi-faceted' concept which embraced 'the combination of sentimentality and instrumentality'. According to Tadmor, '[t]he moral duty of “friends” was to stand by each other, and, if necessary, “serve” each other as best they could, and in as many ways as possible'. Moreover, in her analysis of the Sussex shopkeeper Thomas Turner's diaries, Tadmor found that the diarist 'complained so much about the selfishness and coldness with which he was treated by his related “friends” [i.e. his siblings]'. By contrast, the diarist expected his 'friends' to be 'supportive, considerate, and warm'.[72] Hence, Tadmor extends our understanding of eighteenth-century concepts of 'friendship' and 'siblinghood' by reminding us of the emotional elements in their nature.

However, we might wonder if the ideal sibling friendship shared the same qualities as those of a loving brotherhood. We might also wonder why occasionally a brother who did not fail to provide material assistance and to perform deep devotion of his duty was not perceived by his sisters as a loving brother. This was apparently the case among the Wesley siblings. The Wesley sisters praised their brother John (1703-1791) as their most affectionate brother. For example, Emily Wesley (1691-1770) called her brother John as 'the one I dare trust', saying that 'methinks you are nearer related to me, then the rest of my Brothers and Sisters'.[73] This is surprising, given that the surviving evidence does not reveal any signs of his attempts to provide his natal family's practical assistance. (Recall how John and Charles Wesley decided to embark on their missionary journey to America in 1735.)[74] Instead, it was the family's 'second patriarch', Samuel Wesley, who always supported his siblings. In 1731, Samuel visited his sister Anne, who was suffering in severe poverty, but she 'never opend her Lips to me of her Circumstances' because of her remarkable resignation. Once Samuel noticed her gloomy situation, he promptly 'gave her a Guinea which set her a Crying & Me too'.[75] Why did not this spontaneous one-guinea-donation contribute to the image of a loving brother for the dutiful 'second patriarch' Samuel?

Siblings understood the character of a loving brother less in terms of a friend's

71 Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction', 49. See also Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c.1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), 52.
72 Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, 212-14.
73 JRL, DDWF/6/1 (7 Apr. 1725), Emily Wesley, [Epworth], to John Wesley, Oxford.
74 See earlier in this chapter, pp. 186-87.
75 JRL, DDWF/5/8 (3 Jul. 1731), Samuel Wesley to Susanna Wesley.

obligations and services, than in terms of – I argue – the physical, and emotional closeness of caring for and conversing with each other. Perhaps a vivid description of a loving brother was delivered by Emily Wesley, in a letter to her most beloved brother John in 1730:

> The Tye of frendship, being far preferable to that of Blood, now I fancy my self with the Brother I so dearly Love, that I am talking with him, and injoying all the pleasures of his conversation, vain tho pleasing Delusion, for from me is placed that companion, who coud render Life pleasing.[76]

The character of a loving brother was imagined by sisters in relation to the idea of closeness, intimacy, trust, open conversations, and sharing each other's life. Other Wesley sisters struggled for John's favouritism, showing how much they wished to close to him, whom they considered as their most loving brother. In 1727, Martha Wesley bade him not forget her, asking him charmingly: 'can you blame me if I sometimes wish I had bin so happy as to have had the first place in your Heart?' Likewise, when Mary Wesley had not had a chance to converse with her brother John through letter-writing for a while, she lamented: 'I have not the good hap to be one of Yrs favourite Sisters'.[77] Similarly, in 1738, when Emily received the news that John would soon go to Germany to spread his Methodist doctrine, she bemoaned his decision: 'Love to your Sister in trouble is more pleasing in the sight of God and Man then preaching to a 1000, where you have no business'.[78] Yet, I am not suggesting that a beloved brother had to behave himself according to the sisterly definition of a loving brother. Rather, the examples from the Wesleys suggest that in these sisters' imagination, the image of a loving brother entailed both physical and emotional closeness between the siblings, the closeness that was expected to express best by caring for and conversing with each other.[79]

Indeed, surviving records of other siblings bolster my claim about the relationship between sibling closeness and the image of a loving brother. Witness the Quaker siblings, John (1735-1813) and Mariabella Eliot, from a London merchant family. In December 1759, Mariabella informed her younger brother John, who had recently become a bridegroom, of the state of her mind after having not received any letters from him for a while:

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76 JRL, DDWF/6/3 (9 Feb. 1730), Emily Wesley to John Wesley, Oxford.

77 JRL, DDWF/6/2 (31 Dec. 1729), Emily Wesley, Lincoln, to John Wesley, Oxford; JRL, DDWF/12/2 (7 Feb. 1727), Martha Wesley to same; JRL, DDWF/8/1 (20 Jan. 1727), Mary Wesley to same.

78 JRL, DDWF/6/9 (24 Nov. 1738), Emily Harper to John Wesley, Oxford.

79 Compare my argument on the siblings' intimate conversations with Ruth Perry's observation about how Jane Austen privileged the intimate brother-sister tie in her *Mansfield Park* in which Fanny Price enjoys her happiness in 'unchecked, equal, fearless intercourse' with Edmund Bertram. See Perry, *Novel Relations*, 146, quoted from Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, ed. Tony Tanner (Harmondsworth, 1966), 244.

> [L]et me tell thee my Heart is more inclined to Jealousy, than ever I knew it, not that I am desirous to prevent in the least thy Love to One; [...] but that thou mai'st continue to me that Share in thy Affections, which I flatter myself I have to enjoyed [*sic*], this being the Case, how Wellcome must thy Letters be, as a proof of the Remembrance of thy Sister in the Mid'st of pleasing engagements, and bestowing on her so much of thy Time, Continue I beseech this Comfort to me in thy Absence.[80]

Just as constant letter-writing signified a suitor's sincerity to his lover, so a sister considered a brother's correspondence a measure of his 'Affections' towards her.[81] Letters were 'proof of the Remembrance of thy Sister', a sibling regulation that every loving brother ought to know. It is also noteworthy that Mariabella used the term 'Jealousy' to describe her emotion, when being left unattended by her beloved brother. However, she clearly stated that she did not ask John to abandon his wife. Rather, her 'Jealousy' brought her to implore him that she would continue in his remembrance, that is, a sign of the siblings' physical and emotional closeness. Perhaps, we can understand Mariabella's concerns of being left alone better when we realise that John was her the only immediate relation left to her, as her parents had died years ago and she was still unmarried. She was destined to be completely dependent on her brother. Thus, any signs that confirmed that she would continue in her brother's mind were favourable for her.

In addition, a loving brother was expected to show proper signs of his fraternal love towards his sisters, when they were not living together. These signs were best encoded in a brother's anxiety, uneasiness and remembrance of his sisters. In July 1761, the married John Eliot left his ill sister Mariabella at Bartholomew Close in London, while he embarked on a journey to Bristol for a Quaker meeting. His letter before the journey illuminates how John performed his role as a loving brother:

> Since I left Thee, thou hast been often, in my Thoughts in the Consideration of thy present ill State of Health, insomuch that I rather queried with myself whether I had done well to leave thee. This brought Uneasiness over my Mind, [...] I consider'd likewise that thou knew our Route, & so couldst let me hear from thee, that if necessary I might order my Return soon Dear Sister these are but small Acknowledgements for thy Regard & Care of me which have been great & often manifested, occurring sometimes to my Mind, & making me fear lest I have not allow'd them their due obligation on me. Forgive me if that has been the Case, but yet I believe thou will say that our dwelling together has been in Love, & we have never chosen to be long Separated.[82]

John's anxiety about his sister's illness never went out of his mind. Indeed, John's letter epitomised his anxiety driven by his brotherly tender care for his sister. This message was certainly well received by his sister, as she wrote back to him a week later: 'I desire [...] thou wou'd not be uneasy on my Account. [...] I can very truly Assure thee that I am not

80 LMA, ACC/1017/1019 (20 Dec. 1759), Mariabella Eliot, London, to John Eliot, Bristol.
81 See Chapter 1, pp. 46-48.
82 LMA, ACC/1017/1024 (22 Jul. 1761), John Eliot, Putney, to Mariabella Eliot, London.

insensable of thy tender Care of me'.[83] Needless to say, we shall never know whether John actually felt so uneasy and worried about his sister's illness that he was ready to interrupt the meeting to attend her, if necessary, or, if this was simply his attempt to calm her down. Perhaps John really did feel thus, as we should not forget that family solidarity formed a core identity of the Quakers ('dwelling together' was discourse which loomed large in the Eliot correspondence).[84] Whatever it might be, Mariabella clearly sensed John's brotherly love by reading the perturbations represented in his letter. In this light, men's anxiety about their siblings became a lucid sign of brotherly masculinity. Anxiety and uneasiness did not always suggest men's weakness of mind; they could signify an admirable masculine quality if they were represented at a correct place and time.

* * * *

The final section of this chapter will look into the role of sibling relationships in fashioning and confirming the individuals' character, personality, and personal identity. As I have just noted, siblings understood the praiseworthy state of their relationships in terms of physical and emotional closeness. Therefore, it is no wonder that siblings often looked forward to their reunions. In such an occasion, sibling ties offered a homecoming brother an opportunity to sense his important position in the family. Having left his estate in Cumberland for a while for his grand tour in continental Europe, Sir Michael le Fleming (1748-1806) received in December 1766 a charming letter from his three younger sisters – Amelia, Elizabeth and Dorothy. All three girls struggled for their brother's favouritism, each writing one paragraph to assert her enthusiastic participation. Yet no one excelled like the little Dorothy in eliciting her brother's smile. In childish but charming handwriting, she wrote: 'Dear Brother, we are all very throng making Christmas Pyes and nothing would compleat our happiness more than your company to eat some of them'.[85] Only a heart of stone would not believe that her brother's presence at Christmas would please her. However, due to paucity of the surviving evidence, it is impossible to know how this brother felt when he knew that his homecoming was much awaited by his sisters. Perhaps, he did not want to come back home at all if he enjoyed his grand tour.

83 LMA, ACC/1017/1021 (29 Jul. 1761), Mariabella Eliot to John Eliot, Reading.

84 Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1982), 183. Also, see Erin Bell, 'The Early Quakers, the Peace Testimony and Masculinity in England, 1660-*1720', G&H*, 23 (2011), 283-300.

85 CRO/Ken, WDRY/3/3/11 (12 Dec. 1766), [The Sisters of le Fleming] to Sir Michael le Fleming, Groningen.

Nevertheless, this sisterly yearning for their complete family reunion suggests that how much these sisters valorised their brother's presence at home. His special position in their minds can hardly be mistaken.

Likewise, surviving evidence from other families shows that family reunion proved to be a special occasion in which brothers were offered an opportunity to show off their masculinity, which they had developed in the outer world, to their siblings when they came back home and entered the 'family stage'.[86] Take a serviceman of the East India Company, Richard Greene, as an example. In the 1760s, when Richard came back home, his arrival at Slyne was often received with remarkable enthusiasm from his younger brother William. For example, the boy wrote from his boarding school in Slyne to welcome his brother home: '[A]s you say something about paying me a visit, [...] I shall then expect to hear every particular from your own mouth which will be much more agreeable than from your pen'. On another occasion, the boy commanded his brother that 'you may give me as full an account of your last voyage as you can, you may likewise inform me what you have brought home[,] how long you stay, and what you have got ready for your next venture'.[87] William's series of curious questions to his homecoming brother, Richard, is suggestive. Given that William was still at a boarding school and literally a boy, his questions revealed how excited the boy was and how he was looking forward to listening to his brother's accounts of his adventurous journey. He was especially expecting to know what his brother had 'brought home'. For William, Richard was his 'window on the world', bridging his small rural world of Lancashire with the wider world of adventure and exotic knowledge.[88] Perhaps, William considered his older brother as a family superstar.

However, I am not arguing that a homecoming brother would always feel comfortable with the family reunion, or he looked forward to narrating his stories and activities with which he used to develop his masculine traits. This partly depends on what an individual had experienced in the outer world, whether it was success or failures. Rather, what I am suggesting is that we cannot ignore the role of sibling relationships in which siblings offered a brother a chance to express and boast his developed masculinity. In many cases, we need intensive and imaginative reconstruction if we want to try to

86 'Family stage' and 'community state' were terms coined by the historian Rhys Isaac who adopted the terms as a framework for his performative analysis of mid- and late-eighteenth century colonial Virginia; see his, *The Transformation of Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2nd edition 1999).

87 LRO, DDGr/C1 (22 Sep. n.d.), William Greene, Sedbergh, to Richard Greene, Slyne; LRO, DDGr/C1 (4 Nov. n.d.), same to same, Lancaster.

88 Cf. Davidoff, '*Where Strangers Begin*', 210, where she suggests that brothers acted as a 'window on the world' for sisters.

gauge the impact of family reunion on a brother's mind.

Let us try to speculate, as an example, how a family reunion may have an impact on the homecoming brother. In case of the sailor Richard Greene, we exactly know from his own writing that how hard and dangerous his voyage was. In a letter of 1763, Richard recounted his adventurous journey to Rio de Janeiro to his eldest brother Thomas:

> [W]e have had a very good passage, and arriv'd here on the twenty first of July but in the passage five of our men died four of 'em Soldiers, since we came here Misfortunes is daily happening about a week a goe, one of our Sailors was Stabb'd on Shore by a Ginuee [*sic*], but am very well and content in my Station. [...] The Officers are all very Civil, we Live very well and do not want for work, but that I do not mind, as I am not in the least afraid of weathering this Voyage.[89]

A story like this was possibly a place where the traditional qualities of manliness came together: knowledge, courage, hard work and discipline.[90] Thus, in a sibling reunion, a brother could find a favourable occasion to present his masculinity to his siblings who were acting as his peers. For some men, like Richard Greene, a sibling reunion would have offered a chance to reaffirm their manhood and masculine self-esteem. One might imagine how proud of himself Richard would have been when he recounted his life on board. Perhaps he was never more proud of his courage and hard work than when he told his young brother about his journey to Rio de Janeiro, as he had narrated to his elder brother Thomas before.

For proof of the role of family reunion as an opportunity for a brother to reaffirm his masculine self-esteem, we actually need look at a man who was ignored by his siblings when he entered the family stage, intending to show off his achieved manliness. In 1803 a poor, Baptist soldier Joseph Mayett (1783-1839) from Buckinghamshire got short leave and went back home to meet his two younger brothers. Having trained for a couple of months and been nearly promoted to 'a Corporal for I was very clean', the 20-year-old Joseph 'was very proud at that time and thought myself somebody but I knew not who'. As he went home in May 1803, he reported his reunion with his brothers in his autobiography, but in rather a disappointed tone:

> on the 15th of may [my] brothers Came to see me [...] I told my brothers the news but they being young paid but little attention to it. soon after we had dined my brothers gave me the slip and went off unknown to me but I happened to look out at the window and saw them

89 LRO, DDGr/C1 (1 Sep. 1763), Richard Greene, Rio Jenero, to Thomas Greene, London.

90 Literature on a sailor's life at sea can fill a library in its own right, but see Stephen Moore, '"A Nation of Harlequins"? Politics and Masculinity in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', *JBS*, 49 (2010), 514-39; Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge, 2008); Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (Pimlico, 2003); Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2002). For a recent publication on an eighteenth-century mariner's life, see Andrew Hopper (ed*.), The World of John Secker 1716-95: Quaker* Mariner (Croydon, 2011).

> and ran after them and soon overtook them but I Could not perswade them to stop any longer with me.[91]

Joseph's record implies that he was upset at being ignored by his brothers, as he was looking forward to telling them of his improvement and advancement, a comparatively great achievement for a poor man without a proper education like the gentry and the middling-sorts. It is striking to see how much Joseph was looking forward to having his brothers listen to his 'news', because he made an effort to run after them and persuaded them to 'stop any longer with me', but failed eventually. At that time his two brothers, William (b. 1786) and Thomas (b. 1790), were aged 17 and 13, respectively. They could not be too 'young' to ignore what Joseph intended to tell them, that is, about his life and career in the infantry of which he was 'very proud'. Perhaps his record – 'they being young paid but little attention to it' – was a means of consoling himself after being neglected by his brothers. Whatever the cause of their not paying attention to Joseph's story might be, we can still see that Joseph was looking forward to affirming his acquired self-esteem with his siblings in a family reunion. In other words, without his siblings' confirmation a brother's self-esteem could not be perfected.

The final aspect to be discussed briefly here is the issue of how sibling closeness contributed to the fashioning of a brother's character, and how a brother used the sibling relationship as a reference point in constructing his personal identity. However, I can offer only a limited discussion, for a lengthy analysis needs more psychological knowledge than mine.[92] Nevertheless, my attempt to touch on this issue should serve as a stepping-stone, or as an inspiration, for historians of the eighteenth century towards their further in-depth research.

As Leonore Davidoff has suggested, sibling relationships can cause identification or rejection in fashioning one's individualism. 'Brothers and sisters can represent models for us', writes Davidoff. 'We strive to be like them but they can also represent rejected traits, values and behaviours; they can repel as well as attract'.[93] This is by no means restricted to contemporary society. We find evidence of it in the eighteenth century, too. However, having surveyed the ten collections of family archives, which I used as my source base for this chapter, I found with no small surprise that I came across only two,

91 Ann Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton (1783-1839)* (Cambridge, 1986), 24-25.

92 For psychological analysis of on the impact of sibling relationships on brothers and sisters in contemporary societies, see Edwards *et al.*, *Sibling Identity and Relationships*; Rowe, *My Dearest Enemy, my Dangerous Friends*; Peter Goldenthal, *Why Can't We Get Along? Healing Adult Sibling Relationships* (New York, 2002).

93 Davidoff, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept', 413.

but compelling, pieces of evidence which allow us to have a glimpse at the two models with which siblings used to construct their personal character and identity. What follows is, therefore, my experiment to demonstrate how two eighteenth-century brothers used sibling ties for identifying themselves with or rejecting themselves from other siblings to form his own individualism.

Let us begin with an identification model. Since gender difference was strict, sibling identification normally happened among same-sex siblings. John and Charles Wesley's relationship offers a perfect glimpse of this issue. John was four years older than Charles. Both of them were educated at Westminster school and then Oxford University, covering the period from the 1710s to 1730s. In 1728, Samuel Wesley, their elder brother, accommodated 21-year-old Charles in London. Samuel was so struck by Charles' personality, that he penned a line to his brother John: 'Charles is still with me here, [...] He was when he came up, so intirely infected with Your Gravity, that every Motion & Look made me almost suspect it was You, nay I begin now to think he will hardly ever lay aside the present Solemmity [*sic*] of his Person & Behaviour'.[94] Charles himself also verified Samuel's observation. He reflected on his life in 1785 that 'my Brother [i.e. John] had the Ascendant over me, [...] he overruled me here also'.[95] John's personal magnetism was confirmed.

What was the reason for Charles' identification with his brother John? We do not know the answer exactly. Perhaps the age gap played a key role, as the eldest brother was 17 years older than Charles, while John was only four years his senior. The length of time John and Charles spent together could be another reason. However, a clue was given by Samuel when he observed that Charles gradually absorbed John's 'Gravity' in 'every Motion & Look'. If gesture was important in expressing one's gender, as Judith Butler famously argued, this suggests that Charles considered gravity and solemnity as a performative part of his masculinity.[96] It was then John Wesley's supreme self-confidence and self-control that attracted his younger brother. In this sense, sibling closeness could help a brother to form and develop his sense of being a proper man.

What about rejection, then? The rejection model does not necessarily mean that hatred reigns over the sibling relationship. Rather, it means that a sibling is trying to differentiate himself from the other(s) to create his individual character and personality. One example reveals this issue lovingly. Earlier, we met the Collier boys from Hastings;

94 JRL, DDWF/5/7 (6 Jan. 1727/8), Samuel Wesley to John Wesley, Epworth.
95 JRL, DDWes/1/38 (29 Apr. 1785), Charles Wesley, London, to Thomas B. Chandler.
96 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York, 1993).

Jacky was one year older than his brother Jemmy. Both were educated at the same institutions. Jacky was a lovely and obedient boy, whereas Jemmy was naughty and jolly.[97] In 1730, the boys were pupils at a boarding school in Battel. Jacky wrote a letter to their parents in which he desired of his mother to 'send me Hennets Roman Antiquities and Erasmus Colloquies'. At the end of this letter, Jemmy made an effort to insert some lines. In very childish handwriting, he let his father know his wishes:

> This is to let you know that I am in good health and I hope you are well I desire to you to buy me a Watch and desire you to let my Papa read this and See whether he will laugh at this.[98]

This is a vivid example of how a boy differentiated himself from his sibling. One might argue that since Jemmy was a naughty boy and did not pay much attention to his books and study, it was therefore unsurprising that he asked for 'a Watch' instead of books like his brother. That is, Jemmy's behaviour came out of his own habits. So far, so simple. Yet, upon reading Jemmy's lines, we gain the impression that he intended to *tease* his parents; he intended to fashion himself as an opposite figure to his learned brother, and let this opposition to be present in the same letter. Whatever it was, Jemmy eventually got his watch in the next two years.[99] Jemmy might have behaved himself that way, perhaps because of his naughtiness in teasing his strict father. However, it is interesting that even an ordinary boy was apt to fashion and individualise himself. And, in this process the sibling relationship played a vital role.

* * * *

This chapter has discussed at length the roles of siblings in constructing and performing brotherly masculinity. As I noted at the beginning, the chapter aims to problematise Ruth Perry's argument on the ideal brotherhood. Perry contends that brotherly masculinity was *chiefly* measured – conferred or denied – by a man's behaviour towards his sisters *alone*, as if other factors – such as birth order, sibling obligations and gender relations – did not play a vital role in the brothers' lives. Perry also suggests that brotherly love towards the sisters became 'a moral litmus test', a sign which guaranteed that he would be a good husband.[100]

By contrast, this chapter has taken a broader perspective, looking into the roles,

97 See Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 121-22, 146.
98 ESRO, SAY 1554 (29 Jan. 1730), Jacky Collier, Battell, to Mary Collier, Hastings.
99 ESRO, SAY 1603 (9 Dec. 1732), John Collier, London, to Mary Collier, Hastings.
100 Perry, *Novel Relations*, ch. 4.

obligations, and expectations within the sibling relationships, and how these had impacts on the brothers' gendered lives. This was striking in the case of eldest brothers whose birth order gave them privileged status in the sibling hierarchy. However, this superiority came with a range of obligations which eldest brothers were expected to perform. Their duties, such as breadwinner and guide, rendered them the 'second patriarch' of their families, second only to their fathers. Other sons could find benefit from sibling relationships, too. This was because of the nature of the sibling relationship itself. Siblings valorised their relationships and viewed them in terms of physical and emotional closeness. This led to siblings' desire for mutual practical assistance and deep devotion. In such a close tie, a 'family stage' would emerge in which each actor, that is the siblings, had a chance to present himself as a loving brother or set forth his achieved manliness to his siblings. This was a significant opportunity for brothers to reaffirm their masculine self-esteem with their family peers. Also, this closeness in person and emotion offered siblings a chance to develop their individualism out of this close relationship. In closeness, some men may have followed their brothers' valued traits of manliness to make sense of their own masculine identity, like in the case of Charles Wesley. Others may have differentiated themselves from their brothers to fashion their own unique characters and personalities, laudable or not, as in the case of the naughty young boy Jemmy Collier, who fashioned himself in opposition to his learned and solemn brother. Thus, it was this close nature of sibling relationships that offered men a channel to make sense of their lives.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, family relationships are used as analytical categories that are brought into play in order to shed light on the meanings and practices of male gender. Although sociologists have long recognised the significance of family in fashioning the individual's gender,[1] students of men's history have moved only slowly towards this fashion.[2] Unless familial relationships are studied, our understandings of male gender will always be obscured.

Historical narratives on eighteenth-century masculinity have limited the scope of the topic. Consequently, they dwarfed our understandings of men's lives. Patriarchy – and with it the female subordination in different adjusting forms – has been an overriding theme in exploring the role of men in gender relations. Historians have taken for granted that patriarchy automatically gained its momentum when the household was set up. This leads to our ignorance of the on-going process of the construction of patriarchy in daily experiences. Moreover, this approach narrowly views patriarchy only in the persons of the husbands and the fathers, who exercised or abused their absolute power over their subordinates. It simply fails to reveal other nuanced meanings that the concept had alongside being the overarching factor in constructing and performing male gender identities. Other historians have prioritised clubs and salons, dance and drills, battles and seas, over familial ties in fashioning masculinity, leading to a narrow view of men's lives in which the importance of lovers, wives, parents and siblings were enormously downplayed. In effect, this approach unconsciously reiterates and reinforces the theory of 'separate spheres' in which hearth and home were imagined as feminine.

Differing from these conventional approaches, this thesis has brought men back to their families, to the very fundamental matrix of their interpersonal relationships. While historians tend to search for the meanings of masculinity by reading prescriptive literature, novels, paintings, and caricature, I have given a due weight to decoding the meanings of masculinity out of male lived experiences. I have prioritised men's reflections on their own actions and behaviour over those representational sources whose absolute authority in constructing genders has already been questioned by several scholars. Reading people's self-writings, such as diaries and letters, autobiographies and

1 R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge, 1987), 121.

2 John Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept', in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, 2011), 18-20.

memoirs, has enabled me to discover the different meanings of being a man which varied according to men's identities. This thesis rejects the notion that masculinity was confined to only *one* prevailing concept, be it sociable gentlemanliness or perfect household management. Instead, this study has argued that within familial relationships, masculinity was constructed, or undermined, by men's capacity for performing gendered familial obligations. Depending on which role a man was playing, the predominant concepts of eighteenth-century masculinity were sincerity, patriarchy, the 'future' and the 'second' patriarch. Looking at male experiences helps us to move away from, though not ignore, the dictates of politeness and 'oeconomy' in fashioning male gender identity.

In addition, this study adopts Robert Connell's definition of masculinity as its framework. For Connell, masculinity is 'the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives' to engage the place of the male in the gender hierarchy. And, these practices have impacts on people's personalities.[3] This approach enables me to identify more than a catalogue of those social values that were essential to be a man. Instead, this study has revealed masculinity as it was constructed and maintained by the correspondence between families' expectations and men's performances. This was an on-going process involving tensions and negotiations among family members. As I have shown throughout this thesis, masculinity was shaped, configured and re-configured, and given meanings by women and men within the family. Men needed to perform their familial roles and duties to gain social recognition and, consequently, self-esteem. Masculinity was then, as now, more than a set of social values: it consisted of gendered lives and practices.

However, this research is not an exhaustive account of eighteenth-century men's lives. By prioritising men's different identities within their family ties, this study has examined only heterosexual men. Scholars have unpacked our understandings of conventional concepts of family and marriage, arguing for the study of the fluidity of family as an institution.[4] Alan Bray points out that in early modern England, even heterosexual men often described their friendship as 'Animorum Connubium' or 'a marriage of souls', although there was no homoerotic desires between them.[5] This should lead us to think about how masculinity was understood and performed within that paradigm in comparison to actual, marital life between men and women. As for the eighteenth century, Helen Berry has explored the conjugal relationship between a woman

3 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (1995; Berkley, 2005), 71.
4 Eve Kosofsky Sedwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (London, 2008).
5 Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago, 2007), 141 and *passim*.

and an emasculated man, the castrato Tenducci, urging historians to pay more attention to alternative relationships, or what she calls 'the elasticity of the institution of marriage'.[6] In this fine study, Berry has also pointed out that '[i]n many respects castrati matched the aesthetics of an idealized form of male beauty beloved by eighteenth-century Europeans', embodied in their fine cut figures with remarkable height, and pale-soft skin. Berry's findings have challenged and complicated our thoughts about the rigid boundary of beauty and the sexed body.[7] Further research can be done to explore the practices of gendered lives by such marginalised men, or to engage with alternative meanings of masculinity.

Arguably, family ties are an important analytical category, which have proved to be a useful framework for exploring the constructions and performances of masculinity. Looking at masculinity through the prism of family ties, this thesis has attempted to unpack our knowledge from the conventional confinement of male gender to only *one* social category, be it the household manager or the polite gentleman. Thus, the findings presented here can be understood in terms of three overarching themes: gender hierarchy, gendered roles and obligations, and the impact of these gendered practices on men's gender identity and personality.

It is not an exaggerated claim that the concepts of gender formed the 'concrete and symbolic organization of all social life'.[8] In the family structure, the male enjoyed the higher social position, whereas the female took on the subordinate one. This gender hierarchy infused not only the practices of daily life, but also people's imagination. It grieved a man when his authority was challenged. In 1798, as we saw in chapter two, the thirty-two-year-old Samuel Wesley sensed his social identity being transformed by the unfair action of his Amazonian wife who 'proceeded to lift her Hand' against him. At the moment, Samuel despairingly 'felt' no longer as '"her Lord, her Governor, her King"', but instead 'a Dupe' who 'had been in remaining so long under the same Roof' with her.[9] Perhaps the significance of the gender hierarchy in constructing men's gender identities was never more tellingly laid bare than in this husband's words.

Although the privileged position of men in gender relations was recognised, it did not necessarily mean that male dominance always went unquestioned by their subordinates. Patriarchy was an on-going process which was constructed, performed, and

6 Helen Berry, 'Queering the History of Marriage: The Social Recognition of a Castrato Husband in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *HWJ*, 74 (2012), 29, 45.
7 Helen Berry, *The Castrato and His Wife* (Oxford, 2011), 75.
8 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *AHR*, 91 (1986), 1069.
9 JRL, DDWF/15/7 (23 May 1798), Samuel Wesley to Sally Wesley. See Chapter 2, pp. 70, 86-87.

negotiated within familial relationships. The process was shaped by patriarchal expectations. Historians of women's history have shown that unhappy wives were apt to find their shelter in coverture, or the rule of polite company to protect themselves from their inefficient breadwinners or brutal patriarchs.[10] However, while women could publicly question men who failed to perform their patriarchal duties, my source material does suggest a different picture in the case of unhappy children. As I showed in chapter three, children who were neglected by their fathers could only raise their quizzical eyebrows against their forsaking paterfamilias. A daughter lamented in 1733: '"Parents are requir'd to take care of, provide for, and instruct their Children" but I cant think the Duty and Obedience of a Child arises from the Parents being the Instrument of its coming into Life: but from his Protection, Tenderness Affection and continual Endeavours to make it Happy'.[11] In a daughter's eyes, the devoted paternal performance was a crucial index for measuring her father's personal merit, which in turn buttressed his patriarchal legitimacy – at least in his progeny's imagination. Yet there is no evidence in my case studies to suggest that the unhappy children would actually rebel against their fathers' authority. Perhaps this is not unexpected, for daughters had less opportunity to conduct their own lives in comparison to their brothers, who had more independent space in their lives. However, even the profligate sons still surrendered to their patriarch, seeking paternal benevolence and forgiveness. Male dominance practically ruled the family, but its legitimacy was not always absolute. It was constructed in relation to how men performed their patriarchal and paternal expectations.

Therefore, it is the overarching argument of this thesis that the construction of masculinity was an on-going process in which men negotiated their gender through performing their gendered roles and obligations towards their family members. Witness a letter written by Rev. William Money (1776-1848) who earned his living at Yatesbury. In 1812, he was left alone at home, while his wife Emma and their children attended her own father in Middlesex. William dramatised his miserable, solitary life, and yearned for his family ties to revitalise his manhood:

> My dearest Emma,
>
> Absolute solitude is not good for man. Even Adam, amid the delights of Paradise, did not exactly enjoy it. If therefore you do not shortly return, I shall have out the Gig, & become gay.[12]

10 For women and coverture, read Margot Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, *c.*1760-1860', *HJ*, 39 (1996), 703-22. For the role of polite company on the decline of wife-beating, see Elizabeth Foyster, 'Creating a Veil of Silence? Politeness and Marital Violence in the English Household', *TRHS*, 12 (2002), 395-415.

11 JRL, DDWF/13/3 (26 Mar. 1733), Kezziah Wesley to John Wesley, Oxford. See Chapter 3, pp. 111-13.

Without his wife and children, William would soon take the carriage out ('I shall have out the Gig'), left the house, and became wild and frivolous. As I argued in chapter two, the husband earned his patriarchal status – *inter alia* – through the roles of 'moral leader', 'benevolent provider', and 'great comforter'. Thus, without his wife and children around him, William could not perform these gendered duties. He would then experience the different role of gaiety, and abandoned all of his patriarchal obligations. The house alone did not enable a man to experience the full state of manhood. It was family ties that allowed him to conduct his gender, through performing the gendered roles and obligations. Indeed, William had written to his wife a fortnight earlier, implying that without his wife and children around him, he thought as if he became a bachelor: '[Y]ou have, […] been absent half your time. I have been so long a Bachelor that wedded life will be quite new to me again'.[13] Perhaps this is just a strategy to urge his wife to return to his arms sooner. Nevertheless, it underlines the centrality of family life and family members in enabling a man to inhabit his gendered identity. William's letter provides a clear rejection of Karen Harvey's overemphasis of the *house* in constructing masculinity.[14]

Just as Rev. William Money located the source of manhood in his patriarchal roles, so we can understand the prevailing concepts of male gender from looking at men's gendered expectations and performances. The variety of masculine gendered roles and concepts are delineated as follows. As a suitor, a man was expected to perform sincerity by showing a sign of rejecting sociable activities, and that of keeping behaviour and self-improvement to conform to his vows. Once he entered the matrimonial stage, it was patriarchy which formed the core concept of masculinity, embodied in – in my terms – the role of 'benevolent provider', 'moral leader' and 'loving comforter'. As a father, a man constructed and developed his gender identity around the image of a breadwinner, intellectual guide, moral instructor, as well as being an indulgent and loving father. Performing paternal duties could shape a father's image in his children's eyes as well as his own inner character and feelings, involving anxiety, strictness, worry, readiness to protect his offspring, or playfulness. The prevailing concept of male childhood was the construction of the perfect 'future patriarch' who was apt to show a sign of his readiness to take care of his family, and, to some extent, to sacrifice himself for the sake of his family members. Lastly, as for brotherhood, sibling hierarchy played a vital role in shaping the

12 WSA, 1720/829 Photocopies of Money family correspondence (30 May 1812), William Money, Whetham, to Emma Money, Colney Hatch.
13 WSA, 1720/829 (14 May 1812) William Money, Whetham, to Emma Money, Colney Hatch.
14 Harvey, *Little Republic*, *passim*.

ways men perceived their social status. Although brothers, regardless of their birth rank, were expected to show their protective characters to their siblings of both sexes, the eldest brothers were especially required to take up the role of – what could be called – 'the second patriarch'. Sibling obligations contributed, therefore, to the ways men fashioned and performed their masculinity, no less than other types of familial relationships.

What, then, was the impact of these gendered roles and practices on men's mentality and how they understood their personhood? I have found that men orientated themselves around their familial expectations to generate their own approved self-images and represent themselves to their peers, when they came to define themselves and wanted to highlight their own manliness. Take a suitor and a husband, as examples. As sincerity was the prevailing concept for measuring a devoted suitor, some suitors were apt to distinguish themselves from other candidates by emphasising their loyalty embodied in the persona of a reserved lover who represented himself as opposite to the sociable men about town. One lover reminded his sweetheart in 1787 of his trueheartedness: 'You I am sure will readily allow the pernicious tendency that Flattery must have, & your good sense will as easily distinguish between the unmeaning compliments of Men of the World, & those which are sincere; & I cannot suppose you seriously think mine to be of [the] former description'.[15] In marital relationships, men were eager to underline their strong sense of family responsibility, although in practice some of them could not perform their obligations perfectly. Consider, once again, how Rev. Charles Powlett represented himself to his wife. Having visited the colleges at Oxford in 1799, he compared their carefree single lives with his own pauperised, but married one. He proudly proclaimed that: '[T]hey have no anxiety for want of Money, no Cares about the welfare of their Family, but where are their pleasure? [...] Science can only fill the Head, but the Heart of a Fellow is a Vacuum!'. Without the family responsibility, a man's soul could not be completed, for it lacked the 'Sentiment of affection' which derived from – in Rev.'s Powlett's eyes – the duty of the breadwinner.[16] It was therefore family obligations that this man used to define his manliness, and to distinguish himself from other men, whom he may have seen as less man than himself. Thus, the conduct of masculinity in men's family lives crucially shaped the ways they defined themselves and formed their own approved self-images and self-esteem.

It is to be noted that I have attempted to vary my sample case-studies in terms of

15 BCA, MS 3101/C/E/4/8/7 (7 Oct. 1787), Joseph Strutt, Derby, to Isabella Douglas, Sandy Brook.
16 HRO, 72M92/7/22 (15 Dec. 1799), Charles Powlett, Oxford, to Anne Powlett, Basingstoke. See Chapter 2, pp. 95-96.

social ranks and denominations to gauge whether there were distinct forms of masculinity. By and large, I have found that family ties were important in the construction of masculinity throughout. However, there were significant differences across society. Firstly, with regard to social ranks, family hierarchy played a remarkable role in fashioning upper-rank masculinity, whereas this seemed to be of less importance among families down the social scale. While elite husbands singled out their prestigious role of superintendent in household management to highlight their patriarchal status, middling-sort and labouring poor husbands tended to emphasise their patriarchal legitimacy by pointing to their daily effort to feed, clothe and shelter their family members. In this respect, it is even more striking when we look at how the first-born son of the landed family gained the special role in watching out the family's estate and managing the inheritance among his siblings. Although the eldest son always enjoyed the outstanding position in the family, it was only in the upper-rank family that the first-born son generally presided over the family members after the death of their father. Even among the boys, I have found that only parents from upper-rank and upper-middling-sort families tended to instil the importance of sibling hierarchy into their male offspring, by instructing their older sons to be good example for their younger siblings. Such an instruction was extremely rare among the lower-middling-sort and labouring poor families. Thus, familial hierarchy seemed to be more crucial for performing upper-rank masculinity than to other social ranks.

With regard to denomination, it is noteworthy that different religious sects affected men's behaviour in different ways. Anglican, Evangelical and Methodist men gave a due weight to family life in performing their gender. Consequently, these men often to be perceived by their family members as loving, devoted family men. This image was even more palpable among the Quaker families whose faith prescribed the family solidarity as a core identity of their religious ways of life. By contrast, Unitarians seemed to be most detached from the image of a loving family man. This does not suggest that Unitarians were not interested in their family members. Rather, I would contend that their serious religious outlook may have caused the image of unsentimental, reflective man. To some extent, as we saw in the case of the young Richard Kay from Bury, the strict self-vigilance, which formed a core part of Unitarianism, could force a man to reflect constantly on his spiritual and worldly shortcomings, which in effect would result in a man's stronger sense of continual self-improvement than men from other religious sects. However, this is only my interim suggestions on the influence of denominations on

shaping masculinity. How the faith and commandments of a particular religious sect governed the ways its believers conducted their gendered lives awaits a meticulous study.

In the final part of this conclusion, I will reflect on three aspects in relation to this study. My reflection should serve as a stepping-stone towards a further discussion of gender history in general. These aspects are: the limits of family ties in men's history, the role of women in fashioning masculinity in eighteenth-century historiography, and the issue of change over time.

Firstly, this study has examined men's lived experiences within their familial relationships, as recorded in ego-documents. However, there are some limits to this approach. Ego-documents rarely allow us to gauge men's subjectivity, especially their inner weakness. This is partly because of the nature of the sources, for men tended mostly to record their approved self-images. For example, we lack empirical evidence for any beleaguered self-esteem as household head, at times when men's capacity as breadwinners was doubted. John Tosh, the pioneer of the study of men's subjective identity, claimed that in that situation, a man would feel insecure about his status. This may result in the man's violent personality, as a reactionary struggle to maintain his superiority in the family. Yet, Tosh accepted that: 'It is, however, not easy to substantiate'.[17] By contrast, the American feminist historian, Toby Ditz, is overtly sceptical about the assumption that male violence against women 'signal[led] a crisis in masculinity'. Based on her survey of historical work on colonial America, Ditz states that male dominance and white supremacy were strengthened by the Evangelical church. She argues that this 'newly secured institutional domain' led to 'the rewards of reformed masculinity', in which the 'new bonds of collective fellowship with like-minded men' were 'comparatively undisturbed by continued challenges to white men's prerogatives'. As such, the claim that male violence against women was a defensive response to a crisis in masculinity was only difficult to imagine, for there was unlikely to have been such a crisis in men's history. Instead, Ditz suggests that such violence can be 'one of the sanctioned, if uglier techniques that some men routinely use to maintain their gendered privileges over women and other men'.[18] But, do we have direct testimonies to substantiate the claim that the secured, public institutional domain of masculinity would *always* secure (or stabilise) an individual man's subjectivity, when his capacity as breadwinner was doubted or when his

17 John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London, 1999), 95-97.

18 Toby L. Ditz, 'The New Men's History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies from Early American Gender History', *G&H*, 16 (2004), 1-35, quoted from pp. 6-7, 20.

patriarchal status was ignored?

To illuminate the limits of ego-documents in exploring men's emotional weakness, we need to look at one case in which a paterfamilias was confronted by his difficult children. The most promising example in my study is the diary entry of Rev. William Temple from Cornwall in the 1790s, as I demonstrated in chapter three. In one evening in 1796, this father was left alone at home, while all of his progeny enjoyed 'a foolish dancing party'. He described his children's behaviour as 'ρυδε [rude], καπριχιους [capricious]', 'giddy, [and] selfish'. He lamented in his diary that 'How λιττλε κομφορτ [little comfort] I have'.[19] A diary entry written in code always excites every historian. It reveals, perhaps, the most intimate information about the diarist which he himself wanted to conceal. However, we cannot be sure why the diarist used the cipher at all. In my analysis, I suggested three potential interpretations. Perhaps, he wanted to protect his children's reputation should anyone read it. Or, he wanted to avoid leaving any sign of his emotional weakness. Maybe, he wanted to veil his insecure (or neglected) masculine status in the family embodied in his children's lack of respect, obedience and loving attention towards him. Just as we cannot be sure about the reason for the encoding, so we should not overstate the claim that the secured, public institutional domain of masculinity would *always* secure, stabilise, or strengthen an individual man's subjectivity in his private life. We should leave open the possibility that a patriarch's unpeaceful state of mind was a sign of his worry about his insecure masculine status. And, surely, further research to confirm (or reject) these speculations is much needed.

My second reflection on men's history is about the role of women in fashioning masculinity. There are two key narratives in the historiography. Firstly, historians agree on female subordination as one of the major characteristics of femininity. In prescriptive literature, women were imagined to be subordinate to men on account of their inferior rationality with sentimental feelings. Sex and services, companionship and domestic comfort formed the essential parts that women were expected to provide for men. Women's role in domestic gender relations was, therefore, associated with softness, obedience and passiveness. However, when women became 'active' in the gender relation, they are presented by historians as part of a catalyst of marital breakdown. Women became active against their inefficient or violent patriarchs, by seeking shelter in law or inviting their relatives to intervene into their unhappy married lives. Joanne Bailey argues that the conflicts that arose in marital life often occurred when male domestic authority

19 Lewis Bettany (ed.), *Diaries of William Johnston Temple, 1780-1796* (Oxford, 1929), 158, 164. See Chapter 3, pp. 126-27.

collided with the expectations of female domestic expertise.[20] Active women are seen in the historiography as a cause of the collapsing of conjugal bond.

Secondly in regard to polite society, historians working on conduct-manuals have underlined the role of women in refining male manners, noting that polite male behaviour did not lead to effeminacy, but to a superior masculinity. Philip Carter argued that '[t]he male sex among a polite people, discover their authority in more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, and in a word by gallantry'.[21] In this narrative, the female active role in constructing a man's masculinity was mostly reduced to polishing, refining and softening male manners chiefly through polite conversation. One might wonder if the female role still remained thus among the labouring poor families who were not the members of polite society.

By contrast, my research has shown that women did play more vital roles in fashioning masculinity. Their active roles did not necessarily lead to conflicts. Women could shape men's sincere performances, or could give men morale-boasting, such as encouraging their suitors to improve themselves in order to gain their parents' consent for wedding. Wives, daughters and sisters constantly requested their husbands, fathers and brothers to protect, provide, care for, and even guide or instruct them. In some cases, as we have just witnessed the Rev. William Money, without his wife, men thought that they could not perform their gendered roles; and as a consequence, they could not experience their full manhood. A married man in his lonely house was indeed a bachelor. In addition, I have shown that wives defined the definition of conjugal love in terms of physical intimacy, yearning for living together with their husbands, along side with receiving their masculine protection. Some women actively used their intimate definition of marital life, which in effect enabled their husbands to perform the most palpable duty of a patriarch: the procreation of their progeny. Perhaps one need look no further than recalling a genteel wife called Mary Rebow for proof of women's roles in fashioning masculinity, which went beyond the polishing of male manners. Through her active role in defining marital love as sexual intimacy, and consequently with her request for intimate consummation, her husband Isaac was saved from becoming a negligent husband, and was able to fulfil his patriarchal role of procreation.[22] Women's roles in men's lives were far more complex than just refining male manners, or being subordinate passively. An active wife did not

20 Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge, 2003), 199.
21 Philip Carter, 'An 'Effeminate' or 'Efficient' Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary', *TP*, 11 (1997), 438.
22 See Chapter 2, p. 93.

necessarily lead to a marital conflict and marriage breakdown. Historians should move away from the prescriptive literature, if they are determined to examine other roles of women in fashioning masculinity.

Finally, was there change over time in the constructions and performances of eighteenth-century masculinity? This study argues for continuities across the long eighteenth century. However, I am aware of the sheer variety of changes in social and cultural structures which emerged in the period, ranging from the rise of middling-sorts, the birth of a consumer society, the growth of the British Empire, the urban renaissance, the widespread female support of sociable institutions, and many more. Yet, all this rarely contributed to any significant change in the meanings, values, and the gendered practices of masculinity within familial relationships. If patriarchy was a core concept of masculinity, it was altogether present throughout the period. If military manliness happened to trickle down the social scale from the elite to the middling and lower ranks during the wars against Revolutionary France, there is no evidence in my collections that family members were happy when their young boys left home to join military campaigns. Military prowess might be a defining aspect of manhood in the public spheres or all male-company, but it did not necessarily have the same function within family life.

Some historians have argued for the cult of sensibility as a major aspect of changing masculinity. They identify this change in conduct manuals and family portraits of the time.[23] As I discussed in chapters one, two, and three, the sentimental movement only enlarged the ways in which people expressed their attitudes and feelings towards home and their family members. In this cult, men were expected to perform their fond and affectionate characters through the symbolic language of sentimentalism, such as tears, sighs, palpitations, and imaginary visions. However, this did not mean that men did not experience such involuntary physical reactions before the sensibility reached its heyday. The language and other modes of emotional representation did change, but family values and gendered obligations remained stable. The ideal masculinity of the eighteenth-century revolved around the notions of the devoted family-man.

This research has brought men back into the fundamental unit of their interpersonal relations, that is, family ties. It has looked at the constructions and performances of masculinity through the gendered roles and obligations within familial relationships. This study has demonstrated how family ties could shape and fashion male

23 For example, Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), ch. 3; Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 2006).

gendered identities through the practices of family duties. Familial relationships did play vital roles in constructing and performing masculinity, no less than other aspects in men's lives, such as their engagement with polite venues, military campaigns and naval services, or in the possession of a house and household management alone. Perhaps we need not wait for the teachings of family psychology to appreciate the pivotal role of family in a person's gendered life. Eighteenth-century people seemed to realise this long before we have allowed ourselves to recognise.

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