PARENTING IN ENGLAND 1760–1830

Parenting in England 1760–1830

Emotion, Identity and Generation

JOANNE BAILEY

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For Lilian Begiato and Gabriel Bailey

Preface

We two kept house, the Past and I,
The Past and I;
I tended while it hovered nigh,
Leaving me never alone.
It was a spectral housekeeping
Where fell no jarring tone,
As strange, as still a housekeeping
As ever has been known.

The Ghost of the Past by Thomas Hardy

I began to work properly on this project around 2005 when I contributed a chapter on parenting to a festschrift for Anthony Fletcher. This persuaded me that the history of parenting was ripe for reconsideration. In 2007 I had the very good fortune to win teaching relief from Oxford Brookes University, followed by a two-year research fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust, giving me three (sincerely appreciated) years to plant, develop, nurture and bring to fruition the tentative seeds I identified earlier. In that time 'the Past and I' have 'kept house' intimately, as I have immersed myself in the various sources I collected and the lives of those who produced them. I hope that I have done them justice when writing about their world.

Throughout this project I have incurred numerous debts and met abundant kindnesses. My first thanks must go to the institutions and organisations that have funded my research. Oxford Brookes University generously provided me with time to begin this project and also funded archive trips to York, Birmingham, and London, and the training for the qualitative software I used to analyse my data. I am sincerely grateful to the British Academy for a Small Research Grant, which funded access to my primary sources, and to the Scouloudi Foundation, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, for a Scouloudi Historical Award which speeded up my collection of data. The Leverhulme Trust awarded me a two-year Research Fellowship which has been utterly invaluable. This book would never have been completed as quickly as it has without this support. I also thank all those who invited me to deliver papers at conferences and seminars, and who listened and offered insightful comments and questions.

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As ever, special appreciation is owed to Anthony Fletcher for his interest in my studies, for his encouragement, and willingness to read drafts and make fantastic suggestions. His and his wife Brenda's hospitality is always wonderful too. I remain indebted to Chris Brooks, my PhD supervisor, for providing me with a model to aspire to in historical research, writing, and intellect. He has also taken the time to read and discuss my work and offered incisive feedback. Both he and his wife Sharyn continue to support me with good humour.

Finally I offer my thanks to my family for all they do. My in-laws, Tony and Sheila, always maintain an interest in my scholarly habits. My mother's help in caring for my son and taking on so many mundane tasks on my behalf has smoothed my way through life's many stresses and allowed me to concentrate on my research. I am grateful to my son for cheerfully accepting a mother who is often distracted by reading and writing history. In fact, this project owes its inception to him because it was after his birth that I began to notice references to children and parents in historical sources and to wonder how parents' sense of selves changes over time and place. My partner-in-parenting is my husband Mark; also a great father. He has kept my head above water with love, help, good humour, and common sense; all with only the occasional escape to restore his personal peace by angling. I celebrate the family in its unfolding form by dedicating this book to my mum and my son; my beginning and my future.

JB

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Abbreviations

BRO	Berkshire Record Office
CRL	Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham
CYLAL	City of York Libraries, Archives and Local History
DUSC	Durham University Special Collections
EBO	Early English Books Online
GM	*The Gentleman's Magazine*
HRO	Hampshire Record Office
LM	*The Lady's Magazine, or, entertaining companion for the fair sex, appropriated solely to their use and amusement*
LRO	Lancashire Record Office
NRO	Northampton Record Office
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary* (Online)
SA	Shropshire Archives
SRO	Staffordshire Record Office
TWA	Tyne & Wear Archives

Notes to the Reader

Original spellings and punctuation have been retained in quotations, although contractions have been silently expanded.

The short-title system is used throughout the footnotes, with the full citation available in the bibliography.

Introduction

Remember me when I am dead
and simplify me when I'm dead.
As the processes of earth
strip off the colour and the skin:
take the brown hair and blue eye
and leave me simpler than at birth,
when hairless I came howling in
as the moon entered the cold sky.
Of my skeleton perhaps,
so stripped, a learned man will say
'He was of such a type and intelligence,' no more.
Thus when in a year collapse
particular memories, you may
deduce, from the long pain I bore
the opinions I held, who was my foe
and what I left, even my appearance
but incidents will be no guide.
Time's wrong-way telescope will show
a minute man ten years hence
and by distance simplified.
Through that lens see if I seem
substance or nothing: of the world
deserving mention or charitable oblivion,
not by momentary spleen
or love into decision hurled,
leisurely arrive at an opinion.
Remember me when I am dead
And simplify me when I'm dead.

Simplify Me When I'm Dead, Keith Douglas, 1941

Children's arrival change their parents' lives forever, delivering them into the world of parenthood and parenting. This book is about that all-encompassing world in the Georgian era: its ideals, representations and experiences. It is generated by a set of related questions. What did the two generations of men and women born and reaching adulthood between 1760 and 1830 feel and think about being parents? How did they see and remember their own parents? In what ways did this interact with society's understandings of parenthood? To answer

these questions it travels new areas of historical enquiry into the interior and bodily realms, navigating recent 'turns' towards emotion, subjectivity, memory, the body and materiality. In so doing it explores several inter-connecting themes: the history of parenthood as an idea, and its emotional and material worlds, the construction of parental identities and subjectivities, and the parent-child relationship as a conduit for the transfer of social and cultural values. This is a history of parenting 'from the inside out'.[1]

Entering this world to chart its territories and trace its changes over time is fascinating, moving, and profoundly challenging. It necessitates reading across genres to find parents, not just in sources that focus on them, but also in those which incidentally mention them, or were produced by them. Even then, words and images relating to parenting do not easily reveal their meaning. Parental characteristics appear stable over time, usually rooted in love, provision, discipline and instruction. Yet this is not evidence for lack of change. It simply means that words and images can mask different meanings and need to be carefully historicised. Take this example, nestled in an idyllic churchyard in Shropshire, beside the path leading to the Church of St John the Baptist, opposite the jewel-like Stokesay Castle:

> Here lies a careful loving Wife.
> A tender nursing Mother.
> A Neighbour free from brawl or strife.
> A pattern to all others.[2]

No doubt this tomb can be dated with precision from its style and form, but if the year in which this woman died was erased her brief biography would be hard to date. The feminine identity it captures would flatter the early modern woman, praising qualities firmly grounded in Christian teachings: a prudent, affectionate wife, a nurturing mother, a harmonious neighbour; all in all, therefore, a fine exemplar. In fact, Ann Bright died at 53 years old in 1806. Perhaps her epitaph is indicative of the continuities inherent in women's lives in the past, always small scale and domestic: defined by marriage, motherhood, and community. Yet, recent research on women, gender, and family demonstrates nuances and differences in roles and behavioural values between social groups, places, and times. The history of identity has also shown that identities are fluid, not fixed, and contingent, adapting over lifetimes and eras. Moreover even the most fervent supporter of continuity will admit that social, political, economic and cultural change occurred over the period when these words might have been used. As such, this study teases out meaning about parenthood and parenting by contextualising accounts of parents, by detecting links and connections between them, and by being attuned to people's inner as well as outer lives.

In fact, the three major themes of this book are inscribed in the stone letters aimed at those Ann left behind, and those still to come, generations as yet unborn. Its simple words of loss evoke all the features that converged in people's thinking

[1] Matt, 'Current Emotion Research in History', 123.
[2] Stokesay Parish Church, Church of St John the Baptist, Shropshire.

about parenting: powerful emotions, the desire to remember individuals, and the urge to connect the past, the present and the future. *Parenting in England* is roughly divided into three sections along these lines. The first investigates the profound emotions that parents and children were understood to provoke in each other. The second negotiates the complexities of accounts of parents that simultaneously span the generic and individual, to demonstrate that parenthood was only one dimension of an individual's life and should be considered in the framework of other personal and public selves. The third, as memorials do, links the one to the many, revealing how people in their roles as parents and children looked backward as well forward when situating themselves in time and place.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND RESEARCH AGENDA

Very few full-length studies focus upon parents rather than children in the past. One exception, Patricia Crawford's book *Parents of Poor Children in England,* 1580–1800 (2010), reveal the riches gained by assembling numerous primary and secondary sources on the subject. In the main, however, only partial aspects of parenthood and parenting have been explored. The two most relevant areas of historical enquiry are, of course, the histories of childhood and family. In 1975 J. H. Plumb argued that 'the children's world of the eighteenth century . . . changed dramatically'. New beliefs about childhood and a greater sensitivity towards the vulnerable meant that by the end of the century children enjoyed milder discipline, more leisure time with parents, and more liberal child-rearing and educational beliefs and practices. Histories of the family published in the later 1970s claimed that family life also underwent remarkable change. Lawrence Stone, for instance, suggested that England witnessed an affective revolution in parents' emotional attachment to their children.[3] Both fields have rejected these grand narratives and have turned away from parent-child relationships to other aspects of childhood and family. Recent histories of childhood examine the expanding role of the child as consumer, along with the commercialisation of childhood; encompass explorations of children's play and work, material culture and use of space; as well as the repercussions of adult intervention in childhood.[4] Family history has excavated contemporary understandings of the concept of family, the making of marriage, gender relations within wedlock, and the incidence, nature and experience of marital violence.[5] Parents appear in all of these, but for the most part are one-dimensional characters due to the studies' circumscribed research agendas. Alongside this, a body of work has adjusted and nuanced demographic histories of household and family structures, adopting a life-course perspective, thinking about

[3] Plumb, 'New World of Children', 65; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, ch. 5, 9.

[4] King, 'Concepts of Childhood: What We Know and Where We Might Go', 371–407; Muller, 'Introduction,' in Muller, *Fashioning Childhood*.

[5] Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: marriage and marriage breakdown in England*; Foyster, *Marital Violence in England*; O'Hara, *Courtship and constraint: rethinking the making of marriage in Tudor England*; Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-century England*.

the family itself as an agent of change rather than passively influenced by historical processes, and generally seeking a more dynamic picture of the institution of the family.[6] Individual parents are absent, but it offers a sense of the broader economic, political and social forces at work which might affect life as a parent in different places and times.

Thus there is no holistic picture of ideas about parents, parental behaviour, and parental practice. We still know frustratingly little about how shifts in ideas about the nature of childhood and child-rearing influenced ideas about parents and parental practice. How far did the new discourses of childhood impact on parenthood? Ruth Perry, for example, states that 'The invention of childhood meant the invention of a new kind of motherhood' which redefined women's roles as wives and mothers as mutually exclusive.[7] Other literary scholars have suggested that paternal power diminished across the eighteenth century as a consequence of the changes, or that it was reformulated to be delivered through paternal affection.[8] Both views tend to see aspects of people's lives as separate, as if parenthood can be separated from identity, or apply simplistic theoretical models about power and gender to a complex lived experience. It is time to scrutinise these assumptions by examining how people defined themselves as parents, and remembered being parented in this period of change. There are inspirational research agendas which suggest possible ways forward. Work on Dutch, German and French children draws upon autobiographies, memory, and psychology to think innovatively about parents, children, and identity.[9] Studies of North American and Atlantic families engage with a history of emotions approach, the impact of cultural shifts like sensibility, and the repercussions of precarious lives lived in times of high mortality, long separations, and the impact of war and revolution.[10] This book offers just such a new research agenda intended to open up the world of parents in the long eighteenth century.

Parents also appear in research on reproduction, women, and gender. The maternal body has been dissected and medical understandings of pregnancy and childbirth analysed to reveal the masculinisation and professionalization of the processes of maternity over the course of the eighteenth century.[11] Studies of early-nineteenth-century evangelicals, radicals and philanthropists show the power of maternity in providing women with a public voice and role.[12] Gender studies explore the relationship between maternity and femininity in print culture.[13] Literary scholarship and histories of art and science have pushed ahead in uncovering

[6] Sovic, 'European Family History'; Hareven, 'The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change'.

[7] Perry, *Novel Relations*, 226–7.

[8] Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fictions*.

[9] Dekker, *Childhood, Memory and Autobiography in Holland*; Heywood, *Growing up in France*; Schlumbohm, 'Constructing individuality: childhood memories'.

[10] Lewis, *Pursuit of Happiness*; Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*.

[11] Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and Conception*; Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*.

[12] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; Gleadle, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna'; Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young*.

[13] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*; Popiel, 'Making mothers: the advice genre and the domestic ideal'.

ideologies of motherhood and charting how they changed over time.[14] Particular attention is drawn to an increasingly powerful 'cult of maternity' from the early eighteenth century, which reached its height in the Victorian era.[15] It essentialised the maternal role, raised the value of motherhood, and made mothers central to their children's welfare.[16] These invaluable works show how motherhood is socially constructed; reveal the importance of maternity as a status, the power it conveys, and its place in blurring the boundaries of public and private.[17] Many questions remain to be answered, however. What was women's own sense of being a mother and being mothered? How was motherhood experienced as personal identity?

The study of English fatherhood is less well advanced, though the related field of masculinity studies has developed apace and has enormous potential for uncovering it.[18] For example, an account of the formation of the nineteenth-century middle class draws attention to the 'serious', caring, *specifically* Evangelical father who developed out of a 'new' model of masculinity rooted in religious revivalism, the separation of work and home, and the cult of domesticity.[19] Domesticity is also revealed to have impacted upon early to mid-Victorian middle-class men for whom providing for children was 'a crucial criterion of adult masculinity'.[20] Thus a new orthodoxy prevails. First, that the 'legacies of both Evangelicalism and Romanticism encouraged men to display affection to wives and children'.[21] Second, when 'men embraced domesticity' in the high Victorian period it was an 'aberration from a male norm, which both preceded and followed it'.[22] Third, the model of domestic fatherhood which originated in Evangelical middle-class families was disseminated through the rest of the middle classes and then to the working classes later in the century to become the dominant version of nineteenth-century fatherhood.[23]

The third assumption has been questioned by revisionists who contend that domestic manliness was not 'a middle-class invention to be imposed on other classes.' Instead, 'working-class constructions of the 'good father' were shaped by

[14] Duncan, 'Happy mothers and other new ideas in eighteenth-century French art'; Perry, 'Colonizing the breast: sexuality and maternity; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, ch. 3.

[15] Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, ch. 5. Female moral superiority was linked to motherhood, Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England*, 47.

[16] For literature: Perry, *Novel Relations*, 339–41; Bower, *The politics of motherhood*, 15. For art see Holdsworth, 'The Family', in *Innocence and Experience: images of children in British Art*, 11. For science and medicine see Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*.

[17] It has also been interpreted as shutting down female opportunities, confining women to the private sphere: Tobin, 'The Tender Mother'.

[18] Americanists have produced valuable studies about fatherhood from the colonial to modern eras: Johansen, *Family men: Middle-class fatherhood*; Wilson, '"Ye heart of a Father": male parenting in colonial New England'.

[19] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, ch. 2.

[20] Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 101.

[21] Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment?', 165. For an assertion of its European-wide existence see Guttormsson, 'Parent-Child Relations' in Kertzer and Barbagli, *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth-Century,* 263.

[22] This assumption is stated and then critiqued in Gordon & Nair 'Domestic fathers and the Victorian Parental Role', 556.

[23] Criticised in Broughton and Rogers, *Gender and Fatherhood*, 8.

distinctive cultural traditions and patterns of labour'.[24] It is equally necessary to question other prevailing generalisations about pre-Victorian fatherhood that have taken root. Was Evangelicalism the point of origin of a caring model of fatherhood? If the culturally pervasive form of domestic fatherhood was 'never the exclusive property of a single class or generation', how far should we continue to see its roots in the middle class at the turn of the eighteenth century?[25]

It is also very difficult to draw comparisons in fatherhood across periods. More is known about early modern and nineteenth-century English manhood because historians of eighteenth-century English masculinities have overlooked men within their domestic environment, more interested in how politeness influenced genteel male identities.[26] Nevertheless, initial work on representations of Georgian fathers destabilises the conventions of the origins of ideal nineteenth-century fatherhood.[27] Georgian elite society imagined fatherhood through the prisms of Christian ideals of masculinity and the culture of sensibility, which prized feeling in both sexes and all ages. As such the nurturing, affectionate elements of parenthood were not as gender-segregated as cultural stereotypes of parenthood in other periods. So how did ideals of motherhood and fatherhood differ in this era? Was there a cult of fatherhood parallel to the cult of maternity? How did this shape masculine identity?

METHODOLOGY

Cultural history is the obvious choice to analyse the evolving meanings and uses of words, phrases and images associated with fathers and mothers, but in the last six years or so there has been a backlash in publications against the cultural or literary turn.[28] This body of critical work identifies three fundamental problems with cultural history: its sources and methodology, its limited scope and degree of abstraction, and its capacity to understand patterns of continuity and change.

Critics attack 'New Cultural History' for focusing entirely on literature or other narrow genres of print, condemning its overly linguistic focus, attention to the marginal, eccentric and atypical use of evidence, and its lack of disciplinary rigour and methodological precision.[29] They suggest two solutions to these problems: a socio-cultural historical approach or an improved cultural history methodology; both means by which several different types of evidence can be efficiently assessed. Mandler and Wahrman, for example, advise scholars to follow tropes, motifs, or

[24] Broughton and Rogers, 'Introduction: the empire of the father' in eadem, *Gender and Fatherhood*, 5; Gordon and Nair, 'Domestic fathers', 551–9; eadem, *Public Lives*, 59–63.

[25] Broughton and Rogers, *Gender & Fatherhood*, 23.

[26] Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity c. 1650–1800', 309–11.

[27] Bailey, '"a very sensible man": imagining fatherhood'; Harvey, 'Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity'.

[28] For example see Stearns, 'Social History Present and Future'; Mandler, 'The problem with cultural history'; Wahrman, 'Change and the Corporeal'.

[29] Stearns, 'Social History, Present and Future', 10; Mandler, 'The problem with cultural history', 94–117; Wahrman, 'Change and the Corporeal', 584.

patterns across 'as many cultural, generic and social boundaries as possible'. They also advise historians to adopt more up-to-date methodologies from the social sciences in order to tackle large quantities of data and make effective connections between separate genres and categories of evidence.[30] To address such methodological criticisms, this book takes a number of steps. It investigates an almost universal experience (particularly if being parented is the criteria for inclusivity). It has a broad empirical base with data from a wide range of sources including ego-documents, print culture, court cases, and depictions of parents in portraits and prints. Furthermore, in order to impose disciplinary rigour this diverse material is analysed with qualitative research software.

A further criticism of cultural history, particularly where gender or identity is concerned, is that it results in a disembodied, dematerialized history. Several historians are dissatisfied with the detachment that results from discourse analysis: particularly denouncing the lack of any sense of emotions surrounding the events described.[31] Indeed, Shepard and Harvey identified among the contributors to their journal collection on British masculinities a 'palpable dissatisfaction with an exclusively cultural approach in the history of masculinity and a wish to complement rigorous dissections of discourse with the social and psychological.' The goal is to explore people's material, embodied experience and their interiority.[32]

By examining a mix of sources, this study moves beyond discourse. It tackles emotions, feeling, and experience, particularly since the material embodied life of parenthood is explored through hands-on care-giving and its meaning. Its research agenda is thus situated in recent developments in scholarship; namely the rapidly expanding fields of emotions, identity formation and subjectivities, and generations. All three are growth areas in several disciplines and all intersect in the study of family as will be explained in more detail in the section openers. Admittedly, historians of English, North American and French art and literature have investigated aspects of the ideals of parenthood that emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, and cultural historians of Revolutionary France and North America have explored the political uses of such ideals. Social historians of family relationships, however, have been less amenable to this cultural turn, placing more value on people's experiences. Yet, drawing on various cultural sources as well as more traditional personal documents offers innovative insights into the relationship between ideals and the individual (rather than the collective use of them). Nevertheless, this study does not simply compare and contrast the forms of expression, expectations and values found in ego-documents with those in fiction, print and art. Instead it aims to explore the mutually constitutive relationship between the two. After all, individuals are influenced by cultural trends. As psychologist Robyn Fivush has observed, when people talk or write about themselves they

[30] Wahrman, 'Change and the Corporeal', 599–601; Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 112–16; Mandler, 'The problem with cultural history,' 95,104, 115.

[31] Roper, 'Slipping out of view: subjectivity and emotion', 61–2.

[32] Harvey and Shepard, 'What have historians done with masculinity?', 275–6, 280. Also Tosh, 'What should historians do with masculinity?', 51; Wahrman, 'Change and the Corporeal,' 599.

produce 'a life narrative in relation to the cultural script, whether it is conforming or deviating' from it.[33]

This research therefore begins from the premise that cultural values set common standards against which the self and others are defined and judged. These are historically variable, with particular types of behaviour and identity favoured, promoted and idealised over others at different moments. These are not simply chronological developments with one mode of behaviour replacing another. Indeed in charting such shifts in parenthood, the persistence of previous forms becomes apparent. Throughout the aim is to consider how cultural values interacted with the experiential. As such, this is very much an updated 'history of sensibilities', an approach which recognises that different structures of beliefs, values, feelings, sense and taste mark different eras and peoples. In Daniel Wickberg's words, a 'history of sensibility' explores the generalised perceptions, feelings, terms and forms in which an object is conceived, experienced, and represented, rather than placing the object itself as the primary focus of enquiry (the approach of 'New Cultural History'; effectively an analysis of language). *Parenting in England* therefore seeks to understand the wider framework which informed ideas of parenting. Adopting this approach shifts attention from *either* the experience of *or* representations of parents to 'the terms in which they experienced the world'.[34] It is, like any investigative approach, very much of its time. Mark Phillips identifies it as part of a wider move to empathetically recreate the past and to trace the textures of ordinary life and inward feeling, rather than to focus upon the causes and consequences of particular events. In his view, such historians aim to attain both intimacy and identification because they are writing in a mode not unlike the sensibility of the later eighteenth century, where emotions were taken seriously and readers were encouraged to use their feelings to understand texts. The questions motivating all new sentimental histories are not 'what happened' but 'what did it feel like to be there'.[35]

The terms in which literate British parents experienced the world in the period 1760–1830 were rooted in three cultural frameworks. Firstly, Christian precepts of behaviour were influential, promoting virtue, industriousness and duty, none the preserve of Evangelicals. Secondly, the Enlightenment products of sensibility and 'Romanticism' shaped parenthood in their focus on emotion and feeling as a way to understand society and the self. Sensibility was a mode of thought that cultivated the inner self, stressing interior feelings over superficial manners.[36] Sentimental images and words were designed to encourage viewers to develop the capacity to feel strongly.[37] The family was often, therefore, an ideal vehicle by which to achieve this end. Romanticism is perhaps an even more nebulous cultural form to

[33] Fivush, 'Remembering and reminiscing', 51.

[34] Wickberg, 'What is the history of sensibilities?', 676 and passim.

[35] Phillips, 'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of Sentimental History', 49–50, 52–3, 55–6; also see Steedman, *Master and Servant*, 178.

[36] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of sensibility*, pp. xix, 258; Carter, *Men and the emergence of polite society*, 23–31; Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain,* 277–80.

[37] Clayton, *English Print 1688–1802*, 247. Barker, *Greuze and the painting of sentiment*; Allison Coudert, 'Faith and Religion'.

describe and link to notions of parenthood. Usually identified as coming into force during the 1790s, its complexity is emphasised, and the doubts about how far it was a movement or a symptom of the times reiterated. Commentators do agree, however, that sensibility was one of its precursors and that emotion was equally central to it. Both 'movements' were rooted in a revival of classicism in so far as appreciating the simple, the serious, and the pastoral; motifs which shaped representations of mothers and fathers.[38] Where they differed was in romanticism's focus on the individual personality over sensibility's collective.

The third shaping concept and vocabulary was 'domesticity,' which flourished from the early nineteenth century. Domesticity combined aspects of sensibility and romanticism with religious precepts. In ideologically closing-off the family from the wider world, it elevated the place of the parent-child relationship within the snug family circle. Its role in theories of evangelically propelled class-formation from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries is well known.[39] Recently, its history as a concept and in relation to separate spheres has been more closely examined.[40] For instance, its mythological nature is acknowledged: its celebration of home as a place of family refuge and leisure was, after all, imaginary since the home was always a site for women's and servants' labour. Recognised to be integral to Victorian manhood, its role in defining eighteenth-century masculine identity is now being considered. It is becoming clear that where the family is concerned, 'domesticity' was not predominantly a product of the separation of work and home, nor of Evangelicalism.[41] Attention to the home as a haven for the snug family occurred in many places over the long eighteenth century, similar responses to many factors. It was a reaction to fears of revolution in the 1790s, and a consolatory response to the transformation of industrialisation and the separation of work and home in England.[42] The insecurities caused by the nature of the Evangelical 'Great Awakening' were the catalyst in America.[43] In France the triggers were intellectual and political, motivated by enlightenment, revolution, and commerce, in Sweden it was driven by the state.[44] Yet the way in which this hard-to define quality was conceptualised at the level of family has disappeared from view recently.

In many ways all these cultural phenomena overlap. Heart religions of the eighteenth century called upon feeling vocabularies, and more moderate Anglican virtues were the solid underpinnings of sensibility and domesticity.[45] Even if romanticism and domesticity seem quite different, espoused by different social groups, with the former the language and vision of an intelligentsia, the other of

[38] Vaughan, *Romanticism and Art*, 10–12, 24, 27–8; Butler, *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries*, 19–20, 59; 60.

[39] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

[40] Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, ch. 4; McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*.

[41] Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 97–9; Donald, 'Tranquil Heavens? Critiquing the idea of home as the middle-class sanctuary', 109; Harvey, 'Men Making Home', 520–40.

[42] Davidoff and Hall, *Family fortunes*.

[43] Lewis, *Pursuit of Happiness*, p. xiv, ch. 3, 5.

[44] Maza, *Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*, ch. 2; Marklund, 'In the shadows of his house: masculinity and marriage in Sweden', ch. 2.

[45] Mack, *Heart Religion*; Steedman, *Master and Servant*, ch. 8.

the bourgeoisie, they share common features where family, parents and home were concerned. The 1790s, for example, saw a turn away from 'Enlightenment universalism to a concern with the private and domestic' in the wake of fears about revolutionary politics. Indeed this counter-revolutionary 'taste for hearth and home' marked romanticism from 1790 to 1818.[46] These sets of overlapping and interlocking ideas and their vocabularies permeated literate parents' notions of parenting because they held wide appeal, popularised in periodicals, fiction, sermons and visual images. For example, sentiment was ubiquitous in both serious line engravings and 'frivolous' stipples and thus appealed to those at the top of society as well as middle-ranks.[47] It is clear that features of these cultural trends reached more humble groups of people too. To take one example, Methodists expressed themselves in the same feeling and sensible discourses that preoccupied their higher-ranking contemporaries.[48] This book will explore how these trends shaped parenting and the length of their reach.

Finally, this account of shifting cultural contexts draws attention to the issues of change and continuity. Critics of cultural history often refer to its difficulties in addressing change over time since it prioritises 'representation above the material and subjective realities' of people's lives, factors identified as unlocking historical agency and causation.[49] The 'big picture' thesis of cultural shift is seen as particularly untenable.[50] Though such works are exciting, inspirational, and stimulate further research they make sweeping generalisations from marginal or partial printed evidence. Revisions of such historical narratives have, however, generated a paradoxical picture of simultaneous complexity and continuity. Dror Wahrman, for instance, states that the model of linear change in understandings of gender identities, sex, and body has been replaced by a thesis of multiple co-existing understandings, what Harvey calls 'enduring synchronic diversity'. The result, Wahrman observes, is the 'British Continuity School'.[51]

This tension between continuity and change is particularly pressing where parental identities are concerned, for there are two assumptions about parenting; firstly that it is a natural instinct and secondly that motherhood and fatherhood are profoundly gendered identities. Parenting as a biological bond presupposes continuity. Yet becoming a mother or a father is engendering, a process that produces a woman or a man. Thus outside influences upon femininity and masculinity will also affect constructions of maternal and paternal identities. This allows for parenthood to modify. Not surprisingly, then, scholarship offers accounts of both continuity and change. Social histories identify continuities in the elements of parenthood for both sexes. More culturally attuned studies, on the other hand, posit transformations in motherhood, especially the eighteenth-century cult of maternity. This dichotomy is not incompatible. Aristocratic men and women, for

[46] Butler, *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries*, 37, 66, 180–1.
[47] Clayton, *English Print 1688–1802*, 246–7.
[48] Mack, *Heart Religion*, 4–5, 15.
[49] Shepard and Walker, 'What have historians done with masculinity?', 456.
[50] E.g. Stone, *Family Sex and Marriage*.
[51] Wahrman, 'Change and the Corporeal', 586–90.

instance, displayed themselves in fashionable ways in family portraits as part of constructing an identity, while simultaneously deploying traditional features of family including male authority and dynastic concerns.[52] This study investigates the world of parenting in England with the similar aim of charting the complex patterns of change and continuity.

PRIMARY SOURCES

The sources are deliberately eclectic in composition and are not intended to exclusively represent any one social group or religious denomination, age cohort or gender. They include print culture in its widest possible form. The popular *Lady's Magazine* was sampled from the 1770s to 1810, and several other periodicals aimed at both men and women were searched for references to parents and children. A range of advice literature from the long eighteenth century was examined, covering topics such as child-rearing and education, family medicine, family relationships, conduct, and religious practice. Popular and literary printed material is also included, from published trial pamphlets, to fiction and poetry, to ballads. Where possible, attention has also been paid to visual images of parents, both those marketed to the public and those not intended to be sold, in the works of the gentleman John Harden (1772–1847), of Brathay Hall, Windermere, an amateur painter who made numerous sketches of his family life.[53]

Life-writings form the core of the study with over forty-five memoirs written by men and women from approximately the 1750s to the 1850s. Most of these writers were born between the 1750s and 1790s and both sexes are represented fairly equally. They hailed from diverse social backgrounds, from trading and farming families through to a member of the aristocracy; most were broadly middling or professional in rank. The majority were English though some were from the other kingdoms of the British Isles and the American colonies. Memoirists' reasons for writing varied. Perhaps common to all was the desire to inform. Conversion narratives detailed the process of spiritual awakening, its trials and God's assisting Providential hand in order to inspire others.[54] Several writers advertised themselves or commercial endeavours.[55] Others explained how they overcame personal adversity.[56] Francis Place sought to prove that the working class had improved over the last half century.[57] Some pursued pedagogical objectives.[58] Another group wrote to enlighten family members, though this did not preclude their public-facing slant.[59]

In addition, two types of correspondence were investigated. There are over 500 letters in total, generated by four families selected from the early nineteenth century: the Courtaulds of Essex; the Shaws of Wolverhampton; and the Grays

[52] Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, ch. 3, 4, 5.
[53] Foskett, *John Harden*.
[54] e.g. Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*.
[55] e.g. Angelo, *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo*.
[56] e.g. Ashford, *Life of a Licensed Victualler's Daughter*.
[57] e.g. Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*.
[58] e.g. Cappe, *Memoirs*.
[59] e.g. Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*.

and Munbys of York (see Appendix 1 for more detailed family biographies).[60] Also included in the study are a similar number of pauper letters written by numerous individuals to paupers' settlement towns in: Hungerford, Tilehurst, and Pangbourne, Berkshire; Fawley in Hampshire; Billington, Hulme, and Tottington, Lancashire; Earls Barton, Peterborough St John, and Thraptson, Northamptonshire; Wallingford, Oxfordshire; Condover and Lilleshall, Shropshire; and Colwich and Uttoxeter, Staffordshire.[61] They were generated when non-resident paupers wrote to obtain relief from their parish of settlement. The data set is composed of different types of pauper correspondence, with letters written by parish overseers, and by those speaking on behalf of the paupers, as well as by the paupers themselves.

The vision of parenthood presented here is perhaps largely that of the literate, predominantly middling and genteel ranks of society. Yet the addition of pauper correspondence acts as a counterbalance, since it was written by people or their amanuenses from the labouring ranks. Conforming to conventions designed to serve the purpose of acquiring relief from middling-sort authorities, it nonetheless offers some insights into the languages the urban and rural poor used to describe parenthood and parenting. Poor parents have recently found their historian in Patricia Crawford. Her approach was, however, that of a social historian surveying a long period. This study focuses more closely upon one period and one type of pauper narrative. The inclusion of popular rural songs also extends the analysis of the reach of ideas about parenting somewhat further.[62] Moreover, while it is clear that the cultural references were predominantly those of the educated, this does not exclude people from lower social ranks from sharing them. One of the dominating themes of this research is the importance of 'tender' parenting, for example. And there are numerous examples of poor parents in this period using the same vocabulary. John Clare (b 1793), brought up in a rural labouring home wrote of his fears of leaving home to take up his apprenticeship because 'I had been coddled up so tenderly and so long'. A poor London father was defended as 'a very tender husband and father.'[63] Likewise, the attractive depictions of rural labouring parents surrounded by their happy children were not just fodder for middle-class appetites. They became 'the cultural property of the farm workers' in the nineteenth century: their means by which to display the honesty and virtue of rural labourers.[64]

Each component of this body of sources has its interpretive problems. Visual culture requires specialist cross-disciplinary knowledge to take account of genre, of its historic and visual context, and to avoid seeing it simplistically as a mirror of contemporary life. Visual culture is itself a social and cultural agent and, at the least, it is assumed here that pictorial images of parents embedded further into

[60] The decision to use family correspondence from the first three decades of the nineteenth century is partly driven by Sarah Pearsall's comprehensive study of eighteenth-century Anglo-American correspondence.

[61] I am immensely grateful to the scholarly generosity of Steve King and Peter Jones who gave me their kind permission to consult data they had collected.

[62] Dyck, 'Towards the "Cottage Charter"'.

[63] Both cited in Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, 252, 254.

[64] Dyck, 'Towards the "Cottage Charter"', 99–101.

society the cultural ideals of tender parenthood.[65] The print culture selected shares a prescriptive or didactic purpose. Yet it is unwise to assume that its 'ideals' can be contrasted with a 'reality' discovered in the ego-documents. Autobiographies are not first-hand accounts of 'reality'. They too are a genre crafted by literary conventions. Also, most were written in old age. Thus scholars must be aware of potential shifts in meaning and viewpoint brought about by being written in a time with differing cultural trends and with hindsight following the events of a lifetime.[66] Indeed the autobiographical individual offers no single version of a life, simply 'different versions of themselves at different times, in different contexts, and to different questioners'.[67]

Yet, their appeal for the historian lies in their reflective quality. Memoirs indicate patterns in descriptions of parents and child-care and the vocabularies adopted for the purpose across the period studied, and thus suggest what cultural motifs might mean for individuals. The self they reveal is the result of an interaction between culture and the individual's bodily and material experiences.[68] In this respect, memories become crucial, since they too are shaped by collectively held conventions and thus uncover demonstrable connections between cultural trends and personal behaviour, even if their writing down may be from later in life and thus muddy neat chronological development.[69] They also expose the emotions involved in parenting and being parented, for both remembering and forgetting were profoundly directed by and intertwined with emotions.[70] People's memories of themselves as parents and of their parents are thus deployed here in order to offer insights into their views of themselves and their emotional condition.

Likewise, correspondence cannot be taken at face value as a record of experienced life and emotions. It is a written dialogue shaped by letter-writing formats and specific cultural, social, economic and political contexts.[71] The problems of pauper correspondence are also acknowledged: it is unclear how far they were written by or on behalf of the pauper or how far they were formulaic or individualistic texts, whether the events described in them were true, what they omitted, and whether they can be taken as representative of the experiences of other labouring people. Nonetheless there is consensus that pauper correspondence conveys 'the "voice" of ordinary people'.[72] In combination, memoirs and correspondence reveal how 'individuals themselves helped to broker new rhetorical styles in their daily lives'.[73]

[65] Behr, Usborne, and Wieber, 'The Challenge of the Image', 425–34.

[66] For strengths and weaknesses of autobiographies as primary sources see Heywood, *Growing up*, 23–33.

[67] Brown, *Postmodernism for Historians*, 122.

[68] ibid, 118.

[69] Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, 165.

[70] Rubin, 'Introduction', 1–4; Christianson and Safer, 'Emotional events and emotions in autobiographical memories', 218–43.

[71] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 1–3; 13–19.

[72] King, 'Pauper letters as a source', 167–70; Sokoll, 'Writing for relief: rhetoric in English pauper letters', 91.

[73] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 17.

Throughout this book, the sources are combined rather than treated separately. The aim is not to see ideals simplistically as descriptive, or generated because people failed to live up to the ideals, or indicative of a gap between ideals and reality, thanks to being aspirational, ignored or personalised by the reader or viewer. All these might be true, but the point is that ideals are not separable from lived experience. Too often scholars impose artificial analytical distinctions between representation and reality and examine print culture separately from or comparatively with ego-documents. This binary divide between representation and experience denies that the historical subject's lived life was a creative process. While it is clear that the opportunity to adopt certain cultural forms was limited according to factors like literacy, wealth, educational opportunities, age, and sex, numerous parental expectations and experiences were expressed through the terms of cultural values predominant in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Michael Roper also points out that stock phrases from culture should be analysed to 'bring out the powerful emotions that are often implicitly expressed, or that lie within what appears to be mere cliché'.[74] The goal is to uncover the way that people thought about themselves as parents at collective or societal, familial, and individual levels and what cultural motifs helped them do so.

Qualitative data analysis software is used to facilitate this 'history of sensibilities' or socio-cultural historical approach, and to explore the interplay between norms, ideas and the experiences and expectations of parents. Transcripts of the sources were entered into Nvivo, software which allows large disparate data sets to be analysed, interpreted and contextualised.[75] Descriptions of parents were coded at 'nodes', effectively collections of references from multiple sources grouped by concept. These nodes were named according to the type of parenting as it appeared in the sources. The notions and concepts were then explored for meaning, context, frequency, and how far they were gendered in use. This allows themes to be traced across *all* the data to check for commonalities as well as diversity. As such, it helps locate important vocabularies, not simply by following them across different printed and visual forms, but by seeing where people use these vocabularies for their own purposes. It shows when they used the vocabularies and cultural motifs, flags up ambivalences, and demonstrates individuals' agency where they adapt them in their own ways.

Of course, genre boundaries do need to be considered when exploring motifs and tropes across different types of sources in order to map out changes in meaning effectively. Yet there are numerous bodies of sources that blur genre boundaries, such as published autobiographies and memoirs and court cases. Also, it is only by placing disparate pieces of evidence in new relationships with each other that they are invested with fresh meanings and created novel understandings.[76] At the same time, specific types of source do lend themselves to certain kinds of questions.

[74] Roper, *Secret Battle*, 23.

[75] For qualitative research more generally see Cresswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*; Ellingson, *Engaging Crystallization in Qualitative Research*.

[76] See Taylor, 'Introduction: how far, how near', 119.

Thus every type of source appears in the first four chapters, which focus on the emotions associated with parenthood and relate these to their 'public' uses. The more introspective aspects of life-writing as well as family correspondence are left for closer analysis in the next five chapters. Chapters five and six, which address identity and subjectivity inevitably call more upon memoirs. Section three's exploration of the role of parenting as a shared activity and a transmitter of familial and social values relies upon correspondence. Still in both latter sections, numerous other sources contextualise the findings. The result is a glimpse through 'Time's wrong-way telescope' into the profoundly felt and experienced world of Georgian parents. Simplified it may be, but it is, nonetheless, worth remembering.[77]

[77] Citing Keith Douglas *Simplify me when I'm dead* (1941).

PART I

PARENTING AND PARENTHOOD: IDEALS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND MEANINGS

[t]he sleep of your nights, and the activity of your days[1]

The overarching theme that shapes this section is the significance of emotions to people's conceptualisation of parenthood and parenting. This is a relatively uncharted area of the history of parenthood.[2] One could, of course, argue that historians of parent-child relationships have long been motivated by an interest in emotions; given the prominence of the progressive narrative that parents increasingly invested love and affection in their children over time.[3] Yet the multi-disciplinary field of the history of emotions has developed enormously since this rather crude formulation was proposed. It is concerned instead with how far human emotions have been conceptualised, felt, and expressed differently at diverse times. In general, the history of emotions is still at a relatively early stage with contributors working from varied perspectives and frameworks, encompassing both constructionist and essentialist camps. At the risk of gross over-simplification, the former are more likely to view all emotions as predominantly socially constructed and the latter as largely universal and physical or hardwired.[4] The extent to which emotions are socially constructed or biologically pre-programmed is unclear, but many scholars follow a middle path which proposes that there are some bodily components to emotions while agreeing that their meaning can shift across cultures and time.[5]

There are also disagreements over what should be categorised as emotions. This study is based on the uncontroversial premise that there are 'basic' emotions, which are considered universal and innate though shaped at the level of expression by cultural and social variations: joy, distress, anger, fear, surprise and disgust. 'Higher cognitive' emotions include love, grief, guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride, envy and jealousy and would appear to demonstrate more cultural variation than basic emotions though are probably also universal. States of mind, or moods, such as happiness and sadness, can be distinguished from emotions.[6] Although all the emotions discussed in this section were linked to other aspects of personal, social and political relationships, it is those that had especial meaning where parents were concerned that have been selected for close analysis.

The approach taken is influenced by two groundbreaking trends in the history of emotions. Firstly, the 'emotionology' line of enquiry, wherein historians investigate how societies attempt to control and manage emotions at the collective level through rules of emotional expression.[7] Thus the ways in which specific emotions were

[1] This is the role of children, according to James, *The Family Monitor*, 113.

[2] For fathers' role in offsprings' psychological wellbeing, see Rohner and Veneziano, 'The importance of father love', 382–405.

[3] e.g., Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*. The Stearns see his work as an early stage in the history of emotions: Stearns and Stearns, 'Emotionology: clarifying the history of emotions and emotional standards', 815.

[4] For an overview of the field: Ruberg, 'Interdisciplinarity and the history of emotions', 508–11.

[5] Ruberg, 'Interdisciplinarity and the history of emotions', 508–11; Gouk and Hills, *Representing Emotions*, 17, 26.

[6] Evans, *Emotion: a very short introduction*, 5, 21; Burke, 'Is there a cultural history of the emotions?', 38; Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 3–4.

[7] Stearns, 'Emotionology', passim. A recent example is Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, ch. 2.

restrained, controlled, or encouraged within the parent-child bond are considered. However, unlike some earlier works that focused upon the management of emotions, no chronological model is suggested of a shift from the pre-modern unrestrained, child-like expression of emotions to the modern restrained emotional world.[8] The second is the model of 'emotional communities' a way to uncover systems of feeling. Barbara Rosenwein defines them as 'groups of people animated by common or similar interests, values, and emotional styles and valuations; one such community is the family.'[9] Overall, this book explores the intense emotions parents and children provoked in each other and the ways in which systems of feeling were shaped by the family and within familial relationships. This opens up emotions associated with parenthood beyond love to incorporate anger, anxiety, grief and such historically specific forms of 'feeling' as tenderness, distress, and benevolence.[10]

Inevitably the attempt to explore the emotions associated with parenthood and parenting must overcome obstacles. Emotions are, after all, typically perceived through some form of mediation. This is not a problem for some historians. As Gouk and Hill observe, culture must be placed at the centre of a history of emotion since it is central to the cognition of emotional states and their understanding, articulation, expression and policing.[11] Peter Burke likewise concludes that a 'linguistic approach to emotions is one of the most promising available' and the most immediate way forward.[12] As such this section pursues the specific linguistic meanings of the emotions associated with parenthood. Yet, other scholars of emotion are concerned that it is often the representation of emotion rather than the emotion itself which is examined, with the risk of disembodying and dematerialising experience.[13] This section therefore acknowledges that minds and bodies were inextricable from emotions and takes a more corporeal and material approach. It follows in the wake of historians of gender identity who analyse the relationship between gender, bodies, spaces and objects.[14]

Work on the relationship between gender, mind and emotions is productive. Thinking about bodies and emotions complicates assumptions about gender difference, opening up the question of gender identities beyond binary oppositions. Emotions are, after all, human and not fixed according to sex. Emotion history therefore promotes investigation of the ways in which the emotions associated with gendered identities were reconfigured in the past. Discussion of parental embodiment in the eighteenth century, for example, should not be restricted to the already well-researched concerns about maternal breastfeeding. An embodied

[8] This narrative is criticised by Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 5–10.

[9] Plamper, 'The history of emotions: an interview', 252; B Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', 842.

[10] I am inspired by Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

[11] Gouk and Hills, *Representing Emotions*, 26.

[12] Burke, 'Is there a cultural history of the emotions?' 43.

[13] Ruberg, 'Interdisciplinarity and the history of emotions', 509–510; Bourke, 'Fear and anxiety: writing about emotion in modern history', 121–2. For the lack of work on embodied emotions see Bound-Alberti, *Matters of the heart*, 9–12.

[14] The relationship between sexual transgressions and identities and gender identities, for example, is being unpicked. Cocks, 'Modernity and the self', 1211–27.

approach opens up distinctions between gender-specific and gender-related parenthood and parenting, for the gendered stereotypes of mothers providing physical care and fathers offering material care and government become far more multilayered and complex. Loving arms and nurturing bosoms were also paternal, and the labouring bodies praised for providing for children were maternal as well as paternal. Of course, the relationship between body and social conventions about gender remain open to investigation. For example, historians find it fruitful to scrutinise how paternity, grounded in biology, might differ from fatherhood, a social, male gendered identity—though both defined a man as a father. This analysis of those associated with Georgian English parents suggests that they were not always mapped onto sexed bodies.

The section is divided up so that parental emotions are considered in three chapters according to the four domains of parenthood: love, care and provision, discipline, and instruction. Particular emotions were not exclusive to one domain or another, of course. Parental affection might be expressed through provision and instruction, and anger might be caused by anxiety or love. However, this structure is useful to explore how the emotions were conceptualised in the period and to establish whether historically-specific elements existed. Its objective is to open up the issue to further debate and to encourage more socio-cultural histories of the emotions of parenthood and parenting. To borrow Peter Burke's explanation, such a history is one of nuances, of the moving frontiers between emotions, of the changes in balances between them, of the changes in their management, and the encouragement or discouragement of their expression, and of changing associations between specific emotions and particular social groups, objects or situations.[15] Although the period studied here is too short to offer conclusive arguments, the analysis of parental emotions in the later Georgian insights will offer insights into this larger project.

[15] Burke, 'Is there a cultural history of the emotions?', 44.

1

The Emotional and Feeling Parent

> Emotions kind, design'd thro' life
> To constitute the faithful friend,
> To form the father, husband, wife,
> And make each joy on all depend.[1]

The Georgian parent stood at the eye of an emotional storm. In a society that did not yet see reason and feeling as opponents, to emote was valued and encouraged, though only the 'right' emotions should be expressed and the 'wrong' ones restrained. To be a parent was to feel most intensely, perhaps even, therefore, to be most fully human, since parenthood gave birth to 'new' emotions, felt for the first time. John Angell James rhetorically asked 'who, that has felt them, can ever forget the emotions awakened by the first gaze upon the face of his child, by the first embrace of his babe'.[2] The most profound emotion that was identified with being a parent was love and this chapter traces ideas about parental love and their expression in an age of feeling, and then turns to those emotions consequent upon love: anxiety, grief, and distress.

LOVE

Children were imagined as the culmination of married love. One poet declared of his marriage: 'Crown'd is our union with a smiling boy' (1777).[3] The 'Tale of Charlotte Bateman' in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1782 traced her elopement for love to its rhapsodic conclusion: 'Heaven has favoured us with two children, the dearest pledges of our mutual attachment'.[4] It was portrayed in sentimental print, like George Morland's *First Pledge of Love*, (1788).[5] Children were thus proofs of a loving marriage.[6] In the late eighteenth century William Hutton described the deep love his grandparents, Thomas and Elinor, held for each other, seeded when neighbouring infants. Though they lived in a tiny dwelling after they married, yet 'Here was as much love as the house could contain, which was excellent furniture;

[1] *LM*, 1778, 64. [2] James, *The Family Monitor*, 73. [3] *To Mrs Irwin*, 322.
[4] *LM*, 1782, 694. [5] Stipple engraving by W. Ward, London. Gilbey, *Morland*, 248, 284.
[6] e.g: Atkinson, *Good princes nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church*, 11; 'Velcour; or the Dangers of Inexperience illustrated,' *LM*, 1778, 421.

and here my father was born.'[7] Thomas Wright even defended his decision in his mid-forties to marry a teenager, rather than an 'old creature', by pointing out that by marrying for love 'I have got a house full of fine children.'[8] By implication, when a union was not a love match, the result might be a neglected child. 'The Man of Sorrows' explained in the 'The Haunted Castle' in 1785 that his father wed his mother for her money. The next year he was born 'not to the great joy of either parent' destined to be 'a miserable victim of parental indifference.'[9]

Children added to the pleasures of married love.[10] In a story subtitled 'Nuptial Bliss' (1781), the young spouses' idyllic 'union was still heightened by the birth of a child, which was suckled by the mother, and when able to speak, was educated by their joint endeavours.' The accompanying engraving illustrates the loving triad, reunited after the father's trip to London (figure 1).[11] In 1831 the depiction of 'Happiness' was a father, mother and infant (figure 2). No wonder the lack of a child was seen to damage a marriage.[12] Yet children's love also had the power to alleviate the woes of a troubled union. It offset its vexations and helped a wife live comfortably with an otherwise unloved husband.[13] It was imagined to reconcile quarrelling or estranged couples. In 'The Little Pleader' (1790) the Bensons separated when Mrs Benson's unfounded jealousy got the better of her. They were reconciled by their little girl pleading: 'do, pray mama, let papa come again, I long to see him; I am sure you ought to love him, for he has given you a great many pretty things.' This did the trick.[14] Similarly, in 'The power of innocence: a true story', published in *The York Chronicle*, 14 October 1785, it was Betsey, Sir John's and his wife's 'darling,' who prevented her parents separating by lisping, 'Papa! Do/"Love dear Mama—Mama loves you!" '[15] Although a consolation for an unhappy marriage, a parent's love for a child could make it the weapon in marital conflict. Both fiction and court cases reveal that removing a child from its mother was understood to be an act of cruelty against a wife.[16]

The concept of children as pledges of a marriage was not new by any means, but in an age of sensibility, it had considerable emotional power.[17] Child pledges also demonstrated parents' ability to feel and to be sensible, since having children was considered to sensitise men and women. Writing to the editor of the *Lady's Magazine* in 1790, one correspondent observed that children 'animate the mind, expand the affections, dispose the heart to reciprocal fondness, and soften the cares and

[7] About grandfather Thomas Hutton b. 1659. Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 342.
[8] Wright, *Autobiography*, 145.
[9] *LM*, 1785, 78.
[10] e.g. *LM*, 1778, 421.
[11] 'Theodosia's Argalus or Nuptial Bliss', *LM*, 1781, 629.
[12] Berry and Foyster, 'Childless men in early modern England', 166–9.
[13] e.g. 'Memoirs of a Widow', *LM*, 1781, 17; *LM*, 1790, 579.
[14] *LM*, 1790, 377.
[15] *The York Chronicle*, 14 October 1785, 3.
[16] 'The History of Lady Bradley, written by herself', *LM*, 1778, 38–9; Foyster, *Marital Violence*, ch. 3.
[17] *OED's* earliest example of a child as a token of mutual parental love is 1587. Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, 127.

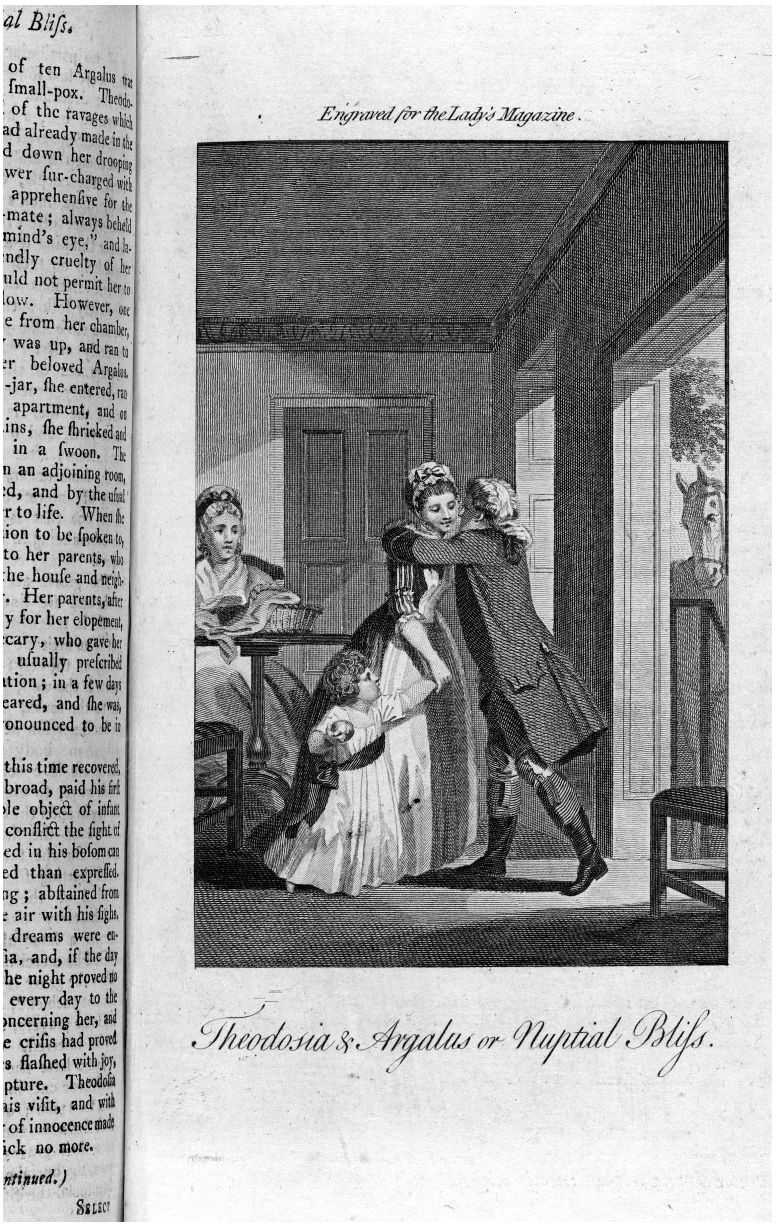

Fig. 1. 'Theodosia & Argalus Or Nuptial Bliss' (1781). This engraving idealises the loving bond between parent and child by depicting the moment when the family was reunited. To emphasise this, it imagines the child as an infant rather than the older boy he was in the story at this point.

Fig. 2. *Happiness* (1831). The loving, sentimental family was so entrenched by this period that it could personify an emotion.

solicitudes of life.'[18] By the time romanticism shaped ideas about childhood they had this effect on humanity not just parents.[19] In the 1820s James Northcote recorded a poetic response to his popular painting of the death of the Princes in the Tower. It praised him: 'Thine gentle Northcote! Is the happy Art, | With childhood innocence to melt the Heart,' asking: 'Who that the Stamp of Human Nature bears, | Resists the eloquence of Infant Tears?'[20]

Children also denoted a satisfying marital sexual relationship, since it was linked with reproduction. There was a popular understanding in seventeenth-century midwifery texts, for example, that marital love improved chances of conception

[18] *LM*, 1790, 579.
[19] For childhood in the romantic era, see Cunningham, *Children and childhood*, 67–72.
[20] Northcote, *Life of the Painter*, 143, reel slide 0552 [N.B. manuscript pagination is altered part way through].

and that barrenness was caused by its want.[21] Producing offspring was also engendering in that it proved men's sexual success and men's and women's fertility, thereby confirming their gender identities.[22] The lack of children might indicate marital failure. In the poem 'The power of innocence' (1785), for example, the daughter was a 'pledge of joys tasted no more' following her parents' estrangement. The motif was used to persuade the jury to award large damages in criminal conversation cases. In *Captain Parslow v Francis Sykes* (1789), Counsel Thomas Erskine pointed out: 'There was every reason to believe, that but for the intrusion of this defendant, many children would have blessed the parents, and adorned the family—Children at once the care and happy fruits of the nuptial bed'.[23] This was an allusive reference to the cessation of married sex thanks to the seducing interloper. Its sentimental side is seen in a scrap album print of two loving mothers playing with their sons in pastoral landscapes (see figure 15), published in 1795. Cupids and hearts in framed devices decorate the corners and at the top centre a couple give their hearts to one another. Demonstrating a legitimate, fruitful, sexual union was also particularly important in the first part of the period studied when there were concerns that population was declining and economists argued that an expanding population was vital to generating labour and national success. In this context, marital sex and procreation shored up the nation.

AFFECTIONATE PARENTING

Parenting should be carried out affectionately according to sermons, guides for parents, fiction, epitaphs and life-writing. In turn this emotion shaped parental activities. The virtuous, charitable, pious, and benevolent paragon, Soberina (1780), cared for her children by 'mature experience, and parental affection'.[24] Although historians of children have shown that parents did not love their children less in the past, the imagined family changed in cultural discourses in this period across Europe.[25] Thus, while affection was always an expected feature of parenting, its expression can be historicised.[26] In the early modern period, 'affectionate' was a frequent adjective describing a father in the salutation of a published letter or a preface.[27] In the main it was influenced by scriptural models of parental behaviour,

[21] Berry and Foyster, 'Childless men', 172.

[22] ibid, 182; Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, 215–21.

[23] 'The trial of Francis William Sykes Esq for adultery with the wife of Captain Parslow of the third regiment of Dragoons in the court of King's Bench before Lord Kenyon, 1789'. In *The Cuckold's Chronicle*, 331.

[24] *LM*, 1780, 66–7.

[25] Bailey, 'Family Relationships' Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, 140–6; Pollock, *Forgotten children*.

[26] For the role of affection in measuring different ways of expressing and managing feelings about death see Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, 68.

[27] This usage was determined by searching for the term on *EBO*. For an example see Anon, *Advice of a father* (1664).

appearing for example in funeral sermons which referred to affectionate Biblical fathers.[28]

In the eighteenth century its scriptural ties were loosened, its application more everyday. Importantly, this noun possessed more power in the past than now when it is understood as fondness, or, as the *OED* puts it, a 'warm regard' which might convey feelings for an object or a pet rather than a more significant relationship. In contrast, affection in the long eighteenth century evoked intimacy and closeness. For Samuel Johnson it was 'Passion of any kind' and to be affectionate was to be 'Full of affection; strongly moved; warm; zealous' as well as 'tender'.[29] As the Baptist preacher William Braidwood explained in 1792, parental affection was a universal passion, an essential property of human nature, and common to all parents despite their religious shortcomings.[30] A further difference in its use over time was its appropriateness for fathers. The schoolmaster Simon Daines' *Grammar* (1640) included a guide for correct orthography extolling the most appropriate forms of addressing people in letters. If writing to a child, the parent should express 'love and care: But the passionate expressions of tender affection, better fit a mother, than a father: for men ought to governe their affections by the rule of reason, least otherwise they chance to set a bad example of letting loose the reines of passion'.[31] Here fathers were to restrain expressive affection for fear of its threat to reason.

The dichotomy between the two was dissolving by the eighteenth century. Aphra Behn's short story *The wand[e]ring beauty*, published at the end of the seventeenth century, has an affectionate father who shed tears in a major emotional crisis. Though he possessed signs of nascent sensibility, he was less fulsomely affectionate and tender than his fictional counterpart of the second half of the eighteenth century who was expected to demonstrate the same animated love as mothers for their children. British, American and French portraits and genre paintings used composition, pose, and gaze to emphasise openly affectionate fathers and mothers.[32] The shifts in pictorial emphasis were caused by a fashion for more 'natural' modes of adult deportment, the desire to advertise the desirable characteristic of feeling, but also, crucially, the urge to align one's parental practice with the new rules of gentle rather than authoritative upbringing.[33] Families succumbed to the need to present themselves thus. For example, aristocrats commissioned portraits in which parents cuddle infants and delight in happy family life. John Harden's sketch of his wife and child, 'Mother and Child' captures an engrossed exchange of glance between a mother and slightly older child (figure 3) and many of his drawings focus on quiet, loving moments between parents and offspring.[34]

[28] e.g. Pearson, *The Patriarchal funeral*, 1658; Slater, *The soul's return to God,* 1690.
[29] Johnson, *A dictionary of the English language*.
[30] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 52.
[31] Simon Daines, *Orthoepia Anglicana*, 87.
[32] Duncan, 'Happy mothers and other new ideas', 202; Lovell, 'Reading eighteenth-century family portraits', 244; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, ch. 3, 4.
[33] Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 7–12; Lovell, *Art in a season of revolution*, 141–53.
[34] Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, ch. 3, 4.

Fig. 3. 'Mother and Child' (pen and ink on paper). John Harden's sketch draws on the classic model of adoring mother and child.

TENDER PARENTHOOD

Tender was the most frequent appellation for mothers and fathers in the period; a quality of parenthood and a method of parenting that shaped the minds and tempers of offspring to produce wise and happy adults.[35] Johnson defined 'tender' through mild emotions such as kind concern, compassion and anxiety for another's good, susceptibility to soft passions, care not to hurt, and gentleness.[36] Though applied to a number of close relationships tenderness had especial affinity with parenthood. Indeed, one of Johnson's definitions of 'love' was 'tenderness, parental care'. Thus it was especially invoked at the birth of a child, breastfeeding, at a child's sickbed and death.[37] The last, most poignantly, could erase the title of

[35] The term was ubiquitous as an adjective for fathers in Colonial North America. Wilson 'Ye heart of a father', 262.

[36] Johnson, *A dictionary of the English language*.

[37] e.g. 'Verses upon the birth of a little boy By the mother', *LM*, 1780, 214; 'The Ladies Physician, by W. Turnbull MD', on 'the Management of Infants', *LM*, 1785, 428; Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 15, 44; Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 264.

tender parent. In *On the death of an only child* (1778), the poet mourned the death of her daughter Maria. She relinquished both child and role: 'Altho', alas! No more I claim | A tender mother's pleasing name.'[38] Tender was most frequently used as an adjective for parental care, encompassing guidance as well as bodily care, whatever the offspring's age, as the story 'The Tender Mother' (1771), exemplifies. When Lady B's adult son was taken ill she devoted herself to caring for him, 'Yet, with all this tenderness to her children, no woman on earth was ever known to take more care of their morals, or to educate them more strictly in just notions of true religion and virtue'.[39] In such accounts tenderness was a flow of maternal care; a nurturing source of whatever an infant required to form them into a rounded adult.[40]

Scholars have labelled this a 'cult of maternity' whereby the 'primary function of motherhood shifted from an emphasis on the biological function of childbearing to an emphasis on the nurturant functioning of childrearing'.[41] Visual and print culture helped disseminate it to women. Always a popular subject of paintings and drawings, the intimacy of the mother-child relationship took precedence in the commissioned portraits of mothers and children, as well as in classically inspired decorative drawings in the early nineteenth century, such as those by John Flaxman and Adam Buck.[42] Many embroidery pictures from the later eighteenth century idealized and celebrated motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. A typical depiction was of the daughter as a miniature version of her mother, the two strolling in the countryside, clasping hands. The inclusion of these motifs in needlework crafts shows their reach since this was a domestic activity created by and for genteel women.[43] It was an instructional tool too. The print 'My Mother' (1815), aimed at girls, depicts a mother at her infant's cradle with the verse: 'Who sat and watch'd my infant head, | When sleeping on my cradle bed, And tears of sweet affection shed? | My Mother' (see figure 18). Periodicals like the *Lady's Magazine* were also an important site for the creation, legitimation and perpetuation of the archetype of tender motherhood.[44]

[38] *LM*, 1778, 270. [39] *LM*, 1771, 105–6.

[40] e.g. Horne, *Reflections on the importance of forming the female character by education*, 8–9; Percival, *A father's instructions*, 14; Alexander, *Some account of the life*, 12.

[41] Duncan, 'Happy Mothers and other new ideas', 214; Lewis, *In the Family Way*, 58; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 83–5.

[42] All the following can be seen on The Bridgeman Art Library website. e.g. Adam Buck (1759–1833), *Mother and Child*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK; John Flaxman (1755–1826), *A Mother and Child* (pen & ink on paper), *A Mother and Child* (pen, ink & wash on paper), and *A Woman Bends Down to Kiss a Child* (pencil, pen, ink & wash on paper), UCL Art Collections, University College London, UK; Sir Edwin Landseer, (1802–73) *A Mother with two Children* (pencil on paper), Private Collection, Photo © Agnew's, London, UK. William Hilton, (1752–1822) *Portrait of Mrs De Wint and her Daughter, Helen*, Lincolnshire County Council, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, UK; Sir Thomas Lawrence, (1769–1830), *Priscilla, Lady Burghesh, holding her son, the Hon. George Fane,* 1820 (oil on canvas), Private Collection, Photo © Christie's Images.

[43] Bailey, 'Stichers in time' Parker, *The Subversive stitch,* 129–30; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, ch. 9.

[44] Tobin, 'The Tender Mother', 205–21.

Yet this is no gender-specific story. The 'sentimental father' appears frequently in the *Spectator* and *Tatler* in the first decade of the eighteenth century. He was protective, supportive, affectionate and non-competitive with his son.[45] The 'sensible' father of the period 1760–1830 followed, marked out by the extremely feeling, expressive forms of his relationships with his children. An examination of fathers in the *Lady's Magazine* also, thus, shows the tender mother's counterpart: the tender father.[46] The qualities for both included: depth of love, compassion and solicitude, 'nursing' an infant, dedicated care taken over children's upbringing, education and welfare, and close attention to offspring of all ages.[47] The father's role was not postponed until a child attained reason. In 'My Father' (1819) it began immediately: 'Who in my Childhood's earliest day, | Before my tongue one word could say, | Would let me with his watch chain play. | My Father.' (see figure 16) It also conveyed status. The ability of a man to love a child was seen as spiritually ennobling whatever his social rank. William Wordsworth's *Michael* was an elderly shepherd who had fathered his only son late in life. This boy was 'The dearest object that he knew on earth. | Exceeding was the love he bare to him, | His Heart and his Heart's joy!' Michael selflessly let the young man leave for the city, sacrificing all his hopes, land and joy in doing so. Wordsworth intended *Michael* to reveal 'that men who do not wear fine cloaths can feel deeply'.[48] Likewise, though contemporary moralistic condemnation of indulgent mothering is well known, tender fatherhood was also considered to be doting and indulgent enough to require the exercise of restraint to enable the child to develop self-control and judgment when mature.[49]

In short, whatever their sex, the oft praised tender parent was affectionate, fond, and kind. Both tender mothers and fathers felt joy, solicitude, and concern for their offspring.[50] They both should possess close knowledge of their children and gain profound satisfaction from raising them.[51] For offspring who used the title 'tender' to idealize their parent it simply advertised the depth of parental love.[52] Indeed, tenderness was so indicative of the caring qualities of a mothers and fathers that it was applied to women and men who were not biological parents.[53] The Quaker minister Mary Dudley's daughter recounted her mother's memories of a spiritual guide from her youth in the early 1770s who advised her with 'tender and maternal interest' even when she turned to a different religious denomination.[54]

[45] Maurer, '"As Sacred as Friendship, as Pleasurable as Love": Father-Son Relations', 25–6.
[46] Bailey,'a very sensible man'.
[47] Also see Wilson, '"ye heart of a father"', 255–74.
[48] 'Michael', in *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 228, 230–6, 700. Eliza Fletcher, who judged men by their capacity as fathers, loved this poem, *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 79, 310.
[49] Bailey, 'Paternal power'.
[50] e.g. Crowley, *Some account of the religious experience of Ann Crowley*, 16; Davies, *diary of Mrs Arabella Davies*, 22; Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, 208; Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 15; Wright, *Autobiography*, 208; 'Leonidas; Or, the Unfortunate Lover, [Written by himself.] To the Editor of the Lady's Magazine', *LM*, 1771, 36–7; 'Verses upon the birth of a little boy. By the mother', LM, 1780, 214; and 'The History of Lady Bradley, written by herself', *LM*, 1778, 38.
[51] Letter to the editor, *LM*, 1790, 579; 'Memoirs of a Widow', *LM*, 1781, 64.
[52] e.g. Robinson, *Memoirs of the late Mrs Robinson,* 22, 169.
[53] See schoolmaster in 'Haunted Castle', *LM*, 1785, 302.
[54] Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 21, 29.

Equally, tender paternity was a metaphor for several kinds of masculine guidance and behaviour. For Quakers it was an analogy for the guiding, kindly actions of preaching ministers.[55]

For all that mothers and fathers were both described as tender, there were some differences. The reverie and sacredness central to visual depictions of tender mothers was less common in depictions of fathers because no equivalent religious model of father-child intimacy was available, unlike that deeply familiar and moving image of Mary and the infant Jesus. While it denoted comparable depth of emotion and commitment, tender maternity was equated with more hands-on and time-consuming physical care. When the fictitious Lady B was warned that she risked her own life in nursing her ill adult son, she replied:

> My life is in the hand of Heaven; I would by no means presumptuously throw it away, but if it pleases God I should lose it in the discharge of the duty of a mother, I can cheerfully submit; and the more so as such a loss would be what I never could expect or even wish to survive.[56]

As this hints, maternal love was seen as unique. For instance, in 'What Might Be', serialized in 1810, Lady Montgomery was enraptured by the long-awaited return of her son Sir Frederick after a three year absence. When he recounted his sufferings, she wept that he should have informed her earlier so that she could administer 'that tenderness which a mother only can bestow'.[57] Yet, simultaneously, tender maternity had a universal quality. In a letter to his brother James in 1772 Samuel Northcote identified his feelings away from home by quoting a German memoir on nostalgia, 'which is said discovers itself chiefly on youthful persons which have been accustomed to their native country, and a mother's tenderness such as reflecting on the loss of all his old friends and acquaintances and on the manners of his countrymen'.[58]

The two major influences on the meaning of tender parenthood in the period examined were Christian principles and the culture of sensibility. The adjective 'tender' was not new to the eighteenth century and had long been used about parents in previous centuries, rooted in the understanding that parenthood was about loving care.[59] However in early modern print, references to tender fathers and mothers had a scriptural basis, typically found in theological texts and sermons. Sixteenth and seventeenth century uses of 'tender father' were also deployed as a metaphor for fatherhood as a collective concept, or sometimes as a title for God.[60] By the eighteenth century it had expanded into a wider range of genres and took on a greater elaboration of meanings thanks to the objectives and vocabulary of sensibility. This is not to claim that the term was secularised, since it retained powerful connections to its religious origins. Tender parenthood remained a potent

[55] *A collection of testimonies*, 199, 212.
[56] *LM*, 1771, 105.
[57] *LM*, 1810, 314.
[58] Northcote, *Life of the Painter James Northcote*, 87, reel 0103.
[59] Houlbrooke, *The English family*, 143.
[60] The earliest listed occurrence of 'tender' father on *EBO* is 1518 [accessed September 2010].

analogy in Christian writings. John Fleetwood's *Christian Dictionary* described the Church as 'our spiritual Mother, [who] is continually watching over us with care and tenderness'.[61] Parental tenderness was also a means to inculcate Christian virtues and Georgian parents were to follow the behaviour of the ultimate tender father, God.[62]

Still, tenderness became an attribute that served the broader objectives of the age of feeling. For social and moral commentators sensibility was a philosophy able to remake a more moral, virtuous society and to improve individuals within it by uniting them through the higher virtues of benevolence, compassion and humanity. Visual and textual depictions of these moralized identities were intended to help people improve their lives to the benefit of society. The situations most often deployed were the familiar and familial, in effect those that most stirred emotions.[63] Parents did just that. A reviewer of an engraving of Lady Charlotte Cranfield and child in the *Oxford Magazine* in 1768 proposed that the scene of the 'mother's tender throes' would 'kindle' feelings in the viewer.[64] The deepening intensity of the meaning of tender is also evident in advice literature aimed at parents and youths. In Daniel Defoe's *Family Instructor*, first published in 1715, while the term was clearly related to affection, it had yet to acquire the potent emotional qualities present in the second half of the century. In 1753, James Nelson's *An Essay on the Government of Children* described devoted and fond fathers, but did not consider their expression of feeling through tears a normal trait. By 1777, however, in his *Addresses to Young Men,* James Fordyce discussed the network of 'tender ties' between father and child and parents' hearts throbbing on account of their children.[65] Crucially, religion and sensibility entwined within idealised parental hearts. Thus Simon Mason described his father as 'a sober honest religious Man . . . he was a loving Husband, and tender Father.'[66]

Though associated with women as well as men, parental tenderness was not a powerless attribute. Henry Angelo quipped in his memoir that plans to send him to sea as a child were overturned by his mother's feelings, so that he became a fencing master like his father. As a child he was given a blue jacket and trousers,

> but here again the tenderness of a mother interposed, and her singing her favourite air in Thomas and Sally, 'For my true love is gone to sea', operating on her too sensitive nerves frequently set her weeping; and my infantine sympathy making me do the like, the blue jacket, as well as the red jacket, was laid aside.[67]

[61] Definition for 'Mother'. Fleetwood, *The Christian's dictionary*, unpaginated.

[62] 'The duty of parents to children', in A. M. *Moral essays*, Essay XXII.

[63] Barker, *Greuze and the painting of sentiment*, 16. Francis Wheatley produced a work entitled 'The Tender Father', which was also engraved. Webster, *Francis Wheatley*, 190.

[64] Cited in McCreery, *The satirical gaze: prints of women*, 189; Walsh, 'The expressive face: manifestations of sensibility', 523, 536, 538.

[65] Defoe, *The family instructor*, Part 1; Fordyce, *Addresses to young men*, 12; Nelson, *essay on the government of children,* vol 1, 12.

[66] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 12.

[67] Angelo, *Reminiscences*, 108–9.

Tender paternity even helped establish male professions. William Moss attributed improvements in the medical care of infants and lying-in and nursing mothers by the end of the eighteenth century

> to the interference of Men of sense, Fathers of Families; who, alive to the feelings and welfare of what is most near and dear on earth—their conjugal attachments—have ventured beyond the limits formerly prescribed our sex on these occasions, to assert and defend the conviction of reason and truth against every force and ailment of prejudice and errors.[68]

FEELING PARENTHOOD

Emotions were physically experienced in very specific ways in the culture of sensibility through the overflow of hearts, tears, and nervous trembling. While typical signs of sensibility in general, they seem to have been more fully experienced by parents to an almost mystical degree simply because they were parents. Parents wept profusely over their children in fiction and report.[69] In the *Lady's Magazine* in 1782 'all the father melted on his cheek'.[70] On hearing an account of an apparently orphaned small child Mrs Manchester, the kindly mother of a children's tale (1818), experienced 'all the feelings of a mother rushing at once to the heart.'[71] Samuel Northcote wrote to his brother, James, in 1772, telling him that on receiving his letters 'your mother (forgetting all other things at the time) listens with great earnestness to every word and generally lets fall some tears to your account'.[72] The term 'sensation' was also often used, located in both paternal and maternal breasts. On being reunited with her small daughter, for example, Lady Bradley declared that the child's whimpered 'Mama' 'roused every maternal sensation in my breast'.[73] Inadequate parents, in contrast, were 'strangers to the pleasing sensations, the delicate emotions, that fill a parent's breast.'[74] Parental feeling could be so intense that it was a form of bliss.[75] Idolizing a child was praiseworthy even before romanticism imagined infants trailing clouds of glory.[76] In the 'History of the Monmouth Family', *Lady's Magazine*, 1780, evidence that the father idolized his infants was that 'he would still them in the night, nurse them in sickness, and study their accommodation and amusement'.[77]

[68] Moss, *essay on the management, nursing, and diseases of children*, 13.
[69] e.g. 'The History of a Clergyman's Daughter. In a Letter from a Lady to her Friend', *LM*, 1781, 33.
[70] *LM*, 1782, 126.
[71] Elliott, *The Orphan Boy*; Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, Vol 1, preface, p. xxxvi.
[72] Northcote, *The Life of the Painter*, 88, reel 0105.
[73] *LM*, 1778, 130.
[74] 'Letter to the Editor', *LM*, 1790, 321.
[75] 'What Might Be', *LM*, 1810, 347.
[76] This refers to Wordsworth's famous phrase in 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'.
[77] *LM*, August, 1780, 418; also Cappe, *Memoirs*, 61.

Feeling also indicated a profound parental responsiveness to children. This might be to their entreaty as, for example, Mrs Benson who 'could hold out no longer' to her daughter's plea that she be reconciled with her husband.[78] Or it might be empathy where parents literally felt what their child felt.[79] In some cases parental feeling was the sublimation of the parent's persona in the child's needs. Dorothea Herbert recorded for 1801 in her memoir that her very young widowed sister-in-law's 'whole Soul was wrapt up in that one precious Darling', her son.[80] This was not necessarily passive emoting. In fiction such feelings would spur on parents to protect or save a child.[81] However, its intensity was recognised as debilitating. The *Lady's Magazine* judged George III as a feeling father whose grief at his daughter Amelia's death in 1810 caused his recent 'illness'.[82]

There are few obvious differences in feelings ascribed to mothers and fathers. The main distinction is that the notion that men were tenderised by babies did not have a direct female counterpart, since maternity was now understood to be a natural feature of womanhood.

Fiction and advice literature assumed that men would be sensitized by interaction with their infant children because it opened them up to feeling a range of 'softer' emotions. In Samuel Richardson's novel (1748), Clarissa claimed her uncles were 'hard-hearted' because they had never been 'humanized by the tender name of FATHER'.[83] The notion remained eighty years later, though by now shorn of the rapturous tone of early pronouncements. In his 1829 publication William Cobbett asked:

> where is the man who does not feel his heart softened; who does not feel himself become gentler; who does not lose all the hardness of his temper; when, in any way, for any purpose, or by anybody, an appeal is made to him in behalf of these so helpless and so perfectly innocent little creatures?[84]

Obviously a product of an elite educated community, the concept was not unknown to the labouring ranks. In her 1806 memoir, the vagrant Mary Saxby was grateful for a temporary softening of her husband when she was delivered of twins in the 1770s: 'My husband was very fond of them, and very kind to me, while they both lived, which was not long'.[85]

Nonetheless, this was simply part of a wider feature of sensibility that love humanised humankind producing a better, kinder, more compassionate society. Rearing children expanded both women's and men's ability to feel, or to be sensible, which itself was a marker of gentility and status. In a letter to the *Lady's*

[78] 'The Little Pleader', *LM*, 1790, 378.
[79] Percival, *A father's instructions*, 14; Fielding,; *The universal mentor*, 158.
[80] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 396.
[81] 'History of Lady Bradley', *LM*, 1778, 85–7.
[82] *LM*, 1810, 484.
[83] Cited in Stuber, 'On fathers and authority in Clarissa', 566.
[84] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 231.
[85] It is possible that this was less an allusion to babies humanising men, and more the claim that God was working to improve him. Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 24.

Magazine's editor, 1790, the writer commented: 'Sir, the endearments of progeny are secrets only known to parents, and they are the grand sources of connubial felicity; for they animate the mind, expand the affections, dispose the heart to reciprocal fondness, and soften the cares and solicitudes of life'.[86] All parents should share these sentiments, facilitating a benevolent society. Certainly, letters seeking charitable help from Lady Spencer in the later eighteenth century often pleaded to the fellow feeling of maternity. One woman declared that Lady Spencer was 'too well acquainted with the tender duties of wife and mother, not to feel for a wretched one'.[87] Pauperised parents deployed a similar rhetoric to support their appeals for relief in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.[88] Parental feelings even benefitted those who viewed the family as well as experienced it. In the same letter to the *Lady's Magazine*, the writer reported his response to witnessing a tender family:

> Situations like these, may be considered as the balm of being; for when rightly understood and enjoyed, they refine, dignify, and exalt the affections; heighten the sense of humanity, render the heart susceptible of every soft impression, and raise such a rational admiration in the mind, as fix it in an inviolable and perpetual state of happiness.[89]

Feeling parenthood was thus about identity since it advertised the ability to feel sympathy and compassion, prized qualities in this sensible era.[90]

This parent's antithesis was the parent who lacked feeling. Thus, while it might be expected that tyrannical parenting was most condemned, much criticism actually focused upon indifference. In the 1820s Catherine Cappe recalled that in the 1760s her childhood friends rejoiced 'to escape from the tyranny of their *unfeeling* father'.[91] The epithet 'unfeeling' was used more frequently about men, though the qualities were also ascribed to women in periodicals and advice literature.[92] Unfeeling fathers lacked care and love for their offspring and failed to think about their children.[93] Unfeeling mothers were cold and rigid; deficient of compassion and sympathy, like the fictional countess who 'was an unmoved spectator of her daughter's sufferings'.[94] Both lacked sensations: 'my parents were equally strangers to the same exquisite sensations; a sure indication of the ungentle and barbarous treatment I was hereafter to meet with from them'.[95] In fictional examples this was related to having a greater love for money than their children and so forcing them

[86] *LM*, 1790, 579.
[87] Cited in Andrew, 'Noblesse oblige: female charity in an age of sentiment', 288.
[88] Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel'.
[89] *LM*, 1790, 579–80.
[90] Fielding, *Countess of Delwyn*, p. xxxviii.
[91] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 57. My emphasis.
[92] e.g. 'Leonidas; Or, the Unfortunate Lover', *LM*, 1781, 42; 'Tale of Charlotte Bateman', *LM* 1782, 693; 'The Elville Family Secrets. A novel', *LM*, 1810, 121.
[93] e.g. William Hutton's description of his father's treatment of his children in the 1730s–40s, Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 352–4.
[94] Mason, *Narrative of the Life*, 91; 'Elville family secrets', *LM*, 1804, 265; 'History of Benedict', *LM*, 1810, 57.
[95] 'The Haunted Castle', *LM*, 1785, 79.

into loveless but wealthy marriages. Demonstrating the reach of this cultural discourse, the concept was deployed by those outside the elite. A pauper living in London (1818), for instance, criticised her husband as an 'unfeling farther'.[96] Another pauper writing from her residence in London to seek relief from her parish settlement in Fawley in 1830 berated her child's father: 'I realy wish that Henry Rowlins Experienced as much as I do for that Child he has No sympathy attached unto him or has he a spark of fatherly affection'.[97]

Indifferent parents betrayed both sensible and Christian ideals. They sought pleasure in the 'world' rather than in domestic retirement.[98] The dissipated father prioritized worldliness and vice over his children and represented a threat to society. The ambitious father placed love of money and personal advancement over his children, to their destruction. Mr Lucum in *The History of The Countess of Dellwyn*, for instance, was distracted from his daughter by his political ambitions. On hearing of someone gaining a government appointment, 'his fatherly Affection abated.' Lucum's thwarted ambition led him to coerce his daughter to marry a rich, powerful old man in the hope he would gain preference from him; her scandalous ruin was the result.[99] By the nineteenth century this cultural trope informed personal identity and advice literature in the lower social ranks. Francis Place declared that he was always honest and fair dealing in trade for otherwise he would have been 'a mere lover of money for its own sake, a mean contemptible sot or curmudgeon, should in all probability have had a hateful family, narrow minded, pitiful and worthless'.[100] Sensibility's aspiration of rural retirement was reconfigured into the domestic doctrine of the snug, bounded home by the 1830s. John Angell James's guidance for middle-class men advocated they be 'keeper at home' and not distracted by reading, company, or even too much attention to public religious duties.[101]

Fashionable, worldly women were callous and self-obsessed, too ready to give their children to nurses, as infamously satirised in James Gillray's *The Fashionable Mamma, or the Convenience of Modern Dress* (1796).[102] The Matron, for example, castigated Emily Dawson, a young relative, for her inadequate childrearing abilities: 'being vain, idle, and extravagant, [she] attends to nothing except her own pleasure'.[103] The worldly woman was distinguished from the virtuous one by her maternity. Thus in 1775 the appalling Fulvia:

> thinks life lost in her own family, and fancies herself out of the world when she is not in the play house or drawing room. She lives in a perpetual motion of body, and

[96] Frances Soundy, Battersea, to the vestry, churchwardens and overseer of the poor of the parish of Pangbourne, Berkshire (22 December 1818), BRO, D/P 91/18/6/1.

[97] To Mr Fry Assistant Overseer Fawley (23 July 1830), HRO, 25M60/PO35 [889]. Also Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 12.

[98] *LM*, 1790, 321.

[99] Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, 25, 154. Also: 'Haunted Castle', *LM*, 1785, 78.

[100] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 12.

[101] James, *Family Monitor*, 50.

[102] Also Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 4–5.

[103] *LM*, 1784, 9.

> restlessness of thought, and is never easy in any one place, when she thinks there is more company in another. The missing of an opera the first night would be more afflicting to her than the death of a child.[104]

Maternity should always take priority. In 1790 'Senex' inveighed against his surrogate daughter learning singing or music in 'that time she should devote to the care of her children; a care from which no rank excludes the mother, and for which she is sure of being most eminently rewarded by the exquisite pleasure arising from it'.[105]

ANXIETY

Recent assessments of parent-child relationships detail the emotional strains of bearing and rearing children in an era of vicious childhood infections and diseases.[106] The sheer agony and trials of parenting shaped the cultural vocabulary of parenthood.[107] Its mundanity is represented by its inclusion in the third of the six vignettes of 'My Mother' (1815) (see figure 18). In effect, anxiety was a way to talk about parenting in the same way that guilt is a way to discuss being a working mother in the twenty-first century. Anxiety denoted uneasiness or trouble of mind, solicitude, and concern (*OED*). One short story described the recently widowed Mrs Harris: 'as a mother she could not help but experience anxiety and tender solicitude' (1784); a correspondent to the *Lady's Magazine* claimed he felt 'all the anxiety of a father' for his adopted daughter (1790).[108] Elizabeth Shaw signed her letters to her son John, 'your anxious mother,' while he was travelling as a salesman for the family business.[109] Solicitude was an equivalent though less frequently used term. Cobbett noted that his advice would 'fill every good parent's heart with solicitude.'[110]

Anxiety was the essential state of parenting: 'what a laborious affair it is to bring up children, how much toil of body, and anxiety of mind it occasions'.[111] Most immediate was that over children's health and safety, whose vulnerability blighted parental joy. The 'Governess' described how her 'sisters languished under a variety of disorders from their cradles, which soon brought them to their graves; so that my mother was never free from trouble and anxiety on their account'[112] Anxiety might also be seen as a response to a child's troubled state of mind.[113] Spiritual

[104] *LM*, 1775, 661. [105] *LM*, 1790, 321.
[106] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, ch. 5, 7; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 110–25.
[107] Tobin, 'The Tender Mother', 209.
[108] 'Haunted Castle', *LM*, 1784, 463; Senex, *LM*, 1790, 320.
[109] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (Sunday 7th [18—]), CRL, Shaw/106; Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (no date), CRL, Shaw/36, in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.
[110] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 280.
[111] Braidwood, *Parental duties,* 51.
[112] 'The Governess', *LM*, 1778, 477.
[113] 'What Might Be', *LM*, 1810, 346.

parents agonised over their offspring's religious habits. Likewise, anxiety described parents' considerations over their child's education, training or choice of spouse.[114] Here is Robert Burns' humble Cotter's wife:

> The wily mother sees the conscious flame
> Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
> With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,
> While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
> Weel-pleased the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.[115]

This feeling was so intense that it could be perceived as punishment. In 'Matilda; Or, the fair penitent' (1781) a wealthy farmer and his wife wished for a daughter. Providence sent them a daughter, Matilda to 'convince them that favours withheld are withheld by the hands of benevolence'. As a result 'their cares increased; hourly afraid of losing so great a blessing her infancy loaded them with anxiety'. As Matilda grew older they simply worried more, for example that smallpox would ravage her pretty face. With less than benevolent hands, Providence brought the mother to grief for wishing too hard for what she was not intended to have.[116]

There was some tendency to see anxiety as a natural state of motherhood, a form of biological programming. George Horne's *Reflections on the importance of forming the female character by education* (1796) declared women had 'an advantage from their own make and frame of mind; they are generally more apprehensive of danger, and of what may come hereafter, than men are. This makes them more concerned for their children's everlasting welfare, and solicitous to teach them what they know themselves'.[117] William Cobbett berated parents who thought that a female servant would have sufficient anxiety to care for their offspring. They might be adequate, 'But they are not the *mothers* of your children, and it is not in nature that they should have the care and anxiety adequate to the necessity of the case.'[118] Maternity and solicitude was such a pair that Mary Robinson described her pregnancy by the euphemism 'domestic solicitude'.[119] Nonetheless, fathers were described as anxious too. John Ryland's *The duty of ministers to be nursing fathers to the church* (1797) used the 'nursing father' of Israel as an example of paternal tenderness and extreme anxiety.[120] Thomas Percival's epitaph in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1804, observed 'If ever man could be said to have lived for his children and his friends, rather than for himself, it was he. So unceasing his attention to their interests, so tender his anxiety for their welfare.'[121] Percival himself reminded his own children of his

[114] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 181. [115] Burns, *Cotters Saturday Night*, 128.
[116] *LM*, 1781, 456. [117] Horne, *Reflections*, 9.
[118] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 178.
[119] Robinson, *Memoirs of the late Mrs Robinson*, 187.
[120] Ryland, *duty of ministers to be nursing fathers to the church*, 28.
[121] Cited in Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities', 54. Bewick was also noted as an anxious father, see Robinson, *Thomas Bewick his life and times*, 92–3, 239.

'unabating solicitude to promote your intellectual, moral and religious improvement' in his *Father's Instructions*.[122]

Anxiety was not a shameful emotion, though it must be tempered with the antidotes of fortitude and resignation to prevent parental over-anxiety.[123] Nonetheless, to be anxious was also a badge of sensitivity and refinement in the later Georgian period, and thus a trait of good parenting. Mrs Gray noted with approval that Sophia refused to take up her father's offer to have her two-year old son to stay during her lying-in, for 'Sophia is too tender a mother, and too anxious for the welfare of her first dear charge, to be easy without seeing him every day' (1781).[124] Ann Candler, writing her memoirs at 61, in 1804, based in Tattingstone workhouse but with a reputation as a poet, commented 'of nine children two remain near me, to afford me substantial happiness and satisfaction as a parent; but my uncertainty about the others, and solicitude for their welfare, are too often painful in the extreme.'[125] True no doubt, but also a way to demonstrate her finely attuned emotions as a creative individual. Men also saw being an anxious father as a positive element of their personal identity.[126]

Anxiety also deepened reciprocal bonds. William Cobbett observed that children must feel filial duty for parents 'when we consider the pains which they endure for us, and the large share of all the anxious parental cares that fall to their lot'.[127] Thus parental anxiety could demonstrate good parenting and good parent-child relationships. No wonder that memoirists born in this period often described their mothers as anxious, solicitous or fearful on their behalf. William Gifford praised his mother as 'an excellent woman', who 'loved her children dearly, and died at last, exhausted with anxiety and grief more on their account than her own.'[128]

GRIEF

Infant and childhood mortality were devastatingly high in the period examined. Around 30 to 35 per cent of children would die before reaching their tenth birthdays in England and Wales across the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, a mortality rate that only improved from the late nineteenth century.[129] This statistic was painfully ordinary; even in the delightful 'Devices', the two circled pictures of young mothers and sons are linked by a diamond inset with a mourning mother (see figure 15). So it is necessary for a survey of parental emotions to include the depiction and expression of grief, the most intense feeling associated with parenting,

[122] Percival, *A father's instructions*, 254. [123] Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter,* 110–25.
[124] *LM*, 1781, 480. [125] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 4.
[126] Wright, *Autobiography*, 255.
[127] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 177.
[128] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad: Pasquin v. Faulder*, p. ix; also Crowley, *Some account of the religious experience of Ann Crowley*, 16.
[129] Woods, *Children Remembered*, 44–5.

encompassing sorrow, distraction, and the fragmentation of mind and body.[130] Indeed, so acute was this form of grief that only parents could grasp its extent. In 1772 one poet rhetorically asked: 'What parent heart but feels a parent's woe'.[131] John Bailey commented that a child's death was a 'loss none can sympathetically feel, but those parents who have been in similar circumstances.'[132] Nonetheless, this subject requires careful treatment. It is vital to move beyond deploying the material to measure the depth of parental love, an approach that has little new to say. It is more valuable to assess changing modes of expression of parental grief.[133] Analysis of parental grief in art and poetry, diaries, journals and correspondence offers insights into its changing conceptualisations at the collective and personal level across several centuries.[134] Greater 'positive resignation' existed in the seventeenth century than later, with children imagined as temporarily lent to parents until reclaimed by God. Some secularisation of language occurred, with a shift in focus to the family's own handling of their grief in the eighteenth century. The impression is that religious conviction, 'though earnest, brought less complete comfort and sustenance than it once had done'.[135]

This section offers a narrower window in time in order to show how deeply personal parental emotion was nevertheless expressed through available cultural vocabularies. The expression of grief in the eighty years examined was shaped by both religion and the culture of sensibility. Providence continued to provide the best explanatory framework for the terrible unpredictability of mortality, Christian doctrine offered consolation that the child had moved to a better place and the hope of family reunion, and the message of Christian endurance helped parents' survive.[136] In the seventeenth century writers advocated the stoical application of self control to withstand bereavement.[137] From the mid-eighteenth century, the culture of sensibility approved of a surfeit of feeling so that grief was no longer an emotion that should be entirely stemmed, though it still required management. Christian hopes would constrain the outpouring of distress and incapacitating grief which was recognised to be dangerous. Grief signalled submission to the will of God and therefore needed to be in moderated form.[138]

The way in which both discourses could be combined is very apparent in Thomas Wright's numerous and heartfelt paeans to his son in his memoir. One section is worth citing in full here to show how he wove scriptural and sensible forms

[130] ibid, 96–101. For the view that the loss of a child was second in intensity to the loss of a spouse see Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family*, 234.

[131] *The Afflicted Parents: An Elegy*. Founded upon authentic circumstances which happened in the year 1763. *The British Magazine*, vol. 2, 278.

[132] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 77; Saxby, *Memoirs of a Vagrant*, 64.

[133] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 252–3.

[134] Woods, *Children Remembered*, 25–6 and chapter 7.

[135] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 92–3; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 248–7; Woods, *Children Remembered*, 178–9.

[136] For general overview of Christian beliefs in the afterlife see Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, chapter 2.

[137] ibid, 221–5.

[138] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 298.

together, citing Isaiah 49:16 and Thomas Gray's *Elegy written in a country Churchyard*. Both expressed his determination never to forget his son. Thirteen years after his child died he relived the dreadful moments and stressed their ongoing emotional effects:

> Thus did I lose, as to *this* world, my darling child; thus was the desire of my eyes taken from me at a stroke; suddenly snatched from my paternal embraces, painfully torn from my bleeding heart! The killing image is still before me; my imagination recalls the distressing scene! I still hear thy last affectionate words calling upon me to come to thee, and pronouncing blessings upon me with thy expiring breath! I still see thee gasping in my arms, and resigning thy last breath in thy father's bosom! Farewell, my son, my son by dearly beloved John! Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, surpassing the common instances of filial affection. I am distressed, I am exceedingly distressed for thee, my darling child! Thou shalt no more play around thy daddy, and entertain him with thy engaging and affectionate prattle! Thou shalt no more be at a loss for comparisons and numbers to express the greatness of thy love to me! I shall no more hear thy sweet voice eagerly blessing me, and when returning home, thou 'No more shalt run to lisp thy sires return,/Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.' I shall no more behold thee on this side the grave, but I shall see thee again at that day [the resurrection]. Till then, farewell, my beloved John! Thou art engraven on the palms of my hands; yea, upon the table of my heart! I shall go mourning to the grave for thee, my son! Farewell my sweet babe, till we meet again in happier regions, beyond the reach of sin and sorrow, pain and death; farewell, till we meet again to part no more.[139]

Gray's refrain 'no more' gave grieving parents a way to voice their despair. Thomas Wright cited it six times in one paragraph. John Stedman's elegy for his son Johnny who died at 21 at sea in 1795 repeated it: 'My manly boy, my John, my sailor is no more. | No more thy tender frame, thy blooming age, | shall be the sport of ocean's turbulent rage'.[140] Elizabeth Shaw echoed it in some lines about her recently deceased daughter Betsy:

> She's gone the treasure of my soul is fled, or numberd with the silent dead no more these eyes on her lov'd form shall gaze, no more shall hear her sweetly sing her maker's praise no more on earth her gentle converse share, nor join with her to God in dayly prayer, no more when sunk in grief, or lost in thought, her dear advise, or gentle counsel take, O lost for ever here, my sweet companion and my tender friend.

The pain of writing was too much for Elizabeth: her spirits failed, she told her son, and she abandoned her pen.[141] It can be very difficult to describe even the deepest most personal emotions without resorting to cultural conventions.

Nor was Thomas Wright alone in his conviction that loss was made more bearable by the prospect of reunion.[142] Reunion was the hope of epitaphs in the early

[139] Wright, *Autobiography*, 181–2.
[140] Cited in Fletcher, *Growing Up*, 138.
[141] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (Sunday 7th [18—]), CRL, Shaw/106.
[142] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 32.

modern period, but its intensity of meaning may have been increased in the eighteenth century when Heaven was coming to be seen 'as a perfect vision of earth' rather than an unknowable realm.[143] The profound desire for reunion in the afterlife with their loving family was also a striking feature of Virginian families in the post-revolutionary period when in the wake of the Great Awakening life was perceived as remorselessly uncertain with only the afterlife certain of bringing joy. Thus the bereaved were consoled that the dead were better off and sought refuge in a vision of heaven as family reunion with no more partings.[144] Such bleakness is familiar in English parents' expression of grief from the later eighteenth century. One scant comfort was that loss strengthened the love between those left behind. Thomas Percival's address to his children in his *Father's Instructions*, explained that two of their brothers had recently died but offered the solace that 'In deploring their loss, we become more sensible of the warmth and of the value of our attachment to each other, whilst mutual sympathy in sorrow draws closer the bands of mutual amity and love'.[145] In these words it is possible also to see how in this period the fulsome expression of grief was also evidence of the profound sensibility of the sufferer.[146] The next chapter will show, however, that some degree of emotional restraint was necessary to prevent extremes of grief from destroying both mind and body.

DISTRESS

Thomas Wright referred repeatedly to his distress as a bereaved father and this feeling was frequently associated with eighteenth-century parenthood. It was used about single and childless people, but perhaps had particular potency when associated with parents.[147] In most examples, the emotional and material aspects of distress were united; a dual meaning consistent with the definition of 'distress' as adversity due to illness or impoverishment. The ready connections between parents and material and emotional need are reflected in an advertisement seeking charitable donations in *The Times* in 1795:

> A CASE of more poignant DISTRESS cannot be submitted to a generous and humane public. A WIDOW, with EIGHT YOUNG CHILDREN, whose husband through misfortunes in trade died of a broken heart, leaving his family totally destitute, humbly hopes this APPEAL will meet the eye of the benevolent, and be the means of raising a little sum to enable her to get into business in the millinery and dressmaking, 7 of the children are girls.[148]

[143] ibid, 45, 52–6.
[144] Lewis, *Pursuit of Happiness*, 72–7; 76–82; 94–6.
[145] Percival, A *father's instructions*, 254.
[146] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 289–91.
[147] Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel', passim. For its frequency in mothers' petitions to the Foundling Hospital see Evans, *Unfortunate Objects*, 133.
[148] *The Times*, 5 March 1825, 5.

The language of distress was familiar to the elite who read literature and donated charity. Parental distress stimulated especial sympathy and consideration and helped indicate which families deserved support and assistance. A book designed to promote benevolence, for example, included a plate illustrating the poverty of the Foy family, Aldersgate, London, (1801). This family of two parents and three children are naked and hungry, incapacitated by need, and intended to stir the desire to help (see figure 4). Louisa Hoare's *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children: addressed to parents of the middle and labouring classes of society* (1824) observed that when

> conscientious parents have to struggle with poverty and distress, they claim in a peculiar manner our sympathy and consideration. A mother, for example, who is obliged to assist in providing bread for her family, a numerous offspring growing up around her, her health perhaps often weak, cannot possibly bestow upon her children that care and time and watchfulness which she knows they require.[149]

As this suggests, industriousness was a sign of a *loving* labouring family and hence parental distress could offer evidence that a poor family was worthy.[150] The loving family in distress also signalled that the poor themselves possessed sensibility which made them all the more deserving of relief or charity. This may have countered such views as William Buchan's in *Domestic Medicine* that poverty so eroded parental love for children that poor parents might be relieved to see their children die and the economic burden lightened.[151]

The middle classes who made up poor-law authorities and distributed relief and charity both deployed and responded to this language. They used the term 'distress' when seeking charity themselves in newspapers advertisements and letters to aristocrats. Such material 'distress' was often coupled with an emotional language of 'feeling'. One 'distracted mother,' left to support her children after her husband committed suicide because his business failed and his eldest son absconded from home, observed that her heart was broken due to her distress.[152] In 1827 a 'gentleman' placed an advert requesting charity because the distress of his family, following the collapse of his profession due to misfortunes, was causing him to sink 'under the weight of accumulated sorrow'.[153] The same 'feeling' rhetoric was deployed by those who wrote to parish authorities in support of pauper requests for aid or acted as amanuenses for them. Letters written by Isaac Gould, surgeon, for Thomas and John Jump in 1829, and those Gould wrote in his own name to support Jumps' requests for relief, for example, deployed a linguistic style familiar to readers of sentimental fiction.[154] In 1831 an amaneusis claimed that if the overseer had 'a heart to feel' he must sympathise with John Jump's distressing circumstances

[149] Hoare, *Friendly Advice,* 95.
[150] e.g., *LM*, 1775, 65–6.
[151] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 24.
[152] *The Times*, 15 November 1821, 2.
[153] *The Times*, 11 January 1827, 2.
[154] Thomas Jump, Oldham, Lancashire, (written by Isaac Gould, surgeon of Oldham) to John Wood, overseer of the poor at Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (25 August 1829), SRO, D3891/6/97.

Fig. 4. Scene illustrating the poverty of the Foy family, Aldersgate, London, patronised by J.C. Lettsom in December 1799. This somewhat simple sketch was intended to stimulate benevolence for a distressed family by emphasising its need, but also its closeness.

in being unable to feed his four children.[155] In June 1832 in support of Thomas Jump's family, Gould declared that 'the Conditions of the Same family as a Scene of the most grievous kind, your Benevolence therein is unspeakably needful'.[156] A letter of 1833 begged compassion for John Jump's family's 'unhappy Condition Loudly Calling your Feeling attention to relieve them.' Clearly such cases must stimulate a feeling response and relieving distress was a sign of sensibility or virtuous humanity.[157] Thus John Bailey commented: 'As I could not obtain money on common interest, I was recommended to a gentleman, *who had a feeling heart*, and a purse always at the use of a *distressed good man*'.[158] Simon Mason's memorialised his tender father thus: his regard and Compassion 'for the Distress'd, often engag'd him in Pauper-Causes, which he us'd to support at his own Expence, and at a Time he could not well afford it.'[159]

[155] John Jump, Oldham, Lancashire, (written by an unknown amanuensis) to John Wood, overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (6 October 1831), SRO, D3891/6/100.

[156] Isaac Gould, surgeon, Oldham, Lancashire, to John Wood, overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (3 June 1832), SRO, D3891/6/101.

[157] Isaac Gould, surgeon, Oldham, Lancashire, to John Wood, overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (12 August 1833), SRO, D3891/6/100.

[158] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 113.

[159] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 12.

The vocabulary of distressed parenting also offers insights into collective notions of the emotions of labouring parenthood, since feeling was not restricted to the middling or genteel. Early nineteenth century poor parents claimed to be 'sensible' parents in their strategic requests for assistance. One mother's petition to the Foundling Hospital in 1800 confessed: 'she is a mother, she feels sensibly the tender claims her child has upon her, to resign the precious deposit, will be indeed an exquisitely painful task'.[160] On 2 December 1818, Francis Soundy wrote to the overseer of her parish of settlement because her husband had left her and her children 'in the gratest disstrees'. She said she would have written sooner except that her 'undutiful child told me her unfeling farther would sand me 10 shiling on sataday last but he did not'. For them too, distress was an emotional sensation as well as a material want. In 1833 Frances James wrote to the Uttoxeter authorities to trace her husband who had gone to his home parish to find work, explaining: 'I feel greatly Distrest at not hearing from him'.[161] A distressed family stoked parents' emotional pain. In December 1825 Jacob Curchin's letter asking for assistance from the overseers of Thrapston, Northamptonshire ended 'I cannot bare [sic] to see my children half starved'.[162] In 1834, Frances's husband wrote of his grief at witnessing the distress of his young, helpless family.[163] Samuel Parker declared that while he searched the country for work, his 'Aching Heart for them I had left behind knowing there [sic] sad Distress it as almost been to much for me and brought me to Desparation'.[164] Ballads intended to stir feeling hearts used the same rhetoric.[165]

While it was most frequently used by and about needy parents deserving of assistance in requests for charity and poor relief it also appeared in print culture and memoirs as part of parental self-identity. The comfortably-off elite used the term, for example, to describe their parenting experiences and demonstrate their higher sensibilities. Arabella Davies' diary entry for 7 August 1778 read, 'Felt my heart touched and distressed while I corrected my little child; but knew it was necessary: I instantly thought how important it was, that the Lord should correct his children'.[166] Similarly, the engraving accompanying the story of 'The Infant Rambler' in the *Lady's Magazine* (1782) illustrating the mother reunited with her lost child was titled the 'Distressfull Mother' (figure 5). This was simply a means to illustrate a feeling genteel young woman. In humbler people's life-writings it displayed a parent's sorrow at his/her inability to meet his/her children's needs. For example, in his life story-cum-plea for assistance, the debt-ridden apothecary Simon Mason's exposed the extremity of his distress, worsened by being a parent. In 1746:

[160] Ann Curtis's petition, cited in Evans, *Unfortunate Objects*, 133.

[161] Frances James, Leicester, Leicestershire, to the overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (29 December 1833), SRO D3891/6/100.

[162] Jacob Curchin of Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire, to the overseers of the poor for Thrapston, Northamptonshire (31 December 1825), NRO, 325P/193/100.

[163] Letter from Philip James, Leicester, Leicestershire, to Thomas Norris, overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (9 March 1834), SRO D3891/6/102.

[164] Samuel Parker, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, to the overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (21 July 1833), SRO, D3891/6/100

[165] e.g. *An Appeal to the Benevolent*, Harding B 25 (5), Bodleian Ballads.

[166] Davies, *diary of Mrs Arabella Davies,* 54.

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Fig. 5. 'The Infant Rambler, or Distressful Mother' (1782). This engraving illustrated the most emotional moment of the story, with the distraught mother's discovery of her lost son.

> I went to see my two naked Boys at my Sister's and carried them Cloaths and other Necessaries: They were highly rejoic'd to see me, which joy was too soon turn'd to grief, for fear of my leaving them. Such as have no Children, and even those that have, and have not the same Compassion for them, can't here share my Distress, for I at all times and places every had the greatest Affection and Concern for my Family, whom I never forsook, but ever strove in all conditions of Life, to do my utmost for them; whereas, many who have not the same care and love for their Families, wou'd have run from, and left them to shift for themselves, but this was never in my Power to do so, however requited for it.[167]

His repeated claims that he was a good father because he did not abandon his family when they were in distress, whatever the cost to his own status, further emphasises the link between distress and parenthood. In 1744 he left his wife and children in lodgings and went to pay his compliments to a surgeon-apothecary in Saffron-Walden 'and offer'd to assist him in any capacity; for I ever us'd my utmost Endeavours to support my Family, which in no distress I ever forsook; and at any time when degraded from being Master, I was content to act as a Servant.'[168] This had considerable meaning since some men who deserted their families claimed that their inability to watch their children in need made them run away.[169]

So in a period that promoted feeling, parental distress was an amalgam of the material and emotional state of the distressed parent, and marked the feeling sympathy of the recipient, the donor and the distributor.

CONCLUSION

The innate emotions of parenthood did not change, but their expression varied according to broader cultural trends and gender conventions. Rooted in widely held Christian principles and in new modes of emotional expression, parental tenderness was rendered more meaningful and aspirational in the Georgian period because it was one of the favourable qualities comprising femininity and masculinity. Tender maternity was fundamental to womanhood; so necessary, it was claimed that women who lacked innate sensibilities pretended to be tender.[170] Tender paternity was equally a key attribute of manhood. In 1736, the late '*Thomas Frewen*, Esq.' was described as 'A Gentleman of most excellent Parts, polite Behaviour, and good Sense; a devout Christian, a good Subject, a fond Husband, a tender Father, and a sincere Friend.'[171] This emphasis upon emotional expression risks leaving out the equally important physical components of parenthood and parenting. The next chapter turns to a more material and embodied survey of parents in print culture and by life-writers.

[167] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 88–9.
[168] ibid, 81.
[169] See Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 172–3.
[170] 'Letter to the editor', *LM*, 1778, 485.
[171] *GM*, 1736, 725, my thanks to Katy Lancaster for this information.

2

The Embodied and Providing Parent

I feel him in my arms—& hear his soft voice sing[1]

Parental bodies loved and cared, nurtured, provided and laboured for their offspring. So this chapter focuses upon the corporeality and materiality of representations of parenting and parenthood. This went beyond caring for and feeding children's bodies and it permeated discussions of parents more broadly than childbirth and breast feeding to encompass material, physical, and emotional sustenance. It is even evident in parental absence. Labouring women's maternal love is glimpsed in the objects and textiles deposited with babies left at the London Foundling Hospital. One patchwork strip, for example, was embroidered with a heart, the only tangible remnant of the very stuff of this mother's love.[2]

LOVING ARMS

Parents' bodies were fonts of love and suffering. As discussed in chapter one, 'tender' maternity was often synonymous with maternal care. Indeed it was predominantly mothers who were associated with physically caring for their infants and sick children in various genres of print and image. 'My Mother' (1815) sits next to the tester bed with her sick infant on her knee, medicine on the table, with the verse above: 'When pain and sickness made me cry, | Who gaz'd upon my heavy eye, | And wept for fear I should die? | My Mother'. In another vignette, the mother rushes to pick up her fallen child and comfort her with a story and a kiss (see figure 18). Thomas Percival's moralising *Father's Instructions* reminded children that their mothers had administered to them 'the healing balm in sickness'.[3] Even with the medicalisation and masculinisation of child-birth and child-rearing, medical texts focused on maternal nursing of children.[4] 'The Lady's Physician by

[1] This is Catherine Courtauld's description of missing her son Peter. Catherine Taylor to sisters Sophia and Eliza Courtauld (28 November 1821) in *Courtauld family letters*, vol. 2, 856.

[2] Styles, 'Patchwork on the page', 49. For more on the tokens left with babies deposited with the Foundling Hospital as tangible statements of love, see Evans, *Unfortunate Objects*, 139–40.

[3] Percival, *A father's instructions*, 14.

[4] Benzaquen, 'The doctor and the child', passim.

Dr Cook' serialised in the *Lady's Magazine* (1775), for example, offered advice on infant diseases in the hope of easing 'their mother's sympathizing agony, by speedily removing pain and diseases from their lovely issue'. In Dr Cook's opinion 'a sensible mother or nurse, may often prove their fittest and safest physician'.[5] Maternal care was considered to shape offsprings' minds and morals as well as their bodies, as the literature on women's moral significance for their families from the later eighteenth century shows.[6] William Buchan, for instance, insisted that mothers were 'not only to form the body, but also to give the mind its most early bias. They have it very much in their power to make men healthy or valetudinary, useful in life, or the pests of society'.[7]

For the most part, however, print did not linger on the tiring, dirty, often frightening aspects of such childcare. It is correspondence, diaries and memoirs that evoke the harrowing nature and physically and emotionally draining results of caring for ill children.[8] The letters between married couples, for example, consistently reported on young children's state of health.[9] Printed references were more allusive, as with W. Turnbull's observation in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1785, that the mother's 'necessary care and attention to infants, is by no means confined to giving them the breast, this is the pleasantest and easiest part of it; many are the other requisites absolutely necessary'.[10] Stories such as 'The Children's Friend: The Tender Mother' (1789) came closer to the bodily strain of caring for infants and ill children. Here the mother had to struggle with her own illness in order to care for her seriously ill daughters'.[11] In 1830 John Angell James saw these labours as destructive. The advent of children sent joy into a man's heart, but 'dismissed' from the woman's 'frame the comforts of health'.[12] Yet fathers did not escape the physical trials of children's sickbeds. Studies of Georgian north-west, midland and south-east families indicate that while not the primary carers, fathers did not shirk at such care.[13] James Nelson's examples of parental indulgence and anxiety show that this was an assumption that permeated advice texts too. In the gentle world of 'My Father' (1819) the son rhetorically asked: 'Who coax'd me, physic for to take, | Giving me sugar plums and cake, | If I would drink it for the sake? | Of Father' (see figure 16).

Sadly, children's illnesses too frequently ended in death, causing the most shattering physical experiences for parents. Suffering a child's death was understood to be physically as well as emotionally tormenting, something perhaps more easily admissible in an era when emotions were visualised as literally shaking the frame

[5] *LM*, 1775, 534.
[6] Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young*; Tikoff, 'Education', 105–9.
[7] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 5.
[8] See Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 117–25.
[9] e.g. CRL, Shaw Letters.
[10] *LM*, 1785, 428.
[11] Cited in Tobin, "The Tender Mother", 210.
[12] James, *The Family Monitor*, 24.
[13] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 330; James, 'A Georgian Gentleman: child care'; Smith 'The Relative Duties of a Man'; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 123.

and deluging the feeling individual. Mid-eighteenth century definitions of grief included bodily pain and discomfort as well as mental distress.[14] Printed accounts spoke of parental retreat and dissolution.[15] For memoirists' grief for their children literally overwhelmed their bodies. Writing about the illness and death of three of his adult children (1817) Joseph Gurney confessed that the suffering he and his wife had seen 'caused us (as it were) to bleed at every pore'.[16] John Bailey described his agonies after having just buried his first born and immediately losing his second child: 'Here I felt wave upon wave.'[17] '[M]y spirrits were allmost overwhelm'd,' Elizabeth Shaw explained to her son when recounting her adult daughter's death.[18] This emotion caused illness. William Hutton remembered 1761 as a melancholy year when: 'Extreme grief for the loss of my son brought the jaundice upon me; which kept me long between life and death'.[19] One of the consequences of Thomas Wright's intense grief over his eight-year-old son's death was that 'his spirits sunk so low that the doctor apprehended much danger.' He confessed it was only with the 'utmost resolution' that he surmounted 'the afflictive impression' which he continued to feel for the rest of his days.[20] Such physical effects were devastating for those with few material resources. In 1833 Elizabeth Bull wrote to her settlement parish requesting relief after her son was burnt to death, explaining: 'I have been very ill and still remain so with the fright it occasioned'; she was therefore unable to work to support her other three children.[21] The balance between permitting emotional outpouring and its control needed to be maintained for more pressing reasons than religious or societal convention.

There were happier representations of the embodied, demonstrative nature of parents' love for their children, however. The tender parent experienced his or her feelings of parental love in the body, communicated through tears and nervous and physical sensations. Images of tender parental love were further corporealised.[22] The joy of embracing and kissing a baby or small child was celebrated. For example, in a poem dedicated by her brother 'To Anna; on her birth-day', 1785, Anna was described as the 'Soft pleasure of thy mother's arms'.[23] Illustrated plates in the *Lady's Magazine* frequently depict a small child clinging to its mother's skirts, or holding her hand [see figures 1 and 13]. 'My Mother's first three vignettes depict maternal loving arms feeding the infant and rocking it to sleep (see figure 18). These are not orderly nursery scenes like Joseph Highmore's illustration of Richardson's *Pamela* in the nursery, but delight more in the physical affection of mother

[14] Woods, *Children Remembered*, 171.
[15] Tobin, 'Tender Mother', 211.
[16] Published in Corder, *Memoir of Priscilla Gurney*, 82.
[17] Bailey, *The Poor Pilgrim*, 77.
[18] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (Sunday 7th [18—] in the first few years of the nineteenth century) CRL, Shaw/106.
[19] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 102.
[20] Wright, *Autobiography*, 183.
[21] Elizabeth Bell to the Overseers of Fawley, (13 January 1833), HRO, 25M60/PO35, Bundle 3.
[22] Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 87–8.
[23] *LM*, 1785, 384.

and child.[24] This was part of the wider artistic shift in which depictions of maternity became far more overtly demonstrative in the second half of the eighteenth century in England, France and America.[25]

Sensibility encouraged both sexes to use physical gestures to display their feelings as parents.[26] Thus fatherhood was not distant or detached either. The six images of father and small son, in 'My Father', conveyed physical closeness in three, and playful and instructive interaction in the others. This father played peek-a-boo and ride-a-cock-horse with his boy, and strolled in the country and flew his kite with him (see figure 16). The father's body might not manufacture food but it provided affection. When Matilda's father forgave her elopement (1781), he pressed her to his bosom and 'shed a deluge of tears.'[27] Men caught up their children in their arms.[28] One heroine was 'incircled in a father's embraces' when reunited with him, causing both a 'speechless rapture'.[29] Fulsome embraces were not restricted to daughters. The son in 'My Father' took his first steps towards his father's 'sheltring arms' (see figure 16). In 'Juletta: or the fair maid of the mill', 1783, 'the fond parent embraced his darling son.'[30] Thus the father's body was the medium of his love through tears, hugs and clasping, clinging arms during sensibility's reign.

The popularity of the demonstrative father is also revealed by that important cultural counterpart to the child at its mother's skirts: the child at its father's knees. In both visual and literary versions this was typically a father returning home.[31] He was found in landscape paintings like Gainsborough's *Cottage Door* (1778), and sentimental genre pictures like Francis Wheatley's *The Fisherman's Return* (1795), and *A Woodman Returning Home* (1792).[32] In an age of regular warfare he could be a military father (see figure 14), but was perhaps most well known in his rural labouring form. Surely the best loved was in this well-known stanza from Thomas Gray's *Elegy written in a country churchyard* (1751), his lament for the demise of hamlet forefathers, which echoed antique verses:

> For them no more the blazing Hearth shall burn,
> Or busy Houswife ply her Evening Care:
> No Children run to lisp their Sire's Return,
> Or climb his Knees the envied Kiss to share.[33]

[24] 'Pamela tells a nursery tale from Pamela or Virtue Rewarded', 1743–4, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

[25] Barker, *Greuze and the painting of sentiment*, ch. 4, 5, 6; Duncan, 'Happy mothers and other new ideas'; Lovell, *Art in a season of revolution*, 159–63; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 85–6; Steward, *The New Child*, 103–12, 115–24.

[26] Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 91–4.

[27] 'Matilda; Or, the fair penitent' *LM*, 1781, 455.

[28] 'The Patriotic Parting', *LM*, 1782, 344.

[29] *The History of Betty Barnes*, 2 vols, London 1753, cited in Perry, *Novel Relations*, 88.

[30] *LM*, 1783, 294–5.

[31] A French example is Charles Benazech's *La Retour du Laboureur*, 1781. Cited in Webster, *Francis Wheatley*, 67.

[32] Webster, *Wheatley*, 77, 151. For engraving see *The Woodman's Return*, engraved by John Whessell (*c.*1760–1823), pub. by T. Simpson and Darling &Thompson, 1797 (stipple engraving) (pair of 125530), after Wheatley, Private Collection, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[33] Gray, *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard*.

Robert Burns' cotter returned home at the end of the week's labour to his cottage, wife and children, to sit, 'The lisping infant, prattling on his knee' (1785).[34] The embraces at meeting were often what artists portrayed. In William Redmore Bigg's *The Husbandman's Return from Labour*, the father delightedly lofts his infant in the air to kiss (see front cover). The blessings for the pastoral patriarch 'Richard of the Wood: A rustic ditty' extended to the next generation when a 'race of grandsons clasp his knees' (1804).[35]

Its appeal spanned several social ranks. A lengthier sentimental form unfurled in the self-indulgent day dream of the narrator of *Juliet Grenville* (1774):

> I have returned from my morning's labour; and I am now out again to finish the toil of the day—My JULIET, in the mean space remains at home, with her little ones about her, who live upon her looks. She has nearly prepared our homely, but healthful meal—she sees me coming, from a distance—our evening's banquet is dished—she comes to the door, with her children on either side, and one little babe looking and chuckling at her from her bosom—She sees my approach, with heaven in her smiles, and more than heaven in her caresses—she advances to meet me—my children come flying before—they clasp their little hands, and spread their little arms to give me reception—they clasp and cling about me, as the young ones flutter and cling about their parent turtle when just returned to his nest.[36]

By the 1790s cheaper versions in the form of mezzotints with accompanying verses were circulated aimed at urban trading and retailing ranks. Plebeian audiences therefore also enjoyed the father's 'glad return; rejoic'd to share | A father's smile, the little prattlers strove | To climb his knee and play'd their gambols round'. In loyalist verses they lost these delights to war.[37] Rural labourers shared the charming motif in the genre 'cottage songs,' a form of popular rural song through which they expressed themselves in the nineteenth century. For example, *The Labourer's Welcome Home* and *The Labourer's Return to His Family*, both delight in children flocking round their father.[38] It was so ubiquitous that anti-pastoralists turned it on its head to signal the grinding labour and impoverishment of the agricultural labourer. Thus in Stephen Duck's *The Thresher's Labour* (1736) the labourers were so dirty from their hard work they were like 'Ethiopians' and 'We scare our Wives, when Ev'ning brings us home; | And frighted infants think the Bugbear come'.[39]

This pastoral image held immense power for individuals. Several writers used it to describe their fathers or themselves. Dorothea Herbert headed the chapter describing the aftermath of her father's death (a landed clergyman) with '*For them*

[34] Burns, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, 126. For this poem as a rural celebration of labour see Ganev, *Songs of protest, songs of love*, 118–19.

[35] *LM*, 1804, 102–3.

[36] Brooke, *Juliet Grenville, v*ol. 3, 160–1.

[37] D. Eaton, 'Effects of War' in *Politics for the People*, 2 vols, parts II, 8: II, 1795, cited in Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, 226–8.

[38] *The Labourer's Welcome Home*, Bodley Ballads, Harding B 11 (2017), 1813–1835; *The Labourer's Return Home to his Family*, Bodley Ballads, Johnson Ballads 1776, Harding B 7 (6), and Harding B 19 (150). Dyck, 'Towards the "Cottage Charter"', 96, 99.

[39] Cited in Barrell and Bull, *Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse*, 386.

no more the blazing Hearth shall burn | Or Busy Huswife ply her Evening Care | No Children run to lisp their Sires return | Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.'[40] Thomas Wright identified with the loving rural father, reconfiguring the lines to refer to his deceased son: 'No more shalt run to lisp thy sires return, | Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share'. In several of the poems he penned to commemorate the awful anniversary of the child's death he used the phrase 'prattling at his knee' to remember his son's presence.[41] Lost loving paternity conveniently evoked the emotional and demonstrative elements of paternal love that was so praised at the time.

Children shared these ideas of parental love. In 1778 the eight-year old Eliza Fletcher's father was a commissioner for enclosure and therefore much from home. Decades later she observed 'I well remember the joy which my father's return, especially, diffused through all his little household'.[42] No doubt his return was a delight, as were the carefully selected small gifts he brought, but in describing it, Fletcher adopted the idyllic convention of the returning father. In memoirs, memories of a father's bodily presence stirred powerful emotions. In old age Sydney Morgan recalled: 'The songs taught me on my father's knee, have lost nothing of their power even to the present day'.[43] William Hutton criticised his father for his lack of kisses:

> My Father had no violent love for any of his children, but the least of all for the last, although deprived of the tenderness of a mother, which ought to have excited compassion. I have reason to believe he never gave him a kiss during his whole life, and I have the same inducement to believe he never gave me one, till I was 23 years of age, nor should I have been favoured with that, though the favourite son, had he been sober, but we all know liquor inspires the man.[44]

Hutton obviously learned a lesson, as some lines of his daughter's poem penned to celebrate his 85th birthday, indicate:

> You have lov'd your children, indulg'd your household, and never treated us with rigour,
> You have kept your health and good humour, and still retain your vigour.
> May God, of his infinite mercy, long spare these blessings,
> And I promise you, my dear Father, you shall not want for caressings.[45]

Lack of physical and emotional care was equated with abandonment and neglect. Though both fathers and mothers were castigated, it was women who were singled out as inhuman; branded 'Unnatural' Mothers for everything from abandoning a child, to favouritism, to insufficient maternal love.[46] The *Lady's Magazine's* editor remarked in 1771 that 'a woman without tenderness ought to be considered as a

[40] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 406. Her italics.
[41] e.g. 'On the death of John Wright', 304; 'A second poem, written on the anniversary of John's death', 310; 'On John Wright four years after his death', 315, in Wright, *Autobiography*.
[42] *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 13.
[43] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 3.
[44] In description of Samuel, the third son. Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 385.
[45] ibid, 276.
[46] For the French 'bad' mother, Popiel, 'Making mothers', 343.

monster in nature'.[47] A fashionable lady who abandoned her child to her lover's wife's care in *The Countess of Delwyn* (1759) penitently described herself as 'an unnatural Mother'.[48] Another was illustrated in the *Lady's Magazine* as an unsmiling mother shutting the door upon her small daughter brought to see her by her aunt (figure 6): no maternal cuddling here.[49] George Crabbe's 'The Mother' was beautiful but possessed 'a cold heart' which made her prize herself over her daughters.[50] Such mothers were indeed 'monsters of inhumanity.'[51] This was not just a motif of sentimental fiction, for its roots were deep in scripture. Benjamin Atkinson's sermon on the marriage of the Prince of Wales (1736) asked: '*Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget*, such a Monster in Nature may be found, but it is not very common'.[52] It could be used to humiliate women. The Countess of Strathmore was coerced by her abusive husband into writing an account of her 'misdeeds' (later published) in which she described herself as an 'unnatural' mother because she was not loving enough to her children, as evidenced by procuring abortions and preferring her cats to her living children.[53]

This maternal aberration was literally against nature because maternity was presumed to be a natural instinct by the later eighteenth century.[54] Thinking about his childhood when cared for by his aunts due to his parents' 'distress', William Hutton said, 'Nothing is more common than for people, particularly young women to be fond of children'.[55] Thus women's failure to provide physical and emotional care for children, or a mother's inability or rejection of her child's love broke biological ties and rendered her inhuman. Though all women should like children, biological motherhood forged the strongest tie. Mary Robinson commented proudly that her maternal instinct overcame her ignorance when:

> having no domestic with me was left to take the intire charge of Maria. Reared in the tender lap of affluence, I had learnt but little of domestic occupations . . . but necessity soon prevailed with the soft voice of maternal affection, and I obeyed her dictates as the dictates of nature.[56]

Mary's obedience to affection's soft voice also indicates how the cultural and natural intertwined since the culture of sensibility understood women to be naturally feeling.

For all this, nature was understood to go only so far and there was plenty of discussion about how to teach women to become good mothers. Thus W. Turnbull

[47] *LM*, 1771, 106.
[48] Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, 214.
[49] *LM*, 1782, 15.
[50] 'The Mother', Tale VIII, Crabbe, *Selected Poems*, 199.
[51] *LM*, 1784, 545–7.
[52] Italicised quote is Isa. Xlix. 15. Atkinson, *Good princes nursing fathers and nursing mothers*, 11.
[53] Published in *A New Collection of Trials for Adultery*, 30.
[54] Wahrman, 'On Queen Bees and Being Queens', 266–72. For nature and motherhood see Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*, ch 10.
[55] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 5.
[56] Robinson, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 150–1.

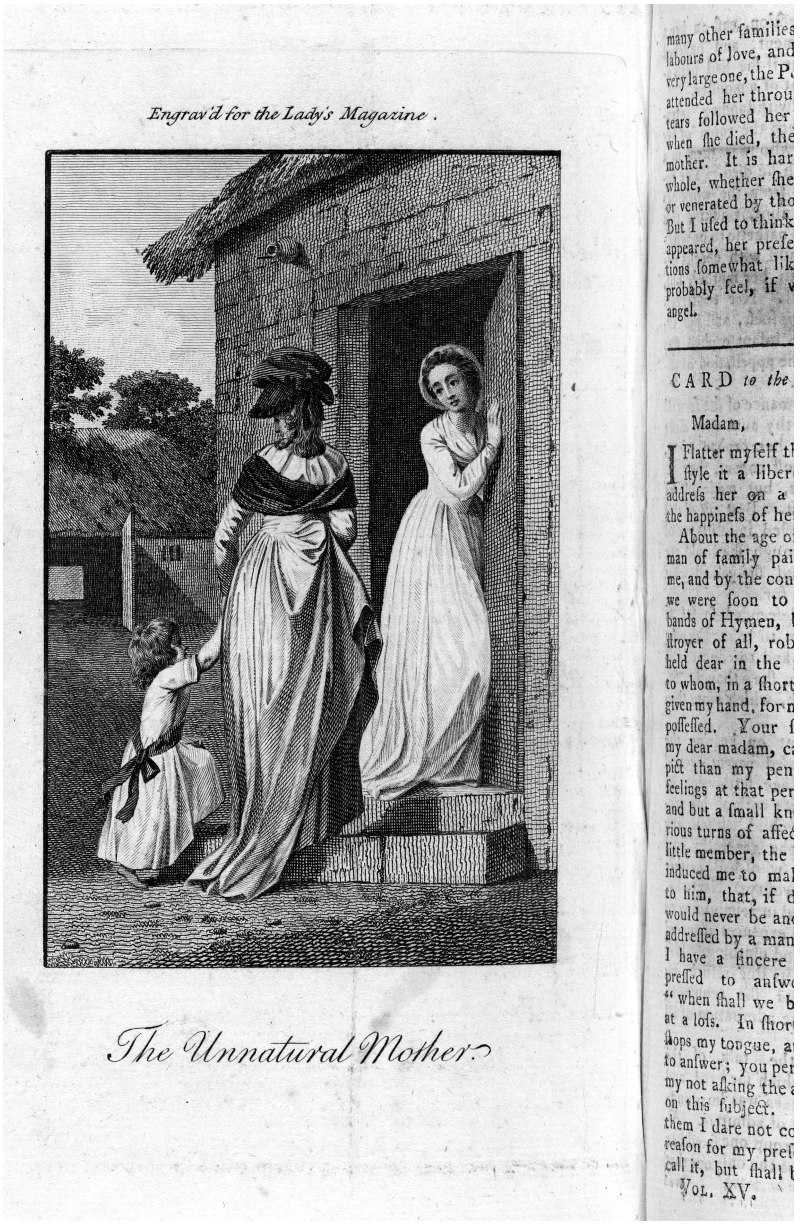

Fig. 6. 'The Unnatural Mother' (1784). Here was the antithesis of the tender mother: cold, distant, and indifferent to her child.

MD argued that 'The bringing forth of children is natural to women, but this is the least part of it' and recommended that girls be educated in appropriate child-drearing practices.[57] It was also an instinct that could be undermined by other factors, as an article defending female education in 1810 infers. Its premise was that an academic education would not turn women's heads and hands away from their maternal duties as sometimes claimed:

> Can any thing, for example, be more perfectly absurd than to suppose, that the care and perpetual solicitude which a mother feels for her children, depends upon her ignorance of Greek and mathematics, and that she would desert an infant for a quadratic equation? We seem to imagine that we can break in pieces the solemn institution of nature, by the little laws of a boarding school; and that the existence of the human race depends upon teaching women a little more or a little less;—that Cimmarian ignorance can aid parental affection.[58]

As Hutton's comment indicates, paternity was not as naturalised as maternity. Male procreation might be seen as a natural act, and the feelings of paternal affection be considered natural, but paternal caring for infants was seen as socially constructed. Thus it is the 'unfeeling father' who was the nearest correspondent to the 'unnatural mother.' John Angell James denounced as a 'brute' and a 'monster' a man who was unmoved by his wife's pleas that he give up daily visits to the tavern or habits of idleness on account of his child at her breast and his child by her side.[59] Still, he broke culture's rather than nature's conventions while unloving mothers broke both.

NURTURING BOSOMS

Parental arms drew children to their 'bosoms', a well-used term that conveyed love.[60] In 1801 Elizabeth Shaw ended a letter to her son John praying that God 'conduct you in innocence and health to the Bosom of your family'.[61] In particular, mothers' bosoms were shorthand for motherly love. Prints and sketches discreetly suggested it by placing the cuddled infant's head at its mother's breast (figure 7). The nursing infant in 'My Mother' is accompanied by the verse: 'Who fed me from her gentle breast, | And hush'd me in her arms to rest, | And on my cheek sweet kisses presst? My Mother' (see figure 16). Other depictions showed it more overtly, as in the lithograph 'Mother giving breast to child' (1806) (figure 8). In fiction, infants burrowed in maternal bosoms. Juliet Grenville 'comes to the door, with her children on either side, and one little babe looking and chuckling at her from her bosom'.[62] Memoirists identified with it. Ann Candler's poem on the loss of her

[57] *LM* 1785, 428.
[58] *LM*, 1810, 130.
[59] James, *Family Monitor*, 33.
[60] See Mrs Gray, *LM*, 1775, 275.
[61] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (15 June 1801), CRL, Shaw/29 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.
[62] Brooke, *Juliet Grenville*, 159.

baby son, invoked her feelings on first seeing him: 'Hope's dawning beam my bosom fill'd, | With fairy visions bright'.[63] For Mary Robinson, author and autobiographer, she and her siblings were the darlings of her mother's bosom. She evoked the phrase three times when describing her response to her own daughter:

> At length the expected, though, to me, most perilous moment arrived, which awoke a new and tender interest in my bosom, which presented to my fondly beating heart my child,—my Maria. I cannot describe the sensations of my soul at the moment when I presented the little darling to my bosom, my maternal bosom; when I kissed its hands, its cheeks, its forehead, as it nestled closely to my heart, and seemed to claim that affection which has never failed to warm it.[64]

These effusions conjure two meanings of 'bosom'. The first, most obviously, is maternal breastfeeding, the most highly visible aspect of embodied motherhood since it was heavily promoted within a medical discourse that promised that maternal nursing would benefit society by securing the better health of children and mothers, and would keep women usefully occupied with their proper function.[65] It too was naturalised as an inescapable duty: 'A series of letters on education' between Viscountess de Limours and the Baroness d'Almane, observed: 'Nature, no doubt, imposed on us the sweet obligation of suckling our children, and we cannot dispense with it, unless compelled by other still more essential duties'.[66]

'Wet nursing' was thus criticised for rupturing the natural bonds of motherhood because the child might love its wet-nurse more than its mother, as well as for endangering the health of infants.[67] For those claiming expertise like Buchan and Turnbull, in the serialised *Lady's Physician* (1785), the woman who abandoned her child to a wet nurse did not deserve the name mother.[68] The sentiment was widespread by the later eighteenth century. For example in 1778, the fictional Mrs Qualm's existence was so defined by her 'perpetual breeding' that the grandmother and man midwife permanently resided at her home. Yet, for all her aspirations to tender maternity, she got its components very wrong. Her critic wryly reported, she 'boasts that no family has ever sent out more numerous advertisements for nurses, *with a fine breast of milk*'.[69]

As this humorous letter indicates, the celebration of maternal nursing was part of the broader landscape of maternity, not just a medical demand. The imagery of nurturing bosoms was even invoked by mothers who did not breastfeed. In the 1760s Arabella Heatley painfully described her son as torn from her bosom when her husband separated from her due to her infidelity, even though the separation

[63] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 19–21.
[64] Robinson, *Memoir*, 21, 143–4.
[65] See Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, ch. 1; Cadogan, *Essay upon Nursing*, 14–16; James, *essay on the government of children*, 42–5.
[66] *LM*, 1785 581; For the thesis that childbearing women's bodies were colonised as a national resource, see Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast'.
[67] From Rousseau translated in *LM*, 1780, 147. For a positive reconstruction of wet-nursing as a practice and occupation, see Levene, *Childcare, health and mortality*, chapter 5.
[68] *LM*, 1785, 427.
[69] *LM*, 1778, 198.

Fig. 7. *Five figures sitting and standing around a tea-table, one of them a mother with a child* (1803). This social gathering places the nursing mother at the centre of attention. Though not literally feeding her baby, maternal nursing is evoked in the position of the child.

Fig. 8. *Mother giving breast to infant* (1806, printed 1810). This illustration of a mother nursing her baby is less ambiguous than usual, though her rustic dress and idyllic pastoral environment perhaps made its directness more acceptable.

case shows she had not breast-fed her baby.[70] It was intrinsic to the growing emphasis upon the emotional and feeling aspects of family life. Thus advocates claimed it deepened a mother's love for a child. As James Nelson observed, 'Mothers by suckling their Children cherish that Tenderness which Nature has implanted in them towards their Offspring. For Experience shews, that the office of suckling considerably augments in them the Affection from whence that Tenderness flows'.[71] Fathers were instructed to promote the practice for all these reasons, as well as for personal benefits. According to Rousseau and, sixty years later, Cobbett, the 'affecting spectacle' would move and touch the father and his husband's love for his wife.[72] Moreover, keeping the child at home instead of sending it away to a wet nurse would encourage men to use their reason and sense to supervise the infant's rearing. In any case, the practice pacified a child and so was conducive to happy, quiet, family life.[73]

While the imagery of the sucking child no doubt suggested maternity in people's minds, fathers frequently clasped children to their paternal bosoms. Of course God was also depicted as a father with 'arms of love.'[74] John Bailey description of the solace he found in God's bosom evoked that of the child in its parent's.[75] This demonstrates the second meaning of bosom. In its modern usage, dating from the second half of the twentieth century, 'bosom' means women's breasts. Yet in the period studied, 'bosom' was more gender neutral and described the human breast (chest) and the enclosure formed by the breast and arms. When Reverend Primrose recovered his errant daughter he welcomed 'my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom'.[76] The meaning of bosom as enclosure between breast and arms originated in scriptural phrasing, as both 'nurse' and 'nursing' fathers and mothers indicate.[77] Indeed the nursing father was its most striking invocation. At its core was an image of a profoundly nurturing fatherhood originating in the Biblical passage from *The Book of Numbers* 11:12, where Moses complained about the burden of leading his people through the desert: 'Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers'.

The analogy served several purposes, as chapter four will discuss, both religious and political. In Quaker writings it denoted the general mildness and supportive qualities of Quaker ministers.[78] Similarly, where advice for monarchs was con-

[70] Arabella Heatley to Richard Heatley, written later 1769 and 1770, *Trials for Adultery*, volume 2, 211, vol. 7, 72.
[71] Nelson, *Essay on Government*, 44.
[72] *LM*, 1780, 147; Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 217.
[73] Cadogan, *An Essay upon Nursing*, 25.
[74] For example, 'A Thanksgiving for his Majesty's Recovery, sung at St James's, Manchester; 23 April 1789' in Bayley, *Religion and loyalty inseparable*, 23.
[75] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 74.
[76] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 173.
[77] See entries in Fleetwood, *The Christian's dictionary*.
[78] See *A collection of testimonies concerning several ministers of the gospel*, 156, 184.

cerned it was conceptually abstract and related to questions of authority. However, it could be profoundly embodied. In his sermon on the duties of Baptist ministers (1797), which related the duties of ministers to the qualities of nursing fathers, John Ryland emphasised the corporeality of the Israelite father. He reminded ministers that the nursing father undertook 'long fatiguing marches' during which he relieved his tenderer partner 'of the burden of her sucking infant', by carrying 'it in his bosom . . . for a very considerable period, till the child had acquired a degree of strength proportioned to the toils of the difficult journey'.[79] This image of paternal love conjured physical paternity with the infant held in the father's bosom to be fed, carried over long distances, and protected from danger, as well as its enduring nature. Yet the culture of sensibility gave the term bosom further power. The *OED* further defines it as: 'The breast considered as the seat of thoughts and feelings'. Thomas Wright combined the archaic and the new in his declaration that no real Christian would promote division 'betwixt a father—a tender and affectionate father—and the offspring of his own bowels.'[80]

LABOURING BODIES

The labouring parental body was a similarly prominent cultural motif of parenthood, often bound up with the notion that having children motivated parents to endeavour on their behalf. As James Nelson insisted at mid-century: 'a Love of our Children is a great ruling Principle in human Nature; and . . . makes a large Part of that Self-love which sticks so closely to us. For them we aim at Wealth, Power, and Dignity; for them our Views are endless, our Desires boundless'. In his view, parents' lives were incomplete until they lived to see their children settled and contributing 'to the great Family of the World.'[81] As William Cobbett also pronounced, 'To provide for a wife and children is the greatest of all possible spurs to exertion.'[82] The rural labouring man of popular imagery offered a similar lesson, for as well as bestowing hugs and kisses to his children on his return he was also the provisioner returning to his cottage after a long day of hard toil. In Wheatley's pictorial series *Four Times of the Day (Rustic Hours): Morning, Noon, Evening* and *Night* (1799), the father returned with his working tools in *Evening*. Morland's *Evening; or, The Sportsman's Return* returned with food to his family waiting outside the cottage.[83] In some images, the father was literally weighed down by his labours until 'deformed and struggling' home, as in Gainsborough's *Cottage Door with Children Playing* (1778) and *The Woodcutter's Return* (1782).[84]

[79] Ryland, *The duty of ministers to be nursing fathers to the church*, 22–3.
[80] Wright, *Autobiography*, 284.
[81] Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 1.
[82] Cobbett, *Advice to Young men*, 205.
[83] Francis Wheatley, (1747–1801), *Evening*, 1799 (oil on canvas), Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, USA, The Bridgeman Art Library; Webster, *Wheatley*, 153–4; Gilbey, *Morland*, 283,288.
[84] Barrell, *dark side of the landscape*, 69–72.

The labourer in Joseph Warton's poem *To Evening* (1746) was 'homeward bent to kiss his prattling babes'.[85]

Tired and ready for rest, the role of his children is quite clear; he did not just receive an income to maintain his family from his hard work, his labour was recompensed through his children's affection.[86] This is why in so many scenes the father was seated at rest, surrounded by his family. Goldsmith's poem 'The Traveller' eulogises the Swiss peasant who worked hard and: 'At night returning, every labour sped, | He sits him down the monarch of a shed; | Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys | His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze'. Burns' cotter returning home was 'toil-worn' and having wearily reached his cottage, 'His wee bit ingle, blink bonilie, | His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile, | The lisping infant, prattling on his knee, | Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile, | And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.'[87] So tired, the labouring father sleeps soundly at the table, his hat still firmly on his head pillowed in his arms, in Wheatley's *Night*.[88]

The sheer physicality of the labour of mothers of the trading and labouring ranks did not go undetected. In Wheatley's *Rustic Hours*, the mother pauses in her labours only to greet her husband in the evening. Ideals of labouring-rank womanhood were situated in industriousness, long-suffering, cheerful endurance, and honesty. They too found their children's love to compensate for their labours like Peggy, the mother, in the pastoral poem *The Gentle Shepard*.[89] These mothers introduced numerous memoirs. James Lackington was deeply grateful to his mother who worked round the clock to support her eleven children.[90] The rarely effusive Francis Place praised both his mother and his wife for working hard for their offspring.[91] While some middle-class writers were worried that this kind of labour was incompatible with giving the care, time, and watchfulness that offspring required, memoirists like Place and Lackington did not see the two as incompatible and associated both with loving care.[92] Clearly genre was significant. The comedy 'The Algerine Captive' has Updike describe his mother as working her body to the bone.[93] On the other hand, sentimental literature featured the nurturing and nourishing maternal body, the loving maternal body, but not the labouring maternal body. Sewing was perhaps one exception. The gentleman John Harden portrayed his wife, Jessie, in this mode, sewing while attending to her three children (figure 9). Perhaps the exception is the pastoral image of wife and mother. Even so, these women were domestically

[85] Cited in Barrell and Bull, *Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse*, 322–3.
[86] Goldsmith, *The Traveller Or A Prospect Of Society*. Steward, *The New Child*, 180. For the point more generally see Ganev, *Songs of protest: Songs of Love*, 124–8.
[87] Burns, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, 126.
[88] Francis Wheatley, (1747–1801), *Night*, 1799 (oil on canvas), Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, USA, The Bridgeman Art Library.
[89] Dwyer, 'The Culture Of Love In An Eighteenth-Century Province', 32.
[90] Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years* 41–2.
[91] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 98, 104, 184.
[92] e.g. Hoare, *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children*, 95.
[93] *LM*, 1804, 68.

Fig. 9. 'A Mother Sewing' (pen and ink on paper). John Harden's evocation of his wife as multi-tasking mother illustrates contemporary admiration for industrious, as well as tender, maternity.

busy rather than labouring hard as part of a provisioning couple. They form the welcoming, waiting backdrop to the returning father thereby idealising the stereotype of the hard-working provisioning father and the domestic, child-caring mother.

PROVISIONING NEEDS

The materiality of being a parent is most familiar in the father's role to provide for his children. This was fundamental for the patriarchal head of household who was obliged to maintain his dependents: wife, children and servants; providing an income and/or labour to supply their basic necessities. It was a legal requirement: the poor law authorities prosecuted fathers who refused to do so in order to prevent their families burdening the parish. The quarter sessions sought them out to

reimburse the parish and resume financial support.[94] Legal records therefore reveal the law's attitudes towards fathers who failed as provisioners, and litigation offers glimpses into communities' criticisms of fathers who refused to support offspring. Its cultural dimensions offer further insights.

It becomes clear that the components of paternal provision were class-related. In 1783, the Matron in the *Lady's Magazine* observed that her readers were not mercenary if they were concerned about how much money they would have after marriage. After all 'There is something like cruelty in bringing children into the world, without being able to provide from them, to pay for their education'.[95] As this suggests, the items provided were more extensive the higher the social rank of the family. For the poor it was basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing, medicine). Thomas Beddoes informed poor parents that to preserve their children from ill health 'The father must be sober and industrious; and the mother learn to manage well,' while for the wealthier it included education.[96] All ranks should aim at moral supervision. As the author of a sermon published in *The Moral Essays* observed:

> It is not in the power of every parent to provide for his children, with regard to the good things of this life, in the manner he could wish, or they, perhaps, deserve. His circumstances may be too narrow to make their's easy. But it is in every man's power to bring up his children in the fear of God, to teach them early their prayers, to form their minds to the practice of virtue, to instil into them the principles of morality, to explain to them the doctrines of Christianity, and acquaint them with the ways of salvation.[97]

A cultural approach therefore reveals how multi-faceted provision was, not always purely material. The *Ladies Library* told mothers that provision included nurturing the abilities of body and mind too. Protection was linked to providing for children, entailing paternal watchfulness over a son's character and performance, protecting daughters from inappropriate company or potential suitors, and physical and metaphorical rescue from danger.[98] This section, however, focuses upon material support although it was an emotional as well as a financial act.[99]

Culturally, provision was perceived to be a weighty care that curtailed other pursuits. In 1771, when enumerating the benefits of a wife over a mistress, an article in the *Lady's Magazine* acknowledged that 'marriage is a no small check to the growth of learning and philosophy; and that the blessing of children turns all a man's thoughts from the liberal arts towards the care of maintaining his family.'[100] In fact, it was usually the strains of paternal provision that prevailed in representations. This occurred when the blessing of children was transformed to a burden

[94] Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 36–7.
[95] *LM*, 1783, 130.
[96] Beddoes, *Guide for Self Preservation, and Parental Affection*, 9.
[97] 'The duty of parents to children. Under the verse: Eccles. Vii. 25. *Hast thou Children? Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood*', in A M. *Moral essays*, vol. 2, 81–2.
[98] e.g. *The Ladies Library*, vol. 2, 88. Bailey, '"a very sensible man": imagining fatherhood', *History*, 281–2.
[99] For such an observation about modern fatherhood, see Dermott, *Intimate Fatherhood*, 25.
[100] 'Lisistratus to Philocles, Making a comparison between a wife and a mistress', *LM*, 1771, 12.

through economic circumstances or their large number. Not surprisingly this was the tone of pauper fathers. One of Phillip James's reasons for seeking parish support was his frequent illnesses: 'I am Obligated to Ask your Assistance on Account of the Largeness of my family.'[101]

The same imagery was, however, used for men of more substantial means. When Thomas Wright described a man who had inherited a couple of small crofts with a cottage and workshop, he pointed out that 'Having a numerous family of eleven children, he was much obliged to mortgage his little pittance for as much money as it would fetch, and struggled with distressing circumstances all his days.'[102] Family 'increase' was often deemed a critical factor in the fall of families of modest means. William Hutton bleakly recounted his father's descent thus:

> And now poverty stared him in the face. Employment, as well as prudence, was wanting, to which was added the dead weight of five small children. This happened in the year 1725. Every future view of prosperity was now closed; and the mind, sinking under misfortunes, became incapable of exertion. His occupation taught him to drink, which be learned with willingness, while his family wanted bread.[103]

Francis Place bitterly described

> the careful saving moral men and women who have set their hearts on bettering their condition and have toiled day and night in the hope of accomplishing their purpose. None but such as they can tell how disappointment preys on them, how as the number of their children increases, hope leaves them, how their hearts sink as toil becomes useless, how adverse circumstances force on them those indescribable feelings of their own degradation which sinks them gradually to the extreme of wretchedness.[104]

Its potential for causing conflict was great. In George Crabbe's poem, *Ellen Orford* described her step-father: 'Sore was the Grief to see him angry come, | and, teased with Business, make Distress at home: | The Father's Fury and the Children's Cries.' Neatly inverting the imagery of the rural labouring father returning with joy to his delighted family, this man's family burdens just made him rage.[105] Still, some men bore the pressure cheerfully. William Gifford admired his patron William Cookesley. Though not rich in his profession of surgeon in a country town and with circumstances contracted by 'a very numerous family, which left him little for the purposes of general benevolence' he nevertheless cheerfully bestowed what he had left.[106]

Men struggled with providing for their families for a range of reasons in these sources. External factors were paramount. In requests for charity for middling families fathers were often unable to maintain their wife and children through

[101] Letter from Philip James, Leicester, Leicestershire, to Thomas Norris, overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (6 June 1834), SRO D3891/6/102.
[102] Wright, *Autobiography*, 247.
[103] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton,* 350–1.
[104] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 113.
[105] 'The Poor of the Borough: Ellen Orford', *The Borough*, Crabbe, *Selected Poems*, 58.
[106] William Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, 20.

business failure.[107] In working men's memoirs it was linked to low pay and difficulties in getting established in a trade.[108] In all ranks men's bodies failed and prevented them labouring to provide for their children. Pauper fathers stressed that their sickness, disability or unemployment hindered their provision, eager to demonstrate that they were 'deserving' rather than idle.[109] Even wealthy men might be inadequate from temperamental unsuitability. Dorothea Herbert described her father, a landed gentry clergymen, as a poor provider, though he was blessed with an 'oeconomist' for a wife.[110] Thomas Holcroft's father was not so lucky, lacking the safety net of wealth or talented wife:

> the habit that became most rooted in, and most fatal to my father, was a fickleness of disposition, a thorough persuasion, after he had tried one means of providing for himself and family for a certain time, that he had discovered another far more profitable and secure. Steadiness of pursuit was a virtue at which he could never arrive.[111]

Some men failed to restrain their unacceptable passions. Profligacy and luxury distracted genteel men from family duties. Fordyce feared the 'new modes of pleasure ruinous by their expence, inflammatory to the passions, productive of softness, idleness, sensuality, debauchery' which alienated 'the heart from the company of the wife and worthy, from the duties and joys of domestic life (1777).'[112] It was drunkenness that made lower-ranking fathers deaf to their children's needs. James Lackington scathingly dismissed his father:

> he contracted a fatal habit of drinking, and of course his business was neglected; so that after several fruitless attempts of my grandfather to keep him in trade, he was, partly by a very large family, but more by his habitual drunkenness, reduced to his old state of a journeyman shoemaker: Yet so infatuated was he with the love of liquor, that the endearing ties of husband and father could not restrain him: by which baneful habit himself and family were involved in the extremest poverty.[113]

Surprisingly sympathetic, Mary Saxby commented: 'My poor husband was at the alehouse most of his time; whilst I, and my children, wanted the common necessaries of life'.[114] Such men failed as fathers because the role did not restrain their worst emotions, a loss of self-control that advertised their inferiority in Georgian society.

For domesticity should tame such men. The 'Matron' condemned time-wasters and gamers, particularly those who possessed 'a family, who look up to him for support.' She recommended that they should 'prove themselves good members of society, as well as good family men, by returning to the female corps, from which

[107] e.g. 'Personal Advert', *The Times*, 23 July 1795, 1; 'A case of extreme distress', *The Times*, 13 April 1795, 2; 'Unparalleled Distress and Suicide,' *The Times*, 15 November 1821, 2.
[108] e.g. Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 40, 45.
[109] See Bailey, '"think wot a Mother must feel"', 8.
[110] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 5.
[111] Holcroft, *Memoirs*, vol 1, 37.
[112] Fordyce, *Addresses to young men*, vol 2, 140
[113] Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years of the life*, 40.
[114] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 34.

they have deserted, and mixing in their domestic parties.'[115] Cobbett pointed out that when he spent hours caring for his infants, 'I have not been idle, I have not been a waster of time; but I should have been all these if I had disliked babies, and had liked the porter-pot and the grog-glass'.[116] The association of refusal to provide and idleness was keenly associated with the labouring ranks. After all, industriousness was vital to defining the deserving poor.

The consequences of failure were bodily experienced too. Seeing their family in distress was deemed to have physical effects for parents. The Baptist minister, John Bailey, recalled the pains of being a young husband and father at the turn of the eighteenth century:

> I remember once in particular walking to Epsom, to preach, with a very heavy heart on account of domestic necessity and distress, my dear partner was confined, and it was not in my power to provide comfortable things for her, or our offspring, being then, as I before stated, a school master.

His recourse was prayer.[117] By 1807, after further setbacks, Bailey despaired: 'I have often said; how is poor children, wife, and mother, to be supported? Day after day I rambled through the streets of this great city and vicinity, crying in the bitterness of my soul to God for help and deliverance'.[118] The combined language of distress and parental feeling was most powerfully evoked when the theme was the abject horror experienced by a parent forced to watch his child go without food. William Bromely told the archdeacon Joseph Cobbett in 1817 that he had been unable to get work for six months; moreover his wife was near her lying in and therefore unable to work to support their five small children. His choice of phrase oozes parental despair: 'my Children Crying Round me for Vitual and non to give them it grives me wors than all'.[119] The higher social ranks were familiar with this language, as Oliver Goldsmith's very popular *Vicar of Wakefield*, demonstrates. Its narrator Reverend Primrose tearfully recounted his despair at 'my children weeping round me for bread'.[120]

Overall, then, provisioning was a very precarious paternal role that was difficult to sustain over the long term, owing to the unpredictable vagaries of life. Hence, one of the defining features of a 'bad father' was a man's *refusal*, as opposed to his inability, to support his children. With wealthier families the contrast was drawn between the father who provided for his children in the long term, after his death, and the father who failed to do so.[121] Men who economically neglected their offspring were subjected to collective censure. Ann Candler described her village's contempt for her deserting husband who spurned his children.[122] References to

[115] *LM*, 1781, 127–8.
[116] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 176.
[117] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 73, 79.
[118] ibid, 142–3
[119] William Bromley, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, to Joseph Corbett, archdeacon, Longnor, Shropshire (26 May 1817), SA 1977/7/649.
[120] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 191.
[121] 'Occasional papers addressed to the ladies. No xvii, domestic happiness or misery'. *LM*, 1790, 351.
[122] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 8.

men who withheld support from their children in the pauper correspondence were harsh. Parishes singled them out. In 1824, John Taylor, overseer of the poor for Kendal, Westmorland, replied to his counterpart James Seed, overseer of the poor for Billington, Lancashire about Barbara Ingham:

> I have to say from her (and I know it myself as a fact) that her husband has been at home at different times for a few days but never brought a single farthing with him for his wife's support, in her own language he came for no other purpose than to distress her, He has said to her that he will not do anything to support her, he left her a fortnight since and she supposed from what she has heard he is skulking around Bury or Burnley but he has declared he will not do anything to support her, he is a very bad fellow and your township ought to punish him—the poor creature is most industrious and maintains with your 4 shillings her four small children by washing clothes doing anything for a honest livelihood and I can assure you she bears a spotless reputation[123]

Refusal to provide indicated male selfishness and immaturity, because by rejecting the obligations of children and living as if at liberty a man rejected the conventions of mature manhood.

Yet for all that providing for a family was a major feature of fatherhood and manhood, it was also considered to be a maternal obligation in several social ranks. The counterpart of the male head of household was the 'prudent' wife and mother, who ran the household and domestic economy and brought up her daughters to follow the same path. Her qualities are summed up by the *OED* definition: the ability to recognise and follow the most suitable or sensible course of action; good sense in practical or financial affairs; discretion; circumspection; and caution. Prudence was more about sense than sensibility. This model of motherhood is therefore a very useful counterbalance to assuming that all representations of motherhood in this period became hyperbolically emotionalised and de-materialised; in fact this rather more traditional view survived, pointing to the multiplicity of ideals even in the most fashionable of media.

Materially-rooted descriptions of motherhood also differed according to social status. Genteel women embraced the concept of the 'prudent' mother. In the story 'Benevolence rewarded; or, the history of Miss Harriot [sic] Worthy. A moral tale', the young widowed Mrs Henry retired to the country to bring up her children and 'there was no occurrence, however trivial, from which this prudent mother did not draw some moral tendency'.[124] The 'affectionate father' in 'The Haunted Castle' chose a sensible and useful woman, which qualities would make her a prudent housewife 'and the careful mother of a family'.[125] While industriousness was appreciated in all women, it was especially recommended in lower-ranking women. Aimed at them, Hoare's *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children* promoted maternal orderliness, cleanliness and industriousness.[126] Middle-class, professional, and genteel 'prudent' maternity focused more upon good

[123] LRO PR2391/1223 October, 1824.
[124] *LM*, 1784, 323.
[125] *LM*, 1790, 401.
[126] *Friendly Advice*, Chapters 6 and 7.

management in catering for the needs of a family.[127] Dorothea Herbert praised her mother's cleverness at managing what was available, which was substantial.[128] In 1775 the *Lady's Magazine* published selected extracts from Joseph Addison's writings. 'Aurelia', a 'woman of great quality,' and her husband, a man of good sense, were praised because 'their family is under so regular an oeconomy, in its hours of devotion and repast, employment and diversions, that it looks like a little commonwealth within itself'. This meant they were happily married; it led their children to love them, and their servants to adore them.[129] When John Harden illustrated his family life, his wife and his mother were usually busy with domestic tasks. Even in his depictions of family leisure at cards, or round the hearth, they also sewed, read to others, or minded babies.[130] For the fictional widowed mother of a son at school and a young daughter, provision was the thrifty marshalling of an inheritance or annuity not paid labour.[131] Cornelia Knight's description of her prudent gentlewoman mother conveyed the authority that stemmed from this role.[132]

Prudent maternity shaped children's memories. William Hutton remembered his mother as an 'exceedingly prudent woman', a quality he associated with her mothering.[133] For James Northcote maternal prudence was foresight. His father had 'a philosophical carelessness to domestick affairs' and 'paid no attention to the improvement of his children and but from the prudence of his mother I should never have been taught to read'.[134] Jane Bewick saw prudent womanhood, exemplified by her mother, as good domestic management, sound financial acumen centred on thrift and economy, and industriousness. Importantly, her depiction did not separate domestic management from maternity; all these tasks were simultaneous. So she remembered 'In the winter evenings, the spinning wheel was in requisition: by the side of a blazing fire, &a web was spun on bed or table linen' and then after a digression on the benefits of household production, she continued: 'in winter nights she used to repeat to us, the Gentle Shepherd etc, from end to end, most of Robin Hood, or to sing us old songs such [as] "John of Badenyon", the "Ewer with the crooked horn", the "auld mans mears dead"'.[135]

Mothers also materially provided for their children, often in the absence of a providing husband. Mary Robinson praised her mother who, when faced with her estranged husband's lack of maintenance for his children, 'resolved, by honourable means, to support them.' She opened a boarding school until her husband reappeared and ordered her to break up the school because 'he considered his name as disgraced, his conjugal reputation tarnished, by the public mode which his wife had adopted of revealing to the world her unprotected situation'. Frustratingly, 'his

[127] See preface to Davies, *The diary of Mrs Arabella Davies*, 22.
[128] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 5.
[129] *LM*, 1775, 662.
[130] e.g. figs. 10, 12, 14, 28, 46, in Foskett, *Harden*, plates III to XIII.
[131] *LM*, 1785, 33.
[132] Knight, *Autobiography of Miss Cornelia Knight*, vol 1, 5.
[133] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton,* 351.
[134] He began the memoir in the third-person. Northcote, *Life of the Painter*, 24–5, reel 0037–0038.
[135] Bewick, 'My Mother', unpaginated, TWA, Accession 4388.

provision for his family was scanty, his visits few' thereafter.[136] Poor women faced even more extreme situations. When widowed, Mary Saxby explained: 'I was left deeply in debt, with a small family to provide for.' When parish assistance proved inadequate she returned to a rambling life to sell wares.[137] Pauper correspondence contains many examples of such women who sought assistance because they were unable to provide for their offspring. In 1836 Frances James wrote to the Uttoxeter overseer:

> Since my Husband was with you at Uttoxeter I have endeavoured (as you may believe me) to maintain my family without trouble to others—Since the time that you last relieved us he has not been much better than he was &the whole burthen has fallen upon my hands—latterly he has been much worse than usual and he is now totally unable to do any one thing towards the family's help—Since that time I have been confined of another Child and we have now 5 Children living and it is not possible to maintain them in my little tripe business.[138]

Frances Soundy's letter pointed out that without her husband's assistance in maintaining her and her children: 'i am oblig to se my dear children starve wile he as a plenty'. Some years later, in a letter dated 16 November 1826, she explained that she was no longer able to assist her son, his wife and his child, having already brought herself and her other children to distress in doing so. She asked 'think wot a Mother must feel in seing her children starving and naked and not lay in her power to elivat their suferings?'[139]

Though these women blamed their plight upon their husband's inability or unwillingness to provide for their families, it is clear from sources that offer more detail about everyday family life that provisioning was frequently a joint effort in labouring and middling ranks.[140] An appeal for charity to support the family of a suicide hints at such united effort: 'A respectable Tradesman, who for many years united his industrious endeavours to those of a beloved wife and tender mother, to support a numerous young family'.[141] After all, mutual labour and combined incomes or resources were necessary to support most families; indeed, some women appear to have felt the obligation to provide was as much theirs as their husbands'.[142] The letters Frances Soundy sent to secure poor relief described her husband's absences or difficulties obtaining work, but she was obviously the lynchpin in organising and labouring to support for her children and grandchildren.[143]

There are some key differences in parental provisioning over time. In the period *c.* 1760–1830 it was a shared task performed by both parents in the labouring,

[136] Robinson, *Memoir*, 39, 43–4.

[137] axby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 52.

[138] Frances James, Leicester, Leicestershire, to the overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (5 February 1836), SRO D 3891/6/103.

[139] Frances Soundy, Battersea, to the vestry, churchwardens and overseer of the poor of the parish of Pangbourne, Berkshire (22 December 1818), BRO, D/P 91/18/6/1; and (16 November 1826) BRO, D/P 91/18/4.

[140] Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, ch. 4.

[141] *The Times*, 15 November 1821, 2.

[142] Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, 71–2.

[143] For the series of letters from the Soundys see 'Sickness and Old Age', edited by Steven King in Levene, *Narratives of the Poor*.

plebeian and middling ranks. The activity was yet to be seen as gender-specific or carry the political connotations of the notion of breadwinner, which developed in principle, if not in practice, from the mid- nineteenth century. Yet it was men's sense of self that was most seriously challenged by failing to provide, especially in the early nineteenth century.[144] This was because the formal role of male provisioning, as opposed to the de facto female contribution, was linked in men's minds to manly independence and authority. Indeed, 'power,' or at least its absence, was a term used in conjunction with provision. When John Bailey explained that on the occasion that he felt distress while travelling to preach, it was because 'it was not in my power to provide comfortable things for her, or our offspring, being then, as I before stated, a school master'.[145] Phillip James wrote to the overseer of Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, in 1832 about his troubles: 'I have A Wife & five Children to Support, tho they Are not half Supported it does not lye in my power to do it, if it did I would not trouble you'.[146] Failure to provide therefore seriously undermined men's masculine identity. John Bailey and Simon Mason certainly saw it as dishonouring and unfair since it lay outside their control. Fears in the early nineteenth century about excessive population growth and too many poor mouths to feed meant that criticism of the man rendered 'dependant' by his inability to support his offspring increasingly permeated official discourse related to political economy and poor law with far-reaching consequences.

CONCLUSION

Parents' bodies worked hard for their children, providing food, clothing and shelter through hard labour in paid and unpaid employment. Both mothers and fathers' arms provided nursing care, affection and refuge. This took place in everyday life, but it also acted at the level of cultural metaphor. The notions associated with the embodied parent and the materiality of parenthood nestled in a number of historically-specific ideas about displaying feeling and refinement, guided by concerns about moral, gendered values of industry, hard work, authority and independence and dependence.

Chapter three turns to the other aspects of parental responsibilities, disciplining and instructing offspring. How was parental authority conveyed in a society that idealised sensitivity, sympathy and refinement? What values did this society promote and how did parents play a part in their dissemination?

[144] Crawford argues that a poor father's failure to provide for children undercut his authority in the family and society more generally, *Parents of Poor Children*, 149.

[145] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 73; Also see Jacob Curchin of Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire, to the overseers of the poor for Thrapston, Northamptonshire (31 December 1825), NRO, 325P/193/100.

[146] Philip James, Leicester, Leicestershire, to the overseers of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (22 February 1832), SRO D3891/6/101.

3

The Disciplining and Instructive Parent

> Remember this, ye parents, and as you value your children's eternal welfare, suppress before them every irregularity. Put a seal on your lips, and place a guard over your hearts; command every passion, hide every vice, and be as a protecting Angel to them in the exercise of every virtue.[1]

Georgian parents were to be ever vigilant. Fathers and mothers must control their anger and severity and harness their affection and tenderness to discipline and instruct their children. As the opening quotation indicates, this was essentially an exercise in emotion-management. The repression of inappropriate emotions and display of acceptable ones was essential, since ideal parents performed all the desired qualities of adulthood and therefore served as exemplars to their offspring. Inevitably the focus of this chapter is on wealthy parents. The material circumstances of poor parents meant that they poured time and effort into securing basic needs for their children and, hopefully, the skills necessary for them to earn a living.[2] Some of the same principles, nonetheless, were disseminated to poor children through the charity, Sunday and infant school movements.[3]

HAPPY CHILDREN

The main objective of child rearing was to make children happy.[4] This was seen as a 'natural' desire of parents: in James Nelson's words, 'Life, Health, and Happiness are the general Wishes of Parents for their Children'.[5] A few decades later, Braidwood observed that God had implanted strong affection for offspring in the hearts of parents, which led them to do their duty to make children happy.[6] After training a child as a Christian, Melesina Trench's aim was 'to do this in a manner most

[1] A. M. *Moral essays,* 79.
[2] Crawford, *Parents of poor children in England*, ch. 3.
[3] Shefrin, 'Adapted for and Used in Infants' Schools' and Stott, 'Evangelicalism and enlightenment', in Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain*.
[4] For elite child education see Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, chs. 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17. For the training of lower ranking children see, Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*.
[5] Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 284.
[6] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 52.

conducive to earthly happiness'.[7] For some, happiness was an end in itself, even, occasionally, superior to other aims. 'The Haunted Castle' revolved around a tradesman censured for his determination that his son Bob enter the family trade, despite his desire to devote his life to learning. At one point his learned clergyman brother wondered: 'But yet, brother, would you not rather see your son a happy man, than a great one? And I forsee he will be unhappy, if you force his inclinations.'[8] More often, parent-child tensions over children's happiness in sentimental fiction turned on marriage, where parents promoted mercenary marriage over unions of love in the misguided belief that this was more likely to secure their offsprings' future.[9]

Parents' function of making children happy in the here and now, as opposed to preparing them for happiness in the next life, was a feature of new models of child-drearing. It can be seen in John Locke's work, in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's child-centered formulation, and was in Romanticism's sanctification of the state of childhood.[10] Rousseau's influence seems to have been widespread here. Seventy years after *Emile: Or on Education* was first published, William Cobbett looked to him as inspiration for his account of parents' duty towards children:

> to *make their lives as pleasant as you possibly can*. I have always admired the sentiment of ROUSSEAU upon this subject. 'The boy dies, perhaps, at the age of ten or twelve. Of what *use*, then, all the restraints, all the privations, all the pain, that you have inflicted upon him? He falls, and leaves your mind to brood over the possibility of your having abridged a life so dear to you.' I do not recollect the very words; but the passage made a deep impression upon my mind, just at the time, too, when I was about to become a father; and I was resolved never to bring upon myself remorse from such a cause; a resolution from which no importunities, coming from what quarter they might, ever induced me, in one single instance, or for one single moment, to depart.[11]

Changing conceptions of the nature of childhood were also important. If childhood was now recognized as a distinctive and special state, then it also needed to be a happy one in its own right. But how were genteel parents supposed to prepare their offspring to arrive at this?

Overall, there were three aspects to securing children's happiness. The first was short-term, satisfying everyday requirements. Thus Braidwood recommended: 'Their natural wants, and what is necessary for their comfort and happiness, ought to be attended to, whether they ask such things or not'.[12] Another feature was to ensure that a child was happy in his or her parents' presence; clearly indicating a concern to attain childhood security.[13] Parents' duty to make their children happy was not expected to end with childhood.[14] Writing in the early 1840s, Benjamin Haydon remembered the year 1807 to 1808 with immense sadness as the period

[7] *The Remains of the Late Mrs Trench*, published in 1837 after her death, cited in Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 42.
[8] *LM*, 1785, 472. [9] e.g. *LM*, 1781, 367–7.
[10] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood,* 58–72. [11] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men,* 85.
[12] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 10. [13] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 12.
[14] Robertson, *Life of Mrs Robertson*, 11.

when his mother sickened and died. He and his sister accompanied her on her journey to visit an eminent physician in London. They stayed overnight at an inn and Haydon recorded with pride that, 'I yet see my dear, dear mother, leaning on us, as she mounted to her room step by step, trying to jest and relieve our anxiety, while her pale face and wan cheek showed the hollowness of her gaiety'. She struggled to do this even though so ill that she died during the night. Making her children happy was the mark of this good mother, a valued trait that still 'convulsed' Benjamin's heart thirty-four years later.[15] Thirdly, parents were to provide children with the tools to be happy adults: affection, wisdom, instruction and training.[16] Eliza Fletcher saw her upbringing as moulding her character: 'As I was an object of much tenderness and affection, so nature and education gave me an affectionate and grateful disposition'.[17] This is why parents were supposed to understand their children's disposition and skills. Facilitating this state of being and related life-skills united parental discipline and instruction. In securing children's happiness parents needed to be able to do two things: one, exert their authority in an acceptable way and, two, instruct their children in the correct manner. They would benefit from putting this in place as soon as possible. As Braidwood said, 'the happiness of children, during the whole course of their lives, is intimately connected with their education in youth.'[18] Girls made the message material by stitching it in their samplers. The seven-year old Ann Maria Wiggins's sampler verse warned that if 'each fond Mother her Darling spares | Error becomes habitual'.[19]

The power to make a child happy was easy to mishandle; yet failure had serious repercussions.[20] It would result in shame for parents, evidence of their inadequacy in the role, ultimately endangering their souls.[21] It threatened the children themselves. Catharine Cappe bemoaned her mother's reluctance to support her intervention to force her brother to acknowledge the desperate state of his finances: 'my mother, ever unwilling to distress him, wished that this might not be urged upon him at present'. Though she did not condemn outright her mother's conciliatory approach, she went on to describe how her brother lost a substantial part of his inheritance and died in debt.[22] In her youth Elizabeth Parker (b. 1817) embroidered a remarkable autobiographical sampler, which outlined her suicidal tendencies and ascribed partial cause of her despair to not following the advice of her parents.[23] All this was a huge responsibility to put on parents' shoulders, particularly when the steps to making children happy were not necessarily fully elaborated or formulated as a set of 'rules' and were presumably dependent upon social rank, means, religion, and family objectives. Samuel Johnson's dictionary indicates the

[15] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 55.
[16] 'Letters on education containing all the principles relating to three different plans of education, for princes, young ladies, and young gentlemen', *LM*, 1785, 535.
[17] *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 49.
[18] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 5.
[19] No reference or date is provided for this sampler, cited in Parker, *The Subversive stitch*, 130.
[20] Horne, *Reflections on the importance of forming the female character*, 13.
[21] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 69.
[22] Cappe, *Memoirs,* 203.
[23] Textile held at Victoria & Albert, reference (T6-1956). Llewellyn, 'Elizabeth Parker's "Sampler"'.

general contemporary meaning assigned to happiness: 'In a state of felicity; in a state where the desire is satisfied'.[24] That offers clues to the state itself and explains why 'indulgent' parents were applauded. Yet it was of little practical help to parents who were also warned of the risks for them and their children of over-indulgence. Guidance for parents advised on how to achieve a balance between good and bad indulgence. In effect, parents needed to be able to distinguish between children's superficial wants and 'real' happiness.

While the steps to securing happiness might be vague, accomplishing it was usually about controlling and managing emotions. The Viscount de Limours offered a 'sensible' explanation of the evolution of happiness across a life course, for instance, which depended upon moderating one's passions without weakening sensibility:

> This is then that state of happiness, I conceive, when, after an impetuous youth, after experiencing all the transports inspired by glory, ambition, and love, age and time, by moderating the intoxication and enthusiasm of a new ardent, and sensible heart, tranquillity, succeeding to so many agitations, is, at length, tasted with delight.[25]

Inculcating happiness in the next generation thus worked towards social good, since its attainment also demonstrated satisfaction with one's place in the society.[26] Parents were crucial in such a process, commanding their own passions in order to serve as an exemplar to them.

VIRTUOUS CHILDREN

A happy child was a virtuous one. Attaining virtue required a holistic approach to instruction and the eighteenth and nineteenth century saw a range of educational programmes with formal and informal curricula developed.[27] There are several examples of parents devising lessons and teaching children themselves.[28] William Cobbett, for instance, prided himself thus and Elizabeth Fry fondly remembered her mother's lessons.[29] Several life-writers of humble origins also praised parents who taught or facilitated their literacy, such as Ann Candler, and William Gifford.[30] For the most part, however, memoirists referred to their mother's or father's role in passing on principles. Thomas Holcroft recalled that on parting from his father, 'He could not too emphatically repeat the few well meant precepts he had so often given me'.[31] This section focuses therefore upon parents' ambitions to

[24] Johnson, *Dictionary*, vol. I.
[25] *LM*, 1785, 536.
[26] This is influenced by Eustace's reading of the concept of cheerfulness as signalling contentment with one's rank, Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 68–9.
[27] See contributors to Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain*.
[28] For the family's role in educating its members see Tikoff, 'Education', 90 and passim.
[29] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, ch. 4; *Elizabeth Fry's memoir, written by herself and edited by her daughters*.
[30] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 3; Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. vii.
[31] Holcroft, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 78.

develop the 'holistic' child by nurturing offsprings' life-skills and transmitting appropriate behavioural qualities. They were expected to send children to school and to church, and at home 'enforce, as much as they can, a due obedience and reverential regard to their teachers abroad, as on this depends, in great measure, the children's tractability, and the teacher's success'.[32]

Education and parents' expectations were related to gender and class. Curricula and their delivery were gendered.[33] The goal for genteel boys was 'independence', for their female counterparts it was 'improvement'.[34] The latter might include something more intangible than French and music lessons. Writing to his daughter Sophia on her birthday when she was at boarding school, in 1813, George Courtauld inferred that he had selected the school because it included in its curriculum 'the formation of the Judgment & the improvem[en]t of the heart'.[35] Advice for parents' on their role in developing their offspring centred on the Christian principles of virtue, morality and piety.[36] While faith and morality were common ends, the didactic middle-class authored texts aimed at lower social ranks demanded that parents instil class-specific virtues in their offspring such as industriousness, cleanliness, and basic religious values.[37]

Maternal instruction was given cultural prominence.[38] George Horne pronounced: 'As *mothers*, women have, for some time, and that the most critical time too, the care of the education of their children of both sorts, who, in the next age, are to make up the great body of the world.'[39] Elizabeth Ashbridge declared that her education 'lay mostly on my Mother, in which she discharged her duty, endeavouring to instil into me in my tender age the principles of virtue'.[40] Women were understood to possess special qualities suited to educating children in the nursery. 'The Contrast', published in the *Lady's Magazine* (1790), featured two daughters whose 'vigilant mother soon discovered their different propensities, and her whole time, her constant care was devoted to the guidance of them in the paths of virtue'.[41] Thomas Bewick thought that the health and morals of a child were the most important aspects of education and 'in this important charge the lot falls

[32] 'Essay on education', *LM*, 1775, 364–5.

[33] Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young*; contributions to Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child*; Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, chs. 11–17.

[34] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, chs. 11, 15; Cohen, 'Familiar Conversation', 103, 108, 112. For a positive reassessment of female education in the period, which shows that elite and middling girls were often provided with 'broad and intellectually sophisticated educations at home' see the contributions to Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child*.

[35] George Courtauld to daughter Sophia Courtauld (11 August 1813), *Courtauld family letters*, vol. 1, 84.

[36] Tikoff, 'Education', 91–2; Woodley, 'Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure', 23; Percy, 'Learning and Virtue: English Grammar'; Van Reyk, 'Educating Christian Men', 425–37.

[37] e.g. Hoare, *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children*. Also see Martin, 'Marketing religious identity', 66–70.

[38] Charlton, 'Mothers as educative agents in pre-industrial England'; Tikoff, 'Education', 105–9; Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young*.

[39] Horne, *Reflections on the importance of forming the female character*, 8.

[40] Curtis, *Quaker Grey*, 12.

[41] *LM*, 1790, 182. Also see Percival, *A father's instructions*, 14.

greatly upon the mother to take the guidance of her offspring'.[42] Maternal involvement in instruction extended beyond the nursery, as John Harden's 'A Lesson' (1811) indicates, where the mother leans over four boys working round a table.[43]

It is suggested that advice literature was aimed more at mothers than fathers by the mid- nineteenth century.[44] It is difficult, however, to see such a change earlier, since most advice was addressed at both. Richard Steele's chapter in the *Ladies Library* (first edition 1714) was titled 'The Mother' but addressed both parents, as did, for instance, 'Thoughts on an early education. Addressed to the Fair Sex. Extracted from Horne's Introduction to Loose Thoughts etc', published in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1781.[45] Warning parents of the dangers to a child's constitution of sending him or her to school too early, William Buchan also referred to both fathers and mothers: 'It is undoubtedly the duty of parents to educate their children', though he saw men's time as restricted.[46] Fathers had specific responsibilities for religious and moral education.[47] This was hardly novel. In Daniel Defoe's *The family instructor. In three parts. I. Relating to fathers and children* (1715) the father wisely bestowed religious instruction.[48] Preaching on Eph vi. 4, *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, William Braidwood explained at the end of the century 'this shows that the care of children is not entirely devolved on mothers'—bringing children up in the admonition of the Lord is 'worthy of the most minute attention of fathers'.[49] Fiction followed similar paths. In 'The infant rambler, or distressed mother' (1783), a father instructed his wife with his dying breath to ensure that his infant son's life be 'tinctured with religion'.[50] Offsprings' virtue was also within a fathers' remit. In his chapter on parents and children, John Fielding (1763) observed that a 'good man will have his eye more upon the virtues and disposition of his children, than on their advancement in wealth'.[51] The author of 'Jacintha. An Anecdote' (1781) observed:

> 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it', says the Wisdom of Solomon. Would parents and guardians, that have the more immediate care of children, instil into their tender minds, early notions of piety and virtue, and strengthen their precepts by the power of example, we should not see so many deviating from the line of rectitude as is often the case.[52]

It was an appealing persona. One of John Harden's sketches evoked the benevolent instructive father, reading to his children.[53]

[42] Bewick, *Memoir*, 172.

[43] John Harden (1772–1847), The Lesson, 1811 (pen and ink on paper), © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[44] Nelson, *Invisible Men*.

[45] *The Ladies Library*, vol 2, 84–216; *LM*, 1781, 653.

[46] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 5, 25.

[47] e.g. George Courtauld to his son George Courtauld (30 May 1815), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 119.

[48] Defoe, *The family* instructor, vol. 1. [49] Sermon I, Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 5–6.

[50] *LM*, 1783, 399. [51] Fielding, *The universal mentor*, 158. [52] *LM*, 1781, 177.

[53] John Harden (1772–1847), *A Father Reading to his Children* (pen and ink wash on paper) © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library.

The objective of instruction was to produce an individual conforming to Christian values. Despite innovative forms of education in the later eighteenth century, the values that parents were to nurture in their offspring would be familiar before and after the period. Any significant differences lay in the mode of delivery, which shifted due to broad Enlightenment aspirations and ideals driven by the culture of sensibility, and new views of childhood, child-rearing and the nature of men and women. As with the other domains of parental care in this period, affection shaped instruction. Collected in *Moral essays* (1796) was a sermon on 'The duty of parents to children' using the verse: Eccles. Vii. 25. *Hast thou Children? Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood.* Its author explained:

> Here the word of God commands parents to instruct their children; and no pretence whatever can excuse them from this duty. It is a task to which they are called by nature. For this they are endued with an affectionate instinct, which powerfully compels them to wish their good. No other can be so familiar with them, have that ready access to their hearts, seize the nice moment when instruction is best conveyed. Nor in any other is found that happy intermixture of endearment and authority, which renders the voice of a parent as the voice of God to a child.[54]

EXEMPLARY PARENTS

Bringing up offspring as practising Christians was critical to achieving a virtuous child. Other methods to inculcate virtue were largely implicit. They included didactic print in a number of guises. A letter to the editor of the *Lady's Magazine*, in 1771, shared a gentlewoman's guidance for her son about to travel abroad. He must avoid vice, pride and wicked women, and exercise reason and self control, and charity and benevolence.[55] A range of fashionable techniques are evident in moralising fiction. In 'Benevolence rewarded; or, the history of Miss Harriot [sic] Worthy. A moral tale' (1784), the youthful widowed Mrs Worthy retired to the countryside to raise her daughter. The first three years of her retirement passed in 'inculcating the usual instructions for children of such tender years'. She also deployed fashionable notions of education, focusing on learning through play:

> the childish pastimes of her infant daughter were made conducive to her improvement; for there was no occurrence, however trivial, from which this prudent mother did not draw some moral tendency. Her dolls, her playthings, in short, every thing which forms a part of puerile amusements, were productive of some instruction.[56]

As the daughter matured her mother introduced to her the adornments of her sex, taught her feeling and to give charity to the deserving, and the Christian rule of doing to others as we would have them do unto us.[57]

Elite parents could also turn to the developing genre of children's literature, which offered examples of children's virtuous behaviour to copy. Yet, as Mrs Worthy's

[54] A.M., *Moral essays,* 68–9. [55] *LM*, 1771, 106.
[56] *LM*, 1784, 322–3. [57] *LM*, 1784, 322.

activities hint, parents themselves were exemplars; a do as I do, as well as what I say, approach.[58] According to the pedagogue Catherine Cappe, the exemplary behaviour of parents was 'wont to have greater influence than any moral lessons, however excellent, which are purposely taught.'[59] Affection would improve the chances of this working. As an essay 'On Education' stipulated, 'The strong affection which nature has implanted in children towards their parents, makes them look to them for every thing: of course they cannot believe there are any better characters than theirs; and when they discover those models are imperfect, they aim at nothing better themselves.'[60] In fact it is striking how often social, moral, and literary commentators told *parents* how to behave rather than informing them how they should encourage children to behave. Instruction and example were thus inseparable. Inevitably, bad parents would produce bad children. The Matron censured the parental behaviour of the Dawsons, whose dissipated habits lost them their fortune and reputation and, worse still, meant they neither instructed their children nor set them an example. The Dawson offspring saw the contempt in which others held their parents and thus ignored parental commands.[61] In contrast, Mrs Worthy's daughter grew up to be exemplary herself, thus rendering her 'amiable mother equally the envy of every parent'.[62]

Parents must therefore guard their every action and emotion. James Nelson (1753) commented,

> all acknowledge how great the force of Example is; yet if we view the general Conduct of Fathers particularly, we shall be obliged to own they stand greatly in need of it. For what more common than to hear Men swear and utter many indecent Expressions before their Children?[63]

Included in the *Moral Essays* was this dictate for parents' conduct before their children: 'Let them see all this in your own actions . . . Be all that is decent, wise, and good, in their presence . . . Not an action should be done before them, which hath the least tendency to sin, not a word should escape your lips that can taint the purity of their unsullied innocence'.[64] Parents were, after all, the adults that children spent most time with. As Braidwood told them, 'they observe you daily, they have confidence in you, and believe that what you do is right'.[65] The loss of an exemplary parent threatened a child. In 1790 an elderly man wrote to the editor of the *Lady's Magazine* about his concerns over raising his orphaned sixteen-year-old niece. He lamented her loss of a mother who 'would have held forth her indulgent hand to guide her through those paths [missing?] herself had trod with so much honour'.[66] The role of exemplar was engrained enough to be part of parental self-identity. In his advice for fathers (1829) Cobbett was the role model for paternal exemplars, reiterating that he indoctrinated his children by rising early, practising sobriety, and working hard.[67]

[58] This applied in France too. Popiel, 'Making mothers', 343.
[59] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 4.
[60] *LM* 1810, 455.
[61] *LM*, 1784, 9.
[62] *LM*, 1784, 402.
[63] Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 198.
[64] A.M., *Moral essays*, 78.
[65] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 48.
[66] *LM*, 1790, 320.
[67] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 267.

The significance of example for individual and societal behaviour was a world view and applied in all hierarchical relations. Monarchs deserved the name of 'Nursing Fathers and Mothers' when they were good examples to their subjects.[68] A polemical letter to the *Lady's Magazine's* editor in 1790 called for magistrates and school masters to exert their authority in order to effect a change in manners. The writer feared that wickedness followed from seeing superiors pursuing their desires. If men of superior rank set good examples to their inferiors then manners would change and 'parents would, by their aid, have the consolation of beholding their offspring pursuing a virtuous course'.[69] The role of other adults in producing a virtuous environment is evident in fiction. In the tale 'Benevolence Rewarded', Mrs Worthy's reason for selecting the village to which she retired to raise her fatherless child was that many of her friends made their summer residence in that county. This would offer her 'a greater opportunity of teaching the young ideas of her beloved child to expand themselves, by enforcing her precepts by the power of good examples'.[70]

When good examples were so influential, then bad ones, like the dissipated father or fashionable mother, endangered society not just families. This was closely related to ideas about childhood since children were understood to be intensely impressionable. One story published in 1778 described bad examples as if they were infectious. In it the mother declared that she did not wish her daughter to spend time with her paternal grandmother 'lest she should, though at so early an age, catch any of her violent passions, and copy her disagreeable manners.'[71] The same concern entered life-writers' minds. Thomas Bewick pronounced:

> in my opinion there are two descriptions of person, who ought to forbear, or to be prevented from marrying—viz those of a base, wicked & [illegible] character, and those who have broken down their constitutions by diseases & debased both mind & body, by their illicit & impure connections & dissipated lives—the latter entails misery upon their innocent unsound [inserted above: tainted] offspring—and the former by the bad examples they shew to their children which grows upon them with their growth till they are perfected in their wickedness & they become a curse to the community in which they live.[72]

Catherine Cappe emphasised her message of the power of parental example by telling the story of local child from Bedale, Yorkshire, whose life was ruined by her parent's bad example. Thanks to the parent's [fairly inconsequential] falsehoods his son fell into a dissolute character, eventually dying in great poverty, having fathered an illegitimate child whom he then deserted.[73] Lawyers turned the trope to advantage in lawsuits. The plaintiff's counsel in Lord Cadogan's criminal conversation suit against the Reverend Cooper for adultery with wife, in 1794, attacked the Reverend for violating Christian and paternal virtues 'as a husband, and as a father of innocent children, who have a right to look up to him for protection.'[74]

[68] Atkinson, *Good princes nursing fathers and nursing mothers*, 13.
[69] *LM*, 1790, 349–50. [70] *LM*, 1784, 323. [71] *LM*, 1784, 85.
[72] Bewick, *Memoir*, 43–4. [73] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 24–5.
[74] 'Trial of Reverend Mr Cooper for adultery with the Lady of the Right Honourable Lord Cadogan of Hanover Square, before Lord Kenyon, 1794' in *A New Collection of Trials for Adultery*, 12.

SEVERITY AND PASSION

Since the late seventeenth century enlightened thinkers had proposed gentler methods of discipline and instruction to gain the goal of happy, well-behaved, virtuous children without losing parental authority. In this process, emotional management was required of both children and parents. Severity and passion were to be avoided at all costs when parents exercised discipline.[75] Samuel Johnson defined severity as 'Cruel treatment; sharpness of treatment' and 'Rigour; austerity; harshness; want of mildness; want of indulgence'. Severity was the child of passion, which was the 'Violent commotion of the mind' and 'Anger'.[76] Bewick associated his father's correction with his passion and would therefore avoid him till it diminished. After playing truant from school 'I always took up my abode for the night in the byer loft among the hay or straw—knowing full well that when his passion subsided I should escape a beating from his hands'.[77] Similarly, Francis Place noted that his mother and the maid were delighted if they could distract his father from embarking on a beating when enraged:

> they knew that if he once vented his passion he would not take any more notice of the matter. We knew well enough that if any circumstance occurred to prevent him coming upstairs at the moment, we should not be molested the next day, he had been prevented from coming up on one or two occasions by being obliged to make punch for and to attend to his customers and a quarter of an hours detention was sufficient to save us.[78]

As this description suggests, fathers were often conceptualised as the bearers of authority and mothers as more naturally kind in accordance with gendered understandings of feminine and masculine qualities, aptitudes, and circumstances.[79] Consequently, men were most associated with parental passion. In fiction paternal harshness and cruelty were described in a fairly generic fashion by contrasting it with kindness. In sentimental literature it usually involved a father trying to force his daughter to marry against her will.[80] In the drama *The Fortunate Deception* (1771), Hortensia responded to her father's letter instructing her that she was to be married to his friend by asking, 'Is this a Parent's love? A father's kindness! What ill fated star presided at my birth . . . can I by any means reconcile my duty to this harsh and sudden command?'[81] Prescriptive writings on education and child-rearing also credited fathers with a propensity to severity. Thus men were advised in more detail about how to achieve the correct balance of paternal control without resorting to harshness. Although Braidwood addressed both parents, the buck ended with the father: 'because they have naturally more authority than mothers, and it is their province to take the lead in the government of their families.' Since men were 'formed for the exercise of authority', he warned fathers most against the extreme of severity.[82]

[75] For the management of anger codes in British America, see Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, ch. 4.
[76] Johnson, *Dictionary*, vol. 2. [77] Bewick, *Memoir*, 15.
[78] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 61.
[79] Bailey, 'Paternal power'. Publication forthcoming.
[80] *LM*, 1783, 173. [81] *LM*, 1771, 154.
[82] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 6. Also see Nelson, *essay on the government of children,* 7.

Eighteenth-century women, in contrast, were not associated with anger, or at least denied its expression since it was a masculine emotion.[83] Commentators on femininity told women that they obtained power through softness, both as wives and mothers. According to Nelson, the laws of Nature gave a joint portion of power to mothers 'that the Father's Authority and the Mother's Sweetness being seasonably and discreetly blended, both might equally contribute to one and the same great End, the future Welfare of their Offspring'.[84] Thus each cancelled out the other's faults.[85] In 1830 John Angell James linked these gendered parental qualities to the age of children, suggesting that the father 'may sometimes have a great influence in awing the rude spirits of the younger branches' and the mother's 'soft, persuasive accents may have delightful power to melt or break the hard and stubborn hearts of older ones'.[86] The Reverend Richard Cecil warned against both laxity and severity, holding up his mother as an exemplar because she would tearfully talk to him in order to correct him. As he declared, 'Sympathy is the powerful engine of a mother'.[87] This was so culturally entrenched that few mothers were accused of being severe in terms of harsh discipline. In the *Lady's Magazine* of 1782 the 'unnatural' mother's harshness was displayed by her child not daring to look up in her presence.[88] Indeed maternal severity was often seen as excessively quelling a daughter's spirits, rather than harsh discipline. *The Treatise on education of Daughters by Archbishop of Cambray*, already a century old when serialised in the same periodical in 1781, explained why some young ladies of leisure were of little use: inadequate female education and lifestyle, and a mother who watched over them too much, chiding them incessantly, being overly grave and excusing nothing.[89]

Severity was not just condemned for transgressing ideals of mild discipline, but because it did not achieve its ends. Hutton in his *History of his Family* professed well-rooted conventions by the time he summed up the problems of severity in the 1790s:

> The conduct of many fathers and masters in training up children is very censurable. The child's temper is seldom attended to, and the *rough* hand is employed to force, instead of the *smooth* tongue to guide: hence we take ten times more trouble to *ruin* than would save… the best mode of education is to guide without *seeming* to guide.[90]

Eliza Fletcher castigated her father only once in her memoir, somewhat unreasonably, for refusing to let her, at 19 years old, marry a 45-year old-widower: 'he attempted to effect that by authority which he had failed to accomplish by reason and kindness. He became stern and severe in his conduct towards me. This produced its necessary consequence, evasion and concealment'. Three years later, in

[83] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 162, 190–2.
[84] Nelson, *essay on the government of children,* 7.
[85] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 25.
[86] James, *Family Monitor*, 21.
[87] Pratt, *Remains of the Reverend Richard Cecil*, 152.
[88] 'The Unnatural Mother from Marmontelle,' *LM*, 1782, 15.
[89] This is a seralised version of Fénelon, François de Salignac de la Mothe *De l'éducation des filles: Instructions for the education of daughters.* Translated from the French, and revised by George Hickes, D.D (Glasgow, 1750), *LM*, 1781, 124.
[90] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 386.

1791, she married Archibald Fletcher anyway.[91] Another prescriptive view on the dangers of harshness towards children was unequivocal: 'It is a wretched mistake to be always reminding them that they should submit to their seniors; that they should give place; that they are of no consequence, because of their youth.' Most commentators prophesied it would result in children's rebellion and resentment, or would crush their spirits and in more pliant minds produce 'slavish cowardice'.[92] Something of a sliding scale seems to have been applied, whereby severity shaded into tyranny both in the form of behaviour and the response it provoked.[93] In his 1829 publication, Cobbett observed that 'though stern authority may command and enforce obedience for awhile, the time soon comes when it will be set at defiance'.[94] This equation of parental tyranny with children's rebellion was fairly commonplace. For example Dorothea Herbert's tale of the elopement of her brother in the face of his future wife's father's harshness, opened with the quotation, 'Ne'er with your Children act a Tyrants part/Tis yours to guide Not violate the Heart'.[95] Fordyce's version was characteristically poetic: 'when that discipline degenerates into severity; an error into which well-meaning but ill-judging parents may sometimes fall' then the child 'like an untamed bird, only pants the more impatiently to get loose from the hand that confines it. And when the restraint is at last removed, with what transport does it soar away into the world!'[96]

To control passion, the parent must exercise reason. This was not the self-control of parental discipline in early modern England where the intent was to administer correction with reason. By the second half of the century, the aim was to avoid passion and use reason to avoid physical correction.[97] Parental punishment must be proportionate to the 'offence' and most corporal forms were unacceptable in comparison to reason. As Locke had informed educators in the late seventeenth century, harsher forms of discipline, or mild corporal punishment, were a last resort to tackle the child with vicious propensities.[98] Reason was thus both the means and the end to discipline, for while rationality was the way to discipline children, the object was also to treat children as rational creatures to get them to behave appropriately.[99] William Hutton commented about his father, 'Severity to children was one of his maxims, which I have since found erroneous; for reason opens in a child at a very early period, and he is easier *drawn* than driven'.[100] Training for boys had long sought to control their anger and exercise reason instead.[101] Only with the like emotional control could parents hope to be successful. Yet the task was complicated in an age of sensibility.[102] An essayist on education, published

[91] *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 43–8.
[92] *LM*, 1810, 456. Also Braidwood, *Parental Duties*, 55.
[93] A tyrant was defined as 'A cruel, despotick and severe master; an oppressor', and tyranny as 'Severity; rigour; inclemency', Johnson, *Dictionary*.
[94] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 237.
[95] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 364.
[96] Fordyce, *Addresses to young men*, 76–7.
[97] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 3–4.
[98] See Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, 59–60.
[99] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 6–7, 14.
[100] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton,* 357–8.
[101] Foyster, 'Boys will be boys?'; Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, ch. 4, Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 26–7.
[102] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, ch. 2.

in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1810, attacked severity for severity's sake: 'The grand object in education is to inculcate virtue without formality; to restrain the passions alone, without restraining the manner. The great mistake of many moralists is, that they hedge in and hem round till there is not a bit of human nature left'. The writer's straw woman was Mrs Hannah More who was accused of being 'ridiculously exact and severe on many trifles, which are perfectly harmless, and some which are even meritorious.' Such 'an air of disproportionate gravity throughout' would 'never attract converts'. In this polemicist's view, More's books were destined to end in the hands of preceptresses at seminaries and be read with disgust by the young and lively and then promptly forgotten.[103] So parents were to restrain their offsprings' emotions without destroying them. How were they to do this?

PERSUASIVE, MILD, COMPANIONATE PARENTS

The answer was by inculcating sympathy, through persuasion, rational explanation and conversation, and companionship. A somewhat hyperbolic, pessimistic statement on excessive parental power in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1775, made it clear which methods to reject and which to undertake. One of the 'Maxims and reflections recommended to the consideration of the ladies. By a friend to them' observed:

> In what a severe and barbarous manner are most children educated! How can we thus treat those in an age so tender, so amiable, whose imbecility demands our kindest instructions?—They are taught to shed tears, when they should remain ignorant of what it is to be unhappy.—They begin their knowledge by being miserable. Nature has furnished only scenes of pleasure for them untainted by reflection, and un-embittered by guilt, and yet a cruel hand robs them of their happiest hours of joy: one would think we were jealous of their felicity; their duty is presented to them in so dry, so disgusting a light, that it is no way strange if they are compelled to obedience only by fear. What a perversion of reason, thus to use terror, when caresses would so much more certainly prevail?[104]

The implication is that parents should have fellow-feeling with their children. At the heart of sensibility was sympathy. Sympathy indicated more than compassion for others, as it does now. In this period it centred on the ability to feel and it indicated shared feelings and parity between people.[105] When this directed parent-child relationships, parental objectives were realizable through kindness, friendship and example. Responding to a letter in 1785 the *Lady's Magazine's* Matron explained that the ideal traits of such parents were to be agreeable to their children as companions, to encourage conversation with them on the most familiar footing, and to promote pursuits which improved and entertained.[106] An illustration *c.* 1810 shows a father reading an affecting novel to his wife and children, all powerfully moved by emotion, perhaps here was less the instructive and more the companion-

[103] *LM*, 1810, 456. [104] *LM*, 1771, 519.
[105] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 271. [106] *LM*, 1785, 138.

Fig. 10. 'A father reading a novel with an affecting plot to his wife and daughters' (Drawing, ca. 1810 (?)). This sketch shows how men were understood to provide entertainment, instruction, and, perhaps, emotional education for their family.

ate parent (figure, 10).[107] These qualities also informed the development of 'interactive education' in the period, a dialogic method of transferring knowledge to children rather than learning by rote, which encouraged them to converse and use all their senses.[108] Sympathy and kindness were also markers of superior social status, associated with gentility and the capacity to feel. They crossed social divisions, shaping the ambitions of educationalists' programme for plebeian children by the late eighteenth century. Hannah More, for instance, demanded 'mildness and kindness rather than severity and harsh punishments' in the Mendip schools she established.[109]

In other words, mildness, kindness, and persuasion were the preferred methods through which to exercise authority.[110] The Matron offered 'a few hints to husbands and fathers at large, desiring them to be mild and persuasive, rather than arbitrary and morose' in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1782. Mildness connoted all the

[107] Lettering in pencil on verso: 'Ghost story ["Ghost story" scored through] Afflictive story', with an un-deciphered character (2y?) preceding it. Produced at a meeting of the Sketching Society, which met on Wednesday evenings from November to May, 1808–1851. At the meetings, members were required to produce by candlelight impromptu monochrome sketches on themes chosen usually by the host. Information from Wellcome Library, London.

[108] Hilton and Shefrin, 'Introduction', 6–8Cohen, 'Familiar Conversation', in Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child*.

[109] Stott, 'Evangelicalism and Enlightenment', 53–4.

[110] For France see Merrick, 'Prodigal sons and family values', 108–9.

desirable qualities of the day. In Samuel Johnson's definition it was: 'Kind; tender; good; indulgent; merciful; compassionate; clement; soft; not severe; not cruel.'[111] 'A mother reprimanding her child' in one 1823 print was herself young, diminutive and sweet; the correction merely wagging her finger at the chastened infant (figure 11). Representations of parental discipline were bound up with notions of manhood and womanhood, but both Christian moral teachings and the culture of sensibility blurred hard gender boundaries since they sought and praised human kindness, sympathy and benevolence regardless of sex. As such, kind and forgiving fathers were idealised and considered an indication of respectable manhood.[112] William Hutton described his nephew thus: 'He supports the characters of a kind son, husband, and father, is respected by all who know him.'[113] When the fictional Dr Primrose forgave his eloped daughter Olivia she declared that angels could not be kinder than him.[114] Such men inhabited genre prints. George Morland's Story of Laetitia, charting the downfall of the seduced daughter concluded with the 'Fair Penitent' being raised from the ground by her forgiving father.[115] Changing depictions of fathers in family portraits followed a similar path. Margaretta Lovell has drawn attention to the way that portrayals of American men in the domestic circle from the 1760s onwards tended to display a '"softened" posture', which was absent in images lacking children. This adoption of the poses from rediscovered images of ideal antique male bodies, she concludes, presented the men as 'benevolent, attentive, unthreatening guardians and mentors'; all ideal paternal qualities.[116]

A further aspiration was that the parent be the child's friend.[117] Ann Candler's poem *On the birth of twin sons in* 1781 lamented that 'they want the friend | That should their youth assist!'—their father.[118] Hannah More's Coelebs commented about his deceased father: 'I lost him, and in him the most affectionate father, the most enlightened companion, and the most Christian friend.'[119] In her 1824 publication Louisa Hoare informed labouring and middling-rank parents, 'Happy will it be for your children, if by prudence and tenderness you can bring them not only to honour you as parents, but to be free and open with you as their best and kindest friends.'[120] The term 'friend' was often used for family members and suggested meanings of guide, protector, and mentor, as well as a degree of intimacy.[121] In 1780 the Matron outlined the benefits of such companionate parenting: 'were parents to make themselves the friends, the companions of their children, by

[111] Johnson, *Dictionary*, vol. 2.
[112] Gregory, 'Homo religious: masculinity and religion' Van Reyk, 'Educating Christian Men'.
[113] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton,* 396.
[114] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 173–4. For other examples of forgiving fathers see those cited in Perry, *Novel Relations*, fn 43, 91.
[115] George Morland (1763–1804), *The Story of Laetitia: 'The Fair Penitent'*, Private Collection, Photo © Christie's Images, The Bridgeman Art Library; *Evening, or The Sportsman's Return*, engraved and pub. by Joseph Grozer (*c.*1755–99), 1795 (mezzotint engraving) (pair of 125514), after Morland, Private Collection, The Bridgeman Art Library.
[116] Lovell, *Art in a season of revolution*, 158–9.
[117] For an example see F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 135. Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, 43.
[118] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 36–7.
[119] More, *Coelebs in search of a wife*, 11.
[120] Hoare, *Friendly Advice*, 32.
[121] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, chapter 5.

Fig. 11. *Mother reprimanding a child* (1823). The youth, calm, and sweetness of the mother indicates the preference for mild discipline.

promoting every innocent, cheerful, and improving diversion with them in their own circle, numberless *unnecessary* expenses might be avoided, numberless evils also might be prevented.'[122]

This rapport levelled out the power distribution between parents and children or at least played down its hierarchical features.[123] Fielding compared it to a fraternal relationship:

> To see a father treating his sons like an elder brother, and to see sons covet their father's company and conversation, because they think him the wisest and most agreeable man of their acquaintance, is the most amiable picture the eye can behold; it is a transplanted self-love, as sacred as friendship, as pleasurable as love, and as joyous as religion.[124]

Friendship also had the potential to make children listen to their parents once they attained adulthood. In Dr Gregory's *Advice to His Daughters* he hoped they would always look on him as their friend, for 'In that capacity alone I shall think myself entitled to give you my opinion.'[125] The intimacy of such companionship could be

[122] *LM*, 1780, 36.

[123] See for example, Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of Men in the Higher and Middle Classes of Society in Great Britain*, 2 vols (London, 1795), vol. 2, 454, cited in Retford, *Art of Domestic* Life, 116–17.

[124] Fielding, *The universal mentor*, 158.

[125] Serialised in *LM*, 1784, 375.

powerful and misread by onlookers. William Hutton's daughter appended some notes to his autobiography about the last years of his immensely long life. She proudly stated,

> after we had lost my beloved mother, my Father's affection and mine being less divided, centered more upon each other. On our journey to Barmouth, it was so evident, that we were sometimes taken for lovers, and sometimes for husband and wife. One person went so far as to say to my father, "You may say what you will, but I am sure that lady is your wife. [She was 40, he was 73][126]

Such intimacy is also suggested in a further meaning of this relationship where the parent and child were confidantes. The daughter in *The Orphan Boy* (1818) 'was eager to make a confidant of a mother; who had ever proved her most indulgent friend'.[127] Catharine Cappe described her husband's eldest son Joseph as 'confidant of his father; his solace and consolation under every affliction and trial.'[128] Catharine attributed this relationship to Joseph being much older than his siblings. Yet age was not the defining factor. Hannah Robertson, writing in the 1790s, remembered that as a girl, when her mother's second marriage failed, 'I devoted myself entirely to afford her consolation, by endeavouring to dissipate her desponding thoughts: I was the only friend to whom she unbosomed her secret sorrows'.[129] Unbosoming was a frequent term, and links back to the discussion of parental bosoms in chapter two. Cappe, for example, recalled her father's anxieties about his son's mood: 'If he would but unbosom himself,' he was wont to say, 'it would make me happy.'[130] Being a confidante worked in both directions.

RECONCILING AMBITIONS WITH PRACTICE

Memories of parental discipline in this period vary. Some echoed ideals. Catharine Cappe recalled that when she was a small girl her mother discovered that she had lied and punished her by cancelling a trip to a Christening later that day. Cappe recalled that it was the 'painful emotions' of shame and remorse that were effective.[131] Some diverged from gendered assumptions. Percival Stockdale's description of his parents' behaviour in the 1740s, for example, explained that his father occasionally mixed 'proper severity with his tenderness,' though his mother was more vigorous than him in her reproof and corrections. Indeed it was his father who was mostly likely to indulge him.[132] Others recalled parental beatings, floggings, and whippings. Hutton recorded that in 1732, after losing a penny and being rude to his mother, he received from his father 'the most severe thrashing… He broke his walking stick, the fragments of which, after the battle was over, I began to splice together with a string for my own use.'[133] Francis Place remem-

[126] Her mother died in 1796. Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 288.
[127] Elliott, *The Orphan Boy*, 51. [128] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 248.
[129] Robertson, *Life of Mrs Robertson,* 6. [130] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 67.
[131] ibid, 36–7. [132] Stockdale, *Memoirs of the Life, and Writings*, 40.
[133] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 17.

bered the agony of being struck by his father's stick.[134] Mary Saxby and Robert Barker both described being confined with a chain around their legs to stop them behaving badly; parental attempts to prevent Barker from poaching and Saxby from running away.[135] Corporal punishment was not restricted to fathers. Thomas Wright accused his first wife of emotionally damaging his favourite son John by suddenly scolding and shaking him when he cried and was troublesome one night in bed. Thomas said John was always nervous and 'frighty' thereafter.[136] Thomas Bewick recalled that in reaction to his daily truanting 'I got many severe beatings from my father and mother.'[137] This led him to reject this form of punishment; indeed his daughter stated that her mother was the disciplinarian in the family.[138]

Even so, it was the capriciousness of fathers or arbitrary nature of their punishments that memoirists condemned.[139] Francis Place's father was, in his son's view, lavish with his unpredictable beatings:

> If he were coming along a passage or any narrow place such as a door way and was met by either me or my brother he always made a blow at us with his fist, for coming in his way, if we attempted to retreat he would make us come forward and as certainly as we came forward he would knock us down.[140]

Such unpredictability became predictable in the regularity of abuse if not cause. Catherine Cappe confirmed this paradox when she recalled her visit at around twelve-years-old to two friends with whom she'd been boarded in York the preceding year. Their mother had died 'and their father, although well enough respected among his acquaintance, was extremely arbitrary in his family, and severe with his children, beating them not unfrequently, if he was out of humour, for little or no cause'. The two were not allowed to visit a friend, so instead of going to Church would sneak out to visit her. Catharine remembered commenting that their father would correct them severely if he discovered. They replied, 'OH, it does not signify . . . when he is next in an ill-humour, he will beat us without a cause, as that he should do it, when we may have really deserved it.'[141] Her lesson that cruel punishment was counter-productive was a theme of the other life-writers. For example Mary Saxby felt that her father's harsh attempts to restrain her simply pushed her into vagrancy.[142] Writing in the early nineteenth century at 84, William Hutton said 'Punishment was an unwelcome attendant. My father, though he loved me, was too much attached to the whip; he forgot that a gentle word properly applied, was a better excitement'.[143] Thomas Bewick strongly argued that corporal punishment was useless, observing that he did not change his behaviour in its wake, but simply practised avoidance or delay thereafter in order to mitigate its effects.[144] It was only reasoned discussion that was effective, in his by then standard view.

[134] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 59–61.
[135] Barker, *genuine life*, 65; Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 5, 6.
[136] Wright, *Autobiography*, 169. [137] Bewick, *Memoir*, 4.
[138] Bewick, 'My Mother', unpaginated, TWA, Accession 4388.
[139] See attitudes towards William Ettrick's behaviour to offspring, Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting' in Berry and Foyster, *The Family in Early Modern England*, 215–16.
[140] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 59–61.
[141] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 44–5. [142] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 6.
[143] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 274. [144] Bewick, *Memoir*, 5, 15, 16.

How do we explain the disjunction between an ideal of mild, non-physical discipline and memories of corporal punishment? There is no straightforward linear decline in accounts of corporal punishment over time as views on child-rearing rejected it and wider society became less tolerant of violence in general.[145] Nor is it safe to assume it was simply a feature of parental discipline in more humble social groups. Court records can give an impression of routine, severe corporal punishment in poorer families. For example child victims of sexual abuse often claimed they did not report the attacks for fear of being beaten by their parents.[146] Yet studies of poor parents indicate that they were neither universally indifferent nor cruel to their children, but did their best to protect them in difficult circumstances.[147] If elite writers characterised the poor as brutish parents, the numerous paeans to affectionate labouring fathers reveal that others portrayed them as more loving to their children than men in other social groups. Higher-ranking writers recalled the physical punishments of their childhood too. The gentlewoman Dorothea Herbert received a beautiful alabaster doll and a miniature horse in 1777 over which she and her friends 'had bloody Battles…which brought on a general flogging bout from our respective Mothers'.[148] Boys were also routinely beaten for bad behaviour in schools, with whipping in public schools becoming increasingly notorious.[149] Moreover, describing childhood beatings was perhaps a structural feature of the nascent genre of life-writing, which certainly developed more fully in examples written in the later nineteenth century, intended to demonstrate the social and cultural distance that writers had travelled from their parents and origins.[150]

Since all the memoirists shared the belief in the superiority of mild discipline they developed tactics to deal with the disjunction. Some denounced the corporal punishments they suffered as excessive, unnecessary violence. Francis Place, for instance, described his father as cruel. Yet occasionally he made concessions for his father's behaviour by positioning Simon Place as a man of his time, to emphasise his general point that the working class had improved over the previous generation. In fact, of course, his descriptions clearly showed that his mother and the domestic servants disapproved of his father's behaviour, evidence that such unfettered violence against children was rejected in the previous generation.[151] Others acknowledged that parents acted thus, but found some way to excuse or justify their behaviour; usually citing mitigating factors: their behaviour was provoking, or their father behaved out of a sense of duty, whether misplaced or not. Thomas Holcroft remembered his experiences of paternal discipline in this fashion:

> My father was alike extreme in his anger, and in his compassion. He used to beat me, pull my hair up by the roots, and drag me by the ears along the ground, till they ran with blood. Indeed my repeated faults were so unpardonable, that he could scarcely

[145] For the problems with theses of reducing violence in society see Cockburn, 'Patterns Of Violence In English Society', 70–106.

[146] My thanks to Dr Sarah Toulalan, University of Exeter for pointing this out to me. See also Crawford, *Parents of poor children*, 145–6.

[147] Crawford *Parents of poor children*, 254.

[148] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 33.

[149] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, ch. 13.

[150] Francis Place is an early example of this.

[151] Thrale, *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, p. xix.

> blame himself. Yet probably within an hour after he had exercised his severity upon me, he would break out into passionate exclamations of fondness, alarming himself lest he should some time or other do me a serious mischief, and declaring that, rather than so, he would a thousand times prefer instant death.[152]

As this shows, Holcroft easily reconciled his father's physical harshness with his tenderness. Indeed, his leave-taking of his father when he was apprenticed was a terrible trial because: 'Notwithstanding his severity, he was passionately fond of me, my heart entered into the same feelings, and there was great and unfeigned affection between us'.[153]

Therefore, in the end, writers might not see tenderness and physical punishment as incompatible. Mary Saxby firmly stated that her father loved her greatly before going on to describe him whipping her and putting a chain on her leg to prevent her running away.[154] Mrs Coghlan's narrative of her scandalous life offered a father who was at once autocratic and tender:

> My father was a man of rigid, austere principles, whenever virtue or honor were in question; however indulgent he might be himself on other occasions: The severity he manifested in this instance, does not derogate, in the least from his usual character; the actual dishonour of a beloved daughter, pleads a sufficient excuse for any harshness which I may have experienced from him.[155]

Although George Courtauld enjoyed a reputation among his children as their companion, and loving, attentive father, his son Samuel remembered him physically reprimanding him:

> One afternoon I remember, at the old house by the church at Pebmarsh, when I must have been between 9 and 10 years old, something occurred between my father and me, when I answered defiantly (I forget all about that), when my father struck me a very sharp blow with a stick in his hand along my arm. That I might not be seen to cry, I ran up and went to bed. After a while, I observed a great purple weal on my arm, and was joyful in it. I went down in my night-shirt, and pulling up the sleeve to show my father the mark, said 'I have come down to show you what you have done'. I thought to make him ashamed of himself; but he took me in his arms and kissed me, saying 'But I am afraid, my boy, you deserved it'.[156]

If they felt it necessary to bridge the gap between their parents' method of severe discipline and milder ideals, these offspring still professed fondness for them. Thomas Bewick and Thomas Holcroft, for example, had long emotionally fulfilling and close relationships with their parents. Fathers themselves might integrate both features of parenthood without difficulty. Thomas Wright, for example, described one occasion when he beat his two children as a way to bring them back into the line of duty. He qualified this as unusual and a response to extreme

[152] Holcroft, *Memoirs*, 45–6. [153] ibid, 78.
[154] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 5–6.
[155] Coghlan, *Memoirs of Mrs Coghlan*, 113–14.
[156] Samuel Courtauld's recollections of his father from a letter written in 1873, when he was 80, published in Courtauld, *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2. p. xvi.

circumstances, but necessary and successful. For him the beating was compatible with his strong identification with tender fatherhood throughout his memoir.

AFFECTIONATE POWER

Of course, conceptualising parenthood and parenting as affectionate, mild, forgiving and persuasive was not intended to reduce parental authority.[157] Even that most hyperbolically sentimental of fathers, the Vicar of Wakefield, described his family as 'The little republic to which I gave laws'.[158] Nonetheless, in fictional versions, the father's power was achieved through tenderness, appropriate in a world of subtler forms of male authority. It is unwise, however, to see this as a new form of paternal power, indicative of the broader shift from patriarchal to paternalist government.[159] A closer inspection of the language of tender parenting shows that its benign authority was not particularly novel. Indulgent paternity, a benevolent form of rule, had long been associated with extremely hierarchical governance, such as that of personal monarchies. Kindness, after all, mitigated rule that was not restrained by laws or customs.[160] As such, parental affection and authority were a fairly conventional reciprocal combination within hierarchical rule.[161] Richard Steele's advice for mothers (first edition 1714 and published throughout the eighteenth century) explained they would win children's honour and obedience by 'gentler Methods' than severity.[162] This parallels the way that advice writers conceptualised the marital relationship in the eighteenth century when they advised wives to choose a husband they could love in order to be able to offer them obedience.[163] It is also detectable in the complex webs of parent-child affection and hierarchy outlined so far. Arabella Davies saw this applying more generally to adult-child relationships. She guided one of her children to be obedient to a master or mistress in order to ensure that he or she was affectionate in return.[164] Clearly the subordinate's obedience stimulated the master's affection in the hierarchical bond, ameliorating authority's severity.

The other side of the coin was that administering authority tenderly would stimulate a child's affection. So tender parents fostered in their offspring the lack of inclination to disobey them; tenderness literally disarmed the child. In 'Advice to the Ladies in the Choice of A Husband, Essay II', published in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1775, Mira was unhappily married to a debauchee at her parents' dictate because 'through the tenderness I bore them, I could not disobey.'[165] In the same issue,

[157] Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fictions*, p. xvi, and 'Introduction'.
[158] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 24.
[159] For a sustained analysis in this vein see Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fictions*, 'Introduction'.
[160] Also, affectionate government inculcated voluntary servitude. See McShane, 'Subjects and Objects: Material Expressions of Love and Loyalty'.
[161] Bailey, 'Parental Power' Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 148.
[162] Steele, *The Ladies Library*, vol. 2, 85.
[163] Tague, 'Love, Honor and Obedience', 76–106.
[164] Davies, *Letters from a parent to her children*, 45.
[165] *LM*, 1775, 31.

Mrs Gray responded to a letter from a father worried that his over-indulgence had made his daughter vain and in danger of jeopardising her reputation. The Matron advised the daughter to comply with her father's requests,

> remembering that when a parent, whose privilege is to command, condescends to expostulate, he discovers a degree of humility mixed with his paternal affection, which cannot but render him extremely valuable in himself, and deserving of the best, the most obedient of daughters.[166]

The terms of this reciprocity founded in love was spelled out by the periodical in 1778, in the form of a conversation between the educator Mentoria, and Lady Mary, Lady Louisa, and Lord George. Mentoria explained that offspring owed duty to their parents like that due to the Creator, consisting of 'gratitude, obedience, and love'. The parents' protection, tenderness, and love deserved 'implicit obedience to their commands.' Lord George checked whether children should do everything their parents commanded. Mentoria answered 'There is little danger of a parent leading a child into error by design: whenever they mistake the means of their advantage or happiness, the defect is in their judgment. As, in general, parents are too apt to err on the side of tenderness, children should in every instance conform.'[167] Here also is proof of Eustace's assertion that eighteenth-century 'rules of emotional expression' could 'help to mask continuing inequalities of power even as they maintained them'.[168] In sum, the new cultural conjunction of ideals of contract, revolutionary languages of liberty and fraternity, and a celebration of family feeling meant that a model that was already available and acceptable came to the fore.

CONCLUSION

From John Locke to Hannah More, the way to achieve a virtuous adult was to train children in the denial of desires and 'habitual interior restraint'.[169] This was as important as the specific content of curricula and training. Both parents were essential to the process. Though philosophers, early paediatricians, and moral commentators elaborated upon motherhood and its duties in nursing, care and the education of young children, fathers remained central and if their physical and medical care of infants was not delineated to the same extent as mothers' considerable space in print was given to their role and obligations. The responsibilities for both parents were heavy, since the demands of discipline and instruction required them to combine 'doing' and 'being'. They were to obtain the child's best behaviour by supplying them with the qualities required of worthy men and women. They were also to embody all this, to be themselves the ideal in order for their offspring to enact these virtues into the next generation and to the benefit of society. Instruction came full

[166] *LM*, 1775, 586.
[167] 'On the relative duties of life, with a general exhortation to virtue. Extracted from a work lately published, written by Miss Ann Murry', *LM*, 1778, 534–5.
[168] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 69.
[169] Stott, 'Evangelicalism and Enlightenment', 47.

circle with discipline since the latter was pointless without powerful parental example. As explained in *Moral Essays* (1796): 'Precepts are but as a dead letter, discipline but as the whipping of the school, which the next play obliterates, if the virtues recommended to children are not imprinted by the exemplary comportment of their parents.'[170]

How did these factors shape parental identity in the public, familial and personal realms? Section two will investigate how individuals thought about themselves, their parents and their children in the context of the ideas set out in section one.

[170] A. M. *Moral essays*, 79.

PART II

PARENTING AND PARENTHOOD: PUBLIC, FAMILY, AND PERSONAL IDENTITIES

Here is the ancient floor,
Footworn and hollowed and thin,
Here was the former door
Where the dead feet walked in.
She sat here in her chair,
Smiling into the fire;
He who played stood there,
Bowing it higher and higher.
Childlike, I danced in a dream;
Blessings emblazoned that day;
Everything glowed with a gleam;
Yet we were looking away!

The Self-Unseeing by Thomas Hardy

As section one shows, parenthood was an emotional community derived from Christian and Enlightenment values, the culture of sensibility and romanticism, and the ideals of domesticity. It was inextricable from numerous ideals, values and ideas circulating in the period including health and strength, virtue and moderation, piety and benevolence, honesty and worth, happiness and affection. This section explores how the same parental motifs were used by different writers in the process of formulating identity. The history of identity is a flourishing field, with accounts of national, class, racial, and gender and sex identities growing ever more conceptually sophisticated. This scholarship investigates identities from the collective to the subjective, exposing the external and internal factors influencing their formation.[1] One overview of this work concludes that identities are formed by a 'process of doing, not just thinking', through repeated patterns of behaviour, bodily practices and cultural forms.[2] This suggests that the family was a crucial location for identity formation, composed of relationships that were 'done' as well as 'thought' about, and a site where activities, bodies and selves intersected. Surprisingly, however, its role in these processes is not often considered.[3] Looking across a range of sources, nonetheless, it becomes clear that parents held an essential role in identity formation at a number of levels. They operated as symbols of social, political and cultural values and relationships; as bearers of familial, social and personal status and worth; and as direct actors in formulating personal identities and states of mind. The questions guiding the following three chapters, therefore, are: how did society make sense of the world, and how did individuals comprehend their families and themselves through the lenses of parenting and parenthood?

There are clues that the role of parenthood in constructing national or collective identities in England was significant, especially in the long eighteenth century.[4] Indeed, the concept of parenthood and its qualities gave numerous social, political,

[1] For an overview, see Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, ch. 6: 'Identity'.
[2] Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 152.
[3] An exception is Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*.
[4] Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 136–8.

religious and economic commentators a convenient metaphor to convey their concerns. It is, however, its political uses which have been most often addressed. Cultural and literary historians analyse the use of the metaphor in kingship and queenship.[5] Early-modernists consider fatherhood's inclusion in the wider status and category of head of household and its uses in a patriarchal society's political discourse.[6] Scholars of revolutionary America and France reveal how the concepts of the 'republican' mother and 'citizen-father' helped reconfigure notions about political relationships.[7] More needs to be done to understand how the imagined parent was deployed in other public debates. Historians of eighteenth-century childbirth, paediatrics, and institutions that cared for abandoned infants and plebeian mothers, for example, expose the significant role of the imagined child in driving such endeavours and shaping the public commentary surrounding them.[8] The concerns that drove new modes of treatment of children are also detectable in ideas about parenthood and ensured that it was equally powerful in defining nation and society.

The role of kin relationships in forming personal identities is only now coming to be investigated. Historians using oral history sources have shown how kin bonds influenced individual and collective identities.[9] Studies of gender identities increasingly identify parenthood as one aspect of early-modern reputation and nineteenth- and twentieth-century masculine and feminine identities.[10] Much of the attention on the construction of personal identity in the Georgian period, however, is upon the novel role of childhood in forging identity, personality and subjectivity.[11] Yet, in a culture that celebrated family ties in the most passionate ways, it is necessary to explore how parentage, parenthood and parenting affected personal identities. Studies of family portraits suggest that wealthy men and women presented themselves as good parents, keenly aware that this benefitted their public, social reputation.[12] As Ludmilla Jordonova's exhaustive analysis of the related concepts of 'nature' and 'family' in eighteenth century culture illustrates, there was a 'growing sense of natural fusion, of an organic link between the different family members, particularly between mother and child'.[13] How did this affect individuals' sense of selves, both as offspring and parents?

Such a question leads into the question of identity as 'self' and how far public discourses, like those about parenthood, might be internalised to form one aspect of individual subjectivity.[14] The nature of the self and the processes by which it is formed

[5] Morris, 'The Royal Family and Family Values', 519–32; Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*; Weil, *Political Passions: Gender, the Family*.

[6] e.g., Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*.

[7] Overview in Bailey, 'Family Relationships', 28–31.

[8] Cody, *Birthing the Nation*; Evans, *Unfortunate Objects*; Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*, 43.

[9] e.g. Thompson, 'Family myth, models and denials in the shaping of individual life paths'.

[10] Bailey, 'a very sensible man'; Berry and Foyster, 'Childless Men'; John Tosh, *A Man's Place*; Yeo, 'The creation of "motherhood" and women's responses', 201–17.

[11] Dekker, *Childhood, Memory and Autobiography*; Schlumbohm, 'Constructing individuality: childhood memories'; *Steedman, Strange Dislocations.*

[12] Lovell, *Art in a season of revolution,* 10, 26; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 151.

[13] Jordanova, *Nature Displayed*, 196.

[14] 'Self' is used to mean a person's nature or character. Subjectivity is defined more specifically as a consciousness of one's inner self.

is another relatively new area of historical enquiry.[15] Gender historians, in particular, have urged that its role within masculine and feminine identities be explored, though it is not an easy process to map.[16] Scholarship in the social sciences, for example, points to 'multiple' masculinities, inflected by age, social, occupational and marital status, race and ethnicity, and life-cycle.[17] Recently, femininity is no longer being seen as a monolithic gender construction, either, varying for very similar reasons.[18] It is emerging that being parented and being a parent played some role in shaping gendered subjectivity. Michael Roper's study of men's subjectivities during and after World War One through their relationship with their mothers reveals the importance of the former. [19] Martha Tomhave Blauvelt's work on the American Sarah Connell's diary (1805–35) concludes that marriage and motherhood were the key points of emotional discontinuity that shaped Connell's sense of self.[20] This section contributes to the endeavour to understand people's construction of self and associated tensions by exploring how writers discussed being parented and being parents.

The Georgian 'self' is glimpsed in ego-documents, especially autobiographies. As Annette Kuhn observes, '[t]elling stories about the past, our past, is a key moment in the making of our selves'.[21] Such 'memories related to the self' thus offer numerous clues about familial and personal identities and subjectivities.[22] Family stories, for instance, offer specific insights into perspectives of family identity, as well as the transmission of social and cultural values.[23] Since much of this material is retrospective in nature, penned at different times and with the benefit, or pain, of hindsight, it is vital to understand the role that memory plays in the formation and experience of identities. Early modern and eighteenth-century monuments and tombs, for example, told stories about the people they commemorated, and attempted to shape how families would be remembered.[24] Family portraits in Colonial America and England family portraits functioned as 'vehicles of duty and memory' and English ancestral portraits were considered by contemporaries as a 'visual family tree', reminders of family members.[25] So too were family archives, which built 'an emotional storehouse, where the most important personal relationships might be sustained and relived', and for religious families offered spiritual guidance to descendants.[26] This section examines acts of

[15] Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 150–2, 153.

[16] Harvey and Shepard, 'What have historians done with masculinity?', 274–80; Roper, 'Slipping out of view', 57–72.

[17] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', 835, 843, 846.

[18] See various contributions to Shepard and Walker, *Gender and Change*.

[19] e.g. Michael Roper, *Secret Battle: Emotional Survival*.

[20] Blauvelt, 'The work of the heart', 586.

[21] Kuhn, *Family secrets: acts of memory and imagination*, 2, 159.

[22] Fivush, 'Remembering and reminiscing', 50.

[23] Olick, '"Collective memory": a memoir and prospect', 23–9; Alexander, 'Do grandmas have husbands?', 162.

[24] Sherlock, *Monuments and memory*, 39; Murison, 'Lapidary inscriptions: rhetoric, reality', 99–112.

[25] Lovell, *Art in a season of revolution*, 10, 26; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 151. For the growth of memorialising family members and the family home see John Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making*, chs. 4, 5, 6.

[26] Holton, 'Family memory, religion and radicalism', 156–75.

individual as well as collective family memory to illuminate identities, and perhaps, something of the 'self'.

Section two thus merges public discourses and personal memories and reflections to offer insights into parenting and parenthood as public and personal identities and subjectivities. This challenges the model of an abrupt transformation in this period from a socially-turned to an introspective, unique self.[27] Although the identities and subjectivities revealed in this section were formed in relation to family and kin, they also took on individualised meanings for writers. In effect, the familial and the individual were never discrete qualities or identities. The two were inextricably combined, even in a world in which individuality and notions of the modern self were rapidly taking hold. Subject to external forces and life-course factors, the parented and parental self was one of change, unpredictability, insecurity and fragility. Often undermined, questioned and broken, full of tension; the parental self was precarious.

[27] Wahrman, *The making of the modern self*. For a similar questioning of this thesis, see Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, 19, 122.

4

Parenthood and Public Identity: Symbolic Parents

unfit to become the mothers of Englishmen[1]

Mothers and fathers were as responsible for the state of their nation and society as their children. The centrality of the family to concepts of social order is well known. Households comprised of male heads with dependents: wives, children and servants, were considered the building blocks of society.[2] Parents were such important components of social stability that parental imagery was often used in political rhetoric to describe or counteract national crises. For example, Britons characterised the American war of independence as conflict between parent and offspring. Following anxieties about George III's health in 1788 to 1789 and the Regency Crisis, 'the nation, the constitution, and the king could all be conflated within the image of a mild, tender, and above all a vulnerable father'.[3] In fact parenthood was central to a number of Georgian societal and national concerns, not just political ones. Numerous commentators invoked parenthood as a means to ensure a strong, healthy nation and to produce a patriotic and secure society. Both traditional and newly fashionable cultural vocabularies were deployed to envision parenting as a means to bind society together. Common to all these discourses were parents' emotions, bodies and behaviours.[4]

A HEALTHY NATION

Children's bodies were considered crucial to the health of the nation in the long eighteenth century.[5] Early moves towards specialism in child health focused on nurturing infants to good health and therefore adulthood, by combining new scientific knowledge with the dictates of Nature especially maternal breast-feeding.[6]

[1] Bewick, *Memoir*, 173.
[2] McShane, 'Subjects and Objects: Material Expressions of Love and Loyalty', 871–86.
[3] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation* 1707–1837, 195–236, cited in Barrell, 'Sad Stories: Louis XVI, George III', 78.
[4] Porter, 'Medicine, politics, and the body in Late Georgian England', 230.
[5] Benzaquen, 'The Doctor and the Child', 14–15; 17; 18; 23; Mary Lindemann, 'Health and Science'.
[6] For the medical treatment of children see Petermann, 'From a cough to a coffin', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2007).

Preventing infant deaths would secure national well-being and strength because weak children produced a weak society.[7] William Cadogan declared that England's 'People of Condition' were a 'puny valetudinary Race' thanks to 'bad Nursing, and bad Habits contracted early.'[8] William Buchan assured readers that: 'the proper management of children' would not only have benefits for children's health and usefulness in life, but 'likewise the safety and prosperity of the state to which they belong'.[9] The argument was still powerful at the end of the eighteenth century when the editor of *The Child's Physician* harnessed the languages of personal feeling and public good to explain that his motive was:

> To save the worthy parent the heart-rending pangs of an untimely separation from a darling child, that, by care and proper management, might become the staff and comfort of his age who gave it life—to contribute to the strength and glory of our country, by adding to the number of its inhabitants one valuable member—or to promote the interests of humanity, by saving from the infant tomb one child, who might, in proper time, become the friend of his species, and shine the ornament of letters or of arts.[10]

Many of the ventures of the 'century of philanthropy' were dedicated to saving children in this way. The London Foundling Hospital and Lying-In Hospitals sought financial support by linking the lives of infants saved to national utility. Charity schools were promoted to subscribers through the usefulness for the nation of large numbers of educated poor children.[11] Political economists and writers on the poor law, like Jeremy Bentham and Jonas Hanway, likewise saw investments in children's health and welfare as worthwhile for society's future benefit.[12]

Parents' bodies and behaviours were just as crucial to building a healthy, strong nation. Parents populated the world. The *Vicar of Wakefield* began by reminding readers that the married man with a large family did more service than the single man who only talked of population.[13] Parents were integral to pronatalist campaigns. In eighteenth-century France pronatalists argued that the nation's future depended on the good *pere de famille*, both moral exemplar and affectionate provider, as well as the nurturing, breast feeding *mere de famille*.[14] Medical advice similarly focused upon parents' role in securing the health of their children.[15] It was not just mismanagement that was to blame.[16] Buchan warned parents: 'ONE great

[7] Emphasis upon infant mortality rates was an innovation of this body of work, Benzaquen, 'The Doctor and the Child', 16.

[8] Cadogan, *Essay upon Nursing*, 5. For analysis of this treatise see Levene, 'Reasonable Creatures', 30–6.

[9] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 36.

[10] Denison, *The child's physician*, p. viii, x. See also Michael Underwood MD, *A Treatise on the Diseases of Children. With Directions for the Management of Infants from the Birth, Especially such as are Brought up by Hand*, 1784, p. 4, cited in Benzquen, 'The Doctor and the Child', 23.

[11] Levene, *Childcare, health and mortality*, 6–7; Lloyd, *Charity and poverty in England*, 127–30.

[12] Levene, 'Introduction', *Children, childhood and poverty in* 18*th century London*, forthcoming.

[13] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 1.

[14] Fuchs, 'Introduction to the forum on the changing faces of parenthood', 333–4; Tuttle, 'Celebrating the pere de famille: pronatalism and fatherhood', 369–70. For the shift away from pronatalism in America from the mid eighteenth century see Klepp, *Revolutionary conceptions*.

[15] Benzaquen, 'The Doctor and the Child', 17.

[16] Moss, *essay on the management, nursing, and diseases of children*, 14.

source of the diseases of children is, the UNHEALTHINESS OF PARENTS. It would be as reasonable to expect a rich crop from a barren soil, as that strong and healthy children should be born of parents whose constitutions have been worn out with intemperance or disease'. This had repercussions for more than one generation, since it was 'entailed on posterity'.[17] This thinking extended far beyond medical discourse and entered moral commentary and life-writings.

Both parents played their parts. The healthy maternal body produced healthy children.[18] The *Lady's Magazine* published 'Peculiarities respecting the education of females. Extracted from loose thoughts upon education by Lord Kamis,' in 1782, which concluded that female children ought to be heartily bred, not just for their own health, but to have healthy offspring.[19] Buchan drew an analogy with animal breeding to make his point:

> IN our matrimonial contracts, it is amazing so little regard is had to the health and form of the object. Our sportsmen know, that the generous courser cannot be bred out of the foundered jade, nor the sagacious spaniel out of the snarling cur. This is settled upon immutable laws. The man who marries a woman of a sickly constitution, and descended of unhealthy parents, whatever his views may be, cannot be said to act a prudent part. A diseased woman may prove fertile; should this be the case, the family must become an infirmary.[20]

No wonder Bewick saw it as a duty that every healthy man gets a 'healthy woman for his wife for the sake of his children'.[21]

Morals were central to explanations for parental and therefore infants' lack of health: worldly women and dissolute men produced frail, enfeebled, unhealthy children or were sterile. Balance must be sought when elite girls' education was rooted in acquiring accomplishments, but fashionable education was considered to weaken women's bodies.[22] More seriously, maternal bad habits were blamed for sickly infants. Thomas Wright blamed his children's infirmities on being damaged in the womb by their mother's excessive drinking.[23] Moreover, fashionable excesses broke the nature-mother link so that women lost their instinctive maternity. Lack of female virtue also robbed the nation since it was considered to cause infertility. The sympathetic Bewick saw prostitution as particularly terrible because it robbed the women of becoming the mothers of 'lovely and healthy children'.[24] Several of these conventions appear in Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode* series (1743). In the fourth of the series, the newly titled Countess's worldliness has erased her maternal interest. The teething coral indicates that a baby has been born, but its absence reveals the Countess's maternal neglect. In the final picture of her dying moments

[17] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 7.
[18] Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*, 178, 224, and passim.
[19] *LM*, 1782, 396.
[20] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 8. Rather than animal breeding, Cadogan used the poor to make his case, Cadogan, *An Essay upon Nursing*, 7–8.
[21] Bewick, *Memoir*, 116.
[22] Fletcher, *Growing Up in England*, chs. 15, 16, 17.
[23] Wright, *Autobiography,* 101, 106–8; 119–20.
[24] Bewick, Memoir, 85, 43–4, 179.

the infant's body bears the sign of bodily impairment and syphilis passed on to her by her mother's behaviour, in the form of leg calliper and facial blemish.[25] Even the reasonably virtuous but fashionable woman caused anxiety. The 'Lady's Physician' argued that 'some women of fashion by want of caution make themselves incapable of the duty' of breastfeeding their own child.[26] This had profound implications for individuals and the state. According to Buchan, 'children who are suckled by delicate women, either die young, or are weak and sickly all their lives'.[27] In Thomas Bewick's view: 'If they survive these trials, still they leave behind them a want of health & vigour which hangs upon them through life & they then become the nerveless outcasts of nature—they are then unfit to become the mothers of Englishmen'. Too many such 'nerveless' females would ensure that 'their generation dies out'.[28] Buchan cited Tacitus's analogy between the degeneracy of Roman ladies who refused to suckle their own babies and the decline of the empire. He obviously agreed with Greek and Roman authors that wetnursing diminished family ties and destabilised society, since the mother-child bond developed into a love of one's country and desire to serve it.[29] Certainly, in revolutionary France breastfeeding would 'become a political act, demonstrating patriotism and freedom'.[30] It is hardly surprising, then, that a dominant feature of the eighteenth-century landscape of maternity was a harsh view of wetnursing. Not all of this attacked the wetnurse, instead targeting the mother and her potential losses. George Morland's *A visit to the child at Nurse* (1788) is typical of visual versions. The moment depicted is the infant's reluctance to leave his wetnurse's arms for his beautifully dressed mother's.[31]

The link between men's bodies, weak children and national threat was equally commonplace. Like mothers', fathers' healthy bodies secured the next generation. Fathering children and immersion in a domestic life should guard against corruption; thus a father who was unrestrained by his role endangered society.[32] Moral commentators condemned a clutch of masculine behaviours comprising licence, luxury, drinking, womanising and gambling by emphasising their detrimental impact upon the family and subsequently the nation. The worst sort of man (1778) led a 'luxurious, lazy, effeminate, and extravagant life, deadens and stupefies his natural faculties by excess, impairs his constitution by disease, transmits his personal distempers to his posterity'.[33] In 'Advice to the Ladies in the Choice of A Husband', Essay II, (1775) the bad husband was addicted to sensual pleasures (mistress and prostitutes), was covetous, and profligate with money, spending it 'in riot and debauchery'; in effect, the antithesis of the benevolent gentleman. Not only would his behaviour engender his own destruction, his syphilitic body would 'entail the worst of maladies on innocent babes yet unborn' thereby risking national strength.[34] The connections between elite dissipation and inadequate paternity

[25] William Hogarth, *Marriage a-la Mode* (4) 'The Toilette', 6) 'The Lady's Death', 1745, Oil on Canvas, The National Gallery, London.
[26] *LM*, 1785, 428. [27] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, Ch. 1. [28] Bewick, *Memoir*, 173.
[29] Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 4. See also Doolan, 'Nursing Times'. [30] ibid.
[31] Gilbey, *Morland*, 247. [32] Translation of Rousseau's *Emile* in *LM*, 1780, 147.
[33] *LM*, 1778, 199–200. [34] *LM*, 1775, 31.

were sufficient for aristocrats to rebut notions of dissolute paternity. Indeed, a family portrait of a patriarch 'provided evidence of his capacity to produce healthy and virtuous offspring to inherit his name and property'.[35] The rhetoric moved those of other ranks. Hannah Robertson dismissed her son-in-law 'Dr Wilson, (whom I will no longer speak of as my son),' because his taste for dissipation plunged him 'into the tide of fashion, and of folly' and made him insensible to his lovely wife, Hannah's daughter.[36]

Concerns about children's and parents' bodies were embedded in wider discourses about the damage to Britain's status from 'Luxury and Selfishness, Extravagance and Indolence'.[37] This was partly a reaction to expanding commerce and consumer participation, but was also firmly rooted in Christian writings where the 'world' was a place of danger to home, family and society.[38] Worldliness threatened morals, public spirit and masculine valour, especially in times of national crisis. For example, numerous social, moral and political commentators saw the military failure of the 1750s as the direct consequence of effeminacy, itself the result of unrestrained luxury. In Georgian society effeminacy marked the feminization or weakening of men, not sexual behaviour. When harnessed to political criticism of the government's handling of crises, it signified weakened political virtue and national strength.[39] The risk to society of boys unable to mature into men of sterling domestic character was profound. Fordyce wondered:

> What the well-wishers of Britain, and of mankind, are to expect from such a race, I leave them to judge. That the picture is too like the generality of our fashionable young man in the upper classes, and of their fond imitators in the lower, it were not candour, but ignorance, to deny.—Are these then the persons who must, ere long, possess the various departments in the great scale of society? Are these the persons that must shortly sustain the characters of lovers, husbands, fathers, masters, friends?[40]

As a result, parental behaviour must inure children to luxury. Yet this was difficult in a society that also advised parents to make their children happy. Depictions of loving middle-class families enjoying leisure and consumption were attractive, such as George Morland's *A Tea Garden* (1790) (figure 12).[41] Parents were warned not to over-indulge their offspring, however, for it rendered their infant and mature bodies diseased and ineffectual.[42] Fordyce traced the cause back to the nursery, where 'the whole character of boys is commonly perverted and ruined. How? By a cruel indulgence of those desires, passions, fancies, and humours, which should be early checked and regulated'. In such cases, neither physical nor emotional restraint was learned and manliness suffered: their 'bodies are debilitated, and their minds debased: they are rendered children for life, disqualified to endure fatigue,

[35] Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 128. [36] Robertson, *life of Mrs Robertson,* 179.
[37] *Harrop's Manchester Mercury*, 17 August 1756, 2, cited in M. McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 484.
[38] Van Reyk, 'Christian ideals of manliness ', 1070–1.
[39] McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 484–6.
[40] Fordyce, *Addresses to young men*, 157–8.
[41] For analysis of this image see Steward, *The New Child*, 177–9.
[42] Bailey, 'Paternal power' ??.

hunger, and hardship, without unmanly complaints.' Only by returning men to the manly deportment of former times, Fordyce explained, would the country be saved.[43] Girls fared little better under an indulgent regime. According to the 'The Wanderer', writing in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1784, indulgent 'parents are absolutely the seducers of their own children.' They formed daughters' minds to expect luxuries but not the means to supply them, and thus 'throw them defenceless on an uncharitable world, that pays no more regard to fine accomplishments than savages do to beauty, who only glory in the richness of their prey'. Unfit for labour the girls would be forced into being mistresses or prostitutes.[44]

The advice for genteel parents was to lead simpler, less luxurious lives and bring up their children in like manner. The watchwords for both were frugality and temperance. The Vicar of Wakefield boasted: 'My children, the offspring of temperance, as they were educated without softness, so they were at once well formed and healthy'.[45] The newly emerging specialists in child health also recommended simple

Fig. 12. *A Tea Garden* (1790). George Morland's pretty family, consisting of young parents and three children, and grandparents, capture the links between the loving tender family, fashion, and consumption.

[43] Fordyce, *Addresses to young men*, 138, 147, 159.

[44] This was part of a class-based commentary where middling ranks were criticised for attempting social mobility. The satirical target was frequently farmers or tradesmen's families. *LM*, 1784, 234.

[45] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 4.

wholesome diets for infants exemplified by an idealised simple but hardy poor lifestyle. Great importance was placed upon following Nature in children's plain diet, clothing, and lifestyle.[46] This line of thinking became commonplace. Looking back in the 1820s, Thomas Bewick insisted that the only way to raise healthy children was to give them 'a plain diet & temperance & exercise'.[47] Parents were recommended to adopt such a lifestyle too, particularly fathers since frugality was part of approved masculine behavior. According to the *Lady's Magazine*, 1778, the ideal man was 'temperate, frugal, industrious.' In contrast to the dissipated man who passed on his weaknesses to future generations, he would 'be of the greatest service to the community by his personal activity, and his intellectual acquisitions'.[48] Indeed Bewick prided himself on his hardy lifestyle. He restricted his intake of particular foods and alcohol, practiced rigorous exercise and was convinced that this kept him healthy and manly.[49] For Braidwood there were pious implications, for he saw frugality, temperance and sobriety as Christian duty.[50] These forms of self-discipline were also linked with feeling. Physical restraint allowed emotions to flourish. Overloading with food produced numbness.[51] Inability to manage one's emotions, as explained in section one, created the unfeeling person and parent. Francis Place used such lack of parental restraint to represent and censure an entire generation in his criticisms of his father who 'seems to have observed no bounds, but to have indulged his propensities to the utmost.'[52]

The focus on children's and parent's bodies was also driven by fears of depopulation around the mid-eighteenth century.[53] Thomas Short explained that his 1767 history of population sought to make 'the People more prolific, healthy, and robust: so that the Safety, Defence, Establishment, and Continuance of a Nation, and their Laws, Liberties, Rights and Privileges' are safeguarded.[54] Population decline was itself partly attributed to the effects of luxury. Richard Price, for instance, linked the two, though he offered no explanation why.[55] Presumably this related to the anxiety that dissipated individuals either produced diseased children or none at all. The wider world was also a catalyst in bringing these ideas about parenthood into public discussion. Concerns over the quality and quantity of future generations were stimulated by England's growing empire and trade, the success of which required a plentiful supply of subjects.[56] During years of war or perceived national crisis concerns about diminished population, puny Britons, and Britain's ability to wield a robust fighting force exacerbated. Thus anxieties were acutely felt in the 1750s, thanks to the disastrous opening of the Seven Years War (1756–63) and in the 1770s and '80s following the loss of the American colonies and the French Revolution.[57] The debate was not confined to specialist commentators and readers.

[46] Benzaquen, 'The Doctor and the Child', 20.
[47] Bewick, *Memoir*, 173.
[48] *LM*, 1778, 199–200.
[49] Bewick, *Memoir*, 91, 180.
[50] Braidwood, *Parental duties,* 32.
[51] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 74; Cadogan, *An Essay upon Nursing*, 9.
[52] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 24.
[53] Jordonova, *Nature Displayed,* 39.
[54] Short, *A comparative history of the increase and decrease of mankind*, p. i.
[55] Price, *An essay on the population of England*, 29.
[56] Levene, 'Introduction', *Children, childhood and poverty*, forthcoming
[57] McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 490–1.

An 'old maid' wrote to the *Lady's Magazine* in 1782 supporting proposals for a tax on bachelors. She inveighed against celibacy as 'one of the growing evils of the age.' It comprised an 'injury to the other sex, to the state, and to posterity.' Crucially, childless men failed to contribute their share 'to the raising subjects'. The writer advocated that unmarried men above 25 who were not in the armed forces pay tax to 'discharge some part of a debt they owe the public'.[58]

In the final decade of the century anxieties about the fecklessness of the poor and the best way to manage their increasing numbers and the consequent pressure upon rate payers exposed a somewhat different set of fears about an expanding, unsustainable population, most cogently expressed in Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*.[59] Some shifts in tone resulted. Poor men who married without the certainty that they would be able to support future offspring were condemned as dependent economic drains, although poor children were still imagined in terms of their future value as workers and producers.[60] Like other physicians William Moss, the surgeon to the Liverpool Lying-in Hospital, stressed that his intervention on the management of infant illnesses in 1781 was 'essential to the welfare, happiness, and general interests of society'. The third edition in 1800 still acknowledged that infant mortality was too high, but defined the benefits of its prevention in a far more personal manner, with less emphasis on population growth. He pointed out that:

> No subject can be more interesting to mankind, than that wherein the health of the most amiable part of the creation, and that of their lovely offspring, is especially concerned: they being the sources from whence we derive the most exalted and refined pleasure; and unitedly form one of the greatest comforts and blessings in the very limited catalogue of human enjoyments;—namely;—DOMESTIC HAPPINESS. [61]

Yet, even though the 1790s counter revolutionary discourse now positioned the security of society and nation within stable family relationships, it was still parents' actions and bodies that were their primary safeguards.

A STABLE, PATRIOTIC SOCIETY

In their role of instilling virtue and piety in their offspring parents were guardians of society and social wellbeing; an ideal of socialisation that insisted upon social responsibility. At mid-century James Nelson told parents to teach their children to 'consider every one as an Individual of Society' and inculcate in them their obligations to other members of society: respect and duty to senior relations, tender and unalterable affection to siblings, and respect to distant kin.[62] It was a basic Christian duty to command children to be courteous, affable, obliging, and gentle. If parents paid more attention to the spirit than to the outward form of good breeding, then

[58] *LM*, 1782, 255. [59] Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Populatio*n, ch. 1.
[60] Levene, 'Introduction', *Children, childhood and poverty.*. Publication forthcoming.
[61] Moss, *essay on the Management and Nursing of Children*, p. ix.
[62] Nelson, *essay on the government of children,* 201.

such behaviour would become natural.[63] Loving family relationships rippled outwards. Nelson explained that 'Children who love their Parents as they ought, will seldom fail to diffuse in social Life a general Affection around them; they will love their Husbands, their Wives, their Children and their Friends: nay they will love the whole human Race'.[64] The message carried extra freight with sensibility. Happy loving parents and children 'educated' the members of society who witnessed them. Just watching a family of sensibility

> may be considered as the balm of being; for when rightly understood and enjoyed, they refine, dignify, and exalt the affections; heighten the sense of humanity, render the heart susceptible of every soft impression, and raise such a rational admiration in the mind, as fix it in an inviolable and perpetual state of happiness.[65]

Of course, failure to inculcate social values had implications for society. In 'Advice to the Ladies in the Choice of A Husband, Essay II', published in 1775, the bad qualities which rendered one man 'a pest to society' stemmed from being tutored by a 'man of very corrupt morals, a mere tyrant over his whole family'.[66] In the 1820s Thomas Bewick could proclaim 'how can I doubt it, if my father had been a thief, that I would not have been one also—& if a highwayman & robber, that I might not have been as expert as one as himself'.[67]

Fatherhood thus possessed very public components. For *The Female Spectator* 'A MAN who is . . . uneasy with those at home is an unfit member of society elsewhere.'[68] Indeed, the paternal role became one of the markers of citizenship. Essentially, being a good father indicated suitability for life in society as an effective worker, citizen, and franchise holder. The significance of fatherhood to citizenship is especially evident in the evolution of the meaning of 'independence' from an external indicator of political and masculine value to an inherent quality. In the early eighteenth century the politically independent man obtained this status by possessing substantial quantities of land and social standing. By the turn of the century independence was more inclusive: the ability to support one's household and the possession of basic manly qualities like sincerity and self-assertion.[69] Thus men could use their roles as father, husband and head of household to claim the parliamentary franchise from the 1770s.[70] Christianity underpinned this citizen father. In an essay 'On the excellence of Christianity in improving the minds and polishing the manners of men,' published in a collection in 1798, the author stressed that Christianity brought collective as well as individual good. The anonymous writer explained that 'it does not absolutely follow that because men are good children, husbands, or fathers, they will be good, that is, obedient subjects of the government, and serviceable members of society.' After all, usurpers of monarchies could be men

[63] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 25–8. [64] Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 227–8.
[65] *LM*, 1790, 579–80. [66] *LM*, 1775, 32. [67] Bewick, *Memoir*, 43.
[68] *Female Spectator*, IV.24, cited in Katherine Lancaster, 'A crisis of masculinity? The culture and identity of the gentleman in eighteenth-century England', unpublished MA dissertation (2009), 299. My thanks to Katy for bringing this to my attention.
[69] McCormack and Roberts, 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion: chronologies in the history of British political masculinities *c.* 1700–2000', in idem, *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics*, 6, 190.
[70] McCormack, 'Married Men and the Fathers of Families', 45.

of excellent private character. It was Christianity that bolstered these personal virtues, for 'The Christian is not only obliged by his profession to be a good man, but also to be a good Citizen'.[71] The flipside was expressed by Thomas Bewick in his opinion that the best way to serve God was to be good to his creatures '& fulfil the moral duties, as that of being good sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, neighbours & members of society'.[72]

Literary and artistic representations also utilised components of fatherhood to promote patriotism or political and social stability. This can be seen where military man were concerned. In reality, military recruitment and its demands was detrimental to families.[73] It left wives and children with limited maintenance and, worse still, some men abandoned their families by entering military service. Yet the figure of the military man developed into a cultural figure intended to stir patriotic hearts in the second half of the eighteenth century; with militia men in particular as husband and father, symbolic defenders of home and family.[74] Although those in the regular forces were preferably bachelors, even these military models of manhood were domesticated in the service of the eighteenth-century nation. This is especially clear with seamen. By the later eighteenth century, state and pronatalist interests converged to encourage sailors to marry in order to raise the birth-rate and prevent venereal disease. Representations of naval men changed accordingly. Early eighteenth-century depictions tended to be of disruptive drunken carousers bristling with sexual menace. By the post-Napoleonic era seamen's domestic attachments were highlighted in popular prints, songs and material culture through the trope that they were faithful to loved ones at home.[75] Their reluctance to part from loving families was portrayed. The *Lady's Magazine* published two engravings of wives and infants standing at the coast waving off the departing sailor. In *The Patriotic Parting* (figure 13), the man turns to wave at his wife, their son sorrowfully buries his head in his mother's skirts. In *The Fortunate Affliction* the wife and small daughter kneel to pray at a coastal outcrop as a sailing ship departs. The scene decorated numerous ceramics, like a lustre earthenware jug, dated 1810, which depicts a sailor leaving his wife and two small children (figure 14). It is inscribed: 'THE SAILORS, FAREWELL, | Sweet! Oh: Sweet is that Sensation, | Where two hearts in union meet, | But the Pain of Separation, | Mingles bitter with the Sweet.' On the other side, the verse was poignantly completed: 'The Sailor tost on stormy seas | Though far his bark may roam, | Still hears a voice in every breeze | That wakens thoughts of home, | He thinks upon his distant friends, | His wife, his humble cot, | And from his inmost heart ascends | The prayer forget me not.'[76] The material and textual merged in ballads such as the *Sailor's Tear*:

[71] *The Peeper; a collection of essays, moral, biographical, and literary*, 226–7.
[72] Bewick, *Memoir*, 56.
[73] For the impact of war upon families see King, 'The State', 134–6.
[74] McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 494–6.
[75] Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack: representing naval manhood*, 2–5. Seventeenth century military men were often represented as lovers leaving courtship rather than husbands and fathers, see McShane, 'The Loyal Subject's Resolution: Recruiting Citizens for Soldiers'. Many thanks to Angela for letting me read this before publication.
[76] AAA5177, National Maritime Museum.

He leap'd into the boat
As it lay upon the Strand;
But oh! his heart was far away,
With friends upon the land,
He thought of those he love'd the best,
A wife, and infant dear,—
And feeling fill'd the Sailor's breast,
The Sailor's eye,—a tear.
They stood upon the far off cliff,
And wav'd a 'kerchief white,
And gaz'd upon his gallant bark,
'Till she was out of sight.
The Sailor cast a look behind
No longer saw them near,
Then rais'd the canvass to his eye,
And wiped away a tear.
Ere long o'er ocean's blue expanse,
His sturdy bark had sped;
The gallant Sailor from her prow,
Descried a Sail a-head;
And then he rais'd his mighty arm,
For Britain's foes were near,
Ay then he raised his arm, but not
To wipe away a tear.[77]

Thus he was in these three stanzas transformed from loving husband to the mighty foe of Britain's enemies.

The tensions between being a tender husband and father and a man's duty to the nation were similarly resolved in 'The Patriotic Parting' (1782, and figure 13). Mr Townshend, the progeny of a sea-faring family, had 'for some time bridled his rage for glory' after he married a wealthy lady, due to his 'Paternal and uxorious affection'. But his 'love for his country grew predominant over his love as an individual, his love for himself, his wife, or his son' so that he sought a commission. Ordered to Boston, he was captured but fortuitously freed by a British privateer and after service returned safe to his native shore. He immediately made his way home to his wife and son. At home he caught up his son and 'shed over him a deluge of parental tears.' His wife was soon back in his arms; 'the summit of all her wishes'. The story's moral was 'That the man in a public line of life, who shall not be ready to sacrifice all his interests as an individual, to saving his country when endangered, is neither a good husband, a good father, or what is greater, a good patriot'.[78]

Like Mr Townsend, naval and military men were also frequently imagined returning home. This was the counterpart of the sailor's farewell and was a commonplace idea. As Thomas Bewick (b. 1753) recalled from his childhood: 'in cottages

[77] *Sailor's Tear*, Bodley Ballads, Bodleian Library, Frame 19918.
[78] *LM*, 1782, 343–4.

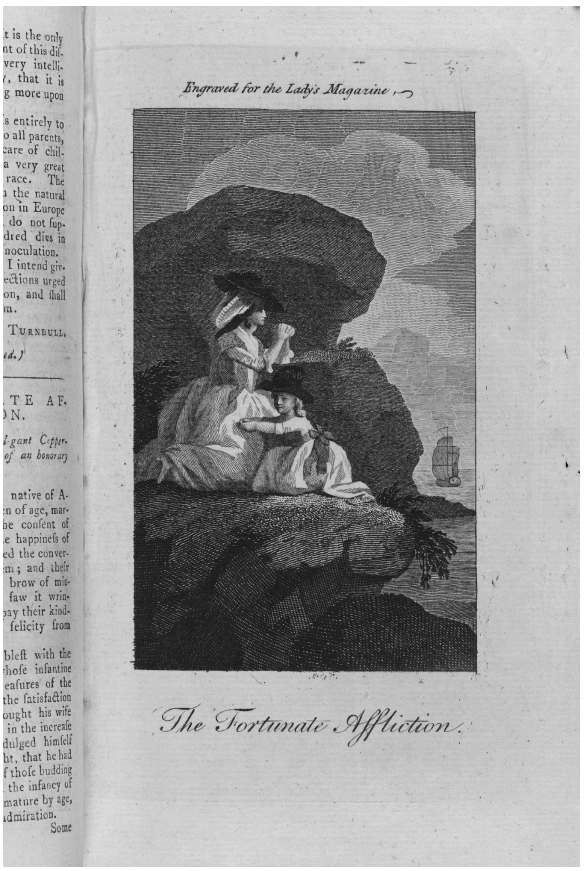

Fig. 13. 'The Patriotic Parting' (1782). This departing father's self-sacrifice for his country is shown by his glance back at his brave wife, crying son, and by the Union Jack emblazoned on the boat which carries him off to his duty.

everywhere were to be seen the sailor's farewell and his happy return'.[79] Julius Caesar Ibbetson's *The Married Sailor's Return Home*, 1795, restores the father safely to the bosom of his family and tenderly evokes his reunion with his young, clinging children.[80] So too does Thomas Stothard's *Sailor's Return in Peace* (1798).[81] The returning father has already been discussed in chapter three where his domestic contents compensated him for his labours. In a similar vein, military men were

[79] Bewick, *Memoir*, 114. It should be noted that some earlier versions involve a sailor leaving his love, rather than his wife and family, and returning to find her virtue lost. I am not aware of scholarship that dates or quantifies the transition.

[80] Ibbetson, *A Married Sailor's Return*, circa 1800, Oil on canvas, N05793, Tate Gallery. This was made into an engraving. See the contrasting and far more morally questionable activities in Ibbetson, *An Unmarried Sailor's Return*, *c.* 1800, Oil on Canvas, N05794, Tate Gallery.

[81] BHC1125, A sailor returns in peace © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Fig. 14. *The sailor's farewell*, lustre earthenware jug (1810). The ubiquity and popularity of the device of the departing, brave father in the service of his country is shown by the picture on this jug of the sailor taking a sorrowful leave of his wife and two small children.

persuaded to fight from the desire to defend wife and children as well as from love of country. Along with sentimental reunion it was a motif common to pro-militia writings from the mid-century as well.[82] In 1756, for example, Samuel Davies claimed that soldiers' 'tender Children' and wives would want the men to return 'victorious to their longing Arms!'[83] Such accounts sought to inspire patriotism and restore British men's manliness as well as hierarchical gender relations.[84] The cultural motif certainly had personal value for men. On 5 July 1811 John Shaw ended a letter to his future wife by copying out a poem celebrating the constancy of wife, children and friends in an uncertain world. In one stanza a merchant on his travels remembered his family; a second featured an injured patriotic seaman: 'the water still breaths in his life's dying embers | the death wounded tar whose his colours defends | drops a tear of regret as he dying remembers | how blest was his home with wife children and friends'. The poem concluded by observing that a man's twilight years were drear if they drew 'no warmth from the smiles of wife children and friends'. It is interesting that John visualised his married life through

[82] MCormack, The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 494.
[83] Samuel Davies, *Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier*, London, 1756, 18, 38, cited in McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 495.
[84] McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender', 494–6.

the figure of the patriotic man uprooted from his family (he was himself a travelling hardware salesman) and hoped thereby to stir more palpable enthusiasm for their forthcoming union in his future wife's letters, if not heart.[85]

Periods of war in the Georgian era may have further promulgated a masculine warrior ideal. This was not necessarily in opposition to sensibility or affectionate fatherhood. American officers in the War of Independence had little difficulty reconciling being sensible and martial.[86] Yet the story of 'Benedict,' serialised in 1810, suggests that two decades later tensions were emerging between ideals of masculinity that elevated masculine valour and physical prowess and those which praised expressive affection. Benedict described his father, a 'modern Hector,' a soldier serving in India, and his subsequent marriage to Benedict's mother. Benedict made his appearance after two years of 'uninterrupted felicity.' At this point 'a new tide of happiness' flowed into his parents' breasts:

> so much was I the idol of my father's affection, that my nurse regularly followed him on the parade. This mode of conduct in a man less dignifiedly brave than my father, would have exposed him alike to censure and ridicule; but his valor was too well known, and his character too highly applauded, for any reproach of effeminacy to be cast upon it; on the contrary, this proof of parental fondness exalted him in the opinion of those above and below him.[87]

The author was trying to unite the explicitly martial model of manhood with pre-existing ideals of tender paternity by stressing that fatherhood did not effeminise or weaken martial valour. Nonetheless, the most successful use of fatherhood was to render the public figure of the martial man safer and more reliable.

Another set of imagined parents who symbolised a stable social and gender order, and stimulated feeling and patriotism were those who formed the idealised rural labouring family, typically depicted gathered around their pretty cottage. The reality of rural labouring life was grinding poverty. Culturally, however, the cottage was 'the site of an idealized private, domestic life'.[88] Numerous versions of this pastoral vision circulated in poetry, fiction, art, and poor-law and political-economy commentaries. While the cottage carries much cultural weight, it is valuable to look closely at the rural family at its centre since it was equally freighted with meaning.[89] Loving parenthood was central to many depictions, far more meaningful than the husband-wife bond. Indeed, couples do not always interact and are sometimes spatially separated, carrying out tasks at a distance from each other. A fully sentimentalised fictional form can be seen in *Juliet Grenville* (1774) as part of the narrator's despair when he thinks he cannot marry his love:

> O, that we had been born of two poor and separate cottagers, remote from the noise and tumult of life, from the idle bustle of the world, from the cloud-graspings of

[85] John Shaw to Elizabeth Wilkinson (5 July 1811), CRL, Shaw/4.
[86] Knott, 'Sensibility and the American War of Independence', 19–40.
[87] *LM*, 1810, 10.
[88] Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism,* 200, 215; Barrell, *The dark side of the landscape*, 65–77; Payne, *Toil and Plenty*, chs. 2, 32.
[89] Morris, 'The royal family and family values, 529.

> ambition, the poverty of the wealthy, and the littleness of the great! Rich in health and industry, with what delight I should have handled the plow, the spade, and the mattock, in the consciousness that I was providing the means of living for my love.[90]

Popular poetic versions abounded. The pastoral, hard-working family men and women in the popular poems of Thomas Gray and Robert Burns have already been mentioned. The connection between the rural cot and loving parents is exemplified in the poem 'The Afflicted Parents: An Elegy' published in *The British Magazine in* 1772. W.P., the poet, claimed it was founded upon a true story which occurred in 1763. In a cottage in a grove, sustained by two cows and an acre, nestled alongside a willow-lined stream, lived a happily married couple, the labourer Croydon and his wife: Pastora of the mill. In her he found nuptial bliss and an adored son.

> Twelve golden Autumns had their courses run,
> Since that which brought Pastora's arms a boy;
> No daughter born, and not another son,
> He grew the parents undivided joy.

W.P. depicted the parents' pride in their clever son who did so well at school. In him lay all their hopes, shattered by his early death. The poet described their grief and the mother's rapid demise, despite her husband's attempts 'with manly fortitude' to sooth her.[91]

The cottage door surrounded by family occupants also flourished in genre paintings in the second half of the eighteenth century, notably in Thomas Gainsborough's, George Morland's and Francis Wheatley's works, and continued to thrive in the nineteenth century.[92] This was part of the broader 'new Pastoral' emerging in the 1780s, which centred on ordered, industrious family life.[93] The rural family had its place in early Romanticism too, as in William Wordsworth's *Michael* (1800), where the cottage thrived while the family, Michael, Isabel and their son Luke were happy, but declined once Luke left for life in the city.[94] These familiar cottage scenes were important conceptual sites for writers on political economy, philanthropy, and poor law. Depictions of rural cottages were repetitive: 'snug, sheltered, productive, clean and neat, their occupants cheerful, industrious, frugal, happy and contented…led simple, fecund and affectionate lives…shunned poor relief and were socially attached to their country, social superiors and neighbours'.[95]

With its long pastoral history, this cultural motif was designed by and for an elite literate readership. It was clearly meaningful to them. Genteel women stitched cheerful rural labourers enjoying domestic idylls into their embroidery in the later eighteenth century, following pastoral trends of painting.[96] The Irish gentlewoman

[90] Brooke, *Juliet* Grenville, 159–60.
[91] *British Magazine and general review*, vol. 2, 278.
[92] e.g. see works by this title listed in Gilbey, *Morland*; Webster, *Wheatley*. For more sustained discussion see Payne, *Rustic Simplicity*.
[93] Barrell, *Dark Side of the Landscape*, 69–70.
[94] *Michael*, in *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 224–36.
[95] Lloyd, *Charity and poverty,* 262.
[96] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 111–12, 116, 143.

Dorothea Herbert evoked the delights of her family life through the imagery. She headed chapter 40 of her memoir, describing 1785, 'Rural felicity,' rhapsodising that 'We Now sat down quietly in the Domestic Way' with no company, spending time singing, reading poetry, novels, sermons, and history, Embroidering, drawing, laughing and idling.'[97] Yet the vision of cottage-door felicity was disseminated more broadly to poorer social ranks through cheap print by the early 1790s. 'Cottage-door' images were produced for plebeian urban audiences in a cheap format and in the form of 'cottage' songs, the ideals of humble cottagers achieving domestic happiness in the face of gruelling labour circulated among rural labouring society.[98] Memoirists from humble origins also took up this language to idealise their families. John Bailey began his memoir by explaining that after his parents were married his mother left service 'and retired to her mother's rural cot, in the village of *Slinfold*' where Bailey was born in 1778.[99] Writing in 1804 from Ipswich Workhouse, the poet Ann Candler described the situation of her favoured child: 'My daughter Lucy is married, and lives at Copdock in this county, and is, I believe, in the true sense of the words, the *contented happy Cottager!* Her husband is a very sober industrious man'.[100]

These imagined rural families served several ends. They partly originated in the pastoral 'fantasy of retirement from the "world" into privacy,' one dimension of the idealised refined lifestyle of the culture of sensibility whose rose-coloured visions tinted all genres.[101] In art, for example, its roots lay in earlier eighteenth-century paintings and prints which sought to stimulate feeling, such as Jean-Baptiste Greuze's oeuvre which was also popular in Britain.[102] Late-eighteenth century commentators rejected sentimental depictions of cottage lives in their more realistic polemics on the state of agriculture, poor laws and philanthropy. But even they could not entirely resist its pull.[103] The political economist Reverend John Howlett's parody of writers who cited that ever popular stanza from Gray did not escape its clutches (1787):

> The father and second son were returning from the labours of the harvest. In the language of the poet, *the busy house-wife was plying her evening's care*; and though the daughters were too big *to run and lisp her sire's return, and climb his knees the envied kiss to share*; yet, what was simple amends, heart-felt joy appeared in every face, and their wholesome supper was eaten with a relish, I ween, which the rich and the great but seldom know.[104]

As Croydon and Pastora show, the rural, devoted, hard-working father, the waiting, domestic mother, and the loving happy children symbolised the truly feeling

[97] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 115, 117, 408.
[98] Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 215; Dyck, 'Towards the "Cottage Charter"', 99.
[99] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 1.
[100] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 4.
[101] Barrell, *Dark Side of the Landscape*, 71. A central theme of the pastoral was love and marriage, Dwyer, 'Culture of love', 18.
[102] Payne, *Rustic Simplicity*, 13–16. For the 'cult of the rural' and its relationship with sensibility and 'Enlightenment' values see Barker, *Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment*, 16, and chs. 1 and 2.
[103] Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty*, 272, and ch. 7.
[104] J. Howlett, *Enclosures, a cause of Improved Agriculture*… (London, 1787), 77–9, cited in Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty*, 267.

family. For polite readers rural labouring parents embodied the ideal qualities of the sensible family without the tensions inherent in wealthier lifestyles where it was necessary to be in the 'world' to be successful but also to protect oneself from its risks through domestic retirement devoted to children and altruistic acts of benevolence.

Crucially, of course, this rural labouring family was what the higher social ranks wanted them to be: industrious, modest, quiet, neat and unthreatening. The fact that these agricultural labourers were cheerful is very significant. Ann Candler's description of her daughter captured further meanings of rural labouring parents with the watchwords happiness, sobriety, and industry. The eighteenth-century concept of cheerfulness 'helped to soften the sharp edges of hierarchy even as it strengthened them'. It demonstrated that one was happy with one's rank, contented in subordination. So when the labouring man cheerfully arrived home he did not just illustrate that work was intrinsically fulfilling, or that its pains were compensated by his domestic pleasures, he indicated that he willingly engaged in the existing social hierarchy, upon which successful society rested.[105] Thus this orderly vision was co-opted by several groups. It was integral to public debates about the problems of pauperism.[106] It was politicised in the 1790s in reaction to revolution abroad and its threat at home. For loyalists the idealised rural family was a vehicle of patriotism displaying the virtues of the labouring classes and illustrating their superior conditions to their counterparts in France.[107] This cottage scene also symbolised what needed to be protected from political upheaval.[108] A particularly well-known example is James Gillray's *The Blessings of Peace, The Curses of War*, 1795. This image illustrates how women's conduct was being endowed with national and international significance thanks to the 'heightened collective emotional investment in motherhood'.[109] Something similar was happening to the imagery of fatherhood.

Yet the motif was not simply an ideological tool to keep the poor in their place. Agricultural labourers adopted it too when they sang cottage songs. For them the domestic idyll of hard-working, loving parents spoke to their rights and obligations; it was not consolation for a hard life, but 'a demonstration that the labourers' experiences are shared rather than isolated, and that despite material restraints, there remain outlets for human agency in the quest for happiness'.[110]

Scenes of rustic cottage life in nineteenth-century British art continued to showcase the virtues of the rural poor and by extension the whole nation, typically through their idealised parent-child bonds, centred round an affectionate father.[111] Still, if the rural labouring family was similar in form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries its meaning changed according to political, social and economic

[105] Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 68–9.
[106] Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty*, ch. 7.
[107] Rural subjects exhibited at the Royal Academy increased from 1792, perhaps due to their nationalistic associations. Barrell, *Dark Side of the Lancscape*, 20–1.
[108] Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 211–15, and ch. 5.
[109] Jordonova, *Nature Displayed*, 28–9, 39; Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 231–2.
[110] Dyck, 'Towards the "Cottage Charter"', 100.
[111] Payne, *Rustic simplicity*, 5, 19.

conditions. In radical depictions in the 1790s, for instance, the peaceful cottage scenes were threatened by the rich, or by inequitable laws.[112] The depictions of healthy rural children in the nineteenth century can be set against the backdrop of concerns about working conditions for children in mines and factories.[113] Imagined parents need to be re-contextualised too. Increasing concerns about the numbers of the poor and their cost after 1800 did not meant that the rural labouring family lost its imaginative appeal, but it was informed by different issues and debates. Malthusianism advocated celibacy for those too poor to support a family following marriage. Thus, the Radical William Cobbett's rural labouring family was deliberately positioned in opposition to the political economists' demands that the poor abstain from marriage. His labouring man deserved to be married. He returned home to his cottage and the blessings of his little children running out to meet him after hard work; on Sundays he helped to feed his children and played with them; he took them all to church. Indeed he was a model for other social ranks.[114] Though Cobbett's rural labouring fathers were self-sufficient, it was a very different model of male independence to that envisaged by the political economists. Their version signified 'those moral qualities that induced the male labourer to support himself and his dependents while remaining socially submissive and available for social labour'.[115] Cobbett's independent husbands and fathers were shorn of the unmanly subordinate connotations of this position.

By the time William Howitt depicted cottagers in 1838 in his *The Rural Life of England*, however, they were no longer characters to emulate, virtuous ideals of a simpler purer life, but an 'other'. While there is some continuity in seeing cottagers at their fireside, the father with his children at his knees, their lives were portrayed as very different from the writers' and his readers.[116] His chapter on cottage life focused upon the need for them to be worthy and good, rather than earlier assumptions that just by being cottagers they were virtuous. Howitt set conditions: *if* the father was sober and industrious and gave his earnings to his wife, then, and only then, would they possess laudable 'domestic affections and their family ties'.[117] Nevertheless, the moral and social code apparent in cottage songs retained their power to express farm workers' culture throughout the nineteenth century.[118]

RELIGIOUS AND BENEVOLENT BONDS

In the long eighteenth century social relationships were understood to operate through reciprocal obligations and duties rooted in Christian values and benevolent acts. These bonds were often visualised through metaphors and depictions of parenthood, parenting or parent-child relationships. The term 'nursing' fathers

[112] Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 221–3. [113] Payne, *Rustic Simplicity*, 19–20.
[114] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 236. For his 'cottage charter' see Howkins and Dyck, 'Popular Ballads', 26–8, 32.
[115] Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty*, 277, 278–83.
[116] Howitt, 'Cottage Life', *The Rural Life of England*, vol. 2, ch. 1, 129.
[117] ibid, 128, 131. [118] Dyck, 'Popular Ballads', 26–8, 32.

and mothers was one such.[119] The phrase originates in two key scriptural passages: the Book of Isaiah 49:23, 'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me,'[120] and the Book of Numbers 11:12 where Moses asked God: 'Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers'.[121]

The metaphor was used for a number of ends in the Georgian period, for, as Benjamin Atkinson observed in 1736, the nursing father/ mother 'is a metaphorical Expression, and signifieth the most tender Care, and parental Affection, which Parents commonly have for their Offspring, especially during their Infancy and Childhood'. He went on to show that the king was thus a nursing father to the Church.[122] The Baptist John Ryland's sermon, *The duty of ministers to be nursing fathers to the church*, published in 1797, listed the characteristics required by ministers in order to qualify as nursing fathers to their congregations, all of which paralleled those of fathers more generally, including: knowledge, judgement, wisdom, prudence, diligence, fidelity, and patience.[123] As such, the metaphor conveyed benign paternal government, protection, and instruction.

Indeed, it had a long tradition of being deployed to invoke the legitimacy of patriarchal power.[124] In early-modern royal iconography and political ideology it explained why subjects should acquiesce to a monarch's rule.[125] Both James I and Charles I declared themselves 'nursing' fathers and Anglican sermons described Stuart and Hanoverian monarchs thus.[126] It continued to be useful at the end of eighteenth century for loyalists. In a sermon published in 1792, Cornelius Bayley defended George III's divine right to rule as 'a nursing father given' by God.[127] The Authoress of *The Rights of Monarchy*, a conservative poem of 1792, harnessed ideas that tender paternity secured children's obedience by describing George as a nursing father who ruled with 'tenderness and mercy' and received in return duty and submission.[128] The nursing father's benign authority was evoked in literature.

[119] Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding*, ch. 5.

[120] This is when the nation of Israel is in exile in Babylon and is part of the prophecy of a king who will free the Israelites and the delivery of God's people from their sins by Messiah.

[121] This is Moses complaining about the burden of leading his people through the desert to the Promised Land

[122] Atkinson, *Good princes nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church*, 11.

[123] Ryland, *duty of ministers to be nursing fathers to the church,* 22, 28–9, 39.

[124] Spiller, 'The Counsel of Fulke Greville: Transforming the Jacobean "nourish father"', 433–54.

[125] Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society*, 303–5 and ch. 12.

[126] e.g. James I's *Basilikon Doron* (first written in 1599) and *Trew Lawe of Free Monarchies* cited in Spiller, 'Transforming the Jacobean "nourish father"', 438; Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding*, 50. George Frederic Handel's 'My Heart is Inditing' part of the Coronation Anthem composed for the coronation of King George II and Queen Caroline and first performed 11 October 1727 in Westminster Abbey at the coronation of the Queen also uses the phrase. My thanks to Matthew McCormack for drawing this to my attention.

[127] Bayley, *Religion and loyalty inseparable*, 23. For the nursing father described as a first divinely instituted form of government see *Authoress of Duke and No Duke, 'The rights of monarchy, a poem'*, 9.

[128] *Authoress of Duke and No Duke*, 8–9.

It was turned to use by the protagonist of Thomas Amory's novel *The Life of John Buncle*, (1766) to justify his elopement with Agnes Dunk by explaining that she no longer owed obedience to her father because he had become her oppressor. According to Buncle: 'The parent, like the king, must be a nursing father, a rational humane sovereign, and so long all service and obedience are due. But if, like the prince, he becomes a tyrant, . . . [this] give[s] her a right to change her situation, and better her condition.'[129] The qualities of the nursing father also served to ennoble labouring men. In Wordsworth's *Michael* the motif signified the dignity and capacity of feeling of a simple man. This was demonstrated by Michael's depth of love and care for his son 'while he was a babe in arms, | Had done him female service, not alone | For dalliance and delight, as is the use | of Fathers, but with patient mind enforced | to acts of tenderness; and he had rocked |his cradle with a woman's gentle hand.'[130] Cobbett used the idea to show that labouring men were often superior to men in other ranks. For proof: 'Let him observe the husband, who has toiled all the week like a horse, nursing the baby, while the wife is preparing the bit of dinner'.[131]

The metaphor 'nursing' father and mother also drew on the conceptualisation of parents as protectors. The monarch or magistrate as nursing father protected the true church and suppressed false religions.[132] In a pluralistic religious environment following the 1689 Toleration Act, nursing fathers were protectors of the Christian faith without preference for one denomination above the rest.[133] Paternal protection extended beyond the Church. The Reverend Richard Munn's riposte to republican writings, published in 1793, *The loyal subject, or monarchy defended*, described George III as a nursing father 'to the Nation; Protecting the Liberties, and tolerating the Opinions of all men'.[134] By the end of the century nursing parents were harnessed to the mission to promote the Protestant Church globally by disseminating the Bible. The essay 'On the excellence of Christianity in improving the minds and polishing the manners of men', published in *The Peeper* (1798), concluded that this would fulfil the prophecy that Kings and Queens would be the nursing fathers and mothers of Christianity.[135] The instructive capacities of loving parents were also conveyed through the metaphor. The gospels were the nursing father and mother of every 'public and private virtue', according to John Hardy, the President of the Leeds Auxiliary Bible Society.[136]

The religious roots of the mild, tender father are clearly evident in the 'nursing' father who communicated the duties of ministers for several denominations including Anglicans, Quakers and Baptists. John Fleetwood's *The Christian Dictionary*

[129] Amory, *Life of John Buncle*, 411.
[130] *Michael*, in *Wordsworth: The Major Works,* 228.
[131] This is a response to Malthus. Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 35.
[132] Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding*, 51.
[133] For its use in revolutionary America see Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding*, 58, 60–1. For a British example see Atkinson, *Good princes nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church*, 1.
[134] Munn, *The loyal subject or monarchy defended*, 12. For the role of sensibility in the language of loyalist political argument in the 1790s see Barrell, 'Sad Stories: Louis XVI, George III'.
[135] *The Peeper; a collection of essays*, 232.
[136] *The Weekly Entertainer,* vol. 52, 194.

(1775) listed the clergyman under the category of 'nurse,' since he was 'Nurse to the people under his care'.[137] Published Quaker testimonies about deceased ministers eulogised them as nursing fathers who had aided individuals on their path towards the Quaker faith. It was the mildness of the men's disposition that was noted. For example, Evan Bevan, clerk of the Friends Meeting in Pontimoyle, Monmouthshire, who died in 1746, aged 67, 'was a tender nursing Father in *Israel*; very condescending and forbearing with those who, by undue Measures, had justly deserved the Censures of the Church'.[138] Though the image was more personalised in this use, the 'public' and 'personal' role of the father were distinguished. So, for example, following his death in 1792, John Gough was described as 'experienced to be as a nursing father to the children of the family'. This was the Quaker family in its broadest sense; the next sentence went on to consider him 'in the more contracted circle of private life' where he ministered tenderly to neighbours and friends.[139]

Over the course of the eighteenth century the term nursing fathers and mothers was applied more generally. It portrayed the protection offered by new forms of institutional care. A charity sermon preached for the London Foundling Hospital in 1770 described a relieved mother handing over her infant into 'the arms of nursing fathers and nursing mothers more able to protect it than its own!'[140] 'Nursing' was attenuated to mean support. Thus, in 1791, a commentator explained that the vogue for 'private plays' was 'a fashion which hath kings and princes for its nursing fathers and queens and princesses for its nursing mothers'. Here the royal family was condemned for supporting their own amusement when they should be facilitating piety and national good.[141] The nursing father had always been affectionate: a man who nurtured his infant in his bosom, but the phrase seems have been used more often as an increasingly straightforward description of a tender, emotionally-charged and practically engaged fatherhood from the later eighteenth century. Men described themselves as nursing fathers, shorn of its political and religious patriarchal meanings, to mean they literally nursed their children (see chapter five). This illustrates the powerful impact of the new, emotionally expressive *style* of fathering that took hold in the second half of the eighteenth century; although it was itself waning during the 1830s.[142]

The trope of benevolence, which colonised many pages of print culture and engravings, was a further way by which social relationships were imagined through parenting.[143] Benevolence was rooted in religious practices, where acts to relieve distress were applauded for demonstrating Christian virtue and kindness. To be

[137] Entry for 'Nurse', Fleetwood, *Christian's dictionary,* Unpaginated.
[138] *A collection of testimonies*, 156. Also see Field, *Piety Promoted, in a collection of dying sayings*, 7.
[139] Gough, *A history of the people called Quakers*, 570.
[140] Robert Bromley, *A Sermon preached in the Chapel of the Hosptial for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children* (1770), cited in Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, 193.
[141] *The Observer: being a collection of moral, literary and familiar essays*, vol. 4, 26.
[142] Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 87–8.
[143] Lloyd, 'Pleasing spectacles and elegant dinners: conviviality, benevolence, and charity', 23–57; Rodgers, 'Sensibility, sympathy, benevolence', 147–51. For *Le Trait de bienfaisance*, see Barker, *Greuze and the painting of sentiment*, ch. 7.

benevolent was also a sign of sensibility.[144] Indeed, the sentimental project rested on the twin beliefs that humanity possessed the basic desire to act benevolently and that sympathy was one of its most powerful sentiments. Hence a feeling, sincere heart was an essential attribute for practising effective philanthropy.[145] Benevolence was thus part of sensibility's attempt to unite the entire human species in virtue.[146]

Those families who issued benevolence sat at the pinnacle of idealised family behaviour. The Bilson family in the mid-century novel *The Countess of Dellwyn*, for example, were revealed as virtuous and sensible through their benevolent acts. Sir Harry proved himself their commendable prospective son-in-law for the same reason.[147] With the clue in their surname, Mrs Worthy and her daughter demonstrated the value of benevolence in the 'moral tale', 'Benevolence rewarded', (*Lady's Magazine*, 1784 and 1785). Harriot Worthy set in motion the narrative and her future good fortune at ten years old by charitably giving the money intended to buy her mother a gift to a young distressed mother of new-born twins. The author declared the tale's value was to show young readers that benevolence, gratitude and filial piety were virtues that adorned the heart.[148] In 'Charles and Lady Worthy. A family piece by Mrs Chapone', in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1784, another set of Worthys lived up to their name by achieving an appropriate balance between the 'world' and their domestic pursuits. They did so by being excellent parents and spouses, and by devoting one day a week to charitable works.[149] This was not just a product of fiction. Life-writers praised benevolent parents and substitute parents. Thus at mid-century Simon Mason remembered his father as a scholar, a sober, honest, religious man, a loving husband and tender father, and benevolent to paupers; all the characteristics of admirable manhood.[150] Those on the receiving end of benevolence were also typically imagined as deserving parents and children.[151] The rural industrious family made poor from circumstances and thus worthy of benevolence was perhaps one of its more common representations.[152]

Why did parents and children play such a central part in images of giving and receiving benevolence? The answer is that they were 'good to think with' and 'to feel with' in the culture of sensibility. For those with the means to issue charity, they were a reminder of one's own status in the eye of the Creator, and of the priority to seek the welfare and happiness of others.[153] As recipients of benevolence,

[144] Lloyd, 'Pleasing spectacles and elegant dinners', 31.
[145] Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment*, 83.
[146] Barker, *Greuze and the Painting of Sentiment*, 11; Lloyd, 'Pleasing spectacles and elegant dinners', 31.
[147] Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, 89.
[148] *LM*, 1784, 402–4; and 1785, 70.
[149] *LM*, 1784, 636–7. Also reprinted in children's literature, e.g. *The Happy Family, or, Winter evenings' employment*, 34–90.
[150] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 12. See also Gifford on his patron, *Baviad and* Maeviad, p. xxi.
[151] Aged widows and orphaned children appeared too.
[152] e.g. Wheatley, *Rustic Benevolence*, 1797; *The Benevolent Cottager*. Webster, *Wheatley*, 67, 182. For other examples see Steward, *The New Child*, ch. 6.
[153] Steedman, *Master and Servant*, 190–1.

parents and children stimulated the sympathetic identification required for feeling and benevolent behaviour.[154] The novelist Sarah Fielding, for example, wrote for an audience whose 'truly softened Heart hath a Tear ready for every human Misfortune which is represented to his Imagination by Reading'.[155] Similarly, the English Cottage genre of painting in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries depicted rural poverty in order to move viewers to sympathy and therefore generosity towards fellow humans.[156] A fictional 'Scene of distress', typically a family, was an example to readers of the virtues derived from benevolent acts and taught sensibility by stirring feeling through exposing the onlooker to pain.[157]

The ability to identify and react to distress was an ideal characteristic of both sexes, though the need had to be genuine and the recipient deserving.[158] Essentially, willingness to relieve 'the Distress of a Family' was a quality, privately or publicly performed, that demonstrated personal merit.[159] Thus benevolence was a vital part of the public discourse of parenting because parents were to disseminate this priceless badge of piety, humanity, compassion, sympathy and sensibility to offspring. As James Nelson informed the parents who read his guide: 'Nothing so humanizes the Soul, nothing so strongly proves the Man, as sympathizing with, and relieving the Distresses of our Fellow Creatures.' As such, it was the duty of parents never to let children be rude to the lowest or make fun of rags or misfortune. They should enable children 'to give to the needy with their own hands'.[160] Two verses and one image were devoted to this in the print 'My Father' (1819). After the fourth vignette the verse asked: 'Who bade me never shut the door, | To shun the sorrows of the poor | Or slight the woes, my power cou'd cure, | My Father.' In the final vignette the boy hands over a coin to a black man: 'Whose eye the glistening tear betray'd, | Seeing his Boy was not afraid, | To give a poor black Man his aid? | My Father' (see figure 16). Here was another area in which exemplary parents must display the correct form of feeling. The essay 'The duty of parents to children' informed them: 'accustom only your children to feel for distress and misery, to abhor insensibility and cruelty, you will soon fashion their young minds to sympathy and kindness; to practise them in giving and relieving, let your alms to the indigent pass through their hands'.[161] This was a powerful rhetoric. Indeed there are clues that the poor themselves tapped into the cultural images of needy families in seeking informal and formal aid. In doing so they hinted that as recipients able to make such appeals they were themselves sensible, thereby offering the benevolent the chance to be virtuous and gain status.

[154] Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, 16–17.
[155] Fielding, *Countess of Delwynn*, p, xi.
[156] Payne, *Rustic Simplicity*, 17–18, 22.
[157] Barker-Benfield, *Cult of Sensibility*, 21. For the close connection between feeling and benevolence see the poem 'To Sensibility' published in *LM*, 1810, 422; and Anon, *Philanthropy: a poem*, 1781, 8.
[158] Zunshine, 'Caught unawares by a benefactor', 37–65.
[159] Benevolence was simultaneously functional and performative. Lloyd, 'Pleasing spectacles and elegant dinners', 32.
[160] Nelson, *essay on the government of children*, 202.
[161] A. M. *Moral essays,* 77.

CONCLUSION

The components of parenthood were so well known that they made its metaphorical use invaluable and were adaptable to changing conditions. This was no cultural mirage. Parental metaphors had enormous power. The regular evocation of George III as a tender father who deserved sympathy thanks to his illnesses, for instance, helped render English republicans unable to contemplate his execution as an initial step towards establishing a British republic.[162] British colonial activities from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries were shaped by notions of imperial fatherhood that had profound and often disastrous implications for indigenous peoples as well as British children and youths.[163] The ideals also had the clout to shape the way people thought about their own parents and themselves. Their role in forming familial and personal identities and subjectivities is the concern of the next two chapters.

[162] Barrell, 'Sad Stories: Louis XVI, George III', 93. For the opposite effect, where identifying the monarch with the father allowed the contemplation of his death, see Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, ch. 2.

[163] Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, 231–8.

5

Family Identity: Parentage, Parents and Being Parented

> I can look neither to the past nor to the future without connecting everything with him, and the present is all, all him.[1]

Parents shaped their offsprings' lives and identities from birth to death and beyond, as Sydney Morgan's grieving words about her father suggest.[2] It was in the later eighteenth century that memories of childhood were included in autobiographical writing as a key to unlocking personal identity. Yet these accounts of childhood were inseparable from descriptions of parentage and parents.[3] Thomas Holcroft (1745–1809), writing towards the end of his life, saw his childhood as the key to himself:

> I know nothing that tends so much as the anecdotes of childhood, when faithfully recorded, to guide the philosopher through that very abstruse but important labyrinth, the gradations that lead to the full stature, peculiar form, temperament, character, and qualities of the man. I am therefore anxious to recount all those concerning myself, which I suppose may conduce to this purpose.

Still, he moved straight on to a memory of his father.[4] Life-writers remembered and told stories about their fore-parents and parents time and again in their memoirs and the similarity in people's attitudes from humble to elite origins is striking. Telling these stories cultivated a sense of familial belonging because they strengthened 'the bond between generations and attachment to a common past'.[5] For example Elizabeth Johnson explained that she left her grandson the prayer-book she taught him from to remember her and her father, his great-grandfather. Such mnemonics looked to the future as well as the past, for she hoped that if he had children 'he may say, "This was your great-grandmother's."'[6] Mary Anne

[1] Sydney Morgan in a letter to her brother-in-law, following her father's death in 1812. Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, 13.

[2] Their influence upon their children's political acculturation is considered in Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, ch. 3.

[3] Schlumbohm, 'Constructing individuality', 37–41; Burnett, *Destiny obscure: autobiographies*, 219.

[4] Holcroft, *Memoirs*, 17–18.

[5] Baggerman, 'Autobiography and Family memory in the Nineteenth Century', 164. For psychological scholarship on this process see Fivush, 'Remembering and reminiscing'.

[6] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 124–5.

Schimmenlpennick's memoir fondly recalled her beloved grandfather in the 1780s through the little silver whistle he would blow on their walks beside a lake, calling to him water fowl to feed. Sixty-six years later, she said, she still wore it 'in remembrance of him'.[7] Reporting family narratives and memories gave the past a place in the writers' and readers' presents, because life stories 'are not only remembered fragments of a real past, not only clues to collective consciousness and personal identity, but also a form of the past still active in the present: signposts'.[8] Remembering parentage, parents, and being parented raised important 'signposts' to people's familial and personal identities.

MEMORIES AND PARENTS

Family, memory and self-knowledge were inextricably linked in life writings.[9] Thomas Wright (1736–1797), a relatively humble West Yorkshire man, began his memoir in 1795 by complaining that human knowledge was limited. He berated people for knowing so little about their own families; very few 'able to trace back their descent beyond their grandfathers; and, indeed, there appears little desire in general to know either from whom or from whence it is we spring'. For Wright this was paradoxical, since

> the desire of remembering those, and being remembered by those, we most esteem on earth, seems congenial to the human heart: -
>
> For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd?
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?
> On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
> Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
> E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
> E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.[10]

Wright inserted these passages from Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) without citation, confident readers would recognise them. He also expected them to share the human urge to cast a regretful look back at life, and to be remembered after death by a loved one. He was probably correct in this assumption because Gray's phrase held considerable meaning for the literate. Having said farewell to her childhood at the end of book two, Dorothea Herbert began the third volume of her recollections at the point of her adulthood, in 1786, with a chapter headed: 'For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey | This pleasing anxious

[7] Hankin, *Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpennick*, 49.
[8] Thompson, 'Family myth', 15, 36; Hodgkin and Radstone, *Contested Pasts: the politics of memory*, 14.
[9] For the creation of the Burney family identity through parenting and step-parenting see Francus, 'Stepmommy Dearest?'.
[10] Wright, *Autobiography*, 1–2.

Being e'er resign'd', the two lines preceding that yearning backward look.[11] In 1820 Samuel Courtauld reflected in a letter to his younger sister that although he had left behind the romantic visions of his younger days, 'I cannot avoid casting back upon it many-a "longing, lingering look"—before I enter on the common, worldly, track of life that now lies before me'.[12] The lines also served as a motif for the loss of a parent, perhaps in itself indicative of the end of youth.[13] In the early 1840s, Benjamin Haydon (1786–1846) recounted his mother's death in 1807. After her funeral, he entered the vault where her coffin was placed and there mused 'on every action of her hard devoted life', prayed, 'and rose prepared for the battle of life! With a last, lingering look, I left the vault, and returned to our broken home.'[14]

This impulse to remember and to be remembered by loved ones was a priority in this society. It cast its somewhat funereal shadow over depictions of parenting (see figure 15 and 17). It drove life writings in which writers preserved generations through acts of memory. Those with the time and means collected family archives. In some cases offspring gathered documents to constitute their parents' 'autobiography', 'life', or 'memoir'. For example *The Life of Mary Dudley* was assembled by her daughter Elizabeth in the 1820s, with the fitting subtitle, 'She "being dead yet speaketh"' (Heb.xi.4). These writings were palimpsests of parental memories, gathering up the composer's and the subject's recollections of their parents. In many cases life-writers put pen to paper for family members.[15] Thomas Wright's original title was, for example, 'Memoirs of Thomas Wright and his Family, interspersed with Remarks and Moral Reflections on Occurring Circumstances, &c, written by Himself for the Information, Instruction, and Amusement of his Children, 1797'.[16]

In many ways, autobiographies are thus disseminators of collective familial memory, for adults memories of their infancy, forebearers, and, sometimes, grandparents, record what parents and siblings told them.[17] Depending on the longevity of grandparents, accounts of parentage were usually a mix of individual and collective memory. Thomas Wright confessed:

> I could wish to give a more particular account of my ancestors that I am able, they all having died while I was very young; and I, like most of my neighbours, having received nothing but verbal accounts concerning them. However, I will put down all that has come to my knowledge concerning them, and be more particular when I come to myself and the affairs of my own more immediate family.[18]

Memoirists occasionally acknowledged this. In 1810, John Bailey said he was indebted to his aged mother 'for every particular of my life, until my remembrance became strong'.[19] William Hutton (1723–1815), writing in the late 1790s, described

[11] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 143.
[12] Sam to Sophia (11 March 1820), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 692.
[13] Wright and Herbert both used another stanza of the Elegy to describe the death of a son and a father respectively. See chapter 1.
[14] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 58.
[15] See Bailey, 'The "after-life" of parenting', 249–70.
[16] Wright, *Autobiography*, pp. vii; xxix.
[17] Baggerman, 'Autobiography and Family memory,' 164.
[18] Wright, *Autobiography*, 2.
[19] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 2.

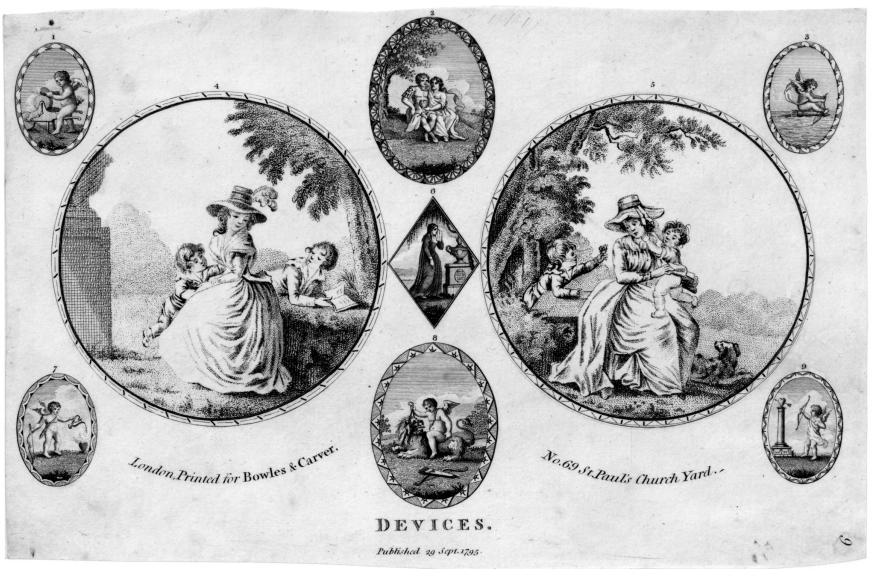

Fig. 15. *Devices* (1795). The tender mothers at the heart of this pretty scene remind viewers of the cultural trope of children as pledges of marital love, in the surrounding cupids and courting couple, but also of the transience of these relationships through death in the central picture of a mourning woman.

swallowing a brass pendant as an infant in the 1720s, adding: 'This incident I do not remember, but have heard my mother repeat it'. The collective nature of his early memories did not, however, undermine his objective to recount the story of himself: 'If I pretend to write from memory, how can I pretend to write things which happened near the time of my birth? Yet this must be granted me. Till the child can walk, he is allowed the hand of another. Whether I tell of myself, or another tells for me, truth shall never quit the page.'[20]

The very process of remembering times long distant was often inextricably linked with parents. The extraordinarily long-lived William Hutton (b. 1723) got the chance to reflect on the matter, observing in 1806:

> The efforts of memory are surprising. I can remember my mother dandling me on the knee, feeding me with the infant spoon, and nursing me in the arms. I also remember the form and colour of my dress. But although eighty-two years have passed by, yet that space of time seems amazingly short; the reason is obvious, memory only brings the two points of *then* and *now* into view, and skips over every incident between the two. But when we look forward, if but for *one* year, the time appears long, because we foresee an infinite number of incidents between the two points.[21]

The power of memories of childhood and parents did not require the patina and nostalgia of decades of distance, as Sydney Morgan's letter to her father in 1796

[20] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 1, 2–3. [21] ibid, 269.

shows. Informing him that she had been given John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* to read, she quipped that she was going to discard it, till some anecdotes about children caught her attention 'and this set me thinking upon what I could longest remember, and I think it was the smell of mignionette, for I can remember when I first smelled it, and the pleasure it gave me, and above all, your singing "Drimindu," the Black Cow, which always made me cry'.[22] Such associations between parents, memory, emotion, and self reveal much about people's attitudes towards family and their subjectivity.

PARENTAGE AND PARENTAL QUALITIES

Recounting parentage and describing parental qualities helped individuals formulate their familial and personal identities in terms of social status, moral value and personal worth.[23] It was common practice to devote the opening sections of a memoir to an account of parents, grandparents, and, occasionally, great-grandparents, with a handful travelling even further back in time. William Hutton was unusual in devoting several pages to the history of his parentage in a history of his family, penned in 1798; so detailed, perhaps, because of his writing career as a historian. This may also explain the idiosyncratic nature of his summing up of his ancestors: 'They have been as steady in their love of peace, and of pudding; remarkable for memory; not much given to receive, keep, or pay money; often sensible, always modest. The males inactive, the females distinguished for capacity'. He saw himself in them, since he partly defined himself by his prodigious memory.[24] Writers did not give an equally full account of all branches of their family tree, possibly because family memories favoured particular ancestors and told more stories about them.[25] Recounting inherited memories had several functions. Wright thought his account would 'prove a leisure hour's useful amusement to some branch of my family into whose hands it may fall after I am gone'.[26] According to Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), knowing their 'pedigree' would assist his children in their passage through life and assuage their curiosity.[27]

Describing parentage across two or more generations introduced the writer's family of origin and advertised his or her familial and personal social status and merit. This is hardly unexpected where writers of titled, landed or professional status were concerned. Catharine Cappe (1744–1821) recalled her maternal grandmother's anecdotes of an uncle who played a central role in the Civil War and later conducted

[22] Sydney's letter was posthumously published in her memoir written and collated at the end of her life, in the mid-nineteenth century, Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, 126.

[23] For aristocratic families use of portraits to place themselves within a family line see Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 100–2, 109–14, and ch. 5. For memories of poor parents relating to paternal breadwinning capacities, discipline, and affection, and maternal affection and sacrifice see Humphries, *Childhood and Child labour*, ch. 5. For memories of parents in the construction of political identities see Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, 104–9.

[24] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 336.

[25] Gillis, *World of their own making*, 14. For the ways family histories are shaped by descendants see Evans, 'Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History'.

[26] Wright, *Autobiography*, 3. [27] Bewick, *Memoir*, 1.

King William to the kingdom. Possessing several high-status ancestors, her grandmother was a fund of tales from the exemplary behaviour of Queen Mary, to the fortitude of Lady Rachael Russell, and the licentiousness and tyranny of Charles II and James II. By recounting these familial memories, Catharine not only revealed her family's elevated status, but linked it into British national history. Cornelia Knight (1757–1837) selected paternal and maternal ancestors active in the Civil War for the same reasons, as well as taking pride in a father who served king and country in the navy for half a century.[28]

Individuals born into lower-ranking families were not that different, though their biographies of parentage were often tales of deteriorating social status. The artist James Northcote (1746–1831), son of a watchmaker, traced his family from the Norman Conquest, singling out nationally important figures, such as his great-great-grandfather who was a Mayor of Plymouth and supported Parliament in 1658. William Hutton recorded that his ancestor fought on parliament's side and was one of the detachment sent to search for Charles II when famously hiding in the oak at Boscobel. Likewise, Hannah Robertson's title of her memoir (1724-c1800) stressed that she was the illegitimate granddaughter of Charles II. Forming the narrative backbone of her autobiography was the struggle of her social decline following her father's death when she was six.[29] In a characteristically colourful version Benjamin Haydon summarised the family qualities he inherited:

> Both by my father's and mother's side I am well descended and connected; the families always residing on their own landed property. The only estate, however at present remaining to us, is a small one near Ide, Exeter. Such are the consequences of folly, extravagance, and lawsuits. My ancestors were loyal public-spirited men, and my father inherited their spirit. He loved his Church and King, believed England to be the only great country in the world, swore Napoleon won all his battles by bribery, did not believe that there was poet, painter, musician, soldier, sailor, general, or statesman out of England; and at any time would have knocked down any man who dared to disbelieve him, or been burnt in Smithfield for the glory of his principles.[30]

Such patriotism was something Haydon prided in himself, determined to triumph over slight talent to forge his career as a history painter. Even those whose knowledge of fore-parents was sketchy still recorded former glories. William Gifford (1756–1826) observed that his family must once have been fairly high status since his great-grandfather had owned 'considerable property' and hunted with hounds.[31]

This eagerness to display former family wealth or status, even when fairly remote and unclear, suggests that it added value to the writer's sense of personal identity. At least culturally, acknowledging kinship with distant relatives was a marker of worth. With living kin, this was represented by hospitality. Though it would eventually cause him problems by nibbling away at his wealth, the Vicar of Wakefield boasted

[28] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 39–40; Knight, *Autobiography*, 1–4.

[29] Northcote, *Life of the Painter*, 16–22, 30–35; Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 338; Robertson, *Life of Mrs Robertson*, 3–4. Also see Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 9–11.

[30] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 2–3.

[31] Gifford, *Baviad and* Maeviad, pp. v–vii.

that he and his wife were hospitable to their cousins 'even to the fortieth remove,' insisting that, 'as they were the same "flesh and blood," they should sit with us at the same table.' This meant, he pointed out, that though not rich, they had 'very happy, friends about us'.[32] Parentage also conveyed profound social meaning, particularly when local memory was long reaching. The diarist John Marsh recorded objections to his decision to allow the Organist Music Master, Mr Day, to subscribe to assemblies held in Romsey, Kent, in the winter of 1770–1. Despite Day's profession, fashionable dress and good behaviour, he was remembered to be a shoemaker's son and therefore deemed socially unacceptable.[33] The other side of the coin was that familial distinctions offset present lacks. Thomas Wright's record of his ancestry established that his family had been creditworthy in the past; for example his paternal grandfather 'lived and died with credit and esteem amongst his neighbours.' Such solid antecedents probably helped him boost his personal merit in a life of self-confessed failure to achieve business success and credit.[34] Wright's memoir also inveighed against his first wife's parents who were, he claimed, contemptuous and dismissive of his merit and status. By establishing his respectable parentage, and his in-laws' flaws, he could therefore go some way to redress the balance. Ironically, despite pages and pages criticising his in-laws, he included their lineage in his memoir. Perhaps he did so to provide his offspring from his first marriage with essential information about their maternal grandparents. Yet this memoir structure also seems to reveal his perception that his natal family and his consanguineal family both played their part in defining him.

In short, therefore, a crucial reason for recounting the status and worth of parentage was its reflected lustre for descendents.[35] It extended to admirable parental qualities. Faith Gray (nee Hopwood) described her parents in her diary:

> My Father[']s attention to the worship of God impressed me with its importance and the great care he took to impress his children with a love of truth was a blessing to us: My mother at that time was so much engaged with the nursing of the young ones, with business, and Family cares, that her attention was chiefly directed to external matters and we were more particularly left to my Father in other respects.

Not only does this confirm that fathers' and mothers' roles in their children's lives were rarely gendered in any straightforward way: a mother simultaneously 'nursing' and involved in 'external matters'; a father who not only took charge of his older offspring's religious instruction, but other aspects of their care too. It also laid out the Hopwood family's collective virtues. When her mother died in 1787 she wrote at greater length about her:

> My mother[']s love of peace was uncommon, and she was willing to bear any fatigue, or to sacrifice any comfort for the good of her Family—She loved, and provided order, and

[32] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 3.
[33] Berry, 'Sense and singularity: the social experiences of John Marsh and Thomas Stutterd', 183.
[34] Wright, *Autobiography,* 4.
[35] James Lackington was the only memoirist to reject this assumption about parentage. Nevertheless, he still went on to discuss his parents and their effect upon his life and identity. Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years of the life*, 37–8.

> cheerful, and desirous to look on the best side of things. She rose early—and went late to Bed—and from morning to night, was employed in every thing that was useful—Nursing—watching over—or working for her children—looking to the ways of her Household or when requisite, whilst my Uncle was in the Business assisting in it—and after he left the partnership, taking so material a part in the conduct of it, as to be its chief support.

Essentially, her parents' piety, hard work both in personal and public spheres, and self-sacrifice forged her sense of familial identity.[36] They also helped her define herself by similar qualities. These motivations help explain individuals' idealisations of parents. No doubt, such mini hagiographies let them convey the depth of their feeling for their parent, as well as didactically encouraging readers to behave equally well. But, more than that, an excellent parent personified the worth of the writer's family. Catherine Courtauld wrote to her sister in 1816:

> Oh how great a blessing is it to all of us that our dearest father possesses such a mind, so much noble independence, so much fortitude, so much of that often boasted—yet most rare—quality, true resignation. Oh my dear girl, we can never be sufficiently grateful for such a father. I have seen so much of the distress which has arisen to all parts of this family from a want of some of these qualities.[37]

In her view, a father's good qualities were a blessing to his whole family.

Consequently, parentage was meaningful even to individuals without inherited property and estates. People lacking illustrious forefathers instead described predecessors in terms of credit, honesty and industry. Elizabeth Ashbridge (1713–1755), writing around 1745, had 'honest parents'; John Allen's (1737–1810) 'were honest labouring people'. Francis Place (1771–1854) who began his memoir around 1824 praised his 'laborious and industrious' mother and John Bailey, a preacher born in 1778 and writing in 1810, was born 'of poor but industrious parents'.[38] Such personal qualities should not be dismissed as generic praise of scant personal meaning. On 22 July 1792 Samuel Northcote wrote to his older brother James Northcote following their father's death. He explained that he had been thinking about 'the continual distinction which the old Mr Tolcher used to make of my Father's character - you must remember than whenever he apply'd any distinction at all to this purpose, it was constantly that of the epithet "Honest"!' Samuel reflected that at the time he dismissed this as a 'slight complement if any at all', akin to a description of his appearance. Yet, he now realised that Mr Tolcher did this 'from a truly respectful feeling of my Father's real character and he well knew the distinction to be most rare and honourable'.[39] The moral authority associated with honesty and industry was profoundly significant for those from the labouring ranks too. Early modern church court deponents' responses to the question of their worth reveals

[36] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a. The version in the archive was later copied into one place by her husband.

[37] Catherine Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld (7 March 1816), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 189.

[38] Ashbridge, *Quaker Grey,* 9; Allen, *The Life of Mr John Allen*, 437; Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 1, 437; Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 98; Ashford, *Life of a Licensed Victualler's Daughter*, 8.

[39] Northcote, *Life of the Painter*, pagination unclear, reel 0518.

the extent to which the labouring poor were acutely aware of the association between poverty and dishonesty. Thus, while admitting they were worth little, witnesses 'offset the language of poverty with a counterclaim to honesty', which they associated with industry and efforts to avoid dependence.[40]

Recounting familial memories of parentage and individual memories of parents also demonstrated writers' personalities. This was a feature of fiction. In 'The Fleet Prison; or, a cure for extravagance; and a convincing proof of the fallacy of fashionable friendship', published in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1810, the individual's true worth was indicated by his parents' good or bad qualities. Thus, though the orphaned protagonist fell into folly, his inner decency was highlighted through his regular references to his parents' hopes and by contrasting him with his dissipated friends who were contemptuous of their parents.[41] Memoirists worked within the same assumptions. Writing around 1810 James Northcote explained that he began with an account of his 'descent and Family connections' because 'such circumstances frequently serve to explain parts of the character on which they may have had an influence'.[42] Personal character was seen as heritable. Writing at the end of her life, Mary Robinson (1756/58–1800) described her great grandmother Catherine Seys as pious and virtuous: 'a character which she transferred to her daughter', Mary's mother.[43] Given her scandalous early career, Mary may well have hoped to demonstrate her own inherited virtue thus. In recounting examples of the bravery, virtue, and integrity of parentage, therefore, memoirists indicated that they were likely to be similarly worthy. The selected predecessor's notable features may also have been those which writers considered meaningful to their family or themselves. For Thomas Bewick this was a deep love of nature and independent Northumberland spirit. Transference of pride in such familial traits to the next generation can be traced in his daughter's manuscript biography of her mother. Jane Bewick (1787–1881) penned a long account of her 'courageous' great-grandmother Agnes Bewick, who fearlessly wielded a bill knife to protect herself and her farm at Cherryburn from an attack by a dangerous robber. It is not unreasonable to suggest that in Jane's eyes Agnes's foresight and bravery imbued her descendents with similar qualities.[44] For Hannah Robertson, her legacy as the illegitimate granddaughter of Charles II was inner nobility in the face of appalling loss.

It was, however, the generation born at the end of the eighteenth century who explicitly spelled out such connections between parentage and personal identity in autobiographical writing.[45] This can be seen by comparing Elizabeth Johnston (born 1764) with the professional writer Sydney Morgan, born a generation later. Johnston described her paternal grandfather, a Protestant minister as 'a truly pious man, poor in this world's goods, but rich in the inheritance of the world to come'; her maternal grandfather 'was a man of great information, and extremely fond of

[40] Shepard, 'Poverty, labour and the language of social description', 90.
[41] *LM*, 1810, 167–8. [42] Northcote, *Life of the Painter*, 15–16, reel 0030.
[43] Robinson, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 7.
[44] Bewick, 'My Mother', unpaginated, TWA, Accession 4388.
[45] Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth also saw their fathers as significant to their lives. Perry, *Novel Relations*, 81, 82–3.

reading'.[46] Her account of her qualities echoed these approved fore-parents. A page later she told the reader she possessed 'a good memory and uncommon love for reading'. Similarly, she went on to point out that she was 'highly respected' for her 'religious principles'.[47] Writing her memoirs in the 1850s Sydney Morgan directly connected her father's and her own qualities and abilities:

> In the course of my early and after years, it was a source of infinite delight to me, to hear him narrate in broken episodes, traits and incidents of his own story and of the times in which he lived, mingled with relations of habits, customs and manners still existing in Ireland down to the close of the last century. They were so impressive in their character and musical in their narration, that they seized on my imagination—for I was a very impressionable child, - and were the cause of the first purely Irish story every written; it was since been known as *The Wild Irish Girl*.[48]

A few memoirists, however, condemned their parents' characters or actions; a feature of the genre that developed more fully in the nineteenth century.[49] Recalling his father's death in the late 1760s William Gifford baldly stated, he 'loved drink for the sake of society, and to this he fell a martyr; dying of a decayed and ruined constitution before he was forty'. His blamed this for his mother's death less than a year later, since she was worn down by the task of running his business and supporting her children.[50] James Lackington's early family history revolved around his father and his resentment of his 'habitual drunkenness', which reduced him 'to his old state of a journeyman shoemaker' and left his family in 'extremest poverty'. In Lackington's view 'children should be taught to despise and detest an unnatural brutal parent, as much as they are to love and revere a good one.[51] Such vilification may have allowed a writer to demonstrate his or her moral or social advancement over the course of a lifetime. Francis Place tied together his father's pursuits and social improvement in order to counter claims of a decline in working-class morals. Thus his father represented a more vicious earlier generation given that his conduct was 'much respected' in his own day though, according to Place, he was:

> governed almost wholly by his passions and animal sensations both of which were very wrong. He was careless of reputation excepting in some particulars in which he seems to have thought he excelled. These were few, mostly relating to sturdiness and dissoluteness.[52]

HAPPY FAMILIES

To be possessed of a happy family also boosted familial and individual merit because it represented well-respected social and cultural values. According to an

[46] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 37, 40.
[47] ibid, 41, 86. [48] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, 41.
[49] This developed into a format in the nineteenth century, see Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom*, ch. 5.
[50] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. viii.
[51] Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years*, Letter II, 39–40, 43.
[52] Simon was 54 when Francis was born. Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 20.

'occasional paper addressed to the ladies,' in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1790, domestic happiness was a 'virtuous and well-regulated family of love, where peace and harmony, health and happiness, create and are created by every passing action of the day.'[53] Thomas Percival's story of 'Family Love and Harmony' shared the same terminology: 'And harmony, peace, sympathy in joy and grief, mutual good offices, forgiveness, and forbearance, are the bright emanations of domestic love. Oh! May the radiance of such virtues long illuminate this happy household!'[54] The 1796 poem 'The Fireside' literally illustrated domestic happiness.[55] Happy family life was self-perpetuating. In Hannah More's *Coelebs in search of a wife*, Coelebs observed 'I had naturally a keen relish for domestic happiness; and this propensity had been cherished by what I had seen and enjoyed in my father's family.'[56]

These cultural values were widely shared among life-writers. Dorothea Herbert's cited a young suitor's poetic attempt to ingratiate himself with her family, by observing: 'Domestic Joy has there set up her Throne.'[57] Faith Gray saw her family's happiness as generating its personal and social merit:

> From the time of the dissolution of the partnership, and my Father's having the whole business, I never saw a happier family. The days were occupied in active employment and the Evenings in a way calculated to improve and gratify the mind—My Brothers were engaged in the study of languages—in reading History, learning Geography or in Music. My Mother, sisters, and myself were sewing or reading. My Father built a Summer House near York, which was a pleasant Sunday retirement, as well as an occasional retreat, for music or any other pursuit that we liked: - He also kept two Horses, and had one of us as a companion, either in riding or walking.[58]

Peter Taylor wrote to his cousin Samuel Courtauld in 1814, describing the 'happiness of domestic peace' in his family. He added a postscript: 'I have just received the most affectionate note from my dear father, that ever father wrote to a son—rejoice with me dear Sam in my happiness—let poverty, let misfortune befall me—I defy their power to make me miserable—whilst I possess the warm affection of so many friends.' For Peter, a loving, virtuous family made him happy and, crucially, cushioned him from the problems of the 'world'.

Happy parents and children therefore represented security, a terribly important feeling in a precarious world. This was further suggested by some writers' use of the phrase 'circle' to describe the family unit consisting of parents and children. A letter to the Matron in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1780, captured the delights of the family circle in its warning:

> Were married pairs to take more pleasure in each other's society, and to spend more of their time by their own fire-sides; were children, while they amused themselves, to contribute to the entertainment of their parents, and were parents to make themselves the friends, the companions of their children, by promoting every innocent, cheerful,

[53] *LM*, 1790, 351.
[54] Percival, *A father's instructions*, 84.
[55] Burns, *Domestic happiness exhibited*, in I. *The fireside*, 2–5.
[56] More, *Coelebs in search of a wife*, Vol 1, 18.
[57] F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 134–5.
[58] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a. 76–7.

> and improving diversion with them in their own circle, numberless *unnecessary* expenses might be avoided, numberless evils also might be prevented.[59]

Families were often sketched in this mode. Like other artists, Robert Harden was keen to capture the quiet, harmonious, happy family. These families were often large in number and not restricted to the 'nuclear', like the family gathered round the tea table, 1803 (see figure 7).[60] For Robert Burns (1785) the cotter's family formed 'a circle wide' when reunited at the end of the working week and settled around the ingle.[61] George Courtauld fondly described his 'fam[il]y Circle' in a letter dated 30 June 1818. Parents were often at the circle's centre. For Faith Gray, it revolved around her mother. In commenting on this, she turned her family outwards to display its worthy public face. Faith proudly recounted a minister's description of her childhood family: 'Mr Richardson used to say when he first knew the Family, that he did not know a pleasanter scene, than my Mother in the midst of her Family circle; diffusing, and enjoying the happiness it afforded.'[62] Sophia Courtauld remembered her father as the animating spirit of her family circle: 'In the family circle, his bright, active, genial, enjoying spirit gave a warm living interest to all the concerns of everyday life'.[63] More fundamentally, by recalling their family 'circle' life-writers conveyed its unity and wholeness.

PARENTAL ACTIONS

Remembered parental actions or interests were another means by which life-writers could understand and make meaning of the path their individual lives had taken. Providence remained a common explanatory framework for writers seeking to make sense of the unpredictability of their lives, but parents' behaviour also functioned to impose some order, structure and meaning upon them too. A parental decision could simply be presented as inspiring offspring with the confidence to act. For example, John Bailey's mother's approval of his desire to marry when very young encouraged him to wed in 1797.[64] Perhaps the most common role assigned a parent in this sense was as advisors or mentors. Bewick praised his father's invaluable guidance on religious belief and virtuous behaviour, delivered as he rode with him from their home in Cherryburn to enter his apprenticeship in Newcastle in 1767. While his mother's previous exhortations had fallen on deaf ears:

[59] *LM*, 1780, 36.

[60] e.g. 'Family group with dog', 1826, 'Dozing the thimble', 1807. Foskett, *John Harden*, Plates X, XIII.

[61] Burn, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, 131. This was also depicted in illustrations to the poem. See David Allan, (1744–96), illustration to 'The Cottar's Saturday Night' by Robert Burns, *c.*1790 (grey wash on paper), © National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[62] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, 77.

[63] 'George Courtauld I: by Sophia Courtauld II', (Endorsed 'Recollections of my Father, 1874'), in Courtauld, *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, p. xxi.

[64] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 66.

> my father's pithy illustrations, as before hinted at were much more forcibly and clearly made out. I understood them well and their effect operated powerfully upon me. I have often thought since upon the very high importance and of the necessity of instilling this species of education into the minds of youth.[65]

Thomas clearly saw this as the right place and the right time for such counsel and it fitted with his adult identity as a deeply moral master of the numerous apprentices whom he nurtured in his Newcastle workshop.[66] Indeed, paternal guidance was frequently seen as a turning point in life. Henry Angelo, less self-reflexive than other memoirists, nevertheless commented on his father's influence on his behaviour. Following his involvement in an escapade on his Grand Tour, his father's letter acknowledged his lack of culpability: 'This generous act of my father's made me reflect seriously upon my late excesses, executed self reproach, and put an end to my folly and vain glory'.[67]

People also attributed changes in their life course to parental decisions. William Gray, for instance, placed his father's unshakeable belief in his abilities at the centre of his rise to considerable wealth and status. He explained: 'I was supposed to be rather quick at learning, & held out by father, sometimes, as a prodigy'. Thus, he says, his father, a linen weaver in Hull, determined that he would arrange the best training possible to raise him above the level of a mechanic. Using his network of business acquaintances, he managed to get him articled as a clerk. Gray became one of the leading lawyers in York.[68] Sydney Morgan believed that her father's residence in Kilkenny 'and the circumstances connected with it, had considerable influence on the after life of my sister and myself.' Mary Ann Ashford began the story of her childhood by explaining: 'I must now mention some things which weighed heavy on my future lot, even in infancy'. The primary one was her mother's decision not to breastfeed her and to send her out to nurse, which she saw as detrimental to her future life course.[69] Mary Robinson placed enormous significance on her father's abandonment of his family, when she was around nine, to set up a whale fishery on the coast of Labrador. Her mother refused to leave her children and accompany him, and her father was deaf to their pleadings to stay. For Mary this paternal act had sweeping consequences: 'From this epocha I date the sorrows of my family'. When his business venture collapsed the family lost their well-appointed home and the children were placed in boarding school following his irrevocable separation from his wife. His failure to send regular funds thereafter left Mary an 'exposed, unprotected' beauty of nearly fourteen.[70] People acknowledged they were not entirely passive in their relationship with their parents. When

[65] Bewick, *Memoir*, 40–3. For a similar point in which a father was seen as determining his son's future moral behaviour see Holcroft, *Memoirs*, vol 1, 25.

[66] Uglow, *Nature's Engraver: A Life of Thomas Bewick*, ch. 16.

[67] Angelo, *Reminiscences*, 82.

[68] William Gray, 'Recollections of early life in Hedon', CYLAL, Acc 5,6,24,235 D2a; William Gray's 'Recollections of God's goodness to me in respect of my temporal concerns'. Written at Ockbrook (15 September 1821), CYLAL,Acc 5,6,24,235 D2b.

[69] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 113; Ashford, *Licensed Victualler's Daughter*, 10.

[70] Robinson, *Memoirs*, 21, 25, 48, 62.

Elizabeth Ashbridge eloped to marry at around fourteen her father refused to let her return home the next year after her husband's death. She chose life in America as an indentured servant to spite him for his stubbornness: 'My Father still keeping me at such a distance, I thought myself quite shut out of his affections, and therefore concluded since my absence were so agreeable to him, he should have it'.[71]

Descriptions of parents' actions were also given a place in making the writer's personality, as well as life path. Bewick obviously felt his father helped form his character as a responsible, virtuous, decent man, describing that journey to take up his apprenticeship as a road to Damascus moment.[72] He did not so consciously explicate other connections. For example, several memories of his father's habits and interests seem to influence his own sense of self. He fondly reminisced

> I had often listend with great pleasure and attention to my fathers description of the morning—with his remarks upon the various wild quadrupeds & the strange birds he had seen or heard in these still hours throughout the year, for he left his bed very early in summer & seldom later than 4 or 5 oclock in the winter.

At various points in his memoir Bewick attributed his own habit of walking at different seasons and times of the day to forming his personal identity and, of course, the two publications he was most famed for in his own lifetime were his *General History of Quadrupeds* (1790) and *History of British Birds* (2 vols., 1797 and 1804). He also tenderly recalled,

> my father's well known whistle which called me home—he went to a little distance from the house, where nothing obstructed the sound, & whistled so loud through his finger & thumb—that in the still hours of the evening, it might be heard echoing up the vale of the Tyne to a very great distance—This whistle I learned to imitate & answer it as well as I could & then posted home.

Bewick's own whistling regularly appeared throughout his memoir; as a young man he boasted the local epithet 'the best whistler in England'.[73] In the period analysed, these conjunctions between generations and personalities were formulated more through juxtaposition than self-conscious exposition later in the genre's development.[74] Nonetheless in the act of remembering parents, these writers made sense of themselves.

LOSS OF PARENTS

The memories selected and accorded especial significance were often those from times of emotional crisis and disruption and may have served to enable the writer to impose a sense of coherence and stability in the face of life's insecurities. Cognitive psychologists demonstrate that individuals are more likely to remember

[71] Ashbridge, *Quaker Grey*, 17.
[72] Also see Stockdale, *Memoirs of the Life, and Writings of Percival Stockdale*, 17–18.
[73] Bewick, *Memoir*, 12, 52, 89.
[74] For a much more thought-out example, see extract from Sydney Morgan's journal titled 'self, 1811', printed in her memoir, written when she was 33, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 429–30.

emotion-arousing events than neutral everyday ones.[75] This is evident in the memoirs where the emotional landmarks most associated with parents were those of parental crisis and death, usually perceived with hindsight as terminations or disjunctions in their offsprings' life courses. Two writers juxtaposed their mother's distressed emotional state following marital unhappiness with ensuing events that set the writer on to a different life path. Mary Robinson's mother was 'nearly annihilated' when she discovered her husband had a mistress. Robinson reports that 'I was then at an age to feel and to participate in her sorrows. I often wept to see her weep: I tried all my little skill to sooth her, but in vain'.[76] Hannah Robertson explained that her mother's misery during her second marriage bound mother and daughter together as she struggled to distract and console her. Indeed 'my young heart entered warmly into her interests, partaking all her griefs' to the extent that she fell 'a victim to her sufferings' and had to be sent to visit her grandfather in Carlisle to recover. Robertson's narrative positioned this separation as the catalyst for the traumas that unfurled across her lifetime. At Carlisle she embarked upon the first of a series of courtships which ended in the early deaths of potential suitors and her marriage in 1749 to a man who was not even her third choice. This planted the 'daemon of melancholy', which flourished when the death of her young son caused her nervous collapse and bore the fruit of her husband's bankruptcy in 1756 after he neglected his business affairs to care for her.[77]

Writers frequently described a parent's death as the event that had the most profound consequences for them. Even more than with parental actions, this event changed an individual's life course. This was, of course, a literary formulation. The *Lady's Magazine* published a letter from 'Leonidas', in 1781. He explained he had lost his mother early in life and 'Was she now living, I am persuaded I should have found her a true friend, and probably, from her influence and good offices, at this time, might have been one of the happiest, instead of being one of the most wretched of mankind'.[78] In novels it was a device that created narrative structure. Orphaned children are typical literary characters, from Tom Jones to Evelina. In her biography of her mother Jane Bewick explained that after her mother's father died she was left on his farm with a sister & two brothers, one of whom fell into a dissolute life thanks to being 'freed from the control of a parent.' The farm was ruined. As Jane commented, 'to the latest period of her life she used to weep bitterly at the recollection of this sad reverse'. The silver lining to the cloud was that this chain of events led her mother to be properly introduced to her future husband.

Typically, life-writers attributed their life-path to a parent's death. The sense of being abandoned by parental death and exposed in an unprotected world was very real. William Hutton declared that a few days after his mother's death, when he was ten years old in 1733, his father 'declined house-keeping, sold up, and spent the money, took lodgings for himself and three children, with a widow, who had

[75] Rubin, 'Introduction', idem, *Remembering Our Past*, 12; Christianson and Safer, 'Emotional events and emotions in autobiographical memories', 219.

[76] Robinson, *Memoirs*, 25–6.

[77] Robertson, *The life of Mrs Robertson*, 7; 18. This phrasing may have alluded to Gray's *Elegy*, 'And Melancholy marked him for her own'.

[78] *LM*, 1781, 36–7.

four of her own. My mother gone, my father at the ale-house, and I among strangers, my life was forlorn'.[79] Maternal death frequently led to the breakup of a household even in higher social ranks. Sydney Morgan's father abandoned householding following her mother's death and sent his daughters to school. This, she observed, 'broke all former associations, and separated us from the companions and habits of our secluded and singular social existence, [and] was an epoch of great emotion and of new impressions.'[80] Mary Saxby (born 1738) began her account of her vagrant life, published in 1806, by stating: 'My mother dying when I was very young, and my father going into the army, I was exposed to distress, even in my infancy.' This had disastrous consequences: 'because I had no parent, [I] scorned to be under the control of any of my friends, even at that early period.' As a result of her waywardness and her father's failures to control her she ran away to follow a vagrant life. As this shows, losing a mother could mean a child was effectively orphaned, by being removed from a father, to be cared for by a relative.[81] Single adult women suffered financial straits after the death of their fathers. Catherine Cappe observed that her father hoped to retire 'once more with his family, among his favourite mountains' at Craven, West Yorkshire, but Providence saw fit to make a very different arrangement: 'And here I would pause for a moment, to reflect that had these events taken place, every circumstance in the life of the writer of this Memoir had been totally altered. She had neither formed the same connexions, been subject to the same influences, or suffered the same deprivations.'[82]

Being orphaned was, of course, the most painful experience. William Gifford was left without a relative or friend except a godfather who neglected him.[83] Such crises caused immense financial disruption, which autobiographers unsurprisingly saw as determining their future lives. For Tommy Wright the deaths of both parents in infancy, compounded by his grandmother's death shortly afterwards, were key to the loss of his rightful financial security, his somewhat chequered career, and his repeated failure in business ventures (he only achieved security in late adulthood as an inspector of woollens).[84] The loss of a parent frequently triggered downward social mobility. Hannah Robertson recalled:

> I felt my father's loss very sensibly, having (like little Benjamin of old) been the darling of his heart, and the pride of his age. My dear father's affections had rendered him blind to my faults; whilst he flattered my follies, and excited my vanity, by perpetually reminding me that I was the grand-daughter of a king.[85]

Such conceits did not survive him.

Yet the significance of parental death was not confined to material or financial upheaval. These crises had emotional and identity ramifications. The most obvious example is found in the spiritual autobiography, where the parent's death was

[79] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 18.
[80] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol 2, 98, 100.
[81] Saxby, *Memoirs of a Female Vagrant*, 1, 2. Elizabeth Johnston's mother died when she was ten and she too was sent to an aunt; Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 43–4.
[82] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 21. [83] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. ix.
[84] Wright, *Autobiography*, passim. [85] Robertson, *The life of Mrs Robertson*, 3.

defined as a religious trial that resulted in the birth of a new spiritual self. For example, the Quaker Mary Alexander (1760–1809) deemed the death of her father in 1786 a test of her religious conviction: 'after the final close of my beloved earthly parent, it pleased my heavenly Father to try me with the loss of spiritual enjoyment also; and, for a long time, my poor mind was often in a very distressed situation'. Writing in the early 1820s, Ann Crowley (1765–1826) described the 'season of lasting profit' to her and her sisters that followed her father's death when she was seventeen, since it served to confirm her faith.[86] John Allen's (1737–1810) account was less generic. He explained: 'Another affliction soon came upon me. I was from a child very fond of my mother, and often thought I could not bear to live after her. In March 1759, she died. This awakened me once more'. He became a Methodist and joined a small society to sing, pray and converse.[87]

Some life writers described the death of a parent as the temporary, or even permanent, loss of self through mental breakdown. The profound link between crisis, memories of parents, and the collapse of identity is devastatingly portrayed in Dorothea Herbert's description of the death of her father in 1803 as a 'Melancholy' event 'that blasted all our Domestic Happiness'. The family lost financial stability as well as her father's 'sweet Society' and 'Solid Advice.' His death marked its disintegration: 'Here ended what was once call'd the Herbert family at Carrickonsuir—We are now a Set of poor Melancholy Wanderers without a head, and hardly knowing what to do with ourselves.' More disturbing was the personal mental turmoil that she endured; a 'black chaos' engulfed her and she inhabited a 'black abode of Despair'.[88] Benjamin Haydon described his emotional torment at his mother's death in 1808:

> Oh the acuteness of that first pang of separation from a MOTHER. It is as if a string of one's nature had been drawn out and cracked in the drawing, leaving the one half of it shrunk back, to torture you with the consciousness of having lost the rest. That, which as children we hardly conceived possible, had happened—a parent dead!

He explained that he suffered a 'first dark day of nothingness,' and self-disgust at his body's desire to eat during early stages of grief.[89] Equally revealing is absence of emotion at a parent's death. William Gifford declared that he did not grieve his father's death when he was eleven or twelve, because 'I never greatly loved him; I had not grown up with him; and he was too prone to repulse my little advances to familiarity, with coldness, or anger'.[90] Absent from him for the first eight years of his life because he had gone to sea, and unloving on his return, Gifford simply had no positive memories of his father.

Parental death provoked reflection on personal identity in life-writers' minds in other ways too. Catherine Hutton advertised her self-worth by discussing her father's death in the concluding section of his published life:

[86] Alexander, *Some Account of the Life and Religious Experience of Mary Alexander*, 21; Eade, *Some Account of the Religious Experience of Ann Crowley*, 6.

[87] Allen, *The Life of Mr John Allen*, 438–9.

[88] She would appear to have suffered mental breakdown and some degree of paranoia. F. F. M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 387, 407.

[89] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 57–8.

[90] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. viii.

> Since I have lost my father, reflection has pointed out many things left undone that I ought to have done; but I do not recollect any that I did, and ought not to have done, or that I did not do to the best of my power. I have the satisfaction of his own testimony in my favour. He has said to me more than once, 'It is impossible to be better nursed than I am.' He said once, 'Thou dost all thou canst to smooth the rugged way I have to go.' And he said once, 'I was thinking a few days ago what faults thou hadst.' 'Pray father,' said I, 'Do not think too much on that subject.' Without noticing my interruption, he added in a solemn manner, 'To my great satisfaction I could find none.' [91]

Jane Bewick identified herself with her father in a letter written shortly after his death in 1828, referring to herself as 'my father's child.'[92] Parental deaths could also signify the formation of a different phase of self and were thus not confined to childhood. Simon Mason reflected that he was 'ruin'd without redress' by the death of his father in Simon's early adulthood because he could not look to him for help in recovering from debt.[93] Thomas Bewick viewed the dreadful year, 1785, when he lost his mother, sister, and finally his father, as an emotional hiatus: 'This is the short account of many years of great and uninterrupted health, buoyant spirits and of great happiness to me.' It launched him into a new personal dimension because he had decided not to marry until they had died 'in order that my undivided attention might be bestowed upon them'.[94] Their deaths even changed his personal habits: 'This life of rapturous enjoyment has its acid, and at length comes to an end, & so did my walk & my reflections or contemplations, which passed through the mind'. Benjamin Haydon suggested renewed vigour in his painting career following his mother's decease. He declared that he returned home for one night after her funeral, departing next day 'for London, to begin my picture, pursued by the influence of my mother, whose memory I have cherished, and shall cherish for ever.'[95]

Remembering and then recounting memories of parents possibly helped to heal the irrevocable discontinuity caused by frequent and sudden mortality. In nineteenth-century German memoirs, for example, 'narratives of family memory were used to impart a sense of stability and control.'[96] Such memories were often fixed in objects. The writer who completed Mary Robinson's memoirs after her death (probably her daughter) commented: 'The filial sorrow of Mrs Robinson on her loss, for many months affected her health; even to the latest hour of her life, her grief appeared renewed, when any object presented itself connected with the memory of her departed mother.'[97] Family portraiture served similar purposes. Colonial American family portraits were a means by which individuals tried to cope with the insecurity and unpredictability of family life. Artists produced a recognisable family face and thereby helped 'to freeze the clock for distinct individuals destined to change and die'.[98] As Henry Angelo observed in his preface to

[91] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 324.
[92] Jane Bewick to John Dovaston (29 November 1828), published in Bewick, *Memoir*.
[93] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and distresses*, 11, 38.
[94] Bewick, *Memoir*, pp. 89, 90, 94, 115.
[95] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 57–8.
[96] Tebbe, 'Landscapes of Remembrance', 195, 207.
[97] Robinson, *Memoir*, 143.
[98] Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution*, 27, 46.

his *Reminiscences*, portraiture aims 'to perpetuate, by those silent resemblances, the fond memory of the illustrious dead', similarly biography was 'painting from the life'.[99] From 1824 to 1825 Joseph Munby, a lawyer in York, discussed the location of 'Papa's & Mamma's portraits' in his letters to his sister. His father died when he was twelve years old followed by his mother three years later. Though their children were cared for by family members, particularly their grandmother, they were frequently separated thanks to their education. It would seem that the parents' portraits acted as fixed points in a mobile life.[100] It is likely that memories of parents in life writing served a similar purpose. Not only were some written for children, making the writer convey memory as well as genes between generations, but the memories themselves acted as an adhesive in the terrible face of mortality, preserving the memory of deceased parents.[101] In Gaston Bachelard's poetic rendering: 'when one has made the archetypal power of childhood come back to life through dreams . . . The father is there, also immobile. The mother is there, also immobile. Both escape time. Both live with us in another time'.[102]

CONCLUSION

Such findings add to the discussion of the ways in which identities were constructed in the past. They suggest that family played an important part in the retrospective formulation of personal identity in terms of status, character, and inner qualities. Parentage and parents illustrated a tradition of familial worth and status. This reflected the glory of whatever admirable qualities were available onto the writer, according to social rank and level of wealth, from shaping British history to being industrious and honest. Parents' actions and choices also helped explain the writer's personality as well as circumstances. A happy family created a praiseworthy familial identity and hinted at the writers' emotional state in recalling times when the circle was unbroken. Finally, parental deaths materially and emotionally reconfigured their children's lives, both in childhood and maturity. Clearly, the rise of the unique 'self' did not entirely supplant elements of identity firmly founded it what are too often seen as 'traditional' components of personal identity.[103]

The next chapter explores in more detail the ways in which people thought about themselves as parents, which similarly demonstrates the layering and multiplicity in such thinking. Using cultural vocabularies about parenthood, parenting, and gender, individuals constructed selves which offer insights into emotional states, subjectivity and the tensions therein.

[99] Angelo, *Reminiscences*, pp. v–vi

[100] Joseph Munby to his sister Jane Munby (6 December 1824), CYLAL, Acc 54: 251; (13 August 1825), CYLAL, Acc 54: 255; and (15 February 1825), CYLAL, Acc 54:253.

[101] This was often materialized, Tebbe, 'Landscapes of Remembrance', 201, 203; Marcia Pointon, 'Materializing mourning: hair, jewellery and the body'. For memories of childhood interiors as an 'attempt to revivify what is lost' see Colley, 'Bodies and mirrors: the childhood interiors of Ruskin, Pater and Stevenson', 55.

[102] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, 125.

[103] Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, p. xxii.

6

Selfhood and Being a Parent: Cultural Conventions, Tensions, and Complexities

it is *yourself* that you see in your children[1]

Dynamism and variety mark the parental selves described in memoirs and correspondence. The specifics of parenting influenced these personal identities and subjectivities, shaped by available cultural languages, specific events, and circumstances ranging from the personal to the economic, as well as a host of social factors. Life-cycle was equally significant; parental identity could alter according to the age of parent, age of child, or a different relationship with each child. Thus parental identity was a journey rather than a culmination or end-point. It was also marked by complexity. Parental identities did not always conform to gender identities, revealing a less binary division than might be expected. Both mothers and fathers, for instance, identified themselves as tender parents and as material provisioners. So, in practice, the emotional and material aspects of parenthood were neither separate nor competing, nor associated with only one sex of parent. It is therefore unsurprising that tensions existed in people's sense of selves as parents. When constructing narratives about themselves as parents, diverse discourses served different purposes and needs, were prioritised one over another for a number of reasons, and sometimes were in tension with each other.

IDENTIFYING THE SELF AS A PARENT

Being a parent conveyed numerous factors about an individual to society. Parental identity was valued for several reasons, not merely because it demonstrated an individual's reproductive capacity. It symbolised full humanity, as William Cobbett's invective against men and women who did not want to be mothers or fathers indicates: 'the man; the *woman* who is not fond of babies is not worthy the name'.[2] It denoted personal worth. Eliza Fletcher displayed her excellent female credentials when she declared 'I never allowed any other occupation or amusement to interfere with this first claim of duty [maternal nursing]. My child grew and prospered,

[1] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 225. [2] ibid, 245.

my home was happy.'[3] It illustrated care and compassion in men as well as women. Joseph Pratt's biography of the Reverend Richard Cecil (1748–1810), published in 1817, praised him because 'Not a child in his family could carry its little complaints to him, but he would stop the career of his mind to listen and relieve'.[4] Parenthood was also a social status. Those without biological children claimed its prizes and satisfactions through 'social' parenting.[5] Catharine Cappe identified herself with maternity through 'social' motherhood, acquired in her involvement in educational institutions. More personally, she literally became a mother by marrying a man with adult children.[6]

In the second half of the eighteenth century individuals used their status as a parent to deepen their claims to professional expertise or authority. Thus male writers of medical texts claimed specialist knowledge in the new genre of child health care.[7] 'Professional' parenthood underpinned conduct advice too. William Cobbett observed that his expertise as a father, in addition to his writing and political career, enabled him to advise other men. He concluded the introductory section of *Advice to Young Men* by explaining that he had,

> during these twenty-nine years of troubles, embarrassments, prisons, fines, and banishments, bred up a family of seven children to man's and woman's state. If such a man be not, after he has survived and accomplished all this, qualified to give Advice to Young Men, no man is qualified for that task.[8]

Women did something similar at the start of the nineteenth century, whereby they deployed socially- and culturally-acceptable understandings of maternity to justify their 'public' activities in child-care and education.[9] For example Lousia Hoare deployed a distanced 'professional' maternity in her *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children: addressed to parents of the middle and labouring classes of society* in 1824.[10]

The act of identifying oneself as a parent also allowed a writer to advertise his or her personal worth and merit. Mary Robinson's memoir, penned at the turn of the eighteenth century, encompassed several female narrative selves: the scandalous actress, the unprotected wife, the victim of failed love, and the female artist. For all these several 'authorial self-images', Mary particularly promoted herself as an adoring mother and her acts of authorship as 'maternal creation'. Her daughter, on completing the memoir on her mother's death, adapted this image into 'the female artist as exclusively a mother'.[11] Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston used her maternal

[3] *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, 69.
[4] Pratt, *Remains of the Reverend Richard Cecil*, 32.
[5] Berry and Foyster, 'Childless Men', 187–3; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, ch. 5; Gleadle, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and the Mobilization of Tory Women', 114–16.
[6] She referred to them always as her children e.g. Cappe, *Memoirs*, 257, 262.
[7] Benzaquen, 'The Doctor and the Child', 18.
[8] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 4–5.
[9] Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young*, passim; Habermas, 'Parent-Child Relationships in the Nineteenth Century', 53; Tikoff, 'Education', 105–7.
[10] Hoare, *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children*.
[11] Mellor, 'Making an Exhibition of Her Self: Mary "Perdita" Robinson', 271–92, 294–5, 296.

status to display her excellent virtue: 'My time was greatly devoted to my family, and though but twenty-two when I went to Jamaica I was at only one Assembly and two private dances during my life there.'[12] In 1812/13 George Courtauld responded to his son with pride in his paternal role:

> I am very solicitous about you—though trusting in the continued kindness of an all-merciful providence; believing that (although with a variety of failings and much imperfection) yet that in educating my children, in attending to you my son—I have acted with much consideration and have taken much pains; from motives more virtuous, I believe, than most of those which have in other laudable particulars influenced my conduct.[13]

In fact, simply being a loved parent demonstrated an individual's good character. In 1807, William Hutton recorded the poem that his daughter penned to celebrate his eighty-fifth birthday. The second verse displayed his admirable qualities: 'You have risen from poverty, and liv'd in plenty, with a mind always sober, | You have lov'd your children, indulg'd your household, and never treated us with rigour, | You have kept your health and good humour, and still retain your vigour'.[14] Similarly Johnson's included in her memoir a poem her daughter wrote. Struggling through a rough voyage from Scotland to Jamaica with her three daughters in 1801, Elizabeth distracted Laleah, her thirteen-year old, by persuading her to write the poem. Her daughter's loving gratitude presented the parental image Elizabeth sought:

> To My mother
> How can I e'er repay the care
> That thou hast ta'en of me,
> Or how restore the nights of rest
> I oft have stolen from thee?
> 'Twas thou that taught my infant heart
> To raise itself in prayer,
> The goodness of Almighty God
> Thou didst to me declare.
> May every blessing light on thee
> To enrich thy mortal store,
> And may the choicest gifts of Heaven
> Be thine for evermore![15]

DEPLOYING CULTURAL IDEALS

People used cultural conventions about parenthood to describe and think about themselves in their writings, borrowing from print in their choice of words, phrases

[12] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist,* 86.
[13] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (20 April 1812) in Courtauld, *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 28.
[14] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 276.
[15] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 103–4.

and tone. More direct examples exist. One woman identified so closely with a description of a loving mother in the children's book *Evenings at Home* that she jotted 'your mamma' in pencil in its margin.[16] In making the note, of course, she also told her child that she loved him or her. Provision, tenderness, instruction, anxiety, distress, and grief were the components of cultural discourses of parenthood that featured regularly in self-presentation. An additional self was the self-sacrificing parent. Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, parents rarely identified with the negative emotions culturally associated with parenting, such as passion or anger. The identities that were assembled offer glimpses into personal subjectivities since they show how the ideals of parenthood, themselves so closely linked to emotions, were experienced as feeling or emotional states.[17]

Parents frequently depicted themselves as providers and the emotions this stirred were formed by the place and purpose of writing. Thus, in letters to parish authorities, men and women defined themselves in their role of providing their children with the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, medical care, and shelter. Since they were unable to do so, their emotional states were distress and helplessness. No doubt they may also have experienced resentment and anger, but they were unlikely to gain relief by expressing anything more than frustration. Though the objective of writing limited their forms of feeling, their identification as provisioners was not artificial. It appears in other ego-documents. In less formal writing by wealthier individuals, however, the provisioning self was more various. Society demanded, rewarded and praised a man's ability to maintain his children. And it was men who elaborated upon this aspect of their parental identity in most detail. Indeed, they described their provisioning role far more extensively than cultural and legal forms dictated. This was one of the justifications George Courtauld used when explaining to his family his aim to emigrate to America.[18] Fathers also incorporated a wide range of components into their provisioning self, shaped by individual circumstances and personalities. In 1818 George wrote to his daughter Louisa from Athens, Ohio: 'Soon I hope to have a comfortable home for you all, where we may, at *leisure*, decide upon the best measures for our mutual &individual comfort &usefulness'.[19] His persona as a father was to supply a home in all its many freighted meanings of security, comfort, emotional support and not just in terms of shelter, and location of food. Indeed, for George, providing was about promoting family welfare. In 1819 he reflected on his care for his children in a letter to his son Samuel: 'Having, I trust, greatly succeeded, by the divine Bless[in]g upon imperfect endeavours, to render them rational, affect[ionat]e, &c pious, I desire to promote their welfare in the way they believe it would be best promoted'.[20]

[16] Grenby, 'Early British Children's Books: Towards an Understanding of their Users and Usage'.

[17] Roper, 'Slipping out of view', 57–72.

[18] e.g. George Courtauld to his daughter Sophia Courtauld (21 February 1818), Courtauld, *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 98.

[19] George Courtauld to daughter Louisa Courtauld (21 October 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 436.

[20] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (8 January 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 126.

Crucially, he saw his provisioning role as father predominating over his business ambitions. To his younger daughter Sophia he wrote in 1818:

> I have no wish so predominant in all my proceedings, or attempts in business, or other pecuniary arrangements, as to promote the well being of my Family collectively & of each individual composing it, & I can truly say it wd be a great relief to my mind could I perceive it my Duty to give to them all the property I possess & to depend solely upon my own efforts—without any pecuniary resource for my own maintenance.[21]

Other men presented themselves as fathers who also provided leisure, amusement, and therefore health and wellbeing for their children.

Poor parents also adopted the convention that provisioning was a difficult role, no doubt from the painful reality of that fact. In April 1825, Elizabeth King wrote from Ely to Thrapston overseers: 'Gentlemen, Some little time ago I wrote to you to inform you of my situation I really cannot go on at all not being able to support myself and child'.[22] Thus, for poor men, an increasing family was less a sign of male virility and more a burden that could be borne only with institutional or charitable assistance. Stephen Hill wrote to his parish of settlement at Fawley in 1830, concluding: 'I am moreover confident when poverty takes me the Parish is my only Refuge our Family is increasing We have 4 Children the last two is Living'.[23] By this late date seeking safety in the arms of the poor laws may well have undermined Hill's sense of self and masculine identity.[24] More surprisingly, perceiving their children to be financial weights spanned ranks and levels of wealth. Newly married with a growing family, the lawyer William Gray recalled of the 1780s: 'Still, for some time I could scarcely sustain the burden of my very moderate household expences; but the Lord blessed my basket &my store'.[25] Indeed, even successful men felt that the task was so onerous that they needed the special aid of God, their ultimate succour and refuge.[26]

Parents' lives were fundamentally shaped by the ability to provide for children. Wealthier men justified their decisions in this way. The warehouse owner, John Shaw, explained his decision not to purchase the Old Manse at Penn by the number of his children in 1831, saying it was 'too much for our family with six children. We are better without it'.[27] Several men described the different life paths they had taken in order to try and maintain their children. John Bailey commented: 'I had given up my school [teaching], which I had no reason to expect more from that I have before stated, and learnt a business, which I thought more likely to be a

[21] George Courtauld to his daughter Sophia Courtauld (Friday evening April 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 372.

[22] Elizabeth King of Ely, Cambridgeshire, to the overseers of the poor for Thrapston, Northamptonshire (26 April 1825), NRO, 325P/193/65.

[23] Stephen Hill to Mr Fry, Asst. Overseer &Master of the Workhouse, Fawley (8 February 1830), HRO, 25M60/PO35 [850].

[24] Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel', 9–10.

[25] William Gray, 'Recollections of early life in Hedon', CYLAL, Acc 5,6,24,235 D2a.

[26] ibid; Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 73–4, 79.

[27] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (14 March 1831), Shaw/33.

means of procuring support for my family'.[28] Francis Place explained that his shift in trade from making leather to more lucrative stuff breeches was driven by the imminent arrival of a child and perhaps by the fact that his wife would be unable to contribute much to their domestic economy.[29] In such ways, men's selves were rewritten by the demands of children.

Higher-ranking married women may not have needed to engage in paid labour to support offspring, but they still saw motherhood and therefore themselves as serviceable to the collective family.[30] Lower-ranking women were often joint provisioners with husbands. Inevitably, their lower wage-earning potential meant that the role became impossible when the load fell solely upon them. In 1836 Frances James informed the overseer of the poor at Uttoxeter that

> Since my Husband was with you at Uttoxeter I have endeavoured (as you may believe me) to maintain my family without trouble to others—Since the time that you last relieved us he has not been much better than he was & the whole burthen has fallen upon my hands—latterly he has been much worse than usual and he is now totally unable to do any one thing towards the family's help—Since that time I have been confined of another Child and we have now 5 Children living and it is not possible to maintain them in my little tripe business.[31]

This sense of her mothering-identity as an active 'agent' corresponds with other findings about labouring and poor mothers. Even the most disadvantaged mothers, who gave up their baby to the Foundling Hospital, were not powerless victims and had strategies for survival that they could deploy.[32] The provisioning parent was, nevertheless, a self identity that was profoundly vulnerable to uncontrollable external factors.[33]

People also identified themselves as feeling, sensible mothers and fathers. Those who were educated or familiar with literary conventions were most expansive in their use of the rhetoric.[34] In 1821 Mrs Taylor wrote to her niece Sophia Courtauld of her fears that she would not meet her son again following his emigration to America. These were the expressive words of the tender mother: 'have I not most tenderly loved my Peter ever since he had an existence, and shall I not most tenderly love him as long as existence will be granted me?'[35] Pre-existing sensibility

[28] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 82.

[29] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 111.

[30] e.g. Ruth Courtauld's housekeeping for her son Sam, referred to in Ruth Courtauld to her husband and children (17 December 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 859.

[31] Frances James, Leicester, Leicestershire, to the overseer of the poor, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (5 February 1836), SRO D 3891/6/103.

[32] Evans, *Unfortunate Objects*, 16, 99.

[33] Humphries notes that male autobiographers tended to evaluate their fathers' occupation and ability, revealing the importance of the father's economic role. Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, 87–8. This sample of autobiographers would suggest that poor fathers were also evaluated on other aspects of their character and personality too.

[34] A French ambassador's journals (1780–92) show how he represented himself in the style of affective family relationships. Merrick, 'The family politics of the Marquis de Bombelles', 503–18.

[35] Mrs William Taylor to her niece Sophia (9 September 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 845.

was deepened by maternity for some women. Mary Robinson said she possessed 'a too acute sensibility' from childhood. The birth of her first daughter then awoke new sensations in her soul.[36] In this sense, parental 'feeling' was both a universal and a unique experience. When Elizabeth Shaw heard that her ill son, travelling from home as a salesman, had improved, she wrote with relief: 'to say what I felt for you is needless, as you never can know till you are a parent and should you be like some I know not even then'.[37] It was also a mark of superiority. Furthermore, feeling parenthood helped convey a poor parent's deservingness of charitable assistance or poor relief.[38] The wife of a former merchant, now unable to contribute to his family's support, described herself as 'an almost broken-hearted Mother' in the advert she placed in *The Times*, 1795. She knew she used a literary rhetoric, for she despaired 'God knows this is not any fiction; and not any thing on earth but the dreadful misery that must attend my children, could ever have so far conquered the delicate feelings of sensibility as to lead me to make this appeal to the Public.' Those less well-educated and enduring lifelong struggle were not without their feeling language. In 1830 a single mother who was told that her that her daughter's father would not contribute to her support pointed out her deservingness through his failure: 'lett him Brave the Storm for her as I have done and ever will to the Day of my Deathe.'[39]

While men did not define themselves as *tearful* fathers of feeling, they did profess to be 'sensible men'.[40] This was not specific to class or education. The struggling debt-ridden apothecary Simon Mason was 'sensibly touchd' by his children's plight.[41] Pauper fathers who wrote to their settlement parishes seeking relief in the early nineteenth century talked of their suffering at seeing their children go without, and their feeling hearts; a rhetorical strategy that was also surely intended to appeal to higher-ranking parish authorities familiar with sensible and Christian ideals of benevolence.[42] Life-writers focused upon being nursing, caring fathers.[43] Writing in the 1790s, William Hutton recalled the year 1758 in his life-story with some pride over his achievements, business and paternal:

> I procured all the intelligence I could relative to the fabrication of paper; engaged an artist to make me a model of a mill; attended to business; and nursed my children; while the year ran round. On the 2nd of July, Mrs. Hutton brought me another son, so that I had now three to nurse; all of whom I frequently carried together in my arms. This I could not do without a smile; while he who had none, would view the act with envy.[44]

[36] Robinson, *Memoirs,* 12, 143–4.
[37] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (19 August no year stated), CRL, Shaw/33 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.
[38] Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel', 11–16.
[39] E. Lorking to Mr Fry Assistant Overseer Fawley (23 July 1830), HRO, 25M60/PO35 [889].
[40] See Bailey, 'a very sensible man'.
[41] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 111.
[42] Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel', 11–16.
[43] See tone of correspondence discussed in James, 'A Georgian Gentleman: child care'.
[44] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton,* 100.

Clearly, he felt that his hands-on fathering was something other men aspired to. George Courtauld saw himself as a 'solicitous parent' and defended himself as father who tended his babies through the night. He wrote to his eldest adult children early in 1815, in response to family tensions, reminding them how much he had loved them throughout their lives by emphasising his bodily labours on their behalf.

> I have loved you all from the cradle—I have uniformly been a nursing father to all of you—and I might almost say a nursing mother too—for at different times when several of you were quite infants I was left alone with you, and when not alone how often have I hushed you to sleep walking about the room with you for hours in the night—to ease your pains and lull your sorrows.[45]

Born in the same decade, William Cobbett built his whole persona on this in his *Advice to Young Men*. Though he was constantly occupied with business he insisted that he made time to assist his wife with the children 'in all sorts of things: get up, light her fire, boil her tea-kettle, carry her up warm water in cold weather, take the child while she dressed herself and got the breakfast ready, then breakfast, get her in water and wood for the day, then dress myself neatly, and sally forth to my business'.[46]

Such fathers took a pride in securing offsprings' health. In 1787 Mr Kilner explained to a friend that he was busy in 'the not only agreeable employment of attending upon my wife & children, but also necessary one of seeking for a store of better health for them'.[47] Thomas Wright proudly boasted that for six or seven weeks while his children were ill from small pox:

> [I] never had all my clothes off, was engaged day and night going up and down stairs and from one chamber to another almost without intermission, and my sleep departed from mine eyes; yet a kind Providence so ordered it, that I neither felt much over-fatigued, or greatly to want my sleep during the whole time, though one might have imagined, from the constant fatigue I underwent.

His family troubles did not cease; shortly afterwards various children were dangerously ill with scarlet fever and measles: 'We were without servant; I therefore waited on my sick children myself, and I dare appeal to my neighbours, that they were carefully and properly attended.'[48] Clearly, tender fatherhood was a vital element of his public reputation. It also formed part of his subjective identity since their illnesses did not just cause him exhaustion but also 'depressing sorrow of mind' for his 'suffering children'. Indeed, Thomas was a feeling father by nature. Responding to people who censured him for suffering too much sorrow over his favourite child's death, he mused: 'Different persons have different feelings, and it had

[45] For 'solicitous' attention, George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (20 April 1812), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 28. For tending through the night, George Courtauld to all his children (1815), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 72.

[46] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 161–2.

[47] Mr and Mrs Kilner to George Courtauld (23 October 1787), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 25, 32.

[48] Wright, Autobiography, 155.

pleased my Maker to endow me with very acute ones, especially with respect to my children'.[49]

Parents also identified with the role of instructive father or mother. This could be a temporary role. Mr Kilner explained why he had not written earlier: 'little of my time is unimploy'd . . . what with my unavoidable attendance on Mrs K. At such times as she has unwell periods, with taking short walks for exercise at her intervals of ease, & the instructing my girls in writing, geography, & c'.[50] Elizabeth Johnston was proud of her role as an instructive mother in the 1790s:

> I used to be diligent in teaching my children and reading to them every morning from the old 'Whole Duty of Man' and conducting family prayers while they knelt around me. I taught all to read and the girls to sew. They were not at a school until I went for my health, after ten years' residence there, again to Edinburgh.[51]

Francis Place's sense of self as a father was almost entirely related to his determination to educate them well.[52] Parents from several denominations were self-proclaimed religious instructors, though this is possibly a feature of the sample of life-writing. In 1811 John Shaw projected himself into the role in a message intended for his prospective father-in-law:

> He will I trust believe me on my own assertion when I assure him Family worship is what in my own Family I have every been used to and trust if ever I have one of my own it will be considered as one of the first duties incumbent upon me as a master of that family.[53]

Some years later his wife interrogated herself and her husband over the extent to which they'd achieved this. In 1820 she wrote to John in a state of spiritual doubt following the deaths of friends. She asked whether they could defend themselves before God that they had 'rear'd a family altar to God & dedicated our little ones to Him & his service, & set them an example'. Her reflections upon this were making her 'nervous system' fretful and irritable and 'totally destroys my peace of mind'.[54] It was unusual for memoirists to question their parental abilities. Yet Eliza Fletcher admitted in her sixties that she had encouraged too many exciting amusements in her children's lives and failed to help them strengthen their minds by exercising self-discipline.[55] Perhaps her doubt was also a feature of different conventions prevailing by the early Victorian period.

Strikingly few parents defined themselves in this sample of life-writing as harsh disciplinarians, although they were prepared to castigate their own parents thus.[56]

[49] ibid, 153–4, 183.
[50] Mr and Mrs Kilner to George Courtauld (23 October 1787), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 25.
[51] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 86.
[52] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 174–5, 226, 227.
[53] John Shaw to Elizabeth Wilkinson (6 July 1811), CRL, Shaw/5.
[54] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (15 July 1827), CRL, Shaw/68.
[55] *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, 120.
[56] This is not an argument that they did not use corporal punishment, simply that they did not present themselves as doing so.

Thomas Wright was one father who reported that he carried out harsh corporal punishment. He claimed his parents-in-law had turned his two eldest children against him so that they were 'very saucy and disrespectful'. As a result he had given them 'a more severe beating than ever I had given them before.' Yet, he combined this with the most fashionable aspects of controlling children, explaining that 'by appealing to their filial affection and good sense, by showing them the impropriety and bad consequence of their listening to such people, and following their pernicious counsels, I brought them back to their duty, and we soon recovered and maintained the wonted peace and quietness of our family.'[57] Parents who publicly asserted a harder stance on patriarchal discipline could be condemned. In the 1760s the Justice of the Peace William Ettrick presented himself before Durham and York Church Courts as a strict disciplinarian when defending himself against his wife's case for separation on the grounds of cruelty, which included accusations that he was too harsh in his punishment of his two children. Witness statements indicate that William's actions were considered inappropriate by people from a range of social ranks.[58]

Matching newer emphases in parent-child relationships, several people presented themselves as companions to their children. Elizabeth Shaw senior called herself her son's best friend and named her recently deceased daughter as her most tender friend.[59] George Courtauld addressed his son Sam as 'my observant, sagacious and well disposed son and friend.'[60] He believed himself the companionate father personified. In 1815 he told his adult children that after recognising that his marriage was no longer successful: 'I consoled myself for many years that by making friends of my children I should secure a parent's best enjoyments'.[61] This was a man who considered he consulted with his offspring in all family decisions. In 1818 he asked Sophia to acknowledge that he had long had 'a desire to give all due w[eigh]t to the opinions of my Children'.[62] It influenced his children's viewpoint too. They marked him out as a father who 'companionised' them.[63]

A further way in which people presented themselves was as a selfless parent.[64] English eighteenth-century maternity was often considered in such terms, and women defined themselves thus. For some this was one way to explain sending a child away from home to be educated for the sake of his or her advancement. In

[57] Wright, *Autobiography*, 148.

[58] Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', 215–16.

[59] Elizabeth Shaw to John Shaw (Sunday 7th [18--].), CRL, Shaw/106; Elizabeth Shaw to John Shaw (no date) CRL, Shaw/36, The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

[60] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (20 April 1812), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 29.

[61] George Courtauld to all his children (1815), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 72

[62] George to his daughter Sophia Courtauld (2 March 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 367.

[63] 'Samuel Courtauld, recollections of his father from a letter written in 1873', *The Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, p. xvi; Sophia Courtauld, 'George Courtauld I (Endorsed "Recollections of my Father, 1874")', *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, 3 vols. (1957) vol. 2, p. xxi.

[64] Habermas, 'Parent-child relationships', 49; J. Popiel, 'Making mothers', 340; Tobin, 'The tender mother', 210.

1810 Ruth Courtauld told her daughters Eliza and Sophia 'nothing could reconcile me to leaveing [sic] you both behind me but my very great wish for your improvement'.[65] Painful though these feelings were, a selfless rhetoric at least eased the situation for mother and child. Dorothy Wilson wrote to Caroline Forth in 1816 after she went to school, telling her:

> your Mother had not been at all low since her Return to Ganthorpe. Indeed I trust the conviction of it being so absolutely necessary for you to be some Time apart from her in order that you may make the Attainments &enter into the Society suitable to your Age and Station in Life, will entirely reconcile her to being separated from you, although her very tender affection excited so much anxiety during the few days we were at Doncaster.[66]

Fathers also adopted a selfless persona, though there may have been some difference in what they sacrificed on behalf of the child. Some advertised how they had given up business to care for their children. In 1787 Mr Kilner imagined his friend asking how he had been able to abandon his business for so long to take his daughters and wife to the coast to recover their health. He answered that the silk business was very bad in general, and expected that 'you will agree with me that it was prudent to decline it, & wait a little while in the not only agreeable employment of attending upon my wife & children, but also necessary one of seeking for a store of better health for them'.[67] Of course labouring and pauper parents presented themselves as sacrificing their own food and material goods to feed their children or obtain money to do so. While this was shaped by the need to show the parish authorities that they had strived at every means to cope before turning to poor relief, it reflected shared notions that a good parent sacrificed all for his or her children.[68]

After all, most print genres praised parental selflessness. The *Lady's Magazine*, 1778, commended the widowed mother in 'The history of Lady Bradley' who refused to marry the 'perfect' suitor because it would take her attention from her only daughter and risk bearing a son who would take precedence in inheritance.[69] It was recommended in advice for parents.[70] Memoirists increasingly praised their own parents for it until it became a convention for people from humble origins to extol their mother's self-sacrifice.[71] Fathers were also commended. Sydney Morgan recounted a typically charming story about her widowed father's

> personal privations, that we might have the advantage of the tuition of the first masters of the day. I remember once, our music mistress, Miss Buck, complained to my

[65] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia (17 June 1810), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, p. 52.
[66] Dorothy Dinah Wilson to Miss Forth (1816), CYLAL, Acc 54:185.
[67] Mr and Mrs Kilner to George Courtauld (23 October 1787), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 24.
[68] For poor parents description of themselves as self sacrificing, see Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel', 15.
[69] *LM*, 1778, 131, 409.
[70] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 51.
[71] e.g. Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years*, 41.

> father of our idleness, as he sat beside us at the piano, whilst we stumbled through a duet from the overture to Artaxerxes. His answer to her complaint was simple and graphic, for drawing up the sleeve of a handsome surtout great coat which he wore, he showed the shabby threadbare sleeve of the black coat beneath, and said, touching the whitened seams, "I should not be driven to the subterfuge of wearing a great coat this hot weather to conceal the poverty of my dress beneath, if it were not that I wish to give you the advantage of such instruction as you are now neglecting." This went home; and Miss Buck had nothing to complain of during the remainder of our tuition.[72]

Literary critics' often associate maternal self-sacrifice with maternal self-effacement. From mid-century, so it goes, the values of personhood and motherhood were becoming mutually exclusive in print culture.[73] By the end of the century this had negated women's expectations for self and subjectivity through subordinating these needs to husband and children following marriage.[74] However, since selflessness extended to fathers too, its role in restricting female personal subjectivities and motherhood becomes less convincing. In fact parenthood and personhood were intertwined, so that motherhood did not develop into a binary opposite to selfhood. Motherhood provided both a sense of self and a public identity. In the story of 'The Adopted Child' (1813) the childless Mrs Montague adopted a daughter and thus found 'a sense of moral and personal fulfillment'.[75] England would seem to be similar to the situation in early nineteenth century Germany where selfless child-rearing was understood as the expression of the love of the mother and father, effectively a 'sacralization' of the activities performed out of love for the child (rather than the parent's needs). While mothers in particular gained most respect for their self-sacrifice, the view included both parents.[76]

A 'SECOND SELF' AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF SELF

It is at times possible to glimpse the extent to which people saw their parental role contributing to their subjectivity. This could be in terms of self-knowledge. In some cases, being a parent provided different insights into one's self and others'. Kate Courtauld complained in 1820 that her mother had not written to her:

> Perhaps my last letter did not please my Mother. I can only say I did not intend to say anything to hurt the nicest feelings, nor do I think (tho' now a Mother myself & perhaps better able than formerly to appreciate a Mother's feelings) I should have felt hurt in receiving such an [*sic*] one from a child myself.[77]

[72] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 107.
[73] Perry, *Novel Relations*, 339.
[74] Perry, *Novel Relations*, 38, 347.
[75] Tobin, 'The tender mother', 210.
[76] Habermas, 'Parent-child relationships', 52–3.
[77] Katy Taylor to her sister Sophia Courtauld (20 April 1820), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 698.

George Courtauld defined his 'self' through his children. When absent from them in America, he wrote to Samuel that his children's 'temporal &eternal welfare must always highly interest me, while I retain any consciousness of identity'.[78] Seemingly, fatherhood was fundamental to that identity. Most revealing are the comments that imagine the boundary between child and parent to be blurred. There was an understanding that children's feelings were affected by their parent's state of mind. In 1819 Kate Courtauld told her sister: 'A Mother, dearest Soph, has double motive for repressing undue anxiety, for she never I find suffers alone; she may always find her own troubles reflected in the face of her little innocent'.[79] Other parents presented themselves as bound up with their children. For William Hutton contentment was his adult children's company: 'I confess my children are my treasure, my happiness. I have ardently wished I might not be separated from them. I have hitherto had my wish. The world would only exhibit a barren desert without them'.[80] He lost his third child in infancy, so this sentiment was heartfelt. John Bailey admitted, 'My soul was bound up in the life of the child; and it was to me as an idol'.[81] He worried that this profound link to his child was detrimental to his faith, as did Mary Saxby who commented that after giving birth to twins 'I relapsed into my old courses, laid my books aside, was so taken up with my two children that I forgot my soul'.[82] The epitaph to Thomas Percival, in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1804, however, shows that this was not always seen in a pejorative sense, but as something to admire:

> If ever man could be said to have lived for his children and his friends, rather than for himself, it was he. So unceasing his attention to their interests, so tender his anxiety for their welfare . . . that they seemed almost to have mingled with his consciousness, and to have formed a part of his very essence.[83]

It is perhaps the use of the term 'second self' about children that most evokes this concept.[84] The phrase was used by eighteenth-century contemporaries about a friend, spouse, or relative to illustrate the closeness, intimacy, and like-mindedness of the relationship.[85] It captured all those elements when used about children. In *The Vicar of Bray*, a debate about the merits of making divorce available, the Vicar pointed out that it was harsh that a man who had made an unfortunate choice in marriage and was childless must 'be excluded from that highest of human gratifications, the beholding a second self growing up, to supply our dropping off'.[86] Mary Robinson described her daughter in a letter as her 'adored and affectionate second

[78] George Courtauld to Samuel Courtauld (26 December 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 116.

[79] Kate Taylor to her sister Sophia Courtauld (13 September 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 594.

[80] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 391.

[81] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 76.

[82] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant,* 24.

[83] Cited in Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities', 54.

[84] The phrase had been in existence before this. The *OED* defines 'second self' as a person whom one loves as oneself or is a counterpart of oneself [1605].

[85] For a reference to a friend as a 'second self' see, Amory, *Life of John Buncle*, 102.

[86] *Vicar of Bray*, ch. 23, 69.

self'.[87] Hannah Robertson's description of the harrowing time during which she was pre-deceased by all her nine children, shows how motherhood was an intrinsic element of her sense of 'self'. She was visited by the 'hideous forms' of poverty, sickness—'and (as far as each child may be considered a second self) I may also say, *by death*.'[88] Robertson's concluding words painfully summed up the fundamental role that motherhood played in her sense of identity and subjectivity: 'deprived of my children—abandoned by the world—and deserted (as it were) by myself'.[89]

Robertson's lament reveals that the close binding up of self with a child had profound implications if that child died. Parents' grief was expressed through a corporeal vocabulary of the destruction of parents' bodies and minds. It also undermined, overwhelmed, or destroyed some parents' sense of selves. It could lead to a religious crisis and was often presented as a turning point for the 'self,' a religious sloughing off of the (selfish) self. The Evangelical Faith Gray feared her immense love for her children was punished by God who reclaimed them. As such she used the bereavements, or survived them, in order to confirm her faith.[90] While this is an extreme version shaped by an evangelical frame of mind, its emotions and feelings were not specific to denominations or styles of worship. The loss of the child was experienced as a profound disassembly of self. Thomas Wright's son John was 'painfully torn from my bleeding heart!'[91] Mary Saxby lamented that her baby daughter, already the only surviving sibling of twins, was 'twined round our hearts, like the ivy round the oak.'[92] When these parents talk about their child being torn from their heart, it is wise to remember that this organ was understood as the seat of feeling and self.[93] Often only God kept the parent whole.[94] To survive, Hutton and his wife damned-up their emotion over the loss of their son in 1767 and never discussed it for ten years, though he was in their thoughts every day. Considering his delight in his children this necessitated some killing of self.[95] Parents frequently defined themselves as left empty and alone after such bereavement. The loss of a child redefined people's parental identities. Melesina Trench (1768–1827) would write in the years after her son Frederick died in his third year in 1806 that this was 'the misfortune from which I date my second life, as different, certainly, from the former as two separate modes of being'.[96] Mental breakdown left Hannah Robertson an 'afflicted' mother of loss.[97] After his beloved son died Thomas Wright re-

[87] Cited in Gristwood, *Perdita: Royal Mistress, Writer, Romantic*, 265.
[88] Robertson, *life of Mrs Robertson*, 36.
[89] ibid, 46.
[90] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a.
[91] Wright, *Autobiography*, 181.
[92] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant,* 26.
[93] For the connections between heart, emotions and 'self' see Bound Alberti, *Matters of the Heart*, 2, and 'Introduction: The Heart of the Matter'.
[94] e.g. Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 26–7.
[95] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 109.
[96] Cited in Katharine Kittredge, 'Melesina Chenevix St. George Trench (1768–1827)', Chawton House Library, <http://www.chawtonhouse.org/library/biographies/trench.html#ref8>, accessed 28/6/11.
[97] e.g., Robertson, *life of Mrs Robertson*, 15.

peatedly referred to himself as a 'much-afflicted father', a 'sorrowing father', and a 'weeping father'.[98]

GENDER AND LIFE-CYCLE

Ego-documents reveal that there was no unified personal identity of 'mother' or 'father'. In part, this is because several versions of parenthood and parenting were available in print culture. A number of other factors influenced the aspects preferred and selected. As an engendering process, parenthood is related to historically specific gender identities, and therefore has the potential to change across social ranks and over time.[99] This diversity and complexity is also evident in the different faces of parental identity, which do not map onto simplistic pictures of gender constructions. For example, the ideal of parental tenderness was not specifically a feature of femininity and, thus, maternity, in an era when the culture of sensibility and ideals of Christian manhood advocated that men possess it too. As such it should not be characterised as a 'feminised' rather than patriarchal form of fatherhood.[100] The two features could be inter-twined. Cobbett argued that being a hands-on-father was payment for patriarchal privileges:

> There are still many hours in the twenty-four, that he will have to spare for this duty; and there ought to be no toils, no watchings, no breaking of rest, imposed by this duty, of which he ought not to perform his full share, and that, too, without grudging. This is strictly due from him in payment for the pleasures of the marriage state. What *right* has he to the sole possession of a woman's person; what right to a husband's vast authority; what right to the honourable title and the boundless power of father: what *right* has he to all, or any of these, unless he can found his claim on the faithful performance of all the duties which these titles imply?[101]

The ability to support dependents was so important a component of patriarchal manhood that the inability comprised failed masculinity. Thus notions of male duty and obligation were inextricable from paternal love in motivating men. William Hutton recorded that in 1793: 'my son married; and as I ever thought it the duty of a father to bring forward and aid his son, at Christmas I gave him the trade, reserving the estates for my own use.'[102] In 1819 George Courtauld explained his motivation for establishing his family in America as,

> the *moral certainty* of my being able to form an Establishment in the Western States of America which would supply abundant opportunities for active and extensive usefulness and the comforts of competence and independence for myself and our children

[98] Wright, *Autobiography*, 168, 299–320.

[99] Bailey, 'a very sensible man', 287–92. The acceptance of cultural constructions of fatherhood shape both behaviours and research into father, fatherhood and fathering. Rohner and Veneziano, 'The importance of father love', 384.

[100] Barrell even describes it as a 'drag queen' mode in relation to George III, in *Refiguring Revolutions*, 96.

[101] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 249.

[102] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 221.

> and our children's children to distant generations: I feel it an imperative call of duty to make the attempt needful for this purpose, in the most desirable way.[103]

Signs of failure at paternal provision undermined men's professional identities. John Bailey, who was trying to establish himself as a preacher, was worried about his family increase, 'lest I should be poor, and bring dishonour on that cause, which was more valuable to me than life itself.'[104] And when communities judged men as poor providers, this could demolish their local identity, as Simon Mason's defensive comments reveal:

> some have reproach'd me with being a bad Husband and Father, with having spent that little I got, and starv'd my Family. But how often, (when I could get nothing by Business or Friends) being sensibly touch'd and most grievously affected with the hungry Cries of my Children, have I stript the Coat off my Back and sent it to borrow Money upon, to buy them Bread![105]

Although poor law administrators may have viewed labouring men as unmanly thanks to their inability to provide solely for offspring, the men themselves associated their masculine identity with their ability to provide for children. Pauper men represented themselves as thwarted providers, and popular ballads sang the praises of providing men; by the early decades of the nineteenth century working men were beginning to use this personal identity to seek and justify a political voice.[106]

Just as tenderness was not restricted to women, women also saw themselves as providing, hardworking parents. So a provisioning parental identity did not grow naturally out of patriarchal manhood rooted in economic independence and support of dependents. These mothers were as motivated as fathers by duty and obligation to infant and adult children; indeed they frequently extended their labour and maintenance to grandchildren.[107] Hannah Robertson was proud that she took up a variety of paid work 'for my family'.[108] Women gained a sense of superiority from the role. Indeed, women's life-writings often contrasted the role of provisioning mother with the ineffectual father and husband, men who were in prison for debt, or bankrupt, or had deserted their families. Where such a husband was absent or inadequate, women created an identity around maintaining their children as the family saviour. They may therefore have visualised themselves in this prudent, provisioning version of motherhood because it was an image of agency, conveying independence, courage, and fortitude.

The parental 'self' also varied across the life-course because it was forged in response to particular events, emotions, and moments of crisis. Events and circumstances formed people's experiences of being a parent and their self-perception.

[103] George Courtauld to his wife Ruth Courtauld (1819), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 142.
[104] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 108.
[105] Mason, *A Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 111–12.
[106] McCormack, 'Married Men and the Fathers of Families', 48–51.
[107] e.g., Letters from the pauper Frances Soundy, published in S. King, et al, *Narratives of the Poor in the eighteenth century*.
[108] Robertson, *life of Mrs Robertson*, 23.

Kate Courtauld, for example, described herself as a distraught mother in the early years of her first son's life, but the reasons for this varied. In his infancy it was because she was initially unwell. She wrote to her sister Sophia in November 1819, 'So you see love tis rather a mournful prospect for us. Pat with an infant & so helpless a wife. Mr H makes me almost wean my babe. I find it as much, nay more, than I can do, to remember always that all things are ordained for the best.'[109] As Peter grew a little older, it was because she was separated from her family when her husband got into financial difficulties and they moved to Flanders to live more cheaply. Here motherhood, nevertheless, rendered her somewhat happier despite her dislike of Bruges:

> every thing smiles round me, & when I possess my dearest husband, my beloved Anna and my smiling cherub of a boy, who notwithstanding the rough billows his little bark has already had to contend with, is at present as happy & thank God! as well as though it had been wafted by summer breezes, along the smoothest sea.[110]

Later she was separated from Peter when the couple emigrated to America, and were persuaded that it was unsafe to take the toddler. During the years of separation, her letters revolved around her sadness and frustration at being a mother without access to her son. In 1822 she told her sister, 'I am longing & expect to hear from England & of my darling. I cannot endure to think of him, I want him *so* bad.'[111]

Indeed separation from a child created a new maternal self for some unfortunate women; one encompassing sorrow, loss, and despair.[112] Since motherhood continued to dominate their sense of self and identity, its denial left them bereft not only through physical distance but because their sense of self was affected. A particularly poignant case is that of Arabella Heatley, whose letters to her husband were published for public consumption in the final volume of *Trials for Adultery*. She was forced to leave her nine-month old baby in November 1769 to live in lodgings when her husband discovered she had committed adultery and sought a separation and divorce.[113] Her letters were produced as evidence to the church court since they admitted she was unfaithful. Though the law in some respects effectively denied her the role of mother in consequence of her infidelity, her remorseful, sorrowful letters to her husband stressed her continuing maternal role:

> Forgive me for giving my advice; I am still a mother. I should think you had better wean Tom: if you do not do it now, you must keep nurse all winter, which is a great

[109] Kate Taylor to her sister Sophia Courtauld (13 September 1819), *Courtauld Family Papers*, vol. 2, 594.

[110] Kate Taylor to her sister Sophia Courtauld (20 April 1820), *Courtauld Family Papers*, vol. 2, 700.

[111] Kate Taylor to her sister Sophia Courtauld, (25 November 1822), *Courtauld Family Papers*, vol. 3, 963.

[112] e.g. Kate Taylor's correspondence during her sojourn in America, *Courtauld Family Papers*, vols.2–3. Mothers' petitions to the Foundling Hospital typically used the words 'distraction' and 'distress' to describe the misery of parting with their baby. Evans, *Unfortunate Objects*, 133.

[113] Richard obtained his separation in 1771; He then obtained a private act of parliament to divorce her in 1774. *Trials for Adultery*, vol. 7, London 1780.

> expence to you: if you approve of it I will send Sukey to town to wean him; I can do without a servant; I want no one to wate on me.[114]

She desperately longed to see her son:

> I hope one favour to beg of you, which I hope you will not refuse me, that is, to see my poor child once more, once more—think what I suffer in parting with you both; but I dare say nothing on the subject. I have forfeited all right to be believed, now let actions speak.[115]

She could not be happy without her son and husband: 'as to happiness, that is only in your power to give me; whilst I am an alien from my child and you, it is impossible'.[116] Although her husband allowed her some access to her child, the separation and guilt led her to suicidal feelings and intent.[117] After he relented she wrote:

> Thanks, ten thousand thanks, for the pleasure you give me in seeing my sweet boy: 'tis a pleasure no one but a parent can describe; but 'tis but of very short duration. To-morrow, and we part, perhaps, (nay I hope so) for ever; for my life is a burden, I know not how to bear, when deprived of you and him.[118]

She appealed to the principle of motherhood to alleviate her sufferings. She asked him: 'Why do I live!—I suffer the tortures of the damned. Oh! if ever I was dear to you, by that affection you *bare* [sic] to the dear infant, and by the love your mother bore for you, have pity on a wretch, borne down with calamity'.[119] She continued to ask to see Tom:

> let me once more see my dear babe, let me once more press him to my bosom; 'tis the request of a fond mother, and then welcome death. I trust the all-wise will take care of him—I *feer* he will want a mother's care; but I have lost the privilege of the meanest of the creation.[120]

The life course lent a degree of fluidity and change to individuals' sense of self as parent.[121] This can be apparent in memoirs, which present personal identity at different points in life. Hannah Roberston, for instance, showed several different maternal faces. While a young mother she was the classic tender mother, countering the criticisms of fashionable women. Thus she declared: 'never did I consider myself superior to the duties of a mother; my children were my delight. I nursed the infants, and presided over the education of my eldest daughter and son'.[122] Sadly, this maternal self was soon supplanted by a suffering maternal persona, shaped by the deaths of her children. It began with the death of her infant eldest son. She recalled that 'the loss of this darling child prey'd upon my spirits' until total mental breakdown struck for two years.[123] This bereavement led to a downward economic spiral from 1756, because her husband neglected his business to nurse her. His bankruptcy roused her from her lethargy and she next took on the

[114] Arabella Heatley to Richard Heatley (late 1769 and 1770), *Trials for Adultery*, vol. 7, 60–1.
[115] ibid, 61. [116] ibid, 67.
[117] She refers to taking an ounce of laudanum but recovering, idem, 87–8.
[118] ibid, 65. [119] ibid, 63–4.
[120] ibid, 72. [121] See Blauvelt, 'The work of the heart', 577–92.
[122] Robertson, *life of Mrs Robertson*, 16. [123] ibid, 18–19.

mantle of the hard-working mother who struggled to maintain her family through various labours from running a tavern, school teaching, and selling millinery, before teaching and selling the visual arts she learned as a genteel child.[124] Her tormented role of grieving mother returned as her adult children died in turn.[125] When all her children predeceased her, she concluded her memoir in her late sixties as a destroyed mother who had lost her sense of self. Yet her sacrifice continued, for this memoir was written to seek financial aid to support her grandchildren.[126] The role of motherhood in Hannah's sense of self was multi-faceted and was informed by hard labour, provision, and obligation to her family, as well as by cultural idealisations of sacrifice and tenderness.

The different emphases evident in George Courtauld's self presentations in correspondence with his children over several years also bear some relationship with different stages in his and their life courses. George took on different voices for different children, adapted to their personalities and relationship with him. In his letters to his eldest son Samuel during his apprenticeship (1812–13) he was an advising father. In letters to his younger sons, George and John, he was the guiding, instructive father. He adopted the role of serious religious father in letters to various children, offering them personalised comments about their religious practices. Following a dispute with his eldest children in 1815 he reminded them he was a tender, nursing father who cared for them as infants and 'companionised' them as older children. During a legal battle with his business partner in 1816, George was Samuel's friend, seeking his help and advice. The changing needs and ages of George and his children shaped the way he thought about himself, amplified by his separation and immense physical distance from them. Despite his advancing years, he clung to his paternal personae. In his sixties, he described himself as the determined provider emigrating to new opportunities in America. This allowed him to feel useful. Indeed, the role of parent may have offset the decline and reduction in independence inherent in old age, at least in its early stages. The elderly Jane Pontey wrote to her grandson in 1826 explaining why she was in Liverpool in winter: 'The wish I have to show kindness &attention to all my children brought me to this place at this season of the year—I found they thought them selves neglected'.[127]

One aspect of parenthood might be prioritised over another in order to compensate for failures elsewhere. Thomas Wright's self-fashioning was hardly the model of mature patriarchal manhood, formulated as it was around his failures to achieve a stable marriage, run an economically sound household in the face of the increasing financial burden of numerous children, or obtain independence of means. He cast himself as the victim of circumstance and of family members denying him his rightful property and he freely acknowledged his failures to earn a reasonable livelihood by renting out his cottages, running his farm, and venturing into business. These shortcomings did not affect his sense of self because he shrugged off personal responsibility. He observed, 'as I did not make myself, my

[124] ibid, pp. 20, 21–4, 28, 31. [125] ibid, pp. 37, 41, 42, 44.
[126] ibid, pp. 46–7. [127] Jane Pontey to Joseph Munby (28 November 1826), CYLAL, Acc 54: 237.

want of talents or propensity for trade, etc. is no *moral* defect; it is therefore no *crime*; brings no *guilt* upon my mind; nor can any person *justly* blame or despise me on that account.'[128] Some obviously did, however, and perhaps placing tender fathering at the centre of his personal identity enabled him to present himself as a praiseworthy man. He frequently referred to possessing a good public reputation on account of his paternal behaviour. George Courtauld believed that being a good father compensated for unhappy areas of his life, namely his marriage. He reflected that he put the happiness of parental love 'in the scale to balance the want of enjoyment elsewhere'.[129]

Where a memoir was written for publication, portraying oneself as a good parent was intended to improve the writer's public reputation. Mary Robinson (1758–1800) reconstructed a more palatable public self-image in her memoir written at the end of her life by obscuring her scandalous early years as a high-class courtesan. Instead she emphasised her career as a female author formed by the culture of sensibility, and formulated herself as a women of feeling through her relationship with her mother and her own status as a 'sensible' mother. For example, her description of her daughter's first words was both touching and an advert for exquisite sensibility:

> These little nothings will appear insignificant to the common reader; but to the parent whose heart is ennobled by sensibility, they will become matters of important interest. I can only add, that I walked till near midnight, watching every cloud that passed over the moon, and as often, with a rapturous sensation, hearing my little prattler repeat her observation.[130]

Elizabeth, Lady Craven, similarly used her maternity to denote her great sensibility, perhaps also a way to repair a reputation rent by sexual scandal. For example in *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople*, published in 1789, she noted:

> the word *enfant* always strikes to my heart: among the many reasons I had before, I have now an additional one for feeling about an *enfant* of any sort. I am at this moment above a hundred miles distant from the most affectionate, the most engaging, and the most beautiful child that ever mother had—and for the first time I have ever left him.[131]

PRIORITIES AND TENSIONS

Parenthood was multi-dimensional, and different components might be prioritised over others in specific genres and locations. Thus it is occasionally possible to

[128] Wright, *Autobiography*, 117.
[129] George Courtauld to all his children (1815), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 72.
[130] This occurred when she accompanied her husband during the nine months he was imprisoned for debt, enduring it, she observed, thanks to writing her poetry and caring for her little daughter. Robinson, *Memoir*, 169–70.
[131] Craven, *A journey through the Crimea to Constantinople*, 7.

identify strains emerging in parents' identities as people attempted to reconcile their parental experiences with ideals. In modern life, for instance, the co-existing ideals of the 'breadwinner' and 'involved' father create significant tensions in men's performance of masculinities.[132] In response, some men formulated individualised 'hybrid' paternal forms by combining the ideas of both.[133] Men in the long eighteenth century may have done something similar. As shown above, a man's ability to perform his masculine self as provisioning father was seriously constrained by structural and personal factors, which left some men agonisingly aware of what they should be, but unable to achieve it. Wealthy men might feel disappointed that they were unable to achieve their preferred parental role because life's events did not conform to their hopes. George Courtauld observed in 1823:

> *My* views in the progress of Life have uniformly been not the pleasures of greatness or of luxurious living, but those of active usefulness &domestic comfort. Yet—altho' always actively engaged in some pursuit which appeared pointed out by Providence (in the circumstances allotted me) as my proper path—my domestic enjoyments have often resembled rather the pleasures of a *Man on a Journey*, than of a *Man at Home*.[134]

Other men faced tensions in balancing different elements of fatherhood. Though John Shaw wanted to be with his children, his determination to build a successful hardware business entailed extensive travelling to secure orders in the North West and Midlands. At times the two ambitions clashed outright. In November 1819 he was missing his family: 'It really does appear as if the pleasures and enjoyments of home acquired much more weight and influence upon ones mind every time I go from home and if it goes on thus progressively shall trust be obliged to remain at home altogether'.[135] This remained unresolved for some years. On 3 December 1823, his wife quietly rebuked him:

> We should have been very glad to see you on Sunday if you had popp'd over. John sadly wants to know if you will not come at Xmas & perhaps his mother would have no objections to know if she liked to ask—you talk hard about staying at home now as I said before I would give my consent for you to take half as much travelling as you do, provided it was at 4 times in the year. If you thought you could do with less—some times taking one part of a journey & sometimes another & by that method you would see all your customers occasionally & I should have time to put the house to rights in your absences. What think you of my scheme—I suppose it will not answer.[136]

Perhaps she stimulated feelings of guilt, for on Christmas day 1823 he wrote despondently to his wife:

[132] Lupton and Barclay, *Constructing Fatherhood*, 146.

[133] This term means actively participating in family life and child care. Tereskinas, 'Men on paternity leave in Lithuania: between hegemonic and hybrid masculinities'.

[134] George Courtauld to his daughter Sophia Courtauld (20 May 1823), *Courtauld Family Papers*, vol. 3, 1024.

[135] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (28 November 1819), CRL, Shaw/16.

[136] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (3 December 1823), CRL, Shaw/63.

> I have been sadly out of sorts today could not help thinking most of the day I was at home this day twelvemonth—and so I have thought I may have been today and have lost for a short time in the sweet caresses and endearments of wife and children the cares and anxieties of business—but it is now too late to repent and the only consolation remaining is that I shall be at home a few days earlier than if I had come home.[137]

Evidence of women experiencing tensions in their understandings of themselves as mothers occasionally emerges in the writings of those who held an intense religious vocation and also sought to fulfil their maternal and domestic role.[138] In the Quaker minister Mary Dudley's (1750–1823) correspondence and journals she presented herself as spiritually compelled to travel in ministry. However, this compulsion conflicted with her role as the mother of eight children. During her absences from her children she suffered immense anxieties. On Sunday, 14 April 1786 she 'felt a stop in my mind to proceeding this day to Knockballymaher . . . some uneasiness respecting home had been hovering about me for several days'. She ignored her anxiety and went about her business, but on returning to her lodgings she got a message that the woman who cared for her children had taken measles and was removed from the house. She confessed, 'I sensibly felt this intelligence, and the struggle was not small to endeavour after, and attain, a degree of quietude, sufficient to discover the right path. I went distressed to bed, I think honestly resigned, either to go forward or return home, as truth opened'. Since her thoughts kept turning to Knockballymaher she took that as a divine message and went there the following day and returned home thereafter to find her husband and children in good health.[139] Troublingly, she interpreted her anxieties about leaving her children as undermining her 'call' and demonstrating her failure to place her trust in God and submit to Him. This irresolvable conflict attacked her sense of self. In June 1792, hearing the call to visit Quaker Friends in France, Guernsey, and the north of Britain, she confessed 'how much has it cost my nature, yea, almost its destruction, to be in the degree I am, loosened from my precious domestic ties'. Her daughter precedes this extract with the statement that it reveals the 'trial which it was to her affectionate feelings, and the conflicts she endured, when thus about to leave her husband and children'.[140]

CONCLUSION

Parenthood was no fixed identity for life-writers. It modified according to circumstances and emotions, both at the time and during the process of reflective writing. Thus it is difficult for a historian to chart common patterns of personal identity over time or individual life-courses. Both were likely to change in individualised

[137] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (25 December 1823), CRL, Shaw/21.
[138] For other examples see Colpus, 'Preaching Religion, Family and Memory ', 38–54.
[139] Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 38, 43–4.
[140] Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 115.

and unpredictable ways and were probably different with different children. Nevertheless, some similarities are obvious. Common to all the different faces of being a parent were the problems and hard work involved. Parental identities were frequently based on struggle, emotional upheaval, anxiety and tension. Nonetheless all were consequences of the deep and intense love that parents, poor or rich, felt for children and the difficulties in doing right by them and for them.

The final section of the book investigates the experiences of parenting across generations. It examines the many values that parents were supposed to transfer to their offspring and the means by which they did so. This, along with the other aspects of child-care, was not easy and it reveals how parents shared the burden of the hard work and the ways in which parental involvement in their children's lives and vice versa evolved over the life-course.

PART III

GENERATIONS: TRANSMITTED VALUES, SHARED ENDEAVOURS, AND EVOLVING RELATIONSHIPS

I am the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.
The years-heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance—that is I;
The eternal thing in man,
That heeds no call to die

Heredity by Thomas Hardy

Historians often study parents and children in isolation, focusing on the binary relationship between one parent and one child, or generic parents and children. This relationship is then examined at one point in time, or a series of them. Little is known of interactions between one parent and several children, or between one child and two parents, or between all of these and other family members or unrelated carers. Nor is the flow of parenting visible, as it adapted or failed to adapt to different ages, demands, events, times and places. Both its sheer contingency and capacity to change from hour to hour, year to year, and child to child are neglected. So too is its enduring nature, for parent-child relationships do not end even at death. This section seeks to illuminate some aspects of this multi-faceted dynamic relationship. The analytical framework used is one of generations in the sense of a kin relationship and genealogical lineage, rather than an age-specific cohort.[1] It is possible to see generational changes in families with regard to household form, property transmission, geographical mobility and occupational status over generations, thanks to quantitative-based studies.[2] Oral history techniques also give insights into changing views and values across two or three generations of twentieth-century families.[3] Qualitative accounts of intergenerational relationships before this are rare.

Yet an inter-generational approach is invaluable, given that the structural form of the Georgian family may have influenced family relationships. Tamara Hareven proposed that when the age of family members was more heterogeneous within the family, because child-bearing continued across a woman's child-bearing years, then generational boundaries were less distinct in everyday life. Moreover, when transitions to adult life were not narrowly age-related, then 'more intensive interaction among different age groups within family and community' occurred, 'providing a greater sense of continuity and interdependence among people and among

[1] Hareven, 'Aging and generational relations', 440.

[2] Surveyed in Anderson, *Approaches to the history of the western family*, ch. 4. An excellent example is Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, ch. 2.

[3] e.g. Koleva, 'Daughters' stories: family memory and generational amnesia'; Schuman and Scott, 'Generations and Collective Memories'.

generations at various points in the life course.'[4] Other work indicates that it is not necessarily generational differences that marked family relations, but interdependence. Over a decade ago, Ilana Ben-Amos depicted the reciprocal bonds of parent-child relationships in her valuable corrective to 'assumptions about the relative lack of generational interactions and the minimal role of obligations to help parents'.[5] New research on kin alliances and networks shows similar 'enmeshed patterns of kinship and connectedness' in English family life.[6] Moreover, attention to expectations of relationships, as well as actual exchanges, among kin reveals the extensiveness and range of those connections.[7] As Naomi Tadmor comments, too often the family and family relationships are seen as dichotomous: extended or nuclear; traditional or modern; based on interest or affection.[8] She uses the term 'extended-nuclear' family to capture more accurately the variations, comings and goings, and differences over a family's life-time.[9] The chapters that follow contribute to this research agenda by considering parenting as a work in progress across a lifetime and located within a web of inter-generational and kinship relationships.

Correspondence is the dominant source in this section, since it builds an impression of the way parenting and parent-child relationships altered across time and space. When one spouse was regularly absent over a period of several years, for example, it is possible to see parents' aims, views, hopes and interaction with children changing over time and at which points. Letters are combined with personal memory as recorded in autobiographies. Memories of parents and relationships with parents and children expose how people negotiated life transitions. Both letters and correspondence contain records of the key family and social values and practices that families aimed to transmit across generations, along with insights into the mechanics of this process. Moreover, accounts of childhood and youth in memoirs bring together direct personal memory with collective family memory, itself an example of the transmission of family influences across generations.[10]

The transferral of specific values from one generation to the next, and parents' role in that, emerges incidentally in research into a range of topics. Work on educational strategies shows how socially-appropriate life-skills and gender identities were conveyed through the curricula of informal and formal education, both of which entailed parental involvement or approval.[11] The political socialisation of children and youths also reveals how families' political views were handed on through the generations.[12] Scholarship on the formation of gender identities,

[4] Hareven, 'Aging and generational relations', 447–8.
[5] Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal bonding', 292.
[6] Tadmor, 'Early modern English kinship in the long run', 15.
[7] ibid, 27.
[8] ibid, 23–6.
[9] ibid, 14, 24.
[10] Thompson, 'Family myth', 13.
[11] Hilton and Sheffrin, *Educating the child in Enlightenment Britain*; Hilton, *Women and the shaping of the nation's young*.
[12] Gleadle, *Borderline citizens: women, gender and political*; Rogers, '"First in the House": Daughters on Working-class Fathers and Fatherhood', 126–37, and idem 'In the Name of the Father: Political Biographies by Radical Daughters'; Richardson, 'You know your father's heart'.

especially at the level of societal dissemination through prescription, sermons and print culture and through the medium of families, is also helpful.[13] Historians of art reveal the way in which ideas grouped around the notion of dynasty and lineage were transmitted through family portraits. Finally, studies of religious groups offer insights into the ways in which families of nonconformist persuasion inculcated their religious beliefs and lifestyle in the next generation.[14] Too often some of these issues are seen only in terms of gender discourses or social control. Yet behavioural values also functioned at the familial level and had considerable impact on the way that children and parents interacted.

The values that cropped up time and again for discussion and promotion were piety, virtue, industriousness, filial duty, and 'domesticity,' or the celebration of a united family within the home. These are all currently seen as particularly characteristic of evangelical and dissenting family life.[15] Yet recent research questions how far such concepts were chiefly evangelical qualities. William Van Reyk, for instance, has shown that the notions of 'domesticity', the 'world', a masculine 'calling', and aspirations to gendered separate spheres of 'public' and 'private' were not confined to Evangelical Christians. Chapter seven adds more weight to the view that such ideas were not only multifaceted in form but held by a range of Christians.[16] Indeed, what becomes clear is that the generational transmission of values was a process that entailed layering, multiplicity, and complexity. It was also historically specific. Of course the 'values' outlined here were not new or novel, except perhaps the concept of 'domesticity', though it too is easily traced back to the later seventeenth century. As noted, these are longstanding Christian values. Furthermore, contemporaries of all periods had held a strong conviction that disseminating such values would shape the next generation's behaviour and conduct. The Georgian period was, however, arguably different. So heavily influenced by sensibility, these parents felt they could shape emotional responses and development in the same process.

So, middling and elite parents were inundated by cultural expectations and social demands in rearing offspring. At one and the same time, and in addition to formal education, they were to be affectionate, tender guides and companions, and channels of essential moral values. How could they achieve the aspirational feeling, emotive style of parenting and the time for personally delivering important societal values? The practicalities of it all were surely against them? After all, few people had only one child upon whom they lavished all their time and attention. Equally, though middling and genteel women were expected to focus upon on the labours of maternity, they had numerous calls upon their time in the domestic sphere, including leisure and sociability, but also in business and trade. Labouring women,

[13] Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, chs. 1–4.

[14] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, chs. 2, 3, 7.

[15] This is partly due to the seminal work of Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*. Also see Hilton, *Women and the shaping of the nation's young*, ch. 4.

[16] Van Reyk, 'Christian ideals of manliness', 1068–71. For the benign role of the Anglican Church in the education of children and in transmitting John Locke's central propositions about the needs of children see Steedman, *Master and Servant*, ch. 6, 119.

of course, had even fewer opportunities since they had to earn an income as well as mother children. Fathers too faced a model of manhood in all ranks that increasingly demanded hard work and long hours to acquire local credit, or promote business and professional lives.[17] Of course, the answer is that the labours of child-rearing were slotted alongside all activities and shared. The former is captured, for example, in John Harden's sketches of his family in the early nineteenth century. His engraving 'Card Game' shows four adult members of the family gathered round the card table in the evening, while just to their left, her feet resting on a footstool, is a mother nursing her baby.[18] Early modern families from all ranks had moved youths around households to gain training and skills. Eighteenth-century aristocratic and landed families employed governesses and tutors in addition to formal schooling. Historians of eighteenth-century families on the move, show that it was not uncommon for children to be cared for by families other than their own, a feature accelerated by imperial movements across the Atlantic world.[19] Fictional accounts of Victorian family life reveal continued expectations that many children were at least partly raised by people other than or in addition to their biological parents.[20] Thus, for all the emphasis on the intimate parent-child bond in the Georgian period, parenting was rarely a sole joint venture of mother and father.

Chapter eight explores this 'shared' parenting in families that did not all have the means to employ long term governesses. It suggests that shared parenting actually facilitated more of the idealised elements of parenthood to be enacted. Too often, studies have explored the close parent-child bond, *or* wider family relationships, *or* the household structure but rarely consider how all features of family life might have interacted.[21] When the structural elements of the household-family are integrated with the kin network and family affections it becomes clear that the 'household-family' structure and the 'extended-nuclear family' aided the fashion for intense intimacy in parent-child relationships by distributing the labours of parenting. Recognising that close affectionate parent-child relationships could coexist with extensive caring arrangements helps sidestep outdated theses of shifts in the nature of family relationships from 'open', 'traditional' family types to 'closed', 'modern' ones.[22]

Also indistinct are the life-course aspects of parenting.[23] The glimpses of parenting after a child grew up show that it was ongoing and reactive. Parents and children were bound by reciprocal duties and obligations in maturity and parents

[17] e.g. Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 30–4.

[18] John Harden (1772–1847), Card Game (engraving), © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[19] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 61–4.

[20] Nelson, *Family Ties*, 145.

[21] For a study integrating household structure and life-course perspective see Gruber, 'Children and their Parental Households'.

[22] For the continuance of the 'household-family' into the nineteenth century alongside a definition of family that distinguished between co-resident members by status, see Barker and Hamlett, 'Living above the shop: Home, Business, and Family'.

[23] Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal bonding', 291.

played a crucial part in aiding their offspring when married life caused problems. What other events in life impacted upon their relationships as both parties aged? Did parents experience changing understandings of parenting, related to their children's stage of development and their own sense of self? As Blauvelt points out, 'emotions are literally a work-in-process in response to adult experience'.[24] A life-course perspective offers one way to address some of these questions. Tamara Hareven identified three dimensions to the 'life-course paradigm' that she formulated. One attends to the timing of life transitions, such as the entry into and exit from different roles within community, education, work and family over the life-course within historically-specific contexts. The second examines the synchronisation of individual life transitions with collective familial ones, such as leaving home, getting married, entering work, and their impact on generational relations. The third dimension of the life-course perspective explores the historical forces that impacted upon the life-course and their indirect transmission to the next generation.[25] Chapter nine adopts a very loose life-course perspective by plotting the moments at which parent-child relationships were perceived to change or experienced as such. These shifts often occurred at transitional points clustered around major life-course stages and events: aging, marriage, crisis and death.[26] In each of these phases, parents and children were forced to respond to new changing conditions and, thus, found themselves rethinking their own and each other's positions.

The aim of this final section is therefore simply to recognise the capacity for change inherent in being parented and being a parent and to acknowledge the contingent qualities of family relationships. The picture that emerges is infinitely more dynamic than the rather static ones sometimes offered in histories of the family. It also lays bare the broader understandings of family, which did indeed accommodate servants and paid carers, and reveals the extensive range of expectations that parents and children held about their relationships with each other and other kin. At all levels of society, household and kinship ties were drawn upon to smooth the labours of parenting and the kaleidoscopic stages of the parent-child life-course.

[24] Blauvelt, 'The work of the heart', 586.
[25] Hareven, ''Aging and generational relations', 439, 440.
[26] For a sociological study of life transitions and generations see Brannen and Nilsen, 'From fatherhood to fathering: transmission and change'.

7

Transferring Family Values

we again live in our children.[1]

Parenting forged the family chain that connected past and future generations, fashioning in children the precious links conveying familial and personal qualities and values. In 1811 one woman described a granddaughter as 'like her own dear mother become a child again'.[2] Cobbett informed his male readers, 'it is *yourself* that you see in your children.'[3] Children were also the repository of parental hopes. Hannah Robertson recalled her feelings in the 1770s: 'as far as it may be considered that we again live in our children, I had now everything to hope, as it respected (at least) the flattering prospects of my eldest daughter'.[4] The hopes were that offspring would replicate good qualities and eradicate bad ones, transferring family worth in loved traits, prized capacities, and moral principles. All this was to be achieved through the transmission of social, cultural and familial values. To some extent this was a mindset that sought familial stasis, but it also acknowledged family evolution. William Hutton, for example, saw his son as carrying on family qualities, but understood he was an individual nonetheless: 'of a family fond of books, Thomas surpasses all. None of his predecessors have had either [sic] the spirit, the taste, or the means, to accomplish what he has done'.[5] As such, in transferring values, parents were conduits for numerous national, familial and personal expectations.

TRANSMISSION AND INHERITANCE

Diffusing personal or familial values to the next generation was a widespread parental aspiration. In 1819 George Courtauld's declared objective was to render his offspring 'rational, affect[iona]te, & c pious.'[6] The biological imperative to prepare

[1] Hannah Robertson, on the hopes she invested in her adult daughter in the 1770s, Robertson, *Life of Mrs Robertson*, 32.
[2] Sophia Courtauld to her sister Kate Taylor (30 August 1811), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 66.
[3] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 225.
[4] Robertson, *Life of Mrs* Robertson, 32.
[5] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 395.
[6] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (8 January 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 126.

offspring for independent maturity was supplemented by prescriptive and scriptural advice that parents educate and train their children to benefit family, society and nation. It was obviously a worrying responsibility. In 1822 Elizabeth Wilkinson advised her daughter, Elizabeth Shaw, 'You must not give way to anxiety respecting the chil[dre]n instruct them & give them up in prayer to the Lord who alone is able to give you wisdom and them grace to re'd your instruction.'[7] A variety of factors motivated parents. The transmission of appropriate values would aid them in later years.[8] As William Cobbett informed readers in his advice for fathers in 1829: ' "Little children," says the Scripture, "are like arrows in the hands of the giant" ', citing Psalm 127:4.[9] He meant that a large number of children were a blessing, and, further, that children born in their parent's youth would survive to be their comforts in old age. There was a very altruistic impulse too; the joys of seeing children fulfil their own lives, opportunities and promise.

The parental endeavour to transmit values was understood to have very long-term effects. While childhood was now considered a distinctive phase in life well-suited to the transmission of important values, in practice, the process continued beyond into youth and adulthood.[10] Advice literature, for instance, stressed that parents' moral instruction and example would be influential throughout a child's lifetime. The Reverend Richard Cecil (1748–1810) noted its tenacity when he explained, 'I had a pious mother, who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them.' Children simply could not escape: 'Parental influence thus cleaves to a man; it harasses him—it throws itself continually in his way'. Thus he advised parents to persevere, for if a father's advice had no immediate result 'perhaps, after he has been in his grave twenty years, his son remembers what his father told him'.[11] In the same vein, the author of *Hints for the improvement of early education and nursery discipline* (1819), Louisa Hoare (1784–1836), concluded: 'How many eminent, how many excellent men have attributed their most valuable attainments to the impressions made on their minds, by the early care of female relatives, and more especially by that of Mothers!'.[12] Henry Fielding envisaged a generational succession of virtuous behaviour: 'If every father remembered his own thoughts and inclinations, when he was a son, and every son remembered what he expected from his father, when he himself was in a state of dependency, this one reflexion would keep men from being dissolute or rigid in these several capacities'. The fictitious Bilsons so successfully transferred familial values that their virtues lived in their children: 'the Family changed its Persons, but not its Manners.'[13] Braidwood likewise warned parents that their conduct 'not only affects the present generation, but extends its influence to future ages.'[14] If a mother could get one child to 'hold

[7] Elizabeth Wilkinson to her daughter Elizabeth Shaw (24 January 1822), CRL, Shaw/85.
[8] French and Rothery, 'Upon Your Entry into the World', 413.
[9] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 225.
[10] Calvert, *Children in the house*, 56–61.
[11] Pratt, *Remains of the Reverend. Richard Cecil*, 150–1, 153.
[12] Hoare, *Hints for the improvement of early education and nursery discipline*, 172–3.
[13] Fielding, *The universal mentor*, 159; Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, 291.
[14] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 7.

fast that which is good', Hoare said, then it would be a blessing 'not only to himself, but, to his children, and his children's children'.[15] Replicating the good in each generation had enormous social value, just as its failure endangered society.[16] One of the moral virtues of a Christian man, as published in the *Lady's Magazine*, in 1781, was that 'he knows that bad examples from parents seldom fail making wicked children: these have children in their turn who are corrupted in the same manner: thus it proceeds without end.'[17] Much therefore was invested in the project of promoting values to one's offspring.

How were values passed on? Some modes of transmission were dismissed by those with a particular agenda. In carving out a professional space in the realm of childbirth and medical childcare, William Cadogan contrasted the transmission of scientific knowledge acquired by educated men's learned observation and by empirical evidence with the 'unlearned' acquisition 'of Examples and transmitted Customs of their Great Grand-mothers'.[18] Yet for the most part, parents were awarded a vital role in transmitting values through instruction and example and it was one that was increasingly carrying extra weight. Representations of juvenile delinquency in the eighteenth-century Newgate Calendars, for example, moved from blaming it on the errors in youths' tempers or the absence of appropriate restraints to making parents and masters in charge of youths culpable for their criminal behaviour from the 1770s onwards.[19] Parents' function was especially critical given contemporary understandings about inheritance, wherein children inherited both genetic factors and distinguishing qualities acquired by the parents during the course of their lives, presumably passed on by example.[20] Catharine Hutton dedicated her novel, published in 1813 to '*My beloved and respected Father*, To you, from whom I inherit the Faculties which have enabled me to compose a Book.'[21] People hoped that children would inherit prized familial attributes. This is clear in Lucy Gray's poem composed for her nephew on his birthday: 'Mays't thou, dear Boy, thro' life inherit | Thy Father's worth—thy Mother's merit | Thy Grandsire's pure and noble spirit | My William'.[22] As her comment 'through life' indicates, inheritance was an ongoing process, occurring after birth as well as genetically at conception. Richard Edgeworth's 'On the education of country gentleman,' published in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1810, conceptualized parental example as a form of inheritance:

> Much has been attributed to hereditary propensities, which arise from the recollection of examples, seen in childhood. These recur to the mind at the ages when they can be imitated: hence it has often been observed that children who had no resemblance to their parents when they were young, become like them when they grow older.[23]

[15] Hoare, *Hints for the improvement of early education and nursery discipline*, 172–3.
[16] For the social and national benefit derived from parenting see ch. 4.
[17] *LM*, 1781, 421.
[18] Cadogan, *Essay upon Nursing*, 3.
[19] Boker, 'Childhood and Juvenile Delinquency', 141–4.
[20] Calvert, *Children in the House*, 57.
[21] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 393.
[22] Lucy Gray to her nephew William Gray (12 December 1811), CYLAL, M 3 (e).
[23] *LM*, 1810, 506.

Thus in Enlightenment minds, the notion of acquired characteristics became a vision of improving humankind. No wonder then that parental exemplars were considered so crucial, fundamental as they were to the very basis of future generations.

The vehicles for transmitting values varied. Schooling and parental instruction were vital, but familial socialisation was valuable too, perhaps more so as children matured. Conversation was an informal educational tool.[24] It was also pleasurable. Elizabeth Shaw Senior looked forward to her teenage son's imminent return from selling the family business's wares, pleased that he was thinking about the direction his faith would take, concluding: 'shall be glad to converse with you on that subject on your return'.[25] Visual and print culture was much deployed. Pretty scraps and books aimed at children conveyed appropriate values. In 'My Father,' for instance, the son asks: 'And who as I up to Manhood grew, | Who taught me what was just and true; | As round the fire-side we drew? | My Father' (figure 16). Books intended

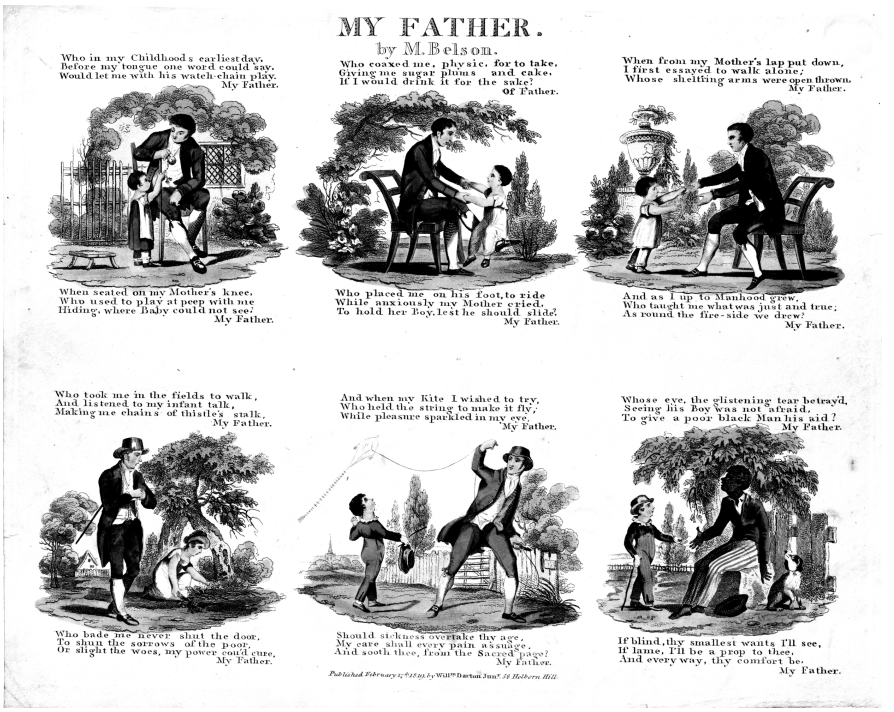

Fig. 16. *My Father. By M. Belson* (1819). These sentimental illustrations and accompanying verses celebrate the tender father's relationship with his son and key paternal functions.

[24] Cohen, 'Familiar Conversation', passim.

[25] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (9 September 1802), CRL, Shaw/35 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

for children like *The Happy Family, or, Winter evenings' employment* by 'A Friend of Youth' guided readers with fitting moralising stories. The compiler added illustrations by Thomas Bewick in order to make the whole more appealing to children.[26] In 1799 Elizabeth wrote to John Shaw explaining: 'have sent you a volume of the Percepter, take great care of it read it peruse it with attention, it contains much useful knowledge'. She finished:

> Your sister has wrote you out the inclos'd, commit them to memory, repeat them to yourself when you lie down, they will leave wolsome impression on your mind & awake with you in the morning. May the character there decrib'd be yours my ever dear child, good night, sweet may your slumbers be.[27]

As these letters suggest, family correspondence was the vehicle by which parents continued to promote values to absent and adult offspring. For example, the newly married Elizabeth Shaw informed her husband in 1813, that she had just received a letter from her parents who 'give me a deal of good advice which I hope will not be lost upon me'.[28] Her mother-in-law, Elizabeth senior, used different styles of writing to fulfil her task. In one letter that opened with a fairly sharp rebuke that her son must be a man and get used to travelling, she continued with a poem she had composed to help him. Importantly, it also served as a vehicle for conveying the principles she wanted to promote:

> You are much on my thoughts, as I sat at work a few days ago I compos'd a few lines for you. The subject is better than the poetry, as you are far distant from us, it may render it more accomplishd.
>
> Thro' all the var[y]ing scenes of life
> Look to the first cause for aid;
> To guide your steps a[l]right.
> Guided by him you need not fear,
> Tho' storms should rise,
> And oceans none guarded by his parental arm
> Your virtues safe from every tempting snare
> His grace will shield thee
> When thy strength might fail
> And bear thee conyvenor thro' the tempters wiles.
> Look up to him he'll stear
> Thy doughtful course
> And fix thy habitation,
> Were best twill suit thy present and immortal state.
> Then when the billowing storms
> of life are over he'll land
> thee safe on his celestial shore

[26] *The Happy Family, or, Winter evenings' employment*.
[27] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (1799) CRL, Shaw/27 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.
[28] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (6 June 1813), CRL, Shaw/40A.

> There if heaven permits with grateful
> [edge of sheet] shal I meet my child.

The letter ended with the same combination of great love and goading. She signed off 'Farewell my much lov'd child. May heaven guard your slumbers' and added the postscript: 'You mention'd a young simpleton that turn'd back. Remember how he was laugh'd at for a fool & blockhead'.[29]

The preservation and projection of family values were also facilitated by journals and memoirs. Ostensibly a personal record of her daily life, the values that Faith Gray hoped to transmit to her offspring and beyond were woven throughout her diary.[30] Memoirists remembered parental lessons and passed these on along with their own doctrines to their offspring and future generations. If they wrote for a wider audience this might involve the dissemination of their family's values more widely. Thomas Holcroft announced that he would recount early memories with 'the chief intention of them being to excite an ardent emulation in the breast of youthful readers; by shewing them how difficulties may be endured, how they may be overcome, and how they may at last contribute, as a school of instruction, to bring forth hidden talent.'[31] Material objects may also have reminded the owner of particular values held by parents. In February 1773 Henry Tolcher sent James Northcote the gift of a watch. His letter explained his intent to offer James the best advice he could, which 'is to keep a good watch upon yourself; and to have your good father daily before your eyes.' To this end he gave James a watch engraved with his father's name so 'that when you look at how your time passes away you will be naturally led many times to think on your good father'.[32]

The most frequently mentioned family values in these records were piety, virtue, industriousness, filial duty and domesticity. The values were not as discrete as this themed structure might suggest. The goal was a rounded Christian individual, so the package of principles would be promoted together. Thus in 1818 George Courtauld told his youngest son John that he ought to make the most of his time in Edinburgh awaiting their planned move to America. He explained that Jack was reaching an age at which he was becoming reasonable, and, therefore, useful 'and more and more actuated by the simple *desire* to do *right* upon the *highest* principles—gratitude and reverence for God—warm affection for your parents and friends—and kindly dispositions to all about you'.[33] It is unclear whether the communication of these particular values worked. What is patent, however, is the effort to inculcate them and the extent to which parents and offspring used the rhetoric when thinking about themselves.

[29] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (30 August possibly 1801), CRL, Shaw/30 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.
[30] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a.
[31] Holcroft, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 57.
[32] His father was a watchmaker. Northcote, *Life of the Painter*, 124, reel 0141.
[33] George to his son John Minton Courtauld (22 July 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 400.

PIETY

Religious instruction was considered one of parents' primary tasks and they attempted to implant religious values from childhood.[34] An example of the effort spent by devout parents is evident in the fervently evangelical Arabella Davies's published letters to her children, written in the 1770s.[35] Family correspondence shows the variety of other means by which parents sought to promote piety in sons and daughters. They insisted that it was the only way to become a virtuous adult. Elizabeth Shaw wanted to keep her son John safe while he was out of her purview, so she advised him that whatever he was doing he must:

> remember the Eye of God is upon you, & that your most secret thoughts lie open to him, you will then never dare to do amiss, dayly beg his assisting grace to preserve you from temptations within & without, and think he will direct all your future steps, & guide you in the paths of virtue & happiness.[36]

Indeed, the absence of faith was indicative of poor character. A decade or so later, in 1813, George Courtauld explained to his son Samuel, 'those who are not religious have uniformly—necessarily, I presume—a very lax morality'.[37] The repeated message for parents and children was simple: to be a good adult one must acquire religious principles.

Religiosity, parents claimed, would make children's lives easier to bear. They consoled their sons and daughters that God's works were for their own good, even when it did not appear so at the time.[38] In 1813 Ruth asked her son George 'what child can feel uncomfortable that knows he is continually under the care of a kind affectionate Father, who is unceasingly watching over him for his good?' She reassured him that 'every thing be assur'd for your good, if you love him as you ought'.[39] Just a few months after his mother died, in 1820, Jane Pontey discussed with her sixteen-year-old grandson a sale of property which had returned a poor value and advised,

> we must learn patience by the things which we suffer the Lord still reineth; what we know not now we shall know in a better world; not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge & he can make up every loss to you in his own time & way . . . however dark some of his dispensations may appear the mercies that yet remain must not be over looked but received with thankfulness.[40]

[34] As discussed in chapter 3.

[35] Davies, *Letters from a parent to her children*.

[36] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (no date), CRL, Shaw/28 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

[37] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (23 June 1813), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 43.

[38] For God directing one's life see Jane Pontey to her grandson Joseph Munby (31 December 1825), CYLAL, Acc 54:234.

[39] Ruth Courtauld to her son George Courtauld (21 August 1813), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 86.

[40] Jane Pontey to her grandson Joseph Munby (17 August 1820), CYLAL, Acc 54: 227.

In 1826 she was still telling her by now adult grandson that he and his siblings should depend upon God 'for every good we receive & every evil we escape'.[41] As this suggests, parents persisted in pointing out appropriate values to youths and adult children. Elizabeth Shaw told her largely adult son 'you was when you went from home piesly inclined, religion was pleasant to you. Should you by not being plac'd in a religious family, lose that happy propensity never more should I know an happy hour'.[42] After a lengthy criticism of her daughter's attitude to settling in America, Ruth Courtauld finished her letter: 'Farewell, dear Cath[eri]ne, and may that God who alone *can* speak peace to your soul, and give strength and energy to your mind and body to bear up under these difficulties teach you remember you have to rely on yourself.'[43] That piety brought solace was a parental lesson that parents did not tire of. Elizabeth Wilkinson reminded her daughter and, probably, herself in 1822, a year when her husband was being treated for insanity, and she was herself experiencing ill health, that 'there is no way to be happy but submitting patiently to the will of his providence who can bring to the gates of death and restore health again'.[44]

After all, parents promoted pious behaviours that were intended to endure through life. Offspring should be ever mindful of God in all their daily actions. In 1817 Jane Munby held up a successful uncle as an example to her son Joseph, observing that 'he always had the fear of God before his Eyes [and] always endeavoured to act as in [H]is presence'.[45] George Courtauld reminded his daughter Sophia in 1819 that in life 'we must endeavour more & more constantly—habitually & uniformly—to feel *satisfied* with the Providences of God towards us, *waiting* for our Lord with *patient* expectation, *ready* at all times to obey *his* call, to follow *his* lead'.[46] Parents advised young children to pray every day. Told precisely this when unhappy at school in 1813, George Courtauld junior obviously got confused about how to do so. His elder sister Catherine told him he should make up his prayers. He replied on 4 September:

> I have read in some books that it was not right to make extempore prayer, because it was being too familiar, and especially for such a little fellow as I am; but Mama has told me that every night I ought to think what faults I have done in the day, and pray to God to forgive me and to enable me to do better for the future; and this I do in the best manner I am able.[47]

[41] Jane Pontey to her grandson Joseph Munby (28 November 1826), CYLAL, Acc 54: 237.

[42] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (no date), CRL, Shaw/36 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

[43] Ruth Courtauld to her husband and children (17 December 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 866–7. Thomas Wilkinson agreed with his married daughter that it would be nicer to live closer and consoled her by observing that in the shortness of time they would be reunited to be parted no more. (15 December 1815), CRL, Shaw/80.

[44] Elizabeth Wilkinson to her daughter Elizabeth Shaw (29 March 1822), CRL, Shaw/86.

[45] Jane Munby to her son Joseph Munby (20 February 1817), CYLAL, Acc 54: 226.

[46] George Courtauld to his daughter Sophia Courtauld (24 September 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 597.

[47] George Courtauld II to his sister Catherine [Kate] Courtauld (4 September 1813), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 92.

John Shaw's ill and anxious mother recommended:

> I would have you put your psalm or hymn books in your pocket. You can bring them with you of a Sunday morning. Get that hymn by heart in the call to the unconverted, how good is that when in the slippery paths of youth with heedless steps I ran, thy arm unseen, convei'd me safe, and led me up to man.[48]

Thomas Bewick's father 'begged I would never omit, morning & eve[nin]g addressing myself to my maker & that if I ceased to do so, then he believed & feared, every evil would follow it'.[49] These parents saw piety as a manner of thinking and living that would bring their offspring happiness in life and after.

Not all religious values flowed down from parents to children. There are several examples of it moving in the other direction. John Bailey converted his father to his Baptist faith.[50] Adult children shared religious thoughts with their parents, as Jane Munby did with her mother in 1804 when beset with worry due to the sudden deaths of several people she knew. Other offspring consoled parents in times of need.[51] William Gray correspondence with his father in the 1770s discussed his religious awakening and delighted that his father was undergoing a similar process, which he endeavoured to nurture.[52] William seems to have found this easier to do by letter. He observed that

> as my own situation would naturally make me very anxious for those who are near and dear to me, I was very desirous to have you made sensible of this grand and needful point and [torn] gladly have explaind it when with you, but [torn] inexperience and Doubts (which even then hung upon me) prevented it.

Thus he was overjoyed to hear that his father 'had the same sense of this important subject with myself' and commented 'I doubt not but you will be desirous that we should write our Endeavours in strengthening and confirming one another in so good, and so essential a work'.[53] In these letters he offered support, thoughts, advice, bible readings, and discussion.[54] In 1773, for instance, he proposed, 'If you have not a good form of prayer I will gladly provide you one and give you any other Helps I can in so glorious a Work'. Similarly he hoped 'that by freely opening our Thoughts to each other, we may both be benefitted even at this Distance'.[55]

[48] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (no date), CRL, Shaw/36 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

[49] Bewick, Memoir, 42–3.

[50] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 88–93.

[51] Jane Munby to her mother Jane Pontey (12 November 1804), CYLAL, Acc 54: 204; also Elizabeth Sha to her father Thomas Wilkinson (23 July 1832), CRL, Shaw/79, on the year's anniversary of her mother's death.

[52] For the phrase that his faith was awakened see William Gray to his father William Gray (1773), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W2.

[53] William Gray to his father William Gray (25 October 1773), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W1.

[54] Also see following letters from William Gray to his father William Gray: (12 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W3; (21 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W4; (21 March 1776), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W6; (October 1777), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235 W/7; (27 April 1778), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235 W/8.

[55] Ibid, (1773), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W2.

William seems to have had great success in communicating piety throughout his family. An exchange of letters between him and his granddaughter Margaret showed that he also passed his religious values on to his children and their children. There was no guarantee of this, however. Samuel Courtauld was steadfastly Unitarian, like his father George. Yet George's daughter Lou became a Calvinist.

VIRTUE

Parents also advocated a number of forms of social behaviour, or manners, which can be grouped under the heading 'virtue,' which formed one of the central objectives of parental instruction.[56] This might attain the status of shared family value, if Lucy Gray's poem for her nephew is any indicator: 'When Time on rapid wings has flown | And thou to manhoods state are grown| Let Virtue all thy actions crown| My William'.[57] It took different forms, however, according perhaps to social rank or environment. Thus on leaving home to take up his apprenticeship Bewick recalled that his father reminded him to avoid pride and meanness, more traditionally expressed versions of benevolence, and 'began & continued a long while on subjects of this kind & on the importance & the inestimable value of honour & honesty'.[58] If followed, these principles would produce a virtuous adult.

The diffusion of these behavioural standards was not, however, gender-specific with mothers and fathers providing different kinds of advice. On Sophia Courtauld's birthday, for example, in 1813, her father sent her cake money and advice. He reminded her that the most useful and therefore ornamental part of her character was not always learnt at boarding school, though she was fortunate that hers promoted such values: 'I mean the formation of the Judgment & the improvem[en] t of the heart; together with <u>that</u> species of Politeness which flows from gentle & benevolent <u>Feelings</u> & which in return improves & refines the Mind'.[59] In 1815, when his son Samuel was proposing to visit family in Ireland he offered:

> One more piece of advice, and I have done—endeavour to profit by the opportunity your excursion is so well calculated to give you, of throwing off a certain stiffness and distance of manner, which is so apt to repress cordiality, and to chill first impression of the benign affections. We should aim not only to be loved where we are known, but by a cordial friendly manner invite those benevolent feelings which should induce a wish to know more of us.[60]

Thus it was George Courtauld who encouraged the feeling qualities associated with sensibility and sympathy in his daughters and sons. Their mother, on the

[56] See chapter3.
[57] Lucy Gray to her nephew William Gray (12 December 1811), CYLAL, M 3 (e).
[58] Bewick, *Memoir*, 43.
[59] George Courtauld to daughter Sophia Courtauld (11 August 1813), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 84.
[60] George Courd 1075o this son Samuel Courtauld (October 1815), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 79.

other hand, was more likely to focus on long-standing modes of behaviour, advocating self-control, patience, and reason. Ruth told her son George in 1813

> there is nothing in my power that I think so likely to contribute to your comfort and happiness as endeavouring to impress your young mind with the idea of the importance (even at your early age) of beginning to bring our tempers, passions, and habits under the control of virtue and fortitude; believe me my sweet boy, there is no happiness to be compar'd to the possession of a well regulated mind.[61]

As this demonstrates, mothers were very comfortable conveying and implanting the values of manhood in their sons.[62] This was certainly Elizabeth Shaw's role with her sons John and William. Not only did she recommend how to behave in business, she delivered it in a manner that emphasized the values of manliness. In 1801 she bluntly declared:

> You much hurt me to find your reluctance to travelling still continues; for goodness sake what are you made of; you are no Edwards; remember upon this your first journey in a 'new way to you', you will stamp your charikter for a trade's man; I wish I was at your elbow, would endevour to rouse your spirits if you really possess anny.[63]

INDUSTRIOUSNESS

Industriousness was a quality sought in both sexes and most social ranks. Although it was a value by which the middle classes evaluated the labouring classes, an indicator of the poor's deservingness and honesty, accounting for one's time was also a means by which the middle-classes and professionals assessed their own worth. John Harden, for example, often depicted his family busily sewing and reading, as in 'Family group in an interior', 'An Evening in' and 'Family at the hearth'(see figure 19).[64] Thus when promoting the value of industriousness, parents told children about the importance of working hard in the face of the dangers of idleness and of using time well by being engaged in worthwhile activities. Parents explained to children that it would improve them as individuals and make them happy. Ruth Courtauld told her daughter Sophia, at school, in 1810, that 'One of the best methods of making time pass pleasantly is to use it well: improve it to the utmost, & it will never fail to make you happy—both while 'tis passing, & when 'tis past'.[65]

[61] Ruth Courtauld to her son George Courtauld (21 August 1813), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 86–7.

[62] French and Rothery, 'masculine values and the threshold of adulthood', 420–1.

[63] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (30 August, probably 1801), CRL, Shaw/30 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

[64] John Harden (1772–1847) *Family group in an interior* (pen and ink on paper) © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library; *An Evening In* (pen and ink on paper), © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[65] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (17 June 1810), *Courtauld Family Papers*, vol. 1, 52.

In 1801 Elizabeth Shaw closed her letter to her son 'as I dought not you have spent your day well you may lie down with happy mind'.[66] It was also, they said, a quality that would be rewarded. On 24 June 1810 Ruth replied to her daughter Sophia with two letters to ensure that she 'receive the reward of industry & a wish to oblige'.[67] Industriousness would bring success in business and life. Jane Munby told her son,

> Your Uncle for the past forty years has always risen at six o'clock in a morning you may therefore calculate how much longer he has lived than men in general and consequently been enabled to do much more from beginning with nothing but Industry he has attained a Rank in society much above his most sanguine expectations and a large fortune.[68]

Elizabeth Shaw did not let her gender stand in the way of telling her son John how hard work would make a successful man of him in 1809:

> this much I know, that if nature had form'd me of the other sex I would have made a handsome competency ere now; little rest by day and less slumber by night would I have allow'd my self till I had gain'd (by the Blessing of God) the right path; perseverance perseverance with a steady resolution my dear boy will do wonders.[69]

Hard work, then, was essential to prevent bad behaviour. Ruth told Eliza and Sophia in 1810 in no uncertain terms:

> I hope above all things, that my dear Girls will so continue as to imploy every moment of their time, the more usefully the better, but still employ it. The human mind may be compar'd to Water, when kept in action it is usefull, sweet & pure; but when permitted to stagnate it becomes useless & stinks.[70]

Parents informed their children that industriousness would bring more time for self improvement. Elizabeth Shaw [no date] asked her son to emulate his cousin:

> Evan is a pattern of economy which I wish you to coppy, his filling up his time is equally good, he'll make a valluable man, two of his evenings (after the warehouse is shut up) he devotes to the study of French, two more to reading, two more to learning to play on the German flute, the seventh is allways spent as you know in the servise of his maker, he would not be prevailed upon to stay the evening last night, but went to meeting.[71]

The notion that industriousness earned money was laid down in infancy. Elizabeth Shaw reported to her husband William that their children were looking forward to

[66] Elizabeth to her son William Shaw (4–10 September [1801?]), CRL, Shaw/108.

[67] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (24 June 1810), Courtauld Family Letters, vol. 1, 55.

[68] Jane Munby to her son Joseph Munby (20 February 1817), CYLAL, Acc 54: 226.

[69] She was correct. John went on to great riches and a thriving manufacturing and wholesale business. Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (27 February 1809) CRL, Shaw/34 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

[70] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (4 July 1810), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 57.

[71] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (no date), CRL, Shaw/28 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

him coming home: 'Betsey says why does he not go such a short journey as we do Mama. John replys because Betsey he would not bring home plenty of money'.[72] As such, parents worried when offspring did not work hard. This is surely what John Shaw's mother inferred when she wrote to him in 1801: 'I can make out what gives me real concern viz your increasing dislike to travelling. What my dear youth do you propose to your self, sure an inactive life you don't wish for'.[73]

The effort parents put in to motivate children to work hard and make the most of opportunities for improvement lays bare the methods by which values were promoted. Their encouragement, persuasion, and manipulation of younger children into working hard corresponded closely with prevailing advice on instruction and discipline. Parental love and attention would reward industry. In 1812, Jonathan Gray told his wife: 'give my love to the brats: & tell Margaret that as soon as she has learnt to read (which I hope will be some day) I will write to her'.[74] John Shaw wrote to his wife on Christmas day, 1823, with the message: 'Please give my love to the children you may tell them now I am coming home and then who has been the best—papa will love them the best also.'[75] Promises of rewards were useful. In a letter to her daughter, dated 1779, later published in a volume serving a didactic purpose, Arabella Davies explained that her sister was learning to write and promised that the daughter who first wrote her mother the best letter would receive a present.[76] In 1829 John asked his wife: 'Please give my kind love and tell them that those are orderly and obedient will have the best present when I get home again—whether at school (or work!).'[77] Jane Munby attempted to stir her son's competitive spirit in 1817. She told him that his uncle had made him a present:

> of a Handsome edition of Horace which I hope you will read and soon make yourself master of it so that you may be able to write Him a Latin Epistle of thanks with your observation upon it, his Boys are all likely to be clever men and I should not like you to degenerate from the Family.

This was a finely-tuned balancing act, however; she promptly back-pedalled:

> Arthur a Boy about fourteen studys [sic] so hard after School Hours that he frequently faints away before he will give up his subject and so does Frederick now this I do not wish you to do but I should like you to pay as much attention as possible and Remember that Talent without industry is a dangerous thing.[78]

Psychological manipulation was alive and well. Parents announced that the child who loved his or her parent would work hard. Ruth Courtauld instructed her daughter Sophia, when she was at boarding school in Cork in 1810, 'your love and

[72] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (19 December 1822), CRL, Shaw/57.
[73] Elizabeth Shaw to her son John Shaw (10 June poss 1801), CRL, Shaw/32 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.
[74] Jonathan Gray to his wife Mary Gray (1812), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,24,235 J/52c.
[75] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (25 December 1823), CRL, Shaw/21.
[76] Letter II, 9, 1779 To dear P----y, Davies, *Letters from a parent to her children*, 17.
[77] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (6 January 1829), CRL, Shaw/28.
[78] Jane Munby to her son Joseph Munby (20 February 1817), CYLAL, Acc 54: 226.

duty to me will induce you not to disappoint me'.[79] A month or so later, she praised her: 'I am very much pleas'd to see my dear Sophia is improving very much in her writing, & delighted to think she has not lost any of that wish to oblige her fond Mother that always distinguish'd her'.[80] A hard-working child would make its parents happy. As Ruth told Eliza and Sophia, 'be good girls & learn as much as you can which will contribute very much to the happiness of your very Affect[ionat]e Mother'.[81] Her husband said much the same in a message to his younger son passed through his elder brother, George, when both attending the same school in 1814: 'I dare say my little John would feel a *pleasure* in knowing that by his attention to learn all that is taught him by Mr Jeffrey and all his good Friends, he gave great satisfaction to them all, and especially to his Father and Mother.'[82] Parents thus set in place children's obligations to their parents and family. These duties extended to kin and into the future. In 1811 Ruth Courtauld passed on a message to Sophia via her sister Catherine: 'Mama also hopes that you will never forget what you owe your friends, but that you will always evince, by all the means in your power, the gratitude which you feel to Mr and Mrs Burkitt for all their kindness and attention to you'.[83] She told her eldest son Samuel in 1809: 'consider, my dear boy, that the comforts of your old Mother and young brothers and sisters may yet depend on your care and industry, I am sure this Idea will act as a sufficient stimulus'.[84]

The promotion of this value did not end when the child attained adulthood. George Courtauld offered his fully grown son Samuel detailed instructions on how to divide up the working day in order to use every scrap of time to advantage.[85] There are glimpses of its generational dissemination in a letter from Jonathan Gray to his son William in 1837. In it Jonathan remembered being admitted as a partner to his father's law firm in 1801:

> my father took care I should never flinch from the 9 hours a day; nay, he often kept me and the clerks much beyond the time of 8, and seemed to have a pleasure in so doing. The effect became manifest on my conduct; for tho' I had been a most lazy clerk, I became of necessity, a working partner.

Jonathan then proceeded to recommend that his son examine the day books for the years 1806 to 1812 or '13 to see the prodigious amount of business done by Jonathan, who took over the business when his father retired in 1805. He admitted

[79] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (17 June 1810), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 52.
[80] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (7 July 1810), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 58.
[81] Ruth Courtauld to her daughters Sophia and Eliza Courtauld (11 June 1810), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 51.
[82] George Courtauld to his son George Courtauld (30 March 1814), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 102.
[83] Catherine Courtauld to sister Sophia Courtauld (May 1811), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 60.
[84] Ruth Courtauld to her son Samuel Courtauld (28 July 1809), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 24.
[85] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (7 April 1813), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 40–1.

that he was uneasy at the scant amount in the Day Book under his son's name. Though, or perhaps because William was a mature man married since 1830, he commented, 'I would not wish to notice this in the way of censure, but from kindness and anxiety that you should make provision for the claims of a family'.[86] In these few words it is possible to see the values of hard work passed from father to son across three generations.

FILIAL DUTY

Filial duty was explicitly inculcated in children as they matured. The child who entered adolescence must now understand that he or she contributed to the comfort of others, particularly parents. Dorothy Wilson informed Caroline Forth in 1816:

> You have hitherto been regarded only as a child, but Womanhood is fast approaching and you know it is the Duty of all who are growing up to endeavour to qualify themselves, for being useful in the Rank of life in which we are placed. The more we learn, the more Power we have of being useful and agreeable to others, and I can truly assure you, there is no selfish Pleasure so great as that of contributing to the comfort of others. I need not remind you how wholly your Mother's Happiness depends on your, and your Brother's good conduct for myself I can assure you I shall witness all your Improvements with great Pleasure.[87]

When Benjamin Haydon was eroding his parents' objections to his becoming a professional artist, his mother spelled-out their objections in exactly these terms:

> My dear Benjamin you are our only support, and in the delicate state of your poor father's health, God only knows how soon I may be left alone and unaided. It will break my heart, if, after all my care and anxiety for your infancy, you leave me, just as you are becoming able to comfort me and console me.[88]

In some families, such as the Courtaulds, it was a shared rhetoric. Similarly, the Gray family disseminated this value amongst themselves, as Lucy Gray's poem for her nephew's birthday in 1811 indicates. In it she imagined him as an ideal adult, repaying his parents for their endeavours by being their prop and stay in old age. Its successful transmission as a value, if nothing else, is also suggested by those who apologized for not fulfilling it. In the mid- eighteenth century Elizabeth Ashbridge confessed the guilt she suffered at leaving her mother when she should have provided her with comfort in return for her maternal labours. Its successful inculcation could nonetheless lead to tensions across and between generations. Ruth Courtauld apologized to her daughter Kate in 1823 for past quarrels: 'could you but form an idea of the awful reverence with which I had been brought up to look on a mother's claims to her children's respect & duty, you would not be so much surprised at my feelings at more than one of my children's conduct to me'. In

[86] Cited in Mrs Edwin Gray, *Papers and diaries of a York family 1764–1839*, 236–7.
[87] Dorothy Dinah Wilson to Miss Forth (1816), CYLAL, Acc 54:185.
[88] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 9.

effect, she realised that her upbringing had left her with high expectations that could not be met by her own children. Children who eschewed the duty were disappointments. In 1818 John Pearson explained to his sister why he refused to assist his brother any longer. John feared he would damage his own family by further supporting his somewhat undeserving sibling, 'Besides I think it reasonable that his adult children should do something for their parents'.[89]

Filial duty's roots were in scripture; namely the commandment to honour one's father and mother. Thus parents and children encountered it in religious worship. Though it was a longstanding social and cultural virtue, its precise components evolved over time. Simon Daines advice on English Grammar and styles of letter writing (1640) stated that letters to parents should demonstrate respect and obedience, a duty demanded by the Lawes of God and Nature.[90] In the next century it was melded with 'feeling' thanks to the culture of sensibility. In 1778 the *Lady's Magazine* published 'On the relative duties of life, with a general exhortation to virtue', a didactic conversation between Mentoria, and the elite youngsters Lady Mary, Lady Louisa and Lord George. When Mentoria explained that people's duty to their parents consisted of 'gratitude, obedience, and love' she saw this as payment for parental 'tenderness and love'.[91] Girls could not escape the message. One sampler verse stated 'With love and Duty both this I indite | And in these lines dear Parent I impart | The tender feelings of a Grateful Heart'.[92] Feeling was not enough however. Christina Anderson made distinctions between duty and feeling in attitudes towards parents. When advising her friend in 1818 about whether she should follow her father's wishes and emigrate, she stipulated: 'do not allow feeling, inclination, or any *vision* to guide you—let duty and reason alone direct.'[93] Perhaps this is why sensibility's message of benevolence was united with feeling and obligation to strengthen the cause of filial duty. In the conversation between Mentoria and three genteel children in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1778, Lord George asked what the difference was between love and duty. Mentoria answered that they were separate, 'yet are generally united in a moral or religious sense; which implies, that acts of obedience or duty ought to proceed from love; as fear, or the hope of reward . . . would make the performance rather a sacrifice than an offering.'

It was not considered an easy principle to implant, since it was not a natural impulse. John Angell James, for instance, stated that children were motivated to perform filial duties because it was demanded by scripture, was a precept of moral law, and because they owed a debt of gratitude for their parents' labours.[94] It was precisely this reciprocity that was the primary way to promote the duty to children. The essayist on filial duty commented in 1783, 'If we consider how much we owe

[89] John Pearson to his half sister Jane Munby (6 October 1818), CYLAL, Acc 54: 198.

[90] Daines, *Orthoepia Anglicana*, 86.

[91] '"On the relative duties of life, with a general exhortation to virtue". Extracted from a work lately published, written by Miss Ann Murry', *LM*, 1778, 533–5.

[92] No date given or provenance. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 131.

[93] Christina Anderson to her friend Sophia Courtauld (28 September 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 414.

[94] James, *Family Monitor*, 136, 138, 139.

our parents, how much we are indebted to them for their care and tenderness; gratitude will surely prompt us to return it, and the time may come when they may stand in need of all we can do for them.' Indeed offspring should derive pleasure out of attending parents in return for parents' bearing their 'pettishness'.[95] In an essay on 'The duty of parents to children' published in *Moral Essays* in 1796 the author baldly stated that parents 'must love, if they expect to be beloved. They must give pleasure and satisfaction if they expect to receive them'.[96] This was the message of 'My Mother,' aimed at girls, which depicted the mother loving her small daughter and matched this with the daughter's obligations: 'And when I see thee hang thy head, | 'Twil be my turn to watch thy bed, | And tears of sweet affection shed, | My Mother'. A later counterpart, 'My Daughter' (1819) illustrated in six coloured vignettes a mother and daughter fulfilling this maxim (figure 17).

In other words, parental performance dictated offsprings' likelihood to be dutiful.[97] As William Cobbett insisted, to make children your blessings,

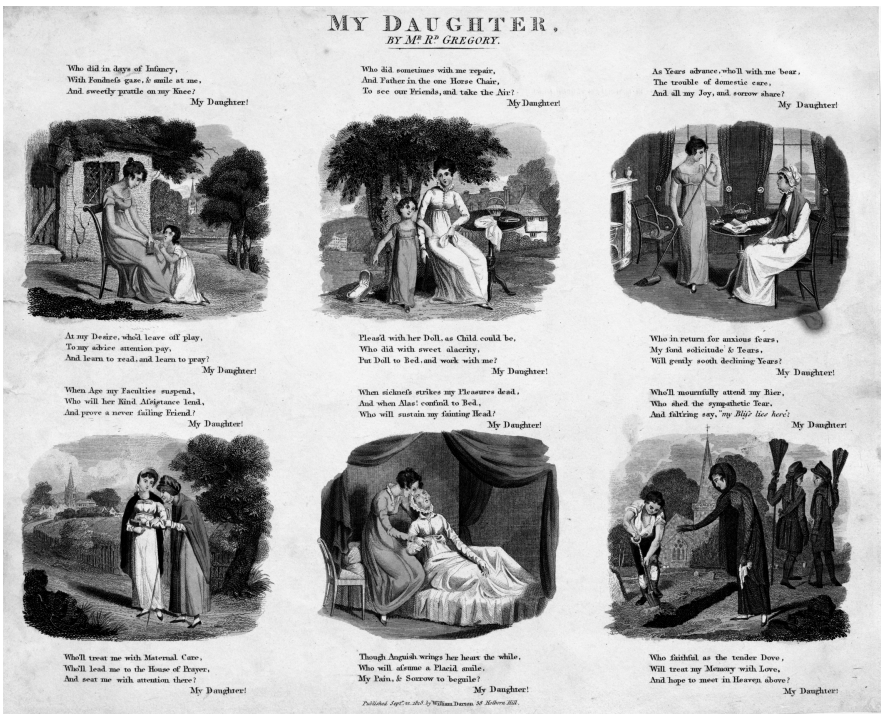

Fig. 17. *My Daughter. By Mr Rd Gregory* (1819). The pretty vignettes of mother and daughter celebrate the reciprocal obligations of filial duty.

[95] *LM*, 1783, 192.
[96] Essay XXII, A. M., *Moral* essays, 79.
[97] For a fascinating analysis of this see Lewis, *Pursuit of Happiness*, 179–84.

> you must act your part well; for they may, by your neglect, your ill-treatment, your evil example, be made to be the contrary of blessings; instead of pleasure, they may bring you pain; instead of making your heart glad, the sight of them may make it sorrowful; instead of being the staff of your old age, they may bring your gray hairs in grief to the grave.[98]

The types of parental behaviour considered to promote filial duty were culturally specific, the characteristics of ideal parenthood. Primarily, parents' tenderness and mildness would prompt the same in offspring.[99] In 1813, in the midst of her parents' marital breakdown, Louisa Courtauld applauded her mother for never criticizing her children's father in front of them. She reported Ruth's comments to her:

> Altogether, your father's conduct to me has not been what it should, but to you it is almost unexceptionable; he is a truly excellent father, and if you do not make dutiful and affectionate children you have much to answer for; no father can be more devoted to his children than yours is, he is tender and affectionate, liberal and generous, and the pains he takes to form your minds is unbounded.[100]

A father's devotion and tenderness stimulated his children's affection and duty and made harsh displays of authority obsolete.[101] Loving instruction and provision had similar effects. A letter to the editor of the *Lady's Magazine* in 1782 explained that a young woman was 'obliged' to assist her father because in her earlier years he had 'been her instructor and her guide, and to whom, next to heaven, she had ever looked up.'[102] In 1774 William Gray had recently attained a position in a law firm in York, and he reiterated to his father that he wished to support him financially in retirement. He explicitly connected this to provision:

> I only wish you would not speak so feelingly about the poor Assistance I propos'd, or call it by such a Name as that of a Robbery; surely all the sums you have so readily expended in my Maintenance and Education are equally a Robbery, and I am doing nothing more than the Law of God, and even the Law of the Land obliges me to, so that instead of looking upon it as a Favor, you ought to expect it as your Right, and I hope you will always consider it as such.[103]

The consequence of a failure of love on the parent's part is seen in Elizabeth Ashbridge mid-century observation that when her father shut her out, emotionally and physically, she went as far away as possible by signing up to indentured servitude in America.[104] Still, not all the onus was upon parents. For instance, girls

[98] This is part of the reason why he suggested that parents should not hand over child to servants. Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 226.

[99] *LM*, 1785, 138.

[100] Louisa Courtauld to her brother Sam Courtauld (1813) *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 51.

[101] See chapter 3.

[102] *LM*, 1782, 711–12.

[103] William Gray to his father William (21 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W4. The link is also made in George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld 8 January 1819, *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 26.

[104] Curtis, *Quaker* Grey, 17.

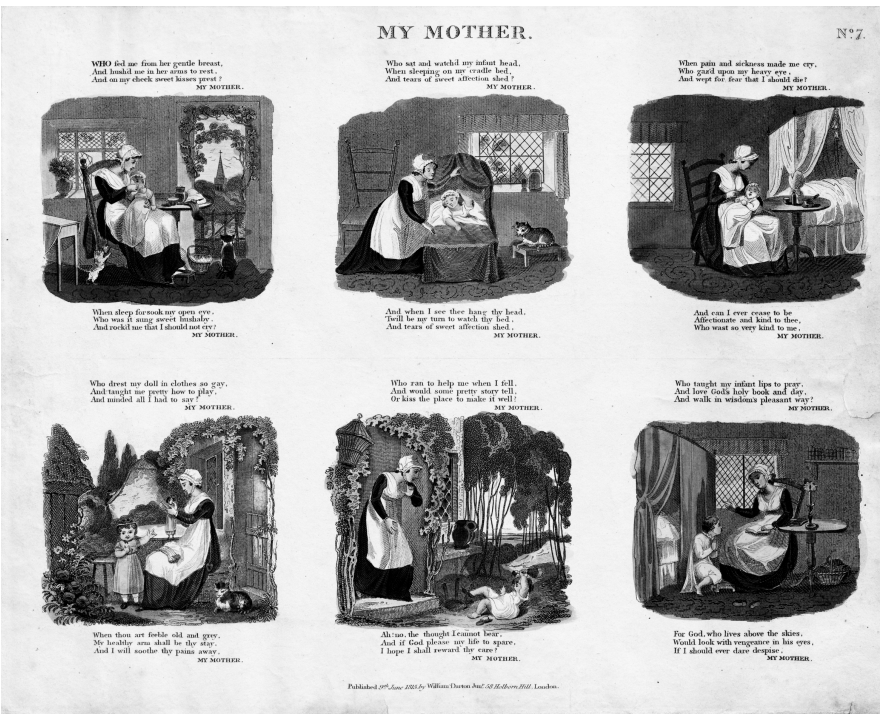

Fig. 18. *My Mother* (1815). Here are a series of emotive vignettes which capture the role of tender motherhood and its virtuous results.

were cautioned in the delicate didacticism of 'My Mother': 'for God, who lives above the skies, | Would look with vengeance in his eyes, | If I should ever dare despise, | My Mother' (figure 18).

Transmitting filial duty to children worked. Offspring proudly identified with filial duty, observing that they provided both comfort and support for parents. Several used the term to describe their actions in their parent's final illnesses. Ann Crowley remorsefully reported that she was away from home when her father died in her seventeenth year in 1782. The result was an awful spiritual trial, since 'I had thereby been deprived of the satisfaction of fulfilling the last offices of filial duty, and prevented the consolation of witnessing the peaceful close of an affectionate, indulgent parent'. She did not let this happen twice. When she received news that her mother had suffered a stroke in 1795 she immediately returned home. Later she remembered: 'I was thankful to find her living and sensible, and esteemed it a great favour to have the privilege of aiding my dear sisters, in fulfilling the offices of filial duty, in waiting upon and caring for our beloved parent'.[105] The apothecary Simon Mason sorrowed over his inability to help his father in the mid 1720s when he became ill with pleurisy, observing that 'I only had the satisfaction of shewing my last duty to a

[105] Crowley, *Some account of the religious experience*, 6, 17.

tender Parent.'[106] Other life-writers listed their material support. In the late 1770s Catharine Cappe's brother's financial mismanagement threatened his widowed mother's standard of living. Though Catharine felt no obligation to assist her brother, 'it was my duty, if possible, to support my mother, to which however my little income would still be inadequate, and I saw no method of doing it, except by endeavouring to open a school'.[107] The novelist Sydney Morgan certainly took it to heart. In a letter to her brother-in-law in 1812 following her father's death she explained that her father 'was the object for which I laboured, and wrote, and lived'. Perhaps in doing so the relationship's dynamics were shifted. In the same letter she told Clarke that her father 'was my child as well as my father'.[108] Filial duty could be performed simply by fulfilling parents' wishes. Maria Robinson, Mary Robinson's daughter, announced to readers of her mother's memoirs that she had done just that by publishing her mother's life story to restore her misrepresented character. She ended her preface:

> Dear sainted PARENT!—You are now obeyed. If when we meet again, before the throne of our Creator, when the sorrows of this life shall be past, to receive, the award of that BEING who judgeth all hearts—if, then, by one approving smile, you inform me that I have FULFILLED MY DUTY, I shall have my reward.[109]

DOMESTICITY

This final 'value' is a bundle of attributes that were considered to define, shape and improve family life. It is difficult to pin down like the other values discussed which were long-standing practices or behaviours with moral connotations. It was not a form of behaviour or manners that children must acquire in order to advance or improve, but was a mind-set that was nurtured as a family identity. It is found in the repeated motifs that were symbolic of home and a united harmonious family: snug fireside, the family circle, and the family home as a safe haven. It seems appropriate to group them under the title of that nebulous phenomenon, domesticity.[110] The cultivation of domesticity was a way in which parents and children communicated with each other about themselves as a family. It is at first glance a language that was the preserve of the genteel, professional ranks since to some extent it required experience of material home comforts. John Harden frequently depicted family life occurring round the hearth (figure 19); in several the family members compose a circle.[111] This was not simply because that is where the family found heat and light

[106] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*, 38.

[107] *LM*, 1778, 196. For Francis Place's recognition that he and his siblings failed in performing filial duty to their mother see Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 122.

[108] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 2, 13.

[109] Robinson, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 'Advertisement'.

[110] More humble writers do not seem to have used this phrasing in the same way in this period, for example Place, Saxby, Mason do not use this as a symbol of domesticity.

[111] Also see: John Harden, 'Family group with dog', Foskett, *Harden*, Plate XIII; John Harden (1772–1847), *An Evening at Home* (pen and ink on paper) © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library.

Fig. 19. 'Family at the Hearth'. John Harden delighted in illustrating his family at leisure, the personification of domesticity: snug, respectably occupied, affectionate, and gathered around the hearth.

in the evening. It symbolised their togetherness, and their virtue. Yet it is evoked in poetry that appealed to the labouring ranks such as Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night* and other domestic scenes in cottage songs. Precisely that moment of gathering around the fireside was often illustrated, as in David Allan's drawing, where even the family's cat, dog and two doves draw close.[112]

Although the 'cosy' images of hearth and home are very evident in the print and visual images from the 1790s, in response to the threat of revolution, they were part of a much longer tradition.[113] An earlier incarnation can be seen in Gray's *Elegy*, where the 'blazing hearth' was central to the united family, now no longer gathered round it after the death of the father. Oliver Goldsmith's *The traveller or a prospect of society*, 1764, also used the fireside to symbolise idyllic family affection and happiness:

> At night returning, every labour sped,
> He sits him down the monarch of a shed;

[112] David Allan (1744–96), Illustration to 'The Cottar's Saturday Night' by Robert Burns, *c.*1790 (grey wash on paper), © National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[113] Shapiro, 'Lucretian "Domestic Melancholy" and the tradition of Vergilian "Frustration"', 1088–93.

> Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
> His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;

He conjured it in the Vicar of Wakefield's delighted recollections of his family before events took over, when 'all our adventures were by the fire-side'.[114] It was widely disseminated in didactic literature too. In 1780, the Matron identified the solution to unhappy families: married couples should spend 'more of their time by their own fire-sides', they and their children entertaining each other.[115] William Cobbett used the imagery to make his criticism of men absent from the family and home all the more barbed: 'but what are we to think of the husband who is in the habit of leaving his own fire-side, after the business of the day is over, and seeking promiscuous companions in the ale or the coffee house?'[116]

Life-writers used the vocabulary in similar ways to communicate their feelings about family life. Dorothea Herbert titled her chapter describing 1785 as 'Family Fireside' and cited the second stanza of Goldsmith's poem; the aim to display the jollities of family domesticity. The connection between family and fireside is clear in her use of it to express her depression following her father's death in 1803: 'What a sad Autumn, and Winter did we spend! It was indeed a frightful Blank—No longer our rural Paradise, or cheerful fireside afford us Pleasure—Their brightest Ornaments were lost to us for Ever—All Joy went with them.'[117] In her biography of her mother, Jane Bewick nostalgically memorialised the winter evenings of her childhood spent with her mother spinning 'by the side of a blazing fire'.[118] Writing in her late sixties, Eliza Fletcher (b. 1770) remembered the 'affectionate family group around our cheerful fireside in the little parlour at Oxton'.[119]

Indeed it was separation from spouse, children or parents, or its threat through removal, emigration or death that brought the vocabulary of domesticity into use; thus its warm glow lit up family correspondence.[120] In a letter replying to Thomas Dovaston's condolences following her father's death, Jane Bewick said his 'letter was read by the sorrowing circle of this desolate house.'[121] For family members separated by circumstances the fireside represented home, comfort and all the qualities associated with domesticity. When Hannah Robertson recalled the prospect of her husband joining her and their children following a period of separation in the 1760s, she declared 'the time was fixed for him to join our circle, and I may truly say, that I anticipated the day with delight'.[122] In 1812 John Shaw wrote to his future wife that he had returned home from selling wares: 'I experienced a

[114] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 2, 4.
[115] *LM*, 1780, 36.
[116] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 170, 175.
[117] F.F.M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 406.
[118] Bewick, 'My Mother', unpaginated, TWA, Accession 4388.
[119] *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 6.
[120] e.g. former see Catherine Courtauld to her sister Sophia Courtauld (4 August 1822), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol 2, 919. For latter Percival, *A father's instructions*, 253; Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 276.
[121] Jane Bewick to John Dovaston, dated 29 November 1828. Reproduced in full at the end of Thomas Bewick, *memoir*.
[122] Robertson, *Life of Mrs Robertson*, 29.

pleasure in sitting in my own House and by my own fire side—such as one that I never before felt and I prized them highly—but still I found something else wanting', which was, of course, her presence.[123] Similarly, the often melancholy Samuel Courtauld imagined he would only find comfort in a 'snug fireside.' When unmarried this represented well-being and the comfort of wife and home.[124] The self-consciously idyllic family moments Sydney Morgan occasionally depicted in her memoir took place around the fireside. For instance, she reproduced a journal entry for 12 September 1801:

> We are seated at our little work-table, beside a cheerful turf fire, and a pair of lights; Livy is amusing herself at work, and I have been reading out a work of Schiller's to her, whilst Molly is washing up the tea-things in the background, and Peter is laying the cloth for his master's supper- that dear master! in a few minutes we shall hear his rap at the door and his whistle under the window, and then we shall circle round the fire and chat and laugh over the circumstances of the day. These are the scenes in which my heart expands and which I love to sketch on the spot. Ah! I must soon leave them.[125]

Even though Sydney looked forward to departing for a degree of independence as a governess, the looming separation rendered the family haven sweeter.

Indeed the purpose of this language of 'domesticity' at the turn of the century seems to have functioned in similar ways to sensibility in the second half of the eighteenth century, as a concept that sustained a notion of family, representing safety and security in changing world.[126] It was partly, therefore, about retreat. The poem The Fireside (1796) declared 'From the gay world we'll oft retire | To our own family and fire' for 'The world hath nothing to bestow, | From our own selves our bliss must flow, | and that dear hut our home.'.[127] The Courtaulds demonstrate this in particular, because they were frequently parted through George and Ruth's marital separation, the children's schooling, and George's desire to start over in his American settlement. In this family the trope of 'domesticity,' or the desire to be centred in a secure home, was a shared value or familial culture; though clearly not one that was explicitly part of a formal or even informal education programme. The Courtauld offspring and parents often discussed the idealised prospect of all being reunited in one place. On a scoping trip to Ohio in 1818, George wrote home to his wife and two of his daughters describing the land he had purchased and wondering whether they would all every meet up on it: 'I cheerfully leave it with you all to decide, earnestly desiring & trusting that a general Family Union will be a governing object. & I am happy in this view to hear that Sam will accompany you, if you remove'.[128] Most of the letters between the Courtauld parents,

[123] John Shaw to Elizabeth Wilkinson (25 December 1812), CRL, Shaw/10.

[124] Samuel Courtauld to his sister Sophia Courtauld (Sunday morning, November 1817); (late Sunday night, 25 September 1818); (Saturday morning January 1818); and (10 April 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1 and 2, 293, 337, 408, 810.

[125] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, 211–12.

[126] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, passim.

[127] Burns, *Domestic happiness exhibited, in I. The fireside*, 2.

[128] George to his wife Ruth Courtauld and daughters Louisa and Sophia Courtauld (4 December 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 452–3.

children and siblings in this period related to whether they should accede to George's desire to settle in America and if so whether all could go or not. In them, the motifs of domesticity were evoked, such as 'fireside' or 'snug,' or more intangibly the united family. In 1818 Eliza wrote to her sister Sophia: 'It is Papa's intention to send John to us and I think we should make a very snug little family. Supposing Papa should go to America and wish you, George, John and I to go with him, would you go? I think I would if you would.'[129]

A few months later his daughter Kate lamented the news from George that he had purchased land without seeking the opinions of his children: 'I was astonished, for as you know, I had begun to fancy, indeed firmly to believe, that we sh[oul]d at length be all settled, at least in the same hemisphere'. She feared that she would be parted, perhaps forever, 'from every individual of my family who seemed at that moment all drawn more closely round my heart.'[130] Late in 1819, George junior wrote to his sister on the proposition to move: 'I don't think I should much mind going *if we left no one of the familly behind*, & when once there I do think I should like it much.'[131] The dream persisted, even when George, John, Kate and her husband, Eliza and Sophie had all joined their father in America. Samuel wrote in 1821 to his brother:

> here I am in my comfortable quiet parlour sitting by Mo's Work Table writing by the fire, aye the fire, and glad to get close to it. Mo, Lou, & Miss C sitting by the round table with blue cloth, Miss C looking out some music to give us presently… Now all this is as comfortable as one could wish, and I were well content so to live—were those I love within a walk of me -: as it is, I have no home on this side the Atlantic.[132]

In February 1822 George was still hoping. He wrote to his eldest daughter Louisa, 'nothing indeed on the subject of social comfort would be so cordially gratifying as that your Mother, Sam and you should all either live with me or near me, and I believe they would also be gratified by such a social reunion'.[133]

CONCLUSION

Prized traits were circulated between parents and children as ways to achieve familial and individual benefits. They encompassed formal religious and pedagogical modes and moral didacticism. Yet they also worked at the level of the imaginary, drawing upon emotional languages to define the collective family, aspire to its

[129] Eliza Courtauld to her sister Sophia Courtauld (9 April 1818) *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 377.

[130] Kate Taylor her sister Sophia Courtauld (14 February 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 514–15.

[131] George Courtauld to his sister Sophia Courtauld (7 November 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 618.

[132] Sam Courtauld to his brother George Courtauld (8 July 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 837.

[133] George Courtauld to his daughter Louisa Courtauld (8 February 1822), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 222.

cohesion, and to aid its members to draw strength from that illusory security to branch out into independence.[134] Family values were a badge of familial and personal merit and therefore it was important to pass them on to the next generation. This was a fascinating combination of family and self. Parents hoped to live again in their children, to see their best qualities, their best efforts, their best feelings find *new* form.

[134] For a broader consideration of this in a later period see Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making*.

8

Shared Parenting

> it may serve to convince most Nurses, Aunts, Grand-mothers, *&c*. how much they have hitherto been in the wrong, what Mischief is done to Children, and what Multitudes are destroyed or spoiled, as well by cramming them with Cakes, Sweetmeats, *&c.* till they foul their Blood, choak their Vessels, pall the Appetite, and ruin every Faculty of their Bodies; as by cockering and indulging them, to the utter Perversion of their naturally good Temper, till they become quite froward and indocile.[1]

For all that Georgian culture idealised the affectionate, intimate parent-child relationship, caring for children in all social ranks extended beyond mothers and fathers to resident and non-resident family, and unrelated members of the 'household-family'.[2] Thus, for instance, to the right of the sweetly embracing mother, child, and returning father in 'Nuptial Bliss' is a calm maid seated at the table. Clearly she and the mother were interrupted in attending to the little boy (see figure 1). This was essential in a society where family limitation was not practised and families typically contained several children, resulting in competition for parents' resources, time and attention. Fortunately for middling, professional and genteel families, the structure of the household-family and the wider support of the kin network facilitated the trend for concentrated intimacy between parents and children by distributing the burden of child care.[3] Thus parents could be involved in all those activities considered to promote tender parenting, from nursing and hugs and kisses, to instruction and play, at suitable times with one or more children, without neglecting others.[4] Social and cultural practices were constitutive where such modes of child-rearing were concerned. Ideas about natural maternity assumed that all females would adore infants, which therefore safely permitted the employment of paid female nurses and servants. Similarly, the notion that being a parent fully humanised an individual and made him or her truly sensible, permeated ideas about grandparents who were supposed to share deep feelings for their children's children. The result was a flexible, diverse pattern of care which linked carers and children across residences, locations and social ranks.

[1] Cadogan, *Essay upon Nursing*, 5.
[2] Tadmor, 'The Concept of the Household-Family'.
[3] For kin networks see Tadmor, 'Early modern English kinship in the long run', 15–48.
[4] Prosperous middle-class Victorian families employed a raft of child-carers. Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, ch. 5.

The nurses, aunts and grandmothers whose misplaced love and indulgence led to Cadogan's grotesquely fouled, choked and cockered brood, therefore merit a closer look. He aimed his ire at female carers, which appears to be a correct gender assumption where paid support was concerned. Yet, men also took a role in shared parenting, particularly as grandfathers, uncles, and surrogate fathers. As Eliza Fletcher fondly recalled, after her mother's death in childbirth in 1770 'I became the object of my father's concentrated affections, and not of his only, but of those of his mother, brother, and sister, who, on the death of his wife, all became inmates of his family'.[5] These activities deserve the name 'shared parenting' because this was a society in which the title of mother or father was both a courtesy and a status. In 1815 Christina Anderson wrote to her friend Sophia about the visit of her little brother: 'My mother is quite *captivated* with little John. Whether she has made a similar impression is rather doubtful as "he did not think he could call her Mama, tho' he did Mrs Burkitt".'[6] Here the title 'mama' was sought by an unrelated woman when the child's biological mother was alive. Moreover in a culture that sentimentalised parental care, child carers were frequently described as doing more than providing routine care-giving, many were perceived as proxy parents.

GRANDPARENTS

If grandparents were less numerous in the past, those who survived to fulfil the role were likely to be important in their grandchildren's care.[7] Just as parenthood was idealised in visual images during the period, so was grandparenthood. In the 1750s James Nelson observed that parents hopes did not end with their children: 'Nor do we stop here; for, eager as we are in pursuing the real or seeming Good of our Children, we extend our Views still farther, even to their Children'.[8] It is shown in family portraits like Henry Raeburn, *John Tait and his grandson* (1793), William Corden's portrait of Agnes Fitzherbert's mother with a grandchild (1817).[9] This went further than including a grandparent in a family portrait, or portrayed with a grandchild. Some genre art centred on grandparents. The apogee of this must be Philibert-Louis Debucourt's, *Le Compliment ou La Matinee du jour de l'an* (*The Compliment or New Year's Morning*), 1787, and *Les Bouquets ou la fete de la grandmaman* (*The flowers, or celebrating the grandmother*) which show that heightened expressions of affection also incorporated the grandparent-grandchild

[5] *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 2.

[6] Christina Anderson to her friend Sophia Courtauld (1815), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 130.

[7] For an argument that grandparents were not particularly rare in the period, citing demographers' claim that around 80 per cent of those over 60 in the eighteenth century would have at least one living grandchild, see Ottaway, *The Decline of Life*, 157.

[8] Nelson, *essay on the government of* children, 1.

[9] Steward, *New Child*, 59; William Corden the Elder (1797–1867), Mother of Agnes FitzHerbert with one of her grandchildren, *c.*1817 (slate), Private Collection, The Bridgeman Art Library.

relationship.[10] Other popular genre artists routinely placed grandparents in their pictures of family life like George Morland's *The Farmer's Visit to His Married Daughter in Town*, 1789.[11] Indeed, the unquestioned assumption was that grandparents were very fond of their grandchildren.[12] In 1783 'The Essayist' dedicated 'On Filial Duty' to the Matron, who was Mrs Gray, the *Lady's Magazine's* fictional great-grandmother. The writer honoured Mrs Gray for her age and, more particularly, for her standing as grandmother, a status augmented by great-grand-motherhood. The Essayist imagined that 'The pleasure to see the numerous branches spring from her parent stock, must be inconceivable. The happiness arising from her own offspring, when in their tender years (for then I make no doubt affection is strongest), is renewed in her children's children'.[13] Perhaps many grandparents shared the Matron's own declaration in 1785 that she gained 'exquisite satisfaction' from her son's and granddaughter's happiness.[14]

Life-writings certainly expressed the same conventions. Infant grandchildren were a blessing. After decades as a devoted grandfather, William Gray recorded in his little manuscript books of religious musings in 1836 that three great granddaughters were the most recent additions to the family's blessings.[15] Grandchildren were handsome and beautiful. Kate Courtauld reported that her new born son was 'a very fine fellow, so mama & papa say' (1819).[16] They were their grandparents' joy. Mary Robinson remembered her mother's response on meeting her new granddaughter: 'Her joy was boundless; she kissed me a thousand times; she kissed my beautiful infant'.[17] When this was not forthcoming, parents were appalled. The Reverend William Ettrick (1757–1847), who had a very bad relationship with his father, the quarrelsome Justice Ettrick, indignantly recorded in 1807 his sister's report of the Justice's reception of two granddaughters: 'the tyger revived as if it had never slumbered . . . the ruling idea of his affection burst forth "these must turn in & I must turn out"'. William Junior was infuriated that his children were 'cast out like live toads'.[18]

Frequently, grandparents' love for grandchildren was conceptualised to be as profound as that for children. The Essayist who sang the praises of Martha Gray, the 'professional' grand-mother, stated 'I believe a grandmother loves them [her grandchildren] equally as well as her own'.[19] The 'Matron' herself announced that

[10] Philibert Louis Debucourt (1755–1832), *The Compliment*, Widener Collection, 1942.9.2253. National Gallery of Art, USA, <http://www.nga.gov/fcgi-bin/tinfo_f?object=2884>. Accessed 28/2/2011; *The Bouquet*, Musee Marmottan Monet, Paris, France, Giraudon, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[11] Gilbey, *Morland*, 249.

[12] Ottaway, *Decline of Life*, 155–65. Tague's study of aristocratic families' responses to male heirs suggests more ambivalence in some instances. 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family'.

[13] *LM*, 1783, 192.

[14] *LM*, 1785, 419.

[15] Cited in Gray, *Papers and diaries of a York family,* 266.

[16] Kate Taylor to her sister Sophia Courtauld (13 September 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 593.

[17] Robinson, *Memoirs*, 158.

[18] Extract cited in Corder, The Corder Manuscripts, 253 (Sunderland Local Studies Library).

[19] *LM*, 1783, 192.

she considered her granddaughter: '*my* child; for in that light I must ever look upon Sophia'.[20] In another family report that she published in 1781, she declared on meeting Sophia that she was 'exceedingly pleased to see my child (I always call her so).'[21] The same depth of feeling is present in memoirs. Elizabeth Johnston described resuming care of her granddaughter, the daughter of her deceased daughter, in May 1825. She explained that hearing the news of the death of Mrs Ritchie, her son-in-law's mother, 'induced me to go up immediately to Mr Ritchie and his children and offer my services and consolation, and once more assume the care of my sweet Bess, who before her father's marriage had been long under my care, *the child of my old days*.'[22] Such grandparents often saw their grandchildren as miniature versions of their child, or as a solace for the loss of a child. Thomas Wright believed his grandmother was 'extremely fond of me, as the only remains of her only offspring' who died in the 1730s.[23] Peter Taylor's grandparents participated in his care during the years when his parents were in America. His grandmother poignantly confessed in 1821 to her niece that:

> his being left with us has ever been a great comfort to my mind: I consider him my Peter in miniature—a beloved part of my own Peter; and when he is gone, I have nothing—merely the remains of a painful dream to recollect, and feel that it is all gone for ever.[24]

The following year she described him as the 'last and best memorial of his beloved father & mother.'[25] The sinister side of such generational links were imagined in the story of Lady Bradley in which a paternal grandmother tried to kidnap her granddaughter 'to supply the place of her dearly beloved Bobby,' the recently deceased, abusive husband of the story's protagonist.[26] Through this cross-generational parental love, the family was thus conceived as a self-healing unit where the dislocation of early death was eased by the next generation. These grandparents were consoled by seeing their lost offspring once again marching into the future in the form of grandchildren.

In fact, grandparental love was perceived to be all too easily excessive. Cadogan suggested that grandmothers' excessive love would cause them to spoil grandchildren.[27] Thomas Bewick recorded that after his birth in 1753 he was mostly entrusted to the care of his Aunt Hannah (his mother's sister) and Grandmother Agnes Bewick. The first thing he could remember was that the latter

> indulged me in every thing I had a wish for, or in other words made me a great Pet—I was not to be snubbed (as it was called) do what I would and in consequence of my being thus

[20] *LM*, 1778, 305.
[21] *LM*, 1781, 480.
[22] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 148. My emphasis.
[23] Wright, *Autobiography*, 21.
[24] Mrs William Taylor to her niece Sophia Courtauld (9 September 1821) *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 846.
[25] Mrs William Taylor to her niece Sophia Courtauld (20 October 1822), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 3, 949.
[26] *LM*, 1778, 40.
[27] Cadogan, *Essay upon Nursing*, 5.

> suffered to have my own way, I was often scalded & burnt, or put in danger of breaking my bones by falls from heights I had clambered up to.[28]

The impression is that when parental feeling was loosened from the responsibilities pertaining to parenthood, especially the paternal requirements of provision, discipline, and instruction, it became less rational and therefore dangerous. This is encapsulated in the term 'doting', which was often applied to grandparents, most usually grandfathers. John Angell James warned parents not to let a 'doating grandpapa' feed their children too many sweets, which would stuff them to death.[29] Samuel Johnson defined the verb to dote as meaning to be infatuatedly fond of someone, excessively or foolishly in love.[30] But, of course, as in 'dotage' it indicated the foolish speech or behaviour of old age. The term was not intended pejoratively when associated with grandfathers in the sample, but perhaps it carried some connotations that men who were softened or weakened by old age might love children too unreservedly and to their detriment. Here, perhaps, were the parameters of sensibility: feeling, but not too much feeling, otherwise relationships incorporating hierarchies and obligations would function incorrectly.

Yet it was their love that made them so indispensable in the project of child-rearing: grandparents' love meant that they shouldered child-care. This stands out from other reciprocal relationships in the family, given that it was not predicated upon religious or legal dicta, nor was it much considered in social or moral guides. Whether motivated by love, altruism, or familial imperatives, the care that grandparents offered was extensive and varied. They helped parents or acted as substitute parents, as dictated by the life-course, health and wealth of parents, and specific needs of grandchildren.[31] As historians of family and health care in the home have noted, grandmothers visited or received their daughters in the later stages of pregnancy.[32] Alternatively, older grandchildren were sent to be cared for by a grandparent, sometimes a grandfather, when a mother was due to give birth.[33] This was only one aspect of a much broader raft of assistance. Grandchildren went for tea with grandparents, took trips with them, and stayed with them for visits at weekends or longer. The letters of the lawyer Jonathan Gray to his wife in 1810–1811 show the regularity of the assistance provided by his parents who lived close by in York.[34] In some cases, grandparents provided childcare to enable a mother to labour. Francis Place's only memory of his maternal grandfather dated from the 1770s when he

[28] Bewick, *Memoir*, 3. Also see Wright who described his grandparents as indulging him, *Autobiography*, 13, 24.

[29] His other culprits were a favourite servant and a kind aunt, the same three key figures again. James, *Family Monitor*, 81.

[30] Johnson, *Dictionary*.

[31] Early-modern household listings often show grandchildren living with grandparents. This may not have always been an instrumental relationship. Ottway, *Decline of Life*, 157, 161.

[32] For Victorian examples see Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives,* 54.

[33] Jane Munby to her Mother Jane Pontey (25 May 1815), YCA, Acc 54: 207.

[34] See letters from Jonathan Gray during his wife's absences from home. This is particularly clear since his parents lived nearby. Section J. Letters of Jonathan Gray and Mary, his wife (1795–1837), CYLAL, Acc5,6,24,235/J.

visited 'my fathers house in Ship and Anchor Court near Temple Bar, to nurse the children on washing days, he was a very old man and wore a red coat'.[35] Somewhat higher up the social ladder, Elizabeth Johnson took on her daughter's children in 1810 on the fortnightly washday.[36] Mary Robinson proudly declared that as a young mother following the birth of her baby in October 1774, 'whenever either business, or very rarely, public amusements drew me from the occupation [her duties as a mother], my mother never failed to be my substitute'.[37] The fictional grandmother, Mrs Gray, provided a home in London for her granddaughter for three months a year, no doubt to facilitate her improvement.[38] Grandparents also helped at their offspring's home. Jane Munby wrote to her son in 1816 that she had lengthened a visit to his aunt and uncle in Wales because 'I had so good a Housekeeper in your Grandmamma that we was prevailed on to prolong our visit much beyond my first Intention'.[39] Her mother, Jane Pontey, went on to act as a substitute for her daughter and son-in-law when her grandchildren were orphaned in 1819. A live-in grandparent also no doubt assisted with child-care as the frequent depiction of his mother in John Harden's drawings of family life would suggest. She lived with her son and his family at Brathay Hall for the last 25 years of her life.[40] One example is 'Granny Harden with Robert Allan Harden, and Jessy holding Joseph Webster Harden' (1805).[41] John himself would go on to take delight in distributing his time amongst his children in his old age, after his wife had died. At 73, he told a friend that he was grateful for his blessings and 'voluntarily a wanderer amongst my Children & giving myself now to them and *theirs*—Life flows on very sweetly'.[42]

Grandparents were, in fact, the first port of call for longer term assistance and substitute parenting. They cared for grandchildren during parental absence, spousal conflict, or ill-health. The Courtauld correspondence offers clues into the distribution of care between Peter Taylor's paternal grandparents, paternal and maternal aunts and uncles when his parents migrated to America from 1821 until 1823 when George Courtauld's death sent them home again.[43] Thomas Wright's parents-in-law were regularly involved with caring for his children over several years in the 1770s and '80s. The assistance they provided is rendered ambiguous because of his raging disputes with them, and his unhappiness with his wife, but it is clear that they offered considerable care. They had several of his children to live with them during the Wrights' marital disputes and after their daughter died. They effectively adopted the last child their daughter bore, twelve weeks before her death, and Tommy's two elder daughters periodically lived them after their mother's death.

[35] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 19.
[36] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 123.
[37] Robinson, *Memoirs*, 163.
[38] *LM*, 1775, 32–3.
[39] Jane Munby to her son Joseph Munby (7 November 1816), CYLAL, Acc 54: 225.
[40] Foskett, *John Harden*, 20.
[41] Ibid. no. 27, plate VIII.
[42] John Harden to Mrs Maconchy (July 1844), cited in Foskett, *John Harden*, 54.
[43] Letters between Courtauld family members, *Courtauld Family Letters*, vols. 2 and 3.

This continued after he remarried. Though he hated his in-laws, he appreciated the aid that they lent, conceding that they were 'very tender over' the youngest.[44] Also in the 1790s he explained his reasons for remarrying thus: 'I had no old grandmother, no mother, no sister, as many others in my situation have, upon whom I might rely, and who might, in a good measure, supply the place of a wife, in taking care of my children and looking after the concerns of my family'.[45] Grandparents also took in one or more children when a mother was overworked or ill. Elizabeth Johnston explained one such occasion:

> My Eliza had two dear boys. John was two and a half years old, Thomas, a stout boy, ten months old. Their mother was looking thin, but well in spirits, the fatigue of nursing and having the charge and attendance of two such children, without a regular servant, was more than a delicate female brought up as she had been was equal to. As soon as I went to housekeeping I relieved her of part of her care by having John to stay with us.[46]

Grandparents were undoubtedly invaluable when a grandchild had lost one or both parents. Their love could soothe bereavement. In *The Orphan Girl* (1812), the protagonist, Emily, had lost her mother early but the care and affection of her 'grandmother in a great measure remedied this loss'.[47] Thanks to their intimate knowledge of their deceased children's wishes and behaviour they were effective proxies. Elizabeth Johnston commented that when her daughter Eliza died in 1819:

> I soon broke up housekeeping to live with Mr Ritchie [her son-in-law] and watch over his children's health and morals. I stood to them now in the place of their dear mother, for I knew well her wishes, plans, and hopes for her children. Her great principle was to exact from them implicit obedience, and those who were old enough at her death evinced by their conduct the benefit they derived from her discipline.[48]

The regular letters from Jane Pontey to her grandson Joseph and granddaughter Jane Munby throughout the 1820s testify to the numerous duties she took on when the Munby grandchildren were orphaned. Her care-giving was similar to that offered by mothers. Jane Pontey made, repaired, and washed her grandchildren's shirts, dresses, and underwear; she organised travel for them and delivered parcels to them at school; she also advised on and arranged their medical care.[49] Life-writing thus demonstrates that grandparents worried about their grandchildren in much the same ways as parents did.

One of the most important forms of care that grandparents offered was provision. In the early 1820s Elizabeth Wilkinson, who had earned her living with her

[44] Wright, *Autobiography*, 122, 124–5.
[45] Wright, *Autobiography*, 146.
[46] Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 123.
[47] *The Orphan Girl; or, sweets of benevolence: being a sequel to the Orphan Boy*, in Elliott, *The Orphan Boy*, 103.
[48] When Elizabeth was not aiding him his own mother did so, even following his second marriage. When the mother-in-law died, Elizabeth visited again to take care of her youngest granddaughter. Robinson, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 137, 148.
[49] Papers of the Munby family of York, CYLAL.

husband from retail in Colne, Lancashire, 'kept' her widowed daughter-in-law's children. They lived with her and she organised their education and training while their mother tried to get work.[50] In 1824 she also maintained her daughter's illegitimate child, as well as providing them with a home.[51] Furthermore, grandparents provided loans for grandchildren and invaluable bequests. Thomas Bewick's apprenticeship in 1767 at fourteen to the engraver Ralph Beilby was funded by the £20 his doting grandmother left him.[52] Even those who were not biological grandparents took on this role. Catharine Cappe explained that her step-son Robert was nursed in the country from infancy to four years old in the 1760s. Soon after being brought home, an old lady of the congregation came across him playing in the yard and asked if he knew her. He replied that he did and that she was his grandmamma. This so struck the woman's fancy that she declared,

> 'Well, my dear, continue to call me so, and I will indeed be your grandma': and from that time, she insisted upon buying all his clothes; she made him a present of £1000 in the three percents, when he was about twelve years of age, and left him at her death, the reversion of her own very excellent house in this city.[53]

Grandparents from the labouring ranks also materially aided their grandchildren. Living in Battersea the Soundys supported several of their grandchildren through the second decade of the nineteenth century. Already in poverty, this strained their capacity to survive to the limits, as their letters, written across the 1820s, to their parish of settlement, Pangbourne, in Berkshire, demonstrate. As Frances Soundy explained in 1826: 'I have dun a grat deal un none to my husband and distressed my salf and other children till we have nothing now left that i can assist them any longer'.[54] In 1823 they cared for their eldest son's wife and child.[55] Frances saw this as her duty. As she explained in a further letter, in 1827, the sacrifice necessary to support her daughter-in-law and grandchild caused a 'grate deel of uneasness in the ole [whole] of my family but gentillmen i can not bare to see one child starve more than a nother'.[56] From 1828, they kept their son Charles's daughter 'out of charity.'[57] The struggle to keep her grandchildren following their mother's death forced Hannah Robertson to seek charity by writing and publishing her memoirs in 1791, as her subtitle made clear: *The Life of Mrs Robertson (A tale of truth as well*

[50] Her husband was by now being treated for mental illness. Elizabeth Wilkinson to her daughter Elizabeth Shaw (22 September 1823), CRL, Shaw/88.

[51] Elizabeth Wilkinson to her daughter Elizabeth Shaw (12 August 1824), CRL, Shaw/92.

[52] Jane Pontey to Joseph Munby (26 February 1825), CYLAL, Acc 54: 232. Bewick, *Memoir*, 41.

[53] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 262–3.

[54] Frances Soundy, Battersea, to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of Pangbourne, Berkshire (16 November 1826), BRO, D/P 91/18/4.

[55] James and Frances Soundy, Battersea, to the vestry, churchwardens and overseer(s) of the poor of the parish of Pangbourne, Berkshire (29 September 1823), BRO, D/P 91/18/4.

[56] Frances Soundy, Battersea, to the vestry, churchwardens and overseers of the poor of Pangbourne, Berkshire (1 February 1827), BRO, D/P 91/18/4.

[57] Frances Soundy, Battersea, to the vestry, churchwardens and overseers of the poor of Pangbourne, Berkshire (7 June 1828); also (22 October 1829), BRO, D/P 91/18/10

as sorrow) who though a grand-daughter of Charles II has been reduced by a variety of very uncommon events, from splendid affluence to the greatest poverty. And after having buried nine children is obliged at the age of sixty-seven to earn a scanty maintenance for herself and two orphan grandchildren by teaching embroidery, filigree, and the art of making artificial flowers. This grand-parental plight clearly moved hearts and taught moral lessons. In the early nineteenth-century tale, *The Orphan Girl*, Emily was confronted by several cases of need required to teach her the valuable lesson of benevolence. In one, she encountered an aged gardener who laboured to support his two grandchildren who were too young to work. Having just spent 5s on a doll, she was chastened to learn that he supported himself and his grandchildren on the 12s he earned each week. She realised that his grandchildren would go to the workhouse when he was too old to work.[58]

Perhaps the most longstanding role for a grandparent, usually the grandmother, in the cultural imagination was as a teacher and wise old adviser. A common image was the grandmother teaching young children to read from the Bible. It was charmingly depicted, as in Maria Spilsbury's *Family Group Before a Thatched Cottage* (early nineteenth century, figure 20) and John Harden's *The Reading Lesson*.[59] A literary version can be seen in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1785, when the 'Matron' described a recent visit to her granddaughter Sophia who had a six-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter:

> Edward came every morning into my dressing-room, and offered to read to me out of the book which I liked best, accordingly as I found him very capable of acquitting himself beyond my expectation, I sometimes chose a chapter in the Bible, or Testament; and in order to give him a little variety, pointed out a story in the 'Children's Friend:' sometimes I put the lessons for the day into his hands, which he always reads with a voice distinct and clear, laying a proper emphasis on every word, attending at the same time to the sound as well as the sense.[60]

The humble Ellen Orford, George Crabbe's poor schoolmistress (1810), came to her role when her eldest son, a seaman, drowned: 'he left a numerous Race; of these would some | In their young Troubles to my Cottage come, | And these I taught—an humble Teacher I'.[61] Less embellished accounts appear in memoirs. William Gifford said he was well acquainted with the Bible as a child because 'it was the favourite study of my grandmother, and reading it frequently with her, had impressed it strongly on my mind'.[62] Elizabeth Johnson explained that her grandson John lived with her till he was past three years old 'and from an old-fashioned prayer book with large print I taught him his letters and to spell little words'.[63]

[58] Elliott, *The Orphan Girl*, 109.

[59] John Harden (1772–1847), *The Reading Lesson* (w/c on paper), © Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, The Bridgeman Art Library.

[60] *LM*, 1785, 419.

[61] 'Ellen Orford', Crabbe, *Selected Poems*, 63.

[62] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. xvi.

[63] Robinson, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 124.

Fig. 20. *Family Group before a Thatched Cottage* (oil on canvas). In this version of the popular rural labouring family Maria Spilsbury paints a grandmother transmitting family values and virtues by reading the Bible to her daughter, who is also busy sewing, and attentive grandchildren. In the background is the father returning from his labours in the fields.

To be an advisor lent some authority to aged women. In her contributions to the *Lady's Magazine* Mrs Gray served as guide to the periodical's readers on domestic matters such as female behaviour, dress, marriage, parenting, young girls and boys place of education, and managing servants.[64] Indeed her legitimate role as her family's advisor gave her the right to speak publicly on matters such as the state of society. She had a lower-ranking fictional counterpart in the aged grandmothers who entertained their grandchildren with stories, and acted as the voice of experience in guiding them for the future, as, for example, in *A Grandmother's Tale* (1804):

> IN the days of my youth, my old grandmother told
> Me a tale, that I ne'er shall forget:
> To be modest, advis'd me,—but ne'er to be bold,—
> And avoid ev'ry man that I met.
> For a time I succeeded, and pleasd her so well,
> That she call'd me her sensible child;

[64] For instance *LM*, 1775, 33–6, 210–11, 263, 460–1; *LM*, 1778, 528, 687–90; *LM*, 1790, 141–2.

But I met with Jack Constant one day in the dell,
And somehow my heart he beguil'd.
In two months we got wed, without grandam's consent,
At first she was raving and wild;
But in one twelve-month more, when she saw our content,/
Why,—she call'd me her sensible child.
Now I beg, my young friends, that with caution you'll wed:
May you meet with a partner like mind;
May your days pass in joy, when Age honours each head,
And your virtues in unison shine!

March 3, 1804, J.M.L.[65]

Catharine Cappe told the uplifting story of a woman who had been ill all her life who credited her tranquillity in the face of her affliction to her grandmother's counsel. When very young she would sit and work by her grandmother, 'whilst she related to me the several events of her past life—the trials she had endured . . . and how the Providence of God had always supported her through them'.[66]

Indeed, life-writings show the sheer variety of advice offered by grandparents. The pious William and Faith Gray and Mary Dudley all counselled their grandchildren on religious matters. In 1813 Faith offered up a description of her deceased daughter Lucy as an exemplar to her granddaughters:

> I trust it will not be deemed improper for a Mother, to give a sketch of the character of this dear and excellent daughter—in memory of the blessings we enjoyed whilst she was spared to us and also as a mournful token of our great loss: if it excite in my Granddaughters a drive to excel in those attainments, which made her estimable as a Christian, and as a valuable member of society, it will not have been in vain, that the particulars are recorded.[67]

The farmer's wife, Sarah Savage, stated that she wrote her memoir to pass on her spiritual wisdom to her children and grandchildren.[68] Jane Pontey, on the other hand, left a record of far wider assistance in her correspondence with her orphaned grandchildren who ranged from Joseph, the eldest son, at fifteen, to the youngest child aged just four. Jane advised Joseph on general religious and moral principles and values. She guided his manners and behaviour in matters as disparate as avoiding guns, behaving appropriately in the company of women, and not smoking. She offered her views on his disposal of property, inheritance, and establishing himself in his profession from his training to networking. She prompted him with regard to aiding his siblings as he grew older and took on responsibilities for them, discussing their education, the boys' future behaviour and professions,

[65] *LM*, 1804, 271.
[66] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 351–3.
[67] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, vol. 2, 15; William Gray to his granddaughter Margaret Gray (9 September 1825), CYLAL, Acc5,6,24,235/W13a. Also see Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 342.
[68] Sarah Savage [1664–1752] cited in Kugler, 'Women and ageing in a transatlantic perspective', 71.

and the girls' spending habits and expenses. Even when she reminded him that she had not interfered with his marriage plans, she could not resist offering her views nonetheless. In the regular advice that she gave Joseph Munby as a youth and young man Jane Ponting showed no awareness of gender restrictions on what she should discuss, perhaps because she felt she had to take on the role of both parents. Indeed Jane often acted as their voice, informing her grandson what his parents' view or position had been on certain matters.[69] Of course, grandparents were not always influential. William Ettrick recorded his irritation in his diary in spring, 1827, when his daughter Kitty ignored his advice against naming her baby girl Rominetta, which William prophesied would be a ridiculous name for an old woman.[70]

Still, many grandchildren appreciated their grandparents' efforts. Tommy Wright expressed his gratitude for his grandmother in his memoir: she was

> the nearest, dearest, and only disinterested friend I had left in the world. Farewell, my honoured, beloved, and affectionate grandmother; great was your maternal care, love, and fondness for me. I was too young at the time to be duly sensible of, or make a proper acknowledgement for your love and kindness, but I have felt deeply grateful for it since, and as I hope and trust to meet you in another and better state, I will thank you for it in heaven.[71]

Mary Anne Schimmelpennick (1778–1856) recollected the sheer pleasure of her time with her 'kind grandfather,' Samuel Galton, on visits to his home at Dudson, near Birmingham. These were holidays, where he taught her to skip, they gardened, and she enjoyed his quiet, ordered household.[72]

AUNTS AND UNCLES

The other key family members in this period who participated most fully in shared parenting were children's aunts and uncles.[73] Both might act as mentors. In the serialised story of 'Benedict', published in the *Lady's Magazine*, in 1810, a dying mother left her son to the paternal care of his uncle, asking him to inspire her son 'with veneration for his father's virtues; but do not encourage in his youthful bosom a desire of glory'.[74] Fictional aunts' often took on siblings' children to provide superior learning or moral guidance.[75] Emily's grandmother provided compensatory maternal affection when her mother died, in *The Orphan Girl*, but her 'mistaken indulgence' allowed Emily to exhibit defects of temper. It was her aunt who

[69] Letters from Jane Pontey to her grandchildren Joseph Munby and Jane Munby in the 1820s, CYLAL, Acc 54: 227, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 252, 263.
[70] Ettrick Papers (1823–7), TWA, 2539/3.
[71] Wright, *Autobiography*, 27–8.
[72] Hankin, *Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpennick*, vol. 1, 3, 45.
[73] For the importance of aunts in fiction see Perry, *Novel Relations*, ch. 8; Nelson, *Family Ties*, 39–140.
[74] *LM*, 1810, 12.
[75] For fictional aunts' role in supporting motherless heroines, see Perry, *Novel Relations*, 366–7.

detected this and persuaded her brother to let Emily live with her for six months in order to correct them.[76] Some aunts rescued children neglected by unnatural mothers, as with the 'pious Aunt' in George Crabbe's 'The Mother', eighth poem in his series *Tales*, published 1812. She adopted the plain daughter of her beautiful, selfish sister and 'In tender friendship and in true respect, | Lived Aunt and Niece'.[77] Real aunts and uncles offered more mundane, though probably more indispensible advice and childcare. The widowed Jane Munby, for example, sought out her half-brother's advice about Joseph's education in 1818.[78] In 1821 Jane's namesake daughter, by now orphaned, was offered religious advice from another of her mother's brothers.[79] Aunts and Uncles provided baby-sitting and short-term assistance. When his wife was assisting with her sister's confinement in 1811, the York lawyer Jonathan Gray informed her that their daughter 'Margaret is getting spoiled by my Aunt &c.'[80] When his wife was visiting her mother in 1818 John Shaw told her that their 'lad' went to his unmarried sister and brother 'every day in the morning but not to stay all day I cant part with him and besides I think he will prove far too cross and peevish for an old Maid and Bachelor'.[81] Longer-term care was provided by married and unmarried aunts. Faith Gray recorded the role of several aunts in her mother's childhood. She 'was educated from 4 to 16 years old [1725–1737], under the care of her Aunt Johnson (sister to my Grandfather Batty)' before returning to her parents at Tadcaster. She also 'came to my (Uncle and) Aunt Mortimers for the benefit of attending the best York Schools, where she made great improvement'.[82]

As with grandparents, aunts and uncles also acted as substitute parents. Their tenderness and devotion was praised. William Hutton's *Family History* described his brother Thomas, born 20 June 1722, who during infancy due to 'his Father's misfortune in trade, was taken under the protection of his uncle George, who behaved to him with the greatest tenderness'.[83] William, however, recalled less satisfactory treatment from other aunts and uncles in his childhood in the same period: 'My family being distressed I was sent over, and I resided alternately with my uncle and my aunts fifteen months. Here I was put into breeches, at the age of four; here I was an interloper, and treated with much ill-nature'. The uncle was a bachelor grocer, the '3 crabbed single aunts—lived together as grocers, milliners, mercers and school mistresses'.[84] William was later apprenticed to another uncle, who by

[76] Elliott, *The Orphan Girl*, 104.
[77] 'The Mother', Tale VIII, Crabbe, *Selected Poems*, 197.
[78] John Pearson to his half sister Jane Munby (6 October 1818), CYLAL, Acc 54: 198.
[79] Thomas Pearson to his niece Jane Munby (5 March 1821), CYLAL, Acc 54L 200. See advice offered to Faith Gray's mother from her uncle, recorded by Faith Gray, Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, vol. 2, 75.
[80] Jonathan Gray from York to his wife Mary (20 May 1811), YCA, Acc 5,6,24,235 J/37.
[81] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (16 August 1818), CRL, Shaw/15.
[82] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), 13 September 1787, CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, vol. 1, 75.
[83] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 379.
[84] ibid, 5.

1743 had taken three of his nephews as apprentice stocking-makers.[85] Eliza Fletcher adored her paternal aunt who took over mothering her when she was ten days old, following her mother's death. Her father's younger brother, who lived in the same family, was 'as indulgent to me as the rest'.[86] Aunts and uncles consistently offered help when children were required to travel or be away from home. Edward Shaw needed medical treatment as a child and an iron brace fitted to one leg because it did not grow as fast as the other. In 1825, Elizabeth wrote to her husband John from Rochdale with the doctor's advice: 'you must leave the child here with your Bro[the]r for a few weeks & I shall see him once a week which will be often enough for these bandages will have to be alter'd'.[87]

It was when parents died that aunts and uncles shouldered more sustained care for nephews and nieces. After the female 'vagrant' Mary Saxby's father remarried in the 1740s following her mother's death, she was passed from one relation to another until 'the Lord was pleased to appear for me, by inclining the hearts of my father's brother, and of his dear wife, (who are both, I trust, now in glory, and whose memories are still precious to me) to take care of and provide for me'.[88] When Thomas Wright's parents died, his maternal grandparents took over, since he and his parents already shared their house. When they too died shortly after, his aunt stepped in.[89] Thomas Olivers' uncles took over care of the children when they were orphaned.[90] Society expected that aunts would do their duty in these difficult situations. When Samuel Alexander's wife died, his aunt, Mary Gurney, lived with him in order to care for his children. She was there for two years until autumn 1788 when she herself died.[91] Ann Crowley recalled both the obligation and sacrifice involved following her sister's death in 1796 leaving six young children:

> This afflictive dispensation brought fresh care upon my sisters and myself, as it became our duty to take the place of a departed mother, as far as we were enabled to do so; which brought us to the trial of separation, one of us mostly residing with our bereaved brother-in-law and the dear little children, endeavouring to comfort them under the loss of maternal tenderness and care.[92]

The reality of aunts caring for nieces and nephews was perceived more as a familial, temporary and shared role than later stereotypes of maiden aunts doomed to spinsterhood by selfish familial needs suggest.[93] As Ann Crowley's account shows, the care of aunts could be collective in nature with several sisters sharing the task, or

[85] ibid, 336.
[86] *Autobiography of Mrs Fletcher*, 7, 8.
[87] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (8 November 1825), Shaw 67.
[88] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant,* 2.
[89] Wright, *Autobiography*, 29–30.
[90] His grandfather cared for one of the boys. Olivers, *Life of Thomas Olivers written by himself*, 195.
[91] Alexander, *Some account of the life*, 21.
[92] Crowley, *Some account of the religious experience*, 23. Also see Elizabeth Johnson's memoir where she records how her dying daughter entrusted her 7 year old child to her sister, Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 130–1.
[93] The adult sister in Victorian fiction was expected to put other family members' interests before her own, particularly aged parents, siblings and siblings' children. Nelson, *Family Ties*, 111.

providing care until they married themselves and passed on the role to unmarried sisters. The role of substitute parent was also facilitated by the frequent practice in genteel and professional families for a sister to accompany a newly married couple in the early stages of the union. In 1799 Agnes and George Ranken were married in Edinburgh and they were accompanied by her sister Jessy to London. She remained with them till they departed for India.[94] As such a sister might be present when the first child was born offering the mother assistance and another adult participant in child care. When these were cousin marriages, such links could be very close.[95]

This sharing, life-course aspect of temporary childcare is evident in the Taylor family's care for Peter Taylor. In addition to his paternal grandparents, he had several aunts and uncles who looked after him at various times. First he was mothered by Anna Taylor, his father's sister. She had lived with his parents from their marriage and had an extremely close relationship with Kate Courtauld, his mother and her cousin. In 1821, after they emigrated to America, she wrote that she had 'the comfort of having their darling to love now I have lost the dear father & mother'.[96] This was not about self-abnegation. Younger aunts, as well as uncles, provided fun and games. Often the role was taken on only until the young woman married. Thus, it was not a substitute but training for motherhood. Anna's role diminished when she herself married. Her younger sister Georgiana obviously 'learned' about maternal love by looking after Peter. In 1823 she fulsomely declared to his paternal aunt Sophia Courtauld:

> I sometimes question whether I *could* love him more had he been my own child. The love of a Mother must be very tender, and certainly I am not one, but I do not believe that I could love that child much more than at present I do. I know not how I shall part with him, for I have so many apprehensions about him.[97]

In 1822 Samuel Courtauld married his cousin Ellen Taylor and as Peter's uncle and aunt, maternal and paternal respectively, they also provided a home for their nephew. If his reported, and rather sad, comment in his Aunt Ellen's letter updating his parents on his progress in 1823 is any indicator, Peter himself was aware of the 'serial' nature of his child-care:

> I told him [Peter] the other day Aunt Anna had a little baby, & asked if he was glad to hear it; he said 'No, for now she will not love me so much'. 'Oh yes, she will' I replied, 'why do you think so?' He answered '*Why don't you know when people has little girls & boys of their own, they don't care for me*'.[98]

[94] Foskett, *John Harden*, 12.

[95] Kuper, *Incest & Influence*.

[96] Anna Taylor to her cousin Sophia Courtauld (21 September 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 843.

[97] Georgiana Taylor to her cousin Sophia (22 May 1823), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 3, 1035.

[98] My emphasis. Ruth Courtauld to sons George, John and Samuel and daughter Sophia and from Samuel Courtauld to his brother George, with a note on the reverse from Ellen Courtauld, Sam's wife (12 December 1823), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 3, 1134.

Edward Gibbon stated that his aunt provided maternal care and was 'the true mother of my mind as well as of my health'.[99] As many such maternal titles denote, these aunts were celebrated as proxy parents and, of course, this could be some solace for women who were childless but did not wish to be. Dorothea Herbert declared of her nephew Walter, born in 1797: 'As I have no dear Babe of my own to share with him my equal affections I can never set my heart so much on any Child again'.[100] Sydney Morgan referred to her nieces and nephews as 'my darling children' and herself as their 'little mama'.[101] She lamented her inability to say goodbye to her nieces before leaving for a trip abroad:

> can I leave my pretty doxies? Dear little toddlers! I am sure that nepotism is an organic affection in single and childless women; it is a maternal instinct gone astray. In popes and princes it is a frustrated ambition, a substitute for paternity. It is a dangerous tendency. Aunts and uncles never love wisely, but too well; besides it brings with it responsibilities without authority, and imposes duties without giving rights. And so bye-bye babies![102]

PAID CARERS

Child care was also purchased by employing female nurses and servants.[103] The importance of the role of servants in child care is perhaps indicated by the exemption to paying tax on servants of having two or more children or grandchildren living with householders.[104] For medical writers nurses were synonymous with wet-nurses. Wet nurses continued to be employed when required throughout the period. Elizabeth Wilkinson's letter to her daughter Elizabeth Shaw describing the feeding of another daughter's illegitimate baby fully demonstrates the shared nature of parenting. She apologised for not having written sooner but explained that

> we John, Sarah & myself came to Haragate n[e]ar a week ago—it was under the nessesity of putting the child to wet nurse as I had no milk—we tryd for a month to bring it up with spoon it did well a fortnight & then from a violent lax & sickness we thought it wd have died & wod have come here by myself but they wd not let me.[105]

Elizabeth's use of the personal pronoun in the phrase 'I had no milk' surely illuminates just how central she felt her role was in the nursing of her grandchild. In most cases, however, the range of child-care offered by nurses and servants was broader. Lower-ranking women also employed or obtained assistance to allow them to work. Mary Ann Ashford condemned her mother for sending her away at

[99] Edward Gibbon, *The Memoirs of the Life of Edward Gibbon*, cited in Perry, *Novel Relations*, 336.
[100] F.F.M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 370.
[101] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs,* vol. 2, 279; Morgan *Passages from my Autobiography*, 176.
[102] Morgan, *Passages from my Autobiography*, 9.
[103] For tutors acting as surrogate parents see French and Rothery, 'Upon your entry into the world', 412.
[104] For the tax, see Steedman, *Master and* Servant, 16–17.
[105] Elizabeth Wilkinson to her daughter Elizabeth Shaw (16 July 1824), CRL, Shaw/91.

four months old to a nurse, in 1787. For Mary this was because the nurse had gained ascendancy over her mother and because 'I happened to exercise the baby prerogatives of squalling and kicking in a very vigorous manner, I was weaned and taken off by Mrs Long'.[106] No doubt it was also because her mother worked with her father in their tobacconists shop.

Paid carers provided a live-in support system for middling, professional and elite mothers.[107] Elizabeth Shaw's letters to her husband John, written from their home in Wolverhampton, while he travelled the north-west and midlands seeking hardware orders, regularly mention the nurses and servants who assisted her. In 1816, shortly after the birth of their first child, she reported on his progress:

> He is as hungry as a hunter having drunk all his milk and nurse is wondering why the milk girl don't come. His face is wonderfully improved since Sunday. I think it gets more chubby every day—His nurse came on Monday night—I hope I shall like her—one thing I am glad of, she is wakeful in the night Nurse tells me & if we can manage nights I am not afraid of the days.[108]

Clearly, at their best, nurses boosted the confidence of mothers as well as aiding them in the physical care of the child. As more children arrived, Elizabeth continued to rely on nurses. In 1822 she told John:

> Our new girl came last night. I cannot say much about her yet—I have slept so long in the nursery that I feel a great reluctance to leave it so long as you are out. I like the Baby better as a bedfellow than I think I should like any of them else. They are so restless but as the Baby is to be got out of bed with several times in the night (to keep him comfortable it gives me cold & I let a girl do that.[109]

It is likely that for Elizabeth nurses were temporary, specialised members of the household, hired when babies were small, with servants assisting more generally. Thus in 1823 she explained to John:

> The strange girl wanted to leave today but I thought I would keep her a week or two while Thos is so helpless—as I have it in my power to do so. I have engaged another girl for the House but she is a very little one & I almost fear she will not be stout enough but I could not mend myself & I had an excellent character with her for steadiness.[110]

This did not mean that Elizabeth did not take a hands-on role with her several children. She told her mother in 1828 about her most recently born son, Richard, 'I never had as much anxiety about a child I think before. He has never had a good nurse to take the care of him & keepe him to cleanly habits as the others have—so that he is daily wetting the bed if I don't keep constant watch over him'.[111]

[106] Ashford, *Life of a Licensed Victualler's Daughter*, 10.

[107] It should be acknowledged that hiring and keeping suitable servants meant it was not without its own problems, and therefore not always long-term or reliable.

[108] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (5 December [1815?]), CRL, Shaw/46.

[109] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (Thurs. night [1822]), CRL, Shaw/51.

[110] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (20 June 1823), CRL, Shaw/60.

[111] Elizabeth Shaw to her mother Elizabeth Wilkinson (19 September 1828), CRL Shaw/83.

Nurses were as useful to fathers as mothers. When John Shaw returned home from his long businesses absences, his wife would take the opportunity to leave the family home to visit her family. In later years, when he was less peripatetic, she took holidays or visited the coast for health benefits. During these times, John was supported in child-care by the household servants. This system of distributing the care of children also gave extra freedom to men who needed to be away from home. John was reassured by the assistance that the servants offered his wife because he worried about his wife's stamina and health. In 1821 he wrote from home to his wife who was at Colne, visiting her family, 'I am much afraid John will be a good deal of trouble to you not having a servant—pray mind you do not knock yourself up'.[112]

There were criticisms of nurses, of course. This was part and parcel of men carving out the professional specialisation of childbirth and child medicine. Across the second half of the eighteenth century popular medical writers like Buchan, Cadogan, and Moss criticized nurses for their lack of understanding, poor knowledge, superstition, neglect and indifference, or over-indulgence. Sensibility's emphasis on feelings led to the suggestion that carers weakened the parent-child bond. Rousseau warned that committing a baby to the care of another risked a mother 'seeing her child love another, as much and more than herself'.[113] Sentimental prints depicted the distress this caused a mother. In Morland's The Visit to the Child at Nurse (1788), the infant was reluctant to leave its nurse's bosom for its mother's.[114] William Cobbett argued that parents should be wary of leaving children too much with servants because it was their own duty to offer care and time and they might not be good enough substitutes. Life-writers' complaints were more personalised. Mary Ann Ashford not only criticised her mother for abandoning her to a nurse, she also attacked Mrs Long for her lack of care and greater interest in money than her charge.[115] In fact, though wet-nurses were gaining a bad press, they were not uniformly considered uncaring.[116] When Samuel Hutton's mother died days after his birth in 1733, he was 'sent to nurse with Joseph and Sarah Knowles, at Mackworth, and was treated with all the tenderness humanity could wish during three years, for eighteen pence a week'. A lifetime later, his brother, William, bitterly recorded that Samuel was happy until his father and common-law wife took him home to save money. In this case, a nurse was better than an unloving parent. In the main, their involvement in supporting parental care for children was not seen as any form of indifference or neglect because women were assumed to be naturally maternal.

Indeed, the concept of the nurse as an embodiment of care and love for children persisted. For example 'nurse' was a metaphor for religious ministers. John Fleetwood described a nurse in his *Christian's Dictionary* as 'One who gives suck to young infants, and performs all the other duties to a child, till it begins to grow up,

[112] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (10 May 1821), CRL, Shaw/17.
[113] Translated in *LM*, 1780, 147.
[114] Gilbey, *Morland*, 247.
[115] Ashford, *Life of a Licensed Victualler's Daughter*, 11–12.
[116] For a balanced view of wetnurses see Levene, *Childcare, health and Mortality*, ch. 5.

so as to take care of itself'.[117] Here the nurse and the nursing father overlapped in their tasks; as he went on to explain, monarchs ought to be nursing fathers to the Church and ministers nurses of the gospel. The analogy between the nurse who feeds infants and the minister who feeds souls was accompanied by an engraving and verse, both of which functioned because of the widespread understanding that a nurse was a woman naturally endowed with deep love and care for children. In a bed-chamber decorated with one portrait of a patriarch and another of a more learned figure, a woman holds a bowl in one hand ready to feed a small child. Its title is Nurse Pfa. CIII. 13, and the verse is: 'The careful Nurse protects her charge from harms, Feeds from her hand, or in her bosom warms. | Thus thrives the soul when fed by Grace Divine; | Nourish'd to Grow—Secur'd in Heav'n to shine.' There were also very sentimental images of nurses and their charges, as with George Morland's *Nurse and Children in the Fields*, 1791 where the nurse is nicely dressed and loving enough to be their mother.[118]

Memoirists often emphasised the affection binding nurse and child. Lady Craven memorialised her nurse as kind-hearted and full of sensibility; a maternal substitute who toiled for Elizabeth and her sister Georgiana without pay, and directed their morals and manners. Elizabeth declared 'I could never speak of her memory without considerable emotion, and my feelings were always alive at the recollections of her virtues and kindness. I well imagined that few women were ever born like her'.[119] Paid carers were very fondly remembered. Catharine Cappe recalled her feelings when her nurse, Mrs Maurice, left the family home while she was at school: 'Most deeply on my return, did I lament the loss of my honoured preceptress; and often did I pace, with sorrowing steps, the now deserted apartment, where she had been wont to rehearse her lessons of wisdom!'[120] When William Gifford was orphaned at thirteen, he was sent to his godfather. He explained that his two-year old 'brother was sent to the alms-house, whither his nurse followed him out of pure affection'.[121] Fictional nurses also doted on their charges; compensation for inadequate mothers.[122] The 'Man of Sorrows' in the *Haunted Castle* (1785) remembered his childhood as one of parental neglect, but 'I was repaid by the affectionate care and assiduity of my kind nurse, who perfectly doated on her charge'.[123]

The best nurse was the long-serving one. Dorothea Herbert colourfully recounted the 'mad', 'bad' and 'sickly' nurses she and her siblings had, 'Not forgetting old Mary Neal who drynursed us all and lived with us upwards of forty years without ever stirring from the Nursery Window, where she sat crying about us or damning us unmercifully for our boldness whilst she sat mending our

[117] Fleetwood, *Christian's dictionary*, unpaginated.
[118] Gilbey, *Morland*, 251.
[119] Craven, *Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach*, vol 1, 8.
[120] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 49.
[121] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. ix.
[122] 'History of Lady Bradley', *LM*, 1778, 85.
[123] *LM*, 1785, 79.

Stockings and Rocking the Cradles'.[124] Memories were usually more poignant. When painfully recording in her diary her adult daughter's sudden illness and death, Faith Gray noted that 'Hannah Clark, who had been with us in the nursery near 16 years and whom Lucy loved was an attendant on her almost Night & Day'.[125] Physically caring to the last, what is sadly rare is access to the grief felt by carers like Hannah when their charges died. Some made great sacrifice. Priscilla Gurney remembered when her father and several members of the family became ill with scarlet fever in 1809. The 'careful nurse of the whole circle,' who had been with them for thirty years, was infected while caring for them and died.[126] The nurse-child relationship was expected to continue after childhood. Thomas Wright offered a short biography of the nurse who cared for him when he lived with his grandparents after his parents died because she 'always manifested a parental love and regard for me to the day of her death, common gratitude requires from me this little tribute to her memory. May she rest in peace!'[127] Nurses did not lose interest in the children they helped raise. In 1810 Ruth Courtauld wrote to her daughters that 'I have seen Eliza's Nurse: she spent some days here, and you may be sure ask'd for you both'.[128] Yet, in many ways such women's care was taken for granted by their employers. Though obviously vital to child-rearing, they are indistinct figures, fading into the background, perhaps, because they were just another form of family-care, one of the servants who composed the household-family.

UNPAID, UNRELATED, SUBSTITUTE PARENTS

The life-writings indicate that individuals volunteered to take on the role of proxy parent when they were not relatives of the child and do not appear to have been paid for their efforts. This was sometimes temporary, since several did so even when biological parents were still alive. Substitute parents offered all kinds of 'parental' support including spiritual guidance, friendship, patronage, economic assistance, affection and care. Taking on such a responsibility was a public marker of the carers' personal merit in a world that applauded parental care. Sydney Morgan proudly described how her parents took in Thomas Dermody, the boy poet, and treated him as a 'child of the family'. Indeed, Sydney said he always referred to her mother as his best friend.[129] Given that parents were still alive, this could lead to tensions between parents and the individual taking on

[124] F.F.M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 13. Also see Lady Sydney Morgan's loving memories of her nurse Molly who provided stability throughout her childhood and youth, eventually acting as nurse to her sister's children. *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*.

[125] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, 22.

[126] Corder, *Memoir of Priscilla Gurney*, 5.

[127] Wright, *Autobiography*, 23.

[128] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (17 June 1810), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 52.

[129] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, 86.

such a role in a child's life. The artist James Northcote recounted his father's aversion to his taking up a career in painting. A family friend, Henry Tolcher, on the other hand, consistently supported his ambitions and doggedly attempted to persuade his father to the same mind throughout the late 1750s and 1760s. In 1762, Henry wrote to James's father: 'your son James is often uppermost in my thoughts & as I have a love for him'. Samuel, however, resented Henry's attempts to persuade him to allow his son to train as an artist in London, although this is what James eventually achieved.[130] Moreover, taking on the role of proxy parent and investing time and care might not be appreciated and led to disappointment. This was perhaps more so in contractual relationships of master and apprentice. Thomas Bewick's view of his role towards his apprentices was certainly different from theirs, as he explained of one:

> I have taken a Boy & behaved to him uniformly with the kindness of a Father or a Brother & have watched with every pains in my power to instruct him, & when all this was done, he shewed not a particle of gratitude, but observed that any 'cartman would take care of his Horse' and put himself under direction of ill disposed people.[131]

William Braidwood acknowledged that the task was fairly common but assumed that parental substitutes could not feel the same depth of affection for children as biological parents: 'Those who have the children of their friends or others committed to their charge, are also called to the performance of the same duties [as parents]; and they should endeavour to supply, by a principle of conscience, the deficiency that must arise from the want of parental affection.'[132] Nevertheless, substitute parents were idealised as sharing the qualities of all good biological parents; they were tender and loving. In some cases the substitute or surrogate parent was used to highlight the inadequacies of the real parent.[133] In the 1785 *Haunted Castle*, the old man Bob explained that his father had shown him little affection and ignored his personal inclinations, wanting him to follow him into business rather than the Church. When obliged to leave school for this reason, his schoolmaster declared to Bob:

> I have always loved you, my dear child, with the affection of a father; nothing inferior, have I wanted over you with the tenderest solicitude; and it has always given me extreme pleasure, to see my tenderness for you, repaid by the love and gratitude, which has appeared on your side; after thus much, it would be vain to dissemble that at parting with you I shall feel some concern.

Even so, he still advised him to obey his father. Such selflessness contrasted with the lack of care and wisdom of Bob's biological father.[134]

[130] Northcote, *The Life of the Painter*, 29, reel 040; 32, reel 0047.
[131] He said he'd been liberal with him, employed a physician for him, and paid him wages. Bewick, *Memoir*, 86.
[132] Braidwood, *Parental duties*, 51.
[133] For 19c examples, see Nelson, *Family Ties*, 166–7.
[134] *LM*, 1785, 303.

Living, loving substitute parents were encountered. Mary Saxby described the 'tender, motherly woman,' whom she met when she ran away from home. This travelling woman took pity 'on me in my forlorn condition; for she washed, combed, and fed me, and took as much care of me as if I had been her own'.[135] William Hutton, who had a distant relationship with his father, remembered in his entry for the year 1741:

> An old gentleman of the name of Webb, who had passed a life in London, brought £3000 into business, lived in genteel life, and had filled many offices, but was reduced, came to reside with us. He was one of the most sensible and best of men, completely formed for an instructor of youth. It was my fortune to attend him, sleep with him, and love him. I treated him as a father, a monitor, and endeavoured to profit by him.[136]

The clergyman John Murgatroyd supported his servant and her illegitimate child, eventually bequeathing them property. Despite the fact that it was not his, the childless Murgatroyd fell in love with the baby. This social paternity was motivated by love rather than any desire for status. His love was perfectly acceptable in his cultural milieu. He operated within sensibility, which expected personhood to be displayed through feelings. He had been educated in the classics, which saw affection as stimulated by the vulnerable and dependent, and in Christian theology in which the child is the reminder of the believer's delight and security in God's eye and care.[137]

CONCLUSION

Parental devotion and shared child-care are not incompatible, since feeling enormous overwhelming love for one's child can co-exist with another carer performing the bulk of routine care, as the institutionalised care of infants in nurseries in modern societies testifies. Parents' ability to share the labours of parenting in a culture that came to focus upon the parent-child bond was facilitated by several factors in the Georgian period. Overall, although parenting was seen as a biological relationship its characteristics were understood to be ideally transferrable to other forms of socially-constructed parental style relationships. Also, social as well as biological parenthood was accorded high status so that care-givers claimed to be or were commended as proxy parents. Similarly, giving another individual the duty of care over a child added a dimension to relationships outside the nuclear family, which Sarah Pearsall defines under the concept of 'familiarity'.[138] Familiarity reinforced connections between family members and forged useful links with others, both domestic and business in nature.

[135] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 8.
[136] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 51.
[137] Steedman, *Master & Servant*, 183–4, 187–90, and ch. 9.
[138] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 59, 61.

This chapter has sought to move the focus out from the parent-single child bond to a macro-level picture of 'parenting'. This widens attention to include the many people and sites involved in parenting, and gives a more informed sense of being parented, being a parent, and doing parenting. The final chapter's objective is to identify the dynamic nature of parenting by considering it over the life course to explore the points at which parenting and parenthood were understood to change.

9

Changing Relationships

> their bosoms are the safe repository of even the whispers of your mind: they are the great and unspeakable delight of your youth, the pride of your prime of life, and the props of your old age.[1]

Parental identities and roles changed as parents and children grew older. The author of the poem 'The Fireside' (1796) extolled: 'They'll joy our youth, support our age, | And crown our hoary hairs, | They'll grow in virtue every day, | And thus our fondest loves repay, | And recompense our cares'.[2] My Daughter' (1819) illustrated in six coloured vignettes a mother and daughter ageing from young mother and dependent infant, to mature mother and companionable adult child, to daughter nursing her aged mother confined to bed (see figure 17). Like the opening quotation, published in 1829, where William Cobbett mapped the shifting nature of a father's relationship with his children, these examples show very distinct stages of parenting. Each stage had the potential to bring profound alterations in parent and child experience too. Indeed the fluidity of parent-child relationships is striking when examined into offsprings' adulthood and in response to life-course events, notably age and youth, marriage and family, adversity and crisis, and death and memory. Since these life transitions were rarely straightforward, their outcomes were as likely to be tensions and sadness as support and joy. Troubled or not, the parent-child relationship was one of the most formative and potent experienced by individuals.

AGE AND YOUTH

A critical factor affecting parent-child relationships was the aging process, especially its transition points from childhood to youth, youth to maturity, and maturity to old age. Parent and child interaction can be glimpsed at such times. The first transition is revealed in the correspondence generated when parents and children were separated from each other due to schooling. At these times middling and genteel parents worked hard to reinforce and maintain 'familiarity'. This was 'a mode of interaction that stemmed from the family setting and that implied degrees

[1] Cobbett, *Advice to Young Men*, 225.
[2] Burns, *Domestic happiness exhibited, in I. The fireside*, 3.

of knowledge and easy affability. It was both a tone, and a space for relations'. Familiarity was forged through letters that sustained familial connections during separation and offered emotional and financial support in these anxious periods.[3] This was a conventional format promoted in letter-writing manuals, where the familiar mode of correspondence was illustrated by parents' letters to children away at school or work, as well as by correspondence with husbands at sea, or between distant relatives.[4] It was put to morally instructive use. A good example is a letter published in *vf* (1788) Arabella Davies informed her child in 1780:

> Your Papa drinking tea from home this afternoon, P---y has very agreeably entertained, and I hope improved the fleeting hour, by reading to me Mr Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs. She read with much sensibility, and appeared to be interested in the solemn scenes, as masterly unfolded by his inimitable pen.[5]

More mundanely, in forging familiarity, parents bridged the gap between home and family and kept children integrated in both by writing to them with news of parents, siblings and relations, pets, home, garden, and locality and by sending verbal and material reminders of love and affection. In 1812, George Courtauld eloquently caught his youngest son's voice in a letter to his other son at school: 'John has a red [e]ye—and says that he "can see with one so that one may be left out:" However I believe there is no danger of his not seeing well with both'.[6] Joseph Munby senior probably got his son's interests in correct order of priority when he wrote to him at school in Scarborough: 'Your Rabbits and Pigeons are all vastly well, and your Brothers and Sisters each sent you a kiss with their best love to you, Johnny says you will bring him a new whip from Scarbro'.[7] The use of place and memory to fix the child in the emotional nexus of the family was striking. Ruth Courtauld did just this in 1813 when she told George junior, away at school,

> I sat a long time in your Summer house today and thought of you—not uncomfortably tho' it will be a long time until I see you, but with pleasure, for I hope you are improving more than if you were here, and I know not any gratification I would not give up for your good—Anna Taylor, Catherine and Eliza often sit there and work and read, they have got a nice bench there, they all desire their Love [meaning they all sent their love to him].[8]

Parents also sought details about children's activities at home and school. Jonathan Gray, for example, included a jolly poem for his small daughter when he wrote to his son William from his walking holiday in Capel Curig in 1812. His wife and two children were in Filey, Yorkshire, hence the sea-faring tone:

[3] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 56–9.
[4] Cited in Pearsall, ibid, 69–70.
[5] Davies, *Letters from a parent to her children*, 25–6.
[6] George was at Hackney School, September 1812–September 1813, at Billinghurst School, February 1814–May 1815, then Mill Hill School, July 1815. George Courtauld to his son George Courtauld (28 September 1812), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 76.
[7] Joseph Munby to his son Joseph Munby (18—[no date]), CYLAL, Acc 54: 211.
[8] Ruth Courtauld to her son George Courtauld (21 August 1813), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 88–9.

To Margaret
What! Have you seen the sea and ships?
And have you had some pleasant dips.
Then go to Mother with three skips
And kiss her with your pouted lips.
From Father.[9]

A child's journey from youth to maturity was the next major point of transition. This was not a specific age, nor a state of independence, but simply marked the point at which a child approached or achieved the age of adulthood, gained some degree of independence through training, employment, or marriage, or had left home to partially or fully support themselves. Parents' busy weaving of webs of 'familiarity' did not end at these points, of course. Thereafter parents and children remained conduits of information that bound family and sustained it under the strain of uncertainty and distance.[10] As children matured, the information highway extended in both directions as they kept parents up-to-date with their own health and their children's well-being and development, reported on spouses' activities, and exchanged news of other kin and their localities. They also circulated goods, from shirts and shoes to ketchup, services, such as information on pork prices and hiring servants, and carried out activities, including paying bills and keeping house.[11]

Nor did parents expect their responsibilities to end at this juncture, though they realised their form would alter. George Courtauld saw his own role expanding at his son's approaching adulthood as he decided what business to take up. He explained,

> my parental duties are not concluded, as they probably are at this juncture of more importance than at any other, (for upon a young man's first start in life his future well-being most imminently depends) it would be a cowardly dereliction of duty—and impious dependence upon the Almighty—to give up the agency He has appointed me.[12]

Attaining maturity also provoked different parental expectations. It meant children became 'reasonable', a conceptualisation of their state of intellectual maturity that may well have influenced how parents felt they should behave towards their child and vice versa. On his voyage to America in 1818 George Courtauld reminded his youngest child to gain as much knowledge as possible while staying with his sisters and mother in Edinburgh and to make the most of his opportunities in education. He ruefully ended:

> but really I forget, how year after year steals on—and that tho' not I suppose very tall—we much now begin to forget "*little Jack*" and consider you as a reasonable and

[9] Jonathan Gray to his son William Gray (24 August 1812), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,24,235 J/52d.
[10] This is evident on a far wider Atlantic canvas: Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, passim.
[11] Based on the requests made by parents and children in the correspondence of the Shaw, Gray, and Munby families.
[12] Editor states that Sam had been at his uncle's firm in London. George Courtauld to his son Samuel (20 April 1812) *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 29.

> reasoning Boy—willing to do all he can to be useful—and becoming daily more and more so.[13]

Maturity brought utility. Dorothy Wilson informed Caroline Forth in 1816: 'The more we learn, the more Power we have of being useful and agreeable to others'.[14] This could shift the basis of a relationship. William Gray's increasing financial security made him attempt to aid his father, in order 'to be serviceable to you, which I never yet was in my Life'.[15]

Increasing maturity, reason and experience encouraged some parents to make a confidante of a child, as George Courtauld did of his son Samuel. They might also lead to a new dimension of a father-son relationship if the son entered the same profession as his father, although personality and personal circumstances mean that generalisations are impossible. The wealthy York lawyer Jonathan Gray regularly travelled every year on business and leisure. As soon as his son was old enough to join the family firm, he accompanied him on these trips.[16] Father-daughter relationships might take on new facets as the daughter reached adulthood, particularly when they acted as a writing father's muse or assistant.[17] This might be seen in less literary families. Lucy Gray, Jonathan's sister, kept accounts for her father William's charitable institutions.[18] While gender precluded her engaging in his professional endeavours, her role was significant, nevertheless, given that he devoted vast amounts of time, energy and money to charities and must have afforded her status and perhaps some shift in their relationship.

Children's maturity brought the likelihood of cleaving parent from child. A child's adulthood ended parental control over his or her life. In 1819 George Courtauld wrote to his wife Ruth about their married daughter Kate with some resignation:

> As to our poor Kate—she is unavoidably removed from our immediate attention, and at present we can only hope that the Universal Parent will protect and guide her in the paths that will best lead her to Virtue and Happiness; to this goal there are many ways—hers may perhaps be rough and thorny—but we know very little about it—except that it is not at this moment such as we should choose for her.[19]

For some parents it imposed physical distance between them and their offspring. When she reported that her daughter Anna was to marry Revd Mr Malleson, and would settle in Leeds, Mrs Taylor expostulated: 'So this couple I shall not see very often, they might almost as well be settled in America. Ah! No, not so neither for I can never think of America but as the burial place of all my joys and comforts.'[20]

[13] George Courtauld to his son John Minton Courtauld (22 July 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 400.
[14] Dorothy Dinah Wilson to Miss Forth (1816), CYLAL, Acc 54:185.
[15] William Gray to his father William Gray (12 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W3.
[16] Based on Jonathan Gray's correspondence. Section J. Letters of Jonathan Gray and Mary, his wife (1795–1837), CYLAL, Acc5,6,24,235/J.
[17] Gonda, *Reading Daughter's Fictions*, ch. 6.
[18] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810, CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, 17, 21.
[19] George Courtauld to his wife Ruth Courtauld (1819), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 143.
[20] Mrs William Taylor to her niece Sophia Courtauld (20 October 1822), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 3, 948.

Of course her son had migrated to America, permanently as far as she could tell. In 1822 Ruth Courtauld wrote to her daughter Sophia in America:

> I sometimes think it hard to be seperated [sic] from you all, but so scatter'd are you all, that there is nothing for hope to rest upon, for me at least on this side Eternity, & perhaps it is best there should not; this World should be loosing its interest with those who have one foot in the other. I feel for your poor father, but he can see some of his daughters when he likes, while I—but no matter. I hope we shall meet when time shall be no more.[21]

In a letter the following year, she lamented not hearing from her children in America so that she feared they were dead. Yet the son who was physically located somewhat closer was still distant. She bitterly commented: 'Sam & his wife drank tea with me this week, but they are in such a hurry away that I have hardly time to ask them a question'.[22] An upwardly socially-mobile upbringing carried similar dangers. According to Francis Place, his wife could not get on with her adult children because they had been better educated than her, effectively brought up to be a different social rank. He reminded his son-in-law after her death that 'my wife found herself, going far behind them in all sorts of school learning, and she conceived that as they advanced in knowledge, of this kind so they became less and less respectful to her . . . it had a bad effect upon her temper, made her sometimes give way to passion and made her as you know at times greatly agitated'.[23]

The aging of parents, or the move from maturity to old age, was the phase of life perceived to have the most intensely transformative impact. Poignantly it was a period associated with a child's diminishing love for his or her parent. The rather jaded 'Reflections on domestic life' (1784) asserted: 'parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love less and less; and if those whom nature has thus closely united, are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation'? The cynical author placed the turning point even earlier: 'An unpractised observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and equal; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy; in a short time the children become rivals to their parents'.[24] George Courtauld certainly lived in fear of a change in the quality of the love his children bore him. In 1814 he told his son Samuel:

> it is indeed one of the most painful mortifications an affectionate parent can experience, to perceive their children as they advance in life very frequently practically forget their first love; good children do not indeed completely do so, but when instances of high displeasure and of contemptuous or other unkind treatment frequently occur, the effect upon a good parent's mind cannot but be proportionably painful.[25]

[21] Ruth Courtauld to her daughter Sophia Courtauld (25 May 1822), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 899.
[22] Ruth Courtauld to her son George Courtauld (25 January 1823), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 3, 980.
[23] Francis Place to his son–in-law John Miers, (7 March 1828), published in Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 255–6.
[24] *LM*, 1784, 30.
[25] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (12 December 1814) *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 69.

Both the author of 'Reflections' and George noted how tensions between parent and child exacerbated the situation. The latter's somewhat recriminatory memorandum to his adult children in 1815 aimed at recovering their 'filial affections' now that its 'delicate part' had dissipated. He reflected:

> During the whole of their infancy and early youth they were all uniformly, constantly treated by their father with the kindest attentions flowing from parental love; they too loved their father, and, as Sam told me, he loved me because I loved him. This happiness was mine for many years… But this seems to be departing…

Ultimately, he blamed himself for the diminution of their love, by having taught them to think for themselves, along with his own personality defects and the 'imperfections' of their mother; all of which 'threaten to deprive him and them of the pleasures and advantages of any high degree of filial respect and love'.[26]

Actually for all George worried about his children's love for him, their comments as adults suggest they retained many of the same feelings for him as they had in childhood. In 1816 Eliza reminded her brother George on his settling in at school that he should not have worried that he would not get taken proper care of at school, 'when you might have felt perfectly assured that Papa would have been as unwilling to have sent you where you would not have been sufficiently attended to, as you could possibly have been to go.'[27] Clearly she retained her sense of confidence in her Papa as protector and carer of his children. In 1819 Sophia asked her brother George to pass on 'My very kind love to dear Papa; ask him if he cannot spare one hour for his little Soph? For I must not lose this "little" tho' on the 11th of this month, I shall be 20'.[28] Adopting the tones of a child, this youngest daughter obviously wished to retain the special nature of their bond.

Nonetheless, tensions between parents and children were seen as somewhat inevitable due to the inherent differences between age and youth. The author of 'Reflections on domestic life' in 1784 considered that 'The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite, by the contrary effects of hope and despondence. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in spring and winter'.[29] William Hutton certainly thought a long life prevented cross-generational understanding:

> When I consider that within my memory the surface of the earth is totally altered, that the old buildings upon that surface have disappeared, and the new become old, that the former inhabitants have, given way to the present, whose opinions and manners are different, I may say with Dr. Young, 'This is not the world in which I was born.'[30]

It was not only the old who felt this way. In 1818 Sam Courtauld lamented 'it is a miserable thing… that my father cannot understand me—nor dare I assert that

[26] George Courtauld to all his children (1815) *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 71.
[27] Eliza Courtauld to her brother George Courtauld (February 1816), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 177.
[28] Sophia Courtauld to her brother George Courtauld (3 August 1819), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 566.
[29] *LM*, 1784, 30.
[30] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 231.

I may not also mistake both him and myself'.[31] The two had a loving but conflictual relationship. Although Sam was unwilling to work with his father in the silk-throwing business, his ideal, as he informed him in 1817, was still to communicate with him regularly. Though even this utopia built in a safe distance:

> Why should it not be as delightful a view to picture to one's self? You with Soph, who would appear of all your children best suited to your wishes as a domestic companion, living in some little central spot between the elder branches of your family—strictly central if they should be within a few miles; or, if somewhat further removed, within a few fields of my house—where each family would be near enough for every gratification of the most intimate sociabilities, yet separate enough to preserve their respective individuality, and thereby give opportunity for a class of agreeables not to be had if both were under one roof: *you* must well understand me.[32]

Parents recognised that they changed with advancing years which in turn reshaped their relationship with their children. George ruefully apologised thus in 1815, when advising his son Samuel about his choice of career:

> You will find some of my letters in one of the parcels a good deal didactical, but I hope not therefore unacceptable. Old men and old parents can scarcely avoid more of this strain than the occasion calls for, but if their solicitude for the welfare of their children naturally leads to this error, affectionate children will find no difficulty in excusing the excess.[33]

For parents, there was a worrying comprehension of the process of their aging as a shifting from parental activity and independence to inactivity and dependence, with children simultaneously moving in the opposite direction.[34] The usually sentimental Mrs Gray of the *Lady's Magazine*, commented

> All grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and grandfathers, old uncles, aunts, fathers and mothers too, when their children begin to be near *one and twenty* are often looked upon as burdens to all to whom they belong, who wish to make them think a *removal* quite necessary for their own comfort, as well as for the satisfaction of their families, that they should be removed; by which means their descendants would come into possession of their money, and get rid of any care which they might be obliged, out of decency, to take of them.[35]

William Hutton clearly saw ageing as a risky passage, but one in which parenting might provide purpose. His journal entry for 1795 mused,

> If the body is unemployed it becomes the nursery of disease. If the mind is unemployed a languor commences, and the man becomes a burthen to himself. Both were

[31] Sam Courtauld to his sister Sophia Courtauld (April 1818), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 369.

[32] Sam Courtauld to his father George Courtauld (20 December 1817), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 324.

[33] George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (13 November 1815), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 81.

[34] For this change in the balance of power between sons and seniors see French and Rothery, 'Upon your entry into the world', 411.

[35] *LM*, 1790, 141.

> designed for action. As I had done with public concerns, which had engrossed much of my time and thoughts, I was reduced to a circumscribed circle; something therefore must supply the place. Walking and assisting my son, employed the body; studying and writing, the mind'.[36]

Handing over his business to his son and providing free help was his key to remaining sufficiently active. In 1818 George Courtauld envisaged a similar shift in powers. He wrote to his son Samuel:

> As yet I hope to act with the most active & as the time shall approach when I must be (comparatively at least) an inactive spectator of the busy scene, George & John, we may hope, will be fully competent to become my substitutes, & then I may with propriety (it will indeed become a duty) gradually retire from this world's business.[37]

Since activity was clearly the source of his identity, he went on to hope that God would help him bear this transition. In 1821 he fantasised that if Sam became the family 'mainstay', 'he would soon enable his father to retire from the bustle of active exertion—I mean bodily fatigue'.[38] In fact, he never retired because death caught up with him first.

This aging process and the sense that the parent-child relationship would consistently evolve was at the root of the common and powerful world view of filial duty, which was transferred across generations as a family value.[39] 'My Daughter' prettily illustrated the journey from dependent infant to nursing daughter. One verse proclaimed the transition: 'When Age my Faculties suspend, | Who will her Kind Assistance lend, | And prove a never failing Friend? | My Daughter.' (see figure 17). The two main components of the cultural construct of filial duty were support and comfort and inbuilt in both was a notion of change over the parental-child life course. This distinction between children as a staff, or a prop, and a comfort was typically maintained. The author of the *Child's Physician* (1795) aimed to save children's lives so that they 'might become the staff and comfort' of the aged parent who gave them life and in 1818 George Courtauld hoped that George Junior would join him in America for 'He would be of great use in forwarding our estab[lishmen]t & would be a great comfort to me'.[40] 'Staff' was synonymous with 'support' and was understood to be financial or material in nature.[41] The imaginary girl at the heart of the print 'My Mother' (1815) consoled her mother: 'When thou art feeble old and gray, | My healthy arm shall be thy stay, | And I will soothe thy pains away, | My Mother' (see figure 18). In most cases it was associated with contributing money to a parent in their old age. In literary examples, Reverend Primrose cheerfully declared that his children would be the

[36] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 223.

[37] George Courtauld to son Samuel Courtauld (26 December 1818), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 114.

[38] George Courtauld to his wife Ruth Courtauld (25 May 1821), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 181.

[39] See chapter 7.

[40] *The child's physician*, p. viii. George Courtauld to his son Samuel Courtauld (26 December 1818), *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 116.

[41] For examples of children's material assistance to parents, Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal bonding', 298.

'supports of my declining age' and the eldest daughter in Robert Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night* (1785) brought her penny 'To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be'.[42]

Real examples of offspring shouldering the burden of are common. For the labouring ranks, of course, poverty pushed the age of support backwards so that young children contributed to their whole family's support. In 1830, the parish authorities in Northampton and Earls Barton discussed the payment of Widow Rightson's son's apprenticeship premium. They did so because it had the potential to save future poor rates by making him able to earn enough to assist his mother in her later life and raise his own family independently.[43] Walter Keeling in 1795 promised he would not ask for parish help any more in his old age: 'I Shall Never Troble you no more as my Son is just out of his Prentis ship Which he has Sarved 7 years Which is Verrey good Lad'. Clearly he expected his son to supplement his and his wife's income thereafter.[44] A child's inability to support a parent was a valid reason to request relief. Joseph Fox wrote in 1800 to the overseers of the poor in Peterbrough apologising that he was no longer able to pay towards the upkeep of his wife while he was working away from his settlement parish, but also it was 'not in the Power of my Sons to pay anything for me'.[45]

For other ranks, the relationship shifted as offspring achieved maturity and economic independence. On entering business as a lawyer and in committing himself to live according to his faith, William Gray organised regular financial provision for his father in Hull. In 1774 he explained: 'I have considered my Circumstances attentively, and find that I can very well spare £15, or perhaps £20 a year, from my income, and yet live as comfortably and decently, as my profession requires'. This he intended to direct to his father to prevent his 'entangling' himself in business that would 'perplex your Mind or your Body'.[46] Marriage and family commitments might have reasonably diverted his funds. Nevertheless, in 1778, shortly after his wedding, he professed his intention to continue to contribute to his father's livelihood: 'My wife and I are much pleased at your letting my sister mention your want and we rejoice that the God of all our mercies enables us to supply it. This is indeed a privelege [sic], and by such opportunities only can the mammon of this World be made our friend when it enables Lord's people to communicate to each other'.[47] Supporting a parent was a praiseworthy achievement. A newspaper advertisement attempting to raise charity for an 'afflicted' family in 1813 explained that the father had suffered a paralytic stroke which made him unable to work to provide for his five children between three and eight years old. What was more:

[42] Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*, 4. Burns, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.
[43] Hallam & Moore To the Overseers of Earls Barton (27 June 1830), NRO, 110p/138/13.
[44] Walter Keeling, Hull, Yorkshire, to Thomas Turner, Colwich, Staffordshire (10 November 1795), SRO, D24/A/PO/2902.
[45] Jos Fox, Woolwich, Kent, to the overseer of the poor for Peterborough St John, Northamptonshire (14 January 1800), NRO, 261P Vii/Bundle 242/14.
[46] William Gray to his father William Gray (12 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W3.
[47] William Gray to his father William Gray (27 April 1778), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235 W/8.

'He has no near friends or relations to help him, but his father, aged 78, whom he chiefly supported for the last ten years'.[48]

Offsprings' support took other forms than maintenance.[49] William Gray invited his father to come and live with him in York after retirement, though financial provision seems to have been the preferred option.[50] Assistance might arise through crisis rather than parents' old age or infirmity. The far less financially secure John Bailey was proud that he removed his father from his job:

> in June, 1802, I took a house for him in the coal trade, which I superintended; and the Lord knows I acted from the best motives; and on a review of that circumstance, I feel happy, because it was the means in the hand of God, of causing him to hear and know the joyful sound of salvation.[51]

Support was also simply about providing necessaries; clearly an entire reversal in the dependency stakes between parent and child. When Bailey's father died at age 46 in 1803, he promised him that he would support his mother. A source of satisfaction and pride, he was not motivated especially by his faith or promises to the dying: 'The love I had for my mother, would have caused me to procure necessaries for her, had not my father given a dying charge'.[52] Parents assisted their offspring when their marriages failed.[53] Perhaps more surprisingly, offspring might provide support to warring parents. When Ruth Courtauld separated from her husband in 1813, for instance, she took on housekeeping duties in return for support from her eldest daughter Louisa, who opened a school in Edinburgh.[54] A few years later she also acted as housekeeper for her eldest son Samuel in return for a home; though this arrangement ended when he married. Not all parents wanted such support. William Gray's father seems to have challenged his attempts to aid him. William tried to hide his plans to do so at first and his father never did move in with William as he suggested.[55] Ruth Courtauld feared becoming a burden to her children and hoped she would die before reaching that point.[56] Impoverished offspring who could not contribute money or necessaries might still aid their parents. The pauper James Bromley claimed he'd lost a great deal of time looking after his eighty-year old father.[57]

If support was the material arm of filial duty, comfort was its emotional counterpart: the pleasures and consolation that offspring brought their parents. For George Courtauld in 1815, children were simply the 'greatest comfort' a parent

[48] *The Times*, Thursday, 4 March 1813; 2; Issue 8850; col A.
[49] Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal bonding', 299.
[50] William Gray to his father William Gray (12 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W3.
[51] Bailey, *Poor Pilgrim*, 83.
[52] ibid, 92.
[53] Foyster, 'Parenting Was for Life, Not Just for Childhood', 313–27.
[54] Events constructed from communications in correspondence.
[55] William Gray to his father William Gray (21 February 1774), CYLAL, Acc 5, 6, 24, 235/W4.
[56] Ruth Courtauld to her husband and children (17 Dec 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 859.
[57] James Bromley, William's brother, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, to Joseph Corbett, archdeacon, Longnor, Shropshire (no date), SA 1977/7/957. Also see King, 'The residential and familial arrangements of English pauper letter writers'.

could have in the world.[58] Comfort was linked with life-course shifts too. Small children offered parents comfort in the face of life's unpleasantness.[59] In 'The History of Lady Bradley', serialised in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1778, Lady Bradley yearned to assist her sister whose husband beat her and brought in his mistress to manage the house over her. Her husband, Sir Robert Bradley, refused to let her do so and threatened to take their daughter away from her if she kept on asking. At least her daughter provided solace in the face of his ill-treatment: 'I endeavoured to draw comfort from the caresses of my little daughter, and to console myself by a tender solicitude concerning every thing which related to my dear Fanny'.[60] Ruth Courtauld thanked her son George in 1813 for his affectionate letter, which, as always, was a comfort to her.[61] Comfort had a very physical dimension where young children were concerned, as the correspondence between Elizabeth and John Shaw demonstrates. When young the children helped Elizabeth endure her husband's lengthy absences on business trips. They offered company and distraction. Thus when John was away they were her bedfellows, providing company, reassurance, and warmth.[62] As she told him in June 1822, she was lonely after the children went to bed.[63]

In the main, however, children were perceived as their elderly parents' comforts. The virtuous son depicted in 'My Father' ends: 'If blind, thy smallest wants I'll see, | If lame, I'll be a prop to thee, | And every way thy comfort be. | My Father' (figure 16). When Lucy Gray died in 1812, her mother mourned: 'Mr Gray and I, had hoped she would be the comfort of our declining years.'[64] Comfort was still related to the elderly parent's state of mind. A letter on education published in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1775 warned:

> if we suffer our children to grow up without implanting in them a due sense of virtue and religion, we can never expect they will do their duty to us in the latter part of our existence, but will prove, as it were, harrows and thorns, to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the mind, and add double weight to the too heavy infirmities of old age.[65]

In 1816 one cousin advised another to offer comfort to her parents: '*lose no time* to make *your* bosom the comforting pillow of your parents' cares, particularly your Mother's, for her feelings are very acute and I believe her shades are deepened perhaps by her temper; but has she never had cause?'[66] In effect, the comfort that parents longed for was their offsprings' emotional sustenance. In 1821 Mrs Taylor defined comfort as a daughter's conversation and good humour; though

[58] George Courtauld to all his children (1815) *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2, 72.
[59] Foyster, *Marital Violence*, 155.
[60] *LM*, 1778, 38.
[61] Ruth Courtauld to her son George Courtauld (21 August 1813), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 86.
[62] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (26 November 1822), CRL, Shaw/55.
[63] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (27 June 1822), CRL, Shaw/52.
[64] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, 22.
[65] *LM*, 1775, 364.
[66] M. Osborne to Sophia Courtauld (28 March 1816), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 193.

she foresaw its end when the daughter married.[67] In 1821 Louisa Courtauld envisaged it as a daughter providing relief from cares for a father's mind.[68] For many parents, access to adult children was compensation for all the debilities of old age. Their proximity eased parents' minds. At 61, Ann Candler began her publication of her poetry with a short account of her life. She made it very clear that she was troubled by the children who were far away: 'of nine children two remain near me, to afford me substantial happiness and satisfaction as a parent; but my uncertainty about the others, and solicitude for their welfare, are too often painful in the extreme.'[69] No wonder that the Matron's ideal granddaughter in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1784 was 'the only child of the best of fathers, to whose declining age, and increasing infirmities, she pays the tenderest attention'.[70]

As with most reciprocal relationships, there were limits to the extent of the duties undertaken. The 'Miscellaneous observations by the late Dr Langhorne' on 'Parental and filial duties' in the *Lady's Magazine*, 1783, observed:

> The duties of parents and children are reciprocal; but the unnatural parent cannot acquit the child of his duty, any more, than the undutiful child can acquit the parent of his natural obligations. Both these, however, are to be understood, as secondary to the great duties we owe ourselves. A child ought no more to embrace misery, than vice, to oblige a parent; and a parent is under no obligation to forfeit his own happiness for the gratification of a child. But under all circumstances, that respect which is due to a parent still subsists.[71]

Filial duty in practice was seen as bounded by adult offsprings' other responsibilities. In 1822 Elizabeth Shaw kept shop for her mother, Elizabeth Wilkinson, while she was away having her lame leg treated. She wrote to her husband telling him when she would be back, explaining, 'I have performed my duty & now I want to be at home again.'[72] Her children needed her attention now. Unmarried offspring had fewer legitimate excuses and some confessed to acting out of duty rather than pleasure. Elizabeth Shaw [the sister-in-law of the previously mentioned Elizabeth Shaw] wrote to her brother John who was in Manchester seeking hardware orders. She ended the letter explaining that their parents had no housekeeper, so 'my Family call upon me for' but 'you know my Papa is not blest with too great a [illegible] of patience and my poor mama wants waiting on so'.[73] Filial duty might be in conflict with an individual's other ambitions. Benjamin Haydon reported his feelings in 1804 when about to leave home having finally persuaded his very reluctant parents to let him train to be a painter: 'When all my things were corded and

[67] Mrs William Taylor to her niece Sophia Courtauld (14 April 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 818.

[68] Louisa Courtauld to her sisters Sophia and Eliza Courtauld (18 June 1821), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 2, 819.

[69] Candler, *Poetical Attempts*, 4.

[70] *LM*, 1784, 9.

[71] *LM*, 1783, 686–7.

[72] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (25 May 1822), CRL, Shaw/54.

[73] Elizabeth Shaw to her brother John Shaw (no date, pre-1809), Shaw/41 in The Shaw letters in the University of Birmingham Library/transcribed by John Malam, 1988, r f DA 529.

packed ready for the mail I hung about my mother with a fluttering at my heart, in which duty, affection, and ambition were struggling for the mastery'.[74]

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The life-course events associated with marriage and family introduced substantial changes in parent-child relationships. Parents were regularly involved in the early stages of children's marriages, depending on their level of wealth and rank, from seeking suitable candidates to approving a prospective partner.[75] After the union, parents also took on additional roles in their offsprings' lives as grand-children were born, offering valued advice and practical assistance.[76] Not only did this help sustain their offspring and forge connections with another generation, it marks another of the shifts in the scale from independence to dependence, with parents acting more as equals of their offspring in this predominantly cooperative role. Parents also helped sustain their offsprings' unions. They mediated between conflictual spouses, acted as support networks, and provided financial help or a residence for daughters in particular.[77] Such intervention could alter the nature of the relationship between the parent and the offspring suffering from an unhappy marriage. The same is true when adult children became involved in their parents' marriage breakdown. Correspondence between the older Courtauld children in 1813 indicates that discussing their parents' quarrels with them and their role in their eventual separation caused permanent shifts in relationships. The siblings appear to have taken sides, with Louisa's resentment towards her father growing as her sympathy for her mother increased. Eventually Louisa left home and moved to Edinburgh with her mother.[78]

The making of marriage also created new parent-like relationships, by forging connections between people and their spouses' parents.[79] The ideal parent-child-in-law relationship would duplicate the biological one as closely as possible. This was yet another consequence of the eighteenth-century emphasis upon familial intimacy. The mid-seventeenth-century Simon Daines was much more circumspect about parents-in-law when he advised on the correct tone to address a letter to them:

> If to a father or mother in law, that is by marriage, we will tender our selves in such termes, as may professe service and obedience; but not duty: At least, not equall to the former: though I grant, we ought to think our selves tied in a firme obligation of civill, and more than common respect.[80]

[74] Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 11.

[75] For varying degrees of participation of parents, see Eustace, '"The Cornerstone of a Copious Work': Courtship, Love, and Power; King, 'Love, religion and power in the making of marriages'; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, ch. 2.

[76] See chapter 8.

[77] Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, ch. 6; Foyster, 'Parenting was for life'.

[78] Constructed from the Courtauld correspondence.

[79] In the Georgian period the term parents-in-law could be used about step-parents too, but modern usage is applied here to avoid confusion.

[80] Daines, Simon, *Orthoepia Anglicana*, 86.

A century later, the rhetoric was one of quasi-parenthood. George Courtauld described himself as Stephen Minton's new son in 1789:

> you now have *two* Sons in America. I would much wish you to consider me in that character—I have never till now known a Father—believe me, Sir, it would give me inexpressible pleasure to join my dear little girl, your amiable Daughter, in ev'ry respectful and tender attention.[81]

In 1783 Ben Mordecai hoped that he would be his future daughter-in-law's father, explaining he waited 'for the time with impatience when I shall subscribe myself your affectionate Father as well as Friend'.[82] In 1781 the Matron was enchanted by Mr Mancel, her granddaughter's husband who was 'as attentive' to his father-in-law, the Matron's son, 'as if he was by birth his son'.[83] Joseph Munby praised his mother-in-law's love for his family in the early nineteenth century: exclaiming at his 'pleasure in seeing you & witnessing the anxiety you often evince for the welfare of my dear family'.[84] This aspiration was not restricted to the middle-classes. The vagrant Mary Saxby praised her repentant son-in-law who attended on her 'with all the tenderness of an affectionate child' when she suffered from asthma and dropsy in 1801.[85]

In practice, individual relationships between parents-in-law and sons- and daughters-in-law were influenced by numerous factors determining closeness or tensions, such as those over property arrangements before and after a marital union or the extent to which parents approved of their children's choice of partner.[86] Other tensions arose after marriage, usually when a spouse perceived an unjustifiable lack of financial assistance or accused parents-in-law of causing problems between them and their spouse. Both Simon Mason and Thomas Wright's accounts of their lives included long litanies of such complaints against their parents-in-law.[87] Parents-in-law might behave differently with their children's spouses. Simon Place broke the habits of a deeply unpleasant lifetime and surprised his family by being affectionate towards his son Francis's wife. As Francis commented with astonishment, he 'afterwards treated her with more consideration and respect than he had ever done any other person.'[88] Further changes occurred with age, when a child-in-law became carer, protector, or provider for a parent-in-law.[89] In most cases this was celebrated as exceptional filial duty. Once again life-course events and personalities produced evolving, unstable parent-child relationships.

[81] George Courtauld to his father-in-law Stephen Minton (24 July 1789), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 35.

[82] William Taylor to his father Ben Mordecai (18 January 1783) *Family Letters*, vol. 1, 22.

[83] *LM*, 1781, 18–19.

[84] Joseph Munby to his mother in law Mrs Pontey (no date [though after 1804 when Joseph born and before 1816 when he died]), CYLAL, Acc 54:203.

[85] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant,* 76.

[86] For a complaint that a future father-in-law was not prepared to treat his son-in-law like his sons, see John Shaw to his future wife Elizabeth Wilkinson (12 November 1812), CRL, Shaw/9.

[87] Mason, *Narrative of the Life and Distresses*; Wright, *Autobiography*.

[88] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 100.

[89] Examples include Sydney Morgan's brother-in-law, and Jonathan Gray's wife.

ADVERSITY AND CRISIS

No lives are lived free from adversity and crisis and in many cases such periods of strain imposed different demands upon the parent-child relationship. Illness and indisposition were major factors in temporarily and permanently shaping experiences of parenting. The trials of nursing children did not end when they grew to adulthood. Parents continued to lend a hand during their illnesses. In 1815 Elizabeth Shaw recommended that her husband get his mother or sister to rub his sore shoulder; the Courtaulds cared for their oldest son when he suffered from a lung complaint; Elizabeth Wilkinson regularly visited her son to care for him when he was ill in 1823; and Elizabeth Johnston spent several years travelling round her widely dispersed offspring in North America during their many afflictions.[90] Lydia Wright's doctor advised her to live with her parents in the final stages of her illness and she died in her natal home.[91] Grandparents also intervened and assisted when grandchildren were ill.[92] Parents supported their daughters during their confinements by visiting them or having them to stay. When this was denied, new mothers felt considerable stress. Mary Robinson desperately wanted her mother's attentions during pregnancy and birth during her first pregnancy while still herself a teenager. However, her husband's financial difficulties meant they had to leave London to escape his creditors. She remembered, 'I felt a severe pang in the idea of quitting my adored mother at a moment when I should stand so much in need of a parent's attentions: my agony was extreme'.[93] Catherine Ettrick even named her husband's refusal to let mother stay with her during her pregnancy as one of his cruelties in her separation suit in the 1760s.[94] When she was unable to be with her mother, Elizabeth Shaw sought written advice from her on her pregnancies and miscarriages.[95] Such acts made parents feel useful, sustaining familiar and emotional links, though the demands may well have caused tensions when they came in conflict with responsibilities to other family members.[96]

Medical care and assistance travelled in two directions during offsprings' adulthood. One of the obligations of filial duty was to offer aged and ill parents nursing care. An essayist in the *Lady's Magazine* in 1783 cautioned people that they should be sympathetic to their parents' aches and pains, 'and nurse them in their second childishness.'[97] Life-writings offer several instances of people caring for declining parents. Between 1786 and 1787 Faith Gray stayed with her mother who was sick

[90] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (31 March 1815), CRL, Shaw/43A; Letters between Courtauld family members written in 1815, in *Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, vol. 2; Wentworth, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist*, 134, 136, 149, 155.

[91] Wright, *Autobiography*, 127, 129.

[92] Michael James, 'Health care in a Georgian rectory', unpublished paper, 2009.

[93] Robinson, *Memoirs*, 134.

[94] Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, Catherine Ettrick v. William Ettrick, Separation on the Grounds of Cruelty, Trans.CP.1765/4.

[95] e.g., Elizabeth Shaw to her mother Elizabeth Wilkinson (19 September 1828), CRL, Shaw/83.

[96] James, 'Health care in a Georgian rectory', unpublished paper, 2009.

[97] *LM*, 1783, 192.

with breast cancer and then persuaded her to move in with her because she feared she was alone too much. When Faith was nearing her confinement, she arranged for her mother to stay with her other daughter, Faith's sister. Faith reported in her diary that her mother insisted upon this because she 'feared being inconvenient to us—but we had planned that she need not have left us'.[98] In the early years of her marriage Elizabeth Shaw moved near her husband's family and aided her ill mother-in-law. In 1815 she updated her husband during one of his trips as a travelling salesman: 'I told you your mother was very unwell before & this morning she & sister came here to spend a few days to see if change of air & scene would be of any service'.[99] At various times Elizabeth also visited her own family home to provide different kinds of support for her mother when she was physically unwell and her father was enduring bouts of mental illness. Her husband worried that this would make her anxious and ill herself.[100]

Perhaps because nursing an ill parent was such a strain, those who did so were praised as the best of children. Sitting up with their bed-ridden mother 'alternately night after night for many months' until she died was a badge of merit for Isabella Bewick and her sister, and dutifully recorded by Isabella's daughter in her mother's biography.[101] Catharine Cappe praised the daughter of her childhood nurse, Mrs Maurice, whose exertions 'were extraordinary, and her unwearied attendance upon her mother, who was confined to her bed a whole twelvemonth previous to her death [in 1768], most exemplary'.[102] Dorothea Herbert recalled caring for her father in the 1780s thus: 'As I nursetended My Father whilst the Ladies were at Cards, he gave Me Many Praises for my Attention, whenever he enter'd, declaring I was the best of Daughters.'[103] William Hutton's daughter completed his memoir after his death and felt great satisfaction about her years of devotion to him at the end of his extremely long life: 'He has said to me more than once, "It is impossible to be better nursed than I am." He said once, "Thou dost all thou canst to smooth the rugged way I have to go."' As these examples indicate, offspring who aided ill parents were usually daughters, though some men were acknowledged in the role, like John Bailey. Hannah More's fictional Coelebs attended his father through his lingering illness, sustained by his lessons of wisdom and piety until 'After languishing about a year, I lost him, and in him the most affectionate father, the most enlightened companion, and the most Christian friend.'[104]

Parents also assisted adult children in times of economic need. The easiest way to identify this in the sources is when parents temporarily offered them a home. The objective in such cases was to save housekeeping expenses for a while. Mr Kilner described such a plan and his reservations:

[98] Faith Hopwood Diary (1764–1810), CYLAL, Acc 5,6,4,235/D1a, 72–4
[99] Elizabeth Shaw to her husband John Shaw (11 April 1815), CRL, Shaw/45A.
[100] John Shaw to his wife Elizabeth Shaw (19 February 1831), CRL, Shaw/32.
[101] TWAS, Bewick, 'My Mother', unpaginated.
[102] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 106.
[103] F.F.M., *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert*, 107.
[104] More, *Coelebs in search of a wife*, Vol 1, 11.

> Our scheme is to reside with my father; &, by that means, we shall save the expence of housekeeping until I know whether my new occupation will answer. Indeed my father does in this respect, as he has always done in everything of importance, act most extreemly [sic] generous to me; but, as his nature & temper are not with increasing age likely to change much for the better, you will easily conceive that at my time of life in great measure to lose the independance [sic] with that of the management without constraint of my own family, is very hurting.[105]

There are numerous examples in the pauper correspondence of parents supporting unemployed adult children or their spouses or children. In many of these instances there was an assumption that living with parents would lead to conflict. In 1830 Elizabeth Shaw warned her mother not to let her son William and his wife live with her: 'by no means would I advise you to let them live under the same roof with you—it would be a constant source of disturbance to all parties'.[106] For poor families the economic strain itself caused enormous hardship and further family conflict.[107] Parents also assisted separated or deserted daughters who were invariably in economic need.[108] They aided offspring in even more extreme circumstances. In 1794 Francis Place's brother-in-law was tried, convicted and sentenced to death for highway robbery. His sister 'was now with an infant obliged to go and live with my mother, doing what she could with her needle towards earning her living'.[109]

DEATH AND MEMORY

It was death that most harshly reconfigured parent-child relationships. Children's deaths caused emotional and physical torments which could spill over to affect people's relationships with their other children and placed their own self-identities under severe stress.[110] The death of a parent also had weighty consequences. People perceived it to have influenced their life-courses.[111] But it brought many other after-shocks too. The death of a parent could result in re-marriage which changed the parent-child relationship. Some memoirists recorded their childhood resentment towards their surviving parent and their dislike of a step-parent.[112] Children were at the heart of the decision to marry after widowhood. Would remarriage

[105] Mr and Mrs Kilner to George Courtauld (23 October 1787), *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, 28.

[106] Elizabeth Shaw to her mother Elizabeth Wilkinson (1 July 183), CRL, Shaw/84.

[107] See Soundy correspondence, published in King *et al*, *Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-century Britain*, vol. 1.

[108] Foyster, 'Parenting was for Life'.

[109] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 132–3.

[110] See chapters 1 and 2.

[111] See chapter 5.

[112] e.g. Sydney Morgan dreaded having a step-mother. Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 94. Hannah Robertson refused to call her step-father 'father' which was obviously intended as a snub. Robertson, *Life of Mrs Robertson*, 4. For quarrels about a parent remarrying see letter from Francis Place to his son-in-law John Miers (7 March 1828), Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 259–60. A case-study of the tensions between step-parent and step-children is found in: Francus, 'Stepmommy Dearest?'.

protect and provide for children or would it deprive them of their financial and property rights? Would it lead to neglect, cruelty, or emotional abuse in terms of indifference? Would it turn the surviving parent's attention away from their children? According to Catharine Cappe 'much of the unhappiness of second marriages is usually incurred by the real or apprehended diminution of fortune to the children of the first, and by the consequent existence of separate interests'.[113] Mary Saxby's fears were most direct. She did not wish to marry 'lest he should use the child ill afterwards'.[114] One of the most formidable obstacles to marrying her widower husband, Catharine Cappe recalled, was: 'I was by no means certain how far I could be comfortable with six young people, most of them grown up, and whose previous ideas and habits were in many respects, very different from my own'. In the end, she decided that her life experience made her adaptable to different people's characters and situations, so that she would manage.[115] Mary-Ann Ashford determined to marry again because her elderly suitor promised as a friend of her first husband to raise her children.[116]

Cultural representations of step-parents acknowledged these fears, with cruel or neglectful step parents stalking the pages of fiction and life-writings.[117] In doing so, print culture offered solutions to the anxieties. Fictional tales talked through the problems. In 1785 the *Lady's Magazine* serialized 'The Mother-in-law' in which a widow with a teenage son and daughter married a widower with teenage son and two daughters. She was reluctant to marry him because she expected to encounter problems with his nearly grown children. Mr Bryon's promises of material provision for her children finally persuaded her.[118] Nonetheless her step-daughters were sarcastic, obstinate and disrespectful and the narrative focused on the events that ensued. An interesting set of tensions were on display. In order to secure what was required for one's own children as a widowed parent, one had to make personal sacrifices. There were also gender-related assumptions. Mr Bryon sought a replacement mother for his children, which was someone who possessed the character of a mother, while his wife sought economic security for her children. Such exchanges were acceptable ways to discuss the motivation for remarriage. The fictional and financially independent Lady Bradley (1778) chose another solution when she refused to marry an almost perfect suitor rather than pose any risk to her daughter's emotional or financial status.[119] In 1790 the *Lady's Magazine's* Matron offered a male correspondent a more pragmatic, traditional way to resolve tensions, which was to marry an older woman rather than a young one.[120] Presumably she was a safer bet in terms of behaviour and less likely to bear step-siblings to dilute or divert inheritances. Advice writers also issued instructions. In 1830 John Angell James insisted that 'due care' be exercised about children's interests when selecting

[113] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 245. [114] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 19.
[115] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 245–6.
[116] Ashford, *Life of a Licensed Victualler's Daughter*, 76.
[117] For villainous step mothers in eighteenth-century fiction see Perry, *Novel Relations*, 368–9. In Victorian versions they functioned as a way to critique flaws in biological parenting in a non-controversial way. Nelson, *Family Ties*, 146, 167.
[118] *LM*, 1785, 89. [119] *LM*, 1778, 131. [120] *LM*, 1790, 307.

another marriage partner. He suggested a man ask whether his prospective wife was kind enough, good tempered enough, discrete enough, and loved him enough to bear the burden of his children for his sake.[121]

The best step parent, understandably, was indistinguishable from a biological one. Obviously, this was the only way to avoid conflict, prevent divisions, and make the transition from a biological to a step-parent more bearable for children. To achieve this was noteworthy since there was a presumption that a biological parent loved by nature, but a step-parent '*must* have principle and kindness'.[122] Mary Dudley's daughter proved her mother's worth by explaining that her biological children were unaware that their siblings were step siblings until one of them died.[123] The introduction to the published diary of Arabella Davies (1788) likewise noted that Mr Davies had four children by a former marriage;

> but her happy disposition led her to treat these and her own children, in such a manner *as one family*, that it would have been impossible by the keenest observer, from any thing in her conduct towards them, to distinguish, which of them belonged to the first, and which to the last marriage. She not only called them all her own, but realized them as such even to such a degree, that not any of them could feel the loss of its mother. And she obtained such ascendancy over their affections, that each was emulous to love her most.[124]

Catharine Cappe's persona included being an excellent step-mother and her husband's offspring were 'her' children too. More specifically, she congratulated herself that she caused no jealousy, or arguments between them.[125] Ann Cowley praised a step-mother who was a 'religious caretaker,' substituting successfully for the dead mother.[126] Step relations could be strong. Mary Dudley's daughter reported that her mother observed, 'with grateful emotion, that she never desired more affectionate or dutiful conduct from her own children, than what she received from some of her adopted sons'.[127]

Men were also supposed to treat step-children without differentiation. Just as with biological paternity, tenderness and fondness were crucial. In the 'Memoirs of a Widow' (1781), the widow concluded her tale as the happiest of wives and mothers because, after much deliberation, she married her son's tutor. He was 'exceedingly fond' of her son and daughter, 'attended to their education, with an unremitting assiduity: and did not neglect those whom Mr. Freelove [her first husband] left to my care and protection'.[128] These relationships could continue past childhood. Elizabeth Craven commended her step-father Lord Nugent, who 'conceived such a partiality for me, that he was my constant friend, and never neglected me during his

[121] James, *Family Monitor*, 70–1.
[122] ibid, 71.
[123] Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 264.
[124] Davies, *diary of Mrs Arabella Davies,* 22.
[125] e.g., Cappe, *Memoir*, 247, 257.
[126] Her brother-in-law's second wife, Eade, *the religious experience of Ann Crowley*, 34.
[127] Dudley, *Life of Mary Dudley*, 263.
[128] *LM*, 1781, 695.

life'.[129] While the narrator 'mother-in-law' of her namesake story had difficulties establishing a relationship with her step-daughters, her husband, Mr Bryon, quickly won round her daughter 'by making her of so much consequence, which did the business completely. She attached herself to him from that moment, he was her dear papa at every word'.[130] For all the requirements of affection and attention, however, one of the most predominant features of a good step-fatherhood was his ability to provide and protect his step-children's property and assets.[131] Perhaps this was the most 'transferable' element of fathering, borne by step-fathers and surrogate fathers as easily as by biological fathers.

Death ostensibly ended a parent-child relationship. But it did not. The mother-daughter relationship depicted in the print 'My Daughter' journeyed through time from the daughter's infancy to the mother's death. But the last verse spoke to its continuance thereafter: 'Who faithful as the tender Dove, | Will treat my memory with Love, | And hope to meet in Heaven above? | My Daughter' (see figure 17). Similarly, life-writers descriptions of their parents testify to their protracted influence throughout their children's lives, long after they had died. The memories of parents recorded in memoirs were those associated with especially meaningful moments they had shared or were those that generated powerful feelings: typically security, love, admiration, resentment, fear, anger and guilt. This is hardly surprising, since individuals remember emotion-arousing events more than neutral everyday ones.[132] Thus it is the emotional undercurrents of memories of parents that help explain their meaning and longevity for individuals. For example, in her old age, Catharine Cappe recalled a childhood memory of her mother singing. In itself this was not especially significant, but its emotional meaning was transformed when it consoled her following her prospective suitor's sudden death in 1772:

> I shall here mention, for the purpose merely of demonstrating the great importance of early pious impressions, that I often derived much consolation from the recurrence of two simple stanzas of the thirty-fourth psalm, in the wretched doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins, which when very young, I had been accustomed to hear my mother sing very sweetly, as she stood by the window, in the twilight of a Sunday evening.[133]

Writing at the end of her short life, Mary Robinson memories of her deceased mother were particularly associated with points of parting, separation and loss. It seems, therefore, that her mother represented domestic stability and comfort for her.[134] Guilt and gratitude shaped Robert Barker's (bapt. 1729) only individualised memory of his father. In his memoir, dictated in 1809, he remembered an incident of his youthful ill-behaviour in the 1740s that especially infuriated his father: 'from that very time, I began to view him in the light of a most kind and tender parent,

[129] Craven, *Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach.* vol. 1, 10.
[130] LM, 1785, 139, 365.
[131] One of the factors leading the 'mother-in-law' to marry Mr Bryon, *LM*, 1785, 89.
[132] Christianson and Safer, 'Emotional events and emotions in autobiographical memories', 219.
[133] Cappe, *Memoirs*, 145.
[134] For several examples see Robinson, *Memoirs*, 25, 27, 62, 68, 102, 132, 135, 163.

who had suffered much on my account, for which I ought to make the best return I could, by shewing him all the dutiful respect and gratitude in my power.'[135] Regret shaped many older writers' memories of parents. In his unpublished memoir, or 'history of my heart,' William Cowper remembered when his father asked him to read a vindication of suicide and give him his opinion. Cowper argued against it and recalled that his father,

> was silent, neither approving nor disapproving; from whence I inferred that he sided with ye author against me. Tho' I now believe ye true motive of his conduct was, that he wanted, if he could, to think favourably of ye state of a departed friend, who had some years before distroy'd himself, and whose death had stuck him with ye deepest affliction.—But his solution of ye matter never once occurred to me, and ye circumstance now weighed mightily with me.[136]

Writers' criticisms of parents were also rooted in powerful feelings. Emotional indifference, the inability to sympathise with their child's aptitudes and desires, and harshness were all accompanied by their offsprings' feelings of loss, resentment, and abandonment, which retained the power to move them many years afterwards. William Gifford, for example, stated that he did not love or mourn his father because of his indifference. Though inclined to excuse her father for holding the prejudices of his time about educating women, Cappe regretted his refusal to educate her despite her abilities and desires. But it was his emotional reserve that kept these resentments alive long after she had overcome any educational shortcomings: 'My father's manner, as I have already intimated, was generally reserved and distant, from principle'. Mary Robinson condemned her father for not placing his children higher in his priorities and her memories of him were inextricable from a pervading sense of abandonment, since he left the family to establish a business in North America.[137] Francis Place's memories of his father are notorious. Dissipated, given to running away from his commitments, callously indifferent to his children and an unpredictable, violent disciplinarian of his sons, Simon Place was the antithesis of ideal fatherhood in this period. Place recognised that this might shock his readers: 'Some will think that I ought to have concealed the frailties and vices of my father.' For all that Simon was a mercurial and difficult father, his son actively sought out memories of him in later life. In 1828 Francis revisited Shepperton, the location of some fishing trips that he accompanied his father on when a very small boy. There he met an old man who remembered Simon, and as they reminisced about his father's appearance and his friends, Francis recorded that: 'A multitude of pleasant associations crow[d]ed upon me, as I looked around me, at the water—the house—the landing place—the fishing punts—the Old man—the Church &c &c—and thought of my childish days.' Vicious father he may have

[135] Barker, *genuine life of Robert Barker*, 66–7.

[136] William Cowper, 'Memoir, never published to the world', 2, 16. For regret at not being able to demonstrate love for father, see Cappe, *Memoirs*, 77.

[137] Gifford's *Baviad and Maeviad*, p. viii; Cappe, *Memoirs*, 18–19, 55; Robinson, *Memoirs*, 44. Similarly, see Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years*, 40.

been, he retained his power to stimulate fear, anger, and even happiness in his son over fifty years later.[138]

The linking of memory, parent and emotion may have become more self-conscious by the mid nineteenth century as the genre of autobiographies developed. In the sample analysed here, the memories of those born in the 1790s, written from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, are the most self-aware. Sydney Morgan opened her memoir with an excellent example of this: 'I have cheered gloom and lightened pain by humming a song of other times, which embodied dear rememberances and sustained memory by music. The songs taught me on my father's knee, have lost nothing of their power even to the present day'.[139] In 1873 Samuel Courtauld (1793–1881), the silk manufacturer, recorded a painful memory of his father. As a boy, his father accompanied him on the three mile walk to meet the coach that was to take him to London for a visit. Samuel had long since forgotten why, but remembered that he had been in a bad temper and though they carried his box on a stick between them, he sulked in silence all the way. When the coach arrived his father helped him in, handed him his box, and:

> as the coach started, he waived his hand to me—to which I made no return. As the coach proceeded, my father still stood where I had left him, and from time to time while in sight, again and again waived his hand to me—and still with no sign from me in return; until, at a bend in the road, I lost sight of him with his hand again upraised. And then, at the moment when all sign of contrition and love was too late, I—in that fruitless moment—felt that my heart must break, with such insupportable agony of remorse as I sometimes fancy a child only can feel. And oft times through after-life, even through its seventy years of after-life, the memory of that moment comes back to me, as it were, unbidden, and with nothing that I can trace to lead to it.

Possibly this sense of a lost opportunity to reciprocate his father's immense love for him increased over his life, given that his father died in America in 1823, preventing any final goodbye or resolution to their tense relationship.[140]

CONCLUSION

The experience of parenthood and parenting never stood still. It shifted over a lifetime in response to growing older, to increasing and decreasing independence, to marriage, sickness, and the numerous problems and joys encountered in life. Parents' interventions in their offsprings' lives were financial and material, provided in times of need and to smooth key transitions in their children's lives. Attention to the emotional life of parenting reveals the extent to which the emotions

[138] Thrale, *Autobiography of Francis Place*, 279. Visiting places of one's youth to stir memories and emotions was part of the new interest in childhood in autobiography in the Netherlands after 1800. Dekker, *Childhood Memories*, 121.

[139] Morgan, *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, vol. 1, 3. See also Penrose, *Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 2–6, 57–8.

[140] 'Early life of George Courtauld I by Samuel Courtauld III, endorsed 'fragmentary notice of my father's earlier life in a letter to Sophia 6 December 1873', *Courtauld Family Letters*, vol. 1, p. xxxv.

that children and parents stirred throughout each others' lives resonated through remembered activities, actions, words and events. Parenting continued to evolve and have meaning when a child or parent died. A different parent was forged on the dreadful anvil of a child's death and the lost child remained an influence on parents' lives and identities. Similarly, people's emotional relationships with their parents continued long after their decease. Memories preserved the role children and parents played in each others' lives, bound up as they were with a range of emotions, and with moments of crisis and disruption. They reanimated parents and children, sealing over the rents caused by their deaths.

Conclusion

I heard a small sad sound,
And stood awhile among the tombs around:
'Wherefore, old friends,' said I, 'are you distrest,
Now, screened from life's unrest?'
—'O not at being here;
But that our future second death is near;
When, with the living, memory of us numbs,
And blank oblivion comes!
'These, our sped ancestry,
Lie here embraced by deeper death than we;
Nor shape nor thought of theirs can you descry
With keenest backward eye.
'They count as quite forgot;
They are as men who have existed not;
Theirs is a loss past loss of fitful breath;
It is the second death.
'We here, as yet, each day
Are blest with dear recall; as yet, can say
We hold in some soul loved continuance
Of shape and voice and glance.
'But what has been will be—
First memory, then oblivion's swallowing sea;
Like men foregone, shall we merge into those
Whose story no one knows.
'For which of us could hope
To show in life that world-awakening scope
Granted the few whose memory none lets die,
But all men magnify?
'We were but Fortune's sport;
Things true, things lovely, things of good report
We neither shunned nor sought . . . We see our bourne,
And seeing it we mourn.'

The To-Be-Forgotten by Thomas Hardy

This book is a journey through 'oblivion's swallowing sea' to make the story of Georgian parenting better known. Its 'backward eye' uncovers a frighteningly unstable world that turned on the axes of love and care. When struck by parents'

anxiety over children's health, safety, and development, or rocked by parental frustration and anger at offsprings' bad behaviour, stubbornness, or disobedience, it span out of control. All too often a parent's world ended when a child died. Parenthood could be all consuming. Mothers and fathers invested feelings, minds, bodies, time and energy in their offspring. Being a parent helped define their place in society and forged their sense of selfhood, just as children in turn saw their personalities and lives as determined by their parents' actions, decisions and beliefs. This was not confined to the inner or 'private' spheres. Parents were evaluated on their performance by spouse, society and God. Society also demanded that they pass on the prized values of the day to their children to mould them into pious, virtuous, industrious adults. For the most part expected to be selfless, parents were incentivised in this effort by the notion that such offspring would fulfil their filial duties to them in old age. No wonder parents needed support to meet the demands placed on them. They turned to sisters and brothers, their own parents, and nurses and servants to distribute the labours of parenting. Even so, parenting was quicksilver in their hands. It changed from child to child. While mothers and fathers tried not to relinquish their responsibilities and usefulness to children as they matured, they mourned the loss of infant cuddles, pliability and control. Age wearied parents and made them dependent upon their children. Yet parental influence lived on after death, parents were remembered for good and bad by their offspring even when they themselves were near the end of their lives.

This world was very much of its time. Prevailing social, economic, political and cultural conditions influenced ideals of Georgian parenthood and parental behaviour. Sensibility and its constellation of ideas, like tenderness, sympathy and benevolence, encouraged more emotionally expressive styles of parenting. Populationist concerns and child health care guides brought attention to the need for both mothers and fathers to be more hands-on in the physical care of their offspring. Reconfigurations in the basis of political authority, which deployed models of parenthood as metaphors, brought to the forefront ideals of companionate, negotiated parent-child relationships that problematized corporal punishment. The rapid commercialisation of society created anxieties about moral and physical corruption, which encouraged parents to control both their children's diets and emotions. Warfare and its demands led to fears of effeminacy and the weakening of men, which eventually brought to the fore an emphasis upon hardy manliness and less overt forms of paternal emotional expression.

Parents and children were thus informed and formed by the prevailing cultural trends. Georgian lives were unpredictable, vulnerable and, too often, short-lived. Christian faith remained indispensible for surviving these blows. Sensibility and domesticity were added to the tactics intended to defend oneself in troubled times. Sentiment acted as glue in the face of the centrifugal forces perceived to be at work upon society.[1] Domesticity, a concept rooted in family relationships and homely comforts, was redolent of security and stability. Both functioned at the familial and

[1] Barker, *Greuze and the painting of sentiment*; Maza, 'The "Bourgeois" family revisited', 39–40; 43–4; Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*.

individual level, as well as the societal and ideological. Sarah Pearsall has movingly written of the ways in which evocations of loving, feeling families in letters and print culture 'provided a powerfully compensatory ideology of family feeling . . . that served to ameliorate the shocks and struggles of life'. Georgian families frequently experienced separation, whether across relatively short distances such as those between Liverpool and Manchester, or London and Essex, or longer like south-east England and Scotland, or huge ones which spanned the 'Atlantic' world. It is striking that in this changing world, the desire to remain connected with parents, children, and kin continued, whether the vocabulary that served to maintain those loving links was one of sensibility or its later descendent, domesticity.[2]

Ideas about parenthood and the experiences of parenting were not homogeneous, nevertheless. Even within this span of eighty years or so, different generations might encounter different cultural, social, or economic expectations at familial, local, or national levels. No one model of parental practices or family values reigned supreme, because new and older views co-existed thanks to the continued availability of ideas in print. Yet, there is also plenty of evidence that the notions of parenthood outlined in this book and the expectations held about parents' roles were shared by several social ranks. They did not originate in Evangelical revival, in the reconfiguration of the middle-classes, or the hardening of separate spheres. In fact, the links between Evangelicalism and Enlightenment thought are coming to be emphasised rather than their divisions.[3] Family sentiment and domesticity were neither faith- nor class-based. Both can be traced throughout the long eighteenth century in major or minor forms.[4] They shaped self-representation in aristocratic family portraits independently of any middle-class attack on aristocratic mores.[5] The rural labouring family formed of tender parents and children was consumed by the elite throughout this period. Yet the idyllic images of intimate, sensible family relationships and cosy domesticity, forged in response to political and social threat in the 1790s, were popular with urban artisan families too when cheap enough to purchase.[6] The sentimental tone of popular ballads also moved agricultural labourers and helped them forge their own identity.[7] Similarly, poor mothers and fathers adopted the vocabulary of feeling when necessary. Although Patricia Crawford argues that 'civic fathers' imposed their patriarchal, stern, authoritative ideals of fatherhood on the poor, by the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries both 'civic' and pauper fathers seem to have shared a concept of feeling parenthood as an aspiration and therefore as a self-identity.[8] Indeed, Christian,

[2] Quotation, Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 243.

[3] Stott, 'Evangelicalism and enlightenment', 42–3.

[4] e.g. Maurer, '"As sacred as friendship, as pleasureable as love": father-son relations', 15.

[5] One of the causes of change in style of family portraits was 'the sentimentalisation of domesticity' Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 8; 231–3.

[6] Barrell, *Spirit of Despotism*, 225; Steward, *The New Child*, 177, 193.

[7] Dyck, 'Towards the "Cottage Charter"'.

[8] She defines 'civic fatherhood' as 'public fatherly activity undertaken for the benefit of the poor. She includes men who administered parish relief, from magistrates to overseers, and those who participated in charitable and philanthropic organisations devoted to relieving poor children. Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, 196–7; Bailey, 'think wot a Mother must feel', 14–16.

sensible and domestic virtues were demanded of fathers as well as mothers, which disrupts literary scholars' politicised reading of the 'tender' mother as a new marker of restriction, retirement and constraint, central to the formulation of both the cult of domesticity and the development of separate spheres.[9]

Since parenthood was responsive to social, political, and economic trends and cultural fashions, it did not stand still. Ideas about motherhood and fatherhood were always fixed in the four domains of emotion, provision, discipline, and instruction, and therefore appear to demonstrate continuity across time. Yet a close reading across diverse genres of evidence indicates that parenthood holds quite specific, historicised meanings at different times. To return to Ann Bright's epitaph which opened this book, words do change their meaning. For example, the term 'tender' was used in association with parents across three centuries; yet earlier examples held a scriptural connotation, while during the eighteenth century they were imbued by the culture of sensibility. So while words and broad characteristics endure, the precise qualities they define shift, and their relative importance also alter depending upon historical context. This book suggests, therefore, that change occurred within the four dimensions which always comprised parenthood and parenting. Over time, rank, and place the components were placed in different relationships with each other, reconfiguring priorities and meanings in new contexts.

At the very end of the period studied, notions of parenthood and parenting seem to be revolving into a new configuration. Ideals of gender constructions were changing by the 1830s as the intensity of sensibility dissipated and domesticity became the routine language of conventional family life. At the height of sensibility tender motherhood was all about feeling. As language became less richly expressive by the end of the period, tender maternity was more a set of qualities. Louisa Hoare's *Hints for the improvement of early education and nursery discipline* (1819) retains elements of sensibility, for example, in her declaration that women's hearts would be moved by successfully instilling instruction. But sensible motherhood had crystallised into a set of features associated with benevolence, written about in the chapter titled 'Harmony, Generosity, and Benevolence'. While tenderness remained indicative of the quality of love, it was confined to describing the type of emotion between mother and child. Tender maternity was less a state of being than part of a more 'professionalised' motherhood.[10] In Hoare's 1824 companion piece aimed at parents of lower social rank, tenderness was simply a method of parenting: 'Happy will it be for your children, if by prudence and tenderness you can bring them not only to honour you as parents, but to be free and open with you as their best and kindest friends'.[11] Of course tender maternity still had power and its emotion greater in intensity in less prescriptive genres, arguably more sentimentalised than sensible in Victorian representation. Though it remained a convention, it was one that could be gently mocked as Sydney Morgan's opening comment in her

[9] Tobin, 'The Tender Mother', 205–21.
[10] Hoare, *Hints for the improvement of early education and nursery discipline*.
[11] Hoare, *Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children*, e.g. 32.

memoir chapter titled 'My mother', written at mid century suggests: 'MY MOTHER! there is something infinitely dear and tender in that name, and though all mothers may not be equally dear and tender, still it is the declared intention of Nature that they should be so'. Claudia Nelson states that the Victorian cult of domesticity was a cult of maternity.[12] Yet its emphasis was upon the moral superiority inherent within maternity. Tenderness had become a means to an end of maternity and less an end in it itself.

Ideals of manhood had also shifted by the Victorian period. Expressive emotion was far less tenable, with male independence and taciturnity prized.[13] This has been linked to changes in fathering styles by the mid-nineteenth century when British middle-class fathers were required to restrain their emotions for their children.[14] Overt displays of emotion were becoming more firmly associated with femininity and in any case suspected of artificiality and insincerity. As Tosh observes, William Cobbett's tone in 1830 in praising demonstrative fathers was somewhat defensive and he certainly took great care to explain that such behaviour was not effeminate. Effeminacy in the nineteenth century connoted passivity and dependence and inferred political disempowerment, but would also become the 'principal signifier of homosexuality' and was thus all the more to be avoided.[15] Precisely timing this shift is still difficult however. The first three decades of the nineteenth century continued to praise paternal and manly feeling.[16] Nonetheless, there is interesting evidence for the stirrings of tensions between overt displays of affection and risks of effeminacy. Clearly an incompatibility between expressive affection and masculinity was emerging, perhaps because a more explicitly martial society promoted a harder ideal of masculinity.

Parenting was no lone activity. Georgian parents were never cut-off from others, as even their own rhetoric sometimes appears to show. They were firmly rooted in a view of family that looked backwards and forwards. Life-writers' curiosity about their fore-parents, for example, demonstrates the continued importance of diachronic rather than synchronic meanings of the family, since family members plainly had an interest and personal investment in the way their family changed over time. Indeed, the diachronic nature of family was recognised by writers. In extreme old age Hutton observed: 'Upon whatever family I cast a distant eye, I remark in that family a generation has sprung into life, passed through the bloom of the, day, and sunk into the night'.[17] It was a fairly conventional literary trope. For instance, the interpolated story of the Bilsons in Sarah Fielding's *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn*, 1759, concludes in volume II with the marriage of Miss Bilson and Sir Harry Cleveland. Fielding has them pass on the charitable baton in a virtuous family relay: 'their Virtues lived in their children. The Family changed

[12] Nelson, *Family Ties*, 48.
[13] Cohen, '"Manners" make the man'.
[14] Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 61.
[15] Tosh 'Masculinities in an Industrialising society', 338; McCormack, 'Married men and the fathers of families', 43–54.
[16] Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities', 47–68.
[17] Hutton, *Life of William Hutton*, 263.

its Persons, but not its Manners'. In Henry Brooke's *Juliet Grenville: or, the history of the human heart*, 1774, Juliet's husband reflects on his happy married state: 'whether he looked before him, or whether he looked behind him, thus happily fathered and fathering, he saw himself begirt with blessings'.[18] Studies of eighteenth-century English aristocratic and Colonial elite family portraiture also conclude that they celebrated the diachronic family; textual narratives of parents served a similar function.[19]

Parents made full use of the household-family in order to function. Literary scholars propose that the notion of 'instinctive tender maternal feeling' led to the rationale that only mothers were suitable for child-rearing; they alone could nurture children without stint, nurse them when ill and watch over them anxiously at all times.[20] In reality, the middling, professional, and gentle family was not averse to distributing childcare among household servants and paid carers and kin in the short term and kin in the long term when necessary. Because other carers were involved in child-rearing, cultural attention could be centred on the depth of the emotional bond between parents and children, rather than the routine caring.

Paid carers were as easily accommodated in this conceptualisation of parenting. There is evidence that by the mid-nineteenth century elite parents were worrying that servants would infect children with lower-class bad habits and behaviour, and poor morals. Wealthier parents thus aspired to nurseries with separate sleeping arrangements to prevent servants blighting children's innocence.[21] Such anxieties about social pollution are less evident in the period examined and there was no particular concern about nurses and female servants as child carers in the life-writing or fiction. Mary Anne Schimmelpennick's mother tried to separate her children from the servants in the later eighteenth century, though this was more from intellectual than moral concerns since she feared Mary-Anne's mind would be contaminated by vulgarisms or 'ignoble minds.'[22] In fact, by its very nature, the structural and conceptual 'household-family' allowed sensibility's emphasis upon intimacy and feeling to be achievable, through sharing the physical care of infants, children, and youths. Indeed it was this structured form of care that was crucial. More ad-hoc versions did not succeed so well. Mary Saxby forever rued the day that she left her two-year old daughter with a member of the family with whom her family travelled selling goods. He left the little girl in the hut to check on the families' asses, only to return to find it in flames. The child died later that day from her burns.[23]

[18] Fielding, *Countess of Dellwyn*, vol. 2, 291.

[19] In order to achieve this sense of unbroken continuity, images were fabricated or manipulated if necessary. Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 153–4, 163–5 and ch. 5; Lovell, *Art in a season of revolution*, 117, 120–32. For autobiographies as a 'memory bank' see Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, 166.

[20] Perry, *Novel Relations*, 340.

[21] Calvert, *Children in the house*, 74–5, 134–6.

[22] Hankin, *Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpennick*, 21. Nonetheless, servants often acted as surrogate family members for children of employers in Victorian fiction, Nelson, *Family Ties*, 125.

[23] Saxby, *Memoirs of a female vagrant*, 25–7.

Both the mundanities of domestic life and its extreme circumstances or crisis situations prompted temporary carers into action individually or collectively. The short-term response to crisis is evident in Elizabeth Shaw's description of the frantic few days of her son's dangerous illness and the long-term in the more enduring shared nature of Peter Taylor's care which was divided up between kin. Ironically, this practice has been described as a process of fragmentation amongst poor families. Though no longer presumed to indicate more meagre depths of love at that level of society, it is identified as a sign of the instability of the pauper family. Yet higher-ranking families were equally utilitarian in their own way, organising childcare to suit the demands of their lives as much as poor families were obliged to respond thus to economic conditions.

People's interest in their family also reveals that their sense of self combined outward- and inward-facing elements of identity. This does not fit the argument that personal identity underwent transformation in the final quarter of the eighteenth century from a traditional, socially-turned model, to a modern, introspective self.[24] These life-writers' views indicate that if there was any 'transformation', it was confined to specific cultural discourses. Individuals making sense of themselves across this period of change used a variety of ways to define identity and self, which did not fit into either a socially-turned or introspective model. The parental self was at once collective, familial, and internal. Such multiplicity requires a different interpretive approach. Here, historians of identity could look to other disciplines' theories of parent-children relationships for insights. Interpreting prehistoric children's burials, Koji Mizoguchi argues that by 'caring for children in life and death, adults map themselves in a mesh of imagined life-courses, genealogies, self-identities and social expectations from which they reconstitute themselves'.[25] The same inextricable qualities of self, child and parent marked the Georgian world of parenting too.

It is possible to see all the trends identified coalescing in people's lives as parents, though they do not necessarily use or apply them in the same ways. Take one father: Shell Pattison of Berwick-upon-Tweed, a carpenter.[26] He went to the East Indies early in the 1760s and met and married Zera, with whom he had one daughter in 1766, called Sarah. When Zera died, like many other widowed parents, he sought help from his parents. He brought Sarah back home to Berwick to be cared for by his mother. Arriving, he found out that she had died during his absence. Instead he left Sarah with his father, Christopher Pattison; evidently not averse to the idea of a grandfather raising a three-year old granddaughter. As he later told his cousin, showing the ubiquity of the 'nursing' father, if not his delight in it, had he known his mother was dead he would not have brought Sarah because he had to nurse her on the passage and she had been as troublesome as a sucking child.[27]

[24] For a similar line of argument see Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, 121–2.

[25] Japanese burial sites from 3–4BC. Mizoguchi, 'The child as a node of past, present, and future', 149.

[26] *Pattison v Gray* (1788), DUSC, Durham Diocesan Records [DDR]/EJ/CCD/3/1788/5.

[27] Deposition of Mary Cairncross, wife of John Cairncross, Brewer, Newcastle, 58 years old. (May 1788), DUSC, DDR/EJ/CCD/3/1788/5.

Shell turned around and went back to India until the end of 1773 when he returned to Berwick once more, to briefly live with his daughter and father until April 1774, when he left to set up a business in Chelsea, London. At this point, his instructive obligations as father took over and he organised for Sarah to board with Ann Jamieson, a sewing school mistress. Following a visit to Berwick, he wrote in June 1775 that he was delighted 'to find that Sally has improved so much in her manners and learning' and hoped her bad habits were rooted out. He obviously preferred to delegate his disciplining role. He instructed Mrs Jamieson not to let Sarah keep company with 'Children of ye lower Class' and recommended that if she was keen on reading, she must 'be very Cautious what books she reads, Children of her age are generaly [*sic*] fond of novels and tho they seem entertaining to ye young reader, yet many of them corrupt ye Morals of Children'.[28] Like other parents, he wanted a virtuous child. This was a man who used his family to care for his children, also getting his cousin Mary Shell to advise him on Sarah's education and manage payments for it. Yet, he was no stranger to filial duty, or, of course, to providing for his child. Shell died in December 1775 leaving £700 in consolidated shares, of which half the interest would go to maintain his father and the other half to maintain and educate his daughter. At his father's death, his annuity would pass to Sarah who would inherit all Shell's estate and stocks when she came of age.[29] The reason Shell the father emerges in the historical record is because Sarah went on to marry as a minor, at fifteen, after her father's death. She rapidly changed her mind about the marriage because as soon as she entered her inheritance she brought a case for annulment to Durham Consistory Court, where she succeeded in having the union declared null and void in July 1788. Shell was not noticeably a 'tender' father. Yet, even here, in legal documents not entirely suited to revealing emotions, Shell's paternal manner was judged as 'affectionate', as part of the evidence brought to prove that Sarah was his legitimate daughter.[30]

To sum up the parents in these pages, in a study so deeply devoted to their feelings, it is perhaps appropriate for it to end in parental kisses, for parents sent them in their thousands. 'I am thy affectionate mother. I send thee a thousand kisses – and far more wishes' said Maria Tuke to her absent son in 1796.[31] In 1810 Joseph Munby asked his wife 'Kiss each of my Babes for their loving father'.[32] 'May every blessing attend you and our little folks to whom be pleased to give them many kisses' declared John Shaw in 1825, who often longed to imprint them himself.[33] Whatever the difficulties of raising children, parents knew of its endless pleasures.

[28] Ann Jamieson, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Spinster, 58; and the letter submitted as evidence, DUSC, DDR/EJ/CCD/3/1788/5.

[29] Sarah Pattison's Libel (18 January 1788), DUSC, DDR/EJ/CCD/3/1788/5.

[30] Mary Cairncross's deposition, DUSC, DDR/EJ/CCD/3/1788/5.

[31] Maria Tuke to her son Samuel (*c.* 1796), Borthwick Institute of Archives, Tuke/8.

[32] Joseph Munby to his wife Jane Munby (9 July 1810), CYLAL, Acc 54: 212.

[33] John Shaw to Elizabeth Shaw (4 August 1825), CRL, Shaw/25; John Shaw to Elizabeth Shaw (6 January 1828), CRL, Shaw/28.

APPENDIX

Biographies of Family Correspondence Collections

COURTAULD FAMILY

George Courtauld (1761–1823) was apprenticed as a silk throwster, though was never particularly successful in business, unlike his eldest son Samuel, the famous silk manufacturer.[1] George possessed radical political views, perhaps explaining his fascination with America which he visited four times from 1785 till his death there in 1823.[2] He met his wife Ruth (nee Minton), originally from Cork, Ireland, in America and married her in 1789. The couple's two eldest children, Louisa and Samuel (1793–1881) were born in America. They returned to England in 1793 and George set up a silk-mill in Braintree, Essex, in 1809. They had five more children: Eliza, Catherine, Sophia, George (1802–61), and John. George's and Ruth's marriage was not successful and they spent several years apart during the children's youth when Ruth visited her natal home. Eventually they separated and Ruth moved to Edinburgh with her eldest daughter. George returned to America in 1818, to begin an English settlement in Ohio, and five of his children followed. They returned to England when he died in 1823. George was a Unitarian and some of his children followed suit.

GRAY FAMILY

There are letters from three generations of the Gray family of York. William Gray (1751–1845), Attorney-at-Law, was from a humble background: his father was a weaver until he took a place in the Customs House in Hull. Gray Senior had ambitions for his son and obtained a place as a clerk in a solicitor's office for William at the age of 12, and apprenticed him to a solicitor at 15. William was immensely hard-working and by 1788 was able to move in to the Treasurer's House, York Minster, in what came to be known as Gray's Court. He married Faith Hopwood (1751–1826) in 1777. William was an acquaintance of William Wilberforce, MP for York, and Faith was a friend of Catharine Cappe. They had seven children: Jonathan; Margaret; William; Lucy; Edmund; Robert; and Frances. Frances died before she was one and Robert at four. Lucy and Margaret both predeceased their parents, dying in 1813 and 1826 respectively. The eldest son was Jonathan Gray (1779–1837) who was articled to his father at 16 in 1795 and became a partner in 1801. He married Mary Horner in 1804 and they came to live at Gray's Court in 1821. They had a son, William Gray (b. 1806), who married Lucy Lumley in 1830 and a daughter, Margaret, b. 1809. Mary Gray lived with her father-in-law, William, after she was widowed and cared for him and her grandchildren following the death of her son's wife Lucy in 1838. This was a committed Evangelical family.[3]

[1] For the Courtauld silk business see Coleman, D. C., *Courtaulds: an economic and social history*.

[2] For George's final trip and the settlement he tried to establish in Ohio, see William Van Vugt, *British Buckeyes*, 64–70.

[3] For a family biography see Gray, *Papers and diaries of a York family 1764–1839*.

MUNBY FAMILY

This correspondence centres on Joseph Munby (1804–1875), a solicitor of Clifton Holme, York, who came to head his own law firm in the early nineteenth century. He was the eldest of five siblings of Joseph Munby Senior, a solicitor, and Jane nee Pearson. The children were orphaned by the time Joseph was 15. There are some letters from the parents, but the majority are from Joseph, his sister Jane, and their maternal grandmother Jane Pontey who was heavily involved in the children's care following their mother's death. Joseph married Caroline nee Forth and had seven children. Their eldest son was Arthur Munby, notorious for his obsession with working women and his secret marriage to his servant Hannah Cullwick.

SHAW FAMILY

There is correspondence between two generations of the Shaw/Wilkinson families: between the hardware factor John Shaw (1782–1858) and his wife Elizabeth nee Wilkinson (from Colne, Lancashire, d. 1869), who married in 1813, and between them and their parents.[4] John was born in Penn and by his teens had embarked on a life as a commercial traveller which would see him heading a wholesale hardware business by the early nineteenth century, based in Wolverhampton, and purchasing a mansion on Stafford Road by the 1830s.[5] Both spouses were committed Christians, Elizabeth was a Methodist; John became a member of the Congregationalist Church. They had six children, John (b. 1816), Betsy (b. 1819), Thomas (b. 1820), Edward (b. 1822), Richard (b. 1826), and Mary (b. 1830).[6]

[4] There are occasional letters from the Shaws' children too. For a brief family biography see <http://www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk/Museum/metalware/general/shaw.htm>.

[5] For his early years as a commercial traveller see Popp, 'Building the market: John Shaw of Wolverhampton.

[6] These dates are not absolutely certain as the correspondence simply covers the years of pregnancy and does not announce birth dates.

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