ABSTRACT

Virtue Embodied: Fathers and Daughters in the Eighteenth-Century Novel

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In this study of five eighteenth-century British novels, I explore the connection between an author's definition of virtue and the portrayal of the father-daughter relationship. Both the father-daughter relationship and virtue are pervasive themes in eighteenth-century literature. During the course of the century, patriarchal authority waned, and father-daughter relationships accordingly underwent a change. Accounts of virtue also changed during the century. However, virtue was consistently tied to human happiness though the precise nature of that connection was debated and pondered. Time and again, novelists attempt to answer the question of virtue's connection with happiness within the context of a woman negotiating a perilous journey to marriage. Somewhat surprisingly, the father-daughter relationship is often presented as more important than the anticipated marriage relationship in these novels. As a result, the father-daughter relationship is the author's primary means of offering a definition of virtue and its connection to happiness through fictional embodiments of virtue.

Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess*, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, and Jane Austen's

Emma each depict father-daughter characters that embody virtue to show readers how happiness might be achieved. These authors participate in, respond to, and criticize a tradition of literature which used exemplary characters as pedagogic tools. Depending on how the author defines virtue and its connection to happiness, the five novelists interact with the exemplary tradition in different ways, some of which result in more appealing and compelling portrayals of the father-daughter relationship.

Virtue Embodied: Fathers and Daughters in the Eighteenth-Century Novel

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of English

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In his classic *Aspects of the Novel,* E.M. Forster identifies the inability to know even those we love most as an enduring problem for human relationships:

> For human intercourse, as soon as we look at it for its own sake and not as a social adjunct, is seen to be haunted by a spectre. We cannot understand each other, except in a rough and ready way; we cannot reveal ourselves, even when we want to; what we call intimacy is only a makeshift; perfect knowledge is an illusion. But in the novel we can know people perfectly . . . In this direction fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond the evidence, and each of us knows from his own experience that there is something beyond the evidence, and even if the novelist has not got it correctly, well—he has tried. (63)

Forster identifies a major appeal of the novel: it reveals other people as real life never can. We can know characters in novels from the inside. Not surprisingly then, readers remember novels not primarily for their plot or driving idea, but for the characters. And these characters are oftentimes defined, delineated, and made real by the author's portrayal of their relationships with other characters. In the eighteenth-century, many novels were shaped as a narrative of a young person moving towards marriage. As a result, men and women in relationship with one another were revealed in ways that could not have been possible in real life. In these courtship plots, the father-daughter relationship was oftentimes more important than the relationship between the young people moving towards marriage. In their portrayals of father and daughter characters relating to one another, novelists attempted to communicate something true in one of the

most fundamental human relationships by "getting beyond the evidence." Why eighteenth-century novelists would try to do this, time and again, is a subject of debate.

More than one critic attempts to explain the centrality of the father-daughter relationship in the eighteenth-century novel. In *Reading Daughters' Fiction 1709-1834,* Caroline Gonda convincingly shows that the father-daughter relationship was "central to the developing novel" of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (1). She notes that the daughter's marriage formed the subject of novels and thus her relationship with her father is always presented in this context; Gonda argues that marriage was "the *only* decision of any significance that a daughter would ever have the chance to take; and the success or failure of that decision was intimately bound up with the relationship which she had with her father" (37). Gonda concludes that in that relationship "the father keeps his place [of authority]," and therefore "the novel helps to keep the daughter in hers" (37). For Gonda, the novel's focus upon father-daughter relationships is an attempt to shore up paternal authority by portraying the father as authoritative and by providing examples of daughters who act accordingly. Thus, power is the driving force in the father-daughter relationship. Linda Zwinger also portrays power as the force behind this relationship in *Daughters, Fathers, and the Novel.* She offers readings of novels spanning the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, focusing on "the daughter of sentiment" who is constructed according to "particular specifications of an omni-present and unvoiced paternal desire" (4). Zwinger's argument shows that she assumes that desire is the fundamental driving force in all human relationships, and whatever form desire takes, it is ultimately aimed at power over others. She reads all father-daughter relationships in this light. While Gonda's argument is more nuanced than Zwinger's, her account of

fathers and daughters in relationship with one another is similarly based upon the assumption that the desire for power is the defining characteristic of human relationships. Zwinger and Gonda's shared assumption that human relationships are most fundamentally expressions of desire and power leads to a particular way of accounting for *why* the father-daughter relationship was so central to the eighteenth-century novel.

A common explanation of changes in paternal authority prevails among critics who share Zwinger and Gonda's assumption of the shaping influence of power and desire. In *Frances Burney,* Margaret Doody argues that in the eighteenth century "the old structures were crumbling, and kings and fathers actually had less authority than previously," so in order to cement paternal authority there was a greater insistence upon "the high emotive content of parent-filial relations" (24). The result of this new insistence was sinister: "the father is to gain authority (even authority to destroy) through tenderness; a sort of emotional blackmail is substituted for more straightforward authoritarianism" (24). Gonda echoes Margaret Doody when she claims that "'natural' or culturally imposed parental authority was failing to control filial behavior" and so in "fiction of the mid-to-late eighteenth century, the daughter's transition into marriage is characterized by conflict" with her father (4). Gonda argues that as fathers lost authority during the eighteenth century, "many novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by radicals and conservatives alike, present paternal authority as in a state of collapse, fathers as no longer willing or able to exercise their protective powers over their daughter" (13). She contends that the father-daughter relationship was so important to novelists because it became their mission to prove the daughter's obligation to obey her father, for that relationship not only formed her for marriage but also for "her place in

society" (18). In *Their Fathers Daughters,* Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace argues that "older-style patriarchy, with its emphasis on paternal prerogative, hierarchy, and the exercise of force, had gradually yielded to new-style patriarchy with its appeal to reason, cooperation between the sexes, and noncoercive authority" (110). Kowaleski-Wallace argues that the new patriarchy was no less powerful, for it "no longer operate[d] according to the fear of punishment or injury but according to the more psychologically compelling themes of guilt and obligation" (110). Doody, Gonda, and Kowaleski-Wallace all voice a similar argument regarding fathers in the eighteenth century; although fathers lost real authority, they compensated for this loss by finding other means to control their daughters, especially in the choice of a spouse, by appealing to the daughter's duty to be obedient and affectionate. Gonda takes this argument one step further when she charges the novel itself with being complicit with the paternal attempt to compensate for lost authority.

Other critics offer different accounts of the importance of father-daughter relationships in eighteenth-century novels. In *Impotent Fathers*, Brian McCrea identifies a crisis of demographics in the eighteenth-century; the father failed in his most basic duties, procreation and the continuation of family. McCrea thus rejects the "patriarchal etiology" voiced by critics like Gonda, Doody, and Kowaleski-Wallace and posits that instead of "portraying the patriarch as a powerful figure who either silences and violates the female spirit" eighteenth-century novelists "offer us patriarchs who are absent, impaired, or dead" (28). Although "this weakened patriarch creates difficulties for female characters," these difficulties "have less to do with oppression than with the uncertainty created in families by the absence of a commanding father" (28). In other

words, fathers were not employing insidious means of controlling daughters, but their failures to fill former roles led to problems within the family. T.G.A. Nelson shares McCrea's argument that the eighteenth-century was marked by tension between parents and children, but Nelson locates the source of this tension in a slow and complex change from an authoritarian mode of child-rearing to one based upon sympathy and affection. In *Children, Parents, and the Rise of the Novel* Nelson discusses the theories of the family voiced by historians, including Philippe Ariès, Lloyd deMause, Shulamith Shahar, and Linda Pollock, but he ultimately accepts Lawrence Stone's account of the rise of affective individualism as the historical explanation of the family that best suits his argument answering why "Children and parents are the thematics of the early novel" (25). Nelson quotes Stone's claim that "'there took place . . . between about 1660 and 1800 a remarkable change in accepted child-rearing theory, in standard child-rearing practices, and in affective relations between parents and children'" (qtd. in Nelson 21). Nelson argues that as marriage and family appeared in an increasingly sympathetic light, tension between parents and children arose as "the mature person" had a fear "of a possible decentering of the adult . . . in favor of the encroaching child" (29). In other words, "the transition to a more open and empathetic approach to children" was responsible for the importance of parent-child portrayals in eighteenth-century fiction, but that transition proved rather hard to achieve, resulting in a tension in those portrayals. Like McCrea, Nelson refuses to identify fathers as the culprits behind problematic parent-child relationships depicted in novels but looks to historical evidence to prove that fathers and daughters alike were embroiled in a historical moment which prevented harmonious relationships.

Regardless of the particular account given for the importance of fathers and daughters in the eighteenth-century novel, when combined Zwinger, Gonda, Doody, Kowaleski-Wallace, McCrea, and Nelson make a convincing case that as the century progressed, patriarchal authority waned, and father-daughter relationships accordingly underwent a change. Father-daughter (or parent-child) relationships were central to the developing novel because novelists were attempting to cope with the changes they witnessed in this familial relationship. But these critics tend to view these changes in such a way that reduces fictional relationships either to a combat for power or to constructs of society. They therefore assume that the author's ability to create characters in relationships is controlled by external societal and political forces; the novelists do not reveal truth about human beings so much as reflect their historical situation. This way of reading fictional relationships weakens the appeal of the novel identified by E.M. Forster, for it robs authors of the power of using relationships to create characters who reveal human nature as it cannot be revealed in everyday life. Reductive ways of reading relationships often fail to move toward the truer knowledge of human nature that readers hope to gain by acquaintance with fictional characters. In my discussions of Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791), and Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815), I argue that the way each author unfolds a vision of virtue influences and forms the father-daughter relationship, for these visions of virtue are inseparable from characters, and so are inseparable from the relationships between characters. My exploration of each author's vision of virtue and subsequent portrayal of

fathers and daughters leads, I hope, to readings of the novels which help illuminate the ways that fictional characters reveal truths that everyday life often conceals.

Virtue in the Eighteenth-Century

In the eighteenth century, the discourse of virtue was at least as central to the novel (and all other forms of literature) as the relationship between fathers and daughters. These two discourses were, in fact, intricately connected. Virtue was tied to questions of human happiness, and part of that happiness, of course, was based upon one's closest relationships. Novelists thus viewed virtue, happiness, and the father-daughter relationship as inseparable. In *The Ethics of Sensibility*, Louis Bredvold observes that though there were "many miscellaneous recipes for happiness" in the eighteenth century, "in serious and elevated discourse happiness was almost universally associated with virtue . . . the reading public must have had a passion for discussions of virtue . . . the promise of happiness through virtue seemed to be an unavoidable theme" for novelists as well as preachers, philosophers, and dramatists (7). The connection between virtue and happiness, however, is by no means unique to the eighteenth century. Aristotle, whose influence on ethics has been inestimable, defines virtue in *Nicomachean Ethics* by framing it in a discussion of happiness, or *eudaimonia.* But the happiness Aristotle describes is complex. Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches offer an explanation for "why many commentators on Aristotle resist the rendering *eudaimonia* as 'happiness.' For Aristotle, happiness is not an 'end' that can be pursued or achieved separately from the kind of life we lead; a person's life is not a means to some end called happiness. Rather *eudaimonia* is the name Aristotle gives to 'the best possible life'" (8). *Eudaimonia* is not a feeling of contentment or well-being but is a way of life. Hauerwas

and Pinches note the role of virtue in Aristotle's discussion of happiness: "for [Aristotle], the virtues are not so much the means to happiness, as they are its form" (17). The virtue that forms happiness is fundamentally social, so Aristotle stresses the role of friendship in both the formation and practice of virtue, for "true virtue is not something we have or do alone"; happiness requires transformation of the individual and that cannot be done without friends (Hauerwas and Pinches 31). Thus, for Aristotle, "the life of virtue by its nature requires the presence and participation of others" (33). As Bredvold's argument makes clear, Aristotle's connection between virtue and happiness was still influential in the eighteenth century, and equally alive was the assumption that virtue is fundamentally social. But in the eighteenth century, the "little society" of marriage and the family was of primary importance. As Jean Hagstrum demonstrates in *Sex and Sensibility,* romantic relationships underwent a drastic change in the seventeenth century which spilled over into the eighteenth century; men and women increasingly viewed romantic love as central to human happiness.[1] In the five novels I cover, however, father-daughter relationships are no less important than the man-woman relationship in courtship and marriage, for the novelists focus on the journey to marriage, not marriage itself. The relationship with the father prepared the daughter for the relationship most central to her happiness—marriage. It is not surprising then that novelists would attempt to portray how virtue, father-daughter relationships, and happiness are related.

Aside from the inherited connection between happiness, relationships, and virtue, eighteenth-century discussions of virtue are disconnected from Aristotelian ethics by a different account for the source of virtue. Bredvold cites the third Earl of Shaftsbury as a significant early contributor to the shift towards an "ethic of feeling" in which the center

of discussions of virtue was the heart or feeling (*Sensibility* 12). Shaftsbury anticipated the drift of eighteenth-century ethics, for "it is, indeed, remarkable how the philosophers of the century collaborated to formulate the sentimental psychology of the good man, the man of feeling, the man of beautiful sentiments. But they were only keeping pace with the novelists, dramatists, and poets" (23). Certainly, among the philosophers, ethics in the eighteenth century were marked by a "sentimental psychology" which identified feelings or sentiments as the center of virtue. Markman Ellis points out that Shaftsbury was the beginning of the moral sense school of philosophy, for he argued that "moral decisions are not made by reason but by a moral sense, a sixth sense equivalent to the other senses" which "enables rational creatures to distinguish right from wrong as immediately and spontaneously as the eye distinguishes beauty from ugliness" (10). Of course such an account of the source of morality assumes that humans are naturally benevolent. And the moral sense school also led to Hume's claim in *A Treatise of Human Nature* that "Morality is more properly felt than judged of" (III.I); in other words, "moral judgments cannot be made with the same strict rationality as other forms of judgment" (Ellis 13). Though many novelists accepted this new concept of a moral sense as the source of morality, many also critiqued it in their literary work. The novels I cover are not philosophical inquiries into virtue and morality, but they certainly do not uniformly parrot the "sentimental psychology" of virtue prevalent in the eighteenth century. Thus, it is important to understand the general philosophical developments of the eighteenth-century in order to understand to what degree Haywood, Richardson, Goldsmith, Inchbald, and Austen conform to and challenge the standard eighteenth-century account of the source of morality and virtue.

Moral philosophy in the eighteenth century was fundamentally different from earlier Aristotelian-influenced ethics due to the altered relationship between morality and reason. In *After Virtue*, Alisdair MacIntyre argues that the discussions of morality for eighteenth and early nineteenth-century philosophers reflected a loss of teleology in eighteenth-century ethics which separates it from Aristotelian ethics.[2] MacIntyre argues that this loss of teleology resulted from a changed definition of "reason" (52). By the eighteenth century reason could not tell anything about ends but could only be applied to means (52). Hence, reason was unable to tell humans anything about their teleology. MacIntyre shows how such a change in the capacity of reason distanced eighteenth-century ethics from its Aristotelian roots. For the Aristotelian scheme was three part: first, there is "man-as-he-happens-to-be," and second there is "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature," and finally there is ethics, "the science which is to enable men to understand how they make the transition from the former state to the latter" (52). This three part scheme presupposes "above all some account of the human *telos*. The precepts which enjoin the various virtues and prohibit the vices which are their counterparts instruct us how to move from potentiality to act, how to realize our true nature and to reach our true end" (53). The true end, of course, is *eudaimonia*, or happiness. MacIntyre points out the role reason plays in the movement from "potentiality to act," which leads to happiness: "reason instructs us both as to what our true end is and as to how to reach it" (53). MacIntyre argues that the three-fold scheme of Aristotle, which presupposes the ability to reason about ends, was added to but not substantially changed by Christianity, for "the precepts of virtue" were not only understood "as teleological injunctions, but also expressions of a divinely ordained law"

and the *telos* of humans is only fully achieved in the world to come (53). Medieval Christian proponents of Aristotelian ethics believed that the principles of virtue were "part of God's revelation, but also a discovery of reason" (53). But the Aristotelian ethics adopted by Christians was challenged by Protestant and Jansenist Catholic theologies, which held that the human power of reason was destroyed by the fall, so that "reason can supply . . . *no* genuine comprehension of man's true end" (53). Now only divine law was capable of teaching humans to move from potentiality ("man-as-he-happens-to-be") to act ("man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature"), and grace enables the individual to heed the precepts of divine law in order to make that move (54). Seventeenth-century innovators in philosophy and science basically shared this view of reason as "calculative," able to assess "truths of fact and mathematical relations and nothing more" (54). These thinkers began to discard belief in divine revelation as well. With both the old view of reason and a belief in divine revelation gone, there was no way of defining the *telos* of humans, which was central to Aristotle's three-fold scheme of ethics. MacIntyre observes that "since the whole point of ethics . . . is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end, the elimination of any notion of essential human nature and with it the abandonment of any notion of a *telos* leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two remaining elements whose relationship becomes quite unclear" (54-55). The idea of the two states of humans as "man-as-he-happens-to-be" and "man-as-he-could-be-if he-realized-his-essential-nature" cannot long be retained when both the means and the purpose for making the transition from one to the other had been lost.

MacIntyre argues that the project of eighteenth-century moral philosophers was doomed to failure, for they searched for a rational basis of morality with a now-different definition of reason as well as with "moral injunctions" formed by a teleological view of humans which had been lost, leaving only a view of humans as "natural" or "untutored" (55). He points out that the discrepancy between their inherited "moral injunctions" and a new, non-teleological view of humans was not removed by their "revised beliefs about human nature. They inherited incoherent fragments of a once coherent scheme of thought and action" (55). So what began as a redefinition of reason and a subsequent breakdown of teleological reasoning led to a fragmenting of ethics by the eighteenth century. For once people could no longer reason about ends, then they could no longer reason about human ends, and only the "man-as-he-happens-to-be" part of human nature remains of Aristotelian ethics, along with a set of moral injunctions that now directed humans in no particular direction. The "incoherent fragments" left to the eighteenth century led to an environment abuzz with talk of virtue, but there was not a consensus regarding what the virtuous life was and how it led to happiness. In an age when reason, as it was defined, was no longer adequate to address questions of virtue, it is perhaps best to look not to philosophers (who continued to use defective reasoning for morality and thus rejected the connection between morality and reason) for discussions of virtue, but to novelists, who through narrative offered images of virtue. For perhaps these fictional embodiments of virtue replace a philosophical discourse of virtue that had failed. Through narrative form, it is possible to continue teleological moral reasoning since characters engage in more than mere calculative reasoning; a character's happiness depends on achieving what the novelist views as the purpose or end of humans.

The Exemplary Mode

In different ways Haywood, Richardson, Goldsmith, Inchbald, and Austen use characters that embody virtue in an attempt to show readers how to achieve happiness, or how to realize their end as humans. For each author, the father-daughter relationship plays a particular role in that process. These authors were participating in and responding to a tradition of literature which used exemplary characters as pedagogic tools. Such a use of exemplary figures, too, stems from the remains of Aristotelian ethics. Hauerwas and Pinches observe that "Aristotle holds that virtues are necessarily acquired by habit, and habit is formed by *imitation*" (40). Exemplary characters in fiction provided an example of virtue to be imitated by readers. Imitation was already an integral part of the acquisition of virtue, but during the eighteenth century it received a new emphasis as ethics were increasingly based upon a psychology of sensibility. Susan Manning identifies sensibility as a transitional phase "between the decline of neo-classical 'Reason' and the eruption of Romantic 'Imagination'" (81), and also points out that sensibility served to bind people together "in a moralized and emotionalized public sphere" (83). Thus, propriety and sociability are both primary subjects of novelists of this age, for the force of passions must somehow be balanced and controlled in order for relationships between individuals to be successful. Manning points out that by the end of the eighteenth century, novelists were writing the "*education sentimentalè* of their eponymous heroes" and "these were exemplary 'natural histories' of sentiment" (84). However, long before the end of the century and the rise of the *education sentimentalè* genre, novelists were using exemplary heroes or heroines in order to show how the virtuous person deals with passion or emotions and thus enjoys loving relationships. The

novelists that I cover focus specifically on a daughter, father, or both in an attempt to give readers an example of virtue that guarantees the harmonious relationship between fathers and daughters.

A study of fathers and daughters and exemplary fiction in the eighteenth century has yet to be done. Eve Tavor Bannet approaches this topic in *The Domestic Revolution* but only sees the use of exemplary characters as a tool of women writers of the latter half of the century. She argues these authors employed the exemplary mode, which "conceived of narratives of all sorts as 'philosophy teaching by example'" (10). Bannet notes that "in making 'entertaining examples' the means of 'finding him who flees a serious lecture,'" women writers were finding a place within "an already well-established discursive and pedagogical practice" (10).[3] Bannet argues that women writers took advantage of this genre because their fiction is overtly directed at changing the behavior of women. She cites Timothy Hampton's *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* to show that the function of exemplary narratives "'was not to reflect social practices but to intervene in practice by offering a constructed and embodied ideal . . . as a model for readers' imitation'" (qtd. in Bannet 61). Bannet focuses her argument, then, on showing that women writers used exemplary characters to instruct women as to how to relate to men in order to improve their closest relationships. She argues that women writers offered a new way of imagining the successful family not based upon patriarchal governance.[4] However, the use of exemplary characters is by no means isolated to women writers of the eighteenth century, and neither was it suddenly adopted in the latter half of the century. As I shall show, Eliza Haywood's early novel *Love in Excess* is already participating in the exemplary mode of fiction, using characters

as “entertaining examples” in order to instruct “him who flees a serious lecture” (Bannet 10). In my study of Haywood’s novel as well as the four subsequent novels, I show that only by uncovering how exactly the author envisions virtue can we come to understand how the exemplary character is meant to teach readers to behave.

The five novels interact with the exemplary tradition in different ways, some of which result in more appealing and compelling portrayals of the father-daughter relationship. In the straightforward exemplary mode, an author presents a uniformly good character for the imitation of readers. Only Richardson’s Pamela conforms to such a notion of exemplarity. All of the other “exemplary” characters, that is, characters who embody the author’s definition of virtue, are mixed and therefore develop, or grow in virtue. These characters are still models for readers, but the shades of good and evil of which they are composed as well as their expansion and contraction in virtue form the authors’ vision of virtue. For all of these authors, except Richardson who provides a counter-example, virtue requires a continual effort, and their exemplary characters embody this effort. Because the discussion of each author’s relationship to the exemplary tradition reveals the differing definitions of virtue and how that virtue leads to happiness, in each chapter, I address how each author participates in, respond to, or challenges the exemplary tradition by creating either a father or daughter character that embodies virtue.

The Novels

Haywood’s *Love in Excess,* Richardson’s *Pamela,* Goldsmith’s *Vicar of Wakefield,* Inchbald’s *A Simple Story,* and Austen’s *Emma* may at first seem to have little to do with each other. They are not connected by genre; they represent amatory fiction, the novel of sentiment, the novel of satire, and the novel of manners. They are not

connected by an affinity between authors; one cannot class these authors together as representative of one particular historical or social movement. They are not even connected by their inclusion or exclusion from the literary canon; Richardson and Austen have always been read as "important" authors, while Haywood, Goldsmith, and Inchbald have received varying attention based upon the current critical interests. But they are connected by the common portrayal of the intersection between two themes: virtue and the father-daughter relationship. Also, all five novels are focused to varying degrees upon a woman's path to marriage, so definitions of virtue are made in the context of two relationships: men and women in romantic relationships and fathers and daughters relating to one another while the daughter moves towards marriage. Interestingly, the father-daughter relationship often receives more attention from the authors. And while the critics mentioned earlier view this as either part of an attempt to control daughters as old versions of patriarchal authority waned or as part of inescapable flux of history, I read the father and daughter characters through the virtue they embody in order to show that these authors were engaging the uncertainties of eighteenth-century moral philosophy in ways that were significant and helpful for readers who had been left with an obscured connection between virtue and human happiness.

The first chapter deals with Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719), an amatory novel that was one of the most widely-read novels before Richardson's *Pamela*. In this novel, Haywood introduces virtue in the context of various women subjected to passion as they face seduction. Only the virtuous woman, Melliora, successfully negotiates the passage through stormy passions and threatened seduction to happy marriage. Haywood's novel is important to this study, for it sets the stage for later novels by turning the French

romance genre into a novel that employs exemplary characters for pedagogic ends. Through various female characters, some of whom embody vice and one of whom embodies virtue, Haywood defines virtue as the ability to use one's reason to distance one from one's passions and judge those passions and their effects. While several fathers appear in the novel, they are relatively unimportant, for their efforts to combat the destructive powers of passion are ineffective. Only a virtuous woman can do that for herself. The unimportance of the father is notable here because later novelists who explore virtue in the same context (a woman facing seduction and/or heading towards marriage) portray the father-daughter relationship as a crucial part of the daughter's virtue, whereas for Haywood the two are not connected. For this reason, Haywood's novel both anticipates later fiction and is divided from it. *Love in Excess* provides an example of the roots of the eighteenth-century novel; in it Haywood introduces virtue in a particular context and also shows the father-daughter relationship in this context, but she does not see a strong connection between virtue and that relationship. Virtue is a private capacity, confined to interior struggle between passion and reason; thus, the father-daughter relationship bears very little upon its acquisition or exercise. This disconnection between virtue and the father-daughter relationship was not to be sustained as the novel took shape.

Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) also focuses upon a woman facing seduction and heading towards marriage.[5] But this novel presents virtue as both interior and social. Calling Pamela a "good example," Richardson explicitly defines her virtue as a web of "excellencies" that include a "low opinion" of herself, filial dutifulness, charity, truthfulness, meekness, kindness, prudence, gratefulness, and "her maiden and bridal

purity" (532-533). Central to these "excellencies" is Pamela's filial duty, for it forms the impetus for the narrative itself. Pamela's stated purpose in writing is to inform her parents of every happening to assure them that she remains faithful to their instruction; she also hopes to re-read her narrative someday to remind herself of God's faithfulness to her. However, the dual purpose of the narrative creates unsustainable tension. For Pamela must portray herself as virtuous and obedient to her father and therefore deserving of divine reward; this requires an act of interpretation, and Pamela is guided by questionable hermeneutic practices in this interpretation of her own actions and motives. As a result, *Pamela* is a failed portrayal of a daughter who is considered virtuous for her obedience, for while Richardson insists upon the authority of the father and the daughter's dutifulness, the narrative itself upsets both. Her "excellencies" lose their power to motivate readers to imitation, and the father-daughter relationship is neither convincing nor appealing.

Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) rejects the notion of virtue as the set of "excellencies" that Richardson espouses and as it was also imagined in sentimental novels that valorized the man of feeling as the virtuous man. Goldsmith satirizes these definitions of virtue and thus also uses the exemplary tradition ironically. He does, however, offer his own "exemplar"; he uses the Vicar to define virtue as self-sacrificial love; virtue can therefore be found even in the least exemplary of characters, who disappoint both the paradigms of virtue as moral perfection (Pamela) or as impeccable feeling (the man of feeling). In this novel, the father is simultaneously ridiculous and an exemplar of virtue, for he offers himself sacrificially for his daughter. Thus, the father is not considered virtuous for his ability to exercise authority over his children, and the

daughter's obedience has little to do with the father's love for her. Unlike Richardson's view of virtue, Goldsmith's definition of virtue ignores questions of obedience and authority, and it differs from Haywood's because it removes virtue from the context of an interior conflict between reason and passion. Instead, Goldsmith founds virtue upon a kind of love and uses the father-daughter relationship to illustrate that kind of love.

Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) also focuses upon paternal love for the daughter, but widens that focus to discuss how virtue influences the love in other man-woman relationships. This novel is an attempt to criticize the sentimental novel's previous portrayals of man-woman relationships by showing what truly vicious behavior is. Inchbald exposes men and women's failure to moderate the excesses of their passions as the behavior most injurious to loving relationships. Thus, she reflects a revived interest in the passions, which were so central to Haywood's novel. Inchbald's novel is divided into two, and in the first half she uses a guardian-ward relationship as a substitute for the father-daughter, but this relationship transforms into a romantic relationship. In this relationship, Inchbald shows how men and women who love each other are often kept apart by their inability to moderate their passions. She thus defines virtue as the ability to moderate one's passions, and the reward for virtue is the happiness of a relationship with the person one loves. But in the second half of the novel, Inchbald retreats from this definition of virtue in her portrayal of a father-daughter relationship. Inchbald slips into defining virtue for the daughter as different from the virtue of other characters. In order to be virtuous, the daughter must exemplify filial duty regardless of the excessive abuses of her father. As a result of this revision of virtue, the father-daughter relationship is based upon authority and obedience, even while other man-

woman relationships are transformed by Inchbald's portrayal of virtue as moderation of passion.

Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) is a fitting conclusion to the study of the other four novels, for Austen reflects the influence of these authors, but she introduces both a new way of defining virtue in a novel as well as unique father-daughter relationship. Austen departs from the exemplary mode more than any previously discussed authors, for she consistently resists defining virtue as an achieved goal but rather shows that characters are always either gaining or losing virtue. In *Emma*, Austen portrays an unquestionably flawed father-daughter relationship. The father's flaws and the daughter's flaws have truly negative consequences. But their relationship simultaneously trains the daughter to adopt the habits which form her virtue. For Emma's relationship with her father trains her ability to recognize folly and yet forgive those flaws. As she becomes more skilled in that ability, Emma grows in virtue. Through Emma's development, Austen shows how as a character grows in virtue, that character will begin to know happiness, for virtue makes a person capable of enjoying relationships; in other words, virtue makes a person capable of loving others and such a capacity is key to individual happiness. Austen is very much a product of the eighteenth century, for she engages the same questions as the earlier authors and recognizes similar threats to human happiness. Like Haywood and Inchbald, she sees the need to negotiate the excesses of passion and thus emphasizes propriety. Like Richardson, she recognizes the father-daughter relationship as formative for the daughter's virtue. She is, however, perhaps most indebted to Goldsmith for the escape from the paradigms of virtue that do not allow for the fallibility of humans.

Though the benevolent man, or the man of feeling, may have reigned in eighteenth-century moral philosophy's accounts of virtue, this study shows that as the century progressed, novelists were quite aware of the realities of fallen human beings. As the novel develops, authors increasingly portray virtue as a dynamic state and reject the view of humans as innately good. But neither are humans hopelessly flawed. Virtue can be lost and gained. The realties of human folly, frailty, and vice therefore threaten to destroy happiness, both in the conflict between fathers and daughters and in the daughter's likelihood of stumbling on the path to marriage. But novelists embody virtue in the attempt to reconcile virtue (and the possibility of happiness) with the realities of human nature. Different authors define virtue and happiness differently, and the success of the father-daughter relationship varies accordingly. The two earliest novels offer the least satisfying portrayals of fathers and daughters. Haywood presents virtue as the ability to moderate the passions in order to steer a course to the happiness of "conjugal affection." The daughter's relationship with the father fades in importance as the daughter can achieve this kind of virtue and happiness only by her own effort. Richardson grants the father-daughter relationship central importance in defining the daughter's virtue, which is a web of related "excellenices" that lead to clearly identifiable rewards. Because Richardson defines virtue as the sort of thing that leads to rewards and defines those rewards as external and identifiable, the daughter's relationship with the father becomes merely a tool for the daughter who must prove herself worthy of her reward. For both Haywood and Richardson, fathers and daughters do not enjoy any meaningful relationship with one another. In Goldsmith's *Vicar,* the father-daughter relationship is transformed by the rejection of a definition of virtue that does not also

allow for human fallibility. Goldsmith envisions virtue as self-giving love and connects this kind of virtue to a happiness that cannot be realized in this life. In so doing, he makes it possible for even ridiculous men to be good fathers, and removes from daughters the onus of perfect obedience, for forgiveness is a necessary part of virtue. In *A Simple Story* Inchbald, too, rejects a notion of virtue that does not allow for human fallibility, and in her novel she introduces a psychological reality to embodiments of virtue by showing how virtue is a dynamic state. Inchbald defines virtue as the moderation of excess, and the happiness afforded by virtue arises from the fact that this moderation allows men and women to enjoy relationships with one another. Inchbald does not, however, carry over this definition of virtue to the father-daughter relationship, and as a result, the daughter is given a different definition of virtue to which she must perfectly conform if she is to enjoy the happiness of her father's love. Austen unites what is best in Goldsmith's comic vision of flawed but virtuous humans and what is best in Inchbald's psychologically realistic portrayal of the expansion and contraction of characters as they gain and lose virtue. Austen founds her definition of virtue upon the ability to recognize human folly and yet forgive flaws. And she shows that as characters become more virtuous, they become more capable of happiness, for they are increasingly able to enjoy loving communion with others. Austen thus creates a father-daughter relationship that is successful despite the father's foolishness and the daughter's flaws.

CHAPTER TWO

Useless Fathers in Haywood's *Love in Excess*

When Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess or the Fatal Inquiry* was published in 1719, this now-obscure novel equaled the popularity of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* published the same year (Oakleaf 7). Furthermore, only Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) rivaled these two novels in sales in the first part of the eighteenth century (Backscheider xx). Haywood, who had already had a career as an actress, followed the publication of her first, most successful novel with numerous other publications, so that it is appropriate to call her "the epitome of the novel until Richardson published *Pamela*" (Backscheider xxix). Despite the widespread popularity of *Love in Excess,* few readers today are remotely familiar with it or its author. The details of Haywood's life are obscure although Christine Blouch has done much to uncover previous errors in Haywood's biography. She has corrected the long-standing assumption that Haywood married a clergyman and ran away from him, instead pointing to Haywood's correspondence, which indicates that her "unfortunate" marriage was ended either by her husband's death, or, more likely, his abandonment ("Romance" 539). By the time Haywood published *Love in Excess,* her marriage had ended, and she had turned to writing to support herself and, later, her two children, fathered by two different lovers (Backcheider xiv, xv). During the 1720s she steadily published books that sold well, and during the 1730s she returned to acting before writing again in the 1740s. Despite the fact that Haywood was well-published, well-read, and also well-connected in

the "intensely interactive eighteenth-century London literary and stage community," she received critical attention throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century mainly as the "scribbling woman" who attracted the ire of Jonathan Swift and, more famously, Alexander Pope in *The Dunciad* (1728) (Blouch Introduction 8).

Pope's attack reveals indignation at the overtly sexual nature of Haywood's fiction. He describes "Eliza" as naked from the waist up with "two babes of love" clinging to her, indicating that his objection to her revolved around her sexual license (II. 149-154).[1] Indeed, *Love in Excess* is most often called "amatory fiction," for it portrays men and women encountering one another in love affairs, but it is neither erotic nor pornographic fiction, for the novel offers serious commentary upon these love affairs.[2] The plot itself is, however, remarkable in its focus upon sexual adventures. *Love in Excess,* a novel divided into three parts, follows the adventures of the fatally attractive Count D'elmont and the various women who fall in love with him. In the first part, D'elmont returns to Paris after a successful military career. Immediately, Alovisa, a young, independent heiress, conceives a passion for him and sends him a note revealing he is loved by a beautiful and worthy woman. D'elmont confuses the author of this note with Amena, the beautiful daughter of a penniless man. He begins a secret love affair with Amena, which Alovisa succeeds in destroying by discovering it to Amena's father, who first locks his daughter in the house and then, when such measures are ineffective against the amorous Count, locks in her a convent. Alovisa reveals to D'elmont that she is his admirer, and he, motivated by ambition, quickly marries her. The second part of the novel begins with the death of Monsieur Frankville, who selects D'elmont as the guardian for his daughter, Melliora. Upon first seeing one another, D'elmont and

Melliora fall in love, but Melliora restrains her passion when she finds he is a married man. D'elmont hatches several plans for the seduction of Melliora, all of which fail, and the last of which ends in the accidental death of his wife, Alovisa. In the third part of the novel, D'elmont wanders to Rome while Melliora hides herself in a convent. In Rome, D'elmont encounters the blatantly amorous Ciamara, who holds Camilla, the lover of young Frankville (Melliora's brother), prisoner in her home. In order to help Frankville free Camilla, the Count plays along with Ciamara's sexual game, all the time recognizing Melliora's superiority. Camilla is freed by the help of Violetta, who has fallen in love with D'elmont. Violetta then disguises herself as a page to accompany him as he searches for Melliora, who has been abducted from the convent. In the conclusion of the novel, Melliora reveals herself to D'elmont while he stays in the home of the Marques De Saguiller, her abductor. Although Violetta dies of a broken heart, the novel ends happily with the marriage of Saguiller to his faithful lover, Melliora to D'elmont, and Camilla to Frankville.

Considering the purpose of this study, it is notable that a central father-daughter relationship is missing from this novel. There are, however, several father-daughter portrayals in the three parts of the novel, though mothers seem not to exist. For instance, Amena's father twice puts an end to the secret affair between his daughter and the Count. On his deathbed, Monsieur Frankville selects D'elmont as guardian for his daughter, expressly asking him to protect her from "snares" for her innocence. And Violetta's father attempts to marry her to the handsome, young Frankville. In each case, the fathers try to negotiate a passage to marriage through the volatile passions of their daughters and the men they love. The fathers are, however, unsuccessful: the novel revolves around the

dangerously attractive Count D’elmont and the women who fall prey to excessive love for him. Because Haywood’s prime concern is the portrayal of passion and its effect upon women, this chapter explores the relationship between passion and virtue in shaping the father-daughter relationship. This early novel is significant to this study, for it differs from later novelistic portrayals of fathers and daughters due to Haywood’s perception of the passion of love and the corresponding virtue necessary to withstand that passion.

Haywood’s Definition of Virtue

A close, textual examination of Haywood’s portrayal of virtue in *Love in Excess* has thus far been neglected, perhaps due to the way the novel is classified simply in reference to the amorous content. Indeed, all of Haywood’s fiction is often seen in this light. Tiffany Potter follows the lead of Mary Ann Schofield and John Richetti in valuing Haywood as an early feminist and claims that her major contribution was mastery of the “language of passion” to claim it for women “as a creative, powerful production of value” (171). In her history of the novel, Patricia Meyer Spacks identifies *Love in Excess* in particular as a novel of adventure, specifically, erotic adventures (39). Indeed, the novel derives its plot from the movement from one amorous encounter to another. Backscheider identifies the French romance genre as the shaping force behind Haywood’s novel (xxix). Margaret Doody identifies it as the sub-genre of seduction novel in which Richardson later participates (qtd. in Backscheider, xxix). Ballaster adds to this that is a seduction novel employed “for the purposes of a more general moralism” rather than political commentary as is the case with her literary predecessors, Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley (156). Ballaster observes that Haywood’s exclusive commitment to “the discourse of love . . . marks the beginnings of an autonomous tradition in romantic

fiction, primarily addressed to and authored by women" (158). Ballaster's assessment of "romantic fiction" written by a woman for women brings into question the literary value of Haywood's work and hints at the reasons it has been left out of the canon.

Most theories regarding Haywood's absence from the canon revolve around her identity and interests as a woman writer. Eve Tavor Bannet argues that the "domestic revolution" created by literary women in the eighteenth-century was co-opted in the nineteenth century as the "domestic novel" became "a privileged *male* genre" (219). She notes the concurrent rise of canonical histories of the novel which repeated this co-option of the female novel, so that "only four, reasonably popular, male eighteenth-century novelists . . . were responsible for the transformation of the old romance into the domestic novel" (219). David Oakleaf argues that the now-expanding canon should include Haywood because she formerly was excluded due to the ambiguity of the genre she chose as well as her presentation of gender roles (24). Ros Ballaster assumes that Haywood is ultimately worth association with Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley because her romances "do locate a form of feminine resistance" in the female body itself (169), and Ballaster begins a critical analysis of Haywood's fiction by remarking, "the business of Haywood's amatory plots is to engage the female reader's sympathy and erotic pleasure, rather than stimulate intellectual judgment" (170). These defenses of Haywood's place in the canon center on her identity as a female writer whose opposition to social and cultural hegemony makes her worthy of critical attention. But, as Ballaster's comment shows, these defenses can also lead to reading Haywood's fiction simply as oppositional and void of "serious" literary value.

Kathleen Lubey points out the problem with reviving Haywood's novels on these grounds. Lubey cites several critics, including Mary Anne Schofield, Kirsten T. Saxton and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio, who primarily view Haywood as an author whose significance lies in her opposition to the (male) literary and social dominance of the early eighteenth century (309). Lubey writes, "Haywood's own words undercut the notion that her fiction exists, on the one hand, to expose feminine subjugation or, on the other, to please by constructing a 'fantasy world' of scandalous love plots" (309). In other words, although Haywood may have been left out of the canon for reasons related to her gender and choice of subjects, reviving her literature by defining it in opposition to this exclusion has led to readings that ignore Haywood's own words regarding the purposes of her literature. Lubey cites Haywood's dedication of *Lasselia: or, the Self-Abandoned* (1725) as evidence that she intends to instruct readers in a particular way; Haywood acknowledges the "too great Warmth, which may perhaps, appear in some particular Pages" but argues that it is excused by her "design in writing this little *Novel* (as well as those I have formerly publish'd)" which is "only to remind the unthinking Part of the World, how dangerous it is to give way to Passion" (qtd. in Lubey 309). Haywood asserts that the "warm" scenes must be proportionate to the strength of passion the characters experience in order for the reader "to be sensible how far [passion] touches him, or how probable it is that he is falling into those Inadvertencies which the Examples I relate wou'd cause him to avoid" (qtd. in Lubey 309). Lubey argues, "Haywood utilizes eroticism for pedagogic ends, demanding readers detoxify their visceral response to 'warm' description by remaining mentally attentive to the instructive warnings contained therein" (310). Or, in other words, the erotic scenes of Haywood's novel demand that

"readers 'be sensible' of—that is, both aroused by and detached from—their own passionate 'falling' into the immoderate states of excess about which they read" (310). Hence, Haywood does not simply appeal to the "female reader's sympathy and erotic pleasure" (Ballaster 170) in fiction written in opposition to prevailing cultural and social norms; rather, she writes with a pedagogic purpose that demands that she engage the reader's sympathy and create erotic pleasure for a specific purpose.

Haywood's specific purpose is the formation of virtue in her readers so that they are able to withstand the power of passion. Her attempt to define virtue in relation to reason and passion situates her work in the eighteenth-century philosophical attempts to cope with Thomas Hobbes' claim that passion is dominant over reason. In *Sentiment and Sociability*, John Mullan notes that many philosophers in the eighteenth century try "to refute Hobbes's description of the passions as dominant and competitive primal 'appetites' and Mandeville's depiction of a world in which 'public benefits' flow not from human virtues but from the inevitably self-interested operation of private passions" (24). Mullan identifies a "conventional necessity" in the eighteenth century "to demonstrate that passions were conquerable, not merely by some theoretical reason, but by the actual practices of virtue, politeness, or religion" (24). Haywood certainly participates in this discourse by her fictional portrayal of virtue as that which enables a woman to use her reason to keep passion in check.

Furthermore, Haywood's pedagogic purpose also locates her work within the exemplary tradition of literature. But Haywood's work does not immediately fit into the exemplary tradition until one takes seriously the didactic purposes of her portrayals of passion. Passion plays a central role in *Love in Excess,* but the nature of that role is

debatable. On the one hand, Ballaster argues that Haywood portrays passion as amoral and utterly irresistible; even Haywood's "ruined" women are innocent because of "their inability to resist sexual passion" (170). But Spacks argues that this novel "celebrates love as the center and source of virtue" (*Beginnings* 39). Lubey resolves these two readings by referencing a quote Haywood's remarks in *Reflections on the Various Effects of Love,* (1726):

> *Love,* like the Grape's potent Juice, but heightens *Nature,* and makes the conceal'd Sparks of Good, or Ill, blaze out, and show themselves to the wond'ring World! It gives an energy to our Wishes, a Vigour to our Understanding, and *adds* to the *Violence* of our Desires, but *alters* not the *Bent* of them. (qtd. in Lubey 312)

Contra Spacks, Lubey argues, "Being neither virtue nor vice, Haywood proclaims, love possesses no inherent content or value . . . it but intensifies those that already reside in the individual's constitution and thus provides the most immediate access to their 'Nature'" (312). She continues, "Readers are encouraged to recognize love for its epistemological value: love, as a universal and extreme passion, allows readers to see human nature in its most pronounced form" (313). The amatory nature of Haywood's fiction serves two instructive purposes. First, the erotic scenes simultaneously elicit pleasure from the readers, and demand their judgment of the excessive passion portrayed. Readers experience the power of passion as they are absorbed into the scene in order that they might then learn the value of detachment from passion when they witness its deleterious effects upon the fictional characters. Second, passion, due to its power, reveals the true nature of these fictional characters. As characters are subjected to passion, their virtues and vices are revealed. They thus become useful examples, either of virtue or vice.

It is important to note, with Lubey, the "epistemological value" of love and the "pedagogic ends" of Haywood's amatory fiction, for then we begin to understand how Haywood unfolds her vision of virtue in *Love in Excess*.[3] Haywood certainly does not provide the spotlessly virtuous heroine we find in Richardson's *Pamela,* but that is not because she simply exulted in portrayals of women overcome with sexual desire. In fact, Haywood uses women placed in situations that elicit desire in order to make her own defense of virtue. Bannet notes Haywood's aptitude to participate in the exemplary tradition in order to instruct readers: in *The Female Spectator* Haywood writes regarding the use of exemplary figures from true history, "an instance of shining virtue of any age, can never be too often proposed as a pattern, nor the fatality of misconduct too much impressed on the minds of our youth of both sexes" (qtd. in Bannet 59). But she does not portray "instance[s] of shining virtue" in her fiction. Before her introduction of her hero, Natura, in *Life's Progress through the Passions* (1748), Haywood writes, "There never yet was any one man, in whom all the *virtues,* or al the *vices,* were summed up, for, though reason may go a great way toward curbing the passions, yet . . . they will sometimes launch out beyond their due bounds" (2). She rejects fictional portrayals of pure virtue as inconsistent with the power of passion, but Haywood nevertheless uses characters as illustrative of certain vices and virtues. *Love in Excess* contains several exemplary characters. The women who fall in love with D'elmont—Alovisa, Amena, Melliora, Ciamara, and Violetta—possess virtues and vices that teach readers how to deal with the strength of the passion of love. Each woman, when she becomes subject to passion, is revealed for what she already is; her virtues and vices are heightened. Haywood asks readers to consider what virtue and vice are when they are revealed in the

woman overcome with passion. Vices are those characteristics which render women a slave to passion; virtue is that which enables a woman to regard her passion with a critical eye and thus protect herself from its worst effects.

Thus, *Love in Excess* is one of the earliest novels in the exemplary tradition that also comments upon the father-daughter relationship. Haywood's novel differs from those following it in a significant regard: Haywood presents fathers as affectionate but distant from their daughters, existing within the novel almost entirely as a controlling presence meant to block their daughters from the fatal strength of their own passions. They are, in fact, unable to do so, such is the strength of their daughters' passions. Virtue alone can protect a woman from the effects of passion. Haywood therefore describes the effects of passion on various young women, intending to teach readers to be aware of passion's power, to recognize the virtuous woman, and to learn to emulate that woman's characteristics. Haywood portrays two young women with fathers, both of whom are loving and naïve, as well as fatherless young women, whose passions reveal the need for some sort of check if they are to be kept from destruction. Only one woman, Melliora, whose name means "better," possesses the virtue necessary to monitor her passions. Through Melliora, Haywood defines virtue as the ability to distance oneself from passions in order to monitor those passions with one's reason. The passion of love can never be entirely overcome, even by virtue, for it is a "jealous . . . arbitrary monarch" that fixes his throne in hearts (170), but virtue enables women to protect themselves from the destructive power of passion, whereas fathers cannot protect their daughters from "the almighty dart" of love (91), and are therefore an ineffective substitute for virtue.

Daughters and Women without Fathers

As we might expect of a novel directed towards pedagogic ends, the different ways that each women responds to her passion highlight differing failures of virtue. The first part of Haywood's novel details the events leading to Count D'elmont's marriage to Alovisa, and focuses on two women, Alovisa and Amena, who compete for the love of the too-charming D'elmont. Notably, one woman, Amena, has a father, and the other woman, Alovisa, is fatherless; the absence or presence of a father plays a distinct role in the fate of each woman but does not ultimately have any influence on the woman's passion itself. The passion aroused by D'elmont is so strong that no external force, such as Amena's father, can curb its effects. And although the fatherless Alovisa succeeds in capturing the object of her passion, she is no happier than Amena whose father succeeds in preventing the consummation of her desires. The fatherless Alovisa experiences no such prevention, but without virtue, both women end miserably, tortured by their passion. Thus, the first part of *Love in Excess* portrays two women tormented by excesses of passion, neither of whom can find happiness because they lack virtue to moderate this passion.

Alovisa, the first woman Haywood introduces, embodies several vices, which her excessive passion for D'elmont reveals. She is a young woman from a noble family whose parents have recently died, leaving her a large estate and fortune (41-42). She joins the scores of women pining for D'elmont, and though her passion is no greater than all the others, "her pride, and good opinion she had of herself, made her less able to support it; she sighed, she burned, she raged" (42). In her vanity, Alovisa imagines herself far superior to other women ignored by D'elmont, and she is "agitated almost to

madness between the two extreams of love and indignation" (43). Alovisa's passion reveals her true nature; she is vain, proud, impatient, quick-tempered, and given to extremes. Her vices make her unable to support the agony of passion. She breaks with convention and writes an anonymous note to D'elmont, in which she confesses herself conquered in love and asks him to look for a woman desperately in love with him at the next ball (43-44). D'elmont, "having never experienced the force of love" is at first incredulous (44), but persuaded by friends, he begins "to consider a mistress as an agreeable, as well as fashionable amusement" (45). Haywood uses Alovisa as a pedagogic tool in two ways; first, her passion reveals her vices, and then readers are made aware that excessive passion is directing her to make herself the slave of a man who will not return her love, but will view her as a pleasant plaything.

The second woman Haywood introduces is Amena, a naïve and beautiful girl whom Haywood uses to warn her readers of the danger of passion for the unguarded woman. Amena is the daughter of Monsieur Sanseverin, "who tho' he had a very small estate, and many children, had by a partial indulgence, too common among parents, neglecting the rest, maintained this darling of his heart in all the pomp of quality" (45). This daughter of a doting father is described as beautiful, sweet, and lovely, so D'elmont happily assumes she is the author of the note and "resolved on the beginnings of an amour, without giving himself the trouble of considering the consequences" (46). Amena's father is poor, so his choice to place his daughter amongst "quality" exposes her to danger: D'elmont is charmed by Amena, nothing more. A second note convinces D'elmont that Amena is not the author of the first note, but he continues to pursue "an amour" with Amena, for he feels assured of "victory" there (51). Such victory has

nothing to do with marriage. But “the young Amena” lacks all powers of “dissimulation” and “could not conceal the pleasure she took in his addresses . . . thus was Amena (by her too generous and open temper) brought to the very brink of ruin” (51). She is pulled back from the brink by her father’s discovery of the affair. In a note, she informs D’elmont that she will no longer receive his secret visits “unless commanded to receive ‘em by my father, who only has the power of disposing of—Amena” (52). Haywood’s readers would have immediately recognized this as Amena’s father’s attempt to bring D’elmont to propose marriage. However, Haywood uses the father’s interference to show that Monsieur Sanseverin is ineffective; he can separate his daughter from D’elmont but cannot combat Amena’s passion for him. Thus, the danger posed by passion cannot be combated by a father. Something else is required.

Neither Amena nor Alovisa have that something else. Though Haywood contrasts Amena’s and Alovisa’s response to passion, both women ultimately show the overwhelmingly destructive force of passion. By describing their responses to passion, Haywood characterizes Amena as too-trusting and naïve while she portrays Alovisa as powerful and scheming. For instance, readers are told of the “whirlwind of passion” which takes hold of Alovisa when she sees Amena preferred (47). Alovisa “raved, she tore her hair and face . . . was ready to lay hands on her own life,” until her vanity convinces her that D’elmont would alter his affections if he knew that she, too, loved him (47). This woman, obeyed as a tyrant by her servants, commences to spy on Amena and D’elmont so that she can reveal the secret affair to Monsieur Sanseverin, trusting that he will not allow his daughter to be seduced and thus lose her valuable female honor. Alovisa is driven to violence, subterfuge, and betrayal by her overwhelming passion for

D'elmont. On the other hand, Amena is driven "to the brink of ruin," which Haywood portrays as a more forgivable failing as it is due to "her too generous and open temper" (51). Amena is innocent of the vices that characterize Alovisa's passion; she is not vain, tyrannical, or violent. She deceives no rivals; when she understands that D'elmont intends to seduce rather than marry her, she is overcome with shame. Her passion reveals only her naivety and innocence whereas Alovisa's passion reveals her vanity and tyranny.

Although Haywood is less condemning of the innocent and deceived Amena than the scheming Alovisa, she is more concerned with showing her readers the danger of Amena's failings. Haywood uses Amena to show that naivety and innocence seriously threaten a woman's happiness. She warns readers against being like Amena by means of the first "warm" scene in the novel. This scene shows that, while not reprehensible as Alovisa's vices are, Amena's shortcomings expose her to real danger. Despite her father's attempts at protection, Amena barely avoids becoming a ruined and discarded woman. Haywood describes that danger convincingly by using in erotic detail: D'elmont talks Amena into escaping through an open window into the moonlit garden where he awaits. Earlier in the day, Monsieur Sanseverin has spent hours talking with his daughter showing her "the passion the Count had for her in so true a light, that made a very great alteration in her sentiments" (59). Her father shows her D'elmont's actual intent, and Amena is ashamed of the "condescensions" she offered to a man who never mentioned marriage to her (59). Yet, when that charming man, "who knew the power he had over her too well," appears in the flesh and beckons her to join him in the garden, Amena goes with him (60). Haywood denominates Amena "this inconsiderate lady" here, for she has carelessly and thoughtlessly placed herself in a situation wherein her passion will

overcome her virtue (63). In the warm, moonlit garden Amena cannot maintain that critical distance from her passion that she achieved earlier in the day while talking with her father. Though she may still be cognitively aware of D'elmont's actual purpose, her body betrays the strength of her passion for him. Haywood writes, "she had only a thin, silk nightgown on, which flying open as he caught her in his arms, he found her panting heart beat measures of consent, her heaving breast swell to be pressed by his, and every pulse confess a wish to yield" (63). Here is the first of the amorous scenes for which Haywood's early fiction is famous. And though readers, too, are caught up in the passions of the moment, Haywood has taken care that they should also be aware of Amena's folly as they compare her earlier resolution with her inability to resist desire. Thus, this scene serves two purposes. First, as readers respond to the erotic details, they understand the strength of sexual passion. Second, readers distance themselves from that passion by their awareness of the danger Amena faces when she places herself in a situation where desire must prevail over judgment. Amena sinks into a highly dangerous though entirely understandable "lethargy of love" before she and D'elmont are surprised by her maid, Anaret, who has come to tell her that an alarm has been raised in the house (63). Instantly, Amena's critical judgment returns and she blames D'elmont for seducing her, and though the pair is left alone again, Amena's sentiments are so entirely changed as to make a return of her passion impossible. She has been reminded of something Haywood hopes her readers have not forgotten despite the effects of the "warm" scene: D'elmont is her seducer.

This scene also demonstrates the father's inability to control the effects of his daughter's passion. Amena's father has attempted to act as a barrier against passion by

channeling it into marriage. But he cannot be successful in this endeavor, for passion is a too-powerful force that overcomes the father's two tools: physical imprisonment of the daughter and bolstering of her judgment of the lover and what he offers her. When he tries to create in his daughter a capacity to critically judge D'elmont's intentions, Monsieur Sanseverin is laboring in vain; he cannot impart virtue to his daughter in this way. When confronted with her lover, Amena's physical response shows the strength passion has over reason. Thus, Monsieur Sanseverin has no power over passion itself and can only succeed in physically separating his daughter from D'elmont. He sends his daughter to a convent, hoping to conceal her there until talk of her affair dies down, but she chooses to stay there for life, so scarred is she by D'elmont's treatment. Amena's rival, however, has no one who will separate her from the object of her passion. Alovisa can boast, "I have no body to whom I need be accountable for my actions, and am above the censures of the world" (67). But Haywood in no way presents Alovisa's freedom as the key to her happiness; it simply enables her to marry D'elmont, who does not love her. Ultimately, Haywood shows that both Amena, the naïve, too-trusting daughter and Alovisa, the scheming, sophisticated heiress are damaged irreparably by their inability to resist their passion for D'elmont.

The contrasting characters of Amena and Alovisa prepare readers for the virtuous woman, who alone can resist the power of passion. Haywood does not portray a virtuous woman as one who obeys her father (or any other external authority) and denies her passion. Rather, for Haywood, the virtuous woman does not need a father to protect her from her own passion. Alone, she experiences passion in all its fury but retains her ability to distance herself from that passion in order to judge its effects upon her. This

distance allows the virtuous woman to restrain, not obliterate, her passion. As she portrays the virtuous woman, Haywood increasingly emphasizes the power of passion to highlight the necessity of virtue. In the second part of the novel, D'elmont himself experiences the torture of unrequited passion for Melliora, whose virtue sets her apart from the other women in the novel. In order to draw attention to Melliora's virtue, the second part of *Love in Excess* shows most explicitly the destructive power of passion. Haywood introduces part two with a quotation from Dryden's translation (1700) from Chaucer:

> Each day we break the bond of humane laws
> For love, and vindicate the common cause.
> Laws for defence of civil rights are placed,
> Love throws the fences down, and makes a gen'ral waste.
> Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall,
> The sweeping deluge love comes on and covers all. (85)

This reference to Chaucer shows that Haywood does not glorify eroticism as Pope's attack suggests, but uses eroticism to support a view of passion that is part of a larger literary tradition. Indeed, the second part of her amatory novel narrates the dangers of passion through a series of transgressions against "humane laws" resulting in a "gen'ral waste." More than either part one or part three, part two impresses the reader with the amorality of passion and its power. Significantly, Melliora, Haywood's model of a virtuous woman, is the heroine of this section; her virtue is powerless to stem to destructive tide of passion (nothing can do that), though it does guard her and her lover against its worst effects.

Haywood introduces readers to Melliora while her father is dying; if she is to withstand the power of passion, she must do so unaided by a father. Unlike Monsieur Sanseverin, Monsieur Frankville has previously shielded his daughter from the influences

of society; he has arranged for her education in a monastery, and while he never planned for her to be a "recluse," he has delayed her entry into "the gayeties of court" and "the conversation of the beau monde" (89). Monsieur Frankville selects D'elmont as guardian of his daughter, asking him to promise "to receive her into your house, and not suffer her artless and unexperienced youth to fall into those snares which are daily laid for innocence, and take so far a care, that neither she, nor the fortune I leave her, be thrown away upon a man unworthy of her" (89). D'elmont readily promises these things. But then "the matchless Melliora" enters her father's room, and even in her grief-stricken state, D'elmont recognizes in her words "wit not inferior to her tenderness" and sees her as "the most lovely person in the world . . . an object not to be safely gazed at" (90). D'elmont is equally attractive, and even before Monsieur Frankville is dead, passion takes hold of D'elmont and Melliora both. Haywood writes:

> [T]he first sight of Melliora gave [D'elmont] a discomposure he had never felt before, he sympathized in all her sorrows, and was ready to joyn his tears with hers, but when her eyes met his, the god of love seemed there to have united all his lightings for one effectual blaze; their admiration of each other's perfections was mutual, and tho' he had got the start in love, as being touched with that almighty dart, before her affliction had given leave to regard him, yet the softness of her soul, made up for that little loss of time, and it was hard to say whose passion was the strongest. (90-91).

In her description of passion, Haywood participates in the revival of classical portrayals of love personified; "the god of love" touches the pair with "that almighty dart."[4] Love acts upon this pair, is outside of their control, and none can resist his "almighty" power. As he dies, Monsieur Frankville looks at D'elmont "with a beseeching look as it were to conjure him to be careful to his charge" (91). His beseeching looks are in vain; the god of love is more powerful than a father's dying wish, just as it has already been shown to be more powerful than a living father's attempts at protection.

Haywood shows that the god of love exerts power even over the virtuous woman. When Melliora discovers that the man she loves is married already, she cannot cease loving him, and to her sorrow over her father's death, Melliora adds despair over the death of "her hopes just budding" (92). D'elmont is less willing to relinquish his hopes. He exclaims to her, "'Friendship! Did I say? that term is too mean to express a zeal like mine, the care, the tenderness, the faith, the fond affection of parents,--brothers,--husbands,--lovers, all comprised in one! one great unutterable! comprehensive meaning is mine! is mine for Melliora!'" (93). Melliora is, of course, aware that D'elmont declares more than simply the sentiments of a guardian appointed by her father, but she does not reply in kind. D'elmont takes Melliora to the home he shares with his wife, and though he conceals from Alovisa his new passion, he cannot conceal the indifference he now feels for her. Melliora, on the other hand, successfully hides her passion for D'elmont in her expressions of grief for her father. But she cannot always use grief to hide her passion; when alone with D'elmont her body betrays her. Haywood writes, "love, tho' it may be feigned, can never be concealed; not only the eyes (those true and most perfect intelligencers of the heart) but every feature, every faculty betrays it!" (105).

Despite Melliora's inability to hide or squelch her passion, Haywood portrays her as virtuous by means of comparison between her response to passion and that of Alovisa. In part two, Alovisa despairs as her hopes are dashed by her husband's indifference, but she responds quite differently than Melliora does. Alovisa intercepts a letter D'elmont writes apologizing to Amena, which also reveals that he now suffers from passion. Alovisa reads this over and over, until her passions achieve "dominion of her reason" (100). Then, she commences to rage, but does so secretly, for though she is "too apt to

give loose to her passions on every occasion, to the destruction of her own peace, yet she well enough how to disguise 'em" when she finds that it will be to her advantage to do so (100). Alovisa's reason counsels her not to aggravate the coldness he now shows her, but her unruly passions demand that she relentlessly pursue the identity of her replacement. Alovisa goes so far as to offer her body in exchange for information, and D'elmont accidentally stabs her in the mayhem that follows when her informant comes to claim his due. Haywood shows that Alovisa's passion, which reveals her vices, leads directly to her demise.

On the other hand, Melliora, though subject to passion as well, maintains her capacity to distance herself from that passion and regard it using her reason. Recognizing her inability to completely conceal her love, she tries to stay away from D'elmont. She discourages his advances when he finds her alone. When "verses on love" are read aloud at a dinner party, Melliora does not praise them with the others and reveals her conscious endeavor to resist her passion for D'elmont. Haywood narrates:

> But Melliora who was willing to take all opportunities of condemning that passion as well to conceal it in herself, as to check what ever hopes the Count might have, now discovered the force of her reason, the delicacy of her wit, and the penetration of her judgment, in a manner so sweetly surprising to all that were strangers to her . . . she urged the arguments she brought against giving way to love, and the danger of all softening amusements, with such a becoming fierceness, as made every body of the opinion that she was born only to create desire, not be susceptible of it her self. (111-112)

Melliora's discourse "against giving way to love and the danger of all softening amusements" alarms D'elmont so greatly that he acts upon the advice of a libertine friend and sneaks into Melliora's room intending to confute her arguments. Using all her powers of erotic description once again, Haywood relates how Melliora has just come

from bathing, her dress is "all ungirt, and loosely flowing" and her hair hangs unbraided upon her neck and breast (112). Readers are reminded of Amena's undoing upon being found in a similarly unguarded situation. But no such "warm" scene arises here. Instead, Haywood instructs readers as to how the virtuous woman reads love stories. D'elmont exclaims when he sees Melliora has been reading Ovid's *Epistles*, exactly the sort of literature she expounded against as "softening amusement" in her earlier speech (113). Melliora defends herself, saying chance placed the book in her hands, and she defends herself as the kind of reader who will not be influenced to give way to love. She tells D'elmont that she "shall endeavour to retain in memory, more of the misfortunes that attended the passions of Sappho, than the tender, tho' never so elegant expressions that it produced" (113). Furthermore, she comments, "If all readers of romances took this method, the votaries of Cupid would be fewer, and the dominion of reason more extensive" (113). In other words, Melliora is not the kind of reader who finds in love stories food to fuel her own passion; instead, as she reads, she learns that women suffer ill consequences as a result of their passions. And in words that Haywood's own readers are meant to take to heart, Melliora observes that "all readers of romances" would do well to read in this way if they would devote themselves to reason rather than passion. Melliora's controlled behavior upon finding herself mostly undressed and alone with D'elmont, whom she truly loves, proves she describes the effects of her reading accurately. She regards passion, even her own, with a critical eye—aware of its destructive power—that keeps her from succumbing to its power.

As this conversation between D'elmont and Melliora develops, Haywood invites readers to regard Melliora's situation in much the same way that Melliora has been

reading Ovid's *Epistles.* D'elmont accuses Melliora of opposing love and reason, and she argues that though they are sometimes compatible, "history" and "daily examples" show "how little reason has to do in the affairs of love" (113). But Melliora qualifies this claim by differentiating between two kinds of love. The first, "hurries people on to an immediate gratification of their desires, tho' never so prejudicial to themselves, or to the person they pretend to love" (114). The second kind of love, Melliora describes as "that which fancy inclines, and reason guides us to, in a partner for life," and she lists all the considerations of reason—equality of age, fortune, humor, and affection—that must be joined with fancy for a happy match (114). Of course, such a description of love sends D'elmont into despair, for he can claim none of these are true in his passion for Melliora; his passion for her is of the former sort of love not the latter, which joins reason with "fancy." So in reply to Melliora's argument, D'elmont offers a description of friendship, "which has no reserve, no separate interests, or divided thoughts" as the true definition of love and even goes so far as to claim that Melliora's body might be called "the prize of friendship" (115). Melliora repulses this reasoning, but he begs her to pity his inability to strive against passion for her. Then Melliora is caught; she knows that she can "look on his designs no otherwise than aimed at the destruction of her honour," but she loves him (117). Melliora responds only with tears, the first evidence of softening towards D'elmont. Using Melliora instead of Sappho, Haywood shows readers the overwhelming power of "elegant expressions" produced by passion (113); even virtuous women feel the strength of this power.

Melliora's increasing danger of succumbing to passion highlights Haywood's stated purpose of writing amatory novels to instruct readers about the strength of passion.

She views virtue as that ability to distance oneself from passion so as to be able to moderate it. But even the virtuous Melliora cannot always be consciously moderating her desires. And Haywood describes Melliora's temptations in titillating detail. When D'elmont once again sneaks into her room, he finds her asleep and dreaming. He bends over her, and in her dream, she calls out "Oh D'elmont cease, cease to charm, to such a height—Life cannot bear these raptures" (121). She throws her arm around him and embraces him tightly before saying, "O! too, too lovely Count—extatick ruiner!" (121). D'elmont realizes that though "honour and virtue" may have "dominion" over Melliora's "waking thoughts," while sleeping her true passions "exert their forceful power" and "agitate" her fancy (121). Of course, he presses his advantage, awaking Melliora in order to make her "imaginary felicity" a reality (122). Melliora begs him to leave her, for he now knows she cannot resist "cruel, fatal passion," but D'elmont cannot leave, for he is not master over his passion (122-123). The pair is interrupted before D'elmont accomplishes his purpose, but this "warm" scene between Melliora and D'elmont proves that even the virtuous woman cannot always moderate her passion; when Melliora sleeps, her reason sleeps and passion takes captive her mind and body. Upon being found at this moment, Melliora's virtue fails her.

Melliora recognizes this herself and makes sure to place herself where her virtue will not fail again. After Alovisa is killed, Melliora removes herself from D'elmont completely and "tho' in forming this resolution, she felt torments unconceivable, yet the strength of her virtue enabled her to keep it, and she returned to the monastery" (168). The third part of the novel is necessary to show D'elmont's development and justify Melliora's decision to marry him. Haywood begins this section with a quote from a play

by Thomas Southerne, a Restoration playwright: “Success can then alone your vows attend, / When worth’s the motive, constancy the end” (167). In other words, D’elmont can only satisfy his passion for the “matchless Melliora” when he values her virtue and intends to bind himself to her forever. Though the immediate satisfaction of passion offers a temporary happiness, Haywood uses D’elmont and Melliora to show that true happiness is achieved only by those unite passion with marriage. The women who fall in love with D’elmont in the third part echo Alovisa and Amena from part one, but D’elmont’s response to them proves that he is now sensible of Melliora’s virtue, and his passion for her is directed towards marriage, not the “immediate gratification” of desire (114). Once D’elmont’s passion is reformed, Melliora can reconcile virtue with her passion and they can both enjoy the happiness of marriage.

The two women who fall in love with D’elmont in part three confirm that Haywood defines virtue as that which protects women not from men but from the power of their own passions. Ciamara, a young and wealthy widow, is Alovisa’s counterpart. She, too, is revealed as cruel and dishonest by her pursuit of D’elmont. And, like Alovisa, she is accountable to nobody. She pursues D’elmont without check, but, unlike Alovisa, her passion for D’elmont is merely sexual. Even though she knows that he loves Melliora, she pursues him, hoping that he will have sex with her. When he escapes from Rome, she cannot support disappointed desire and kills herself. Violetta, on the other hand, mirrors young, innocent Amena. Violetta, too, has a father who tries to steer the course of passion towards marriage for his daughter. He selects young Frankville, a handsome young man, as her husband, but his efforts are doomed, for Frankville falls in love with Camilla instead, and Violetta falls in love with D’elmont. D’elmont recognizes

Violetta's symptoms of love, and, feeling pity for her, he keeps himself away from her so as not to exacerbate her passion. Violetta knows that D'elmont avoids her because he loves another, but the strength of her passion renders her incapable of separation from D'elmont, so she disguises herself as a boy in order to be his servant. Violetta becomes ill when she hears that her father dies upon hearing the news of her flight, and the knowledge that D'elmont can never be hers finishes her off. Violetta has virtue enough not to offer herself sexually to D'elmont when she cannot have his love, but she does not have virtue enough to leave him, as Melliora does. While Violetta is not vice-ridden as Ciamara is, both women have no power over their passions—that is, they lack virtue—and therefore suffer the same fate, death.

Useless Fathers

Alovisa dies; Amena is cloistered. Ciamara and Violetta die. Melliora marries D'elmont, is blessed with children, and enjoys "conjugal affection" her whole life (273). Her virtue guides her to this happiness. When fathers appear in this tale of "the tyranny of that fatal passion" (270), they attempt to act as a barrier between the destructive power of love and the well-being of their daughters. But they are completely ineffective. Only the virtuous woman can protect herself from "fatal passion" and steer a course towards the happiness of a marriage of "conjugal affection." Because Haywood portrays virtue alone as sufficient to guide women to happiness, fathers, in their protective role, become useless. They exist in the narrative mainly to show the necessity of virtue and the insufficiency of all substitutes. The decreasing importance of fathers is an important implication of Haywood's definition of virtue as the ability to critically distance oneself from one's passions in order to avoid their destructive power. Useless fathers in *Love in*

Excess show that how one defines virtue, particularly for women, influences the relationship between fathers and daughters. And virtue is particularly important in the novel of seduction that Haywood begins and Richardson makes famous in his *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded.*

Haywood defines virtue quite differently from her early eighteenth-century contemporaries who have most commonly been included in the canon of eighteenth-century literature. In his book-length study of virtue from the Restoration to Romanticism, David Morse argues that virtue in the early years of the eighteenth-century was politically charged; as the two-party system took hold, people worried that an absence of virtuous leaders would lead to the collapse of the nation, as in the case of Rome (47-48). Here, virtue is that which enables leaders to be selfless and civic-minded. Morse identifies Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison as the representative of this "classical and Roman" notion of virtue during the early years of the century (47, 48). Morse describes "classical" virtue as "public, social, and civic" and asserts that it "tends to imply social position . . . [and] may also imply wealth" (111). Morse identifies Richardson's portrayal of the lowly yet virtuous Pamela confronting the wealthy yet debauched Mr. B as a major indicator of the shift away from "classical" virtue (114). However, Haywood's much earlier novel has already shifted away from "public, social, and civic" virtue towards a notion of virtue which is meaningful for women whose role in the public sphere is limited.[5] Haywood grants virtue a private, subjective content, making it applicable to women whose most interesting adventures were often love affairs.

The central role of reading in the acquisition of virtue is a significant part of the subjective nature of virtue for Haywood. Lubey argues that Haywood uses "erotic prose"

in order to teach her readers: “The detachment involved in the aesthetic experience of reading—the Addisonian showing and withholding, stopping and starting, and sustaining readers’ desire for more—secures the reader as an aesthetic, rather than a merely sensual, observer” (320). Haywood models this kind of reading within her fiction; Melliora’s ability to reflect upon what she has read shows that she has already learned the lessons Haywood wants to teach her readers. Regarding *Lasselia,* Lubey argues that the “capacity to feel, to judge, and to apply the wisdom of the heroine’s experience to one’s own life” is Haywood’s goal for her readers (320). If they are to emulate Melliora, then this is certainly the case. Melliora shows that reading is crucial to the formation of virtue, for it directs the reader to “apply the wisdom of the heroine’s experience” by achieving necessary “detachment.” In *Love in Excess* Haywood gives only this account for the acquisition of virtue. Thus, even the acquisition of virtue is a private affair, conducted by the heroine as she interacts with a text. An external authority like the father is not only useless as a protection against the power of passion, but is also unnecessary in the process of acquiring virtue. Haywood thus defines virtue both in her fiction and in the way her fiction interacts with the reader, and in both cases, virtue operates in a private, feminine realm.

Haywood’s vision of virtue, embodied in the “matchless Melliora,” results in the father’s insignificance in the daughter’s journey to marriage. The father is incapable both of inculcating virtue in his daughter and also of using his power to steer his daughter past the destructive power of passion into the safe harbor of a happy marriage. The young woman alone can ensure her own happiness, which is the fulfillment of her desires in “conjugal affection,” and she does so guided by her virtue. Therefore, Haywood’s *Love*

in Excess uses the narrative of a woman facing seduction while moving towards marriage in order to join in the eighteenth-century discussion of virtue and its connection to happiness. Consequently, Haywood sets the stage for later novelists who also define virtue in this context. But Haywood leaves the daughter's relationship with her father out of her portrayal of virtue and its connection to happiness. In this way, she differs from subsequent novelists who see the father-daughter relationship as pertinent to the formation of virtue and subsequently see the daughter's relationship with the father as relevant to her happiness. As we shall see in the next chapter, Richardson picks up Haywood's basic plot of a solitary young woman facing seduction yet desiring marriage, but he completely redefines virtue as a set of characteristics, one of the chief of which is a daughter's filial piety. Richardson defines virtue quite differently from Haywood, and this is largely behind his transformation of amatory fiction into the realistic novel of sensibility, in which the daughter's relationship with the father is of central importance.

CHAPTER THREE

A Useful Father in Richardson's *Pamela*

Just as Eliza Haywood does, Samuel Richardson focuses upon the virtue of women facing seduction. However, Richardson departs from the conventional narrative form of amatory fiction and uses the epistolary form in order to delve into his heroine's most private thoughts and feelings. In *Pamela* (1740), Richardson achieves a psychological realism which sets his work apart from Haywood's fiction. Although Richardson's project is to portray Pamela realistically by entering into her consciousness, his notion of virtue is not private, as Haywood's is. Readers may at first think that the "virtue" referred to in the title of *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* is nothing more than Pamela's fiercely defended sexual chastity, but Richardson directs his reader's attention to the web of virtues Pamela exhibits which, combined, make her worthy of the rewards of Providence. In the "few brief observations" at the end *Pamela*, Richardson reserves his final observations for comment upon the title character. She is a model of humility, industry, veracity, perseverance, and, significantly for this study, filial piety. Haywood rejects the "classical and Roman" virtue that David Morse describes as "public, social, and civic" virtue that "tends to imply social position . . . [and] may also imply wealth" (111) in favor of a private, subjective virtue. But Richardson equally rejects "classical and Roman" notions of virtue, although he portrays virtue in ways that are social and intrapersonal. This is especially true of his portrayal of the virtuous daughter and her relationship with her father.

In his conclusion of *Pamela,* Richardson places his work firmly within the exemplary tradition by reminding readers of the moral lessons they ought to have learned. He directs a few remarks specifically to children here; citing Pamela as a "good example," he writes, "let *children* see what a blessing awaits their duty to their parents, though ever so low in the world" (532). He also lists Pamela's dutifulness towards her parents as one of the "many signal instances of the excellency of her mind" (533). In other words, Pamela is virtuous at least in part because she fulfills her duty towards her parents. Because Richardson's *Clarissa* focuses on the problems a dutiful daughter faces when her father demands her obedience in a loathsome marriage, it may seem more natural to examine that novel in a study of fictional fathers and daughters in the eighteenth century. But with its portrayal of a dutiful daughter and a loving father, *Pamela* provides surprisingly fruitful ground for study and has been neglected in this area, with a few exceptions.[1] No significant critical effort has been made to explore the relationship between Pamela and Goodman Andrews, for what seem like good reasons. Though Pamela is held up as an exemplar of a dutiful daughter, her father never wields any effective authority over her, for good or for ill. Except for one brief visit after she is engaged, Pamela is removed from her father's authority by circumstances both inside of and outside of her control. Indeed, if she were under the authority of her father, then she would not have opportunity for exercising the virtue which earns her Mr. B for a husband, and there would be no novel. Yet a textual analysis of Pamela's references to her obedience to her father and her own virtue reveals that these two things exist in an uneasy relationship that undermines Pamela's attempts to narrate a story of "virtue rewarded."

An uneasy relationship between a daughter's virtue and her obedience to her father is problematic, for Richardson expressly defends parental authority. Regarding Richardson's attitude towards a daughter's duty to her parents in *Clarissa,* Caroline Gonda notes that although "Richardson's preface proclaims his design 'to caution Parents against the undue Exertion of their natural Authority over their Children, in the great Article of Marriage,' Richardson is extremely reluctant to set a limit to that 'natural Authority'" (69). In *Pamela,* the parents are as virtuous as the daughter, for they refuse to exercise "undue Exertion of their natural Authority" in regards to marriage. For instance, when Pamela's marriage to Mr. Williams is proposed to them, they express their happiness at this prospect but leave the matter to her own "inclination" (166). When Pamela refuses, they accept her reasons for doing so. On first glance, it would seem that here is a novel in which the parents' and the daughter's wills coincide, so that the parents retain authority and the daughter exhibits filial duty without any recourse to an imposition of wills, one upon the other.

However, coinciding wills do not, for Richardson, negate the parent's "natural Authority" over the daughter. In a letter regarding a passage in Colley Cibber's *The Lady's Lecture* (1748), Richardson remarks, "He had written a dialogue between a father and daughter—the intention, to show that paternal authority and filial obedience may be reconciled! He has read it to half a score at a time to the fair sex; and not a young lady but is mightily pleased with a lesson that will teach her to top her father" (qtd. in Gonda 69). Much of *Clarissa* is devoted to conflict between the father's insistence upon authority and the daughter's desire to be a dutiful daughter in all things except consent to a marriage of alliance devoid of love. In contrast, much of *Pamela* is devoted to the

daughter's assertions of her dutifulness, and when her father appears, he expresses care for Pamela. But he is unable to exert paternal authority over his daughter because she has been removed, at first against her will, so far from his social sphere of influence. In letters, however, he appeals to Pamela to remember the moral statutes he once taught her. In response, Pamela writes an account of herself for the sake of her beloved parents, whom she desires to know of her continued dutifulness to their former authority despite many temptations to the contrary. Because Pamela portrays herself as an exemplar of filial dutifulness, it seems that there is little occasion for parental action. However, Richardson's remarks concerning Cibber's father-daughter dialogue indicate that Pamela could not have been such an exemplar of filial dutifulness if she represented a reconciliation of "paternal authority and filial obedience." No, readers must carefully search for evidence of Goodman Andrew's authority and Pamela's obedience before concluding that one or the other is not really exercised.

The quest to find instances of Goodman Andrew's authority and Pamela's obedience leads to general questions about Goodman Andrew's role in the novel. He is necessary to the narrative because Pamela writes for him and her mother; she wants to prove to them that she is still virtuous. In this chapter, I argue that Pamela gets her authority to see and to portray herself as virtuous and rewarded from the way that she "reads" the events of her life using readings of authoritative texts, most significantly Scripture. Though Pamela (and, indeed, Richardson) does not recognize it, her authority replaces the authority of Scripture, and she subsequently does not recognize that her authority, derived from how she uses Scripture to "read" the events of her life, replaces

the authority of her father. Goodman Andrews exists in the narrative because he is useful in Pamela's reading of her life as virtue rewarded.

Pamela's Father, the Impetus of the Story

Problems with interpreting the novel first arise when we realize that in order to explore Pamela's relationship with her father we must read her own representation of both her father's authority and her own obedience. Almost from the moment it was published, *Pamela* has inspired controversy due to the method of narration. Fielding's responses to Pamela in *Shamela* (1741) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742) are well-known critiques of Richardson's dependence upon a character's self-portrayal as virtuous. Less well-known is Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela; or, Feigned Innocence Detected* (1742), which reduces the Pamela character to a woman driven by her passion for wealth and men. Both responses show the subversive ways *Pamela* can be read. Patricia Meyer Spacks classifies the novel as one "of consciousness" and observes, "reading *Pamela* the novel has from the beginning implied reading Pamela the character" (*Beginnings* 95). In reading Pamela the character, some have joined Fielding and Haywood in finding Pamela's self-representation as an exemplar of virtue suspect, but others have accepted at face value Pamela's self-portrayal as a virtuous woman.[2] Christine Roulston identifies the truly interesting questions for studying this novel: why is it possible to sustain poralized readings of it, and why do readers even care if Pamela is innocent or dissembling (3)? Roulston notes that the debate surrounding these questions also raises questions over the power of authentic writing (5). However, it is also a debate over the power of reading, for Pamela's narration of "virtue rewarded" is grounded in her ability

to “read” the text of her life. Significantly, Pamela performs these two tasks primarily for the sake of her father.

Pamela’s father appears only twice in the novel, both times seeking his daughter, who he fears has been kidnapped or otherwise abused. The first time Goodman Andrews seeks his daughter, he goes to Mr. B’s Bedfordshire estate after receiving Mr. B’s letter containing the fabrication of Pamela’s affair with Mr. Williams as justification for “sending her out of the way” (92). This part of the novel is related by a narrator who tells how Goodman Andrews worries that Pamela is the victim of foul play and therefore leaves home that very night and walks to Mr. B’s house. Goodman Andrews begs Mr. B to tell him the whereabouts of Pamela, but he succeeds only in securing the promise of a letter from her within a week. After receiving the letter, Pamela’s father knows that she has been abducted and, though still innocent, is yet in danger of being “ruined.” Goodman Andrews realizes that he is powerless to do anything to rescue his daughter; the narrator relates that he and his wife simply “applied themselves to prayers for their poor daughter” (98). Goodman Andrew’s second attempt to reclaim his daughter is similarly ineffective, though happier in its conclusion. Pamela herself narrates this visit. She tells of how her father journeys to Lincolnshire after hearing that she returned there of her own will when given the chance to return home. Upon his arrival, he begs Mr. B for “his child” and bursts into tears; so certain is he of her ruin that when told Pamela will soon by happy, Goodman Andrews concludes that she must be about to die (307). Of course, Mr. B means that she will be made happy in marriage, and he treats her father kindly before finally allowing Pamela to see him. Just as in his first visit, Goodman Andrews exercises no personal agency during this visit. When Mr. B asks his advice regarding the

time of the marriage, Goodman Andrews chooses to remain silent. But unlike the fathers in *Love in Excess,* Goodman Andrews is not rendered useless by the power of passion; rather, his daughter's unwavering virtue makes action on his part wholly unnecessary. He says that since Mr. B. is so good and Pamela is so prudent, there is no need for him to act; he will go home and reflect on "the ways of Providence" (315). And so he does. The rest of Pamela's story is taken up with relating the early days of her marriage and the various struggles she encounters as she is elevated from a maid to a wealthy wife. After this second visit, Pamela's father fades into the background.

However, throughout the first half of the novel before she is safely married, Pamela repeatedly reiterates her dutifulness to her parents; she longs for their advice; she wishes that she were home again under their protection. But Pamela's parents issue a command only once in the novel, and Pamela does not obey it. Early in the story, Goodman Andrews writes to urge Pamela to return home at the least hint of inappropriate attention from Mr. B (6). In response to her father's request that she return home, Pamela begins the apology that determines much of her purpose for writing the rest of her narrative. She writes, "But that which gives me most trouble is, that you seem to mistrust the honesty of your child. No, my dear father and mother, be assured, that by God's grace, I never will do anything that shall bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave" (7). At this early stage, Pamela's letters take on their obsessively detailed form. *Here* is her obedience to paternal authority that Richardson insists upon in his concluding remarks. Through her writing alone, she must prove to her parents that they have nothing to fear. She relates, in detail, Mr. B's present of the silk stockings. Her parents reply by reiterating their request to return home. She responds by narrating how she acted when

Mr. B caught her alone in the summer-house, and at the end of this letter, she begs forgiveness in not obeying their request to return home (16-17). In her next letter, Pamela represents the difficulty in undertaking a journey home, and she describes how she turns to Mrs. Jervis for advice (18-19). Her parents somewhat reluctantly accept Mrs. Jervis' advice as well (20). Soon, Mr. B puts it out of Pamela's power to return home, and for the rest of the novel, Pamela longs for parental affection, protection, and advice, knowing that it is lost to her. Notably, with the exception of this one command at the beginning of the novel, Pamela is never actually subject to her father's authority due to distance and an increasing inability to communicate over that distance. Her only way to express obedience is through a detailed narration of her strict adherence to her parents' moral instructions. In her letters she tells how without protection, advice, or affection, she resists all the temptations Mr. B can offer, even when close to utter despair.[3]

Pamela's solitary strength is important, for Goodman Andrew's authority over his daughter is slim in comparison with the power Mr. B, her master, wields. In an early letter, Goodman Andrews worries that Mr. B's power and authority will overwhelm the resolve of his inexperienced daughter: "I tremble to think, what a sad hazard a poor maiden of little more than fifteen years stands against the temptations of this world, and a designing young gentleman, if he should prove so, who has so much *power* to oblige, and has a kind of *authority* to command, as your master" (13). In this letter, Pamela's father worries that the squire, as a wealthy man and the master of the house, will have greater power and authority than he does, as a poor farmer and Pamela's father. His two visits to Mr. B show these fears to be well-founded. In this letter, Goodman Andrews does all that he can when he charges Pamela again to be on her guard and appeals to the teachings

with which he raised her, such as, "resolve to lose your life sooner than your virtue" and "it is virtue and goodness only that make true beauty" (13). *Here* is Goodman Andrew's paternal authority. And he has plenty to motivate such advice; Margaret Doody notes that "the story of the lowly maiden whose virtue is attempted by a man of high degree was very much in the air" (*Passion* 36). The former teachings of the father figure largely in several plays with a plot similar to *Pamela*'s, such as, the dialogue between Heartwell and Flora in Charles Johnson's *The Country Lasses* (1715); Flora rejects the wealthy man's indecent proposals, saying, "My father, whose Prop I am, the Stay of his old Age; taught me with pious care to tread the paths of Virtue" (qtd. in Doody *Passion* 37). Goodman Andrews, too, has taught Pamela about "the paths of Virtue," and his appeal to these former teachings is his only way of continuing to exercise authority over his daughter.

Unlike the hapless women beset by passion in Haywood's novel, Pamela assures her father that his former lessons still control her behavior. Pamela promises her father, "every little matter that happens, I will acquaint you with, that you may continue to me your good advice, and pray for your sad-hearted Pamela" (14). Regardless of whether Pamela is disingenuous or earnest in her attempts to relate "every little matter," the father-daughter relationship is of utmost importance in this epistolary novel, for Pamela's relationship with her parents is the impetus for her detailed writing. She must have her father know she remains virtuous by following his former instructions. However, Pamela's reading habits precede her writing habits; before she can narrate "every little matter," she must first interpret those events. And she develops these skills of interpretation in her reading. The question I seek to answer next is thus two-fold: what is

the virtuous Pamela's relationship with her father as revealed by her writing, and how does her reading practice influence and reveal that relationship?

Pamela's Reading Habits and Her Hermeneutic

Pamela repeatedly uses other texts as she narrates her story. Her frequent use of texts indicates that not only does she spend a great deal of her time writing, she also spends a great deal of time reading. Indeed, when imprisoned at the Lincolnshire estate, Pamela gets a stack of books from the library to read for "improvement, as well as amusement" (114). Though Mr. B. accuses her of being a reader of "romances" (92), Pamela only cites texts that would be considered "serious" reading for a young maid. No Eliza Haywood novels have polluted Pamela's mind. She cites the biblical story of Amnon and Tamar (49), more than one fable (74, 75, 194, 196), a martyr story (75), prayers from the Book of Common Prayer, and the Psalms (144). In each of these cases, Pamela uses the text to illuminate her current situation. At one point, Pamela uses a fable to identify herself in relation to Mrs. Jewkes and Mr. B., and in response, Mr B. addresses Mrs. Jewkes, "'Oh! You don't know how well this innocent is read in reflection. She has wit at will, when she has a mind to display her own romantic innocence, at the price of other people's characters'" (194). Mr. B. is frustrated by Pamela's use of a text in this situation and others because by drawing upon texts Pamela strengthens her resolve to resist his demands.

Pamela uses texts in three distinct ways. First, she uses texts to help her know how to think of men, seduction, and virtue. For instance, she uses the story of Amnon and Tamar to make sense of the situation when Mr. B. alternates quickly between desire for her and hatred of her. She reasons that hatred is not far off from "wicked love," and

concludes that if innocence cannot make a man love a woman honorably, then guilt will surely engender worse treatment. She muses, “Thus we read in Holy Writ, that wicked Amnon, when he had ruined poor Tamar, hated her more than he ever loved her, and would have turned her out the door” (49). Pamela concludes that she is happy to be sent home “with that sweet companion my innocence” (49), for her reading has taught her to value that innocence not simply for its own sake but also for what it has saved her from. Pamela’s second use of texts is related to the first but is farther-reaching in its implications; even after she has succeeded in bringing Mr. B to an honest proposal of marriage, she tells him that she will continue to read, for “that will help to polish my mind” (278). By reading, Pamela implies, she is elevated. Finally, Pamela reads as part of a devotional practice. The most notable instance of such reading is her meditation upon and revision of Psalm 137 one Sunday morning during her imprisonment. As she draws upon texts in various ways, Pamela proves herself to be a thoroughly literate young woman, capable of using other texts as she creates a text of her own life. The text of her life is “virtue rewarded”; a text she intends both for her parents to “read . . . over and over,” and to read herself, “to remind [her] of what [she] has gone through, and how great God’s goodness has been to [her]” (39).

The texts that Pamela reads enable her to create a text of “virtue rewarded,” for her reading is a source of strength in the absence of the continued authority of her parents, particularly her father. It is not simply her obedience to “former good lessons” taught to her (210) or her fear of defying “the commands of the living God” (218) that motivate Pamela to resist Mr. B’s various immoral offers. Here, Richardson’s account of the acquisition of virtue at first seems similar to that of Haywood. This seeming

similarity arises from the fact that in both cases reading is essential for the virtuous heroine who faces seduction and must be able to resist passion alone. For Richardson, however, lessons learned from reading do not teach the heroine virtue, but confirm her consciousness that she is virtuous. Pamela's hermeneutic practice itself gives the isolated and beset young maid sufficient certainty of the rightness of her motives and actions. Pamela uses authoritative texts, Scripture in particular, to confirm the rightness of her actions when she is separated from her parents. Because she uses Scripture, an authoritative text, Pamela gains mastery over the events of her own life. For instance, the story of Amnon and Tamar proves to Pamela that she has acted rightly and is being rewarded for her virtue in being sent away. When she revises Psalm 137, Pamela proves that she is an innocent sufferer who manages to maintain a love for purity even while held captive by a vicious enemy. Throughout Christian history, Scripture has been used as a source of strength for the Christian facing trials. But for Pamela Scripture is not a tool of self-examination, capable of transforming as well as strengthening; it is a tool of confirmation that aids her as she narrates the story she is certain her life will tell—the tale of "virtue rewarded."

Pamela's reading habits have received little critical attention; James Fortuna, who focuses on the role of Providence in the novel, observes the importance of Pamela's reading but does not delve into her interpretive practice itself. Regarding Pamela's use of the Amnon and Tamar story, Fortuna remarks, "It is noteworthy that whatever comfort Pamela is afforded at this point comes . . . from a reliance upon herself, supplemented by a growing hope for divine assistance, and occasioned by the proper application to her own situation of a biblical story and her parents' early advice" (70). Fortuna goes on

show that Pamela must increasingly trust in her own judgment in order to remain chaste. However, Fortuna does not to explore exactly how Pamela's "application to her own situation of a biblical story" contributes to her reliance upon her own judgment, and thus changes her relationship with her parents, and, ultimately even God. I argue that Pamela exhibits a way of reading that gives her great strength when she tries to obey her parents' former instructions, but it also prevents her from questioning herself and therefore leads to a contradictory relationship with the authorities she most respects—Scripture and her parents.

Pamela's devotional exercise of revising of Psalm 137 shows particularly well her hermeneutic approach. One Sunday morning, during her imprisonment at Mr. B's Lincolnshire estate, Pamela describes sitting down to private devotions. Mrs. Jewkes, the housekeeper-turned-jailer, asks Pamela to sing her a Psalm. Pamela refuses, saying "my spirits were so low I could hardly speak," but once left alone, she is reminded of a Psalm and writes, "when [Mrs. Jewkes] was gone, I remembering the cxxxviith psalm to be a little touching, turned to it, and took the liberty to alter it, somewhat nearer to my case. I hope I did not sin in it" (145). Psalm 137 is a song of lament, sung by exiled Israelites in Babylonian captivity. They say their captors have required a song of them, but they cannot sing because of sadness. Yet they do speak in the Psalm, both remembering Jerusalem and calling down wrath upon Babylon, even to the extent of calling the man blessed who dashes the Babylonian babies against the rocks. This Psalm, describing the utter despair and anger of captivity, the imprisoned Pamela recalls as "a little touching," and she sits down to write her version of it. She alters it so that Babylon becomes Mr. B's house, Zion becomes distant friends, harps and instruments become her heart-strings,

Jerusalem becomes her virginity, and the blessing upon the man who dashes the babies against the rocks is turned into a tentative hope that her enemy, Mrs. Jewkes, will repent (145-146). "Somewhat near to my case" is an understatement. Pamela might better have said, "exactly fitting my case."

Richardson's young heroine seems aware of the difference between her description of the project of altering the Psalm and the actual extent of the alteration, for she writes that she hopes her alteration is not sinful. By worrying that her alteration is sinful, Pamela reveals her respect for the authority of Scripture. But that respect in no way prevents her from using the Psalm to write her own story. There is a long tradition of reading the Psalms devotionally, as Pamela does. Bryan Daley cites Athanasius (293-373) as one of the earliest writers on the devotional use of the Psalms: "Athanasius' argument . . . is that in becoming 'like a mirror to the one singing them,' the Psalms not only lead us to deeper knowledge of ourselves but change us in the process, acting as a providential corrective to the imbalance of our desires and emotions" (83). For Pamela Psalm 137 is indeed a mirror, but it does not change her or lead her to a deeper knowledge of herself; it simply confirms what she already thinks of herself. Instead of being changed by her devotional exercise, she literally changes the text instead. She uses the meaning from the Psalm in order to prove things about herself: her innocence, her loneliness, her suffering, and her longing for reconciliation. Because she uses the Psalm's meaning only to tell her own story, Pamela effectively replaces the Psalmist's experiences with her own.

In order to understand the significance of Pamela's approach to Psalm 137, one must first recognize that Richardson's novel appeared at a time of transition between an

earlier way of reading Scripture and a later interpretive approach. The earlier way has deep roots in Christian tradition and was restated with differing emphases at the Reformation in Calvin's hermeneutic. In *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* Hans Frei describes three elements central to the mode of biblical interpretation operating during and after the Renaissance and Reformation. First, there was an assumption that the biblical story "was to be read literally, [and] it followed automatically that it referred to and described actual historical occurrences" (2). Second, "if the real historical world described by the several biblical stories is a single world of one temporal sequence, there must in principle be one cumulative story to depict it" (2). The interpretive tool for joining various stories of the Bible into one narrative was figural interpretation, which allowed for one story, "without loss of its own literal meaning or specific temporal reference," to be a figure or type of a later story (2). And, third:

> [S]ince the world truly rendered by combining biblical narratives into one was indeed the one and only real world, it must in principle embrace the experience of any present age and reader. Not only was it possible for him, it was also his duty to fit himself into that world in which he was in any case a member, and he too did so in part by figural interpretation and it part of course by his mode of life. (3)

This way of literal and figurative reading was certainly not unique to Calvin's hermeneutic. In fact, repeatedly in *Mimesis* Erich Auerbach discusses figural interpretation as the way of reading and writing which separated Christianity from antiquity.[4] Auerbach describes how two events that are not linked in "the horizontal dimension" of time or causation are nevertheless "vertically linked to Divine Providence" (73-74). Notably, figural interpretation links two events, but *both* of those events maintain their meaning and reality. Figural interpretation was a means of connecting real events in the Bible that were neither causally nor temporally related, but were linked as a

promise is linked to its fulfillment. When an individual "fit himself" into "that world," as Frei says, he fit himself into a world of promise and fulfillment, or, in other words, the narrative of fall, redemption, and resurrection. As Auerbach points out, this way of reading is as old as Christianity. But its practice in England after the Renaissance and Reformation was influenced by John Calvin's specific hermeneutic contributions, which changed the locus of authority.

Richardson, as an early eighteenth-century Anglican Christian, was certainly influenced by Calvin, for as Henning Graf Reventlow points out, English Protestantism, both Anglican and Puritan, "displays a basic Calvinistic approach," especially in regards to Scripture, through the seventeenth century (91). Calvin's hermeneutic reversed the order of authority between the church and Scripture, so that Scripture was given precedence over church authority. Also, it granted the individual, guided by the Holy Spirit, the role of interpreter of Scripture. Wesley Kort explains how Calvin thought the reader's heart is prepared by the Holy Spirit for saving knowledge; then he or she reads and grasps that knowledge, granted by the Holy Spirit (28). Other knowledge of God is then "reconstituted by that saving knowledge" (28-29). Kort calls the prior kind of reading, which leads to saving knowledge, "centripetal," and the subsequent kind of reading "centrifugal" because it enables a reader to understand and construct the outside world according to that saving knowledge. Then, all Scripture was "profitable" by means of figural, or typological, interpretation, which, as we have noted, connected the Old Testament to the gospel narrative in the New Testament.

This new emphasis upon applying Scripture to all aspects of life is a significant contribution to the Protestant hermeneutic, for it led to a new focus upon personal

experience. In order to validate one's application of Scripture to anything extra-biblical, including one's life, a person needed to show that she was, indeed, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for that first, "centripetal," kind of reading. Calvin's hermeneutic did not grant primacy to personal experiences *per se*, but to personal experience of the saving knowledge imparted by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, due to assumptions regarding the chain of authority in interpretation—Scripture in authority over the church and the Holy Spirit guiding the individual to read Scripture—the onus rested on the individual to somehow prove that one's reading of Scripture was indeed guided by the Holy Spirit. To prove, in other words, that one was in fact a recipient of saving knowledge and one's figural applications of Scripture to the church or to society were guided by the Holy Spirit rather than individual whims.

The Roman Catholic objections to the focus upon individual experience had far-reaching consequences for Protestant readers like Samuel Richardson, for they changed the way that figural reading could be employed. Roman Catholic apologist, Jean Gontery (1562-1616), argued that Scripture could easily become a tool of the individual reader to grab personal power (Bredvold *Dryden* 78). Louis Bredvold points out that Roman Catholic writers challenged individual authority by attacking the reliability of the text itself. Father Richard Simon (1638-1712) ushered in a new age of biblical criticism with *A Critical History of the Old Testament* (1683). Regarding the higher criticism which this work incited, Frei argues that these challenges resulted in "a breakup in the cohesion between the *meaning* of the biblical narratives and their *reference to actual events*" (4). The consequence was not exactly the critic's objective—to force Protestants to recognize problems with their hermeneutic—rather, the consequence of the criticism of biblical

texts was the destruction of the literal and figurative hermeneutic that had long informed Christian reading practice, from Augustine to Calvin, albeit with differing emphases.

Pamela's hermeneutic practice reflects this loss of figural interpretation within a Calvinistic hermeneutic. Since it was no longer possible to use figural interpretation to fit one's experiences into the real world depicted in Scripture, the meaning of different Bible stories had to be fit into the new "real" world, as experienced by each reader. So, it did not matter so much "whether the story [was] true history, its *meaning* [was] detachable from the specific story set forth" (Frei 6). Richardson's virtuous heroine's approach to Psalm 137 participates in a hermeneutic which views Scripture as applicable to all aspects of life but separates meaning from story in applying Scripture to the reader's life. This is a real development from earlier literary reflections on this very Psalm. Hannibal Hamlin claims that during the Renaissance and Reformation, "Of the Psalms, none was more widely read, quoted, translated, paraphrased, and alluded to than Psalm 137" (225). Hamlin covers Shakespeare's, Milton's, and Spenser's (to name a few) reflections on this Psalm, and none completely revises the Psalm so as to remove the original setting, speaker, and characters. By interpreting the psalm both literally, that is, taking its literal narrative as *real* though not necessarily historical, and then identifying various figures within that narrative, earlier readers reflected upon not only the nature of things like exile, but also other important (shared) human experiences such as grief, wordlessness, alienation, and the desire for revenge. Regarding this kind of interpretation, Daley notes that Augustine began a long-standing practice of "hearing more than one 'voice' speaking" in the Psalms: "As both prophecy and prayer—God's word to us and ours to God—constantly in use by Christians for both private, meditative

reading and the public liturgy, the Psalms were traditionally seen in the West, from Augustine to Luther and beyond, as peculiarly open to, and even necessitating multilayered interpretation" (85).

Pamela's interpretation, however, is not multilayered. Her interpretation reduces the psalm to one voice only—her own. She remembers the version of this Psalm printed in her Book of Common Prayer (334); in this case, the Psalm has been versified into stanzas of four lines, for purposes of singing both communally and for meditation in private. She turns to it because it describes Israelites in a condition similar to hers. In the versified version Pamela recalls, the most well-known lines of the Psalm read:

> But yet, if I Jerusalem
> Out of my heart let slide;
> Then let my fingers quite forget
> The warbling harp to guide
>
> And let my tongue within my mouth,
> Be ty'd for ever fast
> If I rejoice before I see
> Thy full deliv'rance past. (336)

An earlier reader, in the Renaissance or before, would have identified types or figures in this passage and would have used those types to place her own experiences within those of the psalmist's. Hamlin notes that this passage was commonly interpreted as commenting upon remembering and forgetting. Jerusalem is linked to heaven or the soul's final rest—the source of the soul's music—and Babylon is separation from that home, which might be due to religious isolation or physical distance (240-244). For Pamela, however, none of the figures of the psalm are shared. All become specific to her situation. Her version is:

> But yet, if from my innocence
> I ev'n in thought should slide,

> Then let my fingers quite forget
> The sweet spinet to guide.
>
> And let my tongue, within my mouth,
> Be lock'd for ever fast,
> If I rejoice, before I see
> My full deliv'rance past. (336)

Note the dissimilarity between the first two stanzas and the similarity of the second two. Pamela obliterates Jerusalem and all its imagery and meaning, and replaces it with her innocence, which is quite important to her but not likely to interest those who do not know her. But she retains the hope of deliverance. For her, however, deliverance refers to physical deliverance from her imprisonment and safety from threats to her virginity. Deliverance is only *here* and *now* for Pamela, but for earlier readers, temporary deliverance could refer to here and now, but full deliverance was part of the promise and fulfillment pattern of typology. Most importantly, Pamela's method of reading allows her to identify Mr. B's offer of marriage, which delivers her from imprisonment, as God's deliverance, or rather, God's reward for her perseverance in virtue. Therefore, Pamela's purpose in interpretation is the same as her purpose for writing. First, she is concerned with proving herself virtuous to her parents; then, she must show them, and her new social peers, that her virtue has been rewarded and she is indeed deserving of that reward. Pamela's manner of abstracting the meaning of Scripture to tell her story grants her the necessary authority to tell the account of her virtue preserved and rewarded.

Significantly, Pamela includes her Psalm in her narrative not once but twice. She records it twice because each time it reveals something different about her, and she is, after all, primarily concerned with proving herself virtuous. First, she wants to prove this

to her parents. But after she becomes engaged to Mr. B., she wants to prove to her new social peers that she is worthy of her reward. The first time Pamela records her version of the psalm, she uses the meaning from Psalm 137 to strengthen her view of herself as an innocent sufferer and subsequently reassure her parents of her virtue. The second time she records her version of the Psalm, she does so to prove that others recognize not only her virtue, but also her worthiness of her reward. She writes of the day Lady Jones, Mr. Williams, and the two Misses Darnfords spend at Mr. B.'s house on the Sunday her father is visiting. After dinner, Mr. B brings out Pamela's Psalm and has Mr. Williams read the Common Prayer Book version while he reads Pamela's version. His reasons for doing so are obvious: the rendition illustrates Pamela's literacy, sensitivity, and virtue, and it provides a chance for his guests to admire her and accept her as one of their own rank. In this case, as in her first devotional recording of the Psalm, Pamela engages the text in such a way that Scripture confirms her view of herself rather than transforming her. When Mr. Williams and Mr B read her psalm next to Psalm 137, all attention is focused on Pamela's transformation of the original. The changes prove her "simplicity" to Mr B, her "genius and accomplishment" to Lady Jones, and show one of her particular "excellencies" to all: "though thus oppressed, she prays for no harm upon the oppressor" (334-337). Pamela exhibits a very subtle shift in hermeneutic practice. Scripture retains its authoritative role; she references it with faith and respect; she sees Scripture as applicable to all aspects of her life, and she undoubtedly believes herself guided by it. However, her second inclusion of her psalm conclusively proves that Scripture does not guide her, but verifies her view of herself.

Pamela's stated purpose for writing the Psalm and her second mention of it within her narrative show that she primarily uses Scripture not as a means of self-examination but as a way to prove herself virtuous so that others will recognize her as deserving of her reward, Mr. B. Almost since its publication, readers have objected to Pamela's insistence upon her virtue; her insistence upon virtue turns it into a commodity that can be traded for material rewards. For example, Fielding's Shamela confides in her mother, "I once thought to make a little fortune by my person. Now I think to make a great one by my vartue" (325). Objections to Pamela's virtue stem from the fact that she is writing her own story and must prove herself virtuous. But almost no attention has yet been paid to the way that Pamela reads, particularly Scripture, and how it directly bears upon the way that she writes her story. Pamela's ironic relationship with Scripture sheds light on the true nature of the problems with representing oneself as virtuous and therefore rewarded. Pamela wants to affirm the authority of Scripture, but unconsciously she affirms her own authority. For her actual interpretive practice means that the authority of Scripture only ever confirms her and never instructs or convicts her. Scripture contributes to her story of herself. Thus, her hermeneutic practice contributes to her sometimes objectionable naivety regarding her account of herself. More importantly for this study, her hermeneutic practice contributes to Pamela's unawareness of her de facto independence from her beloved and respected parents.

The Need for Father

Pamela has no conscious desire to use what she finds in Scripture to confirm her own authority. Perhaps this unconsciousness is what first alarmed critics of Protestant

hermeneutics. The Roman Catholic Jean Gontery perceives the danger as a loss of authority:

> For you grant the liberty of everyone in the whole world . . . to supply at his pleasure whatever comes into his mind. By this method, the son will revolt against the father, the wife against the husband, the subject against the Prince, the valet against his master, the flock against the shepherd, all contending that they find their caprices in the bible, by the method of necessary implication. (qtd. in Bredvold *Dryden* 78)

Gontery describes total social upheaval as each individual finds in Scripture grounds for disobeying authorities. But Pamela does not try to use what she finds in Scripture to justify rebellion against any authority. Instead, she is held up as an exemplar of filial obedience by Richardson. Pamela's hermeneutic and its impact upon authority is much more subtle than a critic like Gontery admits. Pamela desires to obey Scripture, but her very interpretive approach disallows submission to the text. Similarly, Pamela desires to obey her parents, but her entire purpose for writing (her only possible way to show her obedience) is shaped by the same "interpretive lens" with which she reads: she knows she is virtuous and she knows God rewards that virtue. Pamela is the sole interpreter of events. There is no genuine other, either a divinely-inspired text or a father, to challenge or shape her narration of self.

Pamela certainly upsets social hierarchies. In her argument linking Pamela, the servant girl, to the Pamela in Sidney's romance *Arcadia*, Gillian Beer voices one way of viewing the young heroine's relationship with authority. Beer writes, "the name [Pamela] sets up disturbances in the hierarchies represented in the older texts: hierarchies of class and of language, of social and material power" (29). Although Beer is right that Richardson may intentionally question certain hierarchies, he does not wish to question the parent-child hierarchy. Pamela upsets the hierarchy to which she is supposed to show

allegiance. She foregoes her only opportunity to obey a direct command (to come home), and spends the next several months writing detailed letters attempting to prove that she is indeed obedient and has followed her father's teachings. When tempted to commit suicide, Pamela recalls her parents and their love for her and so decides to limp off to the shed instead of throwing herself into the water (182). And she repeatedly states that she awaits her parents' approval for any proposal of marriage. When Mr. B begs her to return to him instead of returning home, she wishes for parental advice, but without it, she returns to Mr. B with caution (265).[5] In all these things, her stated desire is to be dutiful, to show deference, but in reality she has little occasion to obey. But because Pamela's primary relationship is with Mr. B, she has plenty of opportunities to assert herself. Mr. B is repeatedly frustrated by her self-assertion for it thwarts his designs throughout their relationship, from his pursuit of her, to their engagement, to their marriage. For instance, early in the narrative, Mr. B comes to Pamela to talk to her about the incident in the summer house. Pamela skillfully avoids answering his question by her use of language, and Mr. B calls her "you little equivocator" for her cannot make her confess to telling others of his behavior, which she has done to ensure protection from him (23-24). Or, when Pamela's own narration of her virtuous resistance finally convinces Mr. B to propose marriage to her, Pamela agrees to become engaged to him, but she will not agree to a quick marriage; first, she says that she will not marry him quickly, for then it would seem as though she did not want to leave him time for reflection (315), and later she continues to oppose his plans for a quick marriage because it is "a quite serious and awful affair" not to be entered into hastily (340). Finally, even though Pamela promises to obey Mr. B once they are married, she opposes him in all

matters of conscience. For example, when they are married, she discovers his six-year-old illegitimate daughter and persuades him to allow the child to live with them as a niece (509). Pamela frames all of these assertions as obedience to her conscience.

Pamela's strength in adhering to her conscience forms what Gillian Beer calls "disturbances in . . . hierarchies" of language, class, and social power (29). And Pamela's conscience is formed by her father's teachings, but once she faces the world alone and unprotected by her father, her consciences is increasingly formed by reading. Fortuna argues that the content of Scripture aids Pamela in forming her beliefs. However, her hermeneutic itself is the source of her strength. As the example of Psalm 137 indicates, Pamela views her story as *the* story; there is no interaction between her and the text that might force her to question her account of herself. So she is always justified in viewing herself as uniformly virtuous and deserving of the rewards Providence grants, which are immediate and clearly identifiable. Like earlier Christian readers, she believes there is an over-arching narrative pattern of promise and fulfillment. But since she lacks figural interpretation by which to connect various stories to that pattern, and her *own* story to that pattern, she applies the pattern of promise and fulfillment directly to her own narrative. Such a move grants her great confidence to assert herself according to her conscience, but also grants her great confidence to interpret her marriage to Mr. B as a divinely-granted reward for her virtue. In Richardson's unfolding of a vision of virtue, virtue does not yield happiness, it guarantees a reward. The consequences for the father-daughter relationship are significant: Pamela does not need her father, except as someone to prove her dutifulness to as part of her narrative of virtue rewarded. A genuine presence (albeit from a distance) is not necessary. He is a placeholder, a figurehead. He

must be there for the sake of upholding filial obedience as a virtue, but he has almost no relationship with his daughter, who knows how to tell her own story.

Admittedly, *Pamela* is not primarily a novel about a daughter and her father. Regarding *Pamela,* Jean Hagstrum writes, "*Pamela* has been read as a moral tract, a hypocritical portrayal of lust, a work of Victorian delicacy, an embodiment of Puritanical fears of sexuality, a revelation of its author's sado-masochism. It has all too seldom but read for what it is, a love story with many resonances" (194). Pamela's story of virtue and its reward is, after all, the story of a young woman who holds onto her socially and religiously valuable virginity and finally inspires her would-be seducer to fall in love with her and marry her. The primary relationship of the novel is the one between Pamela and Mr. B. In this chapter, I have focused upon Pamela's relationship with her father as one of those resonances Hagstrum mentions. For Pamela's fiercely defended virtue not only shapes her relationship with Mr. B, but also her relationship with that other man in her life—her father. As stated above, virtue for Richardson is a web of related characteristics: humility, industry, perseverance, and filial piety (532). Pamela is Richardson's exemplar of all these things, and, as a result, she values and protects her "virtue" as a woman, that is, her virginity before marriage. Her preservation of her virginity, however, is only possible due to her other virtues such as veracity, perseverance, and, most importantly, filial piety. Obedience to and respect for her father is a crucial attribute of Pamela's virtue, for it forms Pamela's reasons for writing an account of "virtue rewarded." Pamela's father is useful for his presences and her relationship with him allows her to prove that she is a virtuous woman—obedient to authority, humble, truthful—and therefore able to preserve her virginity, which in turn

renders her deserving of the rewards of Providence, which, in her case, is a husband, wealth, and prestige.

Recognizing how Pamela's father is useful but powerless helps contextualize Richardson's novel within the waning of paternal authority in the eighteenth century by connecting it with the waning power of Scripture. Ironically, Richardson tries to create a heroine who exemplifies obedience to both of these authorities. But Pamela's reading practice of extracting meaning to confirm herself actually enables independence from external authorities because it verifies the narration of the self. Because her hermeneutic is descended from a tradition which granted utmost authority to Scripture as the revealed word of God, even when the self is elevated above Scripture, one still needs to show obedience to it. Similarly, due to the power of her hermeneutic, Pamela has no need for her father, but she still needs to show her obedience to him. In Richardson's vision of virtue, reward replaces happiness as the end towards which virtue directs an individual. In this system of virtue rewarded, Pamela's father increases in importance while decreasing in actual authority. So it is that the daughter's dutifulness replaces the father's authority as the tie that binds fathers and daughters. This explains Richardson's firm insistence at the end of the novel that Pamela is an exemplar of a dutiful daughter. Thus, the definition of virtue as a web of characteristics including filial piety leads to the kind of father-daughter relationship that Caroline Gonda, Margaret Doody, and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace claim is regnant in the eighteenth century: the father loses real authority and the novel offers a model of a virtuous woman to shore up what little authority remains. Without the portrayal of filial piety as an essential part of virtue in *Pamela*, there is nothing to guarantee a daughter's obedience to her father. However,

Richardson's fictional account of a virtuous woman withstanding the temptation of seduction undermines his insistence upon paternal authority. Ultimately, the father-daughter relationship in this novel does not compel the reader to imitate the "virtuous" daughter; the pedagogic purposes of the novel fall flat. Because Richardson reduces the way that virtue yields happiness to a system of "excellencies" that earn a young woman rewards, the daughter's relationship with the father becomes just another tool in proving her worthy of her rewards. In the next chapter, I turn my attention to a novelist who rejects the Richardsonian vision of virtue and humorously portrays the uselessness of fathers, for unlike Goodman Andrews, Oliver Goldsmith's Vicar is a father obviously lacking authority to either protect or control his daughters. Goldsmith revels in the portrayal a useless father because he does not define virtue as filial piety, or, indeed, any of the other admirable qualities Pamela exemplifies. Yet his novel, lacking a perfect model of virtue, presents a more truly compelling father-daughter relationship than does Richardson's.

CHAPTER FOUR

Not by their freedom of defect": The Ridiculous, Virtuous Father in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*

Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* offers what few other novels of the period do: laugh-out-loud comedy. But the plot itself seems unlikely to harbor such comedy, for Vicar Primrose and his family follow the pattern of the Book of Job, modified to exclude death. In the first few chapters, the Vicar recounts the loss of his fortune when the merchant entrusted with his funds absconds to Amsterdam. When this loss of fortune is discovered, his son George can no longer marry his beloved Arabella Wilmont, and the family must go to live in a more modest home where the Vicar is given a new living. George is sent to make his way on his own, while the other five children, including two "almost grown" daughters, Olivia and Sophia, accompany their parents to their new home. The family is first befriended by an impoverished Mr. Burchell who clearly loves Sophia but is not welcomed as a lover by the family due to his broken financial state. The family is next befriended by Squire Thornhill, their landlord, who seems to fall in love with Olivia. Led by Deborah, the Vicar's wife, the family begins to pursue the Squire as a husband for Olivia. This pursuit leads to further, unforeseen financial setbacks for the already poor Primrose family. At the very center of the novel, Olivia runs away with the Squire. In the second half, the Vicar pursues his lost child to restore her to the family and finds not only Olivia but George, who has failed to make his way in the world. He accepts a loan from Squire Thornhill to buy George a commission in the Navy and then returns home with the fallen Olivia. Once home, he finds his house on

fire but is able to rescue his sleeping family and is badly burned. Within days, the Squire demands the Vicar's blessing on his upcoming marriage to Arabella Wilmot or he threatens to imprison the Vicar for the debt he cannot pay. Vicar Primrose refuses to condone the Squire's marriage to anyone other than Olivia and is thrown into prison where he reforms the prisoners, but is thrown deeper into misery when he hears that Olivia has died, George has been arrested for challenging the Squire to a duel, and Sophia has been kidnapped. In an improbable conclusion, Mr. Burchell is discovered to be the wealthy Sir William Thornhill, uncle of Squire Thornhill. He sets the Vicar free, exposes the Squire's immorality, enables George to marry Arabella, and marries Sophia himself. The Vicar also discovers that Olivia's death was faked in order to get him to approve of the Squire's marriage and thus free himself from prison. The next day, a messenger arrives to inform the Vicar that his fortune has been recovered from the merchant. Like Job, the Vicar is restored to his former good fortune—all his children returned to him, his wealth once again his own—with blessings to spare. Throughout it all, the Vicar is flawed, laughable, and yet, somehow, admirable. Due to the Vicar's character, this novel structured on the Book of Job is a comedy rather than a tragedy. The Vicar's follies create one comic episode after another, and, as one critic says, "ironic situations are triggered almost constantly," but the novel itself is not wholly ironic, for the Vicar is both "an ironized target and a morally admirable mouthpiece" (Probyn 158).

In *Vicar of Wakefield* Oliver Goldsmith envisions virtue quite differently than Richardson does in *Pamela*. Goldsmith's exemplar of virtue, the Vicar, lacks Pamela's remarkable "excellencies." Pamela's undeviating virtuous adherence to parental (and social and divine) authority, unconsciously duplicitous though it may be, contrasts

sharply with the Vicar's not-so-virtuous fulfillment of parental duties towards his daughters. Though the Vicar is far from perfect, he is presented as an exemplar of a good father, for he succeeds in keeping his family intact, bound by love. The Vicar's character and Goldsmith's definition of virtue is best understood in light of a speech Mr. Burchell makes likening books to human character: "As the reputation of books is raised not by their freedom from defect but the greatness of their beauties, so should men be prized not for their exemption from fault, but by the size of the virtues they are possessed of" (72). In *Vicar of Wakefield,* the greatest virtues are those of forgiveness and self-sacrifice, and the Vicar shows himself capable of both. Indeed, the Vicar is often poor in virtue and rich in flaws, but as the story progresses, his virtues emerge and he thereby succeeds in protecting his children and enabling his and their happiness.

In order to understand how Goldsmith envisions virtue through the exemplary but imperfect Vicar, one must first understand how and why Goldsmith creates a character that simultaneously embodies virtues and vices. The novel is so confusing that most critics either identify it as a straightforward sentimental novel or as an obvious satire of the novel of sentiment. In arguing that Goldsmith found the name for his Vicar (Primrose) from a speech Ophelia makes to Laertes,[1] Thomas Maher Gilligan assumes the Vicar is wholly ironic, a character for whom Goldsmith had very little personal regard. Gilligan and many others read the Vicar as merely ridiculous and the novel as ironic. Contrarily, claiming that the novel "traffics in pious sentimentality," Patricia Meyer Spacks notes the difference between it and Fielding's *Tom Jones*: "Fielding's novel has its sentimental moments, but it is not, like Goldsmith's a sentimental novel. It does not make suffering its dominant subject, nor does it characteristically indulge in

elaborate accounts of distress" (*Beginnings* 154).[2] The totally opposing, yet equally common, interpretations of *Vicar* indicate that the dual nature of the Vicar's character creates a basic instability within the text, for "to make one's hero also the object of comedy is a dangerous strategy" (Spacks 157). The reader is never quite sure whether the Vicar is an object of laughter (making the novel a satire of sentimental literature) or is an exemplar of virtue (making the novel an endorsement of the sentimental mode). This "dangerous strategy" is, nonetheless, central to Goldsmith's project.

Goldsmith made no secret of his contempt for the sentimental mode.[3] At the end of the eighteenth-century, novelist and critic Clara Reeve offered a helpful description of the novel of sentiment: "the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the persons in the story, as if they were our own" (qtd. in Ellis 16). Goldsmith, however, strenuously objected to "being affected by the joys and distresses." In the essay "On the Theatre," Goldsmith bemoans the current fashion for sentimental comedy. He observes:

> If we apply to authorities, all the great masters in the dramatic art have but one opinion. Their rule is, that as tragedy displays the calamities of the great, so comedy should excite our laughter by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind . . . yet notwithstanding this weight of authority and the universal practice of former ages, a new species of dramatic composition has been introduced under the name of *sentimental* comedy, in which the virtues of private life are exhibited rather than the vices exposed, and the distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece. (3-4)

Goldsmith finds the new genre of sentimental comedy objectionable because "if [the characters] happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught not only to pardon but

to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts, so that folly, instead of being ridiculed, is commended" (5). He concludes that if true comedy is replaced by the "mulish productions" of sentimental comedy, then "it would be just punishment that . . . we should deprive ourselves of the art of laughing" (6). Accordingly, Goldsmith never wrote a straightforward sentimental play; it would be strange if his one novel would be in the sentimental mode.

Just as is the case with his plays, laughter is certainly evoked by *Vicar of Wakefield*. He evokes laughter by satirizing the sentimental mode in which the distresses or misfortunes of the common man are depicted in such a way as to excite the pity of the reader. Goldsmith objects to the sentimental mode for two major reasons: first, when "distresses rather than the faults of mankind" create interest, then "folly, instead of being ridiculed, is commended" (5); second, the focus on the common man's distresses rather than his foibles results in a loss of laughter. In response to those who claim that the novel is sentimental, one might observe that in *Vicar* the distresses of the Primrose family form the plot, but they are not meant to excite pity. Rather, the focus of the novel is the character of the Vicar, whose foibles and follies are continually evoking laughter.

However, the novel is not simply a satire poking fun at the sentimental mode and its hero by exposing the father of an unfortunate family as ridiculous. Follies and foibles are only comic if they exist within a larger framework of order and purpose—a framework that makes both virtue and folly meaningful. If the Vicar's follies were the sum and substance of the novel, then they would arouse laughter by their absurdity but they would not evoke the laughter of delight. The Vicar's follies are exuberantly comic because they exist within a framework that ultimately returns ridiculousness to sense and

disorder to order. In an introductory essay to the novel, R. H. W. Dillard comments on the "two voices" in the novel: one is the Vicar's and the other's is Goldsmith's, which "speaks through the vicar's, guiding and controlling, shaping the novel from sentiment into feeling, from absurdity into meaning. One is aware, then, at the same time, of the absurdity of the vicar's world and his own quirks and dense foibles, but also of his simple faith in the Christian God and human communion" (xvi). The structure of the novel itself creates the orderly framework which translates absurdity into meaning. As noted above, the novel takes its structure from the Old Testament Book of Job. Dillard argues the "artificial construct" of the plot lends meaning to Goldsmith's "parable" (xvii). Indeed, the implausible plot and contrived happy ending show that "if the 'real world' holds few endings like that of this novel, the human imagination is still capable of constructing them as a proper reflection of spiritual truth, if not of surface fact. The credibility of the ending is not one of plot but of form" (xvii).

Many have criticized the "artificiality" of the novel and the lack of psychological "reality" in its characters. Clive T. Probyn writes, "The problem lies in the obviousness with which it [the thematic and structural symmetry of the Book of Job] determines meanings, however, and its stranglehold on the psychology of character" (159). But this "problem" is central to the novel's aim and actually contributes to the significance of the father-daughter relationship, for it helps Goldsmith unfold a vision of virtue in such a way that brings meaning to that relationship. The artificiality of plot and the lack of realistic psychology run contrary to the typical mode of sensibility. Susan Manning notes that in novels of sentiment, "feeling is in excess of the needs of narrative in representation, and therefore tends to subvert its 'explicatory power'" (88). The novel of

sentiment prioritizes portrayals of feeling so that the plot is less important than the character's episodes of sensibility. Richardson's novels signaled the first of this genre, which was enjoying immense popularity by the time Goldsmith wrote *Vicar.* So it is that Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling,* published in 1771 five years after *Vicar,* is a fragmentary tale, or as the fictional discoverer of the text calls it "a bundle of little episodes, put together without art, and of no importance on the whole, with something of nature, and little else in them" (2). Similarly, in Richardson's *Pamela,* Pamela's lengthy descriptions of her virtuous responses to Mr. B, not the plot, provide the substance of the novel. Nothing could be more contrary to the highly artificial and improbable plot of *Vicar.* Probyn notes the connection between Fielding, whose *Shamela* satirized Richardson's *Pamela,* and Goldsmith. For both authors, "the point is not the occasional incoherence of details but the pattern, not the artifice of the plot but what it signifies . . . the Providential pattern moves behind and through *Vicar*" (160). Furthermore, Probyn argues that Goldsmith shows how "a life of high moral principle is valid only if compatible with the actualities of a fallen world," (160). "High moral principle" or, in other words, virtue, is shown to be "compatible with the actualities of a fallen world" in *Vicar* in two ways: first, the highly artificial plot shifts the reader's focus from sympathies with the main character's distresses to ridicule of that character's follies. And yet, the structure of the novel allows the ridiculous Vicar to be a virtuous father capable of offering his daughter not only forgiveness but also self-sacrificial love.

The artistry of the novel does indeed create rich ground for the satire of the ideal Man of Feeling, but it also creates a response to the sentimental novel and its typical hero (or heroine), which transforms the father-daughter relationship. Goldsmith shows that a

character need not be perfect or have impeccable feeling to be virtuous, and can be simultaneously ridiculous and good. For the greatest good is a self-giving love of others and this the Vicar accomplishes in his relationship with his daughter, Olivia. But not at first. The novel is divided into two halves, each containing sixteen chapters. Three chapters at the beginning and at the end frame the events of the plot. In the first half of the novel, the Vicar's follies are in full-focus, evoking laughter and ridicule. In this half of the novel, he continually asserts and insists upon his authority over his family but such authority is seldom realized. In the second half of the novel, the Vicar's flaws remain but he increasingly becomes an admirable father, not through the exercise of authority, but through offering forgiveness and self-sacrificial love. The Vicar's change is closely linked to the pattern of the plot. Dixon notes that the message of the Book of Job is "the seemingly unequal dealings of providence will be redressed in the life to come; they cannot be explained by reference to the operations of this world, but only by reference to futurity" (86). Unlike sentimental novels of the period that also referenced the Book of Job (Sarah Fielding's *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) and Frances Sheridan's *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph,* (1761) for instance), *Vicar:*

> Moves beyond celebrating patient endurance of calamity . . . Job's "I know that my redeemer liveth" has its counterpart in the Vicar's prison sermon: 'the time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure on our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending.'" (Dixon 86)

Though Spacks might call this "pious sentiment," the Vicar's admirable qualities as a father strengthen as he comes to this realization. The knowledge that happiness and misery cannot be explained in this life and that ultimate happiness is found only in a

future life motivates him to cease seeking wealth and prosperity for his daughters and himself. The Vicar's rejection of happiness as financial well-being or social prestige link him to Aristotelian-influenced Christian ethics which identify virtue and happiness with one another but see happiness as achieved in the next life. The Vicar becomes virtuous when he is willing to sacrifice his own property, health, and comfort for the protection and benefit of his daughter.

The Vicar of the First Half

In the first half of the novel, the Vicar is trying to be a "good" father according to conventional views of fatherhood in the eighteenth century. He tries to assert authority and fulfill the "two primary responsibilities of eighteenth-century parents: situating sons in an occupation and supervising the selection of a marriage partner for each child" (Hilliard 465). Raymond Hilliard argues that the Vicar satirically violates the "widely-accepted eighteenth-century standards of paternal conduct," formulated in conduct books, which "espouse[d] the conservative view that the principle of 'subordination,' regulating relations in what they [saw] as a Providentially ordained familial and social hierarchy, [was] the basis of all order and morality" (468). The Vicar is continually thwarted in his endeavors to be a good father by these standards due to his own flaws. The Vicar's lack of self-knowledge is his chief flaw and the source of the novel's humor. Instances of his blindness abound. When describing his daughters, he remarks, "And then she [Mrs. Primrose] would bid the girls hold up their heads; who, to conceal nothing, were certainly handsome. Mere outside is so very trifling a circumstance with me that I should scarcely have remembered to mention it, had it not been a general topic of conversation in the country" (11). Or, he sums up his family thus: "In short, a family likeness prevailed

through all, and properly speaking they had but one character, that of being all equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive" (12). And more: the Vicar describes his contributions to the "important dispute" of strict monogamy by saying, "I published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have the consolation of thinking they are read only by the happy *Few*" (13). The lack of self-knowledge that makes him ridiculous is twofold: he is totally unaware of his pride in his family and his personal vanity.

Indeed, from the first description of his children, the Vicar betrays the pride he feels in them. This pride is more sinister than one first imagines. The Vicar thus describes his attitude towards his family:

> When I stood in the midst of the little circle, which promised to be the supporters of my declining age, I could not avoid repeating the famous story of Count Abensberg, who, in Henry II's progress through Germany, when other courtiers came with their treasures, brought thirty-two children and presented them to his sovereign as the most valuable offering he had to bestow. In this manner, though I had but six, I considered them as a very valuable present made to my country, and consequently looked upon it as my debtor. (10-11)

The Vicar's children are his treasures, his wealth. Such a way of viewing children was common at the time and was connected to contemporary politics and economics. However, Thomas Preston argues that the Vicar's "counting house" language here is derived not from the contemporary commercialism, but from biblical tradition (232). Preston points out that the language of trade is a familiar metaphor in New Testament parables (233), and argues that the Vicar's references to his children as "treasures" indicate "he has substituted for heavenly treasure not wealth but an attachment to family" (236).[4] But such an argument downplays the fact that, biblical tradition or no, when Goldsmith has his hero use "counting house" language about his children, he is entering

into an important eighteenth-century debate. Eve Tavor Bannet notes that for eighteenth-century "political economists the connections among marriage, population and wealth were simple" (97). She cites F. Douglas's *Reflections on Celibacy and Marriage* (1771), which posited "'without marriages, the population would every year decrease; and agriculture, trade and manufactures could not be carried on'" (qtd. in Bannet 97). Bannet summarizes, "the more hands, the more industry, the more wealth for the nation. And the more children, the more hands" (97). There is something disturbing in viewing children this way.[5] The wealth of the nation becomes, quite literally, children. And if offspring are the wealth of the nation, then the prosperity of the nation demands that those children be brought up in particular, judicious, ways. Hence, the abundance of conduct books instructing fathers in their duties. Bannet later notes that "enlightenment family ideology" held that "the industry and good order of the polity depended on each gentleman's government of his family and dependents" (125). The Vicar's first sentence marks him as highly conscious of this ideology: "I was ever of the opinion that the honest man who married and brought up a large family did more service than he who continued single and only talked of population" (9). The first half of the novel is occupied with the Vicar's repeated (and failed) attempts to govern his "treasures" as was expected of good eighteenth-century fathers. Seeing one's children as treasures in this way leads to all sorts of problems within the family, and the Vicar's moral slide in the first half of the novel is a direct result of his view of his children, which his vanity prevents him from seeing clearly.

Some critics, such as Timothy Dykstal and David Murray, see the Vicar as a typically "oppressive" patriarch as described and praised by the eighteenth-century

conduct books. Such critics miss the fact that the Vicar says one thing about his authority but the events he relates show the readers an entirely different picture. For instance, the Vicar talks as though he rules his wife absolutely. He tells of how he writes her epitaph and puts it above the mantel, "where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end" (13). A second instance that shows the Vicar's view of his own authority occurs when his family is settled into their new, more modest home, and he begins a description of the family's typical day with the words, "The little republic to which I gave laws was regulated in the following manner . . ." (23). Shortly thereafter follows what is perhaps the only instance of the Vicar's commands being obeyed by his wife and daughters. When the women appear on Sunday morning, "drest out in all their former splendour," the Vicar admonishes, "finery is very unbecoming in us who want the means of decency" (25). His wife and daughters change clothes accordingly, and the next day the girls alter their gowns to be plainer (25). Any authority the Vicar may have (and it certainly cannot be as strict as he imagines it) is given up in the chapter that follows this one instance of his authority, for the following chapter introduces Squire Thornhill and, more significantly, the temptation to pursue wealth by means of his daughters' eligibility.

From the first moments of meeting the Primrose family, Squire Thornhill's presence introduces discord. The Vicar is at first displeased with the Squire's friendliness towards his family, for the Squire is their wealthy landlord and they are humble tenants. He says, "As I did not approve of such disproportioned acquaintances, I winked upon my daughters in order to prevent their compliance [with the Squire's

request for a song]; but my hint was counteracted by one from their mother, so that with a cheerful air they gave us a favourite song of Dryden's" (27). This one encounter throws into doubt his previous claims of unquestioned authority over his family. What's more, immediately after the family's first encounter with the Squire, Deborah calls "a council on the conduct of the day" (28). His wife and daughters give their opinions of their new friend—Deborah and Olivia very much in his favor and Sophia unimpressed—and the Vicar attempts to show them the dangers of "disproportioned acquaintances," but his remonstrance is interrupted by a present from the Squire. In the spirit of things to come, the Vicar gives up when the present arrives, reasoning that the Squire's "well-timed present" was more eloquent than anything he could say in response. He comforts himself by saying that he was "satisfied with just having pointed out danger," and wished to leave it to his family's "own discretion to avoid it" (29). If their reception of the present is any indication, the Vicar ought to know that Deborah and Olivia are quite clearly going to do all in their power to make sure they *do not* avoid the dangerous Squire.

The following chapter shows the faults the Vicar falls into after choosing to keep silent about his objections to the Squire. He notices that Mr. Burchell, a poor man who is also wise and kind, is falling in love with Sophia. Without heeding his own remarks regarding the good of keeping to one's own kind, he comments, "I had too good an opinion of Sophia's understanding and was too well convinced of her ambition to be under any uneasiness from a man of broken fortune" (31). The Vicar himself is "a man of broken fortune," and if he desires his daughters to associate with those equal to them, he ought not to hope for Sophia to be ambitious enough to spurn the honest and wise Burchell. His remarks regarding Sophia and Burchell show that the Vicar, conforming to

expectations of an eighteenth-century father, does seek advantageous matches for his daughters. The reader does not have to wait long before this desire is shown in an increasing approbation for the Squire as a suitor.

As he is drawn into seeking advantageous marriages, the Vicar employs underhanded methods of executing his authority over his wife and daughters. His family expects the Squire to come visit them, and everyone is busy with preparations. Olivia and Sophia are "cooking something over the fire" which their father at first thought was food for their dinner, but his youngest son informs him that "they were making a *wash* for the face" (32). The Vicar dislikes washes for he believes that they hurt the complexion rather than help it, but instead of instructing his daughters accordingly, he applies an underhand method to accomplish his will: "I therefore approached my chair by sly degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if it wanted mending, seemingly by accident overturned the whole composition, and it was too late to begin another" (32). The Vicar still believes he has some right of authority over his daughters, but the way he executes that authority belies the fact that he does not have confidence in their willingness to obey direct commands—at least once a handsome and rich potential suitor has entered the picture.

The Squire quite literally enters the Primrose's family picture. In trying to make themselves fine enough to be worthy of the Squire, the Primrose family runs into several financial mistakes, which culminate in an expensive and totally useless family portrait which includes the Squire. The series of events leading up the unfortunate family portrait illuminate the Vicar's role within his family. After the Squire is introduced to them, the Primroses accelerate in their steep descent into both poverty and discord. Their

relationships are now best described with the language of conflict: words like "victory" and "glory" characterize their "debates" about how best to pursue the Squire's acquaintance (35). The Vicar admits that he soon becomes complicit in the quest to marry Olivia to the Squire, justifying his abdication by saying, "I was tired of being always wise . . ." (48). But his capitulation to their purposes does not lead to family peace; instead, war language intensifies and words like "conference," "latent plot," "operations," and "siege" describe the females' desire to appear in finery in church (55). This is accomplished by the "scheme" to sell one of their horses, a colt, in order to get a better horse "to make a pretty appearance at church or upon a visit" (57). This scheme fails totally when Moses, the son entrusted with selling the colt at a fair, is duped into taking a groce of completely worthless green spectacles in payment (60). More family discord follows this mistake; Deborah calls her son a "blockhead" and exclaims "hang the ideot" (60). The Vicar says, "Our family had now made several attempts to be fine; but some unforeseen disaster demolished each as soon as projected. I endeavored to take the advantage of every disappointment, to improve their good sense in proportion as they were frustrated in ambition" (61). But the Vicar's lectures lack any appeal because he too is drawn into the ambitions of his family.

The Vicar, however, knows that he ought to object to the schemes which make the family attractive to the Squire, but he enters into them quietly. He recounts how Deborah fights with Burchell regarding the plan to send the girls to London. The Vicar says, "I stood neuter" (62), and he watches as his wife resorts to insulting Burchell. Even though he reproves his wife for her rudeness to the good Burchell, he is secretly glad she has chased him off, for now he no longer needs to worry that Sophia will marry the man. He

tells her, “Your mother and I have now better prospects for you. The next winter, which you will probably spend in town, will give you opportunities of making a more prudent choice” (64). So much for his desire to admonish his *daughter’s* ambition in marriage. More reversals of fortune await the increasingly ambitious Vicar. Following their scheme to get the girls into town for the next winter, the Primrose family decides to sell their other horse in order to raise some cash. At the fair, a man disguised as a clergyman works upon the Vicar’s vanity about his role in the monogamist debate and deceives the Vicar into giving him his horse (69). Although their scheme to get the girls to town fails, the Primrose family retains hope that the Squire may yet condescend to propose marriage to their daughter.

Finally, the Vicar is so totally complicit with the goal of attaining the wealthy Squire as Olivia’s husband that he enters into two questionable endeavors. Chapter sixteen, the final chapter of the first half, is subtitled “The family use art, which is opposed with still greater” (75). In it, Vicar Primrose describes how his wife and daughters visit their neighbors and discover they recently had their portraits made. He writes, “As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too” (76). The actual strength of his objections is questionable, for the portrait gratifies his vanity as much as the rest of the family’s:

> My wife desired to be represented as Venus, with a stomacher richly set with diamonds and her two little ones as Cupids by her side, while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whitsonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, drest in a green joseph laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could

> spare; and Moses was to be drest out with an hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the 'Squire, that he insisted on being put in as one of the family in the character of Alexander the great, at Olivia's feet. (77)

Unfortunately, only after this masterpiece is finished does the family discover "it was so very large that we had no place in the house to fix it," and, "instead, therefore, of gratifying our vanity, as we had hoped, there it leaned, in a most mortifying manner, against the kitchen wall where the canvas was stretched and painted, much too large to be got through any of the doors, and the jest of all our neighbors" (77). What is worse, "malicious whispers" about Olivia begin to circulate due to the Squire's presence in the picture, and such rumors bring the Vicar and his wife to try one final scheme to bring the Squire to propose marriage. They fix Olivia's wedding date to a local farmer whom they know she does not love.

The Vicar of the Second Half

Chapter seventeen, the first chapter of the second half, contains the results of the Vicar's complicity in his family's attempts to use "art" to capture the Squire in marriage with Olivia: the Squire uses greater art—he induces Olivia to run away with him and then abandons her. In the second half of the novel, the Vicar, though still comically flawed, becomes a virtuous father due to his changed view of his children. No longer does he see his daughters as commodities to be maneuvered into advantageous marriages, but he begins to suffer in order to protect his daughters. Chapter seventeen also marks a noticeable break in the plot of the novel; after this point, the narrative is increasingly interrupted by didactic excursions, which include the Vicar's political speech in defense of the monarchy, a lecture of penal reform, and a sermon. Sven Bäckman states that the "propaganda" included in the second half of the novel is irrelevant to both plot and

structure. He contends that Goldsmith's desire to propagate some of his favorite beliefs led him to include the Vicar's political "harangue" and his sermon on penal reform (66). However, Robert Hopkins points out that since Goldsmith's political views were shaped by debates surrounding the Marriage Act of 1753, the Vicar's politics directly bear upon the events surrounding Olivia's affair with Squire Thornhill ("Matrimony" 173). Since matrimony is a major theme, the Vicar's (and Goldsmith's) political views are necessary to understand how the Vicar comes to see his duty towards his marriageable daughters. Furthermore, the sermon, which has been called the depths of Goldsmith's "pious sentimentality" (Spacks 154), bears directly on the Vicar's changed views of the pursuit of wealth, which again, directly affects the way he views his daughters.

When Vicar Primrose first hears of Olivia's elopement, he is certainly not an object of pity but of comedy. Recall Goldsmith's arguments against sentimental comedy: the distresses of the low are not worthy of tragedy, and if these distresses are made worthy of our pity, then the danger is that "the distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece" ("On the Theatre" 4). More dangerous still, "if the [characters in distress] have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught not only to pardon but to applaud them . . . so that folly instead of being ridiculed is commended" (5). Though the Vicar is increasingly held up as a moral exemplar in the second half of the novel, his follies are still presented as such and as deserving of ridicule. The follies of the Vicar are ridiculed even in the moment of his discovery of Olivia's fate, which is also the moment be begins his transformation into an admirable character. Only moments before hearing news of Olivia, he extols the joys of his life with his family: "I think myself happier now than the greatest monarch on earth. He has no such fireside, nor such

pleasant faces about it . . . While we live [our children] will be our support and pleasure here, and when we die they will transmit our honour untainted to posterity" (85). After his youngest son brings news of Olivia, the Vicar cries, "Now, then, my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more . . . All our earthly happiness is now over! Go my children, go and be miserable and infamous!" (85). Readers cannot help but laugh at the Vicar's sudden swing between considering himself happier than a king and then utterly miserable for the rest of his life. When his son questions his fortitude, the Vicar swings again to another extreme: "Bring me my pistols. I'll pursue the traitor. While he is on earth I'll pursue him yet" (85). His passions finally subside, and he apologizes to his family for cursing Squire Thornhill, and then utters what he has often lectured before: "and I must look out for happiness in other worlds than here" (86), but has not yet succeeded in following. Though this may seem to be "pious sentimentality," it represents a real moral change. It is, in fact, the Vicar's turning point, for here he begins to realize that the happiness he had been pursuing—that of wealth, ease, prosperity—is not a worthwhile goal. The Vicar is now on a different quest. He says, "the wretched creature shall be welcome to this heart and this house, tho' stained with ten thousand vices. I will again hearken to the music of her voice, again I will hang fondly on her bosom, if I find but repentance there" (87). Instead of pistols, the Vicar will take two different instruments: "My son, bring hither my bible and my staff; I will pursue her, wherever she is, and tho' I cannot save her from shame, I may prevent the continuance of iniquity" (87). Here we have the Vicar ridiculous one moment and admirable the next. That these two aspects of his character coexist is crucial to Goldsmith's project. The Vicar is not made virtuous by his conformity to current ideals

of manhood—be they the man of feeling or the prudent and authoritarian father—but by his choice to turn away from the pursuit of worldly success and towards the reconciliation of family relationships.

When removed from the framework of seeking fortune and worldly success, the Vicar begins to act as a good father. The follies that made him ridiculous remain and are important to note. Still as likely to be misled as ever, he believes the Squire when he protests his innocence and accuses Mr. Burchell of seducing Olivia. Such follies, however, do not deter the Vicar from his main goal. He continues to pursue Olivia. He is drawn into another mistake highlighting his faults when he is deceived by a butler masquerading as master of the house. The Vicar engages the butler in a political debate, the silly circumstances of which highlight the dual nature of the Vicar. Thinking he is debating with a well-to-do "parliament-man," the Vicar delivers an impassioned defense of the monarchy. His reasons for defending the monarchy align closely with his new quest as a father and show that he has forsaken the goal of prosperity. So far from being a meaningless intrusion of "propaganda," the Vicar's political speech reveals he has new priorities as a father. He declares that he is all for "glorious liberty," and wishes that all could be "equally free" (93). But, he objects, this could never work because some people are stronger and more cunning than others and these will become "masters of the rest," so it is "entailed upon humanity to submit" (93). In a roundabout defense of the monarchy, he argues that it is best to have one "tyrant" far away rather than a number of tyrants in the same village, and as a result "the generality of mankind" chooses to elect a king. He argues that the great, who were tyrants before the election of the king, will oppose the power of the king as it limits theirs. In other words, his defense of the monarchy is

concerned more with the well-being of the subjects rather than the rights of the king. The relationship between the king and his subjects sheds light on his own view of himself as a father.

The Vicar argues that in eighteenth-century England, the "great ones" have become very great indeed and common people need the protection of a monarch. He notes that in a commercial state the accumulation of wealth is fostered, and he argues that other factors also contribute to the increased wealth of the great ones:

> The very laws of a country may contribute to the accumulation of wealth; as when those natural ties that bind the rich and poor together are broken, and it is ordained that the rich shall only marry among each other; or when the learned are held unqualified to serve their country as counselors merely from a defect of opulence, and wealth is thus made the object of a wise man's ambition. (94)

Here, the Vicar's remarks bear directly upon his own story. He has been the victim of a commercial state in which wealth is easily accumulated and just as easily lost. More importantly, the Vicar's family has been hurt by laws which protect the wealthy from marriages with the poor. In his article, Hopkins convincingly argues that the "natural ties" the Vicar refers to are the ties of marriage since the Marriage Act of 1753 prevented the intermarriage of the rich and the poor. Bannet writes that before the Marriage Act "marriages had been based on the proposition that 'what creates the married state and constitutes that contract' is 'that FAITH by which the Men and Women bind themselves to each other to live as Man and Wife'" (95).[6] Under the new act, banns had to be read at church for four consecutive Sundays, the marriage had to take place before witnesses and qualified clergy, and the marriage had to be recorded in a marriage register (Bannet 94-95). In short, the Act made marriage something essentially legal and controlled by the state rather than a contract made by faith between a man and woman.[7] In practice, it

protected wealthy men from alliances with poor women, for it made promises given to these women meaningless without the legal formalities of a marriage ceremony. This Act has direct importance for the Vicar: if Olivia had been induced to run away by the Squire's promise of marriage before the Act, then it might have been possible to prove that there was a binding marriage between them. But, after the Marriage Act, Olivia could have no legal right to claim any kind of bond with the Squire unless their marriage fulfilled the new legal requirements. (As it turns out, the dishonest priest the Squire uses for the sham marriage tricks the Squire by obtaining a special, legal license, so the Squire and Olivia are really married.) To the Vicar's objection to the laws which dissolve the bonds between rich and poor, the Vicar adds that wisdom does not qualify a person to serve his country but wealth does. He draws from this the conclusion that "wealth is thus made the object of a wise man's ambition." Indeed, in pursuing a wealthy match for his daughter, the Vicar has only been following the prescribed path of wisdom, for wealth creates opportunity and power.

The Vicar's political speech is central to understanding the change in his character and Goldsmith's definition of virtue. He and his family have been drawn into the pursuit of wealth that the whole nation participates in, and they have been significantly hurt in the process. They have been hurt by the power of a wealthy man. Vicar Primrose also argues that for the "possessor of accumulated wealth" the only way to employ "the superfluity of fortune" is in "purchasing power" (94). The wealthy purchase power by making dependents of poor people in need of money. The Vicar argues that there is a "middle order" of people who are not poor enough to be in the power of the wealthy but who need protection in order to avoid being drawn into "the vortex of the great" (95). He

worries that if there is no king to offer this protection, then the laws of the country will be wielded by the wealthy and "the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the law" (95). Already, in the case of Olivia, the Primrose family has been hurt by laws governed by the rich. And the Vicar's political speech makes clear that he no longer thinks that the pursuit of wealth is in any way a laudable goal. The pursuit of wealth, in the end, is nothing other than the pursuit of power. The Vicar rejects both pursuits in his political convictions and in his role as a father.

Instead, he pursues his daughter. In the process, he also finds George, the son he sent into the world. George has joined an acting troupe after a series of missteps in founding a lucrative career. In trying to help George, the Vicar shows, once again, his persistent flaws, for he accepts a loan from Squire Thornhill (whom he still believes innocent) to buy George a commission in the navy. In doing so, the Vicar shows himself still subject to the flaw of naivety, for he has just argued that the wealthy "great ones" are always trying to draw the poor into their "vortex" by means of their money. George thus taken care of, the Vicar continues his journey, and finally finds Olivia, abandoned and penniless. His words upon the occasion show how he has changed despite the persistence of flaws: "Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father's bosom. Tho' the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; tho' thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all" (116). This language at once unites the Vicar with Christ, who offers forgiveness and welcome to those who are lost. But Olivia, who has always had an eye to the dictates of worldly advancement, says to her father, "Sure you have too much wisdom to take the miseries of my guilt upon yourself" (117). Indeed, she is right, for the family would be

financially and socially better off if they were never to see her again. But her father, fortunately, does not have that kind of wisdom; he returns home with her and issues a new kind of command to the rest of his family. But even in this command, his comic folly remains in view for he introduces it by saying, "assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner which was ever followed with instant submission" (123). The command itself, however, shows the Vicar's resolve to extend forgiveness and bind his family together by love rather than power:

> [Olivia's] return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us; let us not therefore increase them by dissention among each other. If we live harmoniously together, we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us here to shut out the censuring world . . . the kindness of heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner, than many persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude. And this is right; for that single effort by which we stop short in the down-hill path to perdition is itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hundred acts of justice. (123)

The Vicar now exerts his authority not to restrain his family from any perceived sins but to forgive and to love one another. In so doing, he also makes a crucial observation about virtue—the virtue of the sinner who repents is of more magnitude than those who pursue virtue with "undeviating rectitude."

Undeviating virtue of the kind we see in *Pamela* is not the highest good in this Goldsmith's morality. Hence, the "ruined" Olivia is welcomed back into her family, who sees her still as virtuous because of her return. Other "fallen" individuals receive similar treatment. The Vicar continues to make clear his love for the sinner after he is thrown into prison by the Squire when he refuses to consent to the Squire's marriage to Arabella Wilmont. The Squire uses his power as landlord to ask repayment for debts the Primrose family cannot pay—both for George's commission and their rent. Imprisoned under such

circumstances, the Vicar turns his attention to his fellow prisoners whom he finds shockingly profane. Instead of huddling in his own cell away from the other prisoners, however, he resolves to attempt to “reclaim them” (138). His family and friends laugh at this endeavor, but he observes “it had ever been my opinion that no man was past the hour of amendment” (140). In response to the claim that his attempts “disgrace” his calling, he cries, “Excuse me . . . these people, however fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title to my affections” (142). He succeeds in his attempts and institutes a system of rewards and punishments in the prison, thus bringing order to lawlessness. His vanity returns a bit when he comments, ‘I had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience” (143). But Vicar’s vanity notwithstanding, the prison is a better place for his efforts, which are motivated by a desire to see the bonds of love replace those of law. His work in the prison is in line with his new desire to use authority in order to promote reconciliation rather than exert power:

> It were to be wished then that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting away the wretches as useless before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into vengeance, it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector but not the tyrant of the people. We should then find that creatures whose souls are held as dross only wanted the hand of a refiner . . . that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are too . . . and that a very little blood will serve to cement our security. (146)

Law should protect, the government should be concerned with the souls of its people. These are the Vicar’s views of authority.

And his own actions within his family show that though he has little authority, he is willing to undergo great personal suffering in order to do what is right and suffer in

order to protect his own small society. When Olivia asks him to submit to the Squire, he tells her, “Never . . . I never shall be brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute, for tho’ the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity” (147). Here, the Vicar makes clear that he still thinks of marriage in pre-Marriage Act terms. For him, marriage is a bond of faith between a man and woman, a “sacred connexion” (118), and not a legal contract. So the Squire’s seduction of Olivia is, in fact, a marriage even though their marriage certificate is a fake. He later tells a friend, “While my daughter lives, no other marriage of [the Squire’s] shall ever be legal in my eye” and questions “should I not now be the most cruel of all fathers, to sign an Instrument which must send my child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison myself” (147). Although his entire family, Olivia included, beg him to relent, he chooses to suffer imprisonment. The Vicar’s refusal to give in to the Squire is significant, for, as John Fischer notes, Goldsmith portrays the Squire as a Miltonic Satan-figure (16-17). The Vicar identifies him as such when he says, “Avoid my sight, thou reptile,” but the Squire also conforms to a Miltonic notion of Satan; he receives all he has from the benevolence of his uncle, but he uses women—seduces them and then abandons them—only to enjoy his own power (17). The Vicar thus suffers for his opposition to a Satan-figure who demands his complicity in his quest for power. This Christ-like suffering replaces the eighteenth-century expectation that fathers use authority to “protect” their children on the path to advantageous marriages.

Goldsmith uses the Vicar to show that virtue is related to both suffering and happiness. When Olivia’s death is related to him (he does not know it is staged), Sophia is reported kidnapped, and George is arrested for challenging the Squire to a duel, then

the Vicar begins to curse his enemy. He is stopped by George who asks him to live up to the words he often taught. The Vicar finds new resolve, and issues the words that form his final response to his sufferings, both deserved and undeserved: "From this moment, I break from my heart all the ties that held it down to earth and will prepare to fit us both for eternity" (155). The next chapter is a self-contained sermon. Goldsmith makes no attempt to fit it into the narrative. It simply is. Here, the voice of Goldsmith which has stood behind the Vicar poking fun at his follies becomes one with the voice of the ridiculous narrator. His sermon is directed to those who suffer, and he offers a response unlikely to garner favor with those who think justice and equity are achievable earthly goals. He says that "to religion then we must hold in every circumstance of life for our truest comfort" and that "the author of our religion every where professes himself the wretch's friend, and unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon the forlorn" (157). The comfort, however, is not of happiness realized here, but of equal dealings in heaven. He concludes:

> [Y]et the time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure of our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending. (159)

Vicar Primrose's earlier lectures on the dangers of various forms of worldly ambitions mean little without his experience of complete loss, which brings him to the full realization that earthly happiness may be denied, even to the good, and all that can be depended upon is the joy of heaven. For the Vicar, there simply is no "virtue rewarded," to be looked forward to, except after death. While on earth, the good man's reward may be wholly denied. The Vicar's moral change in the second half of the novel is not going

to earn him a reward. His decision to forego worldly success and instead forgive his fallen daughter and then sacrifice himself for her is not made with the expectation that such actions will identify him as virtuous secure a reward. He does so simply for the good of his daughter. The Vicar's sermon on Providence is an essential completion to his transformation as a father; he does not act as a virtuous father in order to earn a reward either for himself or his daughter.

The Vicar's sermon is an indispensable part of Goldsmith's vision of virtue, for it shows that virtue is not the sort of thing that earns one earthly rewards like wealth or prestige. Rather, virtue is self-giving love, and often leads to suffering in this life; it can only be rewarded in heaven when justice is finally achievable. The critics who attend to the connection between Job and the Vicar's sermon do not also account for the role of virtue in the novel and thus misunderstand Goldsmith's use of the pattern of Job. Martin Battestin claims that the Vicar learns a lesson which reflects the typical interpretation of the Book of Job in the eighteenth century: that is, Job learns prudence, or the knowledge that God's justice is achieved despite the appearance to the contrary in this world. But the Vicar does not learn "prudence"; in fact, the Vicar's actions at the end of the novel are viewed by his friends and family as imprudent, for he rejects the possibility of freeing himself. On the other hand, James H. Lehmann argues that Goldsmith would have read the Book of Job under the influence of Bishop Lowth, an eighteenth-century divine well-known for his interpretations of the Old Testament, who appealed to the sublime as a secular alternative to spiritual readings. He claims that the message of the Vicar's sermon is an essentially secular interpretation of Job. Lehmann argues that prudence is a slippery term in the novel and a virtue not clearly worth achieving; instead, the Vicar's

sermon shows that he attains the sublime when he transcends the goals of social advancement and is motivated instead by a natural love for his fellow man and for his family (106). Lehmann quotes from Thomas Weiskel's *Romantic Sublime* to remind readers that "in the history of literary consciousness the sublime revives as God withdraws from an immediate participation in the experience of men" (97). But the Vicar's sermon, situated as it is, does not illustrate the removal of God from the affairs of men. Rather, the Vicar argues for a *different* relationship between God and humanity than was regnant in eighteenth-century discussions of virtue. The Vicar simply makes the admission that much as humans might wish it otherwise, virtue is not rewarded by Providence with earthly happiness or prosperity.

But once this final admission is achieved, then all is resolved quickly in a comic and totally unrealistic ending. Since the entire novel is artificially contrived and psychologically unbelievable, this ought not to surprise readers. Instead, the comic ending is what we should expect from the author who railed against the temptations to transform comedy into tragedy. Sir William re-enters the novel and quickly sets all to rights once the villainy of his nephew is revealed. But the Vicar remembers his sermon. He calls all of this "turn[s] of fortune" and not only thanks Sir William but also God, "the giver of joy as well as sorrow" (180-181). He does not assume that the return of blessings is a reward for his perseverance in sacrificing himself to protect Olivia. He is grateful and that is all. At the end of the narrative, the Vicar remarks, "I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for, all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity" (183). The Vicar, silly as he has been and is, finally acts

as a virtuous father and suffers. When he and his family are rescued by Sir William, he does not assign the cause of his blessings to God's reward for his virtue. Instead, the blessings simply are, and he is grateful. The separation of his paternal virtue and God's reward is significant. Despite the Vicar's many ridiculous flaws, in one way he is entirely admirable: there are not and never will be hidden motives of self-advancement in his forgiveness of Olivia or his choice to sacrifice himself for her good. Furthermore, he locates true happiness in the next life and does not look for ways to make himself "happier" now.

Even though the central plot complication of the novel is Olivia's seduction, in *Vicar of Wakefield* Goldsmith takes virtue out of the context of an isolated woman confronted with seduction by focusing on the father rather than the daughter. In Goldsmith's novel virtue is not realized in a private struggle between passion and reason, as it is in *Love in Excess*, and neither is it a web of characteristics that can be clearly demonstrated and have clearly identifiable rewards, as is the case in *Pamela*. Neither is the virtuous man he who conforms to cultural expectations of the ideal of a father or to the ideal of the man of feeling. Rather, virtue in *Vicar of Wakefield* is a willingness to give of oneself, even if that means suffering. Significantly, Goldsmith chooses to embody this virtue in a hopelessly flawed father. By doing so, he rejects the eighteenth-century valorization of human benevolence. Goldsmith paints a picture of human nature as flawed, yet capable of being transformed by virtue. The realization that true happiness is to be looked for in the next life is central to his definition of virtue, for that realization enables flawed humans to love selflessly rather than selfishly pursue earthly happiness. This vision of virtue and its relation to happiness has significant repercussions for the

father-daughter relationship. Goldsmith shows that if the country is to avoid the commoditization of children and the elevation of wealth and power to the ultimate goal for its citizens, then virtue must be connected to self-sacrificial love. Perhaps more significantly for this study, Goldsmith's definition of virtue removes the onus of perfect obedience from daughters and unchallenged authority from fathers, for forgiveness is a necessary part of his definition of virtue, and perfection is not needed for loving relationships to succeed. So it is that although virtue does not guarantee earthly happiness as a reward, it can lead to happiness, both in the family and in the state.

CHAPTER FIVE

Inchbald's *Simple Story* of Failed Relationships

Thus far, this study has covered three novels, each representative of a sub-genre of the eighteenth-century novel: Haywood's amatory fiction, Richardson's psychologically realistic sentimental novel, and Goldsmith's satiric novel of sentiment. Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) is a novel of manners, but like the previous three novels, it too participates in the exemplary tradition by presenting a particular character as virtuous and thus providing a vision and example of virtue. The varying visions of virtue have led to differing portrayals of the father-daughter relationship, and that relationship comes under even closer scrutiny in the evolving novel of manners. This is partly due to the way morality is portrayed in these novels as inescapably social. Patricia Meyer Spacks notes that in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, the novel of manners developed; in these novels, "social behavior is rendered with sharp particularity" (*Beginnings* 160). And manners were a crucial part of that behavior. For Inchbald and others such as Frances Burney, manners are both social and moral. In fact, manners are primarily moral, "since even the most trivial rules justify themselves in terms of the individual's effect on others, concern for manners shades readily into moral obligation. Morality, after all, involves responsibility to and for one's fellow man and woman" (Spacks *Beginnings* 161). Indeed, Inchbald focuses explicitly on man-woman relationships, of which the father-daughter relationship is an important part, to show that these relationships are continually threatened by the alienating tendencies of excessive

passion. In *A Simple Story* manners arise out of one's virtue, which is the ability to moderate excessive passion; an outworking of virtue, manners facilitate loving relationships between men and women, but these loving relationships rarely materialize in the novel.

Inchbald's *A Simple Story* is simple in only one way: men and women simply will not act in ways conducive to the happiness of those they love, nor in ways conducive to their own happiness. The plot is certainly not simple. The novel is divided into four volumes; the first two volumes narrate the relationship between Miss Milner and Dorriforth, who eventually marry. The second two volumes narrate the relationship between their daughter, Matilda, and her estranged father. In volume one, Mr. Milner dies, leaving Dorriforth, a thirty-year-old Catholic priest, as guardian of the young and beautiful Miss Milner. Mr. Milner hopes that Dorriforth will gently correct the flaws in Miss Milner's Protestant boarding-school upbringing. Before long, Miss Milner discovers that she has fallen in love with her guardian. Volume two contains an account of how Miss Milner and Dorriforth become engaged. Dorriforth is unexpectedly transformed into Lord Elmwood by the death of a relative, absolved of his priestly vows, and enjoined to marry and produce heirs. Miss Milner succeeds in capturing his love, but their engagement period is marred by a nearly catastrophic power struggle. The first half of the novel ends with Miss Milner's abrupt marriage to Lord Elmwood. Volume three begins after an interval of seventeen years. During that time, readers are told, the couple enjoyed a happy marriage before Lady Elmwood committed adultery and banished herself. Lord Elmwood has sent their only daughter, Matilda, to share her mother's exile, and he has strictly forbade anyone to remind him of their existence. The volume begins

with a narration of Lady Elmwood's death and her final request that Lord Elmwood protect their daughter. Lord Elmwood allows Matilda to stay at his house as long as she is neither seen nor heard. Matilda is grateful for this arrangement and heartbroken when she accidentally sees her father and is banished again. In volume four, Rushbrook, Elmwood's heir, falls in love with Matilda, who pines away for her father's love. She attracts the attention of Lord Margrave who, motivated by her father's apathy, abducts her. Such violence against his daughter finally rouses Lord Elmwood, and he rushes to her defense. Inchbald ends the novel indeterminately when Lord Elmwood gives Matilda the choice of marrying Rushbrook.

The two pairs of father-daughter relationships create a rich comparison between the two halves of the novel. In *The Domestic Revolution*, Eve Tavor Bannet identifies such contrasting relationships as typical of late eighteenth-century women's writing. She identifies Inchbald with a group of writers she calls Egalitarian proto-feminists, who were concerned with equalizing men and women. Bannet writes:

> The Egalitarian novel exploited the possibilities of exemplar narratives to rewrite domestic governance . . . by using the exemplary narrative's requirement that virtue be rewarded and vice punished to rewrite the relations between women and men. Together with the establishment of a general plan of parallel but contrasting man-woman relationships, this moralizing convention provided Egalitarian novelists with a convenient way of marking what they found vicious in relations between men and women and what they considered conducive to happiness. (79-80)

Bannet goes on to identify the power struggle between Miss Milner and Lord Elmwood as the vicious aspect of man-woman relationships in this novel. She concludes her brief remarks by saying, "Matilda, their daughter, will do better, despite having the tyrannical Dorriforth for a natural father, for she desires no ascendancy" (80). Bannet's analysis of the use of parallel but contrasting relationships is useful, but she does not explore what

exactly virtue is in the novel, so she simplifies how Inchbald uses the exemplary narrative. The analysis of Matilda and Elmwood's relationship is short and simplistic due to the failure to understand the complexities of Inchbald's novelistic portrayal of virtue.

In *A Simple Story,* Inchbald identifies virtuous behavior as the moderation between extremes. She was a Roman Catholic and, as such, was perhaps more influenced by Aristotelian ethics than her Protestant contemporaries. The concept of the mean between extremes is important for Aristotle but, as Hauerwas and Pinches point out, he did not use it to define virtue: "the mean is no specific formula for delineating the virtues," but "the doctrine of the mean serves to introduce us to the important ideas that virtues are not extremes, that there are extremes on both sides of a virtue which we must avoid" (21). Inchbald uses the contrasting sets of man-woman relationships to highlight a "neither this nor that" approach to virtue. Passion is opposed to virtue, for passion involves excess whereas virtue is the ability to moderate passion and avoid extremes. However, in the second half of the novel, virtue-as-moderation is portrayed alongside of a reduction of virtue to filial piety. The two definitions of virtue are incompatible, and the contrasting relationships are therefore not exactly relevant to one another. In the first relationship, Dorriforth is a moderate man whose virtue attracts the passionate Miss Milner although he is both a priest and her guardian. Once they become lovers, her immoderation threatens to destroy his virtue, and Inchbald implies that these threats are only temporarily laid to rest upon their marriage. Inchbald ends their temporary happiness with Lady Elmwood's adultery; this capitulation to passion destroys her husband's moderation. His loss of moderation shows that virtue requires a continual effort and can be gained and lost as a person becomes more or less moderate. In the

second half, Matilda, the virtuous daughter, tries to restore her relationship with her father and succeeds despite his perverse immoderation. Though Matilda is portrayed as virtuous due to her moderation of the passions, her virtue is also identified with something more concrete and specific than moderation: filial piety. The coherence of Inchbald's critique of the mechanism of virtue rewarded is thus thrown into confusion. As long as virtue is moderation, Inchbald shows that an absence of virtue introduces misery in relationships; as people enjoy passion they suffer equally from its excesses. Virtue itself does not guarantee happiness, but it makes people capable of being happy, for it guards against the capricious passions. But when virtue is reduced to filial piety, Inchbald reverts to a moral system in which virtue is simple and is simply rewarded. The implications for the father-daughter relationship are immense. Matilda perfectly loves and obeys her father, and she is rewarded when he finally acknowledges her as his daughter. The father-daughter relationship is based upon a safe system of reward rather than a precarious, though genuine love for one another. Inchbald thus loses the power of her portrayal of virtue-as-moderation and the ways that man-woman relationships need that moderation yet continually challenge it.

Virtue, Sensibility, and Sensuality

In the first half of the novel, we find a convincing portrayal of the miseries awaiting the immoderate in the Dorriforth/Miss Milner relationship and then in the Elmwood/Miss Milner relationship. The novel implies that a balanced father-daughter relationship precedes and makes possible a balanced relationship between lovers; therefore, Inchbald stresses the father's role in education, which forms individuals capable of moderation who are then prepared to love rightly. As does Richardson,

Inchbald concludes the novel with a short address to the reader. And she, too, views her novel as a pedagogical tool to teach something about the relationship between fathers and daughters. She reminds the reader that he has read about "the pernicious effects of an improper education in the destiny which attended the unthinking Miss Milner" and "on the opposite side," he has read about Matilda. She questions, "what may not be hoped from that school of prudence—through adversity—in which Matilda was bred?" (294). Inchbald concludes that it would have been better for Mr. Milner to give his fortune to a distant relative "so had he bestowed upon his daughter A PROPER EDUCATION" (294). The father condemned at the end of the novel is not Lord Elmwood, who banishes his own daughter and gives her inheritance to another, but is Mr. Milner, who bestows wealth and luxury upon his daughter but neglects to educate her properly. Yet it is common for Dorriforth to be labeled the villain. George Haggerty, for instance, describes this as the story "following the frustration, disappointment, and even the malevolence of a passionate and self-important man and his effects on two or three relatively helpless victims" (656). Such a reading ignores the truly malevolent force in this novel: each individual's capacity to hurt those whom he or she loves. And Miss Milner is the foremost character to display such a capacity. Only a "proper education" can teach people to avoid the pitfalls Miss Milner falls into. Inchbald therefore introduces education in the first pages of the novel, preparing the reader for the underlying problem depicted in Miss Milner's love for Dorriforth.

The dying Mr. Milner is the unlikely mouthpiece for the cause of female education. He has only one daughter and, though Catholic himself, has allowed her to be brought up in a Protestant boarding-school, to honor her Protestant mother's wishes.

While in health, Mr. Milner enjoyed watching his daughter open balls, converse wittily, and enjoy admiration. But as he lies on his deathbed, Mr. Milner realizes that his daughter's education has produced a woman with unquestionable taste and elegance who possesses "merely such sentiments of religion, as young ladies of fashion mostly imbibe" (4). Mr. Milner says, "'Something more essential must be considered—something to prepare her for an hour like this I now experience" (5). As does *Vicar,* this novel concerns itself with a character's preparation for a future life. Mr. Milner laments the fact that his daughter's education has only prepared her for the "sunshine of fortune" she now enjoys, for he knows that "in the cold nipping frost of disappointment, sickness, or connubial strife" she will not fare well (4). In short, Mr. Milner realizes, too late, that his daughter is properly educated only when she is prepared for hardship, adversity, and eventually death.

Mr. Milner selects Dorriforth as the man most likely to re-educate his daughter. Mr. Milner says, "'Dorriforth is the only person I know, who, uniting every moral virtue to those of religion, and native honour to pious faith; will protect without controlling, instruct without tyrannizing, comfort without flattering, and perhaps in time make good by choice rather than by constraint, the dear object of his dying friend's sole care" (5). Mr. Milner entrusts his daughter to Dorriforth because he believes that Dorriforth can be what no one else can: a guardian capable of achieving moderation between extremes. Mr. Milner hopes Dorriforth will protect Miss Milner as he balances between controlling and capitulating, will instruct as he balances between tyrannizing and abdicating authority, and will comfort as he balances between flattering and ignoring the young

woman. The goal of this balanced approach is the production of a woman who chooses to be virtuous rather than one who is forced to act virtuously by external control.

Inchbald shows virtue to be a dynamic state, for one must continually negotiate between extremes. Lest the reader confuse virtue with moral perfection, Inchbald is careful to show that Dorriforth is not perfect. She writes, "there was in his nature shades of evil—there was an obstinacy; such as he himself, and his friends termed firmness of mind; but had not religion and some opposite virtues weighed heavy in the balance, it would frequently have degenerated into implacable stubbornness" (29). This description of a virtue that could degenerate into stubbornness if not balanced by "opposite virtues," serves two purposes. First, it defines a virtuous person not as one who is perfect but as one who finds moderation between extremes. Second, it hints at the possibility of Dorriforth's later degeneration into an obstinate tyrant. He is not virtuous due to some innate goodness; his nature contains "shades of evil" that are quite real. This description of his character introduces a brief chapter about young Harry Rushbrook, Dorriforth's orphaned nephew, whom he supports financially but will never see because the boy's mother, Dorriforth's sister, married against his consent. Miss Milner visits the young boy and is overcome with pity for him when he begs to return home with her. Her reaction shows that her flaws oppose her guardians: "unused to resist temptations, whether to reprehensible, or to laudable actions, she yielded to [the child's] supplications" and takes him to his uncle's house (29). Dorriforth is at first affectionate with the child, but leaves abruptly when he discovers his identity. In contrast, Miss Milner comforts young Harry and assures him that she will always be his friend. This chapter is not integrated with the rest of the narrative, but it is crucial to the exploration of the role moderation plays in

virtue. Miss Milner's lack of restraint in taking the child home with her, when she knows of her guardian's resolve towards him, is not good. But her pity for an orphan is good. On the other hand, Dorriforth's firmness of mind in dealing with the child is good, but his lack of affection is not. In this case, both of them are immoderate and lack virtue. The outcome is lamentable—an orphaned boy is left without his uncle's love, and Miss Milner's impulsive kindness only highlights this sad fact.

Readers understand what is truly lamentable about the situation with Harry Rushbrook when they grasp that it arises from a lack of virtue or an absence of moderation. If readers label one or the other character as the sole culprit, they might miss the fact that all involved are hurt by each person's immoderation. The incident of Harry Rushbrook's visit is a miniature of the greater tragedy of Dorriforth and Miss Milner's relationship and it foreshadows Matilda's sad situation. In describing other aspects of the love between Dorriforth and Miss Milner, Inchbald uses the differences in their characters to show how a lack of virtue can hurt people. As in the case of Harry Rushbrook, a lack of moderation within one or the other individual leads to unhappiness and alienation.

Before introducing Miss Milner, Inchbald devotes a chapter to describing Dorriforth, the man Mr. Milner supposes capable of educating his daughter. Inchbald's introduction of Dorriforth indicates that he is to be the hero of the story—attractive, manly, and kind. Not only does he possess all the virtues Mr. Milner identifies, but he is also "tall and elegant," with dark "clerical curls," dark bright eyes, and white teeth. With the exception of his figure, hair, eyes, and smile, he "had not one feature to excite admiration—he possessed notwithstanding such a gleam of sensibility diffused each

[feature], that many people mistook his face for handsome, and all were more or less attracted by it" (7). His charm is in his countenance, upon which "you beheld the feelings of his heart—saw all its inmost workings . . . and as his mind was enriched with every virtue that could make it valuable, so was his honest face adorned with every emblem of those virtues" (7-8). In other words, Dorriforth is already attractive, but he is made almost irresistibly so by his sensibility that manifests his virtue in his appearance.

Dorriforth's physical appearance introduces sensibility in proximity to virtue and thereby begins to hint at a threat to the moderation within Dorriforth and Miss Milner and also to the moderation of the love they come to share. Dorriforth is virtuous; since he is also sensible, his virtues are displayed on all his features for everyone to see. And so he is attractive. It is not his sensibility that makes him attractive but the virtuousness that his sensible features reveal. Commenting on Inchbald's description of Dorriforth's appearance, Candace Ward argues that the description "not only prepares the reader for Miss Milner's reaction, but in a sense justifies it. Miss Milner responds unrestrainedly to the impulses of her own sensibility and expresses her admiration of Dorriforth's beauty" (4). Ward notes that physical beauty is linked with what she calls "spiritual beauty," and "such a mesh grounds the text in the physical and eroticizes it; simultaneously it provides a linguistic cover under which female sexuality can be discussed" (4). There is also a link between female sexuality and virtue: "Whereas Clarissa Harlowe's sensibility was read in 1748 as rendering her incapable of 'running into . . . Indiscretions or Excess of Sensual Pleasures,' female sensibility now came to be identified with dangerous sensuality" (1). As the eighteenth-century wore on, sensibility was shown to mislead people, oftentimes into sexual passions. For instance, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*

makes clear the connection between the sentimental hero's sensibility and his sexual encounters with the women he feels a sympathetic connection to. Inchbald, too, explores the intersection of sensibility, virtue, and sensuality, but she is part of the later eighteenth-century movement that examined that intersection with a critical eye. And Inchbald's critique unveils the almost unavoidable threat to virtue. In this way, she harkens back to Haywood's amatory fiction which takes quite seriously the destructive power of passion. Inchbald describes Dorriforth as a sensible man whose face reveals his virtue, but this is a dangerous thing, for, as Ward states, "male sensibility does not so much preclude sexual desire as change its agency, as demonstrated by Miss Milner's sexual response to her guardian" (2). Ward, like others, assumes that this sexual response is natural and good, and that the reprehensible part of the novel is active Miss Milner's inability to escape the "gendered social order" which prescribes masculine authority and demands her passivity. The novel itself does not support this reading, however. As much as it surprises modern readers, Miss Milner is not the exemplar, but Dorriforth is—at least in the first half of the novel. The unfortunate destiny of Miss Milner shows that there is something imbalanced and immoderate about her character which leads to a confusion and upset of both sensibility and virtue, first in herself and subsequently in the man she loves.

Miss Milner is passionate. Inchbald does not need the cover of sensibility to discuss female sexuality; she does so quite openly in her discussions of Miss Milner's passions. This echoes Haywood's frank approach to the passion of women. However, Miss Milner's passions are not primarily sexual, for they revolve around her desire for power. Dorriforth is first stirred to perform his role as guardian by Miss Milner's

relationship with Lord Frederick Lawnly, who is described as “sprightly, elegant, extremely handsome, and possessed of every accomplishment to captivate a heart less susceptible of love than Miss Milner’s was supposed to be” (16). Dorriforth is pained by this young man’s continual presence because he knows that Frederick is “immersed in all the vices of the town” and amoral. On the other hand, he is pleased by Frederick’s attentions towards Miss Milner because he would be happy to see “his charge in the protection of another, rather than of himself” (17). Dorriforth is gladdened by the thought of handing off Miss Milner and her obvious sexual powers to another man. Miss Milner uses and enjoys her power over men; she watches both Dorriforth and Frederick, knowing that they are both uneasy because one man worries over his ability to protect her and the other is devoted to her admiration, but she does not care. Inchbald writes, “there was but one passion which at present held a place in her heart, and that was vanity; vanity defined into all the species of pride, vain-glory, self-approbation—an inordinate desire of admiration, and an immoderate enjoyment of the art of pleasing, for her own happiness” (17). “Inordinate” and “immoderate” describe Miss Milner’s highest passion: vanity. And her vanity is most satisfied with the devotion of men. Miss Milner uses the power of her sexuality to satisfy her greatest passion. Miss Milner’s sensuality itself is not the threat, but the use she makes of that sensuality is dangerous, and her passion for admiration motivates her in this dangerous game.

In keeping with her rejection of uncomplicated moral characters, Inchbald adds a caveat to her description of Miss Milner: “Still she had a heart inclined, and oftentimes affected by tendencies less unworthy; but those approaches to what was estimable, were generally arrested in their first impulse by some darling folly” (17). In other words, Miss

Milner is not all bad, but her good acts are impulses. Sometimes her nature leads her to do good things, but more often it leads her to act impulsively and in ways that will garner admiration. The first two descriptions of her character demonstrate this. Two ladies visit Dorriforth's home before Miss Milner first arrives, and one warns that Miss Milner is a "young, idle, indiscreet, giddy girl, with half a dozen lovers in her suite; some coxcombs, some men of gallantry, and some married" (8). The other woman, Mrs. Hillgrave, calls her the best benefactress and describes how Miss Milner sold her own jewels in order to pay a debt for her and her husband (10). Both of these women accurately describe Miss Milner. Sometimes she is guided by her sensibility to act rightly, as when she helps Mrs. Hillgrave or pities young Harry Rusbrook. Most often, however, she is a slave to her passion for admiration.

It is easy for modern readers to confuse passions with sensibility. Indeed, the two were confused in the eighteenth-century. Inchbald clearly shows them to be different though related. Miss Milner's sensibility sometimes leads her to right behavior. But more often, her passions deter her from the impulses of her sensibility. Something is needed to negotiate between passion and sensibility and to lead sensibility rightly. Dorriforth provides this for Miss Milner. He is sensible but not passionate. During the latter half of the eighteenth-century people began to worry over the ambiguous nature of sensibility noting that sensibility alone did not result in right behavior or personal happiness. In *The Politics of Sensibility* Markman Ellis quotes from the *London Chronicle* of July 6, 1775, which described sensibility as "'a lively and delicate feeling, a quick sense of the right and wrong, in all human actions, and other objects considered in every view of morality and taste'" (5). Indeed, we see this definition reflected in the

characterization of both Miss Milner and Dorriforth. Ellis notes that sensibility, while "a positive influence and a desirable virtue," was worrisome for such "lively and delicate feeling" was increasingly seen to be leading to painful sensations and not always an unerring guide to right and wrong (6-9). Inchbald offers a solution to the worrisome nature of sensibility; she shows that sensibility can lead to virtue when it is possessed by a rightly-educated person. And for her, the educated person moderates the impulses of sensibility within the restraint of reason; sensibility thus serves to make the virtuous person winsome and attractive.

Habits and Passions

Dorriforth is not perfect, but his sensibility has been moderated by education and habits, and he enjoys contentment afforded by his virtue. When Miss Milner tells Lord Frederick that Dorriforth has asked him not to see her anymore, Frederick accuses Dorriforth of secretly falling in love with his ward, saying, "'what but a savage could behold beauty like her's, and not own its power?'" (18). Miss Woodley, Dorriforth's old friend and herself a Catholic, rebukes Lord Frederick: " 'Habit is everything—and Mr. Dorriforth sees and converses with beauty, and from habit does not fall in love, as you, my lord, merely from habit do" (18). When Lord Frederick makes an allusion to Abelard and Heloise in the hearing of Dorriforth, Dorriforth proves Miss Woodley correct about the power of habit; the insinuation fails to elicit any response, for falling in love with the beautiful young woman has not even occurred to him. Miss Milner, on the other hand, reacts so strongly that she must put her head out the window to conceal her embarrassment. She, obviously, has followed her habits as well; like all men, she views her guardian as a potential conquest and therefore has sexualized their relationship.

Such is the difference between Dorriforth's trained habits and Miss Milner's habitual impulses. Again, it is a difference of education. He has been educated by a priest to be a priest and she has been educated by a boarding-school to be a fashionable young woman. Not surprisingly, she indulges her attraction to him and falls in love. Since he is a priest, she recognizes the error in loving him, but is completely unable to overcome her "fatal passion." However, education and habits are powerful, so it is not surprising that Miss Milner almost dies when her passion for the unattainable Dorriforth overwhelms her body and mind. Inchbald does not condemn Miss Milner; her capitulation to her passions is understandable. Indeed, when Dorriforth is transformed into Lord Elmwood and Miss Woodley reveals Miss Milner's secret love, he too struggles against the power of passion: "there was a fire, a vehemence in the quick fascinating rays [his eye] sent forth, [Miss Woodley] had never seen before" (112). Miss Woodley is alarmed by this, for "she wished him to love Miss Milner but to love her with moderation" (112). The narrator comments, "Miss Woodley was too little versed in the subject to know, that, had been, not to love at all" (112). Dorriforth admits that his passions are confused "triumphant at present" but he says, " 'I have never yet, however, been vanquished by them; and even upon this occasion, my reason shall combat to the last—that, shall fail me, before I do wrong'" (113). Such is the power of the passion of love. It threatens even the life-long habitual moderation of Elmwood. It is little wonder that Miss Milner quickly capitulates to love. Elmwood becomes engaged to Miss Milner, but accustomed by habit, succeeds in subduing his passion for her to reason and prudence. Then, however, the virtue that once made him so attractive to her becomes odious to her.

When he is only her guardian, his virtue works upon her to create moderation and restraint. When she first meets him, she kneels to him and "promised ever to obey him as her father" (11-12). Her promise is suspect, for she is an over-indulged young woman, "who habitually started at the unpleasant voice of control" (13). Despite her former habits, she repeatedly respects Dorriforth's authority, and only seems to disobey him once she is in love with him and trying to conceal that from him. George Haggerty reads this as "female abjection," and argues that she offers passivity in exchange for love and happiness. Candace Ward argues that Miss Milner "abdicates agency as a desiring subject" in order to assume a submission that might attract her guardian. However, these arguments do not offer a satisfactory explanation of why Miss Milner would easily obey Dorriforth when he is her guardian and she has not yet fallen in love with him. Dorriforth, though sometimes provoked to anger by Miss Milner, is not portrayed as an unthinking patriarch. For instance, he readily asks her forgiveness when he realizes he has made an unjust command (27). Miss Milner does not exchange submission for tenderness. Dorriforth's kindness precedes any action on her part. On one occasion, Miss Milner says to Miss Woodley, " 'It is that tenderness which frightens me, Miss Woodley; that intimidates and strikes me dumb—is it possible I can return impertinence to the language and manners Mr Dorriforth uses? And as I am debarred from that, what can I do but stand before him like a guilty creature, acknowledging my faults'" (42). Dorriforth's manners force Miss Milner out of her habitual society-self and bring her face to face with her true feelings. His tenderness disallows her usual levity, and forces her to see her own flaws:

> Miss Milner in the drawing room at Lord Elmwood's surrounded by listeners, by admirers (for even her enemies beheld her with admiration,)

> and warm with their approbation and applause—and Miss Milner, with no giddy observer to give a false éclat to her actions, left destitute of all but her own understanding (which secretly condemns her) and upon the point of receiving the censure of her guardian and friend, are two different beings. (42)

Dorriforth's tenderness brings moderation to her passions, particularly her ruling passion for admiration.

Once he becomes her lover, this state of affairs is unacceptable to Miss Milner, and she begins to pull away from the moderation (for her, restraint) she once began to show. She loves him and her reasons for loving him are good; she has, after all, been attracted by his sensibility which shows his virtue. But she is once again motivated by her passion for admiration: she has been educated to use her female sexuality to gain power over men and her new relationship with her guardian revives her old habits. She thinks:

> Are not my charms even more invincible than I ever believed them to be? Dorriforth, the grave, the sanctified, the anchorite Dorriforth, by their force is animated to all the ardour of the most impassioned lover—while the proud priest, the austere guardian, is humbled, if I but frown, into the veriest slave of love. (119)

She now revises the nature of their former relationship, forgetting the kindness that attracted her and replacing it with pride and austerity in her imagination. Now that they are lovers, she sees him in an antagonistic light. She becomes haughty and insolent (120). Recognizing her change, Dorriforth, now Lord Elmwood, resolves to judge her for himself alone, and "banish her forever" if necessary; these words and the tone with which these words are delivered indicate that he really is being altered from his formerly moderate ways (122). Confronted with her seeming indifference, his firmness of mind threatens to become implacable stubbornness. Though she sees the danger in challenging

her lover's careful moderation, Miss Milner perseveres in her behavior. She aims to force him to submit wholly to passion for her: "'I will do something that any prudent man ought *not* to forgive; and yet, with that vast share of prudence he possesses, I will force him still to yield to his love'" (128). Miss Milner will be triumphant over him once his passions are triumphant over his prudence. Caroline Breashears points out that Elmwood does not break off his engagement with Miss Milner when she attends a masque against his wishes, as Terry Castle argues, but he breaks with her after he is humiliated by his inability to control his emotions upon finding Lord Frederick visiting Miss Milner (459). But Breashears also argues that Elmwood must feel "that his weakness is incompatible with the rational, manly, and Christian identity that he has constructed for himself" (459). By assuming that Elmwood is merely losing a constructed identity, Breashears assumes that virtue inculcated by habits and education is entirely external to the indivudal, and she thus diminishes the importance of Elmwood's loss. He is not losing a constructed identity, some sort of veneer over his true self; he feels his true self contracting into enslavement to passions.

Inchbald shows that Miss Milner recognizes the magnitude of loss in her guardian and lover. After witnessing his ineffective struggle with his passion, Miss Milner happily tells Miss Woodley, "Did you see him? I am afraid you did not see how he trembled? – and that manly, firm voice faltered, as mine does some times—his proud heart was humbled too; as mine is some times . . . we love equally'" (148). She delights in the excess of his love, for he is submitting to his passion for her. Miss Milner believes that as long as Elmwood was able to moderate his passions, he was her superior, and was, in a way, stooping to her. But once he proves the excess of his passion, then he is in her

power, for his passion is for her and she can control him thereby. Elmwood sees the loss in a slightly different light. He does not view her actions as a power struggle between the two of them, but as struggle within himself over his moderation, for he writes to her that "Prudence" must outweigh his friendship, admiration, and love for her, so he must break off their engagement (150).

Their relationship is the central event of the novel, and shows an inherent threat to virtue in a relationship between lovers. As long as Elmwood is only Miss Milner's guardian, the restraint and moderation, which give rise to tenderness and kindness, are attractive to Miss Milner and recall her from her habitual errors. But once they become lovers, the passionate Miss Milner cannot abide with an inequality of their passions because she feels at a disadvantage. First, as a slave to her own passions, she feels controlled by the object of her passion. Second, she has been habituated to view men as conquests; they are conquered by their inability to moderate passion for her. For these two reasons, she must conquer even the man she truly loves. Miss Milner is rescued from losing Elmwood forever by the interference of Sandford, a Jesuit priest and Elmwood's spiritual father, who recognizes Miss Milner's behavior for what it is—a desire for power—but nonetheless discerns her sincere love. The first half of the novel ends with the sudden marriage of Elmwood and Miss Milner. Volume three begins after a period of seventeen years. Inchbald tells readers that the couple lives happily for four years and has a daughter. But something has occurred which transforms Elmwood from a compassionate and feeling man into a "hard-hearted tyrant"; Miss Milner's attempts to enslave him to passion are complete, but it is not passion for her that rules him. She, too, has been transformed; when she loses his love, she also loses her beauty and her virtue.

In this case only, virtue is equated with sexual chastity—Lady Elmwood has committed adultery. The way that Inchbald narrates the event, however, shows that Miss Milner's underlying lack of virtue has never changed: her adultery is the result of passions unrestrained and is connected to her desire for power.

Her adultery is interpreted by both men involved as a power-move. Lady Elmwood's capitulation to the "art and industry" of Lord Frederick "gave to his vanity a prouder triumph, than if she had never given her hand in preference to another" (172). Elmwood once deplored the necessity of a duel on Miss Milner's behalf, and saw it as a departure from his character that transformed him from philosopher into a ruffian (53). But he now not only challenges Lord Frederick to a duel, but shows so little restraint that he leaves his adversary "so maimed, and so defaced with scars, as never again to endanger the honour of a husband" (172). Here, Elmwood is less concerned with his wife than he is with himself. Her adultery is interpreted by both men as an assault on her husband by means of giving her body to another man. Elmwood's moderated virtue cannot withstand this assault. When he was Dorriforth, Elmwood recognized the laws of honor and therefore dueled when he was challenged, but as Elmwood, he issues the challenge himself and then exceeds the bounds of the laws of honor by horribly maiming his opponent. Breashears argues that Elmwood tries to embody "several ideals—ideals of Christianity, refinement, and honour" and is unable "to reconcile them in moments of crisis" (455). As a gentleman, Dorriforth/Elmwood has always been a man of honor. As a priest, he was a man of God. And as one whose sensibility reveals his virtues, he is a man of feeling. In the first half of the novel, Elmwood negotiates these competing roles with moderation, but his moderation is shattered by his wife's adultery. His sensibility

now alienates others instead of attracting them as his passions are loosed from their bounds. He forsakes the balance between the laws of honor and the laws of God. So he maims Frederick, exiles his daughter, and refuses to be reminded of wife. He can no longer moderate himself; his loss of virtue transforms him into a miserable tyrant. Virtue, inculcated by education and habits, can be lost. In Elmwood's case, virtue is lost when he can no longer maintain moderation after his beloved wife wields her sexual power against him.

Competing Definitions of Virtue

The fate of Lord and Lady Elmwood covers several critiques of the prevailing culture: typical female education encourages women to be immoderate in love and in a desire for male admiration; the power of the passion of love is so great that it can erase moderation inculcated by habit and education; and virtue may afford contentment but men and women are tempted by love to forsake contentment for bliss. The second half of the novel replaces Miss Milner with Matilda, who, we are told, has been properly educated. The central relationship of the second half of the novel is between Matilda and her father. She persists in virtue and finally a situation is created in which Elmwood can recognize and reward her virtue. Castle, Ty, and Spacks (in *Desire and Truth*) all argue, to varying degrees, that Inchbald backs away from questioning patriarchal authority in the second half of the novel only to reaffirm it in the end. In fact, the first half of the novel does not precisely question patriarchal authority either, but dwells upon a power struggle between lovers for the moderation of one lover's passions. The question of both halves is basically the same: how does virtue, inculcated by education, either promote or destroy relationships? As we shall see, Inchbald challenges the morality of prevailing

culture through that question in the first half, and she then uses the Matilda/Elmwood relationship to offer some sort of solution to the problems with that morality. However, Inchbald alters her vision of virtue in the second half of the novel, and the solution is not compelling. Inchbald portrays Matilda as virtuous due to her moderation, but then introduces filial piety as her chief virtue, which destroys the problem/solution contrast between her and her mother.

In the second half of the novel, Inchbald emphasizes the suffering that results from Elmwood and Miss Milner's failed relationship. Suffering is the key element of Matilda's proper education and what was missing from Miss Milner's education. Matilda is educated in far different circumstances than her mother. She grows up with her mother, Miss Woodley, and Sandford as her only companions in a house by the side of a "dreary heath" (174). In addition to isolation, Matilda grows up sharing her mother's rejection by Elmwood, knowing from a very early age "the whole and fatal history of her mother" (188). And she participates in her mother's suffering: readers are first introduced to Matilda when her mother dies in her arms after a lingering illness. Matilda is precluded from sharing her mother's folly, which is an immoderate desire for admiration, for she has grown up far from society, been rejected by her own father, and been the constant companion of an ill and contrite mother. But there is more to her virtue than negation.

Matilda embodies a balance between her mother and father. Once at her father's house, she is fascinated by his portrait:

> In the features of her father she was proud to discern the exact moulds in which her own appeared to have been modeled; yet Matilda's person, shape, and complection were so extremely like her what her mother's once were, that at the first glance she appeared to have a still greater

> resemblance of her, than of her father—but her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's; softened by the delicacy of her sex, the extreme tenderness of her heart, and the melancholy of her situation" (192).

Matilda resembles her parents almost equally in appearance; she shares her mother's general characteristics but has her father's specific features, which readers once knew to reveal his virtue by their sensibility. Inchbald tells of Matilda's sensibility; for instance, Matilda cannot bring herself to watch for the arrival of her father's carriage, for "it was a gratification which her fears, her tremor, her extreme sensibility would not permit her to enjoy" (194). Matilda shares the sensibility of both her mother and her father, but she is more like her father, for she shares his firmness of mind and the resulting manners. In *Novel Beginnings,* Spacks argues that Matilda shares with her father "the capacity to use manners as intimidation—not to please, but to frighten—or as a mask for negative feeling" (182). She concludes, "the separation of manners from their traditional purpose of pleasing declares the sense of isolation the characters experience [in the second half of the novel]. They do not feel sufficiently connected with others to wish to please them" (*Beginnings* 182). Such an interpretation of Matilda's likeness to her father, and her character in general, highlights the difference between Matilda's manners and Miss Milner's; Miss Milner was continually employed in the art of pleasing. However, Spack's interpretation ignores the significant difference between Matilda's manners and her father's, which Inchbald is careful to show. Sandford describes Elmwood's manners thus: "his temper is a great deal altered from what it once was—he exalts his voice, and uses harsh expression upon the least provocation—his eyes flash lightning, and his face is distorted with anger on the slightest motives . . ." (194). Elmwood's manners show that he has lost his moderation of his irascible tendencies. Matilda shares these tendencies,

but she is moderated by her love for others. One instance serves to illustrate Matilda's manners and her virtue. Miss Woodley offends her by thoughtlessly promising to join Rushbrook for dinner, and when told of the promise, Matilda "darted upon her kind companion, a look of the most cutting reproach and haughty resentment" (223). Miss Woodley is hurt by this reproach and begins to cry, and "Matilda was moved, but she possessed too much of the manly resentment of her father, to discover what she felt" (224). She allows Miss Woodley to leave the room before she breaks with her composure. She eventually finds Miss Woodley, and though she approaches her with a "sullen silence," she responds lovingly and humbly to Miss Woodley's request for forgiveness by asking for her pardon as well (224). Indeed, Matilda uses her manners to intimidate and rebuke her friend, but, unlike her father, she then breaks her silence, begs forgiveness, and speaks openly with her friend once again. She has not mastered the art of pleasing, as her mother did, but she is not isolated and uncaring; she cares for her friends so much that her impulses are checked and moderated by that love.

Noting that the active, passionate Miss Milner is a more interesting character than the passive, restrained Matilda, many have called Matilda passionless, which they assume is a negative thing.[1] But in Inchbald's novel, Miss Milner's unrestrained passions are unquestionably dangerous though encouraged by prevailing upper-class culture. Criticism of the vicious sexual behavior of the upper classes is nothing new; Haywood, Richardson, and Goldsmith all participate in this critique in some way. Inchbald contrasts Matilda with Miss Milner in an attempt to prove that a "PROPER EDUCATION" can equip women to transcend the viciousness of sexual behavior amongst the upper echelon of society. Through Matilda and Dorriforth, Inchbald shows

that virtue is not reduced to sexual chastity, but it is related to sexual restraint, for virtue is only cultivated by people who exist outside of the sexualized society. As a priest, Dorriforth moves outside of prevailing culture, and his virtue is quite clearly tied to this removal. The first paragraph of the novel tells of his education as a priest at St. Omer's "in all the scholastic rigour of that college" (1). He rejects the cloister, however, and lives in London "where he dwelt in his own prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance" (1). Although he lives in town, Dorriforth is nevertheless outside of society by virtue of his education and his position as a priest. He is increasingly pulled into larger society—first by his position as guardian to a fashionable young women, second by his transformation to Lord Elmwood, and finally by his love for Miss Milner. His reaction when Miss Woodley reveals Miss Milner's love shows how his vision changes according to these transformations: "you are destroying my prospects of futurity—you are making this world too dear to me" (112). Matilda is like her father before he is drawn into prevailing culture. She moves in a contained society and does not lament her isolation from larger culture. The comparison between Matilda and Dorriforth, the priest, also shows that virtue belongs to those who are accustomed to submission. Readers are told of Dorriforth's habitual submission to Sandford in particular, which he abandons in the second half of the novel (187). Matilda submits to others as well—her father most infamously—but she also listens to Sandford, Miss Woodley, and her mother. For instance, Sandford teaches her what is proper regarding her behavior to her father (188). Or, Matilda is recalled from an excess of grief by her mother's memory, and restrains her passions in obedience to her dead mother's wishes (212). The virtue of Matilda, which

separates her from Miss Milner and likens her to Dorriforth, consists of the ability to moderate her passions; that ability is born from habituation to suffering and submission.

As was discussed in relation to Haywood, David Morse makes the case that virtue underwent a redefinition in the course of the eighteenth century. The aristocratic and early eighteenth-century notion of virtue "is public, social, and civic . . . Virtue tends to imply social position since if it is virtuous to be just, then power is necessary if that justice is to be actualized. Virtue may also imply wealth . . ." (111). He argues that in the novel of sensibility, initiated by *Pamela*, the definition of virtue mirrored a struggle between the classes, for Richardson uses "the term [virtue] to privilege a middle-class system of values over an aristocratic behavior code" which was classical and masculine in opposition to the feminine and Christian virtue of the middle classes (116). As the century wore on, the intuition grew that those placed in privileged positions by birth or by wealth "found it particularly difficult to be virtuous" (146). In the characters Dorriforth and Matilda, Inchbald reflects a shift away from virtue defined as an aristocratic and masculine ideal. For instance, Elmwood's sense that his honor is destroyed by his wife's adultery is a turn away from virtue-as-moderation towards aristocratic virtue, and it causes a lamentable loss of relationship in his life. In his character, Inchbald envisions virtue quite clearly as moderation, but that virtue is susceptible to failure and loss. Matilda, too, embodies virtue-as-moderation, but Inchbald tries to safeguard that virtue from loss by appending an unchanging virtue to it—filial piety. This virtue is indeed more permanent, but it is also much less attractive.

If virtuous behavior depends upon moderation, it is inherently impermanent. Diane Osland observes that characters in the novel change suddenly and argues,

> A concept of character that supports this kind of sudden transformation strengthens the ostensible moral of the tale, the importance of 'A PROPER EDUCATION,' for, in the absence of a presiding core personality, only external controls—such as the scholastic and religious rules that had reformed Lord Elmwood or 'the school of prudence—through adversity—in which Matilda was bred'—would seem capable of bringing steadiness and dependability to inherently wayward spirits (98).

Osland is right to point out the role of external authority, for Inchbald sees external authority as effective in inculcating virtue; these authorities form the habits of moderation. But Osland is simply wrong in claiming an absence of "a presiding core personality" in each character. Dorriforth has always had within him the potential to degenerate from firmness of mind into implacable stubbornness; his transformation into a tyrant is not surprising. Miss Milner has always rejected control and been subject to her passions; her adultery is only the extreme expression of these characteristics. If virtue is moderation, it requires a continual balance of characteristics that will otherwise dominate the personality. Moderation is not a settled state; individuals can change dramatically insomuch as they gain or lose moderation of their passions. As long as she portrays virtue-as-moderation, Inchbald's characters are like people we meet in real life—they do not reduce to a single idea. So when Inchbald tries to show an infallible solution to Miss Miner's lack of virtue, she does so by altering her vision of virtue. Matilda's perseverant virtue is, in fact, not moderation, though she does have that, but is unfailing filial piety. In this way, virtue is simply obedience to external controls. Matilda's filial piety is so extreme that it jars against the rest of what readers know of her character. For instance, the memory of her mother motivates her to overcomes grief when her father leaves his house without ever acknowledging her, but then she walks around the rooms he has left, "she leaned over those seats with a kind of filial piety . . . and in the library she took up

with filial delight, the pen with which he had been writing" (213). She pours over the books he has left out and picks up his hat "with a sensation beyond any other . . . and held it in her hand with pious reverence" (213). Even though Sandford and Miss Woodley have communicated her father's real indifference and tyranny (199), her devotion to him is excessive. Matilda's kind of virtue renders her tractable to authorial control; Inchbald uses her to prove a point.

Matilda is not an entirely fixed character; she, too, struggles to balance warring aspects of her personality. Her alternating attitude toward her cousin Rusbrook shows that. She is jealous of him, yet recognizes that he deserves her pity (222). She is angry with him, but tries to be kind when she sees he is in distress (230). In her devotion to her father, though, she is fixed. There is no need for moderation here; filial piety, Inchbald implies, is an unqualified good. It is a static virtue. Matilda's relationship with her father is therefore unconvincing. Readers see none of the dynamic expansion and contraction of character that results from gaining and losing virtue as we see in Miss Milner's relationship with Dorriforth/Elmwood. When virtue is reduced to a single behavior, Inchbald's critique of the problems with man/woman relationships loses its meaning. Matilda's attitude towards her father yields no meaningful parallel to the relationship her mother had with him. Readers are unable to see how Matilda corrects her mother's flaws; Matilda's love for her father is as immoderate as were her mother's passions. Matilda's education is supposed to have prepared her for relationships in a way that her mother was not. Throughout the first half of the novel, Miss Milner's central flaw is an excessive passion for admiration and the subsequent power she gained from that admiration. Inchbald criticizes the society that encourages and inculcates such

immoderation in young women. Matilda, indeed, shows moderation in all relationships except the central relationship, her relationship with her father.

Most problematically for the novel, the unquestioning filial piety which governs Matilda's relationship with her father is part of the old aristocratic code of virtue that her father reverts to. In other ways, she remains outside of the prevailing social order and is a convincing foil to her mother, as a woman with "A PROPER EDUCATION." But when she relates to Elmwood, Matilda is fixed and excessive with none of the attractions of her mother. The means of Elmwood's reunion with his daughter proves that this is not simply a problem with characterization; in the plot, Inchbald shifts between competing definitions of virtue without seeming to recognize any inconsistency. Breashears argues that as aristocratic notions of virtue as honor from the early eighteenth-century gave way, women came "to embody the locus and refuge of honor as virtue" (455).
Dorriforth/Elmwood struggles with this notion of honor as virtue in the first half of the novel: he feels it his duty to "protect" Miss Milner yet knows that he has a greater duty to her father to do something more for her, namely, educate her. After she commits adultery, he only acknowledges his role as protector. Elmwood feels himself so damaged by his failure to protect his wife's virtue, that he must reassert himself against another man before he can accept the role of protector of his daughter (Breashears 467). And his authoritative role in his daughter's life is never more than protector of her "virtue," which devolves into her virginity. Elmwood rescues Matilda from Lord Margrave, who, motivated by the obvious neglect of her father, has kidnapped her and plans to make her his mistress. The connection of female virtue and male honor "reduces [women] to their sexual behavior" and "renders [men] dependent upon women" for their honor

(Breashears 467-468). Saving Matilda from Margrave re-establishes the honor Elmwood lost when his wife committed adultery. The rescue shows clearly that Elmwood moves within a society that defines female virtue quite narrowly. Matilda's moderation inculcated by education does not play any role in her final reunion with her father; her filial devotion earns her a place in his arms. This reduction of virtue places her squarely back into the social order of both Miss Milner and Elmwood; only, unlike her mother, she simply submits to that order while the excessive Miss Milner played within that social order, flaunting conventions and giving way to her passions.

Inchbald attempts to show how "A PROPER EDUCATION" produces a virtuous woman outside of a problematic social order. But Matilda, both in her characterization and her behavior in the plot, is firmly inside of prevailing society. The question controlling both halves of the novel is "how does virtue, inculcated by education, either promote or destroy relationships?" In the first half of the novel, Inchbald offers a convincing critique of Miss Milner's lack of virtue-as-moderation which leads to the destruction of her marriage to a man she truly loves. Matilda does not serve as a convincing counter-example of virtue, for the virtue which finally restores her to relationship with her father is not moderation but unquestioning and excessive filial piety. The father-daughter relationship of this novel therefore demands an excessive and irrational devotion from the daughter. Although the father ostensibly saves the daughter, his actions are motivated more by a desire to promote the self than to protect the happiness and well-being of a loved one. The first half of the novel offers the hope that, as they seek moderation within themselves, men and women can achieve a balanced, and thus loving, relationship with one another. Here is a convincing answer to the

mechanism of virtue rewarded in Richardson's *Pamela*: virtue is not so simple that it can be predictable rewarded, but individuals can enjoy the happiness virtue yields within their relationships with one another. The second half of the novel, however, reverts to a simplistic and reductive definition of virtue that can be rewarded in tangible ways. Such a moral vision is comforting in its simplicity but truly vicious in its actual demands upon daughters and fathers: Matilda must perfectly love and obey a father who abuses her, and her father must not acknowledge her until he fights another man to win her.

CHAPTER SIX

Austen's *Emma*: "Faultless in Spite of all her Faults"

Though published in 1815, Jane Austen's *Emma* is an appropriate novel to conclude a study of fathers and daughters in the eighteenth-century British novel, for it not only relates in significant ways to every novel covered thus far but also presents a father-daughter relationship quite different from anything yet portrayed. Emma is clearly her father's superior in intelligence and ability. Mr. Woodhouse looks to her for advice and guidance and thinks her perfect in every way. But there is another side to this relationship. Although Emma rules him and his household, she carefully maintains his sense of authority. And for all her practical power over her father, Emma spends much of her time ensuring his comfort and happiness. At first glance, it may seem that here is a realization of the "patriarchal etiology" (McCrea 28) voiced by critics such as Caroline Gonda, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, and Margaret Doody; Emma and Mr. Woodhouse might be an example of "the high emotive content of parent-filial relations," and Mr. Woodhouse could be identified as a father retaining authority through tenderness so that "a sort of emotional blackmail is substituted for a more straightforward authoritarianism" (Doody 24). Yet Austen resists portraying Emma as a slave, manipulated by her love for her father and his tenderness. Emma is *both* her father's ruler and her father's dutiful daughter. Herein lies the primary difference between Austen's portrayal of a daughter and her father and previously covered portrayals of the father-daughter relationship: throughout the novel, Austen maintains a paradox within the father-daughter relationship.

This paradox is made possible by Austen's methods of characterization, which never reduce people to the embodiment of an idea or a certain quality. Published almost one hundred years after Haywood's *Love in Excess, Emma* shows how much the novel had changed. Austen rejects the tendency to *use* characters and instead creates characters that conform to our experience of people in real life. Austen's novel is therefore not pedagogical as the previously covered novels are to varying degrees. But that does not mean that questions of virtue are unimportant in *Emma*. On the contrary, virtue is of central importance to Austen; she simply goes about defining virtue using different means. Her novel is "exemplary" in a way that previous novels were not; she does not use excellent or vicious characters in order to teach, but she presents her case for virtue through the examples of characters learning to become virtuous. Alisdair MacIntyre argues that Austen "turns away from the competing catalogues of the virtues in the eighteenth century and restores a teleological perspective" (240). This teleological perspective, he argues, is tied to marriage, for "her heroines seek the good through seeking their own good in marriage" (240). Indeed, virtue in *Emma* is inextricably linked to the heroine's movement towards a marriage that will foster virtue and thereby lead to her happiness. But in this chapter, I argue that Emma's relationship with her father is also inextricably linked to Austen's definition of virtue, for through this relationship, Emma is prepared for, or trained in, the virtue that makes her capable of "seeking [her] own good in marriage" (MacIntyre 240).

Although her portrayal of a father and daughter is different from those previously covered in this study, Austen follows earlier authors when she portrays virtue in the context of a woman negotiating the threatening path to marriage. But even as she

participates in this tradition, Austen makes important changes, most notably in her methods of characterization. It has long been a trend to situate Austen's work by looking to her reading, and in one of the earliest of such studies, Frank Bradbrook notes the similarities between Elizabeth Inchbald's Miss Milner and Emma Woodhouse, and cites Mr. Knightley's reference to Harriet and Robert Martin as "a simple story" as probable evidence of Austen's familiarity with Inchbald's novel (109-112). Indeed, like Emma, Miss Milner is portrayed as a young lady who "unites some of the best blessings of existence" (1), such as wealth, beauty, intelligence, wit, and confidence, but is subject to certain notable flaws. However, Inchbald does not allow Miss Milner to overcome her flaws because she serves a pedagogical purpose, whereas Austen characterizes Emma as flawed yet capable of growth in virtue and thus the object of both ironic critique as well as sympathy. In other words, unlike Miss Milner, Emma is a comic heroine. Here arises Austen's similarity to Oliver Goldsmith. Austen most certainly read Oliver Goldsmith,[1] and *Emma's* participation in the comic tradition is reminiscent of the Vicar. Like him, Emma can be ridiculous as well as admirable. Reginald Farrer praises Austen for her comic abilities, for "to attain success in creating a being with whom you both love and laugh at, the author must attempt a task of complicated difficulty. He must both run with the hare and hunt with the hounds" (76).[2] Such is the talent of Austen as well as Goldsmith. Goldsmith, however, does not create a psychologically real character, for he depends almost entirely upon an artificial plot to move the Vicar from disaster to triumph. Farrer claims that Emma too is saved from her flaws by the movement of the plot, but such a claim ignores the psychological reality Austen's characters. Sir Walter Scott, in a contemporary review of *Emma,* noted that Austen was innovative in this

regard. He observed Austen's talent for "the art of copying from nature" and presenting "a correct and striking representation of that which is daily taking place" (48). The outcome of the novel is not contrived by an artificial plot but is linked to Emma's identity, which adheres to reality in ways that previous participants in the comic tradition did not achieve. In her commitment to psychological reality, Austen is similar to Samuel Richardson. According to Henry Thomas Austen, her nephew, Jane Austen consistently admired Richardson over Fielding, for she preferred "Richardson's power of creating, and preserving the consistency of his characters" (325). Her letters, however, show that she was discontent with the "fixed moral programme which justified the existence" of the novels which took shape in the wake of Richardson's influence (Waldron 13). Austen dispensed with Richardson's narrative profusion as well as the "fixed moral programme" lurking behind his projects, but she maintained the commitment to creating consistent, natural characters, which she then combined with a comic portrayal of a flawed yet sympathetic heroine. This unique union of indebtedness to these previous authors and Austen's difference from them forms a father-daughter relationship unlike any previously portrayed. Though loving, Emma's relationship with Mr. Woodhouse is shot through with comic irony due to the flaws of both Emma and her father and is thus a "striking representation of that which is daily taking place" in the world outside of the novel, in which relationships, be they ever so loving, reveal the flaws of the people within them. Austen does not, however, critique Emma's relationship with her father as the source of Emma's folly, but shows instead the central importance of this relationship in shaping Emma, for good and bad. Mr. Woodhouse, due to his own flaws, aggravates Emma's negative traits; Austen also shows that the kind of active love engendered by Mr.

Woodhouse contributes to Emma's virtue, or her capacity for happiness, and thus to the comic conclusion of the novel as well.

Comedy and Virtue

Austen's particular kind of comedy makes possible this dualistic portrayal of a father-daughter relationship. The comedy of Emma's relationship with Mr. Woodhouse, though arising from their flaws, is gentle. Austen's nephew commented, "she always sought, in the faults of others, something to excuse, to forgive, or forget" (Henry Thomas Austen 325). In her novels as well, Austen notices "frailties, foibles, and follies," but she does not dwell on these as the defining characteristics of individuals. Instead, she often finds reason "to excuse, to forgive, or forget." However, with the rise of historical and political criticism of Austen's novels, a sense of the comedy of her work seems to have diminished,[3] which is unfortunate because one must understand her comedy in order to appreciate the moral aims of her novels. Critics earlier in the twentieth century, whatever their other shortcomings, made a connection between Austen's moralism and her comedy. A.C. Bradley, for instance, notes that Austen's comedy arises from the follies of her characters:

> The foibles, illusions, self-contradictions, of human nature are a joy to her for their own sakes, but also because through action they lead to consequences which may be serious but may also be comic. In that case they produce sometimes a matter fit for a comedy, a play in which people's lives fall into an entanglement of errors, misunderstandings, and cross-purposes, from which they are rescued, not by their own wisdom or skill, but by the kindness of Fortune or some Providence with a weakness for lovers. (363)

Characters like Miss Bates or Mr. Woodhouse certainly "produce . . . matter fit for comedy," but they are "the object equally of our laughter and our unqualified respect and

affection" (364). Emma herself is such a character. Bradley perhaps accounts for the redemption of human folly through the mercies of the plot too hastily. Rather, Austen's characterization of men and women as worthy of both laughter and respect robs their faults of their otherwise damning consequences. Ian Watt's comments on *Emma* are quite useful here, for he points out that Austen's fiction is an innovation on the comedy of the earlier humorists Fielding, Smollett, and Burney; she gets rid of the "good" and "bad" characters which had been a stock part of comedy since Greek plays. Watt writes:

> Through the finer and more detailed psychological calibrations of her narrative, Austen made the hero and heroine psychologically complex, and therefore capable of internal and external development. By this means the traditional conflict of 'good' and 'bad' characters in the comedy was internalized as a conflict within and between 'good' characters. (413)

In Austen's comedy, good and bad still exist, but not in the form of characters who perfectly exemplify one or the other. Every good character is mixed; hence, their follies entertain us rather than dismay us because those follies exist alongside virtues which temper and diminish them; with Austen, we find reasons "to excuse, to forgive, or forget." It is quite true that Miss Bates's perpetual monologue is ridiculous and tiresome, but it is amusing rather than deplorable, for her folly exists alongside great kindness and goodwill towards other. (On the other hand, Mrs. Elton's self-important chatter is ridiculous and deplorable because she has no virtues to temper her folly and engender the sympathy of others.) Both Mr. Woodhouse and Emma, like Miss Bates, are good characters but mixed. Mr. Woodhouse is a nervous, selfish old man, and a tender-hearted man who wishes to treat his family and neighbors well.[4] Emma is a head-strong social snob who also genuinely loves her family and is capable of forming strong friendships with worthy people. Just as both Emma and her father are mixed characters, so their

relationship is mixed. It is not only a picture of Mr. Woodhouse's continual petty demands and Emma's continual sacrifices to his comfort, but is also a picture of genuine familial attachment.

Austen's comedy, dependent as it is upon mixed characters, leads to a particular vision of virtue. Part of Austen's rejection of a moral program such as Richardson's is her refusal to portray virtue as a fixed set of behaviors demanded by society (or, indeed, an individual), which have clearly identifiable rewards. Austen, more than Goldsmith or Inchbald, consciously departs from the exemplary tradition, but she is equally concerned with virtue. Virtue is social and active and is therefore associated with a certain type of behavior. It is highly related to the much-discussed propriety thematic to Austen's novels. Hina Nazar notes that Austen's prioritization of the conventions of propriety has earned her a reputation as anti-modern, which has frustrated feminist critics of her work such as Mary Poovey, Susan M. Gilbert, and Susan Gubar (145-146). Nazar argues, however, that propriety ought not to be viewed so narrowly and points out that it does not silence individual judgment in obedience to a collective judgment, but rather is "dialogic" or "other-directed" and "coheres with our understanding of [propriety] as a code of conduct through which social others are treated with politeness because they are deemed worthy of moral respect" (148). Just as the code of conduct necessitated by propriety is guided by the good of others rather than strict conformity to a system, so virtuous behavior is determined by "other-directedness" rather than outward conformity to a system enforced by collective judgment.

Virtue is not, however, simply self-abnegation in deference to others, though it can include that. Generally, for Austen, virtue connects the individual with society in a

way that does not constrain individual freedom but encourages the bonds of love with others. In her study connecting virtue and happiness in the novels of Austen, Ann Crippen Ruderman points out that Austen defends both morality (the society) and individual happiness (the self), and she cites a failure to acknowledge this as behind controversy between critics who cannot agree upon the nature of Austen's politics (1-2).[5] Ruderman takes issue with those who simply debate the priority of self or society in Austen's novels and argues that there is no such dichotomy for Austen. Instead, Austen participates in the tradition of Aristotelian-influenced ethics, which saw humans as directed toward a particular end, so that there is a "natural content" to virtue (3-4). Furthermore, Ruderman notes that Austen often uses the word "duty" ironically, indicating that virtue ought not to be equated with obedience to expectations; indeed, it cannot be, for virtue is not a construct of the individual nor is it a construct of society (3). Rather, virtue "has a permanent, objective content that defines what the *best* sort of character and actions are" (4). Austen participates in the Aristotelian tradition of viewing virtue as the path to human happiness, or the fulfillment of the *telos* towards which human nature is directed (1-6).[6] Virtue is that behavior which makes possible such happiness. Ruderman identifies happiness for Austen as, "the capacity for real attachment and love"; happiness is not the reward of virtue but "the highest pleasure of virtue" (7). Although Austen does not delve into exactly what makes a particular person virtuous, she does present pictures of "what virtue and happiness seem to be" (9). Virtuous behavior is behavior which enables individuals to exist within loving community with others.

An absence of moral exemplars in favor of mixed characters is a significant aspect of Austen's portrayal of virtue, particularly in the case of Emma and Mr. Woodhouse. Marilyn Butler cites Richard Simpson, a Victorian critic who links Austen's view of virtue with her methods of characterization:

> '[Austen] contemplates virtues, not as fixed quantities, or as definable qualities, but as continual struggles and conquests, as progressive states of mind, advancing by repulsing their contraries, or losing ground by being overcome . . . A character therefore unfolded itself to her . . . as a dramatic sketch, a living history, a composite force, which could only exhibit what it was by exhibiting what it did' (qtd. in Butler 392).[7]

Butler follows this quotation with the observation that Austen does not "invest one character throughout with right opinions" (392), as might be expected from exemplary novels, but she "depicts even the best minds as continually fallible, under the pressure of new evidence, and potentially undermined from within by selfishness . . . She sees perfectibility as a condition of the human life, but not perfection" (392). In Austen's novels, virtuous behavior has objective, constant qualities but never is there a constantly virtuous person. The best characters, however, consistently (though not perfectly) advance in virtue by "continual struggles and conquests," and as they progress they enjoy happiness, and become increasingly capable of true attachment to others.

This increasing capability to be attached to others is the key to the comic conclusion of *Emma.* As Emma grows in virtue, or as the good in her overcomes its contrary, so the plot turns towards her happiness. Because Emma's relationship with Mr. Woodhouse both aggravates her flaws and develops her better qualities, Austen's definition of virtue has far-reaching implications for the father-daughter relationship. *Emma* demonstrates that neither father nor daughter need be exemplars of virtue to enjoy a loving relationship. In fact, both can be quite (humorously) flawed while still growing

in virtue, and, what is more, promoting the growth of virtue in the other. This does not mean, however, that their flaws are unimportant and simply fodder for humor. Rather, the flaws of the father and daughter truly threaten the happiness of both. But Emma is in more danger simply because she still faces the biggest decision of her life: to marry or not to marry. It is crucial to identify Emma's and Mr. Woodhouse's flaws in order to understand the danger of their consequences as well as to understand the true nature of the virtue Emma grows in and how it leads to her happiness.

Loving Care and Autonomy in Emma's Relationship with her Father

Emma's virtue has been frequently misidentified due to misunderstandings of Austen's place within the exemplary tradition. Although Austen departs from the exemplary mode, *Emma* comments upon a certain kind of exemplary daughter common in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century novels by women. Unlike any other Austen heroines, Emma is in charge of her household. Claudia Johnson calls *Emma* "conservative ideology at its best," identifies her rule over her father and his house as "excellent," and praises Emma's intelligence, generosity, and compassion (131,132). While it is true that Emma's rule in her father's house does demonstrate much of her virtue, especially her forbearance and delicacy, it is hasty to quickly identify her as Austen's offering of a perfect conservative heroine. Here, it is helpful once again to turn to Eve Tavor Bannet, who removes the labels of conservative and liberal from late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century women's writing, and instead uses the terms Egalitarian and Matriarchal to delineate two different strains of thought.[8] Austen responds to the Matriarchal tradition in *Emma,* for the heroine of the Matriarchal novel "teaches and governs others," and "those in the parental position voluntarily submit to the

heroine, from a recognition of her superiority to them in sense and virtue" (83). As Bannet observes, in Austen's *Emma* this type of heroine reaches her "apotheosis—and total humiliation" (83). While it is true that Emma's rule over her father and his house is excellent, and that she is remarkable for her intelligence, generosity, and compassion, this is only half of the story. A close examination of Emma's rule shows that while it does foster a loving relationship with her father, it also creates in her certain short-sighted ways of viewing the world and her relationship to it. However, Austen does not use the trope of the Matriarchal heroine to critique Emma's relationship with her father so much as show its importance, for good and evil, in Emma's growth in virtue and, subsequently, her capacity for happiness.

Emma's relationship with her father is remarkable in two ways. First, she tirelessly cares for him, continually seeking his comfort and peace. Second, in exchange for such care, her father has ceded control of himself and his house to her. These, of course, are connected and must be considered together if one is to understand how Emma's relationship with her father affects her growth virtue. The first paragraphs of the novel warn of us of the "real evils" of Emma's situation as "the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself" (1). We are also informed that her father is affectionate and indulgent, and Emma has been mistress of the house since her sister's marriage (1). The connection between the "real evils" of Emma's situation and her authority in her father's house is easy to make. Readers are perhaps surprised, then, to find in the following pages that Emma is far from a spoiled daughter; in fact, she responds to her father with nearly ceaseless attention to his needs and desires. We are told that Mr. Woodhouse is "no companion" for his daughter for he

cannot “meet her in conversation, rational and playful” (2). Also, “his spirits required support” and “he was a nervous man, easily depressed” with “habits of gentle selfishness” which made it impossible to imagine “that other people could feel differently from himself” (2-3). Emma’s behavior toward her father on this first night without Miss Taylor is indicative of her behavior to him throughout the novel: though melancholy herself and receiving no comfort from her father, “Emma smiled and chatted as cheerfully as she could,” and “spared no exertions” to keep her father focused on happier things (3-4). However, when Mr. Knightley enters the room, readers are shown another aspect of Emma’s relationship with her father: unlike Mr. Knightley, Mr. Woodhouse can find no fault with Emma, nor is he comfortable with any one else doing so (5). The reader’s first introduction to Emma and her father demonstrates Emma’s ascendancy and her selfless care of her demanding father as well as Mr. Woodhouse’s total dependence on Emma and admiration for her.

Thus far, we have a typical heroine of a Matriarchal novel. Austen continues to draw a relationship that one might find in the novels of Maria Edgeworth, whose Belinda moves through the fashionable world, tutoring those who might be expected to guide her. Belinda is placed in the household of Lady Delacour, a woman who reigns supreme in society. Belinda does not bow to this woman’s power, but by example and gentle remonstrance takes Lady Delacour into her tutelage in virtue and sense. Similarly, in sense and virtue Emma is superior to her father, and she, too, guides and counsels him. For instance, Emma counsels her father regarding his desire to talk his eldest daughter into staying in the country while her husband returns to town and work alone. Emma points out the futility of such an attempt, “for Isabella cannot bear to stay behind her

husband" (52). Mr. Woodhouse goes on to criticize his son-in-law for being too rough with his sons, and Emma wisely observes that Mr. John Knightley seems rough "because you are so gentle yourself" (53). Mr. Woodhouse then begins to fret over the way the children's uncle, Mr. Knightley, tosses them into the air, to which Emma replies, "One half of the world cannot stand the pleasures of the other" (53). In answering each of her father's anxieties over the people he loves, Emma encourages him to remember that not everyone is like him. Isabella prefers to be in town with her husband; Mr. John Knightley is a stern but loving father; and both Mr. Knightley and the children enjoy games which involve children flying through the air. In short, Emma continually works against her father's "gentle selfishness." Mr. Woodhouse is in need of her guidance otherwise he would plague those he loves with his continual demands. Emma resembles a Matriarchal heroine like Belinda in the obvious superiority of sense and virtue which impresses those who would usually be considered the authority in the relationship.

However, three things undermine the picture of Emma as an ideal Matriarchal heroine. First, her relationship with her father is shot through with comedy. The comedy arises from the fact that though her "tutelage" of her father can be serious, such as her attempts to help him understand how others are different from him, most of her guidance revolves around comic minutiae arising from Mr. Woodhouse's extremely confined view of the world. She must continually guide his generosity, or lack thereof, with food. He really wishes others would only share a basin of gruel before bed, but when his hospitality demands him to offer supper instead, he offers things such as "an egg boiled very soft" or "a very little bit of tart" or "a small half glass of wine" (14). Readers are assured, "Emma allowed her father to talk—but supplied her visitors in a much more

satisfactory style" (14). She must also guard against his overwhelming love for his physician, and spends an entire evening steering the conversation between him and Isabella, so that neither offends the other through their loyalties to their respective medical men (65-68). Emma repeatedly allays Mr. Woodhouse's concerns over the exertion of his horses and groom as they venture on half-mile drives to and from the Weston's house or the village. None of this amounts to the high moral teaching of the sort a Matriarchal heroine could boast. Belinda, for instance, uses her influence to cure Lady Delacour of what was feared to be breast cancer; she reconciles Lord and Lady Delacour after years of bitter fighting; and she succeeds in reintroducing Lady Delacour's child to her affections. Emma's guidance, in contrast, is humorously mundane.

The second, and more important, thing that undermines the picture of Emma as an ideal Matriarchal heroine is Mr. Woodhouse's character. Though he is selfish, unintelligent, and needy, Emma recognizes a certain quality in him that makes him generally beloved: tenderness. She recognizes this lack in herself, but is drawn to it in others, particularly her father and Harriet. One day, while with Harriet, Emma says to herself, "Warmth and tenderness of heart, with an affectionate, open manner, will beat all the clearness of head in the world, for attraction . . . It is tenderness of heart that makes my dear father so generally beloved—which gives Isabella her popularity.—I have it not—but I know how to prize and respect it" (174). This speech is at least partly ironic, for it comes after Harriet has plagued Emma by her inability to stop talking about Mr. Elton and his bride. Emma finally uses Harriet's tenderness of heart to her advantage; only the fear of hurting "dear Miss Woodhouse" forces Harriet into silence, so Emma's rhapsody on "warmth and tenderness" arises partly from her relief over the success of her

appeal to Harriet's affections. Yet, there is still truth to Emma's reflections. Mr. Knightley later acknowledges himself wrong about Harriet, citing her "first-rate qualities" (216), and calling her "an artless, amiable girl" (312). Mr. Knightley only slowly recognizes what Emma quickly grasps: tenderness and warmth are true attractions. Notably missing from Mr. Knightley's praise of Harriet, or from Emma's, is any claim regarding Harriet's sense or intelligence. So it is with praise for that other tender-hearted person, Mr. Woodhouse. No intelligent person who loves him—Emma, Mr. Knightley, or Mrs. Weston—ever expects him to be quick or clever, rather the opposite. Yet, they love him, for the reasons Emma identifies in her praise of Harriet. Emma's speech is, of course, over the top. "Clearness of head" is an attraction, and even helps a person to be more considerate of those they love. Mr. Woodhouse is not intelligent enough to serve others as well as Emma, but he is perhaps more disposed to do so, which she appreciates. Emma recognizes that despite his short-sightedness and inability to understand others, her father is more disposed to be compassionate than she is, and this disposition is part of what engenders her genuine affection. In short, he, too, is virtuous—that is, he can behave in ways that engender genuine attachment—just according to his natural capacities which are entirely different from Emma's. Matriarchal heroines, on the other hand, instruct individuals whose goodness is nothing in comparison; the heroines therefore have little to nothing to learn themselves. Unlike Emma, the Matriarchal heroine is a complete picture of virtue, possessing all positive qualities within herself.

Finally, Emma's identity as the ideal Matriarchal heroine is undermined by the fact that Austen presents both Emma and Mr. Woodhouse as not simply flawed but plagued with flaws that are potentially quite serious. Mr. Woodhouse's faults make the

relationship comic, but are also dangerous because they feed the folly in Emma. Emma, as the more intelligent and powerful of the two, is in more danger of committing errors with serious consequences. Furthermore, as a woman who has not yet made the selection of a spouse, she stands to lose a great deal if her folly leads her to make wrong decisions. Emma's major folly, her undisciplined fancy, grinds along unchecked by her constant companion, for when she is with her father Emma does indeed suffer from "intellectual solitude" (2). Mr. Woodhouse's lack of intelligence and total dependence upon Emma fosters the unchecked fancy of his daughter. At the beginning of the novel, Emma is in need of some sort of activity and mentions her goal of finding a wife for Mr. Elton. Mr. Knightley objects to this as unwelcome meddling, but Mr. Woodhouse only partly understands the nature of this objection, and merely states, "Emma never thinks of herself, if she can do good for others" before asking her to refrain from making matches because they "break up one's family circle grievously" (7). Emma is enabled by her father's inability to see anything morally objectionable in her schemes, and she brushes off her father's self-centered objection with her superior reasoning abilities. Mr. Woodhouse can say or do very little to address Emma's plans or imagination. Throughout the novel, Emma lives a parallel life of the mind which almost never intersects with her father's world. Though given plenty of opportunities for observation, he never discerns Emma's designs for Harriet and Mr. Elton, and neither does he discover Emma's true feelings about Jane Fairfax and her aunt, or the nature of Emma's relationship with Frank. Mr. Woodhouse's faults of a weak understanding and his "inability to suppose that other people could think differently from him" hide Emma's mind from him (3). When Emma tells Harriet that she has "none of the usual

inducements to marry" she reveals the true deficiencies of her relationship with her father (55). She says, "I believe few women are half as much mistress of their husband's house, as I am of Hartfield; and never, never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important; so always first and always right in any man's eyes as I am in my father's" (55). Emma enjoys the autonomy made possible by her father's dependence upon her and inability to discern any fault in her. She also tells Harriet, "Mine is an active, busy mind, with a great many independent resources," so she does not worry about a lack of occupation as an unmarried woman. Indeed, Emma's mind is active and busy, and, as the daughter of Mr. Woodhouse, totally independent of others. Such independence allows Emma to embark on several errors, which she later deeply regrets. This does not mean, however, that Austen is showing the need for an authoritarian, inquisitive father—one needs only think of the unattractive Sir Thomas in *Mansfield Park*. Rather, Austen's portrayal of Emma's relationship with her father shows the danger of being intellectually isolated from those whom one loves. Emma is powerful in her father's house; there is nothing objectionable here, for Emma uses this power responsibly and well, as Claudia Johnson argues (132). The problem with Emma's power is that Emma isn't perfect. Unlike the self-sufficient and morally perfect Matriarchal heroine, Emma needs a companion who is her equal, who can enter into and share her thoughts.

In summary, Emma's relationship with her father does not display the unquestioned superiority of a sensible and virtuous young woman, but shows how her father's short-comings aggravate a particular folly to which an otherwise admirable young woman is prone. Matriarchal authors presented readers with a perfectly virtuous heroine who subdues others by the power of her goodness. But Emma, the capable and

intelligent young woman whose rule in her father's household is excellent, is also Emma, the fanciful young woman, capable of falling into error. Specifically, she is in serious danger of preferring the unquestioned admiration of her father over any relationship which might challenge the machinations of her mind and reveal her faults. Therefore, Austen undermines the Matriarchal heroine exemplar, by demonstrating how a young woman, who is both good and bad, does not benefit from a relationship in which she is the unquestioned superior.

Austen complicates this critique of the Matriarchal heroine, however, by also undermining the notion of virtue as filial piety which was voiced most notably by Richardson and echoed in Inchbald's novel. Austen does not show the problems with Emma's relationship with her father in order to prove the necessity of unquestioning devotion to the father's perfection and authority. A brief comparison between Emma and Inchbald's Matilda shows how Austen rejects a moral system which identifies the father as the unquestioned superior and virtue as obedience and devotion to him. Matilda never questions her father's actions even when his immoderation leads him to treat her with injustice. Unlike Matilda, Emma is quite aware of her father's flaws. But she loves him regardless. Farrer notes the "clear and firm minds" of Austen's heroines who can see even the faults of their fathers. He claims the Victorians saw this as blasphemous, for they accepted the "duty to love and honour" fathers as axiomatic (67). But as we have seen in *A Simple Story, Pamela,* and even in *Vicar of Wakefield* (albeit with a differing emphasis), that duty, which was often identified with female virtue, was already entrenched in the minds of eighteenth-century readers. Austen, however, resists defining virtue as fulfilling any sort of duty imposed either by the self or society. Therefore, she is

completely unconcerned with depicting a dutiful daughter who would never dream of finding fault with a very flawed father. Austen's refusal to portray a heroine who fits into some sort of exemplary standard shows that she defines virtue as something even flawed humans can possess. For in addition to aggravating her folly, Emma's relationship with Mr. Woodhouse also develops and reveals Emma's true virtues. True to her comic vision, Austen allows for much to forgive in this flawed father-daughter relationship, for Emma's relationship with Mr. Woodhouse also contributes to her growth in virtue as she learns to reject her intellectual solitude and the accompanying autonomy. Emma's growth in virtue is tied to her long-practiced forbearance towards her father, whose faults she clearly sees but forgives. Thus, Austen's definition of virtue is predicated upon an ability to recognize flaws in others and then forgive those flaws.

Forbearance, Imagination, and Emma's Growth in Virtue

Emma sees that her father is nervous, selfish, and slow to understand. Yet she forgives these faults because she finds much to love in him, namely his "warmth and tenderness." Such recognition of faults and forgiveness of them is a kindness she extends to others, such as Harriet, Isabella, Mr. John Knightley, Mr. Weston, and even Mrs. Weston. In each of these cases, Emma recognizes a folly and sometimes even deplores it, but she does not cease to hold the other person in esteem. In short, Emma excels in forbearance, which she has learned primarily through her relationship with her father. An extended example serves to illustrate how she offers forbearance to others. When confronted with the habits and opinions of her brother-in-law, Mr. John Knightley, Emma's forbearance is challenged. Mr. John Knightley supposes aloud that Mr. Weston, a man who depends "'upon what is called society for his comforts'" rather than family,

did not much mind giving up his son to be adopted by the boy's aunt and uncle (63). We are told "Emma did not like what bordered on a reflection on Mr. Weston, and had half a mind to take it up," but she chooses to "keep the peace" instead because she considers that "there was something honourable and valuable in the strong domestic habits, the all-sufficiency of home to himself, whence resulted her brother's disposition to look down on the common rate of social intercourse, and those to whom it was important.—It had a high claim to forbearance" (63). Emma tries to imagine the source of her brother in-law's criticism and concludes that it must spring from his love of home and family which make him incredulous of another man's fondness for the society of others. Emma's forbearance here is notable, for readers have already been told her general attitude toward her brother-in-law. Because he has "clearness and quickness of mind," which Isabella does not have, he sometimes is ungracious or unkind to his wife. Emma, who shares his "clearness and quickness," notes all these little episodes. Even more offensive to her, however, is "that greatest fault of all in her eyes which he sometimes fell into, the want of respectful forbearance towards her father" (61). Emma sees the faults of her brother-in-law which can be summed up as a lack of forbearance for his wife and for Mr. Woodhouse. Yet Emma shows Mr. John Knightley the forbearance he sometimes lacks. She is able to do so because she habitually shows the same kindness unfailingly to Mr. Woodhouse despite the fact that her own "clearness and quickness of mind" enables her to see the same flaws that her brother-in-law does.

Emma's forbearance shapes our understanding of virtue in Austen's novel. Only certain people need to exercise forbearance; people like Harriet or Mr. Woodhouse seldom need to show it, for they infrequently recognize faults in those they love. Austen

does not reduce virtue to a single behavior; virtuous behavior might be different for different people. Forbearance is demanded of those whose minds are like Mr. John Knightley's: clear and quick, frequently seeing the faults of others. The "clearness of mind" that Emma pits against "warmth and tenderness" is the characteristic which makes Emma one of those people who must recognize the faults of others. And she, of course, recognizes the flaws in the person nearest to her, Mr. Woodhouse. Her behavior to her father shows that forbearance is not simply polite restraint from criticizing or finding fault, which is how we might identify it if it were shown only in social settings to people such as Mr. John Knightley. Forbearance, though closely related to propriety in that it recognizes others as worthy of respect, adds to propriety a deeper valuing of the individual. Forbearance means acknowledging that others, though imperfect, have redeeming characteristics which engender one's charity. The example of Mr. John Knightley shows that Emma's forbearance springs from her habituated willingness to imagine another's thoughts and motives from the most charitable angle. Forbearance enables Emma to enjoy relationships with those who would otherwise provoke and annoy. Emma is not irritated by Mr. Woodhouse, as her brother-in-law allows himself to be, because she has long recognized the redeeming characteristics of her father and trained herself to see her father's behavior with those traits in mind rather than his flaws. In short, Emma's habits of forbearance, cultivated in her relationship with her father, facilitate loving relationships in her life—with her father and others.

Significantly, forbearance depends upon the same characteristics—quickness and imagination—which feed Emma's most serious flaw, that of an imagination operating upon its neighbors with total autonomy. Emma's failures in forbearance occur when she

uses her imagination not to find grounds for charity, but to find a reason to condemn. Emma's most extended failure of this kind is the story she invents about Jane Fairfax and Mr. Dixon. She first imagines a connection between Jane Fairfax and Mr. Dixon when Miss Bates tells of how the Campbells are pressing Jane to accompany them to Ireland but she refuses to go and chooses to visit Highbury instead (102). There is something strange behind the choice to spend time with a rather tiresome aunt who lives in reduced circumstances rather than visit a much-beloved friend who lives in a large, fine house. Emma's quick mind intuits the incongruity of this behavior, but because she is prejudiced against Jane, she imagines a cause which is less than charitable. In the immediately following chapter, the narrative voice gives Jane Fairfax's story, showing how unfounded Emma's prejudice against her is, and also the reasons she is to be pitied; she is orphaned, left only with Mrs. Bates and Miss Bates for family, and is destined to be a governess (105). Emma does not like to admit why she dislikes this young woman who has so many claims to sympathy. The narrator reports Mr. Knightley's theory: "she saw in her the really accomplished young woman, which she wanted to be thought herself" (107). Emma's "conscience could not quite acquit her" of this charge, but, on the other hand, Emma notes the "coldness and reserve" of Jane, and chafes at the expectation of intimate friendship with such a person (107). Emma has these reasons to dislike Jane Fairfax, but "it was a dislike so little just" that Emma always tries to befriend Jane when she sees her again. In fact, upon their first meeting of the novel, Emma succeeds:

> When she took in her history, indeed, her situation, as well as her beauty; when she considered what all this elegance was destined to, what she was going to sink from, how she was going to live, it seemed impossible to feel anything but compassion and respect; especially, if to every well-known particular entitling her to interest, were added the highly probable circumstance of an attachment to Mr. Dixon, which she had so naturally

> started to herself. In that case, nothing could be more pitiable or more honourable than the sacrifices she had resolved on. (107)

Here, again Emma's imagination directs her to forgive the provocations of Jane Fairfax's superiority and reserve. However, her earlier, less charitable imaginings are still present, though she casts them in a more sympathetic hue. And Emma quickly lapses into dislike of Jane again. On their second encounter, "former provocations re-appeared"; Jane and Emma both play the piano and Jane is clearly the superior, but more provoking is Jane's reserve and artifice on the subject of what happened at Weymouth (108-109). Again, Emma correctly guesses that there is something behind Jane's behavior, and angered by Jane's superiority and reserve, Emma returns to a sinister imagining of Jane and Mr. Dixon's relationship. Worse still, she later voices her fancies to Frank. That she should abandon her usual intellectual solitude and reveal her theories about Jane to Frank is not surprising. For Frank, like Mr. Woodhouse, identifies no imperfection in Emma. So revealing her mind to him is not threatening to Emma's autonomy in the least; she knows he will accede to her every thought. Unlike Mr. Woodhouse, his deference to Emma is calculating and self-serving; it is flattery, and it is dangerous. Mary Poovey observes, "The vanity Frank invites reawakens the 'original narcissism' of his auditors, for implicit in his challenge is the opportunity to imagine, for just a moment, that every thought is as precious to one's listeners as to oneself, that one is, in short, the center of a nonjudgmental little universe" (397). Emma's imagination grinds away unchecked when with her father, but when with Frank, her imagination is flattered and encouraged. Marilyn Butler identifies the root of Emma's choice to communicate her theory about Jane to Frank: "Emma all along has liked what is agreeable better than what is challenging" (389). Emma likes Frank and chooses to reveal her unkind theory about

Jane to him, but he offers her no significant intellectual companionship; he is worse for Emma than Mr. Woodhouse is, for he understands but does not challenge her uncharitable imagination. In fact, Emma senses how Frank's flattery interacts with her imagination, for she somewhat regrets her communication to Frank, but feels that "his submission to all that she told, was a compliment to her penetration which made it difficult for her to be quite certain she ought to have held her tongue" (150).

Unlike both Mr. Woodhouse and Frank, Mr. Knightley does not defer to Emma but sees her faults. Mr. Knightley, Austen's answer to the mentor-figure common to the exemplary novel, repeatedly confronts Emma with quite challenging judgments of her behavior and the imagination he thinks might be behind it. For instance, when he and Emma quarrel over Harriet's refusal of Robert Martin, Mr. Knightley says to Emma, "Your views of Harriet are best known to yourself; but as you make no secret of your love of match-making, it is fair to suppose that views, and plans, and projects you have;--and as a friend I shall just hint to you that if Elton is the man, I think it will be all labour in vain" (42). Here, Mr. Knightley challenges Emma to admit that her imagination must be actively working upon a match for Harriet. He connects her earlier resolve to find a wife for Mr. Elton to her "views" of Harriet, and thus intrudes into her imagined outcome for these two. Emma does not acknowledge any such machinations, but when Mr. Knightley leaves, Emma, though at least partly in the right, is upset.[9] We read, "She did not always feel so absolutely satisfied with herself, so entirely convinced that her opinions were right and her adversary's wrong, as Mr. Knightley" (42). In other words, Emma is shaken in her opinions. He has frightened her a little about her fanciful plans for Harriet and Mr. Elton. Unlike either Mr. Woodhouse or Frank, Mr. Knightley

engages Emma's thoughts, for he is capable of thinking her in error and therefore intrudes upon her imagination.

Mr. Knightley is also the other character most remarkable for his forbearance. Like Emma and his brother, he has a clear and quick mind, but Emma never worries that Mr. Knightley will fail to show her father respect or forbearance. For instance, Mr. Knightley joins Emma in attempts to maintain peace between Mr. Woodhouse and Isabella and her husband. Emma labors to keep her father from offending Isabella with his over-fondness of Mr. Perry and his opinions, and Mr. Knightley joins her in this endeavor by redirecting his brother's attention when Mr. John Knightley grows impatient his father-in-law's silly medical advice (70). Similarly, when Mr. John Knightley alarms Mr. Woodhouse over the inclement weather that might hamper their return home from Randalls, Mr. Knightley joins Emma in taking action that will best sooth Mr. Woodhouse's fears (84). In both of these cases, Mr. Knightley shows the forbearance his brother lacks; he is mindful of Mr. Woodhouse's weaknesses and understands that he means no offense by offering medical advice, and he also recognizes Mr. Woodhouse's inability to be comfortable while worrying about the weather. Mr. Knightley also shows forbearance for others; famously, of course, he remonstrates with Emma for her failure in forbearance towards Miss Bates at the picnic. When Emma objects by saying, "I know there is not a better creature in the world: but you must allow, that what is good and what is ridiculous are most unfortunately blended in her," Mr. Knightley acknowledges, "were she prosperous, I would allow much for the occasional prevalence of the ridiculous over the good" (246). Here, both Emma and Mr. Knightley show themselves perfectly capable of recognizing the flaws of Miss Bates. And Mr. Knightley does not ask Emma to ignore

these flaws; instead, he asks for her to consider why Miss Bates has a high claim to forbearance. He reminds Emma that Miss Bates is not her equal: "She is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to; and, if she live to old age, must probably sink more. Her situation should secure your compassion" (246). In other words, Mr. Knightley asks Emma to imagine the hardships of Miss Bates's situation in order to see how she is deserving of compassion. He is especially angry at Emma's failure of forbearance because it was committed in front of others "who would be entirely guided by *your* treatment of her" (246). Emma's error invites others to justify failures in forbearance by noting the unfortunate blending of good and ridiculous in Miss Bates. Emma's reaction to Mr. Knightley's remonstrance shows that he has engaged her moral imagination. We read, "Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved at any circumstance in her life. She was most forcibly struck. The truth of his representation there was no denying. She felt it at her heart. How could she have been so brutal, so cruel to Miss Bates?" (246). Mr. Knightley's own habits of forbearance have taught him to look for that in the other's situation which demands sympathy. So, too, have Emma's habits formed her, for his words resonate. In fact, when she returns home, she comforts herself by attending to her father, for there, she knows "she could not, in her general conduct, be open to any severe reproach" (247). Indeed, Emma's habits of forbearance have been daily strengthened by her behavior toward her father, and Mr. Knightley is alarmed at her failure because he sees it as a departure from her habits; he is able to see this failure in her because he, too, has cultivated habits of forbearance towards others.

But Mr. Knightley, like Emma, Miss Bates, and Mr. Woodhouse, is a blended character. While he corresponds to the mentor-figures of exemplary novels, Mr.

Knightley represents Austen's departure from an exemplary view of virtue. For he, too, is flawed. His most glaring failure at forbearance is his prejudice against Frank. Citing Mr. Knightley's fallibility, Waldron takes issue with a long line of critics, including most notably Wayne Booth, who identify him as the moral authority in the novel. Noting Mr. Knightley's imperfections, Waldron concludes that the subversion of the mentor-figure as the moral authority must mean that "It is with a general fictional chaos, designed to entertain rather by confusion than by satisfying certainties, that the novel is chiefly concerned" (115). However, I argue that Austen engages the exemplary novel's stock character of the mentor-figure not to entertain readers by the confusion generated by "general fictional chaos," but to show that though there is no perfect exemplar, all characters are capable of growth in virtue as well as loss of virtue. Consistent with her rejection of exemplary modes, Austen endows Mr. Knightley with a mixed nature. In him, too, virtue and vice exist side-by-side, each contending with the other; he, like Emma, is capable of growth and contraction. He is most susceptible to a loss of virtue when he operates without acknowledging the true feelings motivating his thoughts and words. In other words, when he exists in intellectual solitude, then he, too, loses that virtue which otherwise enables him to enjoy attachment to others. He suffers a loss of forbearance when Emma begins to "say a good deal more than she felt" about her sorrow over Frank's failure to come to Highbury, she finds herself defending Frank against Mr. Knightley even though she has already recognized Frank's fault in not visiting Mrs. Weston (94). She defends Frank because she senses Mr. Knightley is unjustly prejudiced against him. Mr. Knightley says, "It is a great deal more natural than one could wish, that a young man, brought up by those who are proud, luxurious, and selfish, should be

proud, luxurious, and selfish too" (94-95). Emma tries to help him imagine Frank's dependence upon a difficult aunt and uncle, but Mr. Knightley points out that Frank can leave them "whenever there is any temptation to pleasure" (95). To which Emma replies, "It is very unfair to judge any body's conduct, without intimate knowledge of their situation. Nobody, who has not been in the interior of a family, can say what the difficulties of any individual in that family may be" (95). Mr. Knightley refuses to imagine the difficulties Frank might face and continues to insist that a man can always do his duty, but Emma reminds him of the precarious position of a young man, dependent upon the pleasure of capricious relatives. They continue to argue over Frank; Mr. Knightley firmly condemning him and Emma pointing out the reasons to refrain from judgment, until Emma resolves to say nothing more about Frank because "We are both prejudiced: you against, I for him; and we have no chance of agreeing till he is really here!" (98). Privately, Emma is surprised at the degree of Mr. Knightley's prejudice against Frank, for "to take such a dislike to a young man, only because he appeared to be of a different disposition from himself, was unworthy of the real liberality of mind which she was always used to acknowledge in him" (98). As Emma does with Jane Fairfax, Mr. Knightley recognizes some real problems with Frank, but the degree to which he condemns Frank's behavior is unjust. In fact, it is motivated not by anything Frank may or may not be guilty of; instead, Mr. Knightley is rendered incapable of extending forbearance by unstated and unacknowledged jealousy over Emma's affections.

Susceptible to passion, Mr. Knightley, the mentor-figure, undermines an exemplary view of virtue in his proneness to prejudice and lack of forbearance for Frank. However, we are not forced to conclude, with Waldron, that "it is with general fictional

chaos, designed to entertain . . . that the novel is chiefly concerned (115), for Mr. Knightley's failure is a loss of virtue, a contraction of his character. A loss in virtue implies that there is a standard which one has been distanced from and that growth toward that objective goal is equally possible. Mr. Knightley's growth in virtue is significant, for it reveals the way that *both* he and Emma become more capable of enjoying loving attachment. Mr. Knightley, too notices something rather strange about Jane's behavior. He finally makes a connection between her and Frank, but he does not share his conjecture for the same reasons Emma shares hers. He tells Emma of his less-than-flattering theory about Jane Fairfax out of concern for Emma, for he believes Frank to be serious about marrying Emma while trifling with Jane. Mr. Knightley worries that his communication to Emma will be "fruitless interference," but finally decides, "He owed it to her, to risk any thing that might be involved in an unwelcome interference, rather than her welfare; to encounter any thing, rather than the remembrance of neglect in such a case" (229). Here, the conjecture about Jane Fairfax is communicated for an entirely different reason than Emma's conjecture is communicated to Frank. Furthermore, Mr. Knightley knows that Emma will not accept his theories as a piece of brilliant insight, and he expects her to challenge him. Emma is, of course, wrong in her quick dismissal of Mr. Knightley's conjecture, for she knows very little about the affairs of Jane and Frank, but the feelings behind her exchange with Mr. Knightley are significant. Mr. Knightley admits to Emma that he has seen "symptoms of attachment" and "certain expressive looks" exchanged between Frank and Jane which belie a secret relationship. Emma laughingly notes that now it is *his* imagination that is wandering, and tells him that she is sure he is wrong. Her assurance silences him. This exchange,

disappointing as it is for Mr. Knightley, indicates that a kind of intellectual and moral community exists between the two of them. They meet as equals. He speaks an uncomfortable conjecture out of concern for her welfare; she feels free to reject his ideas; he is quieted. As was the case with their disagreements over Robert Martin and Harriet and over Frank, both think the other capable of lapses in judgment, and their relationship can bear their disagreements. This exchange is different from those because to it is added Mr. Knightley's serious concern over Emma's happiness.

Virtue and the Happiness of Attachment

Emma's happiness is as important to Austen as it is to Mr. Knightley. Mr. Knightley is the character Austen uses to move Emma toward happiness and away from the threat of isolated autonomy. The imperfections of both Emma and Mr. Knightley stem from a departure from a habit of forbearance each has long cultivated. Emma's forbearance is perhaps even more notable than Mr. Knightley's, for she has exercised it upon her father daily; she is long accustomed to recognizing his flaws yet finding reason to love him rather than condemn. Unfortunately, one of her father's flaws is a weak understanding that renders him incapable of finding fault with Emma; there is never any call for him to forgive her or overlook her folly. As a result, Emma has also cultivated a habit of intellectual isolation from her most constant companion as well as a love of her own autonomy. As we have seen, Emma's imagination often directs her to forbearance, but it is sometimes less charitably engaged or sometimes she is simply mistaken. But whatever her imagination directs her towards, her father never guesses it is anything other than perfect charity towards others. Such are the consequences of Emma's folly aggravated by the folly of her father. However, Austen does not present this state of

affairs in order to criticize a weak father and a strong daughter. Rather, she simply shows the significance of family relationships; what Mr. Woodhouse does and who he is affect his daughter. Similarly, what Emma does and who she is affects her father. The father-daughter relationship *matters*. Notably, Austen does not require Emma to leave her father's house at the end of the novel. But to the attachment to her father, Austen adds a better attachment, attachment to an equal. This is a more demanding relationship because Mr. Knightley recognizes Emma's faults and she recognizes his, but Austen indicates that it is within such a relationship that Emma can be happy. We must also conclude, then, that there is greater potential for virtuous behavior in this relationship between people who see the flaws in each other and forgive those flaws.

Emma grows in virtue as she learns to prefer the kind of intellectual and moral community Mr. Knightley offers to her. Though he also is imperfect, Mr. Knightley shares with Emma the capacity of recognizing the faults of another yet forgiving those faults. Because they can offer each other forbearance, they can challenge one another in ways that Mr. Woodhouse could never challenge Emma. Mr. Knightley and Emma guess at each other's thoughts and challenge the other's judgments. They offer forbearance to each other, but also expect the other to do the same to others, as Emma expects Mr. Knightley to forbear to condemn Frank, or Mr. Knightley expects Emma to forbear to expose Miss Bates's ridiculousness. When Mr. Knightley finally acknowledges himself in love with Emma, he thinks of her as "faultless in spite of all her faults" (284). This is a far cry from Mr. Woodhouse's assessment of his daughter. For Mr. Knightley knows Emma's faults, forgives them, and loves her. Such is the relationship of equals. Because they both extend and receive forbearance, their loving communion precludes two things:

first, the identification of one or the other as superior, and, second, the sort of intellectual isolation that mars Emma's relationship with her father.

There are two errors that can befall readers at the end of the novel. Both stem from a failure to recognize the importance of Emma's relationship with her father in the outcome of the plot. Some, with Wayne Booth, identify Mr. Knightley as the infallible moral voice and conclude "Marriage to an amiable, good, and attractive man is the best thing that can happen to this heroine" for it is a sign that Emma has moved towards "a vision that includes not simply marriage, but a kind of loving commerce not based . . . on whether the 'loved' person will serve one's irreducible needs" (114, 115). Booth implies that Emma's earlier preference for the single life with her father is simply selfishness, and her decision to marry Mr. Knightley is the moment of her movement towards happiness. However, Emma has long been moving towards happiness as she gains in virtue. And the foundation of her virtue is the habit of forbearance cultivated in her relationship with her father. Mr. Knightley is certainly the corrective to Emma's mistaken attachment to autonomy, but her love of Mr. Knightley is part of her organic growth in virtue, and their subsequent happiness is just as much to Emma's credit as Mr. Knightley's. Claudia Johnson falls into the opposite error from Booth: instead of identifying Mr. Knightley as Emma's savior, she sees their marriage as a fall for Emma because she assumes Emma's autonomy is an unquestionably positive thing. She acknowledges that Mr. Knightley's advice to Emma is not a "function of power," for he does not turn away from her when she ignores it, but then Johnson concludes that Mr. Knightley is thus a "fantastically wishful creation of benign authority, in whom the benefits and attractions of power are preserved and the abuses and encroachments are

expelled” (144,145). She bemoans the fact that Emma’s “devolution to marriage a man seventeen years her senior puts an end to her ‘reign alone,’” (145). Indeed, it does put an end to Emma’s “reign *alone*,” but not to Emma’s reign. Emma remains at her father’s house, presumably in her same position of authority, but not in the same kind of isolation. For now she enjoys something that readers might think surprising if they had not been shown the need for it: forbearance, which can only be offered by someone who recognizes her faults. Mr. Knightley recognizes Emma’s faults—and she his—and when each forgives, the two of them are then made capable of enjoying true attachment to one another.

Although this novel portrays a heroine who grows in virtue and learns to seek happiness, it is not an exemplary novel, for *Emma* does not exist to teach readers a lesson about virtue, happiness, or relationships. Austen creates characters more consistently like real people than any other novelist covered in this study. She therefore creates a novel with an immense, lasting appeal of the kind identified by E.M. Forster. For she succeeds in creating a “fiction [that] is truer than history”; in *Emma* “we can know people perfectly, and . . . we can find here a compensation for their dimness in life” (Forster 63). Forster points out that characters that are like we find in life, “do not coincide as a whole with daily life,” but “parallel it” (64). Such characters exist within a world which is not our own, but by their existence in their own world of Highbury, readers can know characters like Emma, Mr. Woodhouse, or Mr. Knightley in ways that we cannot know another real person. Austen reveals little parts of human nature to us in each of these characters. And that revelation itself teaches readers about what it means to be human—in this case, what it means to be a young woman enjoying the safety of a relationship with

her father and moving from that relationship to the more perilous but more rewarding relationship of marriage. Though *Emma* is not didactic, it does present readers with a fully embodied vision of virtue; this embodiment of virtue is often denied to us in everyday life, for we cannot know other people and their growth in virtue as we can know Emma and her development of virtue through her relationship with her father and then with Mr. Knightley. Thus, Austen's novel presents readers with a definition of virtue that leads to happiness, not as a reward but as a natural result of *who* virtuous people are and what they become. And in *Emma,* Austen uses the comically flawed father-daughter relationship to show how this process occurs.

Conclusion

Austen's *Emma* is therefore vastly different from the earliest of its genre. Haywood's *Love in Excess* uses characters as pedagogic tools in order to impress readers with the importance of virtue if they are to safely arrive at the happiness of "conjugal affection." The relationship between the daughter and her father is effectively unimportant in forming virtue; the daughter seems to emerge fully formed, either virtuous or not. The father is thus an external force, and a useless one at that. But Haywood has made a significant contribution to the later novels, for she has connected virtue with a plot moving towards marriage. Richardson develops the amatory novel into a novel of psychological reality, and in *Pamela* he tries to link the daughter's virtue not only to her marriage but also to her obedience to her father. He uses Pamela as an exemplar of virtue in order to teach readers and motivate them by portraying the rewards awaiting the virtuous. And although obedience to the father is crucial to Pamela's virtue and its reward, and is, in fact, the impetus of the narrative, the novel itself undermines Pamela's

identity as an exemplary daughter. In short, Richardson cannot sustain his vision of virtue and its connection to happiness. Through his comic fiction, Goldsmith moves away from identifying the exemplary character as a perfect character. He rejects the notion of humans as capable of perfection; he sees virtue as accessible to even the most ridiculous of characters. He consequently locates full happiness as achievable only in heaven and rejects the pursuit of wealth or status by means of marriage. For him, the virtuous life is that of self-giving love. This envisioning of virtue transforms the father-daughter relationship, for it rescues fathers from their obligation to be wise authoritarians and liberates daughters from the obligation of perfect obedience. Inchbald continues the move away from embodying virtue by using perfect exemplars; in *A Simple Story* she shows how virtue can be lost and gained, for as the moderation of excesses, it is a dynamic state. Inchbald shows that such virtue alone can lead to happiness for men and women who love each other, but she does not successfully carry this definition of virtue over into the father-daughter relationship. There, she reverts to the safe system of the static virtue of filial piety, which is rewarded by the father's love. Austen unites what is best in Goldsmith's and Inchbald's portrayals of virtue and its effects upon fathers and daughters. In *Emma*, Austen, too, portrays virtue as the kind of thing that requires a continual effort for it can be lost and gained, and she also places human folly into a comic framework. Austen's comedy stems from the same source as her definition of virtue; both are founded upon the ability to recognize human flaws and yet forgive them. She creates Emma and Mr. Woodhouse accordingly. Mr. Woodhouse need not be an exemplary eighteenth-century authoritarian father, a wise father, or even a good father to play a role in Emma's formation in virtue; the very fact of his existence, of their daily

relationship with one another, is enough to create certain habits in Emma, some that lead to virtue, such as forbearance, and some that do not, such as a love of autonomy. Hence, Austen shows that the father-daughter relationship brings about the daughter's growth in virtue and her capacity for happiness through attachment to others, but the daughter's virtue and her happiness can never reduce to the way that she relates to her father. The father is important. He is not important as an authority or power, however, but as a flawed but beloved *person* who has known the daughter every day since her birth, been a central part of her first and most intimate community before marriage, and thereby contributed to her formation of virtue.

The father and the daughter in relationship and the development of virtue in either one or both of those characters is the tie that binds together Haywood's *Love in Excess,* Richardson's *Pamela,* Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield,* Inchbald's *A Simple Story,* and Austen's *Emma.* My readings of these novels have not been a study of virtue *per se* or a study of fathers and daughters *per se*, but I have tried to study the intersection of those two themes in these five eighteenth-century novels. This intersection is significant, for it shows how novelists differed from the moral philosophers of their day due to their ability to envision virtue within a story. The novelists used the father-daughter relationship in order to embody their visions of virtue, indicating how central that relationship was for eighteenth-century readers. My readings of the novels have drawn attention to the different ways that these five authors each embody virtue in fathers, daughters, or both in an attempt to offer practical wisdom to their readers who had been left with an obscured connection between virtue and happiness as well as a sense that the father-daughter relationship somehow ought to play into that connection.

Each in their own way, the five novels covered in this study narrate events leading up to a daughter's marriage. The way that the movement towards marriage forms the plots of these novels shows that man-woman relationships had come to be of utmost importance in the lives of eighteenth-century men and women. Jean Hagstrum argues that by the eighteenth-century "men have begun to see heaven in a domestic nest, eternity in a mutually felt romantic passion, the restoration of Eden in heterosexual friendship" (23). In other words, marriage had become increasingly linked with the vision of the good life, or with human happiness. When Haywood, Richardson, Goldsmith, Inchbald, and Austen envision virtue in the context of women moving towards a marriage, they are in reality trying to show how virtue leads to or makes possible happiness. It may initially surprise some readers that the father-daughter relationship receives as much attention in these narratives as that other man-woman relationship which is thought to be so crucial for happiness. But when one understands how the father-daughter relationship reveals and embodies virtue, then its importance in the courtship plot becomes clear: the father-daughter relationship matters so much because it is the relationship which forms the virtue of those who are moving towards the relationship that is most formative in human happiness.

The significance of these author's portrayals of fathers and daughters, virtue, and the movement towards happiness lies in reading the moral aims of these authors in light of the larger eighteenth-century picture of moral philosophy. Aristotelian ethics had connected virtue to happiness or *eudaimonia*, not as a separate end, but as a way of life. Hauerwas and Pinches point out that "*eudaimonia* is the name Aristotle gives to 'the best possible life'" (8). However, by the eighteenth-century the connection between virtue

and happiness had been obscured. MacIntyre argues that eighteenth-century ethics were separated from Aristotelian ethics by a loss of teleology. He argues that the loss of teleology was the result of a changed definition of "reason," so that reason could no longer tell humans anything about ends but could only be applied to means (52). A problem arises for "the whole point of ethics . . . is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end" (MacIntyre 11). MacIntyre points out the inability to reason about ends changes both the notion of human nature and the *telos* towards which human nature is directed. Indeed, in eighteenth-century discussions of virtue, human nature is often assumed to be benevolent, for ethics can no longer be directed by reason but is directed by feeling or sense, and to no particular end. The moral sense school, begun by Shaftsbury, which found mature expression in Hume, held that "moral judgments cannot be made with the same strict rationality as other forms of judgment" (Ellis 13). Admittedly, many times the novel of the eighteenth century "embodies an experimental approach to character based on Hume's acceptance of the ubiquity of the passions as motivators to actions" (Manning 82). Such novels reflect the moral philosophy of the eighteenth-century in which "a sentimental psychology of the good man" (Bredvold *Sensibility* 23) reflects the notion that feelings or sentiments are the source and sum of virtue. These novels, often called novels of sentiment or sensibility, reflect a loss of *telos* for humans, and they focus on individual character, almost to the exclusion of plot. Of the novels I cover, Richardson's *Pamela* most closely resembles this kind of embodiment of virtue. The slender plot of that novel is overwhelmed by the narrative profusion of Pamela's account of her virtue. However, because the plot is directed towards an end—that is, Pamela's marriage—Richardson must somehow connect virtue to an end. The

problems with Pamela's virtue arise from the fact that Richardson does not portray the end of virtue as a way of life—"the best possible life"—but as separate from virtue itself. For Pamela, virtue is rewarded. And this, as I have shown, has strong repercussions for the father-daughter relationship. The father in Richardson's novel is useful in the daughter's narration of virtue rewarded but nothing more.

However, beginning with Goldsmith, trickling through Inchbald, and finding its full expression in Austen, we find that the plot directed towards happiness in marriage increasingly enables authors to place humans back within a teleological framework, which contemporary moral philosophers failed to do. The teleological framework of these novels has immense repercussions for relationships between men and women, including fathers and daughters. While these authors do not assume, as Hagstrum implies, that romantic love and marriage are the highest happiness available to humans, they do view marriage and harmonious man-woman relationships within marriage as an integral part of "the best possible life." The visions of virtue which these authors embody in their novels thus pre-suppose a *telos* for human nature. Because they are teleological visions of virtue, Goldsmith, Inchbald (at times), and Austen offer their readers a kind of wisdom that novels reflecting an ethic based on a psychology of sentiment could not; specifically, these authors address how virtue makes it possible for men and women to each other in ways that make them able to enjoy the happiness of attachment to another. Significantly, these authors embody virtue in the father-daughter relationship as well as in the romantic relationships which will soon replace the father-daughter relationship in importance. So it is that attending to the intersection of virtue and fathers and daughter reveals the practical importance of these novels for readers who were convinced of the

importance of man-woman relationships for human happiness as well as the importance of virtue; the embodiments of virtue in these novels connect these two central themes for eighteenth-century readers in order to instruct those readers in ways that contemporary moral philosophy had failed to do.

NOTES

Chapter One

[1] Hagstrum argues that the change in man-woman relationships was a secularization of religion, for "men have begun to see heaven in a domestic nest, eternity in a mutually felt romantic passion, the restoration of Eden in heterosexual friendship" (23).

[2] In making his argument, MacIntyre focuses upon Kierkegaard, Kant, Diderot, Hume, and Adam Smith.

[3] In this description of the project of eighteenth-century female writers, Bannet quotes from the preface of Jane Barker's 1715 romance *Exilius; or the Banish'd Roman*.

[4] Bannet divides women writers into two camps, the Matriarchs and the Egalitarians. She argues that Matriarchs "imagined a family in which the patriarchal governor . . . had been surreptitiously supplanted by a wife who understood that she had but to 'give the Lords of Creation the appearance of supremacy' to rule them as she would" (3). And Egalitarians "imagined a family based on consensual relations between parents and children and husbands and wives" who behaved towards each other with "equal softness and equal sense" (3-4).

[5] During what is sometimes termed her later, "moralistic" phase, Haywood wrote a response to *Pamela*, titled *Anti-Pamela; or, Feigned Innocence Detected* (1741) in which Syrena Tricksy is a beautiful young woman who uses her appearance of innocence to reap financial reward from her relationships with men. Perhaps this novel shows that Haywood objected to the way that Richardson used the conventions of amatory fiction and tied them to a different definition of virtue which cast the motivations of the heroine into doubt.

Chapter Two

[1] The "two babes of love" could either be two of her amatory novels or her two illegitimate children, each born after her failed marriage. Either way, Pope's attack is aimed at her perceived sexual promiscuity.

[2] David Oakleaf explains the term "amatory fiction": " 'Romance' is dignified but misleading—an aristocratic narrative form to the critic but a love story to readers less professionalized. 'Love stories,' on the other hand are *infra dig.*—likely 'girlish,' lowerclass, or (horrors!) both . . . 'Erotic fiction,' by contrast . . . describes the

gentlemanly or merely male objectification of female sexuality. So the gentle critic refers to 'amatory' fiction, hoping the safely donnish term will steer the reader with some dignity between extremes" (23).

[3] Lubey makes these observations in her argument regarding the "amatory aesthetic" of Haywood. Lubey argues that Haywood views the reader's imagination as a mediating power between the pleasures aroused by the text and the edification of the mind. She notes the importance of such a conception of reading which "situates her work firmly in the period's ongoing consolidation of the aesthetic as a category of affective, edifying experience" (310).

[4] David Oakleaf points out that *Love in Excess* "is a sophisticated development of the Ovidian verse epistle from a woman to her absent lover, a form that shaped fiction directly and through prose variations like *The Portuguese Letters,* and Behn's *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister"* (23).

[5] Haywood's turn away from "classical" notions of virtue certainly distances her from preceding fiction by women (such as the works of Aphra Behn or Delarivier Manley), which employs amatory themes for political ends. Against Ros Ballaster's argument that Haywood therefore is qualitatively different from Manley and Behn, Marta Kvande uncovers "political meaning" in Haywood's fiction of the 1720's. But this quest runs the risk of valuing Haywood's fiction only when it can be read as part of the "public discourse" (Kvande 626), and ignores Haywood's pedagogic purpose in writing amatory fiction.

Chapter Three

[1] Caroline Gonda includes a chapter on Richardson in her book *Reading Daughter's Fictions 1709-1834*, but she focuses upon *Clarissa, Sir Charles Grandison*, and Richardson's letters. In his *Children, Parents, and the Rise of the Novel*, T.G.A. Nelson delves into Pamela's response to the father-daughter relationship between Mr. B and Miss Godfrey. Brian McCrea writes a chapter on how Clarissa's (possible) pregnancy affects patriarchal power in his *Impotent Fathers: Patriarchy and Demographic Crisis in the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. While helpful in their own way, each of these analyses offer little to no insight into Pamela's relationship with her own father.

[2] Robert Donovan argues that polarized readings of the novel have all ignored one crucial problem: "[Pamela's] virtue is never really tested in the sense that she has to fight her own inclination in order to preserve it" (381). Furthermore, he argues that Mr. B would never actually rape Pamela, so her virtue is safe in that regard as well (383). He concludes that Pamela does not go home because "her objective is to maintain and consolidate her social status" (386); in other words, the conflict in the novel (that has so often been misread) stems not from Pamela's threatened virtue but from Pamela's need to occupy a clear place in the social hierarchy. Such a reading, however, assumes that

virtue only arises out of interior conflict, a view of virtue which Richardson rejects in this novel—though not, perhaps, in *Clarissa*.

[3] Regarding the real trauma that Pamela suffers, Doody writes, "The tension in the centre of the tale is real and powerful, and has tragic implications. Pamela feels overwhelmed, her personality threatened. The horror of the imprisonment of one personality by another is strongly suggested in the scenes in the 'awful Mansion . . ." (*Passion* 35). It may be true that Pamela is sometimes a suspect narrator, but even the most cynical of readers has to admit that her being held in isolation against her will is a real, terrifying psychological ordeal.

[4] Auerbach writes, "Figural interpretation 'establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, not only the comprehension, the *intellectus spiritualis,* of their interdependence is a spiritual act.'[4] In practice we almost always find an interpretation of the Old Testament, whose episodes are interpreted as figures or phenomenal prophecies of the events of the New Testament" (73).

[5] Raymond Hilliard argues that this moment marks Pamela's change from a child into an adult and argues that Richardson "envisions Pamela's story as one about growing up—in one sense, about learning to be and act on her own" and cites her "childish" activities of looking to others for advice and seeking to be "beloved" by her fellow servants ("*Pamela*"204).

Chapter Four

[1] Ophelia says to Laertes,

> I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
> As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
> Do not, as some ungracious pasters do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to Heaven
> Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
> And recks not his own rede (I.iii.45-51)

[2] It could easily be argued that Field does indulge elaborately in Tom's and other character's distresses, but he does so comically.

[3] In his biography of Goldsmith, A. Lytton Sells notes that Goldsmith had a low opinion of the novel as a genre as well as a propensity to mercilessly ridicule the sentimental (280-1), and conjectures that *Vicar* was an answer to Sterne's "obscene" *Tristam Shandy,* which also featured a clergyman.

[4] While Preston's argument removes any critique of the Vicar's actions as a father in the first half of the novel, it is a good answer to Robert Hopkins's claim that the "metaphors of commerce—'distribution,' 'dealings,' 'repaid,' and 'balance'—. . . reveal the Vicar's concept of heaven to be a clearinghouse or a bank that stores up credit in terms of happiness" (219). Hopkins's claim certainly ignores the biblical tradition which Preston is right to draw attention to.

[5] In "A Modest Proposal" Jonathan Swift had already noted how disturbing was this tendency to view children as the wealth of a nation.

[6] Bannet here quotes from Henry Stebbing in *An Inquiry into the Force and Operation of the annulling Clauses of a late Act for the better Preventing of Clandestine Marriages,* published in 1735.

[7] Bannet argues that this Act was created in order to better regulate procreation. As population had come to be seen as essential to the wealth of the nation, the government had a vested interest in making sure that children, the treasures of the state, were brought up in stable homes. The regulation of marriage was intended to create homes better suited to bringing up productive members of society (94-124).

Chapter Five

[1] Ward cites Wollstonecraft's opinion that Matilda is passionless and concurs (13), and Haggerty's argument assumes that passion is active and therefore good and restraint is passive and therefore bad.

Chapter Six

[1] In reference to the reputation of Mrs. Churchill after her death, Austen refers to the first lines of a song Sophia sings in *Vicar of Wakefield*: "Goldsmith tells us, that when lovely woman stoops to folly, she has nothing to do but die; and when she stoops to be disagreeable, it is equally recommended as a clearer of ill-fame" (254)

[2] Farrer was a botanist and novelist of the early twentieth-century who traveled to Tibet with only copies of Austen's novels for reading material; he then contributed an influential essay to a collection of essays written in honor of the centenary of Austen's death. Regarding his contributions to Austen scholarship, Fiona Stafford writes that Farrer was the first twentieth century critic to "present [Austen's novels] as . . . universally truthful—and therefore immortal" instead of merely responding to them as "brilliant representations of the time in which they were written" (14).

[3] The debates over Austen's conservatism or feminism, best voiced by Claudia Johnson or Mary Waldron has shaped the direction of Austen criticism for decades and

have shed light on Austen's fiction, but for a long time left little room for criticism which acknowledges both the comedy and morality of her work.

[4] John Wiltshire writes at length connecting Mr. Woodhouse's nervous symptoms with those of Mrs. Churchill which make strong demands upon the young people in their lives. But Wiltshire persists in viewing all relationships as based upon power alone, and he is genuinely confused by the characters who treat Mr. Woodhouse "not merely with deference, but with kindness and affection—even love," (202); he therefore misses the comedy of the novel.

[5] Ruderman mentions Claudia Johnson and Marilyn Butler as examples of the controversy over Austen's politics, but it is also important to note how such criticism differed widely from earlier Austen critics such as Wayne Booth or Lionel Trilling who participate in an earlier critical tradition more interested in the morality and aesthetics of a work. Part of the cause of such debates between critics such as Johnson and Butler arises from the fact that both were part of the move towards historicizing and politicizing interpretations of literature and therefore shared a complex relationship to earlier moral readings; Butler bridges the moral readings and later historicized readings and therefore stresses Austen moralism partly due to her own historical situation.

[6] Ruderman notes that several critics, such as Avrom Fleishman or Lionel Trilling, following the Kantian tradition of thinking virtue must be free of a concern for one's own happiness, connect virtue with death in their insistence that virtuous characters must deny themselves the pleasures of life. Of course, self-denial may be a part of virtue, but virtue does not demand total loss of concern for one's self.

[7] Nineteenth-century critics found virtue to be of more interest than many twentieth or twenty-first century critics who tend to offer readings which are political or historical.

[8] Examples of Egalitarians include Judith Drake, Charlotte Smith, Mary Hays, and Mary Wollstonecraft. Matriarchs included Mary Astell, Jane West, and Hannah More (Bannet 3).

[9] In *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time,* Mary Waldron argues "the dialogue [over Robert Martin's proposal] . . . is a brilliant example of Austen's delight and skill in sporting with the reader's allegiances. Though we know at one level that Emma is all wrong, the scene exposes not her irrationality but Mr. Knightley's" (119). Waldron is helpful in pointing out that both Emma and Mr. Knightley have hidden motives, but she is hasty in drawing upon this as evidence that Austen was simply disappointing the expectations of an "unequivocal moral message" by portraying Mr. Knightley, the mentor-figure, as susceptible to error.

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